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1947

WILHELM MEISTER

"WILHELM MEISTER"

THOUGH this famous novel of Goethe's was translated by Garlyle more than a eentury ago, a new translation, which throws some light on the mental development of Germany's greatest poet giving his views on the Theatre, Education and Religion, will be welcomed by all readers of classical literature.

WILHELM MEISTER

APPRENTICESHIP AND TRAVELS

Translated from the German

by

R. O. MOON, M.A., M.D. (OXON.), F.R.G.P.

CONSULTING PHYSICIAN TO THE NATIONAL HOSPITAL
FOR DISEASES OF THE HEART

CONSULTING PHYSICIAN TO THE ROYAL WATERLOO HOSPITAL

VOLUME I

1947

LONDON

G. T. FOULIS & GO. LTD.

7 MILFORD LANE, STRAND, W.G.2

First Published 1947



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COMPLETE CONFORMITY WITH THE
AUTHORIZED ECONOMY STANDARDS

MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
MORRISON AND GIBB LTD., LONDON AND EDINBURGH

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

MORE than a century has elapsed since the death of Goethe, and a few years more since Carlyle translated his novel, *Wilhelm Meister*.

When the name of Goethe is mentioned the great poem of "Faust" is called up to the minds of most people, and it is this poem which has made Goethe so universally famous. Next to "Faust," however, probably *Wilhelm Meister* is the most widely known of all the numerous works of this renowned and most prolific German poet.

Perhaps it may hardly be correct to speak of *Wilhelm Meister* as a novel, for the main point of it is the importance of discovering one's vocation and then strenuously carrying it out. In that sense it might be called a novel with a purpose : very different from Scott's Waverley novels, for which Goethe had the greatest admiration.

The first half of the book is called "The Apprenticeship," and of it the stage is the centre. In this part occur some of Goethe's most famous lyrics, also his well-known criticism of Shakespeare in general and of Hamlet in particular. Then, too, in this part there is one book entitled "The Confessions of a Beautiful Soul," representing the Pietistic view of life, derived from the Moravian brotherhood. This cannot be said to fit in very harmoniously with the rest of the novel, but for it Schiller and others had an immense admiration.

This remarkable book was begun in 1777, when Goethe was twenty-eight years old and before he had settled down in Weimar, where he remained for the rest of his life, apart from two years spent in Italy.

Not till twenty years later did he take it up again, having been encouraged and stimulated to do so by Schiller, whose great and lasting friendship began with him in 1784. More than twenty years further were to elapse before the second part, "The Travel Years," was published in 1821, and Goethe had then reached the age of seventy-three.

In the "Travel Years" great stress is laid on the importance of choosing one's occupation aright. The occupation to which a

man is to give his life is not only a matter for serious thought, but a matter for poetry and philosophy. " Whatever the human being undertakes to do, whether by deed or word or otherwise, must be done with all his powers acting in combination; whatever is isolated is objectionable " (Hamann).

Goethe says that the system of education in his day excited wishes instead of arousing aptitudes, and by this method man was not helped to find his true vocation. He himself had found the greatest difficulty in discovering what his true vocation ought to be. Many people, he said, have the idea that it does not much matter with what sort of business a man or woman is occupied, provided that their leisure is well and profitably spent. All moral and intellectual interest tends to be concentrated in the hours of leisure. The actual occupation is treated as a matter of course, a necessary routine about which there is not much to be said. In this sense the daily work appears often as a great interruption to life, which on this theory would only begin in the evening when the day's work is done. Against such a view as this the novel of *Wilhelm Meister* is an elaborate protest, for there we find the doctrine that true happiness is to be found in the satisfaction of special inborn aptitudes different in each individual. According to his system there would be no form of work, however trivial or however uninteresting, for which some people would not have a talent or even a genius. The object of education is therefore to discover to people what their own aptitudes really are, so that by selecting some occupation in which they can exercise themselves, they will not only be more helpful and effective as citizens, but will be free from the mental restlessness depicted in the character of Wilhelm Meister and attain what Goethe calls " the inward harmony " or unity with oneself.

Everything worth thinking has been thought before, man must only seek to think it over again.

The " Travel Years " are indeed a strange medley, consisting as they do of various tales, which are certainly not very closely knit together. Though not obviously exciting, they set forth an ideal of education, which inculcates the importance of reverence, helpful human toil and brotherhood and altogether giving us the profound reflections of one of the wisest men who has ever lived and who, throughout his long life from early youth to advanced old age, was for ever considering the development of man.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

If Goethe were not " the spectator of all time and existence,"
of him it might be said :

" The cattle rising from the grass
His thought must follow where they pass,
The penitent with anguish bowed
His thought must follow through the crowd,
Yes ! all this eddying, motley throng
That sparkles in this sun along,
Girl, statesman, merchant, soldier bold,
Master and servant, young and old,
Grave, gay, child, parent, husband, wife
He follows home and lives their life."

M. ARNOLD, Epilogue to Lessing's *Laocoon*.

This translation has been made from the ten-volume edition of Ludwig
Gelger. Berlin. 1880

PART I

BOOK I

CHAPTER I

THE play lasted very long. Old Barbara went to the window and listened to hear if the carriages were on the move. She was awaiting Mariana, her beautiful mistress, who to-day, dressed as a young officer, delighted the public in an after-piece, with greater impatience than usual, when she had only a moderate supper to set before her; this time she was to be surprised with a parcel, which Norberg, a rich young merchant, had sent by post so as to show that even in the distance he was thinking of his loved one.

Barbara, as an old servant, confidante, counsellor, manager and housekeeper, was possessed of the right to open the seals, and even this evening she could resist her curiosity all the less as the favour of the generous lover lay closer to her heart than even to Mariana's. To her greatest delight she had found in the parcel a fine piece of muslin and the newest ribbons for Mariana, but for herself a piece of calico, neckcloth and rouleaux of money. With what affection, what thankfulness, did she remember the absent Norberg ! With what vivacity did she propose even with Mariana to mention him in the best way, to remind her of what she was indebted to him and what he must hope and expect from her loyalty !

The muslin, enlivened by means of the colour of the half-unrolled ribbons, lay upon the little table like a Christmas present ; the position of the lights increased the brilliance of the gift ; everything was in order, when the old woman perceived Mariana's step on the staircase and hurried to meet her. But how greatly astonished did she turn back when the female little officer, without heeding her caresses, pushed past her with unusual haste and movement, came into the room, threw upon the table sword and hat with feathers, walked restlessly up and down and bestowed no glance on the solemnly kindled light.

"What is the matter with you, darling?" cried out the old woman in astonishment. "For heaven's sake, my little girl, what is it? Look here at these presents. From whom could they come but from your most tender friend? Norberg sends you the muslin for a nightgown; he will soon be here himself. He seems to me to be more eager and generous than ever."

The old woman turned round and wanted to show the presents with which she, too, had been provided, when Mariana, turning away from the presents, exclaimed passionately, "Away, away! I will hear nothing of this to-day! I have listened to you, you have wished it, let it be so! When Norberg comes back, I am his, I am yours, do with me what you like; but till then I will be my own, and if you had a thousand tongues you should never talk me out of my purpose. All that is mine I will give to him who loves me and whom I love. No unpleasant faces! I will abandon myself to the passion as if it were to last for ever."

The old woman had plenty of remonstrances and strong reasons to bring forward, and as she in the exchange of words became violent and bitter, Mariana jumped up and seized her by the breast. The old woman laughed loudly. "I must take care," she cried, "that you don't get into pantaloons, if I am to be sure of my life. Away now, get undressed. I hope the girl will beg pardon for the discomfort which the young fellow in his haste has caused me. Off with the frock and off with everything! It is not a becoming dress, and for you it is dangerous, as I observe. The epaulettes make you infatuated."

The old woman laid her hand on Mariana, who tore herself away. "Not so quickly!" she exclaimed; "I am awaiting a visit this evening."

"That is not good," replied the old woman. "Is it not the young, gentle, unfledged merchant's son?"

"That is he," replied Mariana.

"It seems as if generosity is to be your ruling passion," replied the old woman scornfully; "you take up with fervour the youthful, impecunious fellow. It must be delightful to be adored as an unselfish girl."

"Mock away, as you like. I love him! I love him! With what rapture do I speak out these words for the first time! This is the passion which I often pictured to myself, of which I had no

idea. Yes, I will throw myself on his neck ! I will hold him as if I wanted him for ever. I will show him all my love, and enjoy his love in all its fullness."

"Calm yourself," said the old woman composedly, "calm yourself! I must interrupt your joy with one word. Norberg is coming ! He is coming in a fortnight ! Here is his letter, which has come with his presents."

"And if the rising sun were to rob me of my friends, I will hide it from myself. A fortnight ! What an eternity ! In a fortnight, what cannot happen, what change cannot take place !"

Wilhelm entered. With what vivacity did she fly to meet him ! With what rapture did he embrace the red uniform and press the little white satin waistcoat to his breast ! Who dare here describe, for whom is it fitting to express the bliss of two lovers ! The old woman went aside murmuring ; we will withdraw ourselves with her and leave the happy pair alone.

CHAPTER II

WHEN Wilhelm greeted his mother the following morning, she disclosed to him that his father was very much annoyed and would very soon forbid his daily visit to the theatre.

"Though I myself," she continued, "often like to go to the theatre, yet I often wish to goodness my rest at home was not disturbed by your immoderate passion for this amusement. Your Father is always repeating—'What is the good of it ? How can he waste his time so ?' "

"I, too, have often heard it from him," replied Wilhelm, "and have perhaps answered him too hastily. But for heaven's sake, Mother, is everything useless which does not at once put money in one's purse, and does not procure for us possession of what is nearest ? Hadn't we room enough in the old house ? and was it necessary to build a new one ? Does not Father spend every year a considerable part of what he earns from his business in beautifying the rooms. These silken carpets, this English furniture, are they not also of no use ? Could we not be satisfied with less. At least I confess that on me these striped walls, with flowers repeated a hundred times, spiral ornaments, little baskets and figures, make an entirely disagreeable im-

pression on me. At best they seem to me like the curtain of our theatre. But how different it is to sit in front of that ! If we still have to wait a long time one yet knows it will go up on high and we shall see the various objects, which entertain, enlighten and elevate us."

"Only be moderate," said his mother; "your Father also wants to be entertained in the evening; and then he thinks it wastes your time, and in the end when he is annoyed I have to bear the blame. How often have I been obliged to reproach myself because of that cursed puppet-show which I gave you for a Christmas present twelve years ago, and which first gave you the taste for the play."

"Don't scold the puppet play, don't repent of your love and care. They were the first moments of delight which I enjoyed in the new, empty house; at this moment I still see it before me. I know how astonishing it seemed to me, when after we had received our customary Christmas presents we were made to sit down in front of a door which led out of another room. The door opened: but not as formerly for us to run to and fro, the entrance was filled up with an unexpected festivity. A porch rose upwards, which was concealed by a mystic curtain. At first we all stood in the distance and as our curiosity became greater to see what glittering or jingling thing lay behind the half transparent covering, each of us was told to sit down on his little chair and wait in patience. So we all sat down and kept quiet; a whistle gave the signal; the curtain was rolled up and showed us a view into the temple, painted a deep red. The high priest Samuel appeared with Jonathan, and their strangely alternating voices seemed to me most remarkable. Shortly after, Saul appeared upon the scene in great embarrassment over the impertinence of the heavy limbed warrior who had challenged him and all his people. How pleased I was therefore, when the dwarf-like son of Jesse with his shepherd's crook and pouch and sling came hopping forward and said 'Great and mighty King, Sovereign Lord, as no one else has the courage, if your Majesty will allow me I will go forth and enter into combat with this stupendous giant.' The first act had ended and the spectators were full of curiosity to see what further would happen; everyone wished the music might soon stop. At last the curtain went up again. David devoted th

flesh of the monster to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field ; the Philistine spoke words of scorn, stamped with both his feet and finally fell like a log, which gave a splendid termination to the whole piece. How, then, did the young women sing ' Saul hath slain his thousands, but David his ten thousands.' The head of the giant was carried before his small conqueror and he received the beautiful daughter of the king for his wife. Yet with all this delight I felt annoyed that a fortunate prince should have such a dwarfish form ; for according to the general idea the great Goliath and little David had been formed after their due characters. I beg of you, Mother, what has become of these puppets ? I promised to show them to a friend, whom I was lately entertaining with the story of this child's play."

" I am not surprised," replied his mother, " that you have such a lively memory of these things, for you at once took the greatest interest in them. I know how you got the little book away from me and learned the whole piece by heart. I was first aware of this one evening when you made a Goliath and a David out of wax, and got them both to declaim against one another, and at length gave a stab to the giant and fixed his shapeless head on a large pin with a wax handle in the hand of the little David. At that time I had such a loving, motherly delight over your good memory and heart-felt declamation, that I resolved to hand over to you the whole wooden troop. I had no idea then that it was to give me so many hours of annoyance."

" Don't regret it," said Wilhelm, " for this sport has given us many happy hours."

And so saying, he asked for the key, hurried off and found the puppets, and for a moment he was transported back into those times when they seemed to him still alive, when he thought that he could give them life by the animation of his voice and the movement of his hands. He took them into his room and guarded them with care.

CHAPTER III

IF first love, as I hear everywhere asserted, is the most beautiful thing which the heart of man can experience either earlier or later, then we must reckon our hero thrice fortunate in that it

was granted to him to enjoy the rapture of these moments in all their completeness. Only a few men are so peculiarly favoured ; most are led by the feelings of their youth only through a hard school, in which after a wretched time of enjoyment they are compelled to renounce their best wishes and learn to give up for ever that which floated before them as their highest happiness.

Wilhelm's passion for this charming girl had risen on the wings of the imagination, after a short intercourse he had won her affection : he found himself in possession of a being whom he greatly loved and indeed honoured, for she had appeared to him first in the favourable light of theatrical performance, and his passion for the stage was united with his first love for a woman. His youth permitted him to enjoy rich pleasures, which were exalted and maintained by a lively imagination. The condition of his loved one gave a turn to her behaviour, which came to the assistance of his feelings. The fear that her lover might discover prematurely the circumstances in which she stood, diffused over her a charming appearance of anxiety and bashfulness ; her passion for him was active, even her inquietude seemed to increase her tenderness, in his arms she was the most loving creature.

When he awoke out of the first tumult of his joy and looked back upon his life and his affairs, everything seemed new to him : his duties seemed holier, his fancy more animated, his knowledge clearer, his talents stronger, his purposes more decided. It was therefore easy for him to come upon an arrangement for escaping from the reproaches of his father, allaying the cares of his mother and enjoying Mariana's love undisturbed. During the day he transacted his business punctually, usually abstained from going to the theatre, in the evening he was entertaining at table. When all were asleep, wrapped up in his cloak he glided softly out into the garden and hastened, with all the feelings of Lindor and Leander in his bosom, to his loved one without delay.

" What are you bringing ? " enquired Mariana, when he one evening produced a bundle, which the old woman regarded very attentively in the hope of some agreeable presents.

" You will never guess," said Wilhelm.

How astonished was Mariana and how dismayed was

Barbara, when on undoing the napkin he let them see a confused multitude of puppets a span long. Mariana laughed aloud when Wilhelm busied himself in disentangling the confused state of the wires and displaying to her each figure separately. The old woman glided sulkily out of the room.

It wants but a little thing to entertain two lovers, and so our friends had as much pleasure as possible this evening. The little troop was examined, each figure was regarded minutely and laughed at. King Saul in his coat of black velvet with the golden crown would not please Mariana at all : he looked, she said, too stiff and pedantic. All the better delighted was she with Jonathan, his smooth chin, his red and yellow dress and his turban. She understood, too, how quite neatly to turn him hither and thither on the wire, let him make bows and repeat declarations of love. On the other hand, she would not pay the smallest attention to the prophet Samuel, though Wilhelm praised to her the little breastplate and told her how the shot silk of the close-fitting coat was made out of an old dress of his grandmother. David appeared to her too small and Goliath too big ; she clung to her Jonathan. She knew how to be so nice to him, and at last her caresses of the puppet were transferred to our friend so that this time a little game was the preliminary to happy hours.

They were awakened from the sweetness of their tender dreams by a noise which arose from the street. Mariana called out to the old woman, who as usual was busily occupied in looking over the changing materials of the theatrical wardrobe. She answered that just then a company of lively fellows were tumbling out of the Italian cellar hard by, where they had not stinted themselves of champagne with the fresh oysters which had just arrived.

" It is a pity," said Mariana, " that this didn't happen sooner ; we could also have had some fun."

" There is still time," replied Wilhelm, and handed to the old woman a louis d'or. " Get us what we want; you shall enjoy it with us."

The old woman was active, and in a short time there stood before the lovers a neatly covered table with a well-arranged meal. The old woman had to sit herself down to it; they ate and drank and enjoyed themselves.

In such cases there is no lack of conversation. Mariana again took in hand her Jonathan, and the old woman knew how to guide the talk on to Wilhelm's favourite conversation.

" You have already entertained us with the first performance of a puppet play on Christmas evening ; it was amusing to hear it. You were interrupted just as the ballet was to begin. Now we know the splendid company which produced those great results."

" Yes," said Mariana, " tell us more ! How did you feel ? "

" It is a beautiful sensation, dear Mariana," replied Wilhelm, " when we call back to memory old times and old innocent mistakes, especially if it occurs when we have reached a height from which we can look round and look over the way that lies behind us. It is so pleasant, in contentment with oneself to recall to memory many obstacles which we often with a painful feeling thought were insurmountable, and to compare that which is now explained for us with that which then was unexplained. But now I feel unspeakably fortunate, as I now at this moment speak with you of the past, because at the same time I look forward into the delightful land through which we can wander hand in hand."

" But what happened with the ballet ? " interrupted the old woman. " I was afraid that everything did not go off as it should."

" Oh yes," replied Wilhelm, " very well ! Of those wonderful jumps of negroes and negresses, shepherds and shepherdesses, dwarf men and dwarf women a dim remembrance has remained for my whole life. Now the curtain fell, the door was closed, and all the little company hastened as if intoxicated and tumbled into bed. But I knew full well that I could not go to sleep, that I still wanted something told me, that I asked many questions, and only against my will I got rid of the nurse, who had got us to be quiet. The next morning, alas, the magic stage had again vanished, the mystic veil was removed, one went freely through those doors from one room to the other and so many adventures had not left a trace behind. My brothers and sisters ran up and down with their toys ; I crept hither and thither by myself : it seemed to me impossible that there should only be two doorposts where yesterday there had been so much enchantment. Ah, he who seeks for a lost love cannot be more unhappy than I seemed to myself to be at that time."

A glance intoxicated with joy, which he cast on **Mariana**, persuaded her that he was not afraid of ever coming into this condition.

CHAPTER IV

"**M**Y only wish was now," continued Wilhelm, " to see a second performance of the piece. I applied to my mother and she sought at a suitable moment to persuade my father, but her trouble was in vain. He maintained that it was only a rare pleasure which could have value for people ; children and old people did not know how to value that which met them every day.

" We should have had a long time to wait, perhaps till next Christmas, had not the contriver and secret director of the play himself felt pleasure in repeating the performance and producing in an after-piece a quite freshly made clown.

" A young man of the artillery, who was gifted with many talents and specially skilled in mechanical works, who had performed during the building of our house many essential services for my father and had been by him richly rewarded, wanted to show his gratitude to the small family at the Christmas festival and made for the house of his benefactor a present of this fully completed theatre, which he had formerly in his leisure moments put together, carved and painted. It was he, who, with the help of a servant, directed the puppets and in a disguised voice recited the different parts. It was not difficult for him to persuade the father, who granted, in order to please a friend, what he had refused his children from conviction. Suffice it to say, the theatre was again set up, the children of a few neighbours were invited and the play was acted again.

" If on the first occasion I had the delight of surprise and astonishment, so on the second occasion the pleasure of observation and investigation was great. How it all took place was now my task to find out. On the first occasion I had said that the puppets did not speak ; that they did not move of themselves I also conjectured ; but why all this was yet so charming and looked as though they spoke and moved of themselves and where the lights and people might be—these riddles disturbed me **all**

the more, as I wished at the same time to be among the enchanters and the enchanted, at one and the same time to have my hands concealed in the play and yet as spectator to enjoy the pleasure of the illusion.

"The play was finished ; preparations were made for the after-piece, the spectators stood up and conversed with one another. I squeezed myself nearer to the door and heard by the rattling inside that they were busied with clearing away. I lifted up the under carpet and peeped through between the boards. My mother observed it and pulled me back, but yet I had seen so much how friends and foes, Saul and Goliath, and as they were all called were packed into one drawer, and so my half-satisfied delight gained fresh nourishment. Besides, to my greater astonishment I had caught sight of the lieutenant very busy in the Sanctum. Now the clown could no more amuse me, however much he clapped with his heels. I lost myself in deep meditation and after this discovery I was more restful and more restless as before. After I had learnt something, it seemed to me as though I knew nothing, and I was right : for I did not see the connection of things, and yet everything is a question of that."

CHAPTER V

CHILDREN," continued Wilhelm, "in well-established homes, have a sensation, probably as rats and mice have ; they take notice of all crevices and holes where they can get to some forbidden dainties, they enjoy it with such a secret, voluptuous fear which constitutes a part of childish happiness. Before all my brothers and sisters I was observant if a key was sticking anywhere. The greater the respect which I carried about in my heart for the hidden door, and into which I only at times cast a stolen glance, when my mother opened the Sanctuary to fetch something out of it, the quicker was I to make use of the moment, which I was often allowed to meet with owing to the carelessness of the housekeepers.

"Of all the doors, as can easily be imagined, that of the larder was the one towards which my senses were most keenly directed. Few presentiments of joy in life were like the sensation

when my mother sometimes called me in to help her to carry something out, and I then had to thank for some dried plums either her kindness or my cunning. The treasures heaped up over one another embraced my imagination with their fullness, and even the wonderful smell which so many spices exhaled over one another had such dainty effect upon me, that I never missed, as often as I was near by, at least feasting myself on the atmosphere disclosed to me. This wonderful key stuck fast one Sunday morning when my mother was hurried by the pealing of the bells, and the whole house lay in a profound Sabbath quiet. I had scarcely noticed it when I went gently to and fro by the wall; at length I pressed myself quietly and quickly on the wall, the door opened and with one step I felt myself in the neighbourhood of so much long-wished-for happiness. I beheld chests, sacks, boxes, jars, with a rapid, dubious glance as to what I should choose and take. At last I seized upon the much-desired withered plums, provided myself with some dried apples and took a sufficiency of canned orange peel. With this booty I waited to slide my way back, when a couple of boxes standing near one another fell upon my eyes; from one of them wires provided with hooks at the end of it protruded through the imperfectly closed lids. Full of foreboding I fell upon it, and with what a supernatural sensation did I discover my joyful world of heroes packed one upon another. I wanted to lift up those at the top, to examine them and then to pull up those below; but I soon got entangled with the light wires, became disturbed and anxious, especially as the cook in the kitchen close by was making some stir, so that I squeezed everything together as well as I could, shut the chest, and only put in my pocket a little written book in which the whole comedy of David and Goliath was depicted, which was lying on the top, and with this booty I retreated softly upstairs into a room in the attics.

" From that time onwards I devoted all my stolen solitary hours to reading my play repeatedly, learning it by heart and setting before my imagination how glorious it must be if I could make the figures move by my fingers. In my thoughts I myself became David and Goliath. In every corner of the grounds, the stables, the garden, in all circumstances I worked by study the whole piece into myself, grasped all the characters and learned them by heart, only for the most part I was accustomed

to place myself in the parts of the principal heroes and let the remainder run along in my memory only as satellites. The magnanimous words with which David challenged the braggart giant Goliath remained in my thoughts day and night; I often muttered them to myself. No one paid attention to me except my father, who often noticed such an exclamation and secretly praised the good memory of his boy, who could retain so much from only a few recitations. By this means I grew bolder, and one evening I recited the greatest part of the piece to my mother while I was fashioning some bits of wax into players. She noticed it, pressed me about it and I confessed.

" Fortunately this discovery happened at the time when the lieutenant himself had expressed the wish to initiate me into the mysteries. My mother at once informed him of the unexpected talents of her son and he now managed to get a couple of rooms on the top floor, which usually stood empty, allotted to him, in one of which the spectators should sit, in the other should be the actors, and the proscenium was to fill up the opening of the door. My father had allowed his friend to arrange all this and connived at it, according to his principle that we must not let children see how fond we are of them, as they always grasp too far around them ; he thought that one should appear serious at the enjoyment of children and often spoil them so that their satisfaction should not make them too exuberant and presumptuous."

CHAPTER VI

" **T**HE lieutenant now opened his theatre and managed all the rest.

" I noticed that during the week he often came into the house at unusual times and I guessed his intention. My curiosity increased incredibly, because I realized that before Saturday I could take no part in what was being prepared. At last the wished-for day arrived. In the evening at 5 o'clock my guide came and took me upstairs with him. Trembling with joy I walked in and saw on both sides of the framework the puppets hanging down in order as they were to advance ; I regarded them carefully, got on to the step which raised me above the

theatre, so that I now hovered over the small world. Not without awe I looked down between the boards, because the recollection of what a splendid effect the whole would produce and the feeling into what secrets I was being initiated took hold of me. We made a trial, and all went well.

" The next day when a party of children was invited, we performed excellently, only that in the fire of the action I let my Jonathan fall and was obliged to reach down with my hand and pick him up, an accident which greatly broke off the illusion, caused loud laughter and annoyed me beyond words. This mistake, too, appeared to be very welcome to my father, who discreetly did not display his great pleasure at seeing his little son so capable. After the piece was over he at once dwelt upon the mistakes and said it would have been very nice if only this or that mistake had not been made.

" I felt inwardly annoyed. I was melancholy during the evening, but by the next morning I had slept away already all my vexation and was happy in the thought, that I, apart from this mishap, had played excellently. In addition, there was the applause of the spectators who decidedly maintained it, although the lieutenant had intentionally done much to the voice when coarse and sharp, yet his perorations were mostly too affected and stiff. On the other hand, the new beginner spoke his David and Jonathan admirably ; in particular my mother praised my frank expression when I challenged Goliath and presented the modest conqueror to the king. To my great joy the theatre now remained open, and when the spring came and one could get on without a fire in my free and play hours I lay in my room and let the puppets play bravely among one another. I often invited my brother and sister and companions upstairs, but when they didn't want to come I was alone upstairs. My imagination brooded over the little world, which soon took on a different form. I had scarcely exhibited my first piece a few times, for which my theatre and actors had been formed and fixed, when it gave me no more pleasure. On the other hand, among some books of my grandfather I came upon the German theatre and different German-Italian operas in which I busied myself, and on each occasion I first of all reckoned up the characters and then at once, without hesitation, proceeded to the exhibition of the piece. King Saul, then, in his black velvet

cloak had to play the desperado, Gato and Darius, in which case it was to be observed the plays were never quite fully performed, but for the most part only the fifth act, where it was a question of stabbing to death.

" It was also natural that the operas with their manifold changes and adventures should attract me more than anything else. There I found stormy seas, gods coming down in clouds and what most of all delighted me, thunder and lightning. I helped myself with pasteboard, paint and paper. I knew how to make night capitally ; my lightning was terrible to behold, only my thunder did not always succeed, but that did not matter so much. There was, too, in the operas more opportunity for introducing my David and Goliath, which characters did not fit in well with the regular drama. I daily felt more attraction for the little narrow spot where I had enjoyed so many pleasures, and I confess that the perfume which the puppets had acquired from the storeroom contributed to my satisfaction in no small measure. The decorations of my theatre were now fairly complete ; for it now stood me in good stead that from my youth up I had had skill in managing the compass, cutting out paper and illustrating books. All the more it troubled me when the actors hindered the performance of greater things.

" My sisters, as they dressed and undressed their puppets, awoke in me the idea of procuring for my heroes too clothes which were gradually changeable. Small patches were separated from the body and put together as well as one could ; by some economy we bought new ribbons and spangles, begged for many a bit of taffeta, and by degrees created a theatrical wardrobe. The company was now really provided with clothes for the greatest piece, and one could now think that for the first time one performance would follow the other ; but it happened to me as it is wont to happen often to children—they conceive great plans, make great preparations, even some attempts and everything comes to a standstill. Of this error I must accuse myself. My greatest pleasure was in the invention and the occupation of my imagination. This or that piece interested me on account of one scene and I quickly had new clothes made for it. With such preparations the original clothes for my heroes got into disorder and were mislaid, so that not once could the first great piece be performed any more. I abandoned myself

to my reveries, was everlastingly trying and making preparations, built a thousand castles in the air and did not perceive that I had destroyed the basis of the small building."

During this narrative Mariana had put forth all her friendly feelings towards Wilhelm so as to conceal her sleepiness.

Amusing as the adventure appeared on one side, yet for her it was too simple and the reflections on it too serious. Gently she put her foot upon the foot of her lover and gave him visible signs of her attention and applause. She drank out of his glass, and Wilhelm was convinced that not a word of his story had escaped her. After a short pause he exclaimed : " It is now your turn, Mariana, to tell me too about your first youthful pleasures. We have always been still so busied with the present that we have not been able to trouble ourselves about our former way of life. Tell me : how were you brought up ? What are the first lively impressions which you can remember ? "

These questions would have greatly embarrassed Mariana had not the old woman forthwith come to the rescue. " Do you suppose then," said the clever woman, " that we pay so much attention to what we meet with in early life, that we have such nice adventures to relate and that we know how to bestow such skill on the matter."

" As if that were required," exclaimed Wilhelm. " I love this tender, kind, sweet being so much, that every moment of my life vexes me which I have passed without her. At least let me by means of my imagination take part in your past life ! Tell me everything ! I will tell you everything ! Where possible we will make exchanges and try to win back again those times which have been lost for our love."

" If you are so keen about it, we can easily satisfy you," said the old woman. " Only tell us first how your love for the theatre gradually grew, how you practised, how you improved so fortunately that you can now be regarded as a good actor. Certainly you have not been in want of pleasurable adventure. It is not worth while our going to rest ; I have still a bottle of wine in reserve, and who knows whether we shall soon again sit together so quietly and contentedly."

Mariana glanced at her with a sad look, which Wilhelm did not observe, and continued with his narrative.

CHAPTER VII

" THE distractions of youth, as my comrades began to increase, infringed upon my solitary, quiet pleasure. By turns I was huntsman, soldier, knight, as our games brought it along, yet I had always a slight advantage over the others, as I was in a position to provide skilfully for them the necessary apparatus. So there were swords mainly of my manufacture ; I ornamented and gilded the sledges, and a secret instinct would not allow me to rest until I had changed our militia into the fashion of the antique. Helmets were got ready, adorned with paper plumes, shields and even harness were made, work at which the servants in the house, who were something of tailors, and the needlewoman, broke many a needle.

" Now I saw a part of my young playmates well armed, the remainder were also, though to a less extent, fitted out and a grand company came together. We marched in courts and gardens, struck ourselves smartly on the shields and on the heads ; there was many a misunderstanding, but it was soon put to rights.

" This play, which greatly entertained the others, had scarcely been carried on a few times when it no longer satisfied me. The sight of so many armed figures had of necessity excited in me the ideas of knighthood, which for some time had filled my head, as I busied myself in the reading of old romances.

"The 'Jerusalem Delivered' Koppens translation of which having come into my hands, gave to my wandering thoughts at length a definite direction. I was not able to read the poem right through, but there were passages which I knew by heart, the pictures of which floated before me. Especially was I enraptured by Chlorinda with all her doings and sufferings. The virile femininity, the peaceful completeness of her being had a greater effect on my spirit which was beginning to develop than the artificial charm of Armide, though I did not despise her garden.

" But hundreds and hundreds of times, when in the evening I walked on the balcony, which is laid out between the gables of the house, looked over the country and on the horizon a quickening gleam shone up from the sinking sun, the stars came out,

from all corners and depths, night was pressing on and the twinkling sound of the crickets tingled through the solemn stillness, I repeated to myself the story of the melancholy fight between Tancred and Chlorinda.

" Though, as was right, I was strongly on the side of the Christians, yet with my whole heart I supported the heathen heroine when she undertook to set on fire the great tower of the besiegers. And as Tancred in the darkness meets the supposed knight and the strife between them begins under the veil of gloom and they fight vigorously, I could never pronounce the words :

**But now the fated hour is nigh,
Chlorinda's course is ended, she must die!**

without tears coming into my eyes and pouring out plentifully when her unhappy lover plunged his sword into her breast, loosens the helmet of the sinking warrior, recognizes her and, shuddering, brings water to baptize her.

" But how my heart overflowed when in the enchanted forest Tancred's sword strikes the tree, blood flows from the wound and a voice sounds in his ears that here again he is wounding Chlorinda, that he is destined by fate everywhere to injure unwittingly that which he loves.

" The story so took possession of my imagination that the parts which I had read from the poem dimly formed themselves in my mind into a whole, with which I was so captivated that I thought of having it represented in some way or other. I wanted to have Tancred and Rinaldo act, and for the purpose I found two suits of armour quite ready which I had already manufactured. The one of dark grey paper with scales was to be the serious Tancred, the other of silk and gilt paper adorned the brilliant Rinaldo.

" In the liveliness of my representation I related everything to my companions, who were quite charmed with it, only could not understand how all that could be performed and indeed performed by them.

" These doubts I overcame quite easily. I took over a couple of rooms in a house of one of my companions, without considering that his old aunt would not give them up ; it was just the same with the theatre, of which I had no definite idea except

that it was to be fixed on beams, the side-scenes of divided folding screens and a large carpet on the floor.

" For the forest we found a good expedient; we spoke fair to an old servant from one of the houses, who had now become the forester, that he should procure for us young birch and fir trees, which in fact were produced more quickly than we could have hoped. But now we found ourselves greatly embarrassed as to how we could accomplish what we wanted before the trees became rotten. Then good advice was much needed ! We were without room, theatre or curtains. The folding screens were all we possessed.

" In this embarrassment we turned again to the lieutenant and we gave him a detailed description of the splendour which it was to afford. Little as he understood us, he was most helpful, pushed into a small room all that could be found in the house and neighbourhood in the way of tables one upon another, arranged the screens upon them, made a back scene of green curtains, the beams too were quickly placed together in line. Meantime it was evening, the lights had been lighted, the maids and children sat in their places, the piece was to go forward, the whole host of heroes had been dressed ; but now each one perceived for the first time that he did not know what he had to say. In the fever of invention, as I was quite immersed in my subject, I had forgotten that everyone had to know what and where he was to speak, and in the vivacity of the performance it had not occurred to the others either ; they believed they would easily represent themselves as heroes, easily be able to act and speak like the people into whose world they had been transplanted. They all stood astounded, enquired of one another what was first coming ; and I who had thought of myself at first as Tancred, began, stepping forward alone to recite some verses from the heroic poem. But because the passage passed much too soon into narrative, and I in my own speech at length came forward as third person, also Godfrey, of whom the talk was, did not wish to come forward, so I had to retire again amid the loud laughter of my audience ; a misfortune which deeply wounded my soul. The undertaking came to grief; the audience sat there and wanted to see something. We were dressed, I pulled myself together and decided in a word to play David and Goliath. Some of the company had formerly

performed the puppet play with me, all had often seen it, we distributed the parts, everyone promised to do his best, and a queer little fellow painted a black beard for himself, so that if there should ever be an interval he could fill it up as clown with a jest; an arrangement which I most unwillingly allowed to happen, as being contrary to the serious character of the piece. However I swore to myself if I could only once and for all be saved from this embarrassment, I would never venture on the representation of a piece but with the greatest deliberation."

CHAPTER VIII

MARIANA, overwhelmed with sleep, leaned herself on her lover, and he, pressing her to himself, continued in his narrative, while the old woman after mature reflection enjoyed the remainder of the wine.

"The embarrassment," he said, "in which I and my companions found ourselves, when we had undertaken to play a piece which did not exist, was soon half forgotten. My passion for representing on the stage every romance which I read, every story which I was taught could not withstand the most unmanageable material. I was fully persuaded that everything which gave pleasure in the telling of it must have a still greater effect when seen upon the stage; everything should come before my eyes, everything proceed on the stage. When in the school the history of the world was brought before us, I marked out carefully where anyone had been stabbed or poisoned in a special manner, and my imagination looked beyond the exposition and development and hurried on to the interesting fifth act. So I actually began to write some pieces from the end backwards, without in a single case reading the beginning.

"At the same time I read, partly from my own inclination, partly at the instigation of my good friends, who had acquired a liking for acting plays, a whole wilderness of theatrical productions as chance brought them into my hands. I was in those happy years when everything still gives us pleasure and where we find our satisfaction in quantity and variety. But unfortunately my judgment was corrupted in another way. Those pieces delighted me especially in which I hoped to cause delight,

and there were few which I did not read through in this agreeable delusion ; and my lively imagination, by which I could think of myself in all parts, seduced me into believing that I could also represent them all. As a rule, therefore, in the selection of parts I chose those which did not at all suit me, and when it was only in some degree possible I selected two parts.

" Children in their games know how to make everything out of anything : a staff becomes a gun, a piece of wood a sword, any little bundle a puppet, any hole a hut. In this fashion our private theatre developed. With complete ignorance of our powers we understood everything, we observed no *quid pro quo* and were convinced that everyone must take us for what we gave ourselves out to be. Unfortunately everything went along such a common routine that there is not even a noticeable silliness to tell you about. First we played through the few pieces in which only men appear ; then we disguised some of ourselves and at last brought our sisters into the game with us. In some houses they thought our occupation was profitable and invited company to see it. Our artillery lieutenant did not even here abandon us ; he showed us how we ought to come on and go off the stage, how we should declaim and gesticulate, but for the most part he earned but little thanks, because we thought we understood the arts of the theatre better than he did. We soon chanced to think of tragedy, for we had often heard it said and even believed that it was easier to write and represent a tragedy than to be perfect in comedy. We felt, too, in the first attempt at tragedy quite in our element ; we endeavoured to draw near to the loftiness of rank, the excellence of the characters by means of stiffness and affectation and altogether thought no little of ourselves ; but we were only completely happy when we could be in a thorough passion, stamp with the feet and could throw ourselves on the ground from rage and despair.

" Boys and girls were not long together in these games before Nature began to assert herself and the company divided itself into different small love stories, then for the most part comedy was played in comedy. The happy pairs clasped hands most tenderly behind the walls of the theatre, were dissolved in happiness when they, be-ribboned and adorned, appeared to one another as really ideal, while, on the other hand, the

unfortunate rivals were consumed with envy, and with defiance and malicious joy caused all kinds of mischief.

" These games, though undertaken without understanding and carried through without guidance, were not, however, without their usefulness for us. We exercised our memories and our bodies and acquired more flexibility in speech and behaviour than one could otherwise have gained in such early years. But for me that time was especially an epoch ; my mind directed itself entirely to the theatre and I found no greater pleasure than in reading plays, writing and acting them.

" The instruction of my teachers continued. I had been destined for the merchant class and put into the office of our neighbour, but just at the same time my mind became all the more powerfully alienated from all that I regarded as a mean occupation. I wanted to devote all my activity to the stage and therein to find all my happiness and contentment.

" I still remember a poem, which I must find among my papers. In it the ' Muse of Tragedy ' and another female figure, in which I personified trade, strove right vigorously for my worthy person. The invention is common and I don't remember if the verses are worth anything, but you ought to see it on account of the fear, the disgust, the love and the passion which reigned therein. How had I depicted the nervous old housekeeper with her skirt and belt, keys at her side, spectacles on her nose, always diligent, always restless, quarrelsome and thrifty, mean and troublesome. How despicable did I describe the condition of him who had to bow beneath her rod and earn his slavish living with the sweat of his brow.

" How different did the other enter on the scene ! What a vision she was to the heart in its distress. Splendidly formed, in her being and behaviour she was as a daughter of freedom to look upon. The effluence of her personality gave her dignity without pride, her garments became her, they veiled every limb without constraint and the rich folds of the dress repeated the enticing movements of the godlike figure like an echo reverberating a thousand times. What a contrast ! And you can easily imagine to which side my heart turned. Nothing either was forgotten so that my Muse could be recognized. Crowns and daggers, chains and masks were also apportioned to her, as my predecessors had delivered them to me. The struggle was

violent, the speeches of both fittingly contrasted, as one in his fourteenth year is wont usually to paint black and white quite close to one another. The old woman spoke as befits a person who picks up a needle, and the former as one who can make presents of kingdoms. The warning threatenings of the old one were rejected with scorn ; I looked with my back turned to the promised riches ; disinherited and without clothes I gave myself up to the Muse, who threw to me her golden veil and covered my nakedness. Could I have thought, my darling," he exclaimed while he clasped Mariana close to him, " that another and still more dear goddess would come to strengthen me in my resolution and accompany me on my way ; how still more beautiful a turn would my poem have taken, how interesting the conclusion of it would have been. Yet it is no poem, it is truth and life, which I find in your arms, let us enjoy our sweet happiness and be conscious of it."

By the pressure of his arm, by the liveliness of his raised voice Mariana was awakened and concealed her embarrassment with caresses, for of the last part of his story she had not understood a word, and it is to be hoped that our hero in future may find more attentive listeners to his love stories.

CHAPTER IX

THUS Wilhelm passed his nights in the enjoyment of intimate love and his days in the expectation of new hours of bliss. Already at that time when desire and hope drew him to Mariana he felt himself as if he had new life, he felt that he began to be another man ; now that he was united with her, the satisfaction of his wishes became a habit of delight. His heart strove to ennoble the object of his passion, his mind to raise the loved maiden on high with him. Recollections of her took hold of him during the slightest absence. Formerly she had been necessary to him, now she was indispensable, as he was united to her with all the ties of humanity. His free soul felt that she was the half, indeed more than the half of himself. He was thankful and self-surrendered without limit. Mariana too could deceive herself for a time ; she shared the feeling of his enlivening happiness with him. Alas ! if only the cold hand of

reproach were not often laid upon our heart ! Even on the bosom of Wilhelm she was not secure, even beneath the wings of his love. And when she was now again alone, and out of the clouds into which his passion lifted her up, sank down into the consciousness of her condition, then was she to be pitied. For light-mindedness came to help as long as she lived in humble confusion. She deceived herself about her circumstances or still more did not know them ; the events to which she was exposed seemed only detached ; pleasure and vexation relieved each other ; humiliation was compensated by vanity and poverty often by momentary superfluity ; she was able to regard need and habit as law and justification, and so all unpleasant sensations could be shaken off from hour to hour and from day to day. But now the poor girl had felt herself for moments drawn into a better world, she had looked from above downwards, from light and joy into the desolation and depravity of her life, had felt what a wretched creature a woman is who cannot inspire love and reverence at the same time as desire and found herself outwardly and inwardly in no way the better. She had nothing which she could put right. When she looked into herself, her mind was empty and her heart gave no support. The more sad this condition was, the more violently did her affection cling to her lover, yes, the passion increased every day as the danger of loving him every day drew nearer.

On the other hand, Wilhelm soared happily in loftier regions ; for him too a new world had risen, but rich in splendid prospects. The excess of his first joy had scarcely relaxed when there came clearly before his soul what hitherto had affected him but dimly. She is yours ! She has given herself to you, she, the beloved, sought after, adored being, is given to you in true faith ! But to no ungrateful person has she surrendered herself. Wherever he stood or went, he talked with himself, his heart continually overflowed and he recited to himself in a fullness of splendid words the most elevated feelings. He thought he understood the clear intimation of destiny, which reached out a hand to him through Mariana, to tear him out of the dull and stupid bourgeois life, out of which he had long wished to rescue himself. To leave his father's house and his family seemed fairly easy. He was young and fresh in the world, and his spirit, by means of love, raised to a higher level for the pursuit of happiness and

contentment. His destination for the theatre was now clear to him, the lofty aim, which he saw standing out before him, appeared to him nearer, as he strove for Mariana's hand, and in self-complacent modesty saw in himself the splendid actor, the creator of a national theatre in the future for which he had heard people sighing so frequently. Everything which had slumbered in the innermost recesses of his soul was now awake. Out of all kinds of ideas with the colours of love he fashioned a picture on a misty background, the figures of which undoubtedly flowed very much into one another, but in consequence the whole had an all the more enrapturing effect.

C H A P T E R x

HE now sat at home, amid his papers, worked at trade and prepared himself for his departure. All which tasted of his previous destination was set aside : with his journey into the world he wished to be free from every unpleasant recollection. Only works of taste, poets and critics were placed among his chosen ones as well-known friends ; and as hitherto he had made very little use of art critics, his eager desire was renewed for instruction when he again looked through his books and found that the theatrical writings were still for the most part uncut. In the full conviction of the necessity of such works he had procured a number of them, and with the best will he had not in any one been able to read one-half. On the other hand, he had kept all the more keenly on examples and himself made experiments in all the ways known to him.

Werner came in and when he saw him busied with the well-known writing books, he exclaimed : " Are you already again amongst these papers ? I bet you have no intention of completing one or other of them ! You look them through and through and perhaps begin something new."

" To complete is not an affair of the scholar, it is enough if he exercises himself."

" But yet to finish it as well as he can."

" And yet one may well raise the question whether one cannot form a good opinion of a young man who soon knows when he had undertaken something unskilfully does not continue at the

work, and may waste neither leisure nor time on that which **can** never have any value."

"I know, indeed, it was not your affair to finish anything ; you always became tired before it was half-way through. When you were director of our puppet play, how often were new clothes made for the company of dwarfs and new decorations cut out. Soon this, soon that tragedy was to be performed, and at most you gave once the fifth act, where everything went gaily one after another and the people were choked."

"If you want to speak of those times, whose fault was it that we let the clothes be cut down which suited our puppets and were closely stitched to the body and went to the expense of an extensive and unnecessary stock of clothes ? Was it not you who always had a new piece of ribbon to dispose of, who knew how to inflame and make use of my fancy ? "

Werner laughed and exclaimed : "I still remember, always with delight, that I drew advantage from your theatrical campaigns, as contractors do from war. When you made preparations for 'Jerusalem Delivered,' I made a splendid profit, as the Venetians did formerly in a similar case. I find nothing in the world more sensible than to gain advantage from the follies of others."

"I don't know if it were not a nobler pleasure to cure men of their follies."

"As far as I know them, that would be a fruitless endeavour. Something always is wanted in addition, if one single individual is to become clever and rich, for the most part he becomes so at the cost of others."

"There just comes into my hands the young man at the cross roads," replied Wilhelm, as he drew out a sheet from the remaining papers ; "that is, however, finished, the remainder may be as it will."

"Put it aside, throw it into the fire," replied Werner. "The invention is not in the least worthy of praise ; this composition annoyed me before sufficiently and drew down upon you the displeasure of your father. There may be some nice verses, but the mode of representation is fundamentally false. I still remember your personification of trade ; your shrivelled up pitiable Sibyl. You may have snapped up the picture in some miserable retail shop. At that time you had no conception of

trade : I did not know whose mind were the wider, must be wider than the mind of a real man of business. What a survey does not the order procure for us, in which we conduct our affairs. It permits us to look over the whole, without it being necessary to let us become confused by details. What advantages does the double entry afford to the merchant. It is one of the most beautiful inventions of the human mind, and every good house-keeper ought to introduce it into his business."

" Forgive me," said Wilhelm, smiling ; " you begin from the form, as if that were the matter, but usually in your adding and balancing you forget the actual essence of life."

" Alas, you don't see, my friend, how form and matter are here only one ; one without the other cannot continue. Order and clarity increases the pleasure in sparing and earning. A man who keeps house badly, easily finds himself in the dark ; he may not like to reckon up the accounts he is owing. On the other hand, for a good manager nothing can be more pleasant than drawing to himself every day the sum of his increasing good fortune. Even a mishap, if it surprises him vexatiously, does not frighten him, for he knows at once what profits he has earned, which he can set in the other scale. I am convinced, my dear friend, if you could only once find a real taste for our business, you would be persuaded that many capabilities of the mind can also have their free play."

" It is possible that the journey I am proposing will bring me to other ideas."

" Oh certainly ! Believe me, you are only lacking in the view of a great activity, so as to bring you for ever on to our side ; and when you return, you will gladly associate with those who, by means of all kinds of forwarding of goods and of speculation, know how to draw to themselves a part of the money and well-being which in the world guides its necessary circulation. Cast a glance on the natural and artificial products of all quarters of the earth, consider how they have become in turn necessities ! What a pleasant and intellectual task is it to know how to procure easily and quickly for everyone what he wants, everything which at the moment is most sought for, is soon lacking and is soon difficult to get, to put it prudently into store and to enjoy the profit of every moment of this great circulation ! This it is, it seems to me, what will give the greatest pleasure to anyone of sense."

Wilhelm did not seem unfavourable, and Werner continued. " Now visit first a couple of large towns with trade, a couple of harbours, and you will certainly be carried away with the idea. When you see how many people are occupied, when you see how much is transmitted, where it goes, you will certainly see it with pleasure pass through your hands. The smallest goods you see in connection with the whole trade, and therefore you will regard nothing as small, because everything increases the circulation from which your life derives its nourishment."

Werner, who cultivated his correct understanding in intercourse with Wilhelm, had accustomed himself too to think about his trade and business with loftiness of soul, and always thought that he did it with more justice than his otherwise intellectual and valued friend, who, as it seemed to him, laid so great value and the weight of his whole soul on the most unreal things in the world. Many a time he thought it must be that this false enthusiasm would be overcome and so excellent a man would be brought on to the right path. In this hope he continued : " The great ones of this world have become masters of the earth ; they live in the midst of splendour and superfluity. The smallest piece of our part of the world is already taken possession of, every possession is firmly guarded, offices and the business of the citizen bring in little profit, where is there to be found more honest gain, more just conquest than that of trade ? If the princes of the world have the rivers, the roads, the ports in their power and take a heavy tribute from everything which passes through them, shall we not with joy seize the opportunity and by our activity take toll of those commodities which partly the necessities, partly the pride of man have made indispensable. And I can assure you, if you wish to apply your poetic imagination you can set my goddess as an invincible conquering queen boldly opposite yours. True, indeed, she carries rather the olive branch than the sword ; dagger and chains she knows not, but she too bestows crowns on her favourites, which, let it be said without any contempt of the other, shine with true gold from the furnace and with pearls which she has brought from the depths of the sea by her ever unwearied servants."

This thrust vexed Wilhelm a little, yet he concealed his feelings, for he remembered also that Werner was wont to listen to his apostrophes with calm. Besides, he was fair enough to see

gladly how each one thought the best of his own craft, only one must leave unassailed his own, to which he had passionately devoted himself.

"And you," exclaimed Werner, "you who take such an heartfelt sympathy with human affairs, what a spectacle it will be for you when you see before your eyes guaranteed the good fortune which accompanies courageous undertakings. What is more delightful than the sight of a ship arriving again after a fortunate voyage, which returns early with rich booty ! It is not alone the relations, the acquaintances and partakers of the goods, but every foreign onlooker is delighted when he sees the joy with which the sailor from his close confinement springs on to the land, even before the vessel quite touches it, feels himself again free and can now entrust to the faithful earth that which he has withdrawn from the treacherous waters. Profit, my friend, appears to us not in the form of figures alone ; good fortune is the goddess of the living man, and in order to feel in reality her favour one must live and see men who really are alive and enjoy themselves body and soul."

CHAPTER XI

IT is now time for us to make closer acquaintance with the fathers of our two friends ; a couple of men of very different modes of thought, but whose opinions agreed in this, that they regarded trade as the noblest occupation, and both were keenly alive to every advantage which any speculation could bring them. The old Meister immediately after the death of his father had converted into money a costly collection of pictures, drawings, copper-plate engravings ; his house he had rebuilt from the base according to the most modern taste and furnished it, and the remainder of his property he made good in every possible way. A considerable portion of it he handed over to the old Werner for trading, for he was famous as an active business man and his speculations were generally favoured by fortune. But the old Meister was desirous of nothing so much as bestowing on his son qualities in which he was lacking, and bequeathing to his children goods to which he attributed the greatest value. He certainly felt a special inclination to what was gorgeous, to that which

strikes the eye, but which should at the same time have an inner worth and durability. In his house everything had to be solid and massive, the provisions rich, the plate heavy, the service costly ; on the other hand, the guests were few, for every meal was a festival, which could not often be repeated owing to its cost and inconvenience. His housekeeping went a quiet and uniform pace, and everything which stirred or was new in it was just that which gave no pleasure to anyone.

The old Werner lived a totally different kind of life in a dark and gloomy house. When he had finished his business in a confined office, he wanted to eat well and where possible to drink still better. Also he could not enjoy the good things alone. By the side of his family he must always see at his table his friends, and all strangers, who had any connection with his house ; his chairs were extremely old but he invited someone every day to sit on them. The attention of the guests was directed to the good food and no one noticed that it was served on common crockery. His cellar did not contain much wine, but when it was finished it was usually replaced by what was better.

Thus the two fathers lived, they often came together, deliberated over their common business affairs, and just to-day they decided on sending Wilhelm into trade affairs. " He may have a look round in the world," said the old Meister, " and at the same time carry on our business in various places ; it is impossible to show a young man a greater kindness than by initiating him early into the destination of his life. Your son has returned from his expedition with such good fortune, he has known so well how to accomplish his business, that I am curious to see how mine behaves ; I am afraid he will want more money paid for his instruction than yours."

The old Meister, who had a great idea of his son and his capabilities, said these words that his friend would contradict him and extol the excellent gifts of the young man. But in this he was deceived ; the old Werner, who in practical matters trusted no one he had not tried, replied composedly : " We must make trial of everything ; we can send him in the same way, we can give him instructions by which he will direct himself ; there are various debts to be collected, old acquaintances to renew and fresh ones to make. He can also help to advance the speculation about which I spoke to you recently ; for without

collecting exact information on the spot, there is little to be done."

"He may get himself ready," replied the old Meister, "and start as soon as possible. Where can we get a horse for him which is suitable for the expedition?"

"We shall not have far to look. A shopkeeper in H—— who has still something owing to us, but is otherwise a good man, has offered me a horse instead of payment. My son knows it: it should be quite a useful animal. He may fetch it himself. He may go with the diligence and then the day after to-morrow be back in good time. In the meantime we can have his valise and letters put together and so he can start at the beginning of the following week."

Wilhelm was called and told of the decision. Who was more delighted than he, as he saw the means for his purpose put into his hands, as the opportunity was prepared for him without his co-operation? So great was his passion, so pure his conviction that he was acting entirely rightly in withdrawing himself from the pressure of his former life and following a new and nobler career; his conscience was not in the least stirred, no anxiety arose within him, in fact he rather regarded this deception as something holy. He was certain that his parents and relations would in the end praise and bless him for this step, he recognized in these concurring circumstances the signal of a guiding fate.

How long did the time seem to him till the night, till the hour when he should again see his loved one! He sat in his room and thought over the plan for his journey, as an artful thief or magician in prison often draws his feet from out the closely fastened chains to nurse within himself the conviction that his rescue is possible, indeed still nearer than his short-sighted jailers suppose.

At length the hour of night struck, he withdrew from his house, shook off all oppression and wandered through the silent streets. In the great Square he raised his hands to heaven, feeling everything was behind and below him; he had set himself free from everything. Now he fancied himself in the arms of his loved one, then again with her in the dazzling splendour of the stage he soared aloft in a fullness of hopes, and only at times did the cry of the Night Watchman remind him that he was still on this earth.

His beloved came to meet him on the stairs, and how beautiful, how loving she was. She received him in her new white negligee ; he thought he had never seen her look so charming. Thus she dedicated the gift of her absent lover to the arms of her present one, and with true passion she lavished all the riches of the caresses which Nature had bestowed upon her and which art had taught her upon her darling. Need we ask if he was happy, if he felt himself blessed ?

CHAPTER XII

THE next day Mariana awoke to new unhappiness, she found herself very much alone, did not wish to see the daylight, stayed in bed and wept. The old woman sat beside her, tried to talk things over with her, tried to console her, but it was not possible to heal the wounded heart so quickly. Now the moment drew near, to which the poor girl looked forward as to the last of her life. How could one feel in a more painful condition. Her lover had departed, an unpleasant lover threatened to come, and the greatest misfortune impended, if the two, as was easily possible, were to meet.

"Calm yourself, my dear," said the old woman, "don't spoil your beautiful eyes with tears. Is it then so great a misfortune to have two lovers ? And if you can only bestow your tender feelings on the one, you can at least be gratefun to the other, who in the way he cares for you certainly deserves to be called your friend."

"My lover," replied Mariana, with tears, "had forebodings that separation was impending ; a dream unfolded to him what we so carefully seek to conceal. He slept so quietly by my side, all at once muttering anxious unintelligible sounds. I was alarmed and I awoke him. Ah ! with what love, with what tenderness, with what passion he embraced me ! 'Oh Mariana from what a terrible condition have you freed me ! How can I thank you for having rescued me from this hell. I dreamed,' he continued, 'that I was withdrawn from you and I found myself in an unknown region ; but your form hovered before me ; I beheld you on a beautiful hill, the sun illuminated the whole place ; how charming you seemed to me ! But it did not last

long. I observed your form sinking downwards, sinking downwards, I stretched out my arms to you, they could not reach you through the distance. Your figure was always sinking down and approached a great lake, which lay widely stretched out at the foot of the hill ; it was a marsh rather than a lake. Suddenly a man gave you his hand ; he seemed to wish to lead you upwards, but he guided you sideways and seemed to draw you towards himself. I cried, as I was unable to reach you, I hoped to warn you. As I wanted to go, the ground seemed to hold me fast ; if I could go, the water prevented me and even my cries were stifled in my oppressed bosom.⁵ This was the story of the poor fellow as he recovered himself from his fright on my breast and felt himself fortunate in seeing a fearful dream thrust aside by the most blessed reality."

The old woman tried as much as possible by means of her prosaic outlook to bring down the poetry of her friend to the realm of ordinary life and thereby made use of the excellent method which usually is successful with bird-catchers, trying by whistling to imitate the sounds of those they wish to see soon and quickly in their decoy. She praised Wilhelm and extolled his figure, his eyes and his love. The poor girl gladly listened to her, got up, let herself be dressed and seemed calmer.

" My child, my darling," continued the old woman in her flattering way, " I will not trouble nor offend you, I don't think of robbing you of your happiness. Do you mistake my intention, and have you forgotten that I have always taken more care of you than of myself? Only tell me what you wish ; we will see how we can realize it."

" What can I wish," exclaimed Mariana. " I am miserable, my whole life is miserable. I love him, who loves me ; I see that I must separate from him, and I don't know how I can survive it. Norberg is coming, to whom we owe our whole existence, whom we cannot do without. Wilhelm is very much restricted in his circumstances, he can do nothing for me."

" Yes, unfortunately he is one of those lovers who can bring nothing but their heart, and it is just those who have the greatest pretensions."

" Don't mock ! The unhappy fellow thinks of leaving his house, going on the stage and offering me his hand."

" We have already four empty hands."

"I have no choice," continued Mariana; "do you decide! Push me hither or thither, only know this one thing, probably I am carrying within me a pledge which should bind us still more to one another; consider that and decide; whom should I have, whom should I follow?"

After some silence the old woman cried—"How youth always swings between extremes! I find nothing more natural than to unite everything which brings us pleasure and profit. You love the one, so let the other pay: it is only a question of our being clever enough to keep them apart."

"Do as you like, I can think of nothing, but I will follow."

"We have the advantage of being able to shelter behind the caprice of the Director, who is proud of the morals of his company. Both lovers are already accustomed to proceed secretly and prudently. I will take care of the time and opportunity, only you must play the part which I enjoin upon you. Who knows what circumstances may help us. If only Norberg were to come now, when Wilhelm is away! Who prevents you, while in the arms of the one thinking of the other? I wish you good luck in a son, he ought to have a rich father."

Mariana was only made better for a short time by these remonstrances. She could not bring her condition into harmony with her feeling and her conviction; she wanted to forget these painful relations, and a thousand small circumstances reminded her of them every day.

CHAPTER XIII

MEANWHILE Wilhelm had accomplished his small journey and, as he did not find his trading friend at home, handed over his letter of introduction to the wife of the absent one. But she, too, on his enquiries, gave him little information; she was in a violent state of excitement and the whole household was in great confusion.

It was not long, however, before they confided to him (and it was not to be kept secret) that their step-daughter had gone off with an actor, a man who, a short time before, having set himself free from a small company, settled himself in the place and gave instruction in French. The father, beside himself

with sorrow and vexation, had run to the Magistracy so as to have the runaways pursued. She blamed her daughter violently, poured scorn on the lover, so that no pleasing quality was left with either of them. She complained with many words of the shame this brought upon the family, and put Wilhelm to no small embarrassment when he felt himself and his secret project blamed and punished beforehand by this Sibyl with her spirit of prophecy. Yet a stronger and more intimate sympathy did he have to take with the sorrows of the father, who returned from the magistracy ; with silent grief and few words he related his expedition to his wife, and while after looking at the letter he had Wilhelm's horse brought forward, he could not conceal his distraction and confusion.

Wilhelm at once thought of bestriding his horse and getting out of a house in which in the given circumstances it was not possible for him to be comfortable, but the good man did not want the son of the house, to which he was so much indebted, to depart without receiving any hospitality and without having had him for one night beneath his roof

Our friend had earned a melancholy supper, passed a restless night and hurried in the early morning as soon as possible to escape from people who, without knowing it, by their narratives and utterances had tormented his most sensitive feelings. He rode slowly and reflectively along the road when suddenly he saw a number of armed people coming across the field, which by their long and broad coats, immense cuffs, unshapely hats, cumbrous guns, their confident gait and comfortable bearing, he recognized as a detachment of the provincial militia. They halted beneath an old oak, laid down their firearms and placed themselves comfortably on the grass to smoke a pipe.

Wilhelm lingered near them and got into conversation with a young man, who came by on horseback. He had unfortunately to hear yet again the story of the two fugitives and indeed with remarks which were not very favourable to the young people nor to the parents. At length he gathered that they had come thither to take charge of the young people, who had been overtaken and detained in the neighbouring small town. After some time a cart was seen in the distance coming there, surrounded by a civic guard more ludicrous than alarming. A deformed town clerk rose in front and made compliments to the Actuary opposite

(for that was the young man with whom Wilhelm had been speaking) on the border of their districts with great conscientiousness and wonderful gestures as perhaps a spirit and magician are accustomed to do, when they meet at their dangerous nocturnal operations, the one within, the other without the circle.

The attention of the spectators was meanwhile directed to the cart, and one could not regard without pity the poor wandering creatures, who sat by one another on a couple of bundles of straw, looking tenderly at one another and hardly seeming to notice the bystanders. By chance it had been necessary to bring them from the last village in such an unsuitable manner, because the old carriage, in which the fair one was being transported, had broken down. On this occasion she asked for the company of her friend ; they had let him walk by the side, loaded with chains, being convinced that he was charged with a capital offence. The chains indeed contributed not a little to make the appearance of the tender group still more interesting, particularly as the young man moved about with much ceremony, while he repeatedly kissed the hands of his loved one.

" We are very unfortunate," he cried out to the bystanders, " but not so guilty as we appear. This is the way in which cruel people reward true love, and parents, who entirely neglect the happiness of their children, tear them violently from the arms of that joy, which after long days of sorrow has taken possession of them."

While the bystanders in different ways gave expression to their sympathy, the courts had finished their ceremonies ; the cart went on farther, and Wilhelm, who took a great interest in the fate of the lovers, hastened forward on the footpath in order to make acquaintance with the officers before the procession arrived. But he had scarcely reached the house of the Magistrate, where everything was in movement and ready for the reception of the fugitives, when the Actuary overtook him and, by a detailed account of how everything had happened, but especially by a long-winded praise of his horse, which he had just yesterday exchanged from a Jew, interrupted all other conversation.

The unfortunate pair had already been deposited outside in the garden, which by means of a small door adjoined the house of the Magistrate and were conducted in silently. The Actuary received from Wilhelm sincere praise for this indulgent

treatment, although he thereby only wanted to tease the crowd that had gathered before the Magistrate's house and to deprive it of the pleasant spectacle of a humiliated fellow-citizen.

The Magistrate, who was no special lover of such extraordinary cases, because for the most part he made one mistake after another and with the best will in the world he was generally by the princely government rewarded with a sharp reprimand, went with slow steps to the official room, whither the Actuary, Wilhelm and a few of the respected citizens followed.

First of all the fair lady was led forth. She without impudence, composedly and conscious of herself, stepped forward. The way in which she was dressed, and above all behaved herself, showed that she was a girl who attached some importance to herself. She began, too, without being asked, to speak not unskilfully about her condition.

The Actuary bade her be silent and held his pen over the divided sheet. The Magistrate settled himself composedly, looked at him, cleared his throat and asked the poor child what her name was and how old she was.

" I beg you, sir, it must seem wonderful to me that you should ask my name and my age, for you very well know my name and that I am as old as your eldest son. What you wish to know of me and what you must know, I shall be glad to tell you without circumlocution.

" Since my father's second marriage, things have not been at the best for me at home. I could have made several good matches if my stepmother had not known how to frustrate them from fear of the wedding trousseau. Now I have got to know the young Melina, I felt I must love him, and as we foresaw the hindrances which stood in the way of our union we decided to seek our fortune with one another in the wide world, which we could not get at home. I have taken nothing with me except what was my own ; we have not fled away as thieves and robbers, and my lover does not deserve to be dragged about covered with chains and bonds. The Prince is just, he will not approve of this harshness. If we are deserving of punishment, it should not be in this way."

Upon this the old Magistrate became doubly and trebly embarrassed. The most gracious reprimands were buzzing about his head, and the fluent speech of the girl had entirely disarranged for him the plan of the protocol. The evil became

still greater when by regular repeated questions she would not enter into further conversation, but firmly appealed to what she had just said.

"I am no criminal," she said. "I have been brought here for shame on bundles of straw; there is a higher justice which shall bring us again to honour."

The Actuary meanwhile had always written down the words and whispered to the Magistrate, he should only continue: a formal protocol would be put together afterwards.

The old man again took courage and began with ponderous words and in the traditional dry formula to inform himself of the sweet secrets of love.

A blush rose to Wilhelm's face, and the cheeks of the pretty criminal likewise glowed with the charming colour of modesty. She was silent and hesitated till at last her embarrassment itself seemed to exalt her spirit.

"Be assured," she exclaimed, "that I should be strong enough to confess the truth, though I had to speak against myself, am I now to hesitate and stammer when it does me honour? Yes, I have looked upon him as my husband from the moment that I was certain of his affection and good faith; I have gladly given him all that love demands and what a heart when convinced cannot deny. Now do with me what you like. If for a moment I delayed confessing, it was fear alone that my confession might have harmful consequences for my lover."

Wilhelm, when he heard her confession, conceived a high opinion of the young girl's feelings, while the judges regarded her as an impudent hussy, and the townsfolk who were present thanked God that in their families such cases either had not occurred or at least had not become public.

Wilhelm transported his Mariana at this moment before the tribunal, put still finer words into her mouth, made her sincerity more warm-hearted and her confession still nobler. The most violent passion to help the two lovers took possession of him. He did not conceal it and asked the hesitating magistrate in private to make an end of the business, as everything was as clear as possible and needed no further investigation.

This was so far helpful that they let the young girl retire, but the young man was allowed to come in, after his fetters had **been** taken off, before the door. He seemed more reflective about hi*

fate. His answers were more serious, if on the one side he showed less heroic candour, on the other hand, he recommended himself by the distinctness and propriety of his statements.

When this examination also was finished, which in everything agreed with the former, except that, in order to spare the young girl, he stubbornly denied what she had already confessed—she was at length brought forward again, and there arose between the two a scene which made the heart of our friend entirely their own. Here he saw before his eyes going forward in a dismal court of justice that which is only wont to occur in romances and comedies, namely, the strife of mutual generosity, the strength of love in misfortune.

Is it therefore true, then, said he to himself, that the shy delicacy, which hides itself before the eye of the sun and of men and only ventures on enjoyment in secluded solitude, in profound secrecy, when it is dragged forward by a hostile chance, shows itself then more courageous, stronger and bolder than other blustering and bragging passions?

To his consolation, the whole business was closed fairly soon. They were both taken into custody, and if it had been possible he would that very evening have brought the woman over to her parents. For he proposed to be a mediator and to further the happy and reasonable union of the two lovers.

He begged leave of the magistrate to speak alone with Melina; this was granted to him without difficulty.

CHAPTER XIV

THE conversation of the two new acquaintances soon became quite intimate and lively. For when Wilhelm revealed to the downhearted young man his relation to the parents of the young woman, offered himself as go-between and manifested the best expectations, the spirit of the prisoner, which had been melancholy and full of care, was now cheered up; he already felt himself freed, reconciled with his in-laws, and the talk was now only of future earnings and lodgings.

"You need not, however, be embarrassed about that," replied Wilhelm, "for both of you seem to me destined by Nature to make your fortune in the profession you have chosen."

A pleasant appearance, a well-sounding voice, a heart full of feeling ! Can actors be better fitted out ? If I can help you with some introductions, it will give me great pleasure."

" I thank you from the bottom of my heart," replied the other, " but I shall hardly be able to make use of it, for I am thinking, when possible, not to return to the theatre."

" In that you make a great mistake," said Wilhelm, after a pause, in which he recovered himself from his astonishment ; for he had no idea but that the actor as soon as he was set free would, with his young wife, go in search of the stage. It seemed to him as natural and necessary as a frog seeking the water. Not for a moment had he doubted on the matter and now to his astonishment he must experience the contrary.

" Yes," replied the other, " I have resolved not to return to the stage, much rather to take up a civil business, whatever it may be, if I can come by one."

" That is a remarkable decision of which I cannot approve, for without special reason it is never advisable to change the way of life one has entered upon, and besides, I know no profession which offers so many attractions, so many charming prospects as that of an actor."

" One can see you have not been one," replied the other.

Thereupon Wilhelm said : " My dear sir, how seldom is man contented with his condition. He always desires that of his neighbour, who also longs to be out of what he is in."

" Meantime, however," replied Melina, " there is a difference between the bad and the worse. Experience, not impatience, makes me act like this. Is a bit of bread anywhere in the world more miserable, uncertain and wretched ? It were almost as good to beg from door to door. What has one not to endure from the envy, the partisanship of the manager, from the variable mood of the public. Truly, one must have the hide of a bear, which in the companionship of monkeys and dogs is lead round on a chain and beaten so as to dance before children and a mob at the sound of a bagpipe."

Wilhelm thought within himself of various things, which, however, he did not want to speak to the face of the good fellow. He therefore went on with the conversation only distantly. Melina let himself go all the more sincerely and in greater detail. " Were it not necessary," he said, " for the manager

to fall at the feet of every town-councillor, merely to have permission to let a couple of pennies more circulate in one place between the fair. I have often felt pity for ours, who was a good man, if he often at other times gave me cause for annoyance. A good actor advances him, the bad ones he cannot get rid of; and if he wishes to make his income in some degree equal to his expenditure, it is at once too much for the public, the house remains empty and we must, in order not to be ruined, play with shame and trouble. No, my dear sir, since, as you say, you may interest yourself in us, I beg you to speak as earnestly as possible with the parents of my loved one. Let them provide for me here, let them give me a small secretarial or income-tax collector's post and I will consider myself fortunate."

After they had exchanged some further words, Wilhelm parted with the promise that he would go to the parents early next day and see what he could arrange. Scarcely was he alone than he relieved himself with the following exclamations : " Unhappy Melina, not in your profession, but in yourself lies what is miserable over which you are unable to be master ! What man is there in the world, who takes up manual labour, an art or any other mode of life without an inward call to it, must not, like you, find his condition intolerable. He who has a talent and is born to a talent finds in the same his finest existence ! There is nothing on earth without difficulty. Only the impulse from within, joy, love help us to overcome hindrances, to smooth out paths and to raise us up from the narrow circle in which others live in distressing wretchedness. For you the boards are nothing but boards and the parts of an actor only what a task is to the schoolboy. You look upon the audience as they appear on working days. It could therefore make no difference to you sitting behind a desk over ruled ledgers, working out interest and rummaging over balances. You do not feel the co-active and co-operative whole, which alone is found out, understood and carried out by the mind ; you do not feel that a better spark lives in man, which if it has no nourishment and is not stirred, is more deeply covered by the ashes of daily needs and indifference and yet is late and almost never choked. Within your soul you feel no power to rouse it up, within your heart no riches to give it nourishment when awakened. It is

hunger that impels you, the inconveniences are unpleasant for you, and it is concealed from you that these enemies lurk in every profession and can only be overcome with joyfulness and equanimity. You act rightly to yearn after the limits of a common position ; for what things could you rightly carry out which require mind and courage ! Give to a soldier, a statesman, a clergyman your feelings, and with just as good a right he could complain of the wretchedness of his position. Yet, have there not even been men who were so completely abandoned by all feeling for life that they have declared the whole life and existence of mortals to be nothing worth, to be a thing full of misery and like unto the dust. If the forms of active men were alive and stirring within your soul, if a sympathetic fire were warming your bosom, if the mood which emanates from the innermost depths were spread over your frame, if the sound of your throat and the words of your life were lovingly heard, if you felt yourself sufficient within yourself you would certainly seek for a place and occasion for being able to feel yourself in others."

With such words and thoughts our friend had undressed himself and got into bed with a feeling of the innermost delight. A whole romance, which he would accomplish on the place of the unworthy morrow developed within him, pleasant fancies accompanied him gently into the realm of sleep and then handed him over to their sisters, the dreams, who received him with open arms and surrounded the resting head of our friend with the picture of heaven.

In the early morning he was again awake and thought about his approaching mediation. He turned back to the house of the deserted parents, where he was received with astonishment. He brought forward his information modestly, and quite soon found more and yet fewer difficulties than he had anticipated. For one thing the evil was already done, and though exceptionally severe and harsh-tempered people are accustomed to set themselves with violence against the past and thereby to increase the evil, yet on the other hand it has an irresistible effect upon the minds of most people, and what seemed impossible, when it has occurred, takes its place with what is ordinarily happening. It was, therefore, soon agreed that Herr Melina should marry their daughter ; she, however, on account of her ill-behaviour, was to take no marriage portion with her

and to promise that she would leave, in her father's hands, the legacy of an aunt for a few years more at a low rate of interest. The second point with regard to municipal provision for Melina found greater difficulties. They did not want to see in front of their eyes the ill-bred child, they did not want the marriage of an adventurer with so respectable a family, which was even related to a superintendent, to be continually coming forward by his presence ; just as little could they hope that the princely colleges would entrust him with a post. Both parents were strongly opposed to this, and Wilhelm, who spoke very energetically for it, because he did not want a man of whom he thought little to return to the stage and he was convinced that he was not worthy of such a happiness, could not with all his arguments accomplish anything. Had he known the secret springs of the matter he would not have given himself the trouble of trying to persuade the parents. For the father, who would gladly have kept his daughter by him, hated the young man, because his wife herself had cast an eye upon him, and she could not bear to have before her eyes a fortunate rival. And so Melina against his will with his young wife, who already showed a great desire to see the world and to be seen by it, was obliged to depart after a few days and find a lodging with some theatrical company.

CHAPTER xv

HAPPY youth ! Happy times of the first desire of love. Man is then like a child, which for hours on end rejoices in an echo, alone supports the charges of the conversation and is well content with the entertainment, if the invisible partner only repeats the last syllables of the words exclaimed.

Such was Wilhelm's condition in the earlier, but particularly in the later times of his passion for Mariana, when he cast the whole wealth of his feelings upon her and regarded himself as a beggar who lived from the alms she gave him. And as a neighbourhood appears to us more charming, indeed only charming, when it is shone upon by the sun, thus was everything in his eyes beautiful and made more splendid which surrounded her and which she touched.

How often did he stand by the theatre behind the walls, of

which he had begged the privilege from the manager ! Then indeed the magic of the perspective vanished but the mightier magic of love began first to be active. Hours on end he could stand at the dirty balustrade inhaling the vapour of the footlights, to look at his loved one, and if she entered and looked friendly at him, lost in delight he felt transported into a state of paradise. The stuffed little lambs, the waterfalls of taffeta, the pasteboard rose-trees and the one-sided thatched cottages awakened in him lovely poetic pictures of the ancient world of shepherds. Even the dancers who on a near view appeared ugly were not always repugnant to him, because they stood on the same boards as his loved one. And so it is certain that love, which must first give life to bowers of roses, myrtle groves and moonshine, can also even give an appearance of living nature to shavings and scraps of paper. Love is so strong a spice that even thin and nasty broths by its power become palatable.

Such a spice indeed was required to make that condition tolerable, indeed subsequently pleasant, in which he ordinarily found her room and indeed herself.

Brought up in a fine citizen's house, order and cleanliness were the element he breathed, and as he had inherited a part of his father's love of splendour he understood in the years of his boyhood how to decorate in an elegant fashion his room which he looked upon as his small kingdom. His bed curtains were drawn up in great folds and fastened with tassels as one is wont to put on thrones ; he had a carpet in the middle of the room and managed to procure a finer one on the table ; his books and furniture he arranged almost mechanically so that a painter from the Netherlands could get therefrom good groups for his pictures of still life. A white cap he had tied as a turban ought to be, and let the sleeves of his dressing-gown be rolled up after the eastern fashion. The cause of this was, however, that the long white sleeves hindered him in writing. When he was quite alone in the evening and was not afraid of being disturbed he usually wore a silken sash round his waist, and he would often stick a dagger in his girdle, which he appropriated for himself out of an old armoury, and so have performed the tragic parts assigned to him which he had memorized and rehearsed, yes, even in imagination had performed his prayer kneeling on the carpet.

How fortunate, therefore, did he in those times call the actor whom he saw in possession of so many majestic clothes, armaments and weapons and in the continued practice of noble behaviour, of which the spirit seemed to represent a mirror of the grandest and most magnificent that the world in its relations, feelings and passions has found out. In the same way Wilhelm imagined the home life of the actor as a series of worthy actions and occupations, the appearance of which on the theatre was the extreme point, just as a piece of silk which has long been drawn through the fire of purgatory at last appears with a coloured beauty before the eyes of the workman and at last shows to him that the metal is at last at the same time purged of all extraneous additions. How very much startled he was, therefore, at the beginning, when he found himself with his loved one and through the fortunate cloud surrounding him looked upon the tables, chairs and floor. The ruins of a temporary, light and false finery lay scattered one by another in wild confusion, like the gleaming garment of a fish without its scales. The instruments of human cleanliness, such as combs, soap, cloths, with the traces of their use, were also not concealed. Music, rolls of paper and shoes, washing and Italian flowers, cases, hairpins, little pots of rouge and ribbons, boots and straw hats, none of them despised the neighbourhood of the other, as though they were united by a common element—powder and dust. Wilhelm, however, in her presence observed little of all the rest, much rather did everything which belonged to her which she had touched become dear to him, so at last in this confused household management he found a charm which he had never experienced in his dignified, stately arrangement. It seemed to him—if he here removed her stays so as to get to the piano, or there laid her frocks on the bed so that he could sit down, when she herself with unconstrained frankness before him did not seek to hide things which are usually concealed from others from a feeling of propriety—it seemed to him, I say, as if he came closer to her every moment, as if a community was fastened between them by invisible bands.

He could not so easily unite with his ideas the conduct of the other actors, whom he often met with her on his first visits. Busy in idleness they seemed least of all to think of their profession and its object ; he never heard them speak of the poetical

value of a piece, nor made a right or wrong judgment about it ; the question was only—what will the piece make ? Is it a piece which will draw ? How long can it be played ? How often can it well be given ? And more questions and remarks of this kind. Then usually an attack was made on the manager, that he was too niggardly with the salaries and particularly was unjust to one or the other, then they attacked the public which seldom rewards the right man with its applause, that the German theatre was improving every day, that the actor was always more honoured according to his merits and could not be sufficiently honoured. Then there was much talk of coffee-houses and vineyards and what occurred there, how much every friend had to endure in the way of debts and a deduction to be made on account of them, of the unequal proportion of the weekly salaries, of the intrigues of an opposition party ; and so at last the great and deserved attention of the public again came into consideration, and the influence of the theatre on the culture of a nation and the world was not forgotten.

All these things, which had formerly given Wilhelm many disquieting hours, came at present again into his memory, as his horse brought him slowly homewards, and he reflected on the different events which had befallen him. With his own eyes he had seen the commotion, which owing to the flight of a young girl, had come into a good burgher's family, indeed into a whole small town ; the scenes on the road and in the court, the feelings of Melina and the other occurrences displayed themselves before his mind and brought his lively, penetrating mind into a kind of restless anxiety, which he could not long endure, but putting spurs to his horse, hurried to the town. But in this way, too, new unpleasantnesses came to meet him. Werner, his friend and expected brother-in-law, waited for him in order to begin with him a serious, important and unexpected conversation.

Werner was one of those people, proved and fixed in their being, whom one is accustomed to call cold because they in emergencies do not flare up either rapidly or visibly. His intercourse with Wilhelm was a continuous discord, by which their affection was only the more firmly tied ; for in spite of their different way of thinking each found his complement in the other. Werner had a good opinion of himself, in that he

seemed occasionally to put a bridle and bit on the excellent but at times extravagant spirit of Wilhelm, and Wilhelm often felt a splendid triumph when he could carry along his deliberate-minded friend in warm emotion. So one practised himself on the other. They were accustomed to see each other daily and one might even have said their desire to meet one another and converse with one another was increased by the inability of their understanding one another. At bottom, however, both were good fellows, moving towards one goal, and they could never understand how it was that neither could bring the other over to his way of feeling.

For some time Werner had observed that Wilhelm's visits had become less frequent, that on his favourite subjects he broke off and was absent-minded, that he no longer was absorbed in the lively depicting of unusual ideas, by which indeed a fine mind finding rest and contentment in the presence of a friend is most easily recognized. The punctual and considerate Werner at first sought for the mistake in his own conduct, till some talk in the town brought him on the right track, and some imprudences on the part of Wilhelm brought him nearer to the certainty. He ventured on an investigation, and quite soon discovered that Wilhelm for some time had openly visited an actress, had talked with her at the theatre and brought her home. He would have been inconsolable had he known of the nocturnal meetings, for he heard that Mariana was a seductive young woman who was ruining his friend for money and letting herself besides be supported by the most unworthy lover.

As soon as he had brought his suspicion as far as certainty he decided to attack Wilhelm, and was in complete readiness with all his preparations when the latter in a state of vexation and ill-humour returned from his journey.

Werner the same evening set before him all that he knew, at first calmly, then with the cogent seriousness of a well-meaning friendship, he left no piece uncertain and let his friend taste all the bitterness, which quiet individuals are wont freely to expend on lovers with a virtuous, malicious joy. But as may be imagined, he accomplished little. Wilhelm replied with inward emotion, yet with greater security: "You do not know the young girl! The appearance is perhaps not to her advantage, but I am as certain of her truth and virtue as I am of my love"

Werner persisted in his accusation and offered proofs and witnesses. Wilhelm rejected them and withdrew from his friend annoyed and upset, like one from whom an unskilful dentist has grasped a decayed, firmly-rooted tooth and pulled it in vain. Wilhelm felt most uncomfortable at seeing the beautiful picture of Mariana dimmed and almost disfigured in his soul, first by the fancies on his journey and then by Werner's unfriendliness. He sought after the surest means of restoring its full brilliance and beauty as he hastened to her by night in the accustomed way. She received him with lively delight, for he had ridden by on his first arrival; she had expected him this night and it can well be imagined that all doubt was soon driven out of his heart. Yes, her tenderness opened his whole confidence, and he told her how very much the public and how very much his friend sinned against her.

Frequently lively conversation led them on to speak of the earliest times of their acquaintance, the remembrance of which remains always one of the most delightful entertainments of two lovers. The first steps which lead us into the maze of love are so pleasant, the first prospects so charming that one only too willingly calls them back to remembrance. Each party seeks to maintain a preference before the other, and each in this rivalry wishes rather to be overcome than to overcome.

Wilhelm repeated to Mariana, what she had already so often heard, that she had soon drawn his attention from the play to herself, that her form, her play and her voice had fascinated him, how at length he had only gone to the pieces in which she played; how he had gone behind the scenes, had stood near her without being noticed. Then he spoke with rapture of the happy evening when he found the opportunity of showing her some attention and leading her into conversation with him.

Mariana, on the other hand, would not admit that she had not noticed him for so long; she asserted that she had seen him on the public walk, and for proof she described the clothes she wore on the same day; she maintained that he at that time pleased her more than all others and that she had wished for his acquaintance. How gladly Wilhelm believed all that! How gladly did he allow himself to be persuaded that she had drawn near to him as he had to her; they were drawn by an irresistible attraction; that she had intentionally come near him

between the scenes so as to see him more closely and make acquaintance with him, and that at last when his reserve and bashfulness could not be overcome, she had herself given him the opportunity and almost compelled him to bring a glass of lemonade.

In this loving combat, which they preserved through all the small incidents of their short romance, the hours passed very quickly for them, and Wilhelm left his loved one calmed down and with the firm resolution to direct his intention into action.

CHAPTER XVI

FATHER and mother had provided what was necessary for his journey, only a few small things which were wanting for his equipment delayed his start for a few days. Wilhelm made use of the time to write a letter to Mariana, in which he at last made mention of the matter, which hitherto she had always avoided speaking to him about. The letter ran in the following way: "Beneath the lovely veil of night, which formerly concealed me in thine arms, I sit and think and write to you, and what I think and do is only for thy sake. O Mariana! for me, the happiest among men, it is as with a bridegroom who, mistrustful as to what a new world will develop in him and through him, stands on the festal carpet and during the holy ceremonies transports himself in pleasurable longing thought before the mysterious curtain from which the loveliness of love whispers to him.

"I have prevailed upon myself not to see you for some days; this was easy when there was the hope of such a recompense, of being with you for ever and remaining completely thine! Am I to repeat what I wish? And yet it is necessary to do so, for it seems that hitherto you have not understood me. How often have I in soft tones of loyalty, which wishing to gain all, dares to say but little, sought in thy heart for the longing for an everlasting union. You have certainly understood me, for in thy own heart the wish must have developed; you have understood me in every kiss, in the peace of those happy evenings which so closely united us. There I learnt to know your modesty, and how my love was increased. Where another woman would have behaved with artifice that she might by a superfluity of

sunshine bring to maturity the decision of her lover's heart, draw out a proposal and confirm a promise ; just there you drew back, closed the half-opened bosom of your lover and sought by an assumed indifference to conceal your assent. But I understand that ! What a wretched creature I must be if I by these signs would not recognize the pure unselfish love which only cared for its lover ! Trust me and be at rest ! We belong to one another and neither of us leaves or loses anything, if we live for one another. Take, then, this hand ! Solemnly yet I offer this superfluous sign. We have already felt all the joys of love, but there is a new blessedness in the firmly fixed idea of duration. Do not ask how ! Have no care ! Fate has care for love and the more certainly, since love is sufficient for itself. My heart has long ago abandoned the house of my parents ; it is with thee as my spirit hovers over the stage. O my darling ! has a man ever been allowed to unite his wishes as I have ? No sleep comes to my eyes, and like an everlasting dawn of morning thy love and thy happiness rise before me up and down. Scarcely did I restrain myself from starting off and running to you and wresting your consent to me, and at once, in the early morning, striving further in the world after my aim. No, I will control myself ! I will not take thoughtless, foolish, rash steps ; my plan is drawn up and I will calmly carry it out. I am acquainted with Serlo, my journey goes direct to him. He has for a year past often wished that his company had some of my vivacity and delight over the theatre, and I shall undoubtedly be welcome to him ; for I would not like to enter on your troop for more than one reason ; also Serlo plays so far from here that I can at first conceal this step. I can there find a tolerable lodging, I can have a look round at the public, get to know the society and bring you along.

" Mariana, thou seest what I have overcome so as to be sure of having you, for not to see you for so long, to know that you are in the wide world, I cannot bear to think of it. But when again I picture to myself your love, when thou dost not despise my request, before we part, and before the priest thou reachest thine hand to me, then I will go in peace. It is only a formality between us, but such a beautiful formality, the blessing of heaven on the blessing of earth. In the vicinity, in the chapel of the knights all goes forward easily and secretly.

" For the commencement I have enough money ; we will share, there will be sufficient for us both ; before it is finished, heaven will help us further. Yes, my darling, I don't feel at all anxious. That which has begun with so much joyfulness must reach a happy end. I have never doubted that one can find one's advancement in the world, if one is in earnest, and I feel courage enough to gain a rich maintenance for two, indeed for several. Many say, the world is ungrateful, I have not yet found that it is ungrateful, if one understands how to do something for it in the right way. My whole soul is aglow with the thought of at last coming forward and saying right into the heart of men what for so long they have been yearning to hear. I, who am so fascinated with the theatre, have a thousand times felt anxiety in my soul, when I have seen the most wretched creatures imagine they could speak into our heart a grandly striking word. A tone which is forced beyond its natural range, sounds much better and purer ; it is unbelievable, how these fellows offend in their coarse clumsiness.

" The theatre often has a strife with the pulpit, in my opinion they should not quarrel with one another. How much it is to be wished that in these two places God and Nature were glorified only by noble men ! These are no dreams, my dearest. As I am able to feel in your heart that you are in love so I seize the brilliant thought and say—I will not assert it, but I will hope that we shall some day appear to men as a pair of good spirits, to open their hearts, to move their minds and to prepare for them heavenly delights, as certainly joys were granted me on thy bosom, which must always be called heavenly, because in those moments we are moved out of ourselves, we feel we are raised above ourselves.

" I cannot finish ; already I have said too much and don't know whether I have said everything to thee, everything which concerns thee, for there are no words adequate to express the motion of the wheel which whirls round in my heart.

" Meanwhile, take this page, my love ! I have read it through again and find that I ought to begin over again ; yet it contains all that is necessary for thee to know, what the preparation is, when with joyfulness I soon return to thy sweet love on thy bosom. I seem to myself like a prisoner who lurking in a prison is filing away his fetters. I say good-night to my

carefree slumbering parents. Farewell, my loved one ! Farewell ! This time I finish ; my eyes have closed two and three times ; it is already far into the night."

CHAPTER XVII

THE day would not end, when Wilhelm folded his letter beautifully in his pocket and hurried off to Mariana ; it had scarcely become dark when contrary to his custom he slunk to her dwelling. His plan was to announce himself in the night, to leave his loved one after a short time, to press his letter into her hand before he went away and on his return late at night to obtain her answer and consent or to compel it by the strength of his caresses. He flew to her arms and could scarcely contain himself on her bosom. The liveliness of his feelings at first concealed from him that she did not receive him as cordially as formerly ; she feigned an ailment, not being well ; she complained of headache ; she did not wish to admit the proposal that he waited to come again that night. He suspected nothing bad, did not further press her, but felt it was not the moment for handing over to her his letter. He kept it by him, and her various movements and words obliged him, in a polite manner to go away ; he snatched up in the confusion of his unsatisfied love one of her neck-cloths, put it in his pocket, and against his will left her lips and her door. He slunk home, but could not remain there long, changed his clothes and sought again the open air.

When he had gone up and down some streets he fell in with an unknown man, who enquired about a certain inn. Wilhelm offered to show him the house ; the stranger made enquiries as to the name of the street, after the owners of different large buildings which they passed by, then after some of the police arrangements of the town, and they had got into quite an interesting conversation when they arrived at the door of the inn. The stranger pressed his guide to enter and to drink a glass of punch with him ; at the same time he gave him his name and birthplace, also the business which had brought him there, and asked Wilhelm for a similar confidence. The latter was as communicative about this as of his dwelling.

"Are you not a grandson of the old Meister, who had the fine Art Collection?" enquired the stranger.

"Yes, I am he. I was ten years old when my grandfather died and it caused me acute pain to see the beautiful things sold."

"Your father got a large sum of money for them."

"You know that too?"

"Oh yes, I have seen this treasure while still in your house. Your grandfather was not merely a collector, he had an understanding of art; at an earlier and more fortunate epoch he had been in Italy and had brought back treasures with him from there, which are now not to be obtained for any price. He possessed first-rate pictures of the best masters; one could hardly believe one's eyes when one looked through his drawings; among his marvels there were some priceless fragments, of bronzes he possessed a most impressive series; he had also collected his coins from the point of view of art and history; his small number of engraved gems were deserving of all praise; the whole, too, was well displayed, although the rooms and halls of the old house were not built symmetrically. You can imagine what we children lost, when all the things were taken down and packed up. They were the first sad times in my life. I know still how empty the rooms appeared to us, when we saw the objects gradually vanishing away which had entertained us from our youth onwards and which we thought to be as immovable as the house and town itself."

"If I am not wrong, your father gave the capital he had acquired into the management of a neighbour, with whom he entered into a kind of trading company."

"Quite right! and their trading speculations turned out quite fortunately for them; in these twelve years they have very much increased their property, and they both are only the more keenly fixed upon business; the old Werner, too, has a son, who is much more suited to this trade than I am."

"I am sorry that this place has lost such an ornament as was the cabinet of your grandfather. I saw it a short time before it was sold, and I may well say that I was the cause of the purchase coming off. A rich nobleman, great amateur, who in such an important transaction did not trust alone to his own judgment, sent for me here and asked my advice. For six days

I examined the cabinet and on the seventh I advised my friend to pay the sum demanded without hesitation. You as a lively boy were often near me ; you explained to me the subjects of the pictures and above all knew how to interpret the cabinet very well."

" I remember such a person, but I should not have recognized him again in you. It is already a considerable time and we change more or less. You had, if I remember rightly, a favourite picture among them, which you did not wish me to leave out."

" Quite right ! It depicted the history of how a sick son of a king was consumed with love for the bride of his father."

" It was certainly not the best picture, not well composed, of no special colouring, and the execution affected."

" That I did not understand and I do not yet understand ; it is the subject which charms me in a picture, not the art."

" On that point your grandfather seemed to think differently ; for the largest part of his collection consisted of first-rate works, in which one always marvelled at the merit of their master, whatever subject they might represent ; also the picture hung in the outermost hall, a sign that he did not value it much."

" It was just there where we children used to play and where this picture made an indelible impression on me, which even your criticism, which I otherwise respect, could not blot out, if we even stood before the picture now. How it grieves me, how it grieves me still as a young man who must conceal within himself the sweet impulses, the most beautiful inheritance which Nature has given us, and shut up within himself the fire which ought to warm and animate him and others so that his innermost being is consumed in unutterable pains. How I lament for the hapless one who would devote himself to another when her heart has already found a worthy object of true and pure affection."

" These feelings are, however, far removed from those considerations with which a lover of art is wont to look upon the works of great masters, but probably, if the cabinet had remained the property of your house, there would have arisen for you a feeling for the works themselves so that you would not always have in works of art only yourself and your own inclination."

" Certainly the sale of the cabinet caused me much sorrow

and I have often too in later years missed it; but when I reflect that it must have been so in order to develop a taste and a talent in me which were to work far more on my life than those lifeless pictures have ever done, I am contented and then honour destiny, which knows how to bring about what is best for me and everyone."

"I am sorry to hear again the word destiny spoken by a young man, who is just at the age when men are usually accustomed to ascribe their violent inclinations to the will of higher beings."

"Do you not, then, believe in destiny? No power which rules over us and directs everything to what is best for us."

"Here there is no talk of my belief, nor the place to explain how I try to imagine to myself things which are incomprehensible for us all; here it is only the question what mode of representations suits us best. The web of the world is formed out of necessity and chance; the reason of man is placed between the two and knows how to govern them; it treats the necessary as the basis of its being; chance it knows how to lead and to guide only while it stands firm and unshakable does man deserve to be called a God of the earth. Woe to him, who from youth onwards has accustomed himself to wish to find something arbitrary in the necessary, and who may ascribe to chance a kind of reason, and to follow it is even a religion. Does that mean anything more than to renounce one's own understanding and to give unrestrained space to one's inclination? We imagine that we are pious when we meander along without reflection, allow ourselves to be determined by pleasant chances, and finally give to the result of such an irresolute life the name of a divine guidance."

"Were you never so situated that a small circumstance caused you to enter upon a certain way, on which a pleasant opportunity came to meet you and a series of unexpected events at length brought you to the object which you had yourself scarcely yet fixed your gaze upon? Should that not inspire submission to destiny, trust in such guidance?"

"With these feelings no young girl could retain her virtue and no one keep his money in his purse; for there are enough reasons for getting free from both. I am only able to rejoice over the man who knows what is useful for himself and others

and labours to curb his caprice. Everyone has his own happiness in his hands, as the artist has a raw material, which he wishes to mould anew into a form. But with this art it is as with all, only the capacity for it is innate, it wants to be learnt and carefully practised."

They still discussed this and other matters ; at length they separated without seeming specially to have convinced one another, yet they fixed on a place for meeting on the following day.

Wilhelm walked up and down some streets ; he listened to clarionets, French horns and bassoons ; his heart swelled within him. Travelling bands made a pleasant music by night. He conversed with them and for a little money they followed him to Mariana's dwelling. High trees adorned the square in front of her house, there he placed his singers, he himself rested on a seat at some distance and abandoned himself entirely to the tunes floating in the air which rang around him in the refreshing night. Beneath the lovely stars stretched out his being seemed to him like a golden dream.

" She, too, hears these flutes," he said in his heart, " she feels whose remembrance, whose love of her it is which makes the night ring with music ; even in the distance we are bound together by these melodies, as in every separation by the purest spirit of love. Ah ! two loving hearts are like two magnetic clocks, whatever moves in the one, must also move the other with it, for it is only one power which works in them both and which pervades them. Can I in her arms feel the possibility of parting from her ? And yet I shall be far from her, I shall seek a place of healing for our love and shall have her always with me. How often has it happened to me, when absent from her and lost in thought about her, I have touched a book, a piece of dress or anything else, to have thought I felt her hand, so entirely was I clothed with her presence. And to remember those moments which shun the light of day as the eye of the cold spectator, to enjoy which the gods might decide to forsake the painless condition of their pure blessedness. To remember them ! as if by remembering one could renew the excitement of the intoxicating cup which surrounds our senses with heavenly bands, carries us out of all control ! And her form——"

He lost himself in thought of her, his repose passed over into

longing, he clasped a tree, cooled his hot cheeks on the bark, and the winds of night eagerly drew away the breath which came from his pure impassioned bosom. He felt for the neck-cloth which he had taken from her, it was forgotten, it lay in his other clothes. His lips were athirst, his limbs trembled from a longing desire.

The music ceased, and it seemed to him as if he had fallen from the atmosphere in which his feelings had hitherto been supported. His restlessness increased, as his feelings were no more nourished and softened by the gentle tones. He sat down on her doorstep and was already tranquillized. He kissed the brass ring, with which one knocked at her door ; he kissed the doorstep, over which her feet went in and out, and it grew warm from the fire of his bosom. Then he sat down again quietly for a while and thought about her behind her curtains, in the white nightdress with the red ribbon round her head in a sweet calm, and he thought of himself as so near her that it seemed to him that she must now be dreaming of him. His thoughts were sweet like the spirits of the twilight ; calm and longing alternated in him ; love ran over all the chords of his soul a thousand times with a hand of awe ; it seemed as if the music of the spheres stood still above him to listen to the soft melodies of his heart.

If he had had the front door key with him, which used to open Mariana's door for him, he would not have restrained himself, he would have pressed into the sanctuary of Love. However, he withdrew slowly, moved to and fro half in a dream under the trees, wanted to go home and was always, always turning round ; at last when he brought himself to it, had gone to the corner and looked back, it seemed to him as though Mariana's door opened, and a dark figure moved out from it. He was too far off to see clearly, and before he collected himself and looked up, the appearance was already lost in the darkness ; only quite far off he thought he saw it again gliding past a white house. He stood and blinked, and before he got possession of himself and ran after it, the phantom had vanished. Whither should he follow him ? What street had the man gone down, if it was one ?

Like one for whom the lightning has illuminated the neighbourhood in one corner, immediately upon that with blinded eyes he searches in vain for the former figures and the

connection of the paths in the darkness, so was it before his eyes and in his heart. And as a ghost at midnight which produces terrible fright, in the succeeding moments of composure is held for a child of fear, so Wilhelm, too, in the state of the greatest unrest as he leant against a curb stone, paid no attention to the light of the morning and the cry of the cocks, until the early trucks began to be lively and impelled him towards home.

When he came back he had almost driven the vision out of his soul with the most weighty reasons, the lovely feeling of the night, however, on which he now, too, only looked back upon as an appearance, was also gone. To comfort his heart, to press a seal upon his returning belief, he took the neckcloth from his pocket. The rustling of a letter which fell out, drew the cloth from his lips ; he lifted it up and read :

" I love you so, little fool ! What was the matter with you yesterday ? This evening I am coming to you. I can well believe that you are sorry to go away from here, but have patience, I am coming after you at the fair. Listen, don't put on again for me the black green brown jacket ! Then you look like the Witch of Endor. Haven't I sent you the white negligé, that I may hold in my arms a white little lamb. Always send me your letter by the old Sibyl, whom the devil himself has engaged as Iris."

BOOK II

CHAPTER I

EVERYONE, who with vigorous forces strives before our eyes to attain an object, we may praise or blame in his aim, can be sure of our sympathy, but as soon as the matter is decided, we at once turn our eyes away from him ; everything which is finished and done with can in no way hold fast our attention, especially if we have already duly prophesied a bad issue to the undertaking.

Our readers are not therefore to be occupied in detail with the misery and distress into which our unfortunate friend was plunged when he saw his hopes and wishes destroyed in so unexpected a manner. Much rather we pass over some years

and seek him out again when we hope to find him in some kind of activity and enjoyment ; if we have before only presented in short so much as is necessary for the connection of the story.

The plague or a bad fever rage in a healthy body full of life when they attack it more rapidly and more violently, and so our poor Wilhelm was unexpectedly overpowered by an unfortunate destiny, so that in a moment his whole being was shattered. As when by chance firework kindles prematurely under the equipment and the skilfully bored and loaded rockets, which, arranged and burning after a certain plan, were to have depicted in the air magnificently varying flaming pictures, hiss and roar promiscuously through one another, so, in his bosom happiness and hope, pleasure and joys, realities and dreams all at once dash against one another.

In such desolate moments the friend who hastens to the rescue is benumbed and it is a mercy that the senses abandon him whom he goes to meet.

Days of unmixed ever recurring and intentionally renewed pain followed thereupon. In such moments Wilhelm had not yet lost his loved one ; his pains were unweariedly renewed attempts, still to hold fast the happiness which had fled from his soul, to snatch again in imagination the possibility of the same, to procure a short aftermath for his joys that had for ever departed. As a body, so long as putrefaction permits, cannot be called quite dead, so long powers, which vainly seek to be active according to their old purposes, on the destruction of the parts which formerly gave them life, work themselves out ; only when everything is rubbed away, when we see everything broken up indifferently in dust, then there arises the pitiful, empty feeling of death in us, only to be revived by the breath of the ever living.

There was much to tear up, to destroy, to kill, in such a fresh, complete and lovable spirit, and the swiftly healing force of youth gave even to the power of the pain fresh nourishment and intensity. The blow had struck his whole being at the root. Werner, of necessity his confidant, full of zeal attacked with fire and sword the hated passion so as to search into the innermost life of the monster.

The occasion was so fortunate, the proof so close at hand, and how many stories and narratives did he not know how to

make use of. He drove it on with such vehemence and cruelty step by step, did not allow his friend the comfort of the slightest momentary deception, blocked up for him every loophole in which he might have been able to save himself from despair, saying that Nature, who did not want her favourite to go to ruin, had attacked him with an illness, so as to relieve him from another direction.

A high fever with its consequences, medicines, overstrain and exhaustion, together with the trouble of the family, the love of his contemporaries which through want and necessity first makes itself really felt, were so many distractions of a changed condition and a miserable entertainment. Not till he became better, that is to say, when his powers were exhausted, did Wilhelm look down with horror into the tormenting abyss of stagnant misery, as one looks down into the burnt-out hollow cups of a volcano. He now made himself the most bitter reproaches that he was capable of having after so great a loss a moment free from pain, peaceful and indifferent. He felt contempt for his own heart and yearned for the comfort of woe and tears.

In order to awaken these in himself again he brought before his memory all the scenes of his past happiness. He depicted them to himself with the greatest vivacity, he strained after them, and when he had worked himself up to the greatest possible height, when the sunshine of former days seemed again to put life into his limbs, to elevate his bosom, he looked backwards on the dreadful abyss, refeeded his eyes on the depth which overwhelms, threw himself down and extorted from Nature the most bitter pains. With such repeated cruelty he rent himself to pieces ; for youth, which is so rich in hidden powers, knows not what it squanders, when it adds to the pain which a loss has awakened so many more additional sorrows, as though it wanted by that means to bestow upon what was lost yet a true value. He was, too, so convinced that this loss was the only one, the first and last which he could experience in his life, that he felt a loathing for every consolation which tried to represent these sorrows to him as not everlasting.

CHAPTER II

ACCUSTOMED to torment himself in this way, he now laid hold of the remaining thing which after love and with love had given him the greatest joys and hopes, his talent as poet and actor with a malicious criticism from all sides. He saw in his works nothing but an unintellectual imitation of some traditional forms without inner worth ; he would only recognize in them awkward school exercises, lacking in every spark of what is natural, true and inspired. In his poems he found only a monotonous rhythm of syllables in which, held together by a poor rhyme, quite common thoughts and feelings dragged along, and so he took away from himself even every outlook, every pleasure which could at all events have set him up on this side.

It was no better with regard to his talents as an actor. He blamed himself for not having sooner discovered the vanity which alone had been the basis for this presumption. His figure, his gait, his movement and declamation had to suffer. He decidedly denied to himself every kind of superiority, every merit which had raised him above the common lot and thereby he increased his despair to the greatest degree. For if it is hard to renounce the love of a woman, the feeling is not less painful in tearing oneself away from intercourse with the Muses, declaring oneself for ever unworthy of their society and to give up all claim to the most splendid and intimate applause which is publicly given to our person, our behaviour and our voice.

Thus our friend had completely resigned himself and at last with the greatest zeal devoted himself to commercial business. To the surprise of his friend and the greatest satisfaction of his father no one in the office and on 'change, in the shops and stores, was more active than he ; correspondence and calculations and all that was laid upon him he took care of and carried out with the greatest diligence and zeal. Not indeed with the cheerful industry which is at length the reward of the busy man, when we accomplish with order and effect that for which we were born, but with the quiet industry of duty, which has for its basis the best principle, which is nourished by conviction and rewarded by an inner self-reliance, but which, however, even

when the finest consciousness reaches him the crown, can scarcely suppress a sigh from coming out. In this way Wilhelm had lived on for a time very diligently and persuaded himself that that hard trial had been contrived by fate for what was best for him. He was glad at seeing himself on the road of life warned in time, though in a very unfriendly manner while others expiate later and with greater difficulty the blunders to which a youthful conceit has misled them. For, as a rule, man resists as long as he can taking away the follies which he cherishes in his bosom, confessing a chief error and acknowledging a truth, which brings him to despair.

Determined as he was to give up his dearest ideas, there was, however, some time necessary to convince him fully of his misfortune. But at length he had with cogent reasons so entirely destroyed all hope of love, of poetic production and of personal performance that he took courage to extinguish completely all traces of his folly and everything which could yet in any way remind him of it. He had therefore one cool evening kindled an open fire and brought out a casket of relics, in which there were hundreds of trifles, which at important moments he had received from Mariana or taken from her. Every dried flower reminded him of the time when it bloomed still freshly in her hair, every little note, in which she had invited him, of the happy times, every bow of the sweet resting-place of his head, her beautiful bosom. In this way must not every feeling, which he thought he had already long ago killed, begin to stir again within him? Must not the passion of which he had become master, when separated from his loved one, again become powerful in the presence of these trifles. For we first notice how melancholy and unpleasant a gloomy day is when a single glimpse of the sun penetrating to us shows us the enlivening gleam of a more cheerful hour.

It was not, therefore, without emotion that he saw these sacred things, which had been so long preserved, go up in smoke and flame one after another. Sometimes he hesitatingly restrained himself and had still a string of pearls and a neckcloth of gauze left over, when he determined to freshen up again the declining fire with the poetical efforts of his youth.

Up till now he had carefully preserved that which had poured from his pen from the earliest development of his mind

onwards. His writings lay bound up in bundles at the bottom of the trunk, in which he had packed them, when he hoped to take them with him on his elopement. How differently now did he open them from the time when he had tied them together.

If a letter which we have written and sealed under certain circumstances does not reach the friend to whom it was directed, but is returned to us and we open it after a time, we are overtaken by a strange sensation when we break our own seal and converse with our changed self as with a third person. A similar feeling took hold of our friend with violence when he opened the first packet and threw the separate sheets into the fire, which flamed up strongly, when Werner entered, was astonished at the blazing flames and enquired what was taking place.

"I give a proof," said Wilhelm, "that I am serious in abandoning a calling for which I was not born," and with these words he threw the second packet into the fire. Werner wanted to restrain him, but it was done. "I don't see," said Werner, "how it is you come to this extreme course. Why, then, should these works now be destroyed even if they are not first-rate?"

"Because a poem is either first-rate, or ought not to exist; because everyone, who has no talent for producing the best should restrain himself from art and earnestly beware of every temptation leading to it. For indeed there is stirring in every man a certain indefinite yearning to imitate that which he sees, but this yearning does not in any way prove that the power exists in us to bring about that which we undertake. Only look at boys, who every time, as often as rope dancers have been in the town, go to and fro balancing themselves on all planks and beams, until another attraction draws them off to a similar game. Haven't you noticed it within the circle of our friends? As often as a dilettante is heard, there are always some who at once begin to learn the same instrument. How many make mistakes in this way! Happy is he who is soon aware of the wrong inference which he draws from his wishes to his powers!"

Werner contradicted; the discussion became animated, and Wilhelm could not repeat without emotion against his friend the arguments with which he had so often tormented himself. Werner maintained that it was not sensible to abandon altogether a talent for which one had only in some degree inclination and skill, just because one could never practise it in its fullest

perfection. There are so many vacant hours which can be filled up by this means and by degrees something produced with which we can give pleasure to ourselves and others.

Our friend, who was here of quite a different opinion, at once broke in and said with great animation :

" How wrong you are, my dear friend, if you imagine that a work, the first conception of which must fill the whole soul, can be brought forth in interrupted hours casually put together. No, the poet must himself live entirely in the midst of his loved object. He who is inwardly gifted from heaven with the most precious things, who preserves within himself an ever-increasing treasure, must live undisturbed from outside with his treasures in tranquil happiness, which a rich man with goods heaped up around him seeks in vain to produce. Your wishes, your labour, your money are in restless pursuit, and for what ? For that which the poet has obtained from Nature, for the enjoyment of the world, the feeling of himself with others, for an harmonious union with many things which often cannot be united. What disturbs mankind but that they cannot unite their ideas with things, that enjoyment while in their hands steals away from them, that what is wished for comes too late, and that everything which is arrived at and obtained does not have the effect upon their heart, which desire makes us anticipate at a distance. Destiny has placed the poet, like a god, above all this. He sees the whirl of the passions, families and kingdoms exciting themselves aimlessly ; he sees the insoluble riddles of misunderstandings, for which often only a word of one syllable is lacking to explain, cause unspeakably ruinous disorders. He feels the sorrow and the joy of every human lot. If the man of the world lets his days glide past in a consuming melancholy over great losses or goes to meet his destiny with unrestrained joy, the poet with his receptive, easily moved soul strides forward like the wandering sun from night to day and with gentle transitions tunes his harp to joy and sorrow. Innate at the bottom of his heart grows the beautiful flower of wisdom and while others awake are dreaming and are troubled by monstrous notions of all kinds, he lives the dream of life like one who is awake and the most unusual things which happen are for him at the same time past and future. And so the poet is at once teacher, prophet, friend of the gods and of men. How ! do you wish that he

should step down to a miserable trade ? He, who is made like a bird, to soar over the world to nest on high and to take his food from buds and fruits, easily changing from one twig to another, should at the same time like an ox draw the plough, like the dog accustom himself to the harness and draught, or perhaps tied to a chain keeping guard on a farmyard by his barking."

Werner, as we can imagine, had listened with astonishment. "If only men too," he broke in, "were made like birds, and without spinning or weaving could spend lovely days in continual enjoyment, when at the approach of winter they could easily betake themselves to distant regions, could avoid want and secure themselves against the cold ! "

"Poets have lived so," exclaimed Wilhelm, "in times when what is noble was more recognized, and so should they always live. Sufficiently provided for from within, they need little from outside ; the gift of communicating to men beautiful feelings, splendid images in sweet words and melodies clinging to every object, in former days enchanted the world and was for the gifted man a rich inheritance. At the courts of kings, at the tables of the rich, before the doors of lovers one listened to them, while the ear and the soul were closed to all else, just as we think ourselves fortunate and stand still enraptured, when from out the bushes through which we are wandering the song of the nightingale pours fully and touchingly penetrates to our ear. They found a hospitable world and their apparently lowly position elevated them only the more. The hero listened to their songs and the conqueror of the world paid homage to a poet, because he felt that without him his colossal existence would only pass by like a tempest ; the lover wanted to feel his yearning and his enjoyment a thousandfold increased and so harmonious, when the inspired lips understood how to describe them, and even the rich man could not with his own eyes behold his possessions, his idols as so costly as they appeared to him when illuminated by the brilliance of the mind which feels all their worth and elevates it. Yes, who has depicted gods so as to raise us up to them, or brought them down to us, but the poet ? "

"My friend," replied Werner, after some reflection, "I have often regretted that you should strive to banish from your soul by force that which you feel so keenly. I must be greatly mis-

taken, if you would not do better in some measure to give way to yourself than to worry yourself by the contradictions of so severe a renunciation and with one innocent joy deprive yourself of the delight of all others."

"May I confess to you, my friend," replied Wilhelm, "and will you not find me ridiculous, when I admit to you that those pictures still always pursue me, much as I fly from them, and if I examine my heart, all my early wishes are firmly fixed there, indeed more firmly than formerly. Yet what is left remaining for me in my misfortune at present? Oh, who would have prophesied to me that the arms of my spirit, with which I grasped the infinite and with which certainly I hoped to embrace something great, were so soon to be broken in pieces; he who had prophesied this would have brought me to despair. And yet now when judgment has befallen me, now when I have lost the one, who instead of a divinity was to lead me over to my wishes, what remains for me but to abandon myself to the most bitter grief? Oh, my brother," he continued, "I do not deny, she was in my secret designs the staple, to which a rope ladder is fixed; the adventurer hopefully and dangerously swings in the air, the iron breaks, and he lies broken in pieces at the foot of his wishes. There is now, too, for me no more consolation, no more hope! I will not," he exclaimed, as he jumped up, "I will not allow any of these unlucky papers to remain." He again took hold of a couple of sheets, tore them up and flung them into the fire. Werner wanted to restrain him, but in vain. "Leave me alone," cried Wilhelm, "what is the good of these miserable pages. Are they to remain over so as to pain me to the end of my life? Are they perhaps just to serve the world for derision, instead of arousing pity and fear. Woe is me and my destiny! Now I understand the complaints of the poets, of the sorrowful who become wise from necessity. How long did I think myself indestructible and invulnerable, and, alas, now I see that a deeper, earlier injury cannot be grown out of, cannot be repaired; I feel I must take it with me into the grave. No! the pain will not give way for a single day of my life, which at last brings me to ruin, and also the remembrance of her will remain with me, will live and die with me, the remembrance of her who was unworthy—ah, my friend! if I am to speak from the bottom of my heart—she who was not altogether unworthy! Her position,

her lot have made excuses for her with me a thousand times. I have been too cruel, you have unmercifully initiated me into your coldness, into your harshness, have kept prisoner my confused senses and prevented me from doing for her and for myself that in which I was indebted to both. Who knows in what a condition I have placed her, and now it gradually strikes upon my conscience in what despair, in what helplessness I have left her. Was it not possible that she could excuse herself? Was it not possible? How many misunderstandings can distract the world, how many circumstances can demand forgiveness for the greatest fault! How often do I think of her, sitting by herself in stillness, leaning upon her elbows. This, says she, is loyalty, the love which he vowed to me! With this unkind stroke to finish the beautiful life which united us." He burst out into a stream of tears, throwing his face upon the table and wetting the remaining papers.

Werner stood by in the greatest embarrassment. He had no more expected this rapid flare up of the passion. Sometimes he wished to interrupt his friend's talk, sometimes to turn the conversation in another direction, in vain! He did not withstand the stream. Here, too, their lasting friendship took up again its function. He let the most violent attack of pain pass by, while by his restful presence he let a sincere and pure sympathy be seen at its best; and so they remained for this evening; Wilhelm sunk in the quiet feeling which follows pain, and Werner frightened by the fresh outburst of a passion which he believed to have long been mastered and overcome by good advice and zealous persuasion.

CHAPTER III

AFTER such relapses Wilhelm was accustomed to devote himself with still greater zeal to business and activity, and it was the best way of escaping from the labyrinth which tried again to entice him. The pleasant manner in which he behaved to strangers, his facility in carrying on correspondence in almost all living languages gave his father and his business friends even more hope and consoled them for his illness, the cause of which they had not known and for the interval which had interrupted

their plan. Wilhelm's departure was decided on for the second time, and we find him on horseback with his carpet bag behind him, cheered up by the fresh air and exercise, approaching the mountains where he had to accomplish some commissions.

He went slowly through valleys and mountains with the feeling of the greatest pleasure. Here for the first time he saw overhanging rocks, soaring waterfalls, overgrown banks, deep abysses, and yet the earliest dreams of his youth had hovered over such regions. He felt himself at the sight of these things rejuvenated ; all the pains he had suffered were washed away from his soul, and with complete cheerfulness he repeated to himself passages from different poems, especially from the " Pastor Fido," ¹ which in those lonely places passed in numbers through his memory. He also remembered passages from his own poems, which he recited with particular satisfaction. He enlivened the world lying before him with all forms of the past, and every step into the future was full of presentiment of important actions and remarkable events.

Many people, following one after another, came behind him and greeted him as they passed by and quickly continued their way into the mountains through steep footpaths, and sometimes broke in upon his silent, self converse, without, however, his observing them. At last a conversational companion joined him and told him the reason of his vigorous pilgrimage.

" At Hochdorf," he said, " a comedy is to be acted, for which the whole neighbourhood has gathered together."

" What ! " exclaimed Wilhelm, " in these lonely mountains, among these impenetrable woods, has the art of the stage found a way and built for itself a temple ? I must make a pilgrimage to her festival."

" You will be still more surprised," said the other, " when you hear who has introduced the piece. There is a great factory in the place, which supports many people. The manufacturer, who, so to speak, lives remote from all human society, does not know how better to employ his workmen in the winter than by arranging for them to act a comedy. He won't have cards among them and he wants to keep them from rude manners. Thus they pass the long evenings, and to-day, as it is the birthday of the old man, they are giving in his honour a special festival."

¹ A Shepherd poem by the Italian poet, Giovanni Battista Guarini.

Wilhelm arrived at Hochdorf, where he was to pass the night, and got down at the factory, the owner of which was one of the debtors on his list.

When he mentioned his name, the old man exclaimed in astonishment :

" Oh, sir, you are the son of the excellent man, to whom I owe so much gratitude and now also money. Your father has been so patient with me that I must be a rascal if I did not pay speedily and with pleasure. You are come just at the right time to see that I mean it."

He called his wife, who was just as delighted to see the young man. She assured him that he was like his father, and regretted that owing to the numerous strangers she could not put him up.

The business was easy to be understood and soon settled. Wilhelm put a roll of gold in his pocket and wished that the rest of his business would be so easily accomplished.

The hour for the play arrived, only the Head Forester was awaited, who also came at last, entered with some huntsmen and was received with the greatest honour.

The society was now conducted to the theatre, for which a barn had been adapted, situated close to the garden. House and theatre, without special taste, were arranged gaily and nicely enough. One of the painters, who worked at the factory, had been a subordinate at the theatre in the court and had now represented wood, streets and rooms, doubtless somewhat roughly. They had borrowed the piece from a travelling company and adjusted it after their own fashion. Such as it was, it entertained. The plot of two lovers wanting to get a young girl away from her guardian and for themselves brought forward all kinds of interesting situations. It was the first play our friend had seen after so long a time and he made numerous reflections. It was full of action, but without delineation of true characters. It pleased and gave delight. Such are the beginnings of all theatrical art. The ordinary man is satisfied, if he only sees something going forward ; the cultivated man wishes to feel, and reflection is only pleasant for one who is highly accomplished. Here and there he had been glad to assist the actors, for it wanted but little for them to have been able to do much better.

Amid his silent reflections he was disturbed by the smoke

of tobacco which got ever stronger and stronger. The Head Forester, soon after the play had begun, had lighted his pipe, and by degrees more ventured on this liberty. The large dogs, too, of this gentleman made unpleasant scenes. They had indeed been shut out, but they soon found their way in at the back door, ran on to the stage, rushed against the actors, and at last, by a leap over the orchestra, joined themselves to their master, who had taken the first place in the pit.

By way of an after-piece an offering was made. A portrait, representing the old man in his bridegroom's dress, stood upon an altar, hung round with wreaths. All the actors paid homage to him in submissive postures. The youngest child, dressed in white, came forward and made a speech in verse, by which the whole family and even the Head Forester, who was reminded by it of his own children, were moved to tears. So the play ended, and Wilhelm could not resist getting on to the stage, looking at the actresses at close hand, praising them for their acting and giving them some advice for the future.

The remaining business of our friend, which he transacted by degrees in greater and smaller mountain localities, did not all go off so fortunately nor so pleasantly. Many debtors asked for a respite, many were not polite, many told lies. In accordance with his commission he had to bring an action against some, he had to look out for a lawyer, give him instruction, appear before the court and all other such unpleasant affairs.

It went just as badly with him when people wanted to pay him honour. He found only a few persons who could in any way instruct him, few with whom he hoped to get into a useful trade relationship. Now, too, unfortunately rainy days supervened and a journey on horseback in these regions is accompanied by intolerable difficulties. He therefore thanked heaven when he again approached the low-lying country, and at the foot of the mountain in a beautiful and fruitful plain on a gentle stream he saw, lying in the sunshine, a cheerful little town, in which, to be sure, he had no business, but for that very reason he decided to stay there a couple of days to get some rest for himself and his horse, which had suffered much from the bad road.

CHAPTER IV

AS he withdrew into an inn on the market-place, everything was going on there very merrily, at least in a very lively fashion. A great company of rope dancers, vaulters and jugglers, who had with them a strong man, had moved in with women and children, and while making preparations for a public appearance, created one disorder upon another. Now they quarrelled with the landlord and now among themselves, and if their quarrelling was insupportable the expressions of their pleasure were altogether quite intolerable. Undecided as to whether he should go or stay, he stood at the door and looked on at the workmen who were beginning to erect a stage on the square.

A young girl, who was carrying round roses and other flowers offered him her basket and he bought a beautiful bunch which he fondly tied differently and regarded with satisfaction, when the window of another inn standing on the side of the square opened and a well-shaped woman showed herself at it. In spite of the distance he could observe that a pleasant cheerfulness enlivened her countenance. Her fair hair, carelessly untied, fell about her neck, she appeared to be looking round after the stranger. Sometime after, a boy appeared girt round with a barber's apron, and who had on a white jacket, from the door of that house, went up to Wilhelm, greeted him and said : " The lady at the window wants to ask whether you would be willing to give up to her a part of the beautiful flowers ? "

" They are all at her service," replied Wilhelm, as he handed over the bouquet to the nimble messenger and at the same time made a bow to the fair one, who returned it with a friendly answering greeting and withdrew herself from the window.

Reflecting on this pleasing adventure he went upstairs to his room, when a young creature sprang to meet him and drew his attention to itself. A short silk little vest with slit Spanish sleeves, close-fitting long trousers. Long black hair was curled and wound in locks and plaits about the head. He looked at the form with astonishment and could not satisfy himself as to whether he was to declare it to be a boy or a girl. However,

he at last soon decided for the latter, stopped her as she went past him, wished her good-day and asked to whom she belonged, though he could already easily see that she must be a member of the springing and dancing company. She looked at him with a keen dark side glance, as she disengaged herself from him and ran into the kitchen without answering.

When he got upstairs he found on the broad ante-chamber two men who were practising themselves in fencing or rather seemed to be trying their skill on one another. The one clearly belonged to the company in the house, the other had a less wild appearance. Wilhelm looked at them and had reason for wondering at them both; and when not long after the black-bearded vigorous combatant left the battle ground, the other with much civility offered Wilhelm the rapier.

"If you want to take a pupil into your instruction," replied Wilhelm, "I am very well content to venture a few francs." They fenced together, and though the stranger was far superior to the newcomer, he was, however, polite enough to assure him that everything was a question of practice, and Wilhelm had indeed also shown that he had earlier been taught by a good and thorough German fencing master.

Their conversation was interrupted by the uproar with which the motley company went out of the inn, in order to inform the town of their play and make them curious about their acts. The manager on horseback followed a drummer, behind him a female dancer on a similar creature, holding a child in front of her which was well set off with ribbons and spangles. Then came the rest of the troupe on foot, some carrying easily and comfortably children on their shoulders in wonderful postures, among them the young, dark-haired, mournful figure, awakened Wilhelm's attention anew.

The clown ran hither and thither among the oncoming crowd in an amusing manner, and with very comprehensible jokes, distributed his tickets, while he now kissed a girl, now beat a boy and awakened among the people an overmastering desire to get to know him closer.

In the printed advertisements the manifold acts of the company, especially those of a Monsieur Narciss and Mlle Landrinette, were extolled, both of whom as the principal characters had the wisdom to withdraw themselves from the

procession and thereby to give a more distinguished appearance and to awaken greater curiosity.

During the procession the fair neighbour had again let herself be seen at the window, and Wilhelm had not omitted to inform himself about her with his companion. The latter (whom for the moment we will call Laertes) offered to accompany Wilhelm to her. "I and the lady," he said laughing, "are a couple of fragments of a theatrical company which a short time ago was wrecked here. The charm of the place stirred us to remain here some time and to consume in peace the small amount of ready money we have got together ; meantime a friend has gone off to look for a lodging for himself and for us."

Laertes at once accompanied his new acquaintance to Philine's door, where he left him standing a moment in order to get confectionery in a neighbouring shop. "You will certainly be thankful to me," he said, when he came back, "because I have procured for you this pleasant acquaintance." The lady came out of the room to meet them in a pair of little slippers with high heels. She had thrown a black mantilla over a white negligé which, just because it was not quite clean, gave her a homely and comfortable appearance ; her little short dress allowed the daintiest feet to be seen.

"You are welcome to me !" she cried to Wilhelm, "and accept my thanks for the beautiful flowers." She led him with one hand into the room, while with the other she pressed the bouquet to her bosom. When they had sat down, and were occupied with indifferent conversation, to which she understood how to give a charming direction, Laertes shook into her lap burnt almonds, which she at once began to nibble.

"Do you see what a child this young fellow is !" she exclaimed ; "he will want to persuade you that I am very fond of such dainties, and it is he who cannot live without enjoying something sweet."

"Let us confess to you," replied Laertes, "that we in this as in many things are company to one another. For example," said he, "to-day is a beautiful day ; I thought we might go for a walk and take our midday meal at the mill. Most willingly, we must make a slight change for our new acquaintance." Laertes jumped away, for he never walked, and Wilhelm wanted

to go home to have his hair put straight which still looked very much disarranged by the journey.

"That you can do here," she said, called her small servant, and in the nicest manner made Wilhelm take off his coat, put on her peignoir and let his hair be dressed in her presence. "We mustn't waste any time," she said, "we do not know how long we can still remain together."

The boy who was more sulky and unwilling than unskilful, did not behave himself at his best, plucked the hair of Wilhelm and seemed as though he did not want to be finished. Philine several times reprimanded his bad manners, at last pushed him away impatiently and drove him out of the door. She now herself undertook the trouble and curled the hair of our friend with great ease and elegance, though she did not seem to be in a hurry and she had to find fault with this or that in her work, while she could not avoid touching his knees with hers and bringing the bunch of flowers and her bosom near to his lips so that he was more than once led into the temptation of pressing a kiss upon them.

When Wilhelm with a small powder knife had cleaned his forehead, she said to him, "Put it in your pocket and think of me." It was a neat knife, the handle of inlaid steel showed the friendly words "Think of me." Wilhelm put it in his pocket, thanked her, and asked permission to be allowed to make a present in return.

They were now ready. Laertes had brought the carriage, and now began a very amusing drive. Philine threw out of the window something to every poor person who begged from them, at the same time calling to him a bright and lively word.

They had scarcely arrived at the mill and had ordered a meal, when music was heard in front of the house. They were miners, who on cither and triangle sang various nice songs with lively and shrill voices. It did not last long, when a crowd streaming past had closed a circle round them and the company nodded their applause to them from the window. When they saw this attention they extended their circle and seemed to prepare themselves for the most important little piece. After a pause a miner with an axe came forward and represented the action of the mining work while the others played a serious tune.

It did not last long before a peasant stepped out of the crowd and gave everyone to understand, in a threateningly pantomime fashion, that he must get away. The company was astonished at this, and first recognized the miner disguised as a peasant when he opened his mouth and in a kind of recitative scolded the other for daring to carry on business on his ground. The other was not disconcerted, but began to explain to the former that he had a right to break in here, and gave him the first ideas of mining. The peasant, who did not understand the strange terminology, asked all kinds of silly questions, at which the onlookers, who felt themselves to be cleverer, burst into hearty laughter. The miner tried to make things clear to him and pointed out to him the advantage which would at last come to him too if the treasures lying beneath the ground were brought out from it. The peasant who had at first threatened him with blows, by degrees let himself be calmed down and they parted good friends from one another ; but the miner especially drew himself off from the quarrel in the most honourable way.

While at table Wilhelm said, " We have in this little dialogue the liveliest example of how useful the theatre could be for all ranks, how much advantage the State itself could draw from it, if one brought in view of the theatre the actions, occupations and undertakings of men from their good and praiseworthy side, in view of which the State itself must honour and protect them. Now we only represent the ridiculous side of mankind ; the comic poet is only a malicious tax-gatherer who has everywhere a watchful eye on the faults of his fellow-citizens and seems to be happy if he can fix one on them. Should it not be a pleasant and worthy labour for a statesman to survey the natural, inter-changing influence of all ranks and to guide a poet who is possessed of sufficient humour at his works ? I am convinced that in this way many very entertaining, at the same time useful and amusing, pieces could be invented."

" So far as I have been able to observe in my wanderings about," said Laertes, " people only know how to forbid, to hinder and to refuse, but seldom to command, to advance and to reward. Everything is allowed to go on in the world until it becomes harmful, then people become enraged and strike at random ! "

" Let alone the State and statesmen, so far as I am con-

cerned," said Philine, "I can only picture them to myself as in wigs, and a wig, it does not matter who is wearing it, excites in my fingers a convulsive movement ; I should like at once to take it down from the worthy gentleman, jump about in the room and laugh at the bald pate."

With some lively songs, which she sang very prettily, Philine cut short the conversation and spurred them on to a speedy return so that they might not miss seeing the tricks of the rope dancers in the evening. She continued her generosity to the poor on the way home in an amusing manner, bordering on boisterousness ; and at last when she and her travelling companions had no more money she threw out of the window her straw hat to a young girl and her neckcloth to an old woman.

Philine invited both her companions to her room, because, as she said, the public play could be seen better from her windows than in the other inn. When they arrived they found the stage put up and the background adorned with hanging carpets. The spring boards were already laid down, the slack ropes fastened to the posts and the tight rope pulled over the beams. The square was fairly full of people and the windows occupied with different sorts of spectators. The clown first prepared the assemblage for attention and good humour with some silliness at which the spectators are always accustomed to laugh. Some children, whose bodies displayed the most peculiar contortions, soon aroused now astonishment, now horror, and Wilhelm could not restrain his deep pity when he saw the child, for whom he had felt sympathy at first sight, produce with some trouble wonderful attitudes. Soon, however, the merry jumpers aroused an animated delight, when they first singly, then one behind the other, and finally altogether tumbled over forwards and backwards in the air. A loud clapping of hands and shouting rang out from the whole assembly.

But now the attention was directed to quite a different object. The children one after the other had to tread the rope, and indeed the pupils first, so that by their practisings they prolonged the play and displayed the difficulty of the art. Some men and grown-up women also exhibited themselves with fair skill, but not yet Monsieur Narciss nor yet Mlle Landrinette.

At last these also entered from a kind of tent behind red curtains spread over it, and by their pleasing appearance and

pretty dress fulfilled the hope of the audience, which hitherto had been happily supported. He, a bright young fellow of medium height, with black eyes and a strong pigtail ; she no less well and strongly built ; both exhibited themselves one after the other on the rope with easy movements, jumps and unusual postures. Her ease and his boldness, the exactitude with which both performed their clever pieces, increased with every step and jump the general pleasure. The grace with which they carried themselves, the apparent exertions of the others around them gave them the air of being lord and master of the whole troupe, and everyone considered them to be worthy of the rank.

The enthusiasm of the people was shared by the spectators in the windows ; the ladies looked unmoved at Narciss, the gentlemen at Landrinette. The people shouted for joy, and the more refined public could not restrain itself from clapping and there was still laughter over the clown. A few only slunk away, when some of the troupe, in order to collect money, pushed through the crowd with tin plates.

" They have managed their affair well, as it seems to me," said Wilhelm to Philine who lay by him at the window ; " I am surprised at their understanding how even small clever tricks were brought on by degrees and at the right time, and how from the unskilfulness of their children and the great perfection of their best ones they worked together a complete whole, which first awakened our attention and then entertained us in the most pleasant manner."

The people had gradually passed away, and the square had become empty, while Philine and Laertes quarrelled about the form and cleverness of Narciss and Landrinette, teasing one another alternately. Wilhelm saw the remarkable child standing in the street with the other children who played ; he called Philine's attention to her ; she at once in her lively way called to the child and beckoned, and, when it would not come, she stumbled down the stairs singing and brought it up.

" Here is the riddle," she cried, as she brought the child to the door. It remained standing at the entrance, as though it wanted at once to slip out again, it laid its right hand in front of its bosom and the left in front of its forehead and made a deep bow. " Don't be afraid, my dear little one," said Wilhelm, as he

went straight to her. She gazed at him with an uncertain look and came a few steps nearer.

"What is your name?" he asked.

"They call me Mignon."

"How old are you?"

"No one has counted my years."

"Who was your father?"

"The great devil is dead."

"Now that is strange enough!" exclaimed Philine.

They asked her something more, she brought out her answers in broken German and in a remarkably solemn manner; every time she placed her hands on her bosom and head and made a deep bow.

Wilhelm could not see enough of her. His eyes and his heart were irresistibly attracted by the condition of this being so full of mystery. He estimated her age to be twelve or thirteen years, her frame was well built, only that her limbs gave promise of a stronger growth or gave notice of one which was kept back. Her figure was not regular, but striking, her brow mysterious, her nose exceptionally beautiful, and her mouth, though for her age it seemed already too much closed, and she often moved it with her lips to one side, was still always ingenuous and charming. Owing to the rouge one could scarcely recognize her brownish complexion. This figure made a deep impression upon Wilhelm, he was still always looking at her, was silent and forgetful of those present in his reflections. Philine awakened him from his half-dream, while she handed to the child some of the confectionery that was left and signed to it to withdraw. It made its bow as before and went out of the door as quick as lightning.

When now the time came round that our new friends should separate for this evening, they first agreed upon another trip for the following day. They wanted again to take their midday meal at another place, in a keeper's lodge in the neighbourhood. Wilhelm spoke this evening much in praise of Philine, to which Laertes only answered shortly and frivolously.

The next morning, when they had again practised fencing for an hour, they went to Philine's inn, in front of which they saw drive up the carriage they had ordered. But how surprised was Wilhelm when the carriage disappeared, and still more when Philine was not to be found at home. She had, so they

said, set herself in the carriage with a couple of strangers who had arrived this morning, and had gone for a drive with them. Our friend, who had looked forward to a pleasant conversation in her company, could not conceal his annoyance. On the other hand, Laertes laughed, and cried ; " So she pleases me ! That is just like her ! Let us only go straight to the keeper's lodge ; let her be wherever she likes we will not miss our walk on her account."

When Wilhelm on the way continued to find fault with this inconsequent behaviour, Laertes said : " I find nothing inconsequent when anyone remains true to their character. When she proposes something or promises something to anyone, it is always under the silent stipulation that it will suit her convenience to carry out what she proposed or to keep her promise. She makes presents gladly, but one must always be prepared to give her back the present."

" That is a curious character," replied Wilhelm.

" Nothing less than curious, only she is no hypocrite. I like her on that account, indeed, I am her friend, because she represents to me so clearly the sex, which I have so much reason to hate. She is for me the true Eve, the ancestress of the female sex ; thus they are all, only they won't keep their word.

With various talk, in which Laertes expressed his hatred against the feminine sex in a very lively fashion, without, however, giving the reason for it, they arrived at the wood into which Wilhelm entered very much out of humour, because the utterances of Laertes had made the remembrance of his relation to Mariana again very much alive. Not far from a spring in shadow beneath splendid old trees they found Philine alone sitting at a stone table. She sang an amusing little song to meet them, and when Laertes enquired after her society, she exclaimed, " I have led them on splendidly ; I have hoaxed them, as they deserved. Already on the way I put their generosity to the proof, and when I noticed they were stingy of dainties, I at once resolved to punish them. When we had arrived they asked the waiter what there was to be had, he, with the usual fluency of his tongue, told of all that was there and still more. I saw their embarrassment : they looked at one another, stammered and asked for the price.

" Why are you hesitating so long ? " I exclaimed ; " the

table is a woman's business, let me provide for it. I thereupon began to order an absurd midday meal, for which much had to be fetched from the neighbourhood by messengers. The waiter, whose confidence I had obtained by making a wry mouth, helped me at last, and we have so alarmed them by the idea of a splendid banquet that they decided in a word to take a walk in the wood from which they will not easily return. I have for a quarter of an hour laughed to myself and shall laugh as often as I think of their faces." At table Laertes reminded her of similar cases ; they came into the way of relating amusing stories, misunderstandings and hoaxings.

A young man of their acquaintance came stealing out of the town through the wood with a book, sat himself down by them and praised the beauty of the place. He called their attention to the rippling of the spring, to the movement of the boughs, to the falling lights and to the song of the birds. Philine sang a little song about a cuckoo, which did not seem to please the newcomer ; he soon took his leave.

" If only I need not hear of Nature and Nature's scenes," exclaimed Philine, when he had gone ; " there is nothing more intolerable than calculating beforehand the pleasure which one enjoys. When it is fine weather we go for a walk, just as we dance when music is played. But who wants to think for a moment of the music or of the fine weather ? We are interested in the dancer, not in the violin, and to look into a pair of beautiful black eyes does wonderful good to a pair of blue eyes. What is the good of springs and fountains and rotten old lime trees ! " While she so spoke she looked at Wilhelm, who sat opposite her, with a glance into his eyes, which he could not prevent from at least penetrating to the door of his heart.

" You are right," he replied with some embarrassment, " man is for man the most interesting subject and perhaps ought to be the only thing which interests him. Everything else which surrounds us is either only the atmosphere in which we live, or the tool which we make use of. The more we stop there the more we take notice and a part in it the weaker becomes the feeling of our own worth and the feeling of society. The people who attach great value to gardens, buildings, clothes, adornment or any kind of possession are less companionable and pleasant ; they lose sight of people, to whom few are able to give pleasure

and gather together. Don't we see this in the theatre ? A good actor makes us soon forget a poor, unskilful decoration, on the other hand the most beautiful theatre makes the deficiency of good actors just really noticeable."

After dinner Philine set herself in the shadow of the long grass. Her two friends had to get for her a mass of flowers. She wound for herself a complete garland and put it on ; she looked wonderfully charming. The flowers were sufficient for yet another garland, she also plaited it, while both men sat near her. When it was finished, with all kinds of jokes and allusions she pressed it upon Wilhelm's head in the most graceful manner and pulled it more than once differently, until it seemed to sit rightly.

" And it seems," said Laertes, " that I shall go empty."

" Not at all," replied Philine. " You shall have nothing to complain of." She took her garland from her head and set it on Laertes.

" If we were rivals," said the latter, " we could have a violent fight as to which of us you have favoured the most."

" Then you were great fools," she replied, as she bent across to him and reached his mouth to be kissed, but at once turned round, flung her arm round Wilhelm and pressed upon his lips a smart kiss. " Which is the best ? " she enquired teasingly.

" Wonderful," said Laertes, " it seems as though nothing could taste after wormwood."

" As little," said Philine, " as any gift, which anyone enjoys without envy and caprice. Now," she exclaimed, " I had a desire to dance for an hour, and then we must look again at our jumpers."

They went home and found music there. Philine, who was a good dancer, enlivened her two companions. Wilhelm was not unskilful but he lacked practice in the art. His two friends undertook to instruct him.

They came late. The rope dancers had already begun to produce their tricks. On the square there were numerous spectators to be found ; when our friends got out, however, there was a remarkable crowd which a large number of people had brought to the gate of the inn at which Wilhelm lodged. Wilhelm sprang up to see what was happening and saw with horror, when he had pushed his way through the crowd, the master of the dancing rope company who was striving to drag the interesting child out of the house by her hair and with the

handle of a whip belaboured the small body unmercifully. Wilhelm rushed at the man like lightning and seized him by the chest.

"Leave the child alone," he cried like a madman, "or one of us does not leave from here." At last he seized the fellow by the throat with a force which only anger can give, so that the latter, thinking he would be stifled, let go the child and endeavoured to defend himself against his assailant. Some people who had pitied the child but had not dared to begin a quarrel, quickly fell on the arms of the rope dancer, disarmed him and threatened with much abusive language. He now seeing himself reduced to the weapon of his mouth began to threaten and to curse horribly ; the idle, useless creature would not do her duty, she refused to dance the egg-dance which he had promised the public, he would strike her dead and nobody should prevent him. He tried to get himself free so as to find the child, which had crept back among the crowd. Wilhelm held him back, and cried, "You shall not see or touch the creature until you give an account before a court of justice where you have stolen it ; I will push you to extremes ; you shall not escape me." This speech, which Wilhelm in the heat of the moment, without thought or intention, had spoken from an obscure feeling, or if you like, from an inspiration, at length calmed down the man in his wrath. He cried out : "What have I to do with the useless creature ? Pay me what her clothes cost and you may keep her ; we will be friends for this evening." He hurried thereupon to continue the interrupted performance and to satisfy the restlessness of the public by some important displays of his art. Wilhelm, now that it had become quiet, looked for the child, but she was nowhere to be found. Some thought they had seen her on the floor, others on the roofs of the neighbouring houses. After they had searched everywhere, they had to keep calm and wait to see whether she would not of herself come back again. Meanwhile Narciss had come home and Wilhelm asked him about the lot and origin of the child. He knew nothing about her, for he had not been long with the company ; on the other hand, he related his own experiences with great readiness and much levity. When Wilhelm congratulated him on the great applause which he had enjoyed he expressed himself with much indifference. "We are accustomed," he said, "to people laughing at us and wondering at our arts, but we shall not be at all im-

proved by the exceptional applause. The manager pays us and may see how he succeeds." He took his leave and wanted to withdraw quietly.

At the question, where he wanted to go so quickly, the young man smiled and confessed that his figure and talents invited a more solid applause than that of the great public. He had received messages from several ladies, who very eagerly desired to get to know him more intimately, and he was afraid that with the visits which he had to pay he would scarcely be ready before midnight. He continued to relate his adventures with the greatest sincerity, and would have pointed out the names, streets and houses had not Wilhelm refused such an indiscretion and politely dismissed him. Meanwhile Laertes had entertained Landrinette and assured her that she was fully worthy of being a woman and remaining one.

Now the negotiations went on with the manager for the child, who was handed over to our friend for thirty thalers, in return for which the blackbearded, vehement Italian completely waived his claims, but he would acknowledge nothing more as to the history of the child, except that after the death of his brother, who they had called the great devil on account of his exceptional skill, he had taken her to himself. The next morning was passed mostly in looking for the child. In vain they searched through all the corners of the house and neighbourhood ; she had vanished and they were afraid that she might have jumped into the water or otherwise done herself some harm.

Philine's charms could not divert the restlessness of our friend. He passed a melancholy, thoughtful day. In the evening, too, when the jumpers and dancers put forth all their powers to commend themselves to the public as well as possible, his spirit could not be cheered up and distracted.

Owing to the crowding in from neighbouring localities the number of people had increased extraordinarily and so too the snowball of applause rolled up to an enormous height. The jumping over the sword and through the barrel with paper bottoms made a great sensation. The strong man gave rise to general horror, alarm and astonishment when he laid himself with his head and feet on a couple of chairs pushed away from each other, on his upturned body placed an anvil and on it had a horse shoe hammered by some strong blacksmith's apprentices.

There was also the so-called strength of Hercules, when one row of men standing on the shoulders of a first row carries again women and youths, so that at last a living pyramid arises, on the top of which is a child, adorned as a ball and weathercock, this had never been seen in these regions and brought the whole play to a worthy end.

Narciss and Landrinette let themselves be carried in litters on the shoulders of the others through the most superior streets of the town amid the loud shouts of joy of the people. Ribbons, nosebags and silk handkerchiefs were thrown to them and people pressed forward to look in their faces. Everybody seemed to be happy to see them and to be thought worthy of a look from them.

"What actor, what writer, indeed what man above all would not see that he had reached the height of his desires, if by a noble word of some kind or a good deed he had brought forward such a general impression? What a valuable feeling it must be when one can awaken among the populace good and noble feelings, worthy of mankind even as quickly as is spread by an electric stroke, as these people have done by their bodily agility, if one would give to the mass of men the sympathy with all that is human, if with the representation of good fortune and bad, wisdom and folly one could kindle and stir their sluggish inner life and set it in lively and grave movement." So spoke our friend, but since neither Philine nor Laertes seemed in the mood for continuing such a discussion, he conversed with himself over these favourite reflections as he walked around the town till late at night and again pursued with all the liveliness and freedom of an unrestrained imagination his old wish that the good, the noble, and the great could be made visible to the senses by means of the theatre.

CHAPTER V

THE next day, when the rope dancers had departed with a great bustle, Mignon was again found at once and she came in when Wilhelm and Laertes continued their fencing exercises in the hall.

" Where have you hidden ? " asked Wilhelm in a friendly way ; " you have caused us much anxiety."

The child answered nothing and looked at him.

" You are now ours," said Laertes, " we have purchased you."

" What have you paid ? " enquired the child quite dryly.

" A hundred ducats," replied Laertes, " when you return them, you can be free."

" That is indeed a good deal ? " asked the child.

" Oh yes, if only you behave well."

" I will serve," she replied.

From that moment she observed exactly what the waiter had to do for the two friends in the way of service, and the next day would not allow him to come into the room. She wanted to do everything herself, did also her business, doubtless slowly, and occasionally not helpfully, yet with precision and great care.

She often stood by a vessel of water and washed her face with so great assiduity and vigour that she almost wore away her cheeks, till Laertes, by questions and teasing her, learnt that she was trying in every way to get the rouge off her cheeks, and owing to the zeal with which she did it the redness which she had produced by the rubbing appeared as the most firmly fixed rouge. This was pointed out to her and she left off and after she had been rested there appeared a beautiful brown complexion heightened only by a little red.

Wilhelm passed several days in this strange company entertained by the frivolous charms of Philine, by the mysterious presence of the child more than he liked to confess to himself, but he justified himself by a diligent practice in the arts of fencing and dancing, for which he would not easily again find opportunity.

He was not a little astonished and to some extent pleased when one day he saw Herr and Frau Melina arrive. Soon after the first joyous greetings they made enquiries about the manageress and the other actors, and perceived with great alarm that the former had already for a long time departed and the latter, except a few, were scattered. The young couple, after their union, in which as we know Wilhelm had been helpful, had looked about in several places for an engagement, having found none they had at last come to this little town, where some

people, who had met them on the way, would like to have seen a good theatre.

When they had made acquaintance Frau Melina did not in any way please Philine, nor did Herr Melina please the lively Laertes. They soon wished to be rid of the newcomers, and Wilhelm could not contribute any favourable sentiments for them, though he quickly assured them repeatedly that they were quite the right sort of people.

As a matter of fact, too, the life of our three adventurers, hitherto merry, was disturbed in more than one way by the enlargement of their society : for Melina began at the inn (he chanced to have found a room just in the same one where Philine lodged) at once to bargain and to wrangle. He wanted to have better rooms, richer meals, and quicker service for less money. In a short time innkeeper and waiters looked annoyed, and when the others, to have a joyous life, let everything please them and only paid quickly so as no longer to think about that which was finished, the meal which Melina at once arranged was each time gone through again, so that Philine without ceremony called him an animal that chews the cud. Even more disliked was Frau Melina by the merry young woman. This young lady was not without education, she was, however, completely lacking in mind and soul. She recited not badly and was always wanting to recite, but one soon noticed that it was only a recitation of words which laid stress on particular passages but did not express the feeling of the whole. With all this she was readily pleasant to everyone and especially to men. Much more did those, who were a good deal in her society, usually ascribe to her a fine understanding, for she was, if I may call it by one word, one who adopted the feelings of others ; she knew how to flatter with particular attention a friend whose respect she wanted to have, to enter into his ideas as far as possible, but as soon as they were quite beyond her capacity, to receive with ecstasy such a new vision. She understood how to speak and how to be silent and to watch with great care where the weak side of another person might be, though she had no malicious humour.

CHAPTER VI

MEANWHILE Melina had informed himself precisely about the wrecks of the former theatrical management. Scenery as well as stocks of clothes were pawned to some tradespeople, and a notary had received the order from the manageress, in certain circumstances, if amateurs appeared, to acquiesce in the sale readily. Melina wanted to look over the things and brought Wilhelm with him. The latter, when they opened the rooms for them, felt a certain inclination to them, which he did not however confess to himself. The bedraggled scenery was, too, in such a wretched condition, little showy also were the turkish and pagan clothes, old caricature coats for men and women, cowls for magicians, Jews and priests ; Wilhelm could not prevent himself from feeling that he had found the happiest moment of his life in the neighbourhood of similar trumpery.

Had Melina been able to see into Wilhelm's heart he would have pressed him with greater eagerness to hand over a sum of money to set free, display, and give life to these scattered pieces " into a beautiful whole." " What a fortunate man could I be," exclaimed Melina, " if I only possessed two hundred thalers in order as a beginning to obtain the possession of these first theatrical essentials. How soon would I get together a small play, which should quickly support us in this town, certainly in this neighbourhood." Wilhelm was silent and both left deep in thought the treasures which were again shut up.

From this time on Melina had no other talk but projects and proposals of how a theatre could be instituted and he could find his advantage. He tried to interest Philine and Laertes and made proposals to Wilhelm to advance money and to accept security in return. But on this occasion it now struck the latter that he should not have lingered here so long ; he excused himself and wanted to make arrangements for continuing his journey.

Meanwhile Mignon's figure and being had become for him always more charming. The child had something peculiar about her in all that she did. She did not walk either up or down the stairs, but sprang ; she jumped along the railings of

the passages, and before one was aware she was sitting above on a chest and remained quiet for a while. Wilhelm too had noticed that for everyone she had a special mode of salutation. For some time she greeted him with her arms thrown across her chest. For many days she was quite silent, at times she answered more to various questions, always in a strange manner so that you could not decide whether it was wit or ignorance of the language since she spoke broken German mixed with French and Italian. In Wilhelm's service she was inexhaustible and up early with the sun ; on the other hand, she disappeared early in the evening, slept in a room on the bare ground and could not be persuaded to take a bed or straw mattress. Often he found her washing herself. All her clothes were clean, though nearly everything had been stitched twice or three times. Wilhelm was also told that she went quite early every morning to Mass. He followed her there once and saw her in the corner of the church kneeling with a rosary and praying devoutly. She did not observe him ; he went home, had all sorts of ideas about this appearance and could not think of anything definite about her.

Fresh pressure from Melina for a sum of money for the redemption of the oft-mentioned theatrical apparatus decided Wilhelm still further to think of his departure. He wished to write to his people, who had not heard from him for a long time, by the day's post. He actually began a letter to Werner and had come a considerable way in the narration of his adventures in which, without himself noticing it, he had often swerved from the truth, when to his annoyance he found he had already written on the back of his sheet of paper. Angrily he tore up the paper and put off the repetition of his confession till the next post day.

CHAPTER VII

OUR society was now together again, and Philine, who was extremely attentive to every horse and carriage which passed by, cried with great animation : " Our pedant ! Here comes our dearest pedant ! Who has he got with him ? " She cried and beckoned from out of the window and the carriage drew up.

A miserably poor devil, whom from his shabby, grayish-brown coat and his ill-conditioned lower garments you must have taken for a schoolmaster, as they are accustomed to moulder at our universities, got out of the carriage, and greeting Philine as he took off his hat, discovered a badly powdered, otherwise very stiff wig, and Philine threw a hundred kisses of the hand to him. As she found her happiness in loving one set of men and enjoying their love, so the pleasure was no less, which she gave to herself as often as possible, in making jokes about the others, whom at that moment she did not love, in a most frivolous manner.

In the excitement with which she received this old friend one forgot to pay attention to the others who followed him. Wilhelm, however, thought he knew the two ladies and the elderly man who entered with them. It soon became clear also that he had often seen all three some years ago in a company which played in his native town. Since then the daughters had grown up, but the old man had changed little. The latter usually played the good-humoured, blustering old gentleman, of whom the German theatre is never without and whom one not infrequently meets with in ordinary life. For it is the character of our countrymen to do good and to render it without much pomp, so they seldom think that there is also a way of doing what is right with delicacy and grace, and driven by a spirit of contradiction they fall easily into the mistake of representing their dearest virtue in a sullen manner so as to make a contrast.

Our actor played such parts very well, and he played them so often and exclusively that he had adopted in ordinary life a similar way of behaving himself.

Wilhelm was greatly disturbed when he recognized him, for he remembered how often he had seen this man at the theatre near to his beloved Mariana ; he heard him still scolding, he heard her flattering voice with which she in so many parts had to meet his rough character.

The first lively question of the newcomers whether lodgings were to be found or hoped for outside was unfortunately answered in the negative, and one had to perceive that the companies with whom they sought information were engaged, and some were even anxious about having to separate in consequence of the approaching war. The blustering old man with his daughters had given up a profitable engagement for a change out of

vexation and affection, had with the pedant, whom they met on the way, hired a carriage so as to come here, where too, as they found good counsel was dear. The time, during which the others were conversing about their circumstances in a lively manner, Wilhelm passed deep in thought. He wanted to speak to the old man alone, wanted to hear about Mariana and feared to do so and was in a condition of the greatest restlessness. The kindness of the newly arrived ladies could not tear him from his dream ; but an exchange of words, which arose, made him attentive. It was Frederic, the fair-haired boy, who was accustomed to wait on Philine, but this time actively disobeyed, when he had to lay the table and bring in the food. " I have bound myself," he exclaimed, " to serve you, but not to wait on everybody." They got into a violent quarrel about it. Philine maintained he had to do his duty, and when he obstinately disobeyed, she told him without ceremony he could go where he liked.

" Do you, indeed, suppose that I cannot get away from you ? " he exclaimed, and went away defiantly, put his things together and at once hurried out of the house.

" Go, Mignon," said Philine, " and get for us what we want, tell it to the waiter and help to wait ! "

Mignon came in front of Wilhelm and asked in her laconic fashion : " Shall I ? " " May I ? " and Wilhelm replied : " Do, my child, what Mademoiselle tells you."

The child looked after everything, and the whole evening waited on the guests with the greatest care. After dinner Wilhelm tried to get a walk alone with the old man ; he succeeded, and after many questions as to how things had gone with him up till then, he turned the conversation on to the former company and Wilhelm at last ventured to enquire after Mariana.

" Tell me nothing of that dreadful creature ! " cried the old man, " I have sworn to think no more about her."

Wilhelm was startled at this utterance, but was in still greater embarrassment when the old man continued to declaim against her frivolity and dissoluteness. How gladly would our friend have broken off the conversation, but he must now for once endure the boisterous outpouring of the remarkable man.

" I am ashamed," continued the latter, " that I had such an inclination for her. Had you, however, known the young woman more closely, you would certainly excuse me. She was so **kind**,

natural and good, so pleasing and in every sense tolerable. Never had I imagined that impudence and ingratitude were to be the chief features of her character."

Wilhelm had already composed himself for hearing the worst of her, when all at once he observed with astonishment that the tone of the old man became more gentle, his talk at last ceased to flow, and he took a handkerchief from his pocket to dry the tears which at last completely broke off his talk.

"What is the matter with you?" exclaimed Wilhelm. "What gives to your feelings all at once a completely different direction? Don't hide it from me! I take more interest in the fate of this young woman than you imagine; only let me know all!"

"I have little to say," replied the old man, again relapsing into his serious, disagreeable tone of voice. "I shall never forgive her for what I have suffered for her. She had," he continued, "always a certain trust in me; I loved her like a daughter and had, as my wife still lived, formed the resolution of taking her to me and rescuing her from the hands of the old woman, from whose guidance I didn't promise myself much good. My wife died, the project came to nothing. Towards the end of my stay in your native town, not quite three years, I noticed in her a visible melancholy; I asked her about it but she put me off. At last we went on a journey. She drove with me in a carriage and I observed that she was expecting a child, which she soon confessed to me, and she was in the greatest fear of being turned off by the manager. It only lasted a short time, when he made the discovery, gave her notice at once of the contract, which besides was only in force for six weeks, paid her what she had to demand and left her, in spite of all remonstrances, behind in a small town, in a wretched inn. The devil take all dissolute girls!" exclaimed the old man greatly annoyed, "and especially her who has ruined for me so many hours of my life. What shall I tell at length of how I interested myself in her, what I have done for her, how I clung to her, how I in her absence provided for her. I would rather throw my money into the pond and spend my time training mangy dogs than ever again pay the smallest attention to such a creature. What happened? At first I received letters of gratitude, information of some places where she was staying, and at last no further word, not a word of thanks for the money which I had sent **for**

her confinement. Oh, the deceit and the frivolity of women is so fittingly united as to procure for them a comfortable life and for an honest fellow many miserable hours."

CHAPTER VIII

ONE can imagine Wilhelm's state when he came home after this conversation. All his old wounds were again torn open, and again the feeling became alive that she was not quite unworthy of his love ; for in the interest of the old man, in the praise which he had against his will to give her, her entire lovingness had again appeared, indeed even the violent accusation of the passionate man contained nothing which was able to lower her in the eyes of Wilhelm. For he recognized himself as a fellow culprit in her misdoings ; he had for himself only melancholy thoughts on the subject; he saw her as a woman after confinement, as a mother wandering about in the world without help, probably wandering about with his own child—ideas which awakened in him the most painful feeling.

Mignon had waited for him and lighted him upstairs. When she had put down the light she asked him to allow her this evening to pay her respects to him with a display of her art. He had rather forbidden it, especially as he did not know what it might mean. But he could not deny anything to this kind of creature. After a short time she re-entered. She carried a carpet under her arm, which she spread out on the ground. Wilhelm let her go on. She then brought four lights, put one at each corner of the carpet. A small basket with eggs which she then brought made her purpose clearer. With artistic measurement she stepped on to the carpet and laid the eggs in certain quantities apart from one another, then she called in someone who waited in the house and played the violin. He entered with his instrument in the corner, she bound her eyes, gave the sign and began with the music her movements like a piece of wound-up clockwork, while she accompanied time and tune with the stroke of the castanets. Quite easily and with exactitude she guided the dance. She trod so exactly and so surely in between the eggs, down with the eggs, that every moment one thought she must either crush one or by her swift turnings

break through the other. Not at all ! She touched none of them, though she went through the rows with all kinds of steps, close together and far apart, indeed even with jumps, and finally half kneeling. Unceasingly, like a clockwork, she ran her way and the wonderful music gave a fresh jolt at every repetition to the dance always beginning over again.

Wilhelm was quite carried away by the wonderful performance ; he forgot his cares, he followed every movement of the loved creature, and was astonished how in this dance her character developed itself in a splendid manner. Strong, sure, dry, vehement, she showed herself and in gentle postures more solemn than pleasant. He experienced in this moment once for all what he had already felt for Mignon. He longed to bring to his heart this deserted being in a condition of childhood and with the love of a father to awaken the joy of life.

The dance came to an end ; she gently rolled the eggs together with her feet into a little heap, left none behind, damaged none, set herself there, while she took the bandages from her eyes and finished her artistic display with a bow.

Wilhelm thanked her for having so nicely and unexpectedly performed the dance for him, which he wanted to see. He stroked her and regretted that she had to let herself be so morose. He promised her a new cloak, at which she answered hastily : " Your colour ! " That he also promised to her, though he did not know clearly what she meant by it. She took the eggs together, the carpet under her arm and asked whether he had anything else to command, and swung herself out of the door.

From the musician he gathered that she had for some time given herself much trouble to sing before him the dance, which was the well-known Fandango, until he was able to play it. She had also offered him some money for his pains, but this he did not wish to take.

CHAPTER IX

AFTER a restless night, which our friend passed partly awake, partly troubled with grievous dreams, in which he saw Mariana now in all her beauty, now as a miserable figure, now with a child on her arm, now deprived of the same, the morning

had scarcely broken when Mignon entered with a tailor. She brought gray cloth and blue taffeta, and declared in her way that she wanted to have a new coat and sailor trousers, such as she had seen on boys and in the town with blue cuffs and ribbons.

Since the loss of Mariana, Wilhelm had laid aside all bright colours. He had accustomed himself to gray and dark clothes and only perhaps a sky-blue lining on a small collar of this colour enlivened to some extent that subdued clothing. Mignon eager to wear his colours urged on the tailor, who promised to deliver his work shortly.

The dancing and fencing lessons which our friend took to-day with Laertes were not very successful. They were also interrupted by the arrival of Melina, who showed in detail how a small company was now got together with which enough pieces could be played. He renewed his proposal for Wilhelm to put up some money for the establishment, but the latter again showed his indecision.

Philine and the young girls came in with laughter and tears. They had again planned a walk, for change of place and objects was a pleasure they always longed after. Every day to have a meal at a different place was their greatest desire. This time it was to be a water party.

The boat with which they were to go down the meanderings of the charming river had been already ordered by the pedant. Philine urged them on, the company did not delay and was soon on board.

"What are we to begin now?" said Philine, when they had all sat down on the seats.

"The shortest thing would be," replied Laertes, "for us to extemporize a play. Let each take a part, which is most suited to his character, and we shall see how we succeed."

"Splendid!" said Wilhelm, "for in a society in which one is not disguised, where everything only follows its own notion, grace and entertainment cannot long exist, and when one is always disguised, nothing gets done. It is therefore not done badly, if we at once from the beginning give ourselves the disguise and afterwards under the mask are as sincere as we like."

"Yes," said Laertes, "therefore this is such a pleasant thing with women, who never let themselves be seen in their natural guise."

"That is because," said Madame Melina, "they are not so vain as men, who imagine that they are already always sufficiently pleasant, as Nature has produced them."

Meanwhile they went along between charming bushes and hills, between gardens and vineyards, and the young ladies, especially Madame Melina, expressed their delight in the neighbourhood. The latter even began solemnly to recite a nice poem of the narrative style about a similar scene of Nature ; but Philine interrupted her and proposed a law that no one should venture to speak of an inanimate object ; much rather did she carry through with zeal the proposal for extemporized comedy. The blustering old man was to represent a pensioned-off officer, Laertes a fencing master on holiday, the pedant a Jew, she herself wanted to be a Tyrolese maiden, and left to the others to choose their parts for themselves. One had to imagine that they were a company of mere strangers to the world who had just come together on a market day. She at once began to play her part with the Jew and a general cheerfulness spread around. They had not gone far, when the skipper stopped to take up some more, if the company allowed it, who stood on the bank and beckoned.

"That is just what we wanted," cried Philine, an unknown passenger was just wanted by the travelling company.

A well-built man got into the boat whom we could well have taken for a clergyman from his clothes and dignified mien. He saluted the company, who thanked him in their way and soon made him acquainted with their joke. He at once took up the part of a country clergyman, which, to the astonishment of all, he carried through in the nicest manner possible, while he now admonished, now related stories, allowed some weak sides to be seen, yet knew how to keep himself respected.

Meanwhile everybody who only once came out of his character had to pay a forfeit. Philine had gathered them together with great care, and she especially threatened the clerical gentleman with many kisses on the future redemption of them, though he himself never came in for punishment. Meline, on the other hand, was completely plundered ; shirt studs and buckles, and everything that is movable on the body, Philine had taken for herself ; for he wanted to represent a travelling Englishman and couldn't at all get into the part.

The time passed in the pleasantest way possible ; everyone had strained his imagination and wit to the uttermost and everyone adorned his part with pleasant and entertaining jokes. Thus they came to a place where they wanted to stay for the night, and Wilhelm on a walk soon fell into an interesting conversation with the clergyman, as we will call him in accordance with his appearance and part.

" I find this practice," said the unknown one, " very useful among actors, indeed in the society of friends and acquaintances. It is the best way of bringing people out of themselves, and by means of a circuitous route bringing them back into themselves again. By every company it should be introduced that there must often be a practice of this kind, and the public would certainly gain thereby if every month there were performed a piece which had not been written, but on which the actors had prepared themselves in many rehearsals."

" We should not," replied Wilhelm, " think of an extemporized piece as such, as has been composed at once on the spur of the moment, but as such in which the plan, treatment and division of the scenes have been given, but the performance of it is left to the actors."

" Quite right," said the unknown one, " and as regards this performance, such a piece would gain exceptionally as soon as the actors were only once going. Not the performance by means of words, for by means of these must the superior writer indeed adorn his work, but the performance by means of gestures and demeanour, exclamations and what belongs thereto—in short, the dumb, half loud play which by degrees seems with us to have become quite lost. There are indeed actors in Germany whose bodies show what they think and feel, who by means of silence, hesitation, nods, by gentle, pleasing movements of the body, prepare a speech and know how to unite the pauses of the conversation by means of a pleasing pantomime with the whole ; but a practice which came to the assistance of a happy naturalness and taught it to be in rivalry with the author is much to be desired—it is not so much in the way of acting as for the consolation of those who visit the theatre."

" But should not," replied Wilhelm, " a fortunate disposition as the first and last thing bring an actor, like every other artist, perhaps every man, close to the lofty goal he aims at ? "

" The first and last, beginning and end it may well be and remain, but in the middle the artist is deficient in much, if the culture, and indeed early culture, has not made him what he ought to be ; for perhaps he to whom one ascribes genius is worse off in this way than one who only possesses ordinary capabilities, for the former can more readily be misinformed and more violently pushed on to a false path than the latter."

" But," replied Wilhelm, " will genius not serve itself, heal itself the wounds which it has self-inflicted ? "

" Not at all," replied the other, " or at least only scantily ; let nobody think that the first impressions of youth can be overcome. Has he grown up in a praiseworthy freedom, surrounded by beautiful and noble objects, if his masters have taught him that which first of all he ought to know so as to comprehend the rest more easily, if he has learnt what he never need unlearn, if his first activities were so directed that he can in the future bring to pass what is good more easily and in a more comfortable fashion, without ever having to disaccustom himself from it, so this man will lead a freer, more complete and happier life than another, who has obstructed his first youthful powers in opposition and in error. So much is spoken and written about education, and I see only few men who grasp and are able to carry out in practice the simple but great conception which includes everything else within itself."

" That may well be true," said Wilhelm, " for everyone is so limited as to wish to educate another after his own pattern. They are fortunate therefore whom Fate takes charge of, and educates each after his own fashion."

" Fate," replied the other smiling, " is a superior but expensive tutor. I would myself always rather keep to the reason of a human master. Fate, for whose wisdom I have every respect, may have on the chance by which it works a very unsuitable instrument. For the latter seldom appears to carry out exactly and clearly what the former has commanded."

" You seem to express very wonderful ideas," replied Wilhelm.

" Not at all ! Most of what one encounters in the world justifies my opinion. Do not many adventures show at the beginning great sense and do not most of them pass off into something ridiculous ? "

" You mean to joke."

"And is it not," continued the other, "just so with what everyone meets with. Admitted Fate might have determined someone to be a good actor (and why should it not also provide us with good actors), but unfortunately chance led the young man to a puppet play, where early on he could not refrain himself from taking part in something in bad taste, something tolerably silly, so as to find something interesting and so to receive on a false side the youthful impressions which can never be obliterated and from which we can never remove a certain attachment."

"What brings you to the question of a puppet play," Wilhelm interrupted him with some consternation.

"It was only an arbitrary example ; if you don't like it, let us take another. Admitted Fate might have destined some one to be a great painter and it pleased chance to cast his youth among dirty cabins, stables and barns, do you imagine that such a man will ever elevate himself to purity, nobleness and freedom of soul ? The livelier the sense with which in his youth he grasped what was impure, and in his own way has ennobled it, the more powerfully will it take vengeance on him in the course of his life, because he has united it with his inmost being, while he has endeavoured to overcome it. He who in early life has lived in bad and trifling society, though later on he can have better, he will always yearn back to that, the impression of which is bound up with his youthful memories and with the joys which can seldom return."

It is easy to imagine that the rest of the company had gradually withdrawn from this conversation. In particular Philine at the beginning had stepped aside. Wilhelm and the Unknown One came back to them by a side path. Philine brought out the forfeits and they had to be redeemed in all kinds of ways. In this the stranger by the most curious devices and by a natural sympathy recommended himself to the whole company and especially to the ladies, and so the hours of the day passed in the most pleasant manner amid joking, singing, kisses and teasings of all sorts.

CHAPTER X

WHEN they wanted to return home, they looked about for their clergyman, but he had vanished and was not to be found anywhere.

"It is not nice of the man, who otherwise seemed to understand the world quite well," said Mme. Melina, "to leave a society, which had received him in such a friendly way, without taking leave."

"I have all the time been thinking," said Laertes, "when I may have seen the remarkable man before. I was just about to ask him about it at our parting."

"It was the same with me," replied Wilhelm, "and I certainly would not have let him go until he had told us something more closely about his circumstances. I am greatly mistaken if I have not spoken somewhere with him already."

"And yet you may be mistaken there," said Philine. "This man has indeed the false appearance of an acquaintance, because he looks like a man and not like a Tom, Dick or Harry."

"What does that mean?" said Laertes; "don't we too look like men?"

"I know what I am saying," replied Philine, "and if you cannot understand me, never mind. In the end I don't want to have to interpret my words."

Two carriages drove up. They praised the providence of Laertes who had ordered them. Philine took a place next to Mme. Melina, Wilhelm was opposite, and the others arranged themselves as well as they could. Laertes himself rode back to the town on Wilhelm's horse, which had been brought out.

Philine was scarcely seated in the carriage when she began to sing pretty songs and to lead the conversation to stories which she said could be treated successfully as dramas. By this clever turn she had soon put her young friend in the best humour, and from the wealth of his lively store of images he composed at once a whole play with all its acts, scenes, characters and plots. It was thought a good thing to insert some airs and songs; they composed them, and Philine, who entered into everything, adapted well-known melodies to them and sang them on the spur of the moment. To-day she had one of her beautiful days, her very

beautiful days : she knew how to enliven our friend with all kinds of teasing; he felt in good spirits, such as he had not had for a long time.

Since that cruel discovery had torn him from the side of Mariana, he had remained faithful to his vow and had guarded himself from the condition of a womanly embrace closing round him and avoided the faithless sex and shut his griefs, his affection and sweet wishes within his breast. The conscientiousness with which he observed this vow gave a secret support to his whole being, and as his heart could not exist without sympathy, communications with affection were a necessity for him. He again went about as if accompanied by the first glamour of youth, his eyes caught up every charming object with delight, and his judgment about a loving person had never been more indulgent. Unfortunately it is easy to see how dangerous was for him in such a condition the wild young girl. At home they found everything in Wilhelm's room ready for their reception, chairs arranged in the right place for a reading aloud and the table placed in the middle, on which the punch had to have its place.

Plays about the German knights were at that time just new and had drawn to themselves the attention and inclination of the public. The old blusterer had brought along one of this kind, and the reading aloud had been determined on. They sat down. Wilhelm took possession of the copy and began to read aloud. The knight in harness, the old citizens, the loyalty, uprightness and integrity, especially the independence of the acting personalities were received with great applause. The reader did his utmost possible and the company was beside itself. Between the second and third act came the punch in a great drinking cup ; and as in the play there was a great deal of drinking and clinking of glasses, nothing was more natural than that the company in each case of the kind put itself in an animated manner in the place of the heroes, likewise clinked glasses and drank the health of the favourites among those who were acting.

Everybody was on fire with the noblest national feeling. How pleased was this German company, in accordance with their character, to have poetic enjoyment on their own soil. Especially had the vaults and cellars, the dilapidated castles, the moss and the hollow trees, but above all, the nocturnal

gipsy scenes, and the secret tribunal a quite incredible effect. Every actor saw now how in helmet and armour, every actress how in a tall standing collar they could show before the public their truly German origin. Everyone wanted at once to assume a name from the play or from the German history, and Mme. Melina asserted that the son or daughter (which she was expecting) could not be baptized otherwise than Adelbert or Matilda. Towards the fifth act the applause was louder and more uproarious, indeed at last when the hero escaped from his oppressor and the tyrant was punished, the delight was so great that they swore they had never enjoyed such happy hours. Melina, who was excited by the drink, was the loudest, and when the second bowl of punch was emptied and midnight was drawing nigh, Laertes swore solemnly that nobody was ever worthy of putting his lips to these glasses again, and with this asseveration he threw his glass behind him and through the window panes on to the street. The rest followed his example, and in spite of the protests of the innkeeper who came hurrying by, the bowl of punch itself which after such a festival could not again be desecrated by unholy drink, was broken into a thousand pieces. Philine, who was least regarded at the carouse, as the two young women were lying on the sofa not in the most decorous postures, excited the others to make a noise with malicious joy. Mme. Melina recited some noble poems, and her husband, who in the midst of a carouse was not very amiable, began to find fault with the bad preparation of the punch and assured them that he understood how to organize a festival in a quite different way, and became at last, when Laertes commanded silence, even more coarse and noisy, so that the latter without long reflecting threw at his head the fragments of the bowl and thereby increased the noise not a little. Meanwhile the watchman had come along and demanded admission to the house. Wilhelm, much inflamed by his reading, though he had only drunk a little, had enough to do with the help of the innkeeper to keep the people quiet by means of money and soothing words, and to get the members of the company home in their precarious condition. When he returned, overcome with sleep, he threw himself on the bed without undressing, full of ill-humour, and nothing was equal to the unpleasant sensation when he opened his eyes the next morning and, with a gloomy look at the devastations of the

previous day, saw the trouble and evil effects which an intellectual, lively and well-intentioned poetical work had brought forth.

CHAPTER XI

AFTER a short consideration he called the innkeeper at once and got him to put down the damage to the account of his bill. At the same time he perceived, not without annoyance, that his horse which Laertes had ridden yesterday was so exhausted that it probably had got so stiff that it had foundered, as one is wont to say, and that the farrier gave little hope of its recovery.

A greeting from Philine, which she nodded to him from her window, put him again into a cheerful mood and he at once went into the next shop to buy for her a small present in return for the powder knife for which he was still indebted to her, and we must confess, he did not keep himself within the proportionate limits of a return present. He bought for her not only a pair of very dainty earrings but he took as well a hat and neckcloth and some other small things which he had seen her the first day throw away in a spendthrift fashion.

Mme. Melina, who had just come to see him, as he handed over his presents, looked for an opportunity before dinner to call him very seriously to account for his feeling towards this young woman ; and he was all the more astonished as he thought he deserved nothing less than these reproaches. He swore by all that he valued most that it in no way occurred to him to direct his attention to this person, whose whole behaviour he knew quite well ; he excused himself as well as he could for his friendly and kindly behaviour to her, but Mme. Melina was not at all satisfied, much rather was she always more annoyed, when she had to observe that the flattery by which she had acquired a kind of inclination from our friend was not sufficient to ward off this possession from the attacks of a lively, younger and more happily gifted nature.

Likewise she found her husband, when they came to dinner, in a very bad humour, and he began to express himself about trivial details, when the innkeeper came in and announced a harp-player. " You will certainly," he said, " find pleasure in

the music and songs of this man ; no one who hears him can restrain himself from wondering at him and communicating some little thing to him."

" Let him go away ! " replied Melina. " I am not the least in the mood for hearing an organ grinder, and in any case we have singers among us who have gladly deserved something." He accompanied these words with an artful glance which he threw to Philine. She understood it and was at once ready, to his vexation, to protect the singer who had been announced. She turned to Wilhelm and said : " Shan't we hear the man ; shall we do nothing to get us out of this wretched ennui ? "

Melina wanted to answer, and the quarrel would have become more animated had not Wilhelm greeted the man who was at the moment coming in and beckoned him to them.

The figure of this singular guest astounded the whole company, and he had already taken possession of a chair before anyone had the heart to enquire of him or otherwise bring forward anything. His bald skull was surrounded with a few gray hairs, large blue eyes looked out gently beneath long white eyebrows. To a well-formed nose was joined a long white beard without covering the pleasing upper lip, and a long dark brown garment enveloped the slender body from the neck to the feet, and so he began a prelude on the harp, which he had in front of him.

The pleasant tunes which he drew forth from the instrument soon enlivened the company.

" You are accustomed to sing too, my good old man," said Philine.

" Give us something," said Wilhelm, " to delight the heart and mind at the same time as the senses. The instrument should only accompany the voice, for melodies, cadences and fugues without words and meaning seem to me like butterflies or beautiful, gay birds that hover around in the air before our eyes which perhaps we catch and appropriate to ourselves, while the song rises like a genius to heaven and incites our better self to accompany it."

The old man looked at Wilhelm, then aloft, made some frets on the harp and began his song. It contained a glorification of song, praised the good fortune of singers and exhorted men to honour them. He delivered the song with so much life and **truth that** it seemed as though he had composed it at this moment

and on this occasion. Wilhelm scarcely restrained himself from falling on his neck, only the fear of arousing loud laughter brought him back to his chair ; for the others made just half aloud silly remarks and disputed as to whether he was a parson or a Jew.

When they asked about the composer of the song, he gave no definite answer ; he only assured them that he had plenty of songs and only wished that they might please. The greatest part of the company was delighted and joyful, even Melina himself became in his way outspoken, and while they talked with one another and joked the old man began to sing the praise of the social life in the most intellectual manner. He praised harmony and amiability with flattering melodies. All at once his song became dry and confused when he mourned over hateful taciturnity, narrow-minded enmity and dangerous quarrelling and was glad to throw away from every spirit these disagreeable bonds, when he, carried along on the wings of a penetrating melody, praised the creators of peace and sang of the happiness of the souls who are restored to one another.

He had scarcely finished when Wilhelm cried out : " Whoever thou art, thou who comest to us as a helpful protecting spirit with a blessed and animating voice, take my respect and thanks ! Feel, that we admire you, and trust in us if you are ever in want of anything."

The old man was silent, first let his fingers glide over the strings then grasped them more firmly and sang : as the singer after the song was finished grasped a glass of wine which stood there poured out for him and with a friendly look drank it off, turning to his benefactor, and then arose general delight in the company. They clapped and called to him, May this glass be for his health and the strengthening of his old limbs. He still sang some romances and always awakened more liveliness in the company.

" Do you know the song, old man," cried Philine. "' The shepherd adorns himself for dancing.⁵ "

" Oh yes," he replied. " If you wish to sing the song and perform it, I shall not be wanting."

Philine stood up and held herself ready. The old man began the melody and she sang a song, which we cannot communicate to our readers, because perhaps they could find it in bad taste or **perhaps not decorous.**

W I L H E L M M E I S T E R

" What notes are those without the wall,
 Across the portal sounding ?
Let's have the music in our hall,
 Back from the roof rebounding."
So spoke the king, the henchman flies,
His answer heard, the monarch cries :
 " Bring in that ancient minstrel."

" Hail gracious king, each noble knight !
 Each lovely dame, I greet you !
What glittering stars salute my sight !
 What heart unmov'd may meet you !
Such lordly pomp is not for me,
For other scenes my eyes must see :
 Yet deign to list my harping."

The singer turns him to his art
 A thrilling strain he raises ;
Each warrior hears with glowing heart,
 And on his lov'd one gazes.
The king, who liked his playing well,
Commands, for such a kindly spell
 A golden chain be given him.

" The golden chain give not to me,
 Thy boldest knight may wear it,
Who 'cross the battle's purple sea
 On lion breast may bear it :
Or let it be thy chancellor's prize
Amid his heaps to feast his eyes,
 Its yellow glance will please him.

" I sing but as the linnet sings,
 That on the green bough dwelleth ;
A rich reward his music brings,
 As from his throat it swelleth :
Yet might I ask, I'd ask of thine
One sparkling draught of purest wine,
 To drink it here before you."

He viewed the wine, he quaff'd it up :
 " O draught of sweetest savour !
O ! happy home, where such a cup
 Is thought a little favour !
If well you fare, remember me,
And thank kind Heaven, from envy free,
 As now for this I thank you."

T. CARLYLE.

Meanwhile the company, which had always become more cheerful, had drank some more glasses of wine and began to be very noisy. As the ill-consequences of their pleasure **still** floated freshly before the memory of our friend, he endeavoured to break off, put a rich reward into the hand of the old man for his trouble ; the others also did something, they let him go away and rest, promising themselves a repeated pleasure from his skill.

When he had gone, Wilhelm said to Philine : " Indeed I can find neither poetical nor moral merit in your love song ; however, if you ever perform at the theatre something fitting with naivete, strangeness and delicacy, you will certainly receive a more lively applause."

" Yes," said Philine, " it must be a very pleasant sensation to warm yourself on ice."

" Above all," said Wilhelm, " how much does this man put to shame many actors ! Have you observed how right was the dramatic expression of his romances ? Without doubt, there lived more representation in his song than in our stiff presentation on the stage. We should keep the performance of many plays rather for a narration and ascribe to these musical narrations a material presence."

" You are wrong," replied Laertes. " I don't consider myself a great actor or singer, but this I do know, if the music guides the movements of the body, gives life to them and at the same time prescribes measure for them, if declamation and expression are assigned to me by the composer, I am quite a different man from when I have to produce everything in the prosaic drama and must first invent measure and declamation, in which everyone who plays with me can disturb me."

" This much I know," said Melina, " this man certainly puts us to shame in one point, and indeed in a chief point. The strength of his talents is shown by the use which he draws from them, it stirs us, who perhaps will soon be embarrassed where to find a meal, to share our meal with him. He knows how to entice from our pockets by means of a little song the money which we could employ in putting ourselves into some position. It appears to be so pleasant to squander money with which one could procure an existence for oneself and others."

In consequence of this remark the conversation did not take

the most agreeable turn. Wilhelm, against whom the reproach was properly directed, answered with some passion, and Melina, who was not possessed of the greatest refinement, at last brought forward his grievances with fairly dry words.

CHAPTER XII

AFTER a short time, which he had passed disturbed by all kinds of thoughts, sitting and looking in front of him Philine sauntered out to the door of the house, singing, sat herself by him, one might almost say on him, so near did she move to him, leant on his shoulders, played with his locks of hair, coaxed him and said to him the kindest words in the world. She asked him to remain and not leave her alone in the company, in which she would die of ennui ; she could no longer endure to be under the same roof as Melina and therefore she had settled down on this side.

Wilhelm endeavoured in vain to send her away and to make her understand that he neither could nor would remain any longer. She did not leave off her entreaties, indeed she unexpectedly threw her arms round his neck and kissed him with the most lively expression of desire.

" Are you mad," exclaimed Wilhelm, while he tried to get himself free. " To make the public street witness of such caresses, which I in no way deserve ! Let me go ! I cannot and will not stay."

" And I will hold you fast," said she, " and I will kiss you in the public street for so long until you promise me what I want. I die of laughing," she continued. " After this intimacy the people certainly regard me as your wife of a month's standing, and the husbands who see such a pretty scene will praise me to their wives as a pattern of a childlike unembarrassed tenderness."

At that moment some people went past, and she caressed him in the most graceful manner, and he, in order to cause no scandal, was obliged to play the part of the patient husband. Then she made faces at the people behind their back, and full of wild spirits she practised all kinds of improprieties, until he was at last obliged to promise that he would still remain to-day and to-morrow and the day after.

" You are a regular block ! " she said thereupon, as she left

him, " and I am a fool for wasting so much friendliness on you." She stood up in vexation and went some steps, then she returned laughing. " I just think that I must be madly in love with you ; I will only go and fetch my knitting so that I may have something to do. Just stay, so that I may find again the man of stone on the seat of stone."

This time she did him wrong ; for though he strove to restrain himself from her, yet he would at this moment, had he been with her in a lonely arbour, probably not have left her caresses unresponded to. She went into the house, after she had cast towards him a mischievous glance. He had no reason for following her, much rather had her behaviour awakened in him a fresh antagonism ; he got up, however, from the seat in order to follow her, without himself knowing why. He was just on the point of entering the door when Melina came by, addressed him with modesty and asked his pardon for some expressions in their conversation which had been too rough. " Don't be offended with me," he continued, " if in the condition in which I find myself, I perhaps show myself to be too anxious, but care for a wife, perhaps soon for a child, hinders me from one day to another from living quietly and passing my time in the enjoyment of pleasant sensations, as is still permitted to you. Think over the matter and if it is possible for you, put me in possession of the furniture which is here. I will not long be in your debt and shall remain everlastingly grateful to you."

Wilhelm found himself kept unwillingly on the threshold just as at this moment an irresistible inclination drew him over towards Philine, so he said with astonished distraction and hasty good humour : " If I can make you happy and contented by this means, I will no longer reflect about it. Go off and make everything straight ! I am ready to pay the money this evening or early to-morrow morning." He thereupon gave Melina his hand in confirmation of his promise and was satisfied when he saw him going rapidly over the street ; but unfortunately he was for the second time kept back from entering into the house and in a most disagreeable way.

A young fellow with a bundle on his back came rapidly along the street and met Wilhelm, who at once recognized him as being Frederick. " Here I am again," he exclaimed, as he let his large blue eyes joyfully wander about and up to all the

windows. "Where is Mademoiselle? May the devil stay longer in the world without seeing her!"

The innkeeper, who had just entered, replied: "She is upstairs," and with a few springs the young fellow was up the staircase and Wilhelm remained standing, as if rooted to the spot. In the first moments he might have pulled the young fellow by his hair backwards down the stairs; then the violent spasm of a powerful jealousy checked all at once the course of his animal spirits and his ideas, and as he gradually recovered from his torpidity, a restlessness and discomfort befell him such as he had never felt in his life before.

He went to his room and found Mignon busied with writing. The child had for a time taken pains with great diligence to write everything which she learnt by heart and had given it to her master and friend to correct. She was unwearied and grasped things well; but the letters remained uneven and the lines crooked. Here too her body seemed to contradict her spirit. Wilhelm, when his mind was at rest, found great pleasure in the attention of the child, this time took little notice of what she showed him; she felt it and was all the more troubled when she thought this time she had done the thing quite well.

Wilhelm's restlessness drove him up and down the passage of the house and soon again to the front door. A rider pranced forward with a good appearance, and though of middle age still betrayed some gaiety.

The innkeeper hastened to meet him, offered his hand as to a well-known friend and cried: "Oh, Herr Stallmeister, do we see you once again?"

"I will only bait my horse here," replied the stranger. "I must be off to the property so as to get everything arranged with rapidity. The Count is coming to-morrow with his wife: they will stay up there for some time so as to entertain the Prince of——as well as possible, who probably is setting up his headquarters in these regions."

"It is a pity you cannot stay with us," replied the landlord. The groom who sprang after him led away the Stallmeister's horse, who conversed with the landlord by the door, giving a sidelong glance at Wilhelm. The latter, when he noticed that they were talking about him, went away and walked up and down some streets.

CHAPTER XIII

IN the vexatious restlessness, in which he found himself, it occurred to him to go in search of the old man, by means of whose harp he hoped to drive away the evil spirits. When he enquired for the man they pointed at a miserable inn in a remote corner of the little town and in it the steps up to the floor, where the sweet tone of the harp rang out to him from a room. They were heart-stirring tones of complaint accompanied by a melancholy, anxious song. Wilhelm glided up to the door, and then the good old man delivered a kind of improvisation and always repeated a few strophes, partly singing, partly reciting, the listener was able after a short attention to understand more or less the following :

Who never ate his bread with tears
Who never through night's heavy hours
Sat weeping on his lonely bed—
He knows you not, ye heavenly powers.

Through you the paths of life we gain
Ye let poor mortals go astray
And then abandon them to pain—
E'en here the penalty we pay.

E. A. Bo WRING.

The melancholy, touching complaint penetrated deeply into the soul of the hearer. It seemed to him as though the old man was often prevented by tears from continuing : for the strings twanged alone till the voice again mingled with them softly in broken tones.

Wilhelm stood at the side of the door ; his soul was deeply moved, the melancholy of the unknown man opened his oppressed heart ; he did not withstand the feeling of sympathy and neither could nor would keep back his tears, which the heartfelt complaint of the old man at length drew from his eyes too. All the pains which oppressed his soul melted away at the same time ; he yielded himself to them, pushed against the door of the room and stood in front of the old man, who had been obliged to take for his seat a miserable bed, the only furniture of this wretched dwelling.

"What feelings have you not stirred in me, my good old man," he exclaimed. "All that was locked up in my heart, you have loosened ; don't let me disturb you, but continue to make a friend happy in soothing your own troubles." The old man wanted to stand up and say something. Wilhelm prevented him, for he had noticed at dinner that the old man spoke unwillingly, on the contrary, he sat down by him on the paillasse. The old man dried his tears and enquired with a friendly smile : "How is it you come here ? I wanted to call on you again this evening."

"We are quieter here," replied Wilhelm. "Sing to me what you like, what suits your frame of mind, and do it as though I were not here. It seems to me that to-day you could not make a mistake. I find that you are very fortunate in that you can occupy and entertain yourself so pleasantly in loneliness, and though everywhere you are a stranger, in your own heart you find the pleasantest companionship."

The old man looked at his strings and after a gentle prelude he struck up and sang :

Who longs in solitude to live,
Ah ! soon his wish will gain ;
Men hope and love, men get and give
And leave him to his pain.
Yes, leave me to my moan !
When from my bed
You all are fled,
I still am not alone.

The lover glides with footstep light ;
His love, is not she waiting there ?
So glides to meet me day and night,
In solitude my care,
In solitude my woe ;
True solitude I then shall know
When lying in my grave,
When lying in my grave,
And grief has let me go.

T. CARLYLE.

We should be too discursive and yet we could not express the charm of the singular conversation, which our friend held with the wonderful stranger. To everything which the young man said to him the old man answered with the clearest agree-

ment by means of concord which stirred all kindred feelings and opened a wide field for the imagination.

Whoever has been present at a meeting of devout people, who believe that in separation from the Church they can edify themselves in a purer, more heartfelt and spiritual manner, will be able to form an idea of the present scene ; he will remember how the leader of the meeting knows how to suit the verse of a song to his words, which elevate the soul, as the speaker wishes that it may take its flight, how another of the congregation adds in another melody the verse of another song, and to this again a third adds a third, whereby the kindred ideas of the songs from which they were derived, were indeed aroused, but each passage by means of the new combination becomes new and individual, as if it had been invented at the moment ; hence from a well-known circle of ideas, from well-known songs and sayings there arises for this particular society, for this moment an individual whole, by the enjoyment of which it is enlivened, strengthened and refreshed. Thus did the old man edify his guest, while from songs and passages known and unknown he brought into circulation feelings near and distant, awake and slumbering, pleasant and painful emotions from which in the present condition of our friend the best was to be hoped.

CHAPTER XIV

SO on his way back he really began to think more keenly than he had done hitherto about his position and had reached home with the intention of getting himself out of it, when the landlord disclosed to him in confidence that Mlle. Philine had made a conquest of the Stallmeister of the Count, who, after he had settled his commission on the property, had returned in the greatest haste and had had a good supper with her in her room.

Just at this moment Melina came in with the notary; they went together to Wilhelm's room, where the latter with some hesitation fulfilled his promise, paid out three hundred thalers to the credit of Melina, which he at once delivered to the notary, and in return received the document for the purchase of the whole theatrical furniture which was to be delivered to him the next morning.

They had scarcely parted when Wilhelm heard a cry of horror

in **the** house. He heard a youthful voice which angrily and menacingly was interrupted by immoderate weeping and howling. He heard this lamentation from above hurrying past his room to the bottom of the house.

When curiosity enticed our friend downstairs, he found Frederick in a state of madness. The boy wept, gnashed his teeth, stamped, threatened with clenched fists and appeared quite wild with anger and vexation. Mignon stood opposite and looked on with astonishment, and the landlord in some degree explained this phenomenon.

The boy after his return had been well received by Philine, seemed contented, festive and merry, had sung and jumped about, until the time when the Stallmeister made acquaintance with Philine. Now this young fellow, half child, half youth, had begun to show his vexation, to bang the doors and to run up and down. Philine had ordered him to wait this evening at table, at which he became more sullen and defiant, at last instead of putting a dish of ragout on the table, he had thrown it between mademoiselle and the guest, who were sitting somewhat near together, whereupon the Stallmeister had given him two vigorous boxes on the ear and kicked him out of the door. He, the landlord, had then helped to clean up the two people, whose clothes were very much spoiled.

When the boy heard of the good effect of his revenge, he began to laugh aloud, while tears still always streamed down his cheeks. For some time he heartily rejoiced until the shame which the strange man had done to him occurred to him and then he began afresh to howl and threaten. Wilhelm stood reflecting and ashamed before this spectacle. He saw his own inner being depicted with strong and exaggerated features ; he was also inflamed with an irresistible jealousy ; also if decency had not restrained him, he would willingly have satisfied his wild humour, willingly with a mischievous malicious joy have injured the loved object and challenged his rival, he would have destroyed the people who only seemed to be there for his vexation. Laertes, who also had come by and heard the story, roguishly strengthened the enraged boy, who asserted with oaths that the Stallmeister should give him satisfaction, he had never allowed an insult to rest on him, if the Stallmeister declined, he would know how to take vengeance on him.

Laertes was just here in his element. He went upstairs solemnly to challenge the Stallmeister in the name of the boy.

"That is amusing," said the Stallmeister. "Such a joke as this I had hardly promised myself this evening." They went downstairs and Philine followed them. "My son," said the Stallmeister to Frederick, "you are a fine fellow and I don't refuse to fight with you, only as our years and strength are so unequal as to make the affair somewhat hazardous, I propose instead of other weapons a pair of foils; we will rub the buttons with chalk and whoever marks on the other's coat the first or the most thrusts shall be deemed the victor and to be treated by the other with the best wine to be had in the town."

Laertes decided that this proposal could be accepted; Frederick obeyed him as his tutor. The foils were brought, Philine sat down, knitted and looked at the two combatants with great mental composure.

The Stallmeister, who fenced very well, was kind enough to spare his opponent and to let him get on to his coat some spots of chalk, whereupon they both embraced and wine was procured. The Stallmeister wished to know Frederick's parentage and history, the latter told a story which he had often repeated and with which we another time will make our readers acquainted.

Meantime in Wilhelm's soul this contest completed the picture of his own feelings, for he could not deny that he wished to drive the foil, or still rather a sword itself, against the Stallmeister, though he saw already that the latter was far superior to him in the art of fencing. He did not, however, bestow a look upon Philine, guarded himself from every utterance which could betray his feeling, and hurried, after he had drunk the health of the combatants, to his room where a thousand unpleasant thoughts pressed in upon him.

He recollected the time when his spirit rich in hope with boundless aims was raised aloft, when he floated in the liveliest enjoyment of every kind as in his proper element. It was clear to him that he had now got into an indefinite wandering, in which he now only tasted in sips what formerly he had quaffed in full draughts; but he could not clearly see what irresistible want Nature had made for the law of his being and how this want by the circumstances of his life had been only irritated, half satisfied and misdirected.

No one therefore should be surprised, if on consideration of his circumstances and while he was labouring to extricate himself from them he got into the greatest perplexity. It was not enough that by his friendship with Laertes, his inclination to Philine, his interest in Mignon he was kept longer than was right in a place and in a society in which he could cherish his favourite inclination, at the same time satisfy by stealth his desires and without proposing any aim to himself again pursue his old dreams. He thought he possessed sufficient strength to get himself out of those conditions and at once to depart. Now he had a few minutes previously entered into a money transaction with Melina, he had come to know the enigmatic old man and he felt an indescribable desire to unravel his history. But after much thought on one side and the other he was determined not to be kept back, or at least he thought he was determined. "I must be off," he exclaimed, "I will be off." He threw himself on to a chair and was greatly moved.

Mignon came in and asked if she could let down his hair. She came quietly; she was deeply grieved that she had been so abruptly dismissed by him. Nothing is more touching than a love nourished in silence, a faith made strong in secret, at last at the right moment comes near and is made manifest to him for whom it has hitherto not been of much value. The bud which had been so long and so firmly closed was ripe, and Wilhelm's heart could not have been more sensitive.

She stood in front of him and saw his unrest. "Master," she cried, "if you are unhappy, what will become of Mignon?"

"Dear creature," he said, as he took her hands, "thou also art among my troubles. I must be off."

She looked into his eyes which glistened with restrained tears and knelt before him with impetuosity. He held her hands, she laid her head on his knee and was quite still. He played with her hair and was kindly. She remained quiet for a long time. At last he felt in her a kind of quiver which began softly and then spread with increasing force through all her limbs. "What is the matter with thee, Mignon," he exclaimed, "what is the matter." She raised her little head up and looked at him, all at once put her hand on her heart, as with a gesture suppressing pain. He lifted her up, and she fell in his lap; he pressed her to him and kissed her. She answered by no

pressure of the hand, no movement. She held her heart tightly and all at once uttered a cry which was accompanied by convulsive movements of the body. She started up and fell down at once in front of him, as if all her joints were broken. It was a ghastly sight. "My child," he exclaimed as he lifted her up and embraced her, "my child, what is the matter with you?" The quivering continued, which from the heart was communicated to the tottering limbs. He clasped her to his heart and bedewed her with his tears. All at once she appeared again to be quite rigid as one enduring the most severe bodily pain, and soon with a fresh impetuosity all her limbs again became alive and she threw herself on his neck like a spring which closes, while in her inmost being there was, as it were, a great rent and at the moment a stream of tears flowed from her closed eyes to his bosom. He held her fast. She wept, and no tongue can express the force of those tears. Her long hair was loosened and hung down from her as she wept, and her whole being seemed to pour itself forth unceasingly in a stream of tears. Her stiff limbs again became softer; her inner being poured itself out and in the confusion of the moment Wilhelm was afraid she would dissolve away in his arms and there would be nothing of her remaining for him to hold. He only held her tighter and firmer. "My child," he exclaimed, "my child! Thou art mine, if that word can console you. Thou art mine! I will keep thee and not forsake thee." Her tears still continued to flow. At last she raised herself up. A gentle cheerfulness shone from her face. "My father," she said, "thou wilt not forsake me! Thou wilt be my father! I am thy child."

Before the door the harp began to sound softly; the old man brought his most heart-affecting songs as an evening offering to our friend, who, with the child held ever firmly in his hands, enjoyed the present, most undescribable happiness.

BOOK III

CHAPTER I

Knowest thou the land where the pale citron grows,
And the gold orange through dark foliage glows !
A soft wind flutters from the dark blue sky,
The myrtle blooms and towers the laurel high,
Knowest thou it well ?

O there with thee !
O that I might, my own beloved one, flee !

Knowest thou the house ? On pillars rest its beams,
Bright in its hall, in light one chamber gleams
And marble statues stand, and look on me—
What have they done, thou hapless child, to thee ?
Knowest thou it well ?

O there with thee !
O that I might, my lov'd protector flee !

Knowest thou the track that o'er the mountain goes,
Where the mule threads its way through mist and snow,
Where dwells in caves the dragon's ancient brood,
Topples the crag, and o'er it roars the flood,
Knowest thou it well ?

O come with me
There lies our road—O father, let us flee !

THEODORE MARTIN.

WHEN Wilhelm in the morning looked round in the house for Mignon, he did not find her, but heard that she had gone out early with Melina, who had got up in good time so as to take over the stocks of clothes and the rest of the theatrical furniture.

After the lapse of some hours Wilhelm heard music in front of his door. He thought at first the harp-player was there again, but he soon distinguished the tones of a zither and the voice which began to sing was the voice of Mignon. Wilhelm opened the door, the child came in and sang the song which we have just described.

The melody and expression pleased our friend particularly, though he could not understand all the words. He had the stanzas repeated and explained, he wrote them down and translated them into German. But the originality of the

expressions he could only remotely imitate, the childlike innocence of the expression vanished, when the broken sentences were united and the disjointed parts put together. The charm of the tune too was with nothing to be compared. She began every verse in a solemn and stately manner, as if she wished to draw attention to something wonderful, as if she wished to deliver something of importance. In the third line the song became more muffled and gloomier ; the " Knowest thou it well ? " she expressed in a thoughtful and mysterious manner ; in the " 'Tis there ? 'tis there " lay an irresistible yearning, and her " Let us go " she knew how to modify at each repetition so that now it seemed to entreat and to insist, now to impel and persuade. After she had finished the song for the second time, she kept silent for a moment, looked keenly at Wilhelm and asked, " Knowst thou the land ? "

" It must certainly be Italy," replied Wilhelm, " where didst thou get the little song from ? "

" Italy ! " said Mignon thoughtfully, " if thou goest to Italy, take me with you, I am frozen here."

" Hast thou been there, dear little thing ? " asked Wilhelm.

The child was silent and nothing more was to be got out of her.

Melina, who came in, looked at the zither and was glad that it was already put together so prettily. The instrument was part of the old stage stock. Mignon had asked for it from him that morning, the harp-player took it up at once, and the child developed by this opportunity a talent which she was not known to have had hitherto.

Melina had already taken over the wardrobe with all its appurtenances ; some members of the Town Council promised him permission to play for some time in the place. With a joyful heart and cheerful countenance he now came back again. He appeared to be quite a different man ; for he was gentle, polite to everyone, indeed obliging and attractive. He congratulated himself that he was now able to find occupation for his friends, who hitherto had been idle and embarrassed, and to engage them for a time ; he regretted, however, that at first he was not in a position to remunerate the excellent actors, whom good luck had brought to him, according to their capabilities and talents, since he must before everything dis-

charge his debt to such a generous friend as Wilhelm had shown himself to be.

" I cannot express," said Melina to him, " what friendliness you have shown me in helping me to the management of a theatre. For when I met you, I found myself in a very remarkable position. You remember in what a lively manner at our first meeting I let you see my disinclination for the theatre, and yet, as soon as I was married I had to look around for an engagement, out of love for my wife, who promised herself much pleasure and applause. I found none, at least none that was suitable, but on the other hand fortunately some men of business, who were just wanting in exceptional cases someone who could manage a pen, understood French, and in accounts was not quite without experience. I got on very well for some time and was tolerably well paid, procured various things for myself and there was nothing to be ashamed of in my condition. But the exceptional commission of my patrons came to an end, a continual maintenance was not to be thought of, and my wife yearned after the theatre all the more keenly, unfortunately at a time when her circumstances were not the most favourable for showing herself to the public with honour. Now I hope the establishment, which by your assistance I am able to set up, will be a good beginning, and I thank you for my future good fortune, however it may turn out."

Wilhelm listened to these utterances with satisfaction, and all the actors likewise were fairly well satisfied with the declarations of the new director ; they were secretly pleased that employment showed itself so quickly and they were disposed for the commencement to be content with a smaller salary, because most of them regarded that which was unexpectedly offered to them, as an addition, on which a short time before they could not have counted. Melina had the intention of making use of their favourable temper, he endeavoured to talk with each one separately in a suitable manner and had understood how in one way or another to persuade each one so that they were disposed to conclude the contract quickly, scarcely reflecting on their new engagement and they felt themselves secured as they could get free with a six weeks' notice.

The conditions had now to be brought into suitable **form** and Melina already **thought of** the pieces with which he would

at first entice the public, when a courier announced to the Stallmeister the arrival of company, and the latter ordered the fresh horses to be brought forward.

Soon after this the carriage loaded with luggage drove up and two servants jumped down from the box in front of the inn, and Philine in her way was among the first to be at hand and stood at the door.

" Who are you ? " said the Countess on entering.

" An actress, at your Excellency's service," was the answer, while the rogue with a pious face and gestures of humility curtsied and kissed the lady's dress.

The Count, who saw some people standing about, who also gave themselves out to be actors, informed himself as to the strength of the company, their last place of residence and their director. " If they were French," he said to his wife, " we could have made an unexpected pleasure for the Prince and procured for him his favourite entertainment."

" The question is," replied the Countess, " whether we should not let these people, though unfortunately they are only Germans, play at the Castle, as long as the Prince stays with us. They have, doubtless, some amount of skill. A large company is best entertained by the theatre, and the Baron too would assist them."

With these words she went upstairs and Melina introduced himself above as manager.

" Let him call his people together," said the Count, " and introduce them to me that I may see what is in them. I will also at the same time see the list of the pieces which they could in any case perform."

Melina with a deep bow hastened out of the room and soon returned with the actors. They squeezed in front and behind one another ; some from a great desire to please introduced themselves badly, and others were no better as they appeared to be frivolous. Philine showed all reverence to the Countess, who was extraordinarily kind and friendly ; meanwhile the Count reviewed the others. He asked each one about his specialty in acting and said to Melina that one should keep them strictly to their special parts, this utterance Melina received with the greatest devotion.

The Count then remarked to each one what he ought specially

to study, what should be improved in his figure and postures ; he pointed out to them, in an illuminating manner, on what points the Germans are always deficient, and he exhibited such extraordinary knowledge that they all stood in the greatest humility before so enlightened a connoisseur and so illustrious a patron that they hardly dared to draw their breath.

" Who is the man there in the corner ? " enquired the Count, looking at a character who had not yet been presented to him ; a thin figure drew near in a worn-out coat patched at the elbows, a miserable periwig covered the head of the submissive subject.

This man, whom we know already from the previous book as Philine's favourite, was accustomed usually to play the part of pedant, tutor and poet and generally to take on the part in which anyone had to receive blows or be ducked. He had accustomed himself to certain creeping, ludicrous, timid bows, and his stammering speech, which suited his parts, made the spectators laugh, so that he was always regarded as a necessary member of the company, particularly as he was otherwise very obliging and pleasant. He approached the Count in his way, bowed before him and answered every question with the gestures he was wont to make use of on the stage. The Count looked at him for some time with pleased attention and consideration, then he said, as he turned to his wife : " My child, consider this man carefully, I am sure he is a great actor, or can become one." The man in the fullness of his heart made an absurd bow, so that the Count was obliged to laugh loud and exclaimed : " He does his affair excellently ! I bet this man can act what he likes, and it is a pity that he has not hitherto been used for something better."

Such an exceptional preference was very vexing for the others ; only Melina felt nothing about it, rather he fully agreed with the Count and replied with a reverential look :

" Ah, yes, he and others of us have only wanted such a connoisseur and such encouragement as we have found in your Excellency."

" Is that the whole company ? " enquired the Count.

" Some members are absent," replied Melina ; " above all, if we only found support, we could have our full numbers from the neighbourhood."

Meantime said Philine to the Countess : " There is a very

pretty young man above, who without doubt would soon qualify himself for a first-rate amateur."

" Why does he not let himself be seen ? " said the Countess.

" I will bring him," said Philine, and hurried out of the door.

She found Wilhelm still busied with Mignon and persuaded him to come downstairs with her. He followed her with some reluctance, yet curiosity impelled him ; for as he heard they were people of rank, he was most desirous of getting to know them more closely. He entered the room and his eyes at once met those of the Countess, which were directed on him. Philine led him to the lady, while the Count busied himself with the others. Wilhelm bowed, and to the various questions which the charming lady put to him gave somewhat confused answers. Her beauty, youth, grace, delicacy and fine demeanour made the most pleasing impression on him, all the more as her words and gestures were accompanied with a certain bashfulness, one might almost say embarrassment. He was also introduced to the Count, who did not pay much attention to him, but moved to his wife at the window and appeared to ask her something. One could observe that her ideas corresponded with his in the liveliest manner, indeed she seemed to entreat him eagerly and to strengthen him in his intention.

Thereupon he soon turned to the company and said : " I cannot stay at present, but I will send a friend to you, and if you make reasonable conditions and are willing to give yourselves a good deal of trouble I am not disinclined to let you play at the Castle."

All showed their great pleasure at this, and in particular Philine kissed the hands of the Countess with the greatest vivacity.

" Look you, little one," said the lady, while she patted the cheeks of the frivolous young girl, " look you, my child, you shall come to me again. I will keep my promise, only you must dress better." Philine excused herself, as she had little to spend on her wardrobe, and at once the Countess ordered her waiting women to bring up an English hat and a silk neckcloth, which were easy to unpack. The Countess herself decked out Philine, who continued by her sanctimonious, innocent air to behave and conduct herself very nicely. The Count offered his hand to his wife and led her downstairs. She greeted the whole company in a friendly manner as she passed by and turned

round again towards Wilhelm, while in the most gracious manner she said to him : " We shall soon see each other again."

Such happy prospects enlivened the whole company ; everyone now gave free vent to his hopes, wishes and imaginations, spoke of parts which he wanted to play and of the applause he hoped to acquire. Melina considered how by a few performances he could get some money from the inhabitants of the little town and at the same time put life into the company, while others went into the kitchen to prepare a better dinner than what they had been used to.

From the mountains to the champaign
By the glens and hills along
Comes a rustling and a tramping
Comes a motion as of song :
And this undetermined roving
Brings delight and brings good deed ;
And thy striving, be't with loving
And thy living be't in Deed !

For the tie is snapt asunder,
Trust and loving hope are fled ;
Can I tell in fear and wonder
With what dangers round bested,
I, cut off from friend and brother,
Like the widow in her woe
With the one and not the other,
Now my weary way must go !

T. CARLYLE.

CHAPTER II

AFTER a few days the Baron arrived and Melina received him not without awe. The Count had him announced as a connoisseur and it was to be feared he would soon discover the weak sides of the little company, that he would have before him no trained troop, as there was scarcely a single play which they were suitably master of; but the manager as well as all the members of the company were soon freed from their anxiety, as they found in the Baron a man who regarded the theatre of the Germans with the greatest enthusiasm; for him every actor and every company was welcome and agreeable. He greeted them all with solemnity, regarded himself as fortunate in meeting so unexpectedly with the German stage, to become connected with it and to introduce the Muses of their native land into the Castle of his relative. He then pulled out of his pocket some papers in which Melina hoped to see the terms of the contract: but it was something quite different. The Baron requested them to listen with attention to a drama which he had himself composed and which he wanted to see played by them. They willingly formed a circle round him and were delighted with so little trouble to be able to establish themselves in the favour of so important a man, though everyone from the thickness of the manuscript dreaded that it would be overpoweringly long. And indeed it was so, the play was written in five acts and of that kind which never seems to have an end.

The hero was a superior, virtuous, generous, at the same time misunderstood and persecuted man, but who at last gained the victory over his enemies, on whom the most rigorous poetic justice would have been exercised if he had not forgiven them on the spot.

While this piece was being rehearsed, each of the auditors had the occasion to think of himself and quite gently from the depression to which he felt himself disposed a short time before to mount up to a happy self-satisfaction and from there to survey the most pleasing prospects in the future. Those who found in the piece no part suited to them, declared it bad and regarded the Baron as an unfortunate author; the others, on the other hand, followed a passage by which they hoped to get some

clapping, with the greatest praise to the greatest possible satisfaction of the author.

The economic side of things was soon settled. Melina knew how to settle the contract with the Baron to his advantage and to keep it secret from the other actors.

Melina spoke to the Baron about Wilhelm in passing and assured him that he was qualifying himself very well to be a dramatic poet and had no bad capacities for being an actor. The Baron made acquaintance with him at once as with a colleague, and Wilhelm produced some small pieces which had been saved by chance, together with a few relics, on that day when he had committed the greatest part of his works to the flames. The Baron praised alike his pieces and delivery, assumed it as settled that Wilhelm should come up to the Castle with the others, promised for all at his departure the best reception, comfortable quarters, a good table, applause and presents, and Melina added further the assurance of a definite amount of pocket money.

It can well be imagined into what good spirits the company came by this visit, as instead of an anxious and low condition they now at once saw honour and enjoyment before them. They made themselves merry in anticipation and everyone thought it unsuitable to keep a penny in his pocket. Meanwhile Wilhelm deliberated with himself as to whether he should accompany them to the Castle and in more ways than one he found it advisable to do so. Melina hoped by this advantageous engagement to be able to pay off some of his debt, and our friend, who had come away in order to get knowledge of mankind, did not wish to lose the opportunity of making closer acquaintance with the great world, in which he hoped to arrive at much insight into life, himself and the dramatic art. At the same time he did not confess to himself how much he desired again to come near the beautiful Countess. He tried rather in general to persuade himself what a great advantage a nearer acquaintance with the world of rank and wealth would bring to him. He made his reflections about the Count, the Countess and the Baron on the security, ease and grace of their demeanour, and exclaimed, when alone, with rapture : " Thrice happy are they to be accounted, whose birth exalts them at once above the lower stages of mankind ; they do not have to pass through not even

distantly to dwell among those conditions, in which many excellent men painfully consume the whole period of their life. Universal and just must their vision be in that higher station, easy each step of their life ! From their birth they are, as it were, placed upon a ship in which, in this voyage we all have to make, they can profit by the favourable winds and wait upon the adverse ones ; while others swimming for their life wear themselves away, enjoy no advantage from the favourable wind and in a storm with their forces soon exhausted go under. What comfort, what ease does not an inherited fortune confer upon us ! And how securely does a business flourish, which is based upon sound capital, so that the failure of any enterprise does not at once make us inactive ! Who can know better the worth and worthlessness of earthly things than he who has been in the position to enjoy them from his youth upwards, and who can guide his mind earlier to the necessary, the useful and the true than he who must convince himself of so many errors in an age when strength does not fail him to start life afresh ! "

Thus did our friend congratulate all those who live in the higher regions, but also those who draw near to such a circle and can draw sustenance from these sources, and he thanked his lot, which was preparing to lead him too up these steps.

Meantime Melina, who had been cudgelling his brains how in accordance with the desire of the Count and his own conviction he could distribute the company among their parts and hand over to each his definite co-operation, at last when it came to the point of execution, he was quite well contented if with so small a company he found the actors willing to fit themselves into this or that part as best they were able. As a rule Laertes undertook the part of the lover, Philine of the lady's maid, the two young girls took up the parts of artless and tenderly loved ones ; the boisterous old man was the part which was best played. Melina, himself thought he might appear as Chevalier ; Mme Melina, to her great vexation, had to take the part of the young women or even of the tender mothers, and because in the newer plays a pedant or a poet is not easily introduced, still less is made ridiculous, so the well-known favourite of the Count had to play the part of President and Minister, because these were generally introduced as rogues and were severely handled in the fifth act. Melina too, in the

part of chamberlain or the like, put in with pleasure the crudities which in the traditional manner had been pressed upon him by honest Germans in many popular plays, because with this opportunity he could deck himself out in a pleasing fashion and had the permission to take the air of a courtier which he imagined himself to possess completely. It was not long before many actors came along from different localities ; they were received without special examination, but were also retained without special conditions.

Wilhelm, whom Melina several times tried in vain to persuade to take the part of a lover, interested himself in the matter with much goodwill, without our new manager recognizing his labours in the least ; rather did Melina think that with his office he had got possession of all necessary insight ; in particular the art of curtailment was one of his most pleasing occupations, by which he would reduce every piece to the regulation measure of time, without paying respect to anything else. He had a good run, the public was very well satisfied and the inhabitants with most taste in the little town maintained that the theatre of the Capitol was not so well conducted as theirs.

CHAPTER III

AT last the time arrived when they had to get ready for the journey and await the coaches and carriages which had been ordered to take our whole troop over to the Castle of the Count. Already beforehand there was much altercation as to who should drive with the others and how they should sit. The ordering and distribution was at last only settled and arranged with trouble, yet unfortunately without effect. At the appointed time fewer carriages came than they had expected and they had to accommodate themselves somehow. The Baron, who followed on horseback not far behind, gave as the reason that everything was in a commotion at the Castle because not only was the Prince to arrive a few days earlier than was expected, but because an unexpected company had already actually arrived, the room was much diminished ; they would therefore not be so well lodged as had formerly been intended, for which he was extremely sorry. They distributed themselves in the

carriages as well as they could, and as the weather was tolerable and the Castle only a few miles distant, the merriest among them decided rather to go on foot than to wait for the return of the carriages. The cavalcade got under way with shouts of joy, for the first time having no care how the landlord's bill was to be paid. The Castle of the Count rose before their minds as a palace of fairies ; they were the happiest and most joyful people in the world, and each one on the way, after his own manner of thinking, attached to this day a chain of good fortune, honour and prosperity.

A heavy rain, which fell unexpectedly, could not tear them out of these pleasant sensations ; but as it became more continuous and violent many of them perceived discomfort. The night came on and nothing could have appeared more desired than the palace of the Count illuminated through all its storeys which shone upon them from a hill opposite, so that they could count the windows. When they came nearer they also found all the windows of the side buildings lighted up. Everyone thought within himself which would be his room, and most of them were modestly satisfied with a room in the attics or the wings. They now drove through the village and past the inn. Wilhelm stopped the coach, in order to get out there ; but the landlord assured him that he could not allot to him the least accommodation. His lordship, the Count, because some unexpected guests had arrived, had at once engaged the whole inn, since yesterday all the rooms had been clearly marked with chalk as to who should lodge there. Our friend therefore against his will was obliged to go forward with the rest of the company to the courtyard of the Castle.

Round the kitchen fire in one of the side buildings they saw the cooks moving busily about and this sight already refreshed them ; servants came running hurriedly with lights to the staircase of the main building, and the hearts of our good pilgrims rose at the sight. On the other hand, how great was their astonishment when this reception changed into shocking curses. The servants abused the coachmen for driving in hither, they must turn round, it was shouted, and get to the old castle ; there was no room here for such guests ! To this unfriendly and unexpected decision they added all kinds of jeering and laughed aloud among one another, as they had jumped

into the rain owing to this error. It kept on pouring with rain, there were no stars in the sky and now the company was dragged by a rough road between two walls into the old hinder castle, which had stood there uninhabited since the father of the present Count had built the one in front of it. Partly in the courtyard, partly under a long arched doorway the carriages drew up and the drivers and postillions from the village unyoked their horses and rode away.

As no one appeared to receive the company, they got out, shouted, looked about. In vain ! All remained dark and silent. The wind blew through the lofty gate, and the old towers and courtyards were grey-looking so that their forms could scarcely be distinguished in the darkness. They were freezing and shuddering, the women were getting frightened, the children began to cry ; their impatience increased every moment and such a quick change of fortune for which no one had been prepared brought them all out of any sort of composure.

There they expected every moment that someone would come and open the door to them, now the rain and now the storm deceived them, and more than once they thought they heard the much-desired step of the Castellan ; they remained for some time in ill-humour and inactive ; it did not occur to anyone to go into the new Castle and there call for help to some compassionate souls. They could not understand where their friend the Baron was staying, and they were in the most painful condition. At last some people actually arrived ; by their voices one recognized those pedestrians who had remained on the road behind those who were being driven. They related that the Baron had stumbled with his horse, had hurt his foot severely, and that they too, when enquiring at the Castle, had been directed here in a rude manner.

The whole company was greatly embarrassed ; they deliberated as to what was to be done and could come to no decision. At last they saw in the distance a lantern coming, and breathed afresh ; but the hope of an early release also again disappeared, as the object approached and became more clear. A groom was lighting the well-known Stallmeister of the Count, and he on coming nearer enquired very eagerly after Mile Philine. She had scarcely come out from the rest of the crowd, when he very pressingly offered to guide her to the new Castle,

where a little place had been prepared for her with the maids of the Countess. She did not think long about thankfully accepting his proposal; she grasped him by the arm, and after recommending her box to the others, wanted to hurry away with him; but they stood in the way, asking, entreating, adjuring the Stallmeister, till at last in order to get away with his fair one he promised and assured them that in a short time the Castle would be opened and they would be lodged in the best manner. Soon after they saw the light of his lantern disappearing and hoped a long time in vain for a fresh light, which at last appeared, after much waiting, scolding and abusing, and enlivened them with some consolation and hope.

An ancient groom opened the door of the old building, into which they pressed violently. Everyone now looked for his things, to bring them by him and unpack them. Most of the baggage, like the owners themselves, was thoroughly wet through. With one light, everything got on very slowly. In the building they knocked against one another, stumbled and fell. They asked for more lights and some fuel. The monosyllabic groom with great difficulty left his light there, went away and did not come back. They now began to look through the house; the doors of all the rooms were open; there were large stoves, embroidered tapestry, inlaid floors still remaining from its former grandeur; but of other household gear there was nothing, no table, no chair, no mirror, a few enormous empty bedsteads devoid of every ornament and everything necessary. The wet boxes and portmanteaux were selected as seats; a part of the tired wanderers made themselves comfortable on the floor; Wilhelm sat down on some steps, Mignon lay upon his knees; the child was restless, and to his question what was the matter, she answered: "I am hungry!" He found nothing by him to allay the desire of the child, the rest of the company had consumed all their provisions and he was obliged to leave the poor little creature without refreshment. He had remained inactive during the whole adventure, silent and self-absorbed, for he was vexed and angry that he had not kept to his idea of getting down at the inn even though he had had to make his bed on the topmost floor.

The others behaved each in his own way. Some of them procured a heap of old wood for the huge fireplace in the hall

and set fire to the pile with great shouts of joy. Unfortunately this hope of drying and warming themselves was deceived in the most frightful manner ; for this fireplace stood there only for ornament and was walled up above. The smoke rushed quickly back and at once filled the rooms ; the dry wood burst crackling into flames, and the flame too was driven back ; the draught which came through the broken windows gave it an unsteady direction ; their condition became more intolerable and they were almost in despair.

Wilhelm had retreated from the smoke into a distant room, to which Mignon soon followed him, bringing in a well-dressed servant, who carried a tall brightly burning double-lighted lantern. He turned to Wilhelm, and as he handed over to him sweetmeats and fruits on a beautiful china plate, said, " The young lady upstairs sends you this with the request that you join her company; she asks me to tell you," added the servant with a mischievous air, " all goes well with her and she would like to share her satisfaction with her friends."

Wilhelm expected nothing less than this offer, for since the adventure on the stone seat he had met Philine with decided contempt and was firmly determined to have nothing more to do with her, so he was on the point of sending back the dainty gifts, when a look of entreaty from Mignon induced him to accept them and in the name of the child to send his thanks for them, but the invitation he rejected entirely. He asked the servant to have some care for the company which had arrived, and enquired after the Baron. The latter was in bed, but had already, as far as the servant knew, given a message to another person to provide for those who were so miserably lodged.

The servant departed and left behind for Wilhelm one of his lights, which the latter, for want of a candlestick, had to fix upon the window-sill, and now at least in his meditations he saw the four walls of the room illuminated. Nor was it long before preparations were being made which were to bring our friends to rest. By degrees candles arrived but without snuffers, then some chairs, an hour afterwards some bedclothes, then pillows, all thoroughly wet. It was already long after midnight when paillasses and mattresses were at length brought along ; if they had been there at first, they would have been very welcome.

In the interval something also to eat and drink appeared,

which was enjoyed without much criticism, though they looked like disorderly remains and gave no very special proof of the respect in which our friends were held.

CHAPTER IV

THE unrest and disturbance of the night were still further increased by the bad behaviour and wild spirits of the frivolous companions ; they teased one another, woke each other up and played all manner of pranks. The next morning loud complaints broke forth about their friend the Baron, that he had so deceived them and had given a quite different picture of the order and comfort which were awaiting them. However, to their surprise and consolation, the Count himself appeared quite early with a few servants and made enquiries about their condition. He was very angry when he heard how badly they had fared, and the Baron who came along limping accused the steward of not obeying his commands on this occasion. The Count at once ordered that everything in his presence was to be arranged for the greatest possible comfort of the guests. Then some officers arrived who at once made acquaintance with the actresses. The Count had all the company introduced, addressed everyone by his name and intermingled a few jokes in his conversation, so that they were all delighted with so gracious a lord. It was at last the turn of Wilhelm, and Mignon hung upon him. He excused himself as well as he could for the liberty he had taken ; the Count, on the other hand, appeared to take his presence as expected.

A gentleman, who stood beside the Count, whom one took to be an officer, though he had on no uniform, spoke particularly with our friend and distinguished himself from all the others. Large, clear blue eyes shone out beneath a lofty brow, his fair hair was thrown carelessly back, his medium stature showed a vigorous, firm and determined mode of being. His questions were lively and he seemed to understand everything about which he asked.

Wilhelm asked for information about this man from the Baron, who, however, had not much good to say of him. He has the rank of major, was the special favourite of the Prince,

managed his most secret business and was regarded as his right arm, indeed there was reason to think that he was the natural son of the Prince. He had been on embassies in France, England and Italy and he was everywhere very distinguished, and that made him conceited; he imagined that he knew German literature fundamentally and allowed himself to make all kinds of shallow mockery of it. The Baron avoided all intercourse with him, and Wilhelm would do well to keep at a distance from him, for in the end he gives everyone a cutting reply. He was called Jarno, but no one knew rightly what to make of this name.

Wilhelm had nothing to say about this, for he felt a certain inclination towards him though there was something cold and repellent about him.

The company was distributed throughout the Castle and Melina commanded very strictly that they should now behave in an orderly manner, the women living separately and each directing his attention and his inclination to their art and the part to be played. He posted up on all the doors ordinances and regulations which consisted of many points. The amount of fine was decided on, which each transgressor had to put into a common box.

These ordinances were but little respected. Young officers went in and out, joked with the actresses not in the most refined manner, made fun of the actors, and annulled the whole little police system before it could take root. They chased one another through the rooms, disguised themselves and played hide-and-seek. Melina, who at first wanted to show some severity, was exasperated by all kinds of mischief, and when the Count soon afterwards had him brought so as to see the place where the theatre was to be erected, the trouble became continually worse. The young men planned all kinds of broad jokes and by the help of some of the actors they became still coarser, and it seemed as if the whole old castle was possessed by a raging mob, and the disorder did not end till it was time to go to dinner. The Count had brought Melina into a large hall, which belonged to the old castle, communicating by a gallery with the new one, and there a small theatre could be very well erected. Here the discerning master of the mansion himself pointed out how he wished everything to be arranged.

The work was now taken in hand in great haste, the stage

scaffolding was erected and decorated with what they had in the packing-cases and could use, and the rest was prepared with the help of certain skilful workmen of the Count's. Wilhelm himself took a hand in the business, helped in deciding the perspective, marking the outlines for the scenery, and was very anxious that nothing should be done unskilfully. The Count, who often came by, was very well satisfied and showed how they should proceed in everything they did, and displayed thereby uncommon knowledge of every art. Now the rehearsing began seriously ; for this they would have had space and leisure enough if they had not been continually disturbed by the numerous strangers who were present. For every day new guests arrived and everyone wanted to see the company.

CHAPTER v

THE Baron had kept Wilhelm for some days in the hope that he should be formally introduced to the Countess.

" I have," said he, " told this excellent lady so much of your plays, which are so intellectual and full of feeling, that she is impatient to speak with you and to have one or other read aloud. Keep yourself, therefore, prepared to come over here at the first signal, for you will certainly be summoned on the first morning she is at leisure."

He then pointed out to him the after-piece, which he should first read aloud and by which he would specially recommend himself. The lady was very sorry that he had arrived at such a disturbed time and that he and the rest of the company had to manage so poorly in the old castle.

With great care, therefore, Wilhelm took in hand the piece, by which he was to make his entry into the great world.

" Hitherto," said he, " thou hast laboured for thyself in silence, only receiving applause from a few friends ; for a long time you have despaired of your talents and thou art still always in doubts as to whether you are on the right path and whether you have as much talent as inclination for the theatre. Before the ears of such practised judges, in the closet where no illusion takes place, the attempt is far more dangerous than elsewhere, and yet I would not willingly keep behind, I would like to add

this delight to my former joys and broaden out my hope for the future."

Accordingly he went through some pieces, read them with the greatest attention, made corrections here and there, recited them aloud to himself that he might be quite proficient in the tones and expressions, and put that which he had practised most and from which he expected to get the greatest honour, into his pocket, when one morning he was invited to appear before the Countess. The Baron had assured him she would be alone with a good friend. When he entered the room, the Baroness of C—— came to meet him with much friendliness : she was delighted to make his acquaintance and introduced him to the Countess, who was just having her hair dressed, and she received him with friendly words and looks, but unfortunately near her chair he saw Philine kneeling and playing all kinds of fooleries. " The charming child," said the Baroness, " has been singing various things to us. Finish now the song you had begun that we may lose nothing of it."

Wilhelm listened to the small piece with great patience, wishing the hairdresser were at a distance before he was to begin to read. They offered him a cup of chocolate, the Baroness herself handing him the biscuit. All the same he did not like his breakfast, for he wanted too eagerly to lay before the beautiful Countess something which might interest her, with which he could please her. Philine also was only too much in the way for him, she had often already as a listener caused him discomfort. He looked with painful feelings at the hands of the hairdresser and hoped at every moment the tower of hair would be complete.

Meantime the Count had come in and conversed about the guests he was expecting, of the arrangements for the day and other domestic matters which came forward. When he went away several officers asked permission to pay a call on the Countess as they had to ride away before dinner. The groom was now ready and she permitted the gentlemen to come in.

The Baroness meantime took some trouble to entertain our friend and showed him much consideration, which he received with reverence, though somewhat absent-mindedly. He often felt for the manuscript in his pocket and hoped for every moment, and was almost losing his patience, when a dealer in fancy goods was brought in and began unmercifully to open one after another

of his papers, bags and handboxes and exhibited every kind of his wares with an importunity peculiar to these people.

The company increased. The Baroness looked at Wilhelm and whispered with the Countess ; he noticed it without understanding the intention of it. This at last became clear to him at home when he went away after he had endured a painful and fruitless hour. He then found a beautiful pocket-book of English make in his pocket. The Baroness had managed to put it there secretly, and soon afterwards the little Moor of the Countess followed and handed to him a prettily embroidered waistcoat without saying very clearly whence it came.

CHAPTER VI

THE mingled feelings of vexation and gratitude destroyed the remainder of the day for him till towards evening he again found employment, as Melina disclosed to him that the Count had spoken to him of a prelude which he should like to have performed in honour of the Prince on the day of his arrival. He wished to have the qualities of this great hero and philanthropist personified. These virtues were to come forward together, recount his praise, and finally encircle his bust with garlands of flowers and laurels. The Count had entrusted him with providing the versification and other arrangements of this piece, and he hoped that Wilhelm, for whom it would not be difficult, would assist him on this occasion.

" What ! " exclaimed Wilhelm in a tone of annoyance, " can we only honour a Prince with portraits, changed names and allegorical figures with which to show honour to a Prince, who in my opinion deserves a quite different eulogy. How can a sensible man be flattered by seeing himself set up in effigy and his name gleaming on oiled paper. I am afraid very much that the allegories, particularly in the present state of our wardrobe, would give rise to many ambiguities and jests. If you wish to compose the piece or get it composed I have nothing to say against it, only I beg to have nothing to do with it."

Melina excused himself: " It was only a casual idea of the Count, who left it entirely over to them to arrange the piece as they liked."

"With all my heart," replied Wilhelm, "I will contribute something to the pleasure of these most excellent people, and my Muse has never had so pleasant a task as to sing, though in a flattering fashion, the praises of a Prince who deserves so much veneration. I will think over the matter ; perhaps I shall succeed in arranging our little troupe that we may at least produce some effect."

From this moment Wilhelm reflected eagerly on the undertaking. Before he fell asleep he had got everything fairly well into order, and next morning, quite early, his plan was ready, the scenes projected, indeed some of the finest passages and songs were versified and written down.

Wilhelm the next morning hurried to speak about various circumstances and put his plan before him. The Baron was very much pleased with it, but he showed some surprise. For on the previous evening he had heard the Count speak of quite a different piece which was to be put into verse according to his idea.

"It does not seem to me probable," replied Wilhelm, "that it has been the intention of the Count to have the piece got ready just as he gave it to Melina ; if I am not mistaken, he only wanted by a sign to point out to us the right path. The amateur and connoisseur points out to the artist what he wants done and then leaves to him the care of producing the work."

"Not at all," replied the Baron, "the Count relies on the piece being carried out in the way he had prescribed and in no other. Yours has indeed a remote resemblance to his idea, and if we go through it and wish to draw the Count away from his first thoughts, we must effect it by means of the ladies. The Baroness especially knows how to plan out such things in a masterly manner ; it is just a question whether your plan pleases her so that she may undertake the affair and then it will certainly succeed."

"Moreover we want the help of the ladies," said Wilhelm, "for our company and our wardrobe would not be sufficient for the performance. I have counted on some pretty children that run up and down the house, who belong to the groom and the steward."

Thereupon he desired the Baron to make his plan known to the ladies. He soon returned and brought the news that they

wished to speak with Wilhelm personally. This evening when the gentlemen have sat down to play, which besides, owing to the arrival of a certain General, was more serious than usual, they would, under the pretext of some indisposition, retire to their room, he was to be introduced by a secret staircase and could then set forth his subject in the best way possible. This kind of mystery would now give to the affair a double charm, and the Baroness particularly was as pleased as a child at the prospect of this rendezvous and all the more so as it was to be undertaken secretly and contrary to the will of the Count.

Towards evening at the appointed time Wilhelm was sent for and brought in with caution. The way in which the Baroness came to meet him in a small cabinet reminded him for a moment of former happy times. She brought him into the room of the Countess and now they proceeded to question and to investigate. He set out his plan with the greatest warmth and animation so that the ladies were quite charmed with it, and our readers will allow us that we also make them acquainted with it by a short account.

In a country scene children were to open the play with a dance, representing that play where each has to wheel round and win the place of the other ; then they were to vary it with other jokes, and finally in a circle of dances which were repeated they sang a joyous song. Then the Harper and Mignon were to enter, awaken curiosity and attract many of the country people from round about ; the old man was to sing various songs in praise of peace, repose and joy, and Mignon was then to dance the egg dance.

In this innocent pleasure they are disturbed by martial music and the society are surprised by a troop of soldiers. The men put themselves on the defensive and are overcome, the girls fly and are overtaken. In the confusion everything seems to be going to destruction when a person (about whose vocation the poet was still uncertain) comes forward, and by the news that the General is near, quiet is again restored. Here the character of the hero is depicted with the finest traits, in the midst of arms security is promised, limits are set to wild spirits and violence. A universal festival was held in honour of the noble-minded General.

The ladies were very well satisfied with the plan ; only they asserted that there must necessarily be something allegorical in

the piece so as to make it please the Count. The Baron made the proposal that the leader of the soldiers should represent the Genius of dissension and violence ; but at last Minerva should come forward, put fetters on him, announce the approach of the hero and celebrate his praise. The Baroness undertook the duty of persuading the Count that the plan which he had proposed would be carried out with a few alterations, at the same time she expressly desired that at the end of the play of necessity the bust, the altered name and the princely hat should appear, as otherwise the whole affair would be futile.

Wilhelm, who had already imagined how delicately he wished his hero to be praised from the lips of Minerva, gave way on this point only after long opposition, but he felt himself obliged to yield in the pleasantest manner possible. The beautiful eyes of the Countess and her loving demeanour would have moved him to act against his conscience as a poet, to give up the most beautiful and charming invention, the unity of a composition which he keenly desired and all the suitable details. Even so hard a struggle had his conscience as a citizen to endure, when on the distribution of the parts the ladies expressly insisted that he must play too.

Laertes had received for his part that of the violent God of War. Wilhelm was to represent the leader of the peasants who had to recite some very pretty verses full of feeling. After resisting for a long time he was at last obliged to give way. In particular he found no excuse, when the Baroness represented to him that the stage here in the Castle was only to be regarded as a private theatre and that she would be very glad to play with them if a suitable part could be found for her. After this the ladies parted with our friend in the kindest way. The Baroness assured him that he was an incomparable man : she accompanied him to the little staircase, where she wished him good-night with a squeeze of the hand.

CHAPTER VII

FIRE^d by the sincere interest which the ladies took in his composition, the plan, which by the process of narrating it had become more present to his mind, was quite vivid. He

passed the greater part of the night and the next morning in the most careful versification of the dialogue and the songs.

He had nearly finished when he was summoned to the new Castle, where he heard that the company, which had just finished breakfast, wished to speak with him. He entered the hall; the Baroness came again first to meet him, and under the pretext of wishing him good-morning, whispered to him mysteriously, "Say nothing of your piece except what you are asked."

"I hear," cried the Count to him, "that you are very busy in working at my prelude, which I wish to present in honour of the Prince. I approve of your introducing a Minerva into it, and at times I consider how the goddess is to be dressed so as not to make a mistake in the costume. Therefore I am having all the books brought from my library in which there is a picture of her."

Just at that moment several servants came into the hall with large baskets full of books of every kind of shape.

Montfaucon with his collections of ancient statues, gems and coins and all kinds of mythological writings was turned up and the plates compared. But that was not enough. The excellent memory of the Count recalled to him all the Minervas which might appear in frontispieces, vignettes or anywhere else. One book therefore after another had to be brought from the library so that at last the Count was sitting among a heap of books. At last, as he could remember no other figure of Minerva, he cried out with laughter: "I would like to bet that there are no more Minervas in the whole library, and it may well be the first time that a collection of books has been so totally deprived of the image of its tutelary goddess."

The whole company was pleased at this idea and particularly Jarno, who had spurred on the Count to bring forth more books, laughed quite immoderately.

"Now," said the Count, turning to Wilhelm, "it is an important point to know which goddess you mean? Minerva or Pallas? The Goddess of War or of the Arts."

"Would it not be wisest, your Excellency," replied Wilhelm, "if we did not clearly express ourselves on this point, because the goddess plays a double part in the mythology let her here appear in a double aspect. She announces a warrior, but only to quiet the multitude; extols a hero while exalting his humanity;

she overcomes violence and restores quiet and joy among the people."

The Baroness was anxious lest Wilhelm might betray himself, so she pushed between the tailor of the Countess, who was to give his opinion how such an antique coat could best be got ready. This man, being experienced in masquerades, knew easily how to arrange the matter, and as Mme Melina, in spite of her advanced state of pregnancy, had undertaken the part of the heavenly virgin, he was directed to take her measure, and the Countess showed, though with some unwillingness from her chambermaids, the clothes from the wardrobe which were to be cut up for the purpose.

The Baroness in a clever manner understood how to bring Wilhelm aside, and soon let him know that she had provided all the other things which were necessary. At the same time she sent to him the musician, who was at the head of the Count's private band, partly so that he should compose the necessary pieces and partly that he should choose from the stock of music suitable tunes. Now everything went according to Wilhelm's wishes, the Count enquired no further about the piece, but was principally busied with the transparent decorations which at the end of the piece were to astonish the audience. His power of invention and the skill of his confectioner brought together a most pleasing illumination. For on his journeys the Count had seen the greatest exhibitions of this kind ; he had brought back many copper-plates and drawings and how to sketch with considerable taste what was suited to them.

Meantime Wilhelm finished his play, gave each one his part, took over his own, and the musician, who at the same time understood well about dancing, directed the ballet and so everything went as it should.

Only an unexpected obstacle stood in the way which threatened to make an unpleasant gap in the proceedings. He had promised himself the greatest effect from Mignon's egg-dance ; how astonished was he therefore when the child with her usual dryness refused to dance, saying she was now his and would go no more upon the stage. He tried with all kinds of persuasion to move her and did not stop till she began to weep bitterly, fell at his feet and cried : " Dear Father, do thou too stay away from the boards." He did not heed this

sign, but thought how by a different turn he would make the scene interesting.

Philine, who was to act one of the peasant girls and in the round dance was to give the single voice part and to lead the chorus, was excessively delighted over this. Besides everything went according to her wish ; she had her separate room, was constantly with the Countess, entertaining her with her drolleries and daily receiving some present for her trouble ; a dress was made for her for this play. As she was of an easily imitative nature she had soon in her intercourse with the ladies noticed so much that was suitable for her, and in a short time she had become full of *savoir-faire* and good behaviour. The attentions of the Stallmeister increased rather than diminished, and as the officers also were very pressing to her and she found herself in such a luxurious atmosphere, it occurred to her for once to play the prude and in a skilful manner to practise herself in a certain lofty dignity. Cold and artful as she was, in a week she knew the feeble side of everyone in the house so that had she been able to proceed with a definite intention she could easily have made her fortune. But here too she employed her advantages only in order to amuse herself, to have a pleasant day for herself and to be impertinent when she observed there was no danger in being so.

The parts were learnt, a principal rehearsal of the piece was ordered ; the Count wished to be present at it, and his consort began to feel anxious as to how he might receive it. The Baroness called Wilhelm secretly, and as the hour drew nearer, they showed increasing embarrassment, for there was indeed nothing left of the original idea of the Count. Jarno, who had just come in, was admitted to the secret. He was much amused and was disposed to offer his good services to the ladies. " It would be a bad thing, my lady," he said, " if you could not alone extricate yourself from this affair, yet in any case I will keep myself in reserve." The Baroness then related how she had gone through the whole piece to the Count, " but only in parts and without order, that he was therefore prepared for every detail ; yet he still firmly believed that the whole would harmonize with his original idea. I will," she said, " this evening sit by him at the rehearsal and endeavour to distract him. I have already engaged the confectioner to make the

decoration at the end really beautiful, but as yet there is still a little deficiency."

"I knew a Court," said Jarno, "where we wanted such active and clever friends as you are. If this evening you do not succeed with your acts, give me a signal, and I will take the Count away and not let him come in again until Minerva enters, and from the illumination you can hope for a speedy success. I have already for some days disclosed to him something about his cousin and which I have always put off for various reasons. It will be a distraction for him and certainly not the pleasantest."

Some business prevented the Count being present at the commencement of the rehearsal ; then the Baroness entertained him. Jarno's help was not in the least necessary. For while the Count had enough to do in improving and arranging details he entirely forgot the whole, and as Frau Melina at last spoke as he wished and the illumination did well, he showed himself completely satisfied. When everything was over and they had gone to play cards, the difference seemed to strike him and he began to reflect whether the piece was really of his own composition. At a signal Jarno now issued from his place of concealment ; the evening passed away ; news that the Prince was really coming was confirmed ; people rode out several times to see his vanguard camping in the neighbourhood ; the house was full of tumult and unrest, and our actors, who had not always been looked after in the best way by unwilling servants, had to pass their time in expectations and exercises in the old castle without anyone remembering anything particularly about them.

CHAPTER VIII

THE Prince had at last arrived. The Generals, Staff officers and the remaining retinue which entered at the same time, the numerous people coming to visit or to do business made the Castle like a beehive, which was about to swarm. Everyone pressed forward to see the excellent Prince, and everyone was astonished at his affability and condescension ; everyone was astounded at seeing in the hero and leader of armies at the same time the most pleasing courtier.

According to the orders of the Count the inmates of the house on the arrival of the Prince were to be at their posts ; no actor was to let himself be seen, because the Prince was to be surprised by the ceremonies they had prepared ; and so it seemed when he was led into the large, well-lighted hall decorated with the embroidered tapestries of the previous century, he was not in the least prepared for a play still less for a prelude in honour of himself. Everything went off in the best way possible, and the troupe, after the completion of the performance, had to be introduced to the Prince, who knew how to make some enquiries in the friendliest manner and to make some remark in the most pleasing way. Wilhelm, as the author, had especially to come forward and he likewise received his share of applause.

After the prelude was over no one asked particularly about it ; in a few days it was as if it had never been performed, except that Jarno spoke of it occasionally to Wilhelm and praised it very judiciously ; only he added : " It is a pity you should play with hollow nuts for hollow shells." For many days Wilhelm thought of this expression ; he did not know how to interpret it nor what he should understand by it.

Meanwhile the company acted every night, as far as their powers permitted, and did everything possible to attract the attention of the audience. Undeserved applause cheered them up ; in their old castle they now really believed that the great assemblage was crowding thither particularly on their account ; that the multitude of the strangers was attracted by their representations, and that they were the centre point, round which and for the sake of which the whole was moving and revolving.

But Wilhelm observed to his great sorrow that exactly the opposite was true. For though the Prince sitting on his seat had watched the first performances from beginning to end with the greatest conscientiousness, by degrees, however, he appeared in an easy manner to dispense with it. Just those people whom Wilhelm in conversation had found the most sensible, Jarno being the chief of them, passed only a few moments in the hall of the theatre, otherwise they sat in the ante-chamber playing cards or apparently occupying themselves with business. Wilhelm was very much vexed in spite of his continuous labours to miss **the** applause so much desired. In the choice of plays, in tran-

scribing the parts, in the frequent rehearsals and whatever else had to be done, Wilhelm eagerly worked with Melina, who secretly feeling his own insufficiency, at last let things alone. Wilhelm learnt his parts with diligence and delivered them with warmth and vivacity and with as much propriety as the little training, which he had given himself, would allow.

Meanwhile the continued interest of the Baron removed every doubt from the minds of the rest of the company, as he assured them that they produced the greatest effects, especially while they performed one of his own pieces ; he only regretted that the Prince had an exclusive inclination for the French theatre ; on the other hand, a part of his people, among whom Jarno was especially distinguished, gave a passionate preference to the monstrous productions of the English stage.

If now in this way the art of our actors was not noticed and admired as the best, their persons, on the other hand, were not entirely indifferent to the men and ladies of the audience. We have already pointed out that the actresses from the outset awakened the attention of the younger officers, but in the sequel they were more fortunate and made more important conquests. We will, however, be silent about them, only observing that Wilhelm every day became more interesting to the Countess, so that in him too a silent inclination to her was beginning to spring up. When he was on the stage she could not take her eyes from him, and he soon seemed to play and to recite as if alone directed to her. To gaze at one another was for them an unspeakable pleasure, to which their harmless souls yielded entirely without cherishing more lively wishes or feeling anxious about any consequences.

As two hostile outposts convene peacefully and merrily over a river which divides them, without thinking of the war in which both countries were engaged, so did the Countess exchange significant looks with Wilhelm across the vast chasm of birth and rank, each thinking they could with safety indulge their feelings. Meanwhile the Baroness had sought out Laertes, who particularly pleased her as being a vigorous and lively young man, who, misogynist though he was, did not despise a transient adventure. And really this time he would have been fettered against his will by the affability and captivating nature of the Baroness, had not the Baron showed him a good, or if you will,

a bad, service, in making him more closely acquainted with the temperament of this lady.

For when Laertes once loudly praised her and preferred her to all other members of her sex, the Baron replied jokingly : " I already observe how things stand ; our fair friend has again got an inmate for her stalls." This unfortunate comparison, which pointed only too clearly to the dangerous caresses of Circe, vexed Laertes beyond measure and he couldn't listen to the Baron without anger, who continued to talk without mercy : " Every stranger thinks that he is the first, for whom there has been such delightful behaviour ; but he makes a great mistake ; for we have all been led along this course. Man, youth or boy, whoever he may be, must for a time give himself up to her, hang about her and toil with yearning for her."

The happy man, who has just entered into the garden of an enchantress and been received with all the delights of an artificial spring, must be most unpleasantly surprised, when while listening to the song of the nightingale some transformed predecessor unexpectedly meets him with a grunt.

After this discovery Laertes felt heartily ashamed that his vanity had misled him to think well even in the least degree of any woman. He now neglected her completely, kept close to the Stallmeister with whom he fenced diligently and went hunting, but behaved himself at rehearsals and performances as if these were secondary matters.

The Count and Countess would often in the mornings send for some of the company, when each one had cause to envy the undeserved good fortune of Philine. The Count had his favourite, the Pedant often for hours together while he was dressing. This man had by degrees been attired and was now equipped and furnished even to watch and snuff-box.

Many times too, and particularly after dinner, the company was called before the noble guests. The actors prized it as the greatest honour and did not observe that just at the same time by huntsmen and servants a number of hounds were led in and horses brought into the Court of the Castle.

They had told Wilhelm occasionally to praise Racine, the Prince's favourite, and thereby to attract a good opinion to himself. He found an opportunity on one afternoon when he was also invited and the Prince asked him whether he read

diligently the great French dramatic writer ; this Wilhelm answered with a very lively " Yes." He did not notice that the Count, without awaiting his answer, was on the point of turning away to someone else ; he fixed upon him at once and almost got into his way, as he continued saying that he prized the French drama very highly and read the works of the great masters with delight, particularly he had heard with true joy that the Prince did complete justice to the great talents of a Racine. " I can imagine, he continued, " how people of high rank and distinction must value a poet, who describes so splendidly and truly the conditions of their lofty relationship. Corneille has, if I may so express it, depicted great men and Racine men of high rank. When I read his works, I always think of the poet as living at a brilliant Court with a great ring before his eyes, surrounded with the most eminent people and penetrating into the secrets of human nature as they lie concealed behind the costly embroidered tapestries. When I read his *Britannicas*, his *Berenice*, it really seems to me as if I were at the Court, and initiated into the greatness and littleness of the habitations of these earthly gods, and I see through the eyes of a Frenchman with delicate feeling, kings whom a whole nation worships, courtiers who are envied by many thousands, in their natural forms, with their failings and their sorrows. The story that Racine died of grief because Louis XIV. would not see him and had let him feel his dissatisfaction, is for me a key to all his works, and it is not possible for a poet of so great talents, whose life and death hangs on the looks of a king, should not also write works which would meet with the applause of a king and a prince." Jarno had come near and listened to our friend with astonishment. The Prince, who had made no answer and only showed his approbation by a pleasing look, turned aside, though Wilhelm, who did not know that it was contrary to etiquette in such circumstances to continue a discussion and wished to exhaust a subject, would gladly have spoken more and shown the Prince that he had not read his favourite poet without profit and feeling.

" Have you, then," said Jarno, as he drew him aside, " never read a play of Shakespeare's ? "

" No," replied Wilhelm, " for since the time when they became better known in Germany, I was unacquainted with

the theatre ; and I don't know whether I should be glad if an old taste and occupation of my youth were again by chance renewed at present. Meantime all that I have heard of these plays has not made me curious to get to know more closely such strange monstrosities, which seem to go beyond all probability and dignity."

" I will, however, advise you," replied Jarno, " to make an attempt, it can do no harm if one looks at what is extraordinary with one's own eyes. I will lend you a couple of volumes, and you cannot better employ your time than by getting free from everything and in the solitude of your old habitation looking into the magic lantern of this unknown world. It is sinful that you should waste your hours in dressing up these apes to be more human and teaching these dogs to dance. Only one thing I stipulate, you mustn't complain of the form ; the rest I can leave to your own right feeling."

The horses stood at the door and Jarno mounted with some other cavaliers to amuse themselves out hunting. Wilhelm looked sorrowfully after him. He would gladly have still talked much with this man, who, though in an unfriendly way, gave him new ideas, of which he felt himself in need.

A man, when he is drawing near to a development of his powers, capacities and conceptions, often gets into an embarrassment from which a good friend can easily extricate him. He is like a wanderer, who, when not far from the inn falls into the water : if someone at once catches him and draws him to the bank, he would have been thoroughly wet once for all, instead of getting himself out on the wrong side and having to make a difficult, long and circuitous way to his destined goal.

Wilhelm began to have an idea that things went differently in the world from what he had supposed. He saw close at hand the important and significant life of the great and distinguished and wondered how they managed to give it an easy dignity. An army on the march, a princely hero at the head of it, so many warriors co-operating with it, such a number of admirers crowding in, exalted his imagination. In this mood he received the promised books, and in a short time, as may be supposed, the stream of that mighty genius took hold of him and carried him to an immeasurable ocean, in which he soon entirely forgot and lost himself.

CHAPTER IX

THE relationship of the Baron to the actors since their stay in the Castle had undergone various changes. At the commencement there had been mutual satisfaction. For the Baron, for the first time in his life, saw one of his pieces, with which he had often enlivened a private theatre, in the hands of professional actors and on the way to a decent performance ; he was in the best of humours ; showed himself liberal, and made purchases from every seller of fancy goods, of which many had installed themselves there ; he bought little presents for the actresses and managed to procure for the actors many an extra bottle of champagne ; on the other hand, they took every kind of trouble with his plays, and Wilhelm spared no diligence in learning with extreme exactitude the splendid speeches of the eminent hero, whose part had fallen to his share.

Meanwhile, however, some misunderstandings had arisen. The Baron's preference for certain of the actors became every day more noticeable, and this of necessity annoyed the others. He exalted his favourite quite exclusively and thereby introduced envy and disunion into the society. Melina, who besides in disputable cases did not know how to help himself, felt himself to be in a very unpleasant condition. Those who were applauded accepted their praise without being specially thankful, and those who were neglected let their annoyance be seen in all sorts of ways and managed to make the presence of their highly honoured patron among them in one way or another disagreeable, indeed their malicious joy had no little nourishment when a certain poem, the author of which was unknown, gave rise to much sensation in the Castle. Hitherto they found fault with the Baron's intercourse with the actors in a fairly refined manner ; all kinds of stories directed towards him, certain incidents embellished and with an amusing and interesting aspect given to them. At last it was begun to be said that a kind of trade rivalry had arisen between him and the actors, who imagined themselves to be authors, and on this report was based the poem of which we spoke, and which runs as follows :

I, poor devil, Lord Baron,
Must envy you your crest of arms,
The coach you ride in, coat you've on,
Your copses, ponds, and rack-rent farms,
Your father's polished ashlar house
And all his hounds and hares and grouse.

Me, poor devil, Lord Baron,
You envy my small shred of wit ;
Because it seems, as things have gone,
Old Nature had a hand in it ;
She made me light of heart and gay,
With long-necked purse, not brain of clay.

Look you now, dear Lord Baron,
What if we both should cease to fret,
You being your Lordship's eldest son,
And I being mother Nature's brat ?
We live in peace, all envy chase,
And heed not which o' th' two surpasses
I in the Herald's Books no place,
You having none about Parnassus.

T. CARLYLE.

The opinions upon this poem, which in copies scarcely legible was in various hands, were very much divided, but no one could conjecture who the author was, and when they began to amuse themselves about it with some malicious joy, Wilhelm expressed himself very much against them.

" We Germans," he exclaimed, " deserved to have our Muses held in the contempt in which they have so long languished, because we do not know how to value men of rank, who may occupy themselves with our literature in some way or other. Birth, rank and fortune are in no way in opposition to genius and good taste ; foreign nations have taught us this who count among their best minds a great number of noblemen. Hitherto it has been remarkable in Germany for a man of high birth to devote himself to the sciences ; hitherto only a few celebrated names have become still more celebrated by their inclination to art and science ; on the other hand, many have emerged from obscurity and risen like unknown stars on the horizon. Yet this will not always be so : and if I mistake not the best classes of the nation are already on the way to make use of their advantages to earn the finest laurels of the Muses in the future. Nothing, therefore, is more unpleasant to me

than when I see the burgher often mocking at the noble, who knows how to value the Muses, but also men of rank, themselves with ill-considered humour and a malicious joy which is not to be approved, frighten away their equals from a path where honour and contentment await all."

The last utterance appeared to be directed towards the Count, of whom Wilhelm had heard that he really liked the poem. Indeed, this nobleman, who was wont always in his way to joke with the Baron, found such an opportunity most desirable for plaguing his relation in every way. Everyone had his own conjecture as to who the writer of the poem could be, and the Count, who did not like to see himself surpassed by anyone in acumen, came upon an idea, which he was soon ready to swear by, that the poem could only be written by his Pedant, who was a very shrewd fellow and in whom he had already for a long time seen signs of poetic genius. In order to make a real pleasure for himself, he had therefore this actor summoned to him, who, in the presence of the Countess, the Baroness and Jarno, had to read aloud the poem in his own manner and thereby he earned praise and applause and a present, and when the Count asked if he had still some poems from earlier times, he managed with acuteness to turn aside the question. Thus the Pedant acquired the reputation of a poet, a wit and, in the eyes of those who were favourable to the Baron, a lampooner and a bad man. From that time on the Count only applauded him always the more, however he played his parts, so that the poor man at last became inflated, indeed became almost mad and meditated, like Philine, having a room in the new Castle.

Had this plan been carried out at once he would have avoided a great mishap. For when late one evening he was going to the old castle and groped about in the dark narrow way, all at once he was set upon, held fast by some persons, while others struck him vigorously and so thrashed him in the darkness, that he was left almost lying on the ground and only with difficulty could crawl up to his companions. Angry as these were over this misfortune, they felt a secret joy and could scarcely keep from laughing when they saw him so thoroughly drubbed and his new brown coat white all over as if he had had to do with millers. The Count, who soon got news of this, burst into

indescribable rage. He treated the matter as a most heinous crime, spoke of it as an insult to "The Peace of the Castle," and caused the strictest inquisition to be made into the matter by his judge. The coat bedaubed with white was to give a chief proof, everything in the Castle which had to do with powder and flour was investigated, but in vain.

The Baron on his honour solemnly asserted that such kind of jesting thoroughly displeased him and that the behaviour of the Count had not been of the friendliest, but he had managed to pass the matter over and he had had nothing to do with the misfortune which had befallen the poet or lampooner or whatever one liked to call him.

Our troupe, which acted regularly every evening and on the whole was very well thought of, now began to make greater demands, as they were better treated. In a short time their food, drink, attendance and lodging was too small ; they applied to the Baron, their patron, that he should at last procure for their enjoyment and comfort that which he had promised. Their complaints became louder, and the efforts of their friend to satisfy them became ever more fruitless.

Meantime Wilhelm, except for rehearsals and times of acting, appeared but little. Shut up in one of the remotest chambers, to which only Mignon and the Harper were granted admission, he lived and moved in the Shakesperian world so that he neither knew nor felt anything apart from his own mind.

One tells of magicians, who by magic formulas summon all kinds of spiritual forms into their cell. The adjurations are so powerful that the whole space of the room is quickly filled, and the spirits crowding on to the small circle which has been drawn round them, around it and above the master's head, keep increasing, ever whirling in continual transformation. Every corner is crammed and every cornice occupied. Embryos expand themselves and giant forms contract themselves into mushrooms. Unfortunately the Black Artist has forgotten the word with which he might command this flood of spirits to ebb away.

So sat Wilhelm alone, and with unknown agitation a thousand feelings and capabilities were awakened in him, of which he had no conception or anticipation. Nothing could tear him away from this condition, and he was very discontented if anyone

took occasion to come to him, to converse with him about what was going on in the world outside.

Accordingly he scarcely noticed it when they brought him the news that in the Castle yard a sentence was to be executed, and a boy to be flogged who was suspected of breaking into houses by night, and as he wore the coat of a peruke maker, he had probably been among the conspirators against the Pedant. The boy, however, denied it most obstinately; one could not therefore formally punish him, but they wanted to give him a ticket as a vagabond and send him away, because he had been prowling about the vicinity for some days, lain at night in the mills and at last leaned a ladder against a garden wall and climbed over it.

Wilhelm found nothing specially remarkable in the whole business, when Mignon came in hurriedly and assured him that the prisoner was Frederick, who, since the quarrel with the Stallmeister, had been lost from the company and from our eyes.

Wilhelm, who was interested in the boy, got up hastily and found preparations already going forward in the courtyard. For the Count loved solemnity even in such cases. The boy was brought forward; Wilhelm came between and requested them to delay, as he knew the boy and he had first various things to bring forward. He had difficulty in succeeding with his representations; at last he obtained permission to speak with the delinquent alone. The latter asserted that he knew nothing about the assault in which the Pedant, had been mishandled. He had only rambled about the Castle and slunk in by night to look up Philine, whose bedroom he had discovered and would also certainly have reached, if he had not been caught on the way. Wilhelm, for the honour of the company, did not at all want this affair to be made known: he hurried to the Stallmeister and asked him, from his knowledge of the people and the Castle, to mediate in the matter and set the boy free.

This moody man, with the assistance of Wilhelm, invented a little story, that the boy had belonged to the troupe, had run away from it, then wished to get back again and to be received again into it; he had been trying by night to seek out some of his well-wishers and commend himself to them. It was, besides, testified that he had otherwise behaved himself well, the ladies took part in the matter, and he was let go.

Wilhelm received him and he was now the third person of this strange family, which Wilhelm for some time had regarded as his own. The old man and Mignon received the returning wanderer in a friendly manner, and all three were united in showing themselves attentive to their friend and protector and serving him and showing to him all that was pleasant.

CHAPTER X

PHILINE managed every day to insinuate herself better into the favour of the ladies when they were together alone. She generally led the conversations to the men who came and went about them, and Wilhelm was not the last with whom she occupied herself. The clever girl was quite alive to the fact that he had made a deep impression on the heart of the Countess ; she therefore related what she did and did not know of him, but guarded herself against bringing forward anything which might point against him ; on the contrary, she praised his magnanimity, his generosity and especially his modest behaviour towards the fair sex. All enquiries which came about him to her she answered with good sense, and when the Baroness noticed the increasing inclination of her fair friend, to her also this discovery was most welcome. For her own intrigues with several men, especially of late with Jarno, were not concealed from the Countess, whose pure soul could not look on such levity without disapproval and with a gentle censure. In this way the Baroness as well as Philine each had a special interest in bringing our friend into closer relationship with the Countess, and Philine hoped besides that on an occasion she could work for herself and if possible regain the favour of the young man, which she had lost.

One day when the Count had gone out hunting with the rest of the company and they expected the gentlemen back the next morning, the Baroness thought of a joke, which was completely in her line, for she loved disguises, and in order to surprise the company she would appear among them, now as a peasant girl, now as a page, at another time as a hunter's boy. Thus she gave herself the air of being a little fairy, which is present everywhere and especially there where least expected. Nothing gave her greater joy than, without being recognized, waiting

upon the company as a servant or mixing among them otherwise, and at last disclosing herself in some sportive manner.

Towards evening she sent for Wilhelm to her room, and as she still had something to do, Philine was to prepare him.

He came and found, not without astonishment, in the room, instead of the honourable lady, the frivolous young woman. She came to meet him with a certain dignified frankness, which she had hitherto been practising and this obliged him in like manner to be polite.

At first she joked in a general way on the good fortune which pursued him and which, as she could not help noticing, had brought him hither in the present case ; then she reproached him in a kindly way for the way in which he had pained her, blamed and accused herself, confessed that she well deserved such a reception, made so sincere a description of what she called her former condition, and added that she must despise herself, if she were not capable of altering and making herself worthy of his friendship.

Wilhelm was struck with this speech. He had too little knowledge of the world to know that persons who are quite frivolous and incapable of improvement will often accuse themselves in the most lively fashion, confess and repent of their faults with the utmost freedom, though they have not the least power in themselves to turn back from the course along which the irresistible power of their nature drags them along. He could not therefore remain unfriendly to the fair sinner ; he entered into conversation with her and heard from her of the project of a strange disguise, with which it was intended to surprise the Countess.

He found some reason for hesitation, which he did not conceal from Philine, but the Baroness who entered the room at that moment left him no time for his doubts ; she rather hurried him away with her, assuring him that it was just the proper hour.

It had become dark and she led him to the wardrobe of the Count, made him take off his own coat and slip on the silk dressing-gown of the Count and put on the cap with red trimmings. She led him to the cabinet, told him to sit down on the large chair and take a book ; she lighted the Argand lamp which stood in front of him and instructed him in what he was to do and what part he was to play.

" They will inform the Countess," she said, " of her husband's unexpected arrival and of his bad temper. The Countess will come, walk up and down the room several times, then sit herself at the back of the chair, lay her arm on his shoulder and say a few words." He was to play the part of the husband as long as was possible, but when at last he was obliged to reveal himself, he was to behave nicely and gallantly.

Wilhelm sat now restlessly enough in this singular disguise. The proposal had surprised him and the carrying out of it came before deliberation. The Baroness had already gone out of the room before he noticed how dangerous the part was which he had undertaken. He did not deny that the beauty, the youth and the grace of the Countess had made some impression on him, but his nature was far removed from all empty gallantry, and his principles would not allow any thought of more serious undertakings, so that he was in no small embarrassment at this moment. The fear of displeasing the Countess or of pleasing her more than was suitable were alike fully in his thoughts. Every female charm, which had ever worked upon him, showed itself again to his imagination. Mariana appeared to him in her white morning dress and besought him to remember her. Philine's amiability, her beautiful hair and flattering behaviour had become again effective by her recent presence ; yet all retired as behind the veil of distance when he thought of the noble, blooming Countess, whose arm he was to feel on his neck in a few minutes, and to whose innocent caresses he was called upon to make some reply.

The strange way in which he was to be drawn out of this embarrassment he certainly did not anticipate. How great was his astonishment, nay, indeed his fear, when the door opened behind him and he at the first stolen glance at the mirror saw quite clearly the Count coming in with a light in his hand. His doubt what he was to do, whether he should stay where he was or get up, fly, confess, deny or beg forgiveness, lasted only a few moments. The Count, who had remained immovable, standing in the doorway, retired and shut the door gently. At the same moment the Baroness sprang in from a side door, extinguished the lamp, pulled Wilhelm from the chair and hurried him after her into the cabinet. He quickly threw aside the dressing-gown, which was at once placed in its usual position.

The Baroness took his coat over her arm and hurried with him through several rooms, passages and partitions into her room, where Wilhelm, after she had recovered herself, learnt from her that she had gone to the Countess to bring her the fictitious news of the arrival of the Count. "I know already," said the Countess. "What can have happened? I have just seen him come in by the side door." The Baroness, greatly alarmed, at once ran to the Count's room to bring Wilhelm away.

"Unfortunately you came too late," exclaimed Wilhelm. "The Count was in the room before you and has seen me sitting."

"Has he recognized you?"

"I do not know. He saw me in the mirror, as I did him, and before I knew whether it was he or a ghost he drew back and closed the door behind him."

The embarrassment of the Baroness increased, when a servant came to call her and announced that the Count was with his lady. She went with a heavy heart and found the Count silent and absorbed in himself, but in his utterances gentler and more friendly than usual. They spoke about the incidents of the hunting and reasons for his early return. The talk soon came to an end. The Count became taciturn, and the Baroness particularly noticed, when he asked for Wilhelm and expressed the wish that he might be called so that he should read something aloud.

Wilhelm, who had dressed himself again in the Baroness' room and had to some extent recovered himself, came to the order not without anxiety. The Count gave him a book, from which he read an adventurous romance not without difficulty. His tone had something uncertain and trembling about it, which fortunately corresponded with the contents of the story. The Count gave some friendly signs of applause and praised the special expression of the reading, when he at last dismissed our friend.

Wilhelm had hardly read a few plays of Shakespeare, when their effect on him was so powerful that he could not proceed any further. His whole soul was in a turmoil. He sought for an opportunity of talking with Jarno and could not thank him sufficiently for the pleasure with which he had provided him.

"I clearly foresaw," said Jarno, "that you would not remain

insensitive to the excellence of the most extraordinary and wonderful of all writers."

"Yes," exclaimed Wilhelm, "I cannot remember that any book, any man, any incident of my life has produced such great effect upon me as the precious works, which, by your kindness, I have been able to know. They seem to be the work of some heavenly genius, who draws nigh to men in the gentlest of manners to make them acquainted with themselves. These are no fictions! You think you are standing before the open, awful books of fate, in which the whirlwind of the most animated life rushes, violently turning the leaves hither and thither. I am so amazed by the strength and tenderness, the power and peacefulness and so transported, that I now only wait yearningly for the time when I shall be in a condition to read further."

"Bravo!" said Jarno, while he reached his hand to our friend and squeezed his, "this is how I would have it! And the consequences, which I hope for, will certainly also not be missing."

"I wished," exclaimed Wilhelm, "I could reveal to you all that is going on within me at present. All earlier feelings I have ever had regarding mankind and his destiny, which have accompanied me from youth upwards, though unobserved by myself, I find developed and fulfilled in Shakespeare's plays. It seemed as though he revealed to us all enigmas, though we cannot say. Here or there is the word of solution. His men appear to be like natural men and yet they are not. These most mysterious and complex creatures of Nature act before us in his plays as if they were clocks whose dial plate and cases had been made of crystal; they point out according to their use the course of the hours, and at the same time one can recognize the wheels and springs that drive them. These few glances which I have cast into Shakesperian world spurs me more than anything else to quicken my steps forward in the actual world, to mingle in the flood of the destinies which overhang it, and some day, if I am fortunate, to draw a few cups from the great ocean of true nature and distribute them from the stage to the thirsting public of my fatherland."

"How pleased I am with the condition of mind, in which I see you," replied Jarno, and laid his hand on the shoulder of the excited young man. "Don't let go your purpose of

embarking on an active life and hasten on to employ vigorously the good years that are granted to you. If I can help you, I will do so with all my heart. I have not yet asked how you came into this society for which you were neither born nor bred. This much I hope and see you are yearning to get out of it. I know nothing of your family and of your domestic circumstances ; consider what you wish to confide in me. So much only can I tell you, the times of war in which we are living can bring forth rapid changes of fortune ; if you like to devote your powers and talents to one service and are not afraid of the toil and, if need be, the danger, I have even now the opportunity of putting you in a position which you would not afterwards regret having filled for a time."

Wilhelm could not sufficiently express his gratitude and was willing to relate to his friend and protector the whole history of his life.

In this conversation they had lost themselves far in the park and had come to the highway which crossed it. Jarno stood silent for a moment and said : " Consider my proposal, make up your mind, give me your answer in a few days and bestow on me your confidence ! I assure you it has been for me hitherto incomprehensible, how you could have anything in common with such people. I have often seen with disgust and annoyance how you, in order only to make a living in some way, must fix your heart on a wandering ballad singer and a silly creature neither male nor female."

He had not yet finished speaking, when an officer came by in haste on horseback, followed by a groom with a led horse. Jarno called out a warm greeting to him. The officer jumped off his horse ; both embraced and conversed with one another, while Wilhelm, upset at the last words of his warlike friend, stood by the side self-absorbed. Jarno turned over some papers, which the newcomer had handed to him ; but the latter came to Wilhelm, stretched out his hand and said with emphasis : " I find you in worthy company. Follow the advice of your friend and thereby fulfil at last the wishes of one unknown to you, who takes a sincere interest in you." In saying this he embraced Wilhelm and pressed him cordially to his breast. At the same time Jarno came forward, and said to the stranger : " It is but that I ride on with you, so you may obtain the

necessary orders, and ride again farther before night." Both then sprang on to their horses and left our astonished friend to his own reflections.

The last words of Jarno still rang in his ears. It was intolerable for him to find two human beings, who had innocently won his affection, disparaged by a man whom he so much honoured. The strange embrace of the officer, whom he did not know, made little impression on him : it occupied his curiosity and imagination for a moment ; but Jarno's words had cut him to the heart ; he was deeply wounded and now as he was returning he broke out into reproaches against himself that he should for a moment have mistaken or forgotten the hard-hearted coldness which looked out from his eyes and spoke in all his gestures. " No ! " he exclaimed, " you imagine that you can be a friend, cold-hearted worldling that you are. Everything which you had to offer me is not worth the feeling which binds me to these unfortunate beings. How fortunate that I have discovered in time what I had to expect from you."

He clasped Mignon in his arms, who just came to meet him, and exclaimed, " No, nothing shall separate us, you good little creature. The apparent prudence of the world shall not cause me to forsake you, nor forget what I owe to you."

The child, whose vehement caresses he was accustomed to put aside, was delighted at this unexpected expression of tenderness and clung so firmly to him that it was only with difficulty that he could at last get free from her.

From this time he paid more attention to Jarno's dealings, which did not all appear to him to be praiseworthy, in fact much came out which thoroughly displeased him. He had, for example, a strong suspicion that the poem on the Baron, for which the poor Pedant had to pay so dearly, was the work of Jarno. As the latter in Wilhelm's presence had joked about the incident, our friend thought he recognized herein the sign of a thoroughly corrupted heart, for what could be more depraved than to mock at an innocent man whose sorrows one had caused without thinking of satisfying or indemnifying him. Wilhelm would himself have gladly occasioned such satisfaction, for by a very curious accident he had come on the traces of those who had taken part in that nocturnal ill-usage.

Hitherto it had been concealed from him that some young

officers spent whole evenings in the lower hall of the old castle with a part of the actors and actresses in a festive manner. One morning when he had got up early according to his custom he came by chance into this room and found the young gentlemen just about to make a very peculiar toilette. They had rubbed chalk into a bowl of water and drew this paste with a brush on their waistcoats and trousers without taking them off, and thus replaced the cleanliness of their wardrobe as quickly as possible. To our friend, who was surprised at these tricks, there occurred the white bespattered coat of the Pedant, his suspicion became all the stronger when he learned that some of the relations of the Baron were among the company.

To come nearer to the track of this suspicion he invited the young gentlemen to have a small breakfast with him. One of them in particular, who had been for some time on the recruiting service, could not sufficiently praise the cunning and activity of his captain, who understood the art of drawing all men to himself and overreaching each in the way suited to him. He related in detail how young people of good family and careful education had been deceived by all kinds of illusions of a superior preferment, and he laughed heartily over the simpletons who at first thought they had done so well to be valued and brought forward by such a reputable, bold, clever and generous officer.

How Wilhelm blessed his good genius for having showed to him unexpectedly an abyss, to the edge of which he had quite innocently drawn near. He now saw in Jarno nothing more than the recruiting agent; the embrace of the stranger could be explained. He detested the feelings of these men, and from that moment avoided coming in contact with anyone who wore a uniform, and so the news that the army was going to move farther forward would have been very welcome to him, if he had not at the same time to fear being banished from the neighbourhood of his beautiful friend, perhaps for ever.

CHAPTER XI

MEANWHILE the Baroness had passed several days troubled by fears and an unsatisfied curiosity. For the behaviour of the Count, since that adventure, was to her a complete enigma.

His manner was entirely different ; one heard none of his customary jokes. He made fewer demands on the company and the servants. One now noticed little pedantry or imperiousness about him ; he was, on the contrary, silent and self-absorbed : however, he seemed cheerful and was quite another man. At the readings aloud, for which he gave opportunity, he chose serious, often religious, books, and the Baroness lived in perpetual fear that behind this apparent calm he might be concealing a secret resentment, a silent intention of revenging the offence which he had so accidentally discovered. She decided therefore to make a confidant of Jarno, and she could do this more easily as she stood to him in a relation in which one has but little to conceal. For some time Jarno had been her decided friend ; they were, however, clever enough to conceal their attachment and their joys from the noisy world surrounding them. Only this new romance had not escaped the eyes of the Countess, and most probably the Baroness endeavoured to occupy her friend in a similar way, so as to escape the silent reproaches which she often had to endure from that noble soul.

Scarcely had the Baroness related the story to her friend than he exclaimed laughing :

" Without doubt the old fellow thinks he has seen himself ! He fears that this vision indicates a misfortune for him, perhaps even death, and so he has become tame as do all brutes when they think on the end which no one has escaped nor will escape. Only quiet ! As I hope he is still to live long, we will with this opportunity so train him at least that he shall no longer be a burden to his wife and household."

They now began, as soon as it was suitable, in the presence of the Count, to speak of warnings, apparitions and such like. Jarno played the part of the sceptic and the Baroness did so too, and they carried it so far that the Count at last took Jarno aside, reproved him for his free thinking way, and by his own example tried to convince him of the possibility and reality of such stories. Jarno pretended to be struck, then to be in doubt, and finally convinced, but in the quiet of the night with his friend made himself all the merrier over the weakness of the man of the world who all at once had been cured of his bad manners by a bugbear, but who was therefore worthy of praise as he awaited with so much composure an impending misfortune, perhaps death itself.

"The natural result which this apparition might have had might have brought him out of his composure," cried the Baroness with her usual cheerfulness, to which she always quickly returned as soon as anxiety was removed from her heart. Jarno was richly rewarded, and they invented new projects for making the Count still more tractable, and exciting and strengthening the inclination of the Countess to Wilhelm. With this intention the whole story was related to the Countess, who at first showed herself to be displeased, but from that time she became more thoughtful and in quiet moments appeared to think over the scene which had been prepared for her to follow it up and colour it.

The preparations which were now going forward on all sides left no more any doubt that the armies would soon move forward and the Prince at the same time would change his headquarters, indeed it was said that the Count at the same time was leaving his property and returning to the city. Our actors could therefore easily cast their horoscope; Melina, however, was the only one who took measures in consequence, the others only tried to catch as much enjoyment as possible from the moment.

Meanwhile Wilhelm was occupied in a special way. The Countess had asked from him a copy of his pieces and he looked on this wish from the charming lady as the finest reward.

A young author, who has not yet seen himself in print, applies in such a case the greatest attention to providing a clear and delicate copy of his works. It is like the golden age of authorship, he sees himself transported to those centuries, when the press had not yet inundated the world with so many useless writings, where only worthy products of the mind were copied and preserved by the noblest men; and how easily he made the false conclusion that a carefully copied manuscript may be an excellent product of the mind and worthy of being possessed and exhibited by some connoisseurs and patron of literature.

In honour of the Prince, who was shortly to depart, a great banquet had been arranged. Many ladies from the neighbourhood were invited and the Countess had dressed herself betimes. On this day she had put on a more expensive dress than she was otherwise wont to wear. Head-dress and hair decoration were more studied, she was adorned with all her jewels. In the same

way the Baroness had done all that was possible so as to be dressed with splendour and taste.

Philine, observing that the time for awaiting their guests was becoming rather tedious to the two ladies, proposed to get Wilhelm to come, who wanted to present his manuscript and to read aloud some little pieces besides. He came, and on entering was astonished at the form and grace of the Countess, which were only the more visible by reason of her decorations. He read according to the behest of the ladies, but so distractedly and badly, that if his hearers had not been so indulgent they would very soon have dismissed him.

As often as he looked at the Countess it seemed as if an electric spark glanced before his eyes. At last he knew no more where he was to get breath for his reading. The beautiful lady had always pleased him, but now it appeared to him as though he had never seen anything more perfect. Of the thousand thoughts that crossed through his soul, what follows may be almost their contents :

" How foolish it is that so many poets and so-called men of feeling move against pomp and decoration and desire to see ladies of all ranks in clothes which are simple and conformable to nature ! They blame adornment without reflecting that it is not the poor adornment which displeases us when we see an ugly or somewhat plain person clothed in a costly and special manner ; but I would like to gather together here all the connoisseurs of the world and ask them whether they wished to remove one of these folds, of these ribbons and laces, of these cuffs, ringlets and sparkling stones. Would they not be afraid of disturbing the pleasing impression which comes to meet them here so spontaneously and naturally ? Yes, I may say naturally, as Minerva sprang fully armed from the head of Jupiter, so does this goddess seem to have stepped forth with a light foot from some flower in all her adornments."

Frequently while reading he looked at her, as if he wished to imprint this impression on himself for ever ; he sometimes made mistakes but without falling into confusion, though formerly he would despair of a whole recitation if there were a mistaking of a word or a letter as if it were a stain. A false alarm, as if the guests were arriving, brought to an end the reading aloud ; the Baroness went away, and the Countess, about to shut up her

writing-desk which was standing open, took up a casket and put some more rings on her finger. " We shall soon part," she said, as she fixed her eyes on the casket ; " accept a remembrance of a good friend who wishes nothing more ardently than that you may prosper." She then took up a ring, which under a crystal showed a beautiful plate of woven hair and set with precious stones. She handed it to Wilhelm, who, as he took it, did not know what to say or do, but stood as if rooted to the spot. The Countess shut her desk and sat down upon her sofa.

" And I am to go away empty," said Philine, as she knelt down at the right hand of the Countess. " Only look at the man, who carries so many words in his mouth, when they are not wanted, and now cannot stammer out a poor word of thanks. Quick, sir, at least express your indebtedness by way of pantomime, and if to-day you can invent nothing, then at least imitate me.

Philine seized the right hand of the Countess and kissed it with warmth. Wilhelm fell on his knee, laid hold of the left and pressed it to his lips. The Countess seemed embarrassed, but without displeasure.

" Ah," exclaimed Philine, " so much adornment have I seen already, but never yet a lady so worthy of wearing it. What bracelets, but also what a hand ! What a necklace ! But also what a bosom ! "

" Quiet, little flatterer ! " said the Countess.

" Does this then represent the Count ? " said Philine, pointing to a rich medallion which the Countess wore on her left side with a costly chain.

" He is painted as bridegroom," replied the Countess.

" Was he then at that time so young ? " enquired Philine ; " you have only, I know, been married a few years."

" His youth must be placed to the artist's account," replied the Countess.

" He is a handsome man," said Philine, " but was never," she continued, placing her hand on the Countess's heart, " another image which found its way into this hidden case ? "

" You are very bold, Philine ! " she exclaimed. " I have spoilt you. Don't let me hear this a second time."

" If you are angry, I am unhappy," cried Philine, jumping up and hurrying out of the room.

Wilhelm held the most beautiful hand still in his. He looked steadfastly at the bracelet clasp, which to his greatest surprise let him see the initials of his name in lines of diamonds.

"Do I then," he modestly enquired, "possess your own hair in this precious ring?"

"Yes," she replied, half aloud; then she collected herself and said while she pressed his hand: "Arise, and fare you well."

"Here is my name," he exclaimed, "by the most wonderful chance!" he pointed to the bracelet clasp.

"How," cried the Countess, "it is the cipher of a lady friend!"

"They are the initials of my name. Do not forget me. Your image stands in my heart irremovably. Fare thee well, I must fly."

He kissed her hand and wished to rise, but the strangest thing develops from the strangest and surprises us, so, without knowing how it happened he held the Countess in his arms, her lips rested on his and their warm mutual kisses yielded them a bliss which we only sip from the first effervescing foam of the freshly poured-out cup of love.

Her head rested on his shoulder, and there was no thought of the disordered ringlets and ribbons. She had thrown her arm around him, he embraced her with vivacity and pressed her repeatedly to his bosom. Oh that such a moment could but last for ever! And woe to the envious fate that broke in upon these short moments of our friends.

How alarmed was Wilhelm, how stupefied did he start up from his happy dream, when the Countess all at once with a cry tore herself from him and pressed her hand against her heart.

He stood there stupefied in front of her; she held the other hand before her eyes and cried after a pause: "Go away, make haste."

He still continued standing.

"Leave me," she cried, and taking her hand from her eyes she looked at him with an indescribable gaze, adding with the most loving voice: "Flee from me, if you love me."

Wilhelm was out of the chamber and again in his rooms before he knew where he was.

The Unhappy Creatures! What singular warning of chance or of destiny tore them from one another.

BOOK IV

CHAPTER I

LAERTES stood meditatively at the window and leaning on his arm looked out into the fields. Philine glided to him across the great hall, leant herself on her friend and laughed at his serious aspect.

"Do not laugh," he replied ; "it is horrible to think how time goes on, how everything changes and has an end ! Only look, here stood a little while ago a fine camp, how festive did the tents look ! What a lively existence went on within them, how carefully was the whole district watched ! and how all at once everything has vanished ; for a short time the straw that has been trampled down and the holes dug by the cooks, will still show a trace of what has been ; then the whole will be ploughed over and the presence of so many thousand vigorous men in this neighbourhood will only haunt the memories of a few old people."

Philine began to sing and dragged her friend out to dance in the hall.

"Since we cannot," she cried, "overtake time, when it is past, let us at least honour her as a beautiful goddess with joy and delicacy."

They had scarcely made a few turns when Mme Melina came through the hall. Philine was mischievous enough to invite her, too, to dance and thereby to bring to her mind the full shape induced by her pregnancy.

"May I never more see a woman who is pregnant," said Philine behind her back.

"Yet she is glad," said Laertes.

"But she dresses so badly. Have you seen the waving fold of her shortened petticoat, which always goes out before her when she moves. She has no art or skill to tidy herself up and conceal her condition."

"Leave her alone," said Laertes, "time will come to her assistance."

" It were, however, prettier if children could be shaken from the trees," cried Philine.

The Baron entered and said to them some friendly words in the name of the Count and the Countess who had departed early and sent them some presents. He went straight to Wilhelm, who was busy in the next room with Mignon. The child had been very friendly and helpful, had asked after Wilhelm's parents, brothers and sisters and relations, and reminded him of his duty of giving some news of himself to his family.

The Baron brought to him besides the farewell greetings of the Company the assurance how greatly satisfied the Count had been with him, with his acting, his poetical works and his theatrical labours. As a proof of this sentiment he drew out a purse, through the beautiful texture of which the ravishing colour of new gold pieces sparkled out. Wilhelm drew back, refusing to accept it.

" Look upon this gift," continued the Baron, " as a compensation for your time, as a recognition of your trouble, not as a reward of your talent. If this procures for us a good name and the affection of men, it is fair that we by our diligence and efforts should at the same time earn the means of satisfying our wants as we are not yet entirely spirit. If we had been in a town where everything is to be got, we should have changed this small sum of money into a watch, or ring, or something else, but now I must give the magic rod direct into your hands ; get for yourself a small trinket with it which you may like best and what may be most serviceable to you, and keep it in remembrance of us. At the same time you must keep the purse in honour. The ladies have knitted it themselves, and it was their intention to give to the contents its most pleasing form."

" Forgive my embarrassment," replied Wilhelm, " and doubts about receiving this present. It almost does away with the little I have done and hinders the free play of a happy recollection. Money is a fine thing where anything has to be finished with, and I should not wish to be entirely finished out of the recollection of your house."

" That is not the case," replied the Baron, " but as you yourself feel tenderly, you should not desire that the Count should be obliged to regard himself as your debtor, for he is a man who sets his greatest ambition on being precise and just.

It has not escaped him how much trouble you have given yourself, and you have devoted your whole time to his projects ; indeed he is fully aware that in order to hasten on some operations you have not spared your own money. How, then, shall I then appear before him, if I cannot assure him that his recognition has given you pleasure ? "

" If I think only of myself," replied Wilhelm, " if I were only to follow my own feelings, I should in spite of all these reasons steadfastly refuse to accept this gift, beautiful and honourable as it is ; but I do not deny that if at the moment it brings me into one embarrassment it rescues me from another into which I have fallen lately with regard to my family and which has caused me much grief. I have not managed in the best way with my time any more than with my money, for which I must give an account ; now, owing to the generosity of the Count, it is possible for me, consoled as I am, to give news to my family of the good fortune to which this strange by-path has led me. I sacrifice those feelings of delicacy, which like a tender conscience gives us warning on such occasions, to a higher duty, and so that I may be able to appear courageously before the eyes of my father I stand ashamed before yours."

" It is singular," replied the Baron, " what a remarkable hesitation people make about accepting money from friends and patrons, from whom they would receive every other gift with thanks and joy. Human nature has other such peculiarities by which such scruples are produced and carefully nurtured."

" Is it not the same with all points of honour ? " asked Wilhelm.

" It is so," replied the Baron, " and with other prejudices. We do not wish to root them up so as not perchance at the same time to tear up noble plants. But I am always glad when I find people who can set themselves above such things, and I think with pleasure of the story of the intellectual poet who had composed some plays for a Court theatre, which obtained the complete applause of the monarch. ' I must handsomely reward him,' said the magnanimous prince, ' let someone find out whether some kind of trinket would give him pleasure, or if he would not disdain to accept money.' In his humorous fashion the poet answered the courtier who had been sent, ' I am heartily thankful for his gracious feelings, and as the Emperor takes money

from us everyday, I don't see why I should be ashamed of taking money from him.' "

The Baron had scarcely left the room when Wilhelm eagerly counted the money which had come to him so unexpectedly and, as he thought, so undeservedly. It seemed as though the value and dignity of gold, which we usually do not feel till later years, had now by anticipation shone out to him for the first time, as the beautiful glittering pieces rolled out from the delicately wrought purse. He made his reckoning and found that, particularly as Melina had promised to repay the loan at once, that he now had as much if not more to his account as on that day when Philine asked from him the first nosegay. With secret contentment he looked upon his talents, and with some slight pride upon the good fortune which had directed and accompanied him. He now took up his pen with confidence to write a letter which should at once free his family from all embarrassment and set his previous behaviour in the most favourable light. He avoided any special narrative and only let them guess what had befallen him by significant and mysterious experiences. The good condition of his cash-book, the earnings obtained by his talents, the favour of the great, the friendly feeling of ladies, acquaintance with a wide circle, the development of his bodily and mental abilities and his hope for the future constituted such a wonderful picture in the air that "Fata Morgana" itself could scarcely have put together one more strange.

In this happy state of exaltation he continued, after he had closed the letter, to hold a long conversation with himself in which he recapitulated the contents of his letter and painted for himself an active and worthy future. The example of so many noble warriors had set him on fire, the poetry of Shakespeare had opened out a new world to him and from the lips of the beautiful Countess he had drawn into himself inexpressible ardour. All that could not and would not be without effect.

The Stallmeister came and enquired if they were ready with their packing. Unfortunately no one except Wilhelm had thought of it. Now they had to break up speedily. The Count had promised to have the whole company transported a few days' journey, the horses were ready and could not long be dispensed with. Wilhelm asked for his box; Mme Melina was making use of it for herself; he asked for his money, Herr Melina had

with great care packed it away at the bottom of his box. Philine said, " I have still room in my box." She took Wilhelm's clothes and bade Mignon bring the rest. Wilhelm had to acquiesce in it not without reluctance.

While they packed up and made everything ready, Melina said, " It annoys me that we should travel like rope-dancers and mountebanks. I could wish that Mignon would put on girl's clothes and that the harp-player would quickly have his beard cut." Mignon kept close to Wilhelm and said with great animation : " I am a boy and will not be a girl ! " The old man was silent ; and Philine on this occasion made some amusing remarks about the peculiarity of the Count, their patron. If the Harper cut off his beard, she said, let him sew it carefully on a ribbon and keep it so that he may easily take it again as soon as he meets the Count anywhere in the world ; for it was this beard alone which procured for him the favour of this gentleman. When they pressed her and demanded an explanation of this peculiar utterance, she let herself be understood in the following manner :

" The Count believes that it contributes very much to the illusion, if the actor continues to play his part in ordinary life too and keeps up his character ; and for this reason he was so favourable to the Pedant, and he found it very clever that the Harper wore his false beard not only in the evening at the theatre but constantly by day, and he was greatly pleased with the natural appearance of the mask."

While the others were laughing at this error and about the singular opinions of the Count, the Harper went aside with Wilhelm, took leave of him and begged him with tears to let him go forthwith. Wilhelm spoke to him and assured him that he would protect him against everyone, that no one should hurt a hair of his beard, much less cut it off against his will.

The old man was greatly moved and in his eyes there glowed an unusual fire.

" This is not the cause which drives me away ; already for some time I have been reproaching myself silently for staying with you. I ought to linger nowhere, for misfortune hurries to overtake me and harms all who are connected with me. Fear everything if you do not dismiss me, but ask me no questions ! I don't belong to myself, I cannot stay."

" To whom do you belong ? Who can exert such a power over you ? "

" Sir, leave me my horrible secret and let me go ! The vengeance which pursues me is not of the earthly judge ; I belong to an inexorable destiny. I cannot stay and I dare not."

" In this condition in which I now see you I will certainly not let you go."

" It is high treason against you, my benefactor, if I delay. I am safe with you, but you are in danger. You do not know whom you are protecting beside you. I am guilty, but more unfortunate than guilty. My presence frightens happiness away and good deeds become powerless when I am connected with them. Fugitive and wandering I should be, that my genius of ill luck may not overtake me ; this pursues me only slowly and only appears when I lay down my head and wish to rest. I cannot show myself more grateful than by forsaking you."

" Strange man ! You can as little take away the confidence I have in you as the hope I have of seeing you happier. I will not seek to penetrate into the secrets of your superstition, but if you are in anticipation of wonderful forebodings and entanglements of Fate, I say to you for your consolation and encouragement : join yourself to my good fortune and we will see which has the strongest genius, your black one or my white one ! "

Wilhelm seized this opportunity of saying many consolatory things to him ; for he had already for some time believed that in this wonderful attendant he saw a man who had by chance or destiny burdened himself with a great crime, and the remembrance of it he was always carrying along with him. A few days before Wilhelm had listened to his song and particularly noticed the following lines :

For him the light of ruddy morn
But paints the horizon red with flame,
And voices from the depth of nature borne,
Woe ! woe ! upon his guilty head proclaim.

The old man might now say what he liked, Wilhelm had always a stronger argument. He knew how to turn everything for the best, knew how to speak so bravely, heartily and consolingly that the old man appeared to revive again and to throw aside his melancholy thoughts.

CHAPTER II

MELINA was hoping to settle down with his company in a small but prosperous town. They were already at the place where the horses of the Count had brought them, and they looked round them for other carriages and horses with which they hoped to go farther. Melina had taken over the transport and, as was his wont in other things, showed himself very niggardly. On the other hand, Wilhelm had the five ducats of the Countess in his pocket, and he thought he had the fullest right to spend them merrily, and he very easily forgot how vaingloriously he had specified them in the official balance which he sent to his family. His friend Shakespeare, whom with the greatest joy he acknowledged as his godfather and was all the more pleased to be called Wilhelm, had made him acquainted with a prince "who had passed some time in inferior, nay, even bad society, and who, in spite of his noble nature, had found pleasure in the rudeness, unseemliness and silliness of such entirely sensual fellows."¹ This ideal was most welcome to him, as he could compare his present condition with it, and the self-deception for which he had an almost invincible inclination was in consequence exceptionally facilitated.

He now began to think about his clothes. He found that a waistcoat, over which in case of need a short mantle could be thrown, was a very suitable costume for a traveller. Long knit trousers and a pair of lace boots seemed the true costume of a pedestrian. Then he procured a fine silk sash which he tied beneath him on the pretence of keeping warm ; on the other hand, he freed his neck from the tyranny of a stock and got a few strips of muslin sewn upon his shirt, which were somewhat broad and presented the complete appearance of an ancient ruff. The beautiful silk neckcloth, the memorial of Mariana, which had been saved, lay only loosely tied under the muslin collar. A round hat with a bright ribbon and a large pattern made the mask complete.

The ladies asserted that this garb became him well. Philine showed herself to be quite enchanted with it and asked for some

¹ In *Henry IV.*

of his beautiful locks of hair which he had unmercifully cut off so as to come nearer to the natural ideal. In this way she recommended herself not amiss to his favour, and our friend, who by his generosity had acquired the right of associating with the rest of them in Prince Henry's manner, soon came himself to have a taste for concerning himself with some mad tricks and promoting them. They fenced, they danced, they invented all kinds of sports, and in the frolicsomeness of their heart enjoyed such tolerable wine as they came across and in strong proportions, and in the disorder of this sort of life Philine lay in wait for her shy hero, for whom his good genius had a care.

An excellent entertainment with which the company amused itself consisted in an extemporary play in which they imitated and bantered their late benefactor and patrons. Some of them had very well observed the peculiarities of the outward manner of several distinguished persons, and the imitation of these was received with the greatest applause by the rest of the company, and when Philine from the secret archives of her experiences brought forward some declarations of love which had been made to her, the rest could scarcely restrain themselves from laughter and malicious joy.

Wilhelm reprimanded their ingratitude ; but it was said in opposition that they quite deserved what they were getting, and that above all their behaviour towards such meritorious people as they considered themselves to be was not of the best. They now complained of the little respect with which they had been met and how they had been neglected. The mocking, teasing and mimicry went on again, and they were continually getting more bitter and more unjust.

Upon this Wilhelm said, " I wished that there was no envy nor self-love appearing in your utterances, and that you considered those persons and their relations from the right point of view. It is a peculiar thing to be already placed by one's birth in an elevated position in human society. He for whom inherited riches has procured a perfect freedom of existence, who, if I may so express it, finds himself from youth upwards surrounded with all the accessories of human life, is accustomed to regard these goods as the first and greatest of all, while the value of that form of life which has been finely endowed by Nature will not be so clear to him. The behaviour of noblemen to those of lower

rank and to each other is measured by external advantages, they give to each credit for his title, his rank, his clothes and equipage, only not for his individual merits."

To these words the company gave unbounded applause. They found it detestable that the man of merit had always to be pushed into the background, and that in the great world there should be no trace of natural and cordial intercourse. On this last point particularly they wandered in discourse through a great variety of subjects.

"Don't scold them for it," exclaimed Wilhelm, "rather pity them. For they have seldom had an exalted feeling of that happiness which we recognize as the highest, which flows from the inner abundance of Nature. Only to us who are poor, who possess little or nothing, is it granted to enjoy the happiness of friendship in rich abundance. Our loved ones we cannot elevate by our benevolence, nor advance by our favour, nor render happy by our presents. We have nothing but ourselves. We must give up this whole self, and if it is to have any value we must make this good secure for our friend for ever. What an enjoyment, what a happiness for giver and receiver ! Into what a blessed condition does loyalty of affection place us ! It gives to the transitory life of man a heavenly certainty, it makes the crown and capital of all that we possess."

During these words Mignon had drawn near to him ; she threw her tender arms about him and remained standing with her little head leaning on his breast. He laid his hand on the child's head and continued :

"How easy is it for a great man to win over natures to him ! how easy to make our hearts his own ! a pleasing, agreeable, only moderately human manner works wonders, and how many means does he possess of keeping firm hold of the spirits he has once won ! For us all this comes less frequently, everything is more difficult and how naturally we lay a greater value on that which we acquire and accomplish. What touching examples of faithful servants who have sacrificed themselves for their masters ! How beautifully has Shakespeare described such things for us ! Loyalty is in this case a striving of a noble soul to be like to a greater one. By continual attachment and love the servant becomes equal to his master, who otherwise is justified in looking upon him only as a hired slave. Yes, these virtues belong to the

lower class of men, which cannot do without them and they give it a beauty of their own. Whoever is able to redeem himself easily from favours, is easily tempted even to raise himself above the recognition of them. Yes, in this sense I think that I can assert that a great man may well possess friends but cannot be one."

Mignon pressed ever closer to him.

"Well now," replied one of the company, "we do not need their friendship and have never demanded it. Only they ought to have a better understanding of the art which they wish to patronize. When we have played our best, no one has listened to us; everything was partiality. Whoever had favour, he was the one who pleased, and he who deserved to please did not meet with favour. It was not noticed how often what was silly and devoid of taste drew to itself attention and applause."

"When I subtract from this," replied Wilhelm, "what may arise from malice and irony, I think I may say things happen in art as in love. How will the man of the world with his distracted life maintain that inwardness in which the artist must live if he thinks of producing anything to perfection, and it should not be strange to anyone who wishes to take such an interest in the work as the artist wishes and hopes he will do. Believe me, my friends, it is with talents as with virtue, one must love them for their own sake or give them up altogether. And they will not be otherwise recognized and rewarded except when they can be practised unseen like a dangerous secret."

"Meantime, until a connoisseur discovers us we may die of hunger," cried someone from the corner.

"Not just so, at once," replied Wilhelm. "I have seen so long as one stirs and lives one can always get a living, though it may not be of the richest. And why should we complain? Were we not unexpectedly, even when things looked at their worst, were we not well received and entertained? And now when we are in want of nothing, does it occur to us to do anything for our improvement and even in some degree to strive further. We busy ourselves with strange things and like schoolchildren we withdraw ourselves from everything which might remind us of our lesson."

"In very deed," said Philine, "it is inexcusable! Let us choose a piece; we will play it on the spot. Everyone

must do his best possible, as if he stood before the largest audience.⁵⁵

They did not deliberate long ; the piece was decided on. It was one of those which at that time met with great applause in Germany, and have now passed away. Some whistled a symphony, everyone speedily thought of his part ; they began and played through the piece with the greatest attention and really beyond expectation well. They applauded one another in turn ; they had seldom entertained themselves so well.

When they had finished they all felt an exceptional pleasure, partly on their time being so well spent, partly because each of them could feel satisfied with himself. Wilhelm expressed himself copiously in their praise and their conversation was cheerful and merry.

" You should see,"⁵ cried our friend, " how far we should have to come if we continued our practisings in this way and did not merely confine ourselves to learning by heart, rehearsing and playing mechanically as if it were a duty or some handicraft employment. How much more praise do our musicians deserve, how greatly they rejoice in their art, how exact they are when they undertake their practisings in common ! What trouble they take in tuning their instruments, with what delicacy do they express the strength and weakness of their tones. It does not occur to one of them to do honour to himself by the loud accompaniment of the solo of another. Everyone tries to play in the mind and feeling of the composer and to express well whatever is laid upon him, be it much or little. Should, then, we not go to work with as much exactitude and intelligence, when we are practising an art still more delicate than any kind of music, since we are called upon to express the commonest and the most rare of human utterances in good taste and so as to cause joy. Can anything be more detestable than to slur over our rehearsals and in our performance to rely upon good luck and the mood of the moment ? We ought to set our highest happiness and pleasure in agreeing with one another so as mutually to please each other, and only so far to value the applause of the public as we have already sanctioned it among ourselves. Why is the conductor of his orchestra more secure than the manager of his play ? Because in the orchestra each individual must feel ashamed of his mistake, which offends the outward ear, but how seldom

have I seen the actor recognize and feel ashamed of pardonable and unpardonable mistakes by which the inward ear is so outrageously offended. I could only wish that the theatre were as small as the wire of a rope-dancer so that no unskilled person should venture on it, instead of it being a place where everyone feels in himself a capacity for parading himself."

The company received this apostrophe pleasantly ; each was convinced that the speech had nothing to do with him, since he a short time before had acted so well with the rest. They agreed rather that on this journey and in the future if they remained together they would, as they had begun, let a pleasant way of handling things prevail. Only they found that because this was an affair of good humour and free will, no Manager must be mixed up with it. They took it as an established fact that among good men the republican form of government is the best ; they maintained that the office of Manager should go round among them ; he must be chosen by all, and a kind of small Senate should remain joined along with him. They were so charmed with this idea that they wanted at once to put it into practice.

" I have no objection," said Melina, " if you like to make such an experiment while we are travelling ; I am glad to give up my post of Manager until we come to some settled place." He hoped thereby to save some money and to cast many expenses on the small republic or the temporary manager. They then took counsel very vigorously, how the form of the new state could best be organized.

" It is a wandering kingdom," said Laertes ; " we shall at least have no quarrels about boundaries."

They proceeded at once to the business and elected Wilhelm as the first Manager. The Senate was appointed, the ladies had a seat and vote in it, laws were proposed, were rejected, and agreed to. The time passed by unnoticed in this playing, and because it had been spent pleasantly they thought they had really done something useful and by their new constitution had opened out a new prospect for the stage of their native country.

CHAPTER III

WILHELM, when he saw the company so favourably disposed, now hoped that he might be able to converse with them about the poetic merit of the pieces which they played. "It is not enough," said he the next day when they had come together again, "for the actor just to glance superficially, to judge of it by his first impressions and to declare his satisfaction or dissatisfaction with it without investigation. This is indeed permissible for the spectator, who may be moved and entertained but is not expected to criticize. On the other hand, the actor ought to be able to give an account of the piece and of the reasons for his praise and censure ; and how will he do this if he does not understand how to penetrate into the sense of his author and his intentions ? I have seen the mistake of judging a play from one part and looking at a part by itself not in connection with the play as a whole. I have noticed this in myself in these days so clearly that I will give you an example of it if you will give me a well-disposed hearing. You know Shakespeare's incomparable Hamlet from a public reading which gave you the greatest pleasure at the Castle. We proposed to act the play, and I, without knowing what I was doing, undertook the part of the prince. I thought that I was studying it while I began to learn by heart the strangest passages, the soliloquies and those scenes in which force of soul, elevation and vehemence of feeling have their freest scope, when the agitated heart can display itself with expressive feeling. I also imagined that I penetrated right into the spirit of the part, while I took upon myself the load of deep melancholy and endeavoured to follow my prototype through the strange labyrinth of so many moods and peculiarities. So I learned by heart and practised and imagined by degrees I should become one person with my hero.

"But the farther I advanced the more difficult did the representation of the whole become for me and at last it seemed to me impossible to arrive at a general view of the whole. Now I went through the piece in an uninterrupted sequence and here, unfortunately, much would not suit me. Now the characters, now the manner of expression, seemed in contradiction, and I

almost despaired of finding a general tone in which I could present my whole part with all its shadings and deviations. In these errors I toiled for a long time in vain, until at length I hoped to arrive at my aim in a quite special way. I sought out every trace of the character of Hamlet which showed itself before the death of his father ; I noticed what this young man had been, independently of this tragic event and of the horrible events which followed upon it, and what without them he perhaps would have become. Gentle, and sprung from a noble stem, this royal flower had grown up amid the immediate influences of majesty ; the conception of what is right with that of princely elevation, of what is good and dignified with the consciousness of high birth developed themselves in him simultaneously. He was a prince, by birth a prince, and he wished to reign only that good men should be good without hindrance. Pleasing in form, well mannered by nature, amiable in his feelings, he was to be the pattern of youth and the joy of the world. Without any prominent passion, his love for Ophelia was a silent presentiment of sweet requirements. His zeal for knightly exercises was not quite original, much rather was this desire to be quickened and elevated by the praise which is bestowed on others. Pure in feeling he knew the honourable minded and could value the repose which a sincere spirit enjoys on the bosom of a friend. Up to a certain degree he had learnt to recognize and appreciate the good and the beautiful in the arts and sciences ; everything in bad taste was offensive to him, and if hatred could take root in his gentle soul it was only so far as was necessary to make him despise the changeful butterflies of the Court and to play with them in a scornful fashion. He was composed in his temper, simple in his behaviour, neither pleased with idleness nor too eager for employment. An academic leisureliness he seemed to continue at Court. He possessed rather mirth of humour than of heart ; he was a good mixer, pliant, modest, careful and able to forgive and forget an injury, yet he could never unite himself with one who overstept the boundaries of the right, the good and the becoming. When we read the piece together again, you can judge whether I am on the right path. At least I hope to support my opinion completely with some passages."

This description was received with loud applause ; they imagined they foresaw that Hamlet's manner of proceeding

ery well explained : they were delighted with penetrating into the spirit of the author. Each of ed to study a piece in this way and to develop the e author.

CHAPTER IV

THE company had only to remain a few days in the place, and soon for some members of it there appeared some not unpleasant adventures. Laertes in particular was incited by a lady who had some property in the neighbourhood, but he remained exceptionally cold towards her, indeed he behaved himself in so unfriendly a way that he had to put up with many scoffing jokes from Philine. She took the opportunity of relating to our friend the unhappy love story which had made the poor young man so much of a foe to the whole female sex. " Who can take it ill of him," she exclaimed, " that he hates a sex which has played so badly with him, and given him to swallow in one concentrated drink all the evil which men have to fear from women ? Imagine it : within twenty-four hours he was lover, bridegroom, husband, cuckold patient and widower ! I do not know how one could behave worse to any man."

Laertes ran half laughing, half annoyed, out of the room, and Philine began in her most charming manner to relate the story of how Laertes as a young man of eighteen, when he entered on a company of actors found a beautiful girl of fourteen years old who was just about to depart with her father, who had quarrelled with the Manager. He had on the instant fallen deeply in love, made all kinds of representations to the father to remain, and finally promised to marry the girl. After a few pleasing hours as bridegroom he had been married and had passed a happy night as husband ; thereupon the next day when he had been at the rehearsal, his wife, according to professional custom, honoured him with the decoration of horns ; but because he, out of too great tenderness, hurried home much too soon had, unfortunately, found a former lover in his place, had struck into the affair with heedless passion, challenged both lover and father and came off from it with a grievous wound. Father and daughter departed in the night and he was left behind, wounded,

alas, in a double fashion. His ill luck had led him to the worst army surgeon in the world, and the poor fellow got out of this affair with blackened teeth and watering eyes. He was to be pitied as he was the bravest young man on earth. Especially," said she, " I am sorry that the poor fool hates women, for how can one live who hates women ? "

Melina interrupted them with the news that the transport was completely ready, and that they could start off early next day. He handed them a plan, explaining how they were to travel.

" If a good friend takes me on his lap," said Philine, " I am quite content, though we sit crammed together and uncomfortable ; to the rest I am quite indifferent."

" It doesn't matter," said Laertes, who also came by.

" It is miserable," said Wilhelm, and hurried away. He got for his money quite a comfortable carriage, which Melina had refused. Another division of the party was made and they were delighted with the idea that they could travel comfortably, when the serious news arrived that upon the road which they were to take a party of military volunteers had been seen, from whom not much good was to be expected. In the place itself great attention was paid to this news though it was only variable and ambiguous. In view of the position of the armies it seemed impossible that a hostile corps could have worked its way through, or that a friendly one could have remained so far behind. Everyone was eager to describe to our company the danger which awaited them as really dangerous and to advise them to take another route.

In consequence of this, most of the company were disquieted and alarmed, and in accordance with the new republican form all the members of the State had been called together to deliberate about this extraordinary case, and they were almost unanimously of opinion to avoid the danger by remaining where they were or leaving it and choosing another route.

Wilhelm alone was not seized with the alarm ; he considered it disgraceful to give up a plan which they had entered upon after so much deliberation on account of a mere rumour. He spoke to them with vigour and his reasons were manly and convincing.

" It is," he said, " nothing: but a rumour, and how many

such arise in time of war? People who know say that the case is high improbable, indeed almost impossible. In such an important matter are we to allow ourselves to be determined by an uncertain report. The route which the Count showed us and for which our passport is made, is the shortest and the best way. It leads us to the town, where you will see your acquaintances and friends and may hope for a good reception. The roundabout way will bring us there, but along what wretched roads and with what a circuit. Can we hope at this late season of the year to get right at all and how much time and money shall we not waste meanwhile?" He said much more, and brought forward the matter from so many advantageous aspects, that their alarm diminished and their courage increased. He understood how to tell them so much of the discipline of regular troops, and to describe to them the marauders and wandering rabble as so worthless, representing the danger itself as so pleasant and amusing that the spirits of all of them were cheered up.

From the first moment Laertes had been on his side and assured them that he would not flinch or fail. The old blusterer found at least some consenting expressions in his own manner; Philine laughed at them altogether, and Mme Melina who, in spite of her advanced pregnancy, lost nothing of her natural stout-heartedness, found the project heroic; Melina, who hoped to save much by taking the shortest road, did not oppose and agreed to the project with full content.

Now they began to make preparations for defence at all costs. They purchased large cutlasses and hung them over their shoulders on well-embroidered straps. Wilhelm, besides, stuck a pair of pistols in his girdle. Laertes had, apart from this, a good gun, and they started on the road with the greatest delight.

On the second day the driver, who knew the neighbourhood well, proposed that they should take their midday's rest in a woody place among the hills, as the village was far distant, and in good weather they were glad to take this road. The weather was beautiful and everyone readily agreed to the proposal. Wilhelm on foot hurried on in front through the hills, and everyone who met him stared at his singular appearance. He hurried with quick and contented steps across the forest; Laertes came behind whistling; only the women let themselves be dragged

along in the carriages. Mignon ran too by his side, proud of the cutlass, which they could not refuse her when all the company was arming. Around her hat she had bound the pearl necklace which Wilhelm had kept from the relics of Mariana. Friedrich, the fair-haired youth, carried the gun of Laertes; the Harper had the most peaceful appearance. His long cloak was stuck within his girdle and so he walked more freely. He leaned upon a knotty stick, his harp had been left behind in the carriage.

After they had climbed the summit, not without difficulty, they at once recognized the appointed place by the fine beech trees which encircled and covered it. A large, gently sloping meadow in the forest invited one to remain, a well-bordered spring offered the most grateful refreshment; and on the other side, through chasms and woods, there appeared a view distant, beautiful and full of hope. Villages and mills were lying at the bottom; small towns on the plain and a new chain of mountains visible in the distance made the view still more full of hope, for they entered only, as it were, a small confined place. The first arrivals took possession of the place, rested in the shade, made a fire and singing as they worked, awaited busily the rest of the company, which arrived by degrees and with one accord saluted the place, the lovely weather and the unspeakably lovely neighbourhood.

CHAPTER V

IF they had often within four walls enjoyed good and merry hours, they were naturally much more alive here, where the freedom of the sky and the beauty of the neighbourhood seemed to pacify the feelings of everyone. All felt nearer to each other. All wished that they might spend their whole life in so pleasant an abode. They envied hunters, charcoal burners and woodcutters, whose calling kept them in such happy places, but above all they prized the charming arrangement of a gipsy settlement. They envied the wonderful fellows, who were justified in enjoying in blissful idleness all the adventurous charms of Nature; they rejoiced at being in some degree like them.

Meanwhile the ladies had begun to boil potatoes and to unpack and prepare the food they had brought with them.

Some pots stood on the fire ; the company placed themselves in groups under the trees and bushes. Their unusual clothes and varied weapons gave them a foreign appearance. The horses were feeding at the side, and if they could have concealed the carriages the appearance of this little horde would have been romantically illusive.

Wilhelm enjoyed a pleasure he had never felt before. He could here imagine there was a wandering colony and himself as leader of it. In this sense he conversed with everyone and created the fancy of the moment as poetically as possible.

The feelings of the company were heightened ; they ate, drank and made merry and repeatedly acknowledged that they had never experienced more pleasing moments.

Their pleasure had not increased for long, when activity awoke among the younger people. Wilhelm and Laertes seized their rapiers and began their exercises, this time with theatrical intention. They wanted to represent the duel in which Hamlet and his opponent met with so tragic an end. Both friends were convinced that in this important scene one should not (as usually happens on the stage) make strokes unskilfully hither and thither ; they hoped to represent a pattern in the performance of how one should give a worthy spectacle to the critic of the art of fencing. A circle was made round them ; both fought with zeal and intelligence ; the interest of the spectators increased with every pass. All at once a shot went off in the next bush and immediately after another one ; the company parted asunder in terror. They soon saw armed men pressing on to the spot where the horses were taking their provender not far from the packed-up carriages.

A general shriek burst from the females ; our heroes threw away their rapiers, seized the pistols, hurried against the robbers and demanded with violent threats the meaning of this undertaking.

When this was answered laconically with a couple of musket shots, Wilhelm fixed his pistol at a curly headed fellow who had climbed up on to the carriage and cut the cords of the package. Being well hit, he at once tumbled down ; Laertes, too, had not made a bad shot ; both friends feeling encouraged drew their side-arms, when a part of the robber band rushed upon them with curses and bellowing, fired a few shots at them and opposed

their boldness with glittering sabres. Our young heroes maintained themselves courageously ; they called to their other companions and encouraged them to a general resistance. But Wilhelm soon lost the sight of day and the consciousness of what was going forward. Stupefied by a shot which wounded him between the breast and the left arm, by a stroke, which split his hat and almost penetrated to his skull, he fell down and only afterwards by the narrative of others did he come to hear of the unfortunate end of the adventure.

When he opened his eyes again he found himself in the most remarkable position. The first thing which looked at him through the dimness that still lay in front of his eyes was the face of Philine, which bent over him. He felt himself weak, and as he made movement to raise himself up, he found himself in Philine's lap, on to which he again sank back. She sat on the grass ; she had gently pressed to her the head of the outstretched young man and made for him in her arms as well as she could an easy couch. Mignon knelt down with dishevelled, bloody hair at his feet and embraced them with many tears.

When Wilhelm saw his bloody clothes, he asked in a broken voice where he was and what had happened to him and the others. Philine begged him to remain quiet ; the others, she said, were all in safety and no one had been wounded except himself and Laertes. She would not tell him anything further, but continually begged him to keep quiet as his wounds had only been bound up badly and in a hurry. He stretched out his hand to Mignon and enquired as to the cause of the child's bloody locks, as he supposed she too had been wounded.

In order to pacify him, Philine told him how this good-hearted creature, when she saw her friend wounded and had in the hurry been able to think of nothing to stop the bleeding, she had taken her own hair, which was flowing round her head, to staunch the wounds, but had soon been obliged to desist from the vain undertaking. Afterwards they bound him with sponge and moss ; Philine had given up her neckerchief for the purpose.

Wilhelm observed that Philine was sitting with her back against her own trunks, which still looked quite firmly locked and uninjured. He enquired whether the others had also been so fortunate as to save their possessions. She answered with a shrug of the shoulders and a look over the meadow, where broken

chests, smashed-up boxes, knapsacks torn up and a multitude of smallwares lay scattered hither and thither. No one was to be seen upon the place, and the strange group found themselves alone in solitude.

Wilhelm now learned even more than he wanted to know ; the other men, who in any case might have been able to make further resistance, were quickly frightened and soon overpowered ; a part fled, a part looked on with horror at the accident. The drivers, who for the sake of their horses had held out most obstinately, were overthrown and bound, and in a short time everything was completely plundered and carried off. The worried travellers, as soon as fear for their lives was over, began to mourn over their loss ; they hastened with the greatest speed to the neighbouring village, carrying with them the lightly wounded Laertes, bringing away only a few fragments of their possessions. The Harper had leaned his damaged instrument against a tree and had hurried with them to the place to find a surgeon and to come as quickly as possible to the help of his benefactor, whom he had left for dead.

C H A P T E R V I

MEANWHILE our three unfortunate adventurers remained still for some time in their singular position. No one hurried to their assistance. The evening came on, darkness threatened to break in on them ; Philine's indifference began to pass into disquiet; Mignon ran to and fro and the impatience of the child increased every moment. At last, when their wish was granted and men began to draw near them, a new terror fell upon them. They heard quite clearly a troop of horses coming along the road which they had left behind them, and they feared that a second time a company of unbidden guests might seek out this place they had chosen, to gather up the gleanings.

On the other hand how pleasant was their surprise when a young lady came in sight out of the bushes riding on a white horse ; she was accompanied by an elderly gentleman and some cavaliers ; grooms, servants and a troop of hussars followed behind.

Philine stared at this phenomenon and was about to call and

beg the beautiful Amazon for help when the latter, astonished, turned her eyes on the singular group, at once guided her horse, rode up to them and halted. She eagerly enquired about the wounded man, whose position in the lap of this frivolous Samaritan seemed to strike her as extremely remarkable.

" Is it your husband ? " she enquired of Philine.

" It is only a good friend," replied the latter in a tone which was most displeasing to Wilhelm. He had raised his eyes to the gentle, elevated, calm, sympathizing features of the new arrival ; he thought he had never seen anything nobler or more lovely. A large man's overcoat hid her form from him ; she had borrowed it from one of her attendants to shield her from the cool evening air.

Meantime the riders had come nearer, some of them dismounted ; the lady did the same, and enquired with humane sympathy after all the circumstances of the accident which had befallen the travellers, but especially after the wounds of the young man who lay outstretched before them. Then she turned round quickly and went with an old gentleman sideways to the carriages, which slowly came up the mountain and stopped at the place they had chosen.

After the young lady had stood a short time at the door of one of the carriages and had conversed with the people who had come in it, a man of undersized figure stepped out whom she led to our wounded hero. By the small casket which he had in his hand, and by the leathern pouch with instruments, one soon recognized that he was a surgeon. His manners were rough rather than attractive ; his touch, however, was light and his help welcome.

He examined with precision and declared that the wound was not dangerous ; he wanted to bind it up on the spot and then the sick man could be taken to the nearest village.

The anxiety of the young lady seemed to increase. " Only see," she said, after she had gone to and fro several times and brought up the old gentleman again, " only see how they have treated him. And is he not suffering on our account ? "

Wilhelm heard these words and understood nothing of them. She walked restlessly to and fro ; it seemed as though she could not tear herself away from the sight of the wounded man, and as though she were afraid of violating decorum by remaining

when they had begun, though with difficulty, to remove his clothes. The surgeon was just cutting off the left sleeve when the old gentleman approached them and represented to the lady in a serious tone the necessity of continuing their journey. Wilhelm had his eyes directed upon her, and was so fascinated with her looks that he scarcely felt what was passing before him.

Philine meantime had stood up to kiss the hand of the gracious lady. When they stood beside one another our friend thought he had never seen such a contrast. Philine had never appeared to him in such an unfavourable light. As it seemed to him she ought not to come near that noble nature, still less to touch her.

The lady asked Philine various things but in a low tone. At last she turned to the old gentleman, who stood by quite uninterested, and said : " Dear Uncle, may I be generous at your expense ? " She at once took off the overcoat and it was obvious that she intended to give it to the stripped and wounded young man.

Wilhelm, who had hitherto been held fixed by the healing look of her eyes, was now, when the overcoat fell away, astounded by the loveliness of her form. She came nearer and laid the coat gently over him. At this moment, when he wished to open his mouth and stumble out some words of thanks, the lively impression of her presence worked so strongly on his already bewildered senses that it seemed all at once as if her head were encircled with rays, and a bright light seemed to spread by degrees over her whole form. The surgeon touched him just then rather ungently as he made preparations to extract the bullet which stuck in the wound. The holy vision vanished before the eyes of the fainting patient ; he lost all consciousness, and when he again came to himself the riders and carriages, the fair lady with her attendants had vanished away.

CHAPTER VII

AFTER our friend had been bound up and dressed, the surgeon hurried away, just as the harp player came up with a number of peasants. They quickly prepared from boughs that had been cut down and twigs woven together a stretcher ; they laid the wounded **young man** upon it and brought him

gently down the mountain under the guidance of a mounted huntsman, whom the noble company had left behind them. The Harper, silent and self-absorbed, carried his damaged instrument. Some men brought along Philine's box ; she sauntered after them with a bundle. Mignon sprang now forwards, now sideways, through bush and wood and looked yearningly at her sick protector.

He lay wrapped up in his warm overcoat peacefully on the litter. An electric warmth seemed from the fine wool to spread over his body ; in short, he felt in a most delightful sensation. The beautiful possessor of the garment had greatly influenced him. He still saw the coat falling from her shoulders, the noblest form encircled with rays standing before him, and his soul hurried through rocks and woods in the steps of her who had vanished from him.

Only at nightfall did the procession arrive in the village in front of the inn, where the remainder of the company were, and in despair complained of their irreparable loss. The only small room of the house was crammed full of people ; some were lying on the straw, others had occupied benches, some squeezed themselves behind the stove, and Frau Melina in a neighbouring room anxiously awaited her confinement. The alarm had accelerated this, and with the assistance of a young inexperienced woman, little good was to be expected.

When the new arrivals desired to be admitted there arose a general murmuring. They now asserted that only owing to Wilhelm's advice, under his special leadership, had they undertaken this dangerous road and been exposed to this accident. They threw the blame of their misfortune upon him ; they put themselves against the door to oppose his entrance and declared that he must seek a lodging elsewhere. They met Philine still more insolently ; the harp player and Mignon had to endure their share.

The huntsman, to whom the case of the abandoned party had been earnestly entrusted by the beautiful lady, did not listen long with patience to this quarrelling ; with oaths and threats he rushed upon the company, commanded them to get themselves together and make room for the newcomer. They now began to quiet themselves. He prepared a place for Wilhelm at a table, which he pushed into a corner. Philine had her box

put there and sat down upon it. Everyone squeezed themselves as well as they could, and the huntsman went away to see if he could not find more comfortable quarters for "the young couple."

He had scarcely gone when the discontent again became loud and one reproach pressed hard upon another. Everyone told the story of his loss and magnified it; they censured the foolhardiness for which they had paid such a penalty; they did not even hide the malicious joy which they felt at the wounds of our friend; they despised Philine and considered it a crime the way in which she had saved her box. From all kinds of jibes and innuendoes one had to conclude that during the defeat and robbery she had worked herself into the favour of the leader of the band, and had caused him to give her the box free, Heaven knows by what arts and complaisance. They must have missed her for quite a time. Philine answered nothing, and only clanked with the large padlocks of her box to convince those who were envious of her of its presence, and by her own good fortune to increase the despair of the rest of them.

CHAPTER VIII

WILHELM, though weak by the considerable loss of blood and though, after the appearance of that helpful angel, he had become gentle and mild, yet he could not at last restrain himself over the harsh and unjust speeches which, owing to his silence, were continually being renewed by the discontented company. At last he felt sufficiently strong to raise himself up and to represent to them the unkindness with which they disquieted their friend and leader. He raised up his bandaged head and began to speak in the following manner, leaning himself with some difficulty against the wall:

"Owing to the pain which each one of you experiences from his loss, I forgive you for insulting me at a moment when you should rather condole with me, that you oppose and push me from you the first time that I could have expected help from you. The services and complaisance which I have shown to you have hitherto been sufficiently rewarded by your thanks and by your friendly conduct; do not mislead me, do not force my mind

to go back and think over what I have done for you ; this calculation would only be painful to me. Chance has brought me to you, circumstances and a secret inclination has kept me with you. I shared in your labour and in your pleasures ; my slight knowledge was at your service. If you now lay the blame on me in a bitter fashion for the accident which has befallen us, do you not recollect that the first proposal for taking the road came to us from strangers, was approved by you all and agreed to by everyone as well as by me. Had our journey been accomplished fortunately, everyone would have praised himself for the good idea of advising this road and preferring it to others ; he would joyfully have remembered our deliberations and of his vote which he had well thought out ; now you make me alone responsible, you force a blame upon me which I would willingly accept if my conscience did not clearly say that I was free from blame—indeed if I might not appeal to yourselves. If you have something to say against me, bring it forward in an orderly manner and I shall know how to defend myself ; if you have nothing well based on fact to allege, be silent and do not torment me as I have now such urgent need of rest."

Instead of any answer the girls began again to weep and to relate their losses in detail. Melina was quite beside himself, for he had indeed to pay most and more than we can think. Like a madman he stumbled up and down in the narrow room, pushed his head against the wall, cursed and scolded in the most unseemly manner, when now at the same time the landlady came out of the chamber with the news that his wife had been delivered of a dead child, he gave way to the most violent outburst, and in accordance with him all shrieked, halloed and bellowed among one another.

Wilhelm, who was at the same time moved in his innermost being with a pitying sympathy for their circumstances and annoyance at their mean way of thinking, in spite of the weakness of his body felt the whole power of his soul awakened.

" I must almost despise you," he exclaimed, " deplorable as your case may be. No misfortune justifies us in loading an innocent person with reproaches. If I have a share in this false step, have I not also paid my share ? I am lying here wounded, and if the company has had losses, I have lost the most. The

stage property and decorations of which we have been robbed were mine, for you, Herr Melina, have not yet paid me and I here set you completely free from this demand."

"It is well for you to make presents," said Melina, "of what no one will see again. Your money was lying in my wife's box, and it is your own fault if you have lost it. But oh, if that were all!" He began to stamp afresh, to curse and cry out. Everyone remembered the beautiful clothes from the wardrobe of the Count, the buckles, watches, snuff-boxes, hats for which Melina had arranged so fortunately with the chief valet. Everyone remembered his own treasures, though they were much smaller. They looked with annoyance at Philine's box, and gave Wilhelm to understand that he had probably not done badly in associating himself with this fair lady, and by her good fortune saving also his own possessions.

"Do you think," he exclaimed at last, "that I will have anything of my own while you are in want, and is it the first time that I have honestly shared with you when in need. Let them open the box, and that what is mine I will hand over to the common needs."

"It is my box," said Philine, "and I will not open it till I choose. Your pair of rags which I kept for you cannot be worth much if they were sold to the most honest of Jews. Think of yourself—what your cure can cost and what you may meet with in a strange country."

"You will, Philine," replied Wilhelm, "keep back from me nothing that is mine, and that little will rescue us from our first embarrassment. But a man possesses many things besides glittering money with which he can help his friends. All that is in me shall be devoted to these unfortunate persons, who certainly will repent of their present behaviour when they come to themselves again. Yes," he continued, "I feel that you are in need of help, and what I am able to do I will perform; give me your confidence afresh, calm yourselves for the moment, accept what I promise you! Who will receive the engagement from me in the name of all?" Here he stretched out his hand and cried: "I promise not to leave you nor to forsake you till each one sees his losses doubly and trebly compensated, until the condition in which you are, by whosoever fault it may be, is completely forgotten and you have exchanged it for a better one."

He kept his hand still stretched out, and no one wished to grasp it.

"I promise it again," he cried as he sank back on his pillow. All remained silent ; they were ashamed but not consoled ; and Philine, sitting on her box, kept cracking nuts which she had found in her pocket.

CHAPTER IX

THE huntsman returned with some people and made some preparations for carrying off the wounded man. He had persuaded the parson of the place to receive the young couple. Philine's box was taken out and she followed with a natural dignity. Mignon ran on in front, and when the sick man arrived at the parsonage a wide couch, which had long been ready as the guest's bed and bed of honour, was handed over to him. Here it was first noticed that the wound had opened up and bled profusely. They had to procure a new bandage. He fell into a state of fever. Philine waited on him faithfully, and when weariness overmastered her the Harper relieved her. Mignon, with the firm intention of watching, had fallen asleep in a corner.

Next morning, when Wilhelm had recovered a little, he learned from the huntsman that the gentry who had come to his assistance yesterday, had shortly before left their property in order to avoid the warlike movements and to remain in some quieter place until the time of peace. He mentioned the names of the elderly gentleman and his niece, pointed out the place to which they were first going, and explained to Wilhelm how the young lady had enjoined upon him to take care of those left behind.

The entrance of the surgeon interrupted the lively expression of gratitude which Wilhelm was pouring out to the huntsman. The surgeon made a circumstantial description of the wounds, assured them that they would easily heal if the patient kept quiet and took care of himself.

After the huntsman had ridden off, Philine related that he had left with her a purse of twenty louis-d'or ; that he had given the parson a remuneration for their dwelling, and had left with him the cost of the surgeon's bill. She had passed everywhere

for Wilhelm's wife ; she introduced herself once for all to him in this capacity and would not allow him to look for any other sick nurse.

" Philine," said Wilhelm, " in the disaster which has befallen us I am very much in your debt and I should not wish to see my obligations towards you increased. I am restless as long as you are near me, for I do not know how I can repay your labour. Give me my things which you have saved in your box, join yourself to the rest of the company, look out for another lodging, take my thanks and the gold watch as a small acknowledgment ; only leave me ! Your presence disturbs me more than you can imagine."

She laughed in his face when he had finished. " You are a fool," she said ; " you will not be sensible. I know better what is good for you. I will stay ; I will not move from this spot. I have never reckoned on the gratitude of men, therefore not on yours ; and if I love you, what does that matter to you ! "

She remained and soon ingratiated herself into the favour of the parson and his family, being always merry, being able to give something to everyone, knowing how to talk to each in their own fashion and at the same time always managed to do what she wanted. Wilhelm was not uncomfortable ; the surgeon, an ignorant but not unskilful man, let Nature do her part and the patient was now soon on the way to recovery.

Unceasingly he kept recalling that event which had made an ineffaceable impression on his heart. He saw the fair Amazon come riding out of the bushes ; she drew near to him, dismounted, went to and fro and busied herself about him. He saw the robe she was wrapped in falling from her shoulders, her countenance and striking figure vanish away. All his youthful dreams were fastened on this image. He now imagined that he had seen with his own eyes the noble, heroic Chlorinda, and again there came before him the sick son of the king to whose bed the beautiful sympathizing princess came in all her modesty.

" May it not be," he often said to himself, " that in youth as in sleep images of future destiny hover around us and become forebodingly visible to our unobstructed eye ? Are not the seeds of what is to befall us already scattered by the hand of destiny ? Should not a foretaste of the fruits which we hope some time to gather be possible for us ? "

His sick-bed gave him time to repeat that scene a thousand times. A thousand times he recalled the sound of that sweet voice, and how he envied Philine who had kissed the helpful hand. The story often came before him as a dream, and he would have regarded it as a fiction had not the garment remained behind which assured him of the certainty of the vision.

With the greatest care for this garment he combined the most lively desire to be dressed in it. As soon as he got up he threw it over him, and the whole day he was afraid that it might be damaged by some stain or in some other manner.

c H A P I E R x

L AERTES visited his friend. He had not been present at the lively scene at the inn, for he was lying in bed in an upper chamber. Over his loss he was very much consoled and helped himself with his customary "What does it matter?" He retailed various laughable features of the company, in particular he blamed Frau Melina for bewailing the loss of her daughter merely because she could not enjoy the old German pleasure of having a Meshtilde¹ christened. As regards her husband, it now appeared that he possessed a good deal of money and at that time he was by no means in need of the advance which he had extracted from Wilhelm. Melina now wanted to depart with the next diligence, and required from Wilhelm a letter of introduction to his friend, the Manager Serlo, in whose company he now hoped to establish himself, as his own undertaking had gone to ruin.

Mignon had been very quiet for some days, and when one pressed her she at length confessed that her right arm was dislocated.

"You have to thank your foolhardiness for that," said Philine, and told how the child in the fight had drawn her cutlass and when she saw her friend in peril had struck stoutly at the free-booter; finally one had seized her by the arm and thrown her on one side.

They blamed her for not disclosing her injury sooner, yet they easily noticed that she was shy of the surgeon, who had

¹ Older form of Matilda.

hitherto always regarded her as a boy. They tried to get rid of the injury and she had to carry her arm in a sling. About this she was again sensitive, as she had to give up the management and nursing of her friend to Philine, and the pleasing sinner showed herself on this account more active and attentive.

One morning, when he awoke, Wilhelm found himself in a strange vicinity to her. On his broad bed he had in the restlessness of sleep hitched himself to the back part of it. Philine was lying stretched out across the front part of it ; she seemed while sitting on the bed to have fallen asleep reading ; she had sunk back with her head lying near his breast, over which her fair hair, now dishevelled, lay spread in waves. The disorder of sleep increased her charms more than art and design could have done, a childlike smiling calm hovered over her countenance. He looked at her for a time, and seemed to blame himself for the pleasure which looking at her gave him ; and we do not know whether he blessed or blamed the circumstance which made quiet and moderation a duty for him. He had considered her attentively for some time, when she began to move. He gently closed his eyes, yet he could not cease from blinking and looking at her as she trimmed herself up again and went away to enquire about breakfast.

By degrees all the actors had announced themselves to Wilhelm ; they had asked for letters of introduction and travelling money more or less discourteously and impatiently, and they always received them against the will of Philine. It was in vain she represented to her friend that the huntsman had also left a considerable sum for these people, and that they were only making game of him. They came into a lively quarrel about this, and Wilhelm asserted once for all that she should join the rest of the company and seek her fortune with Serlo.

For a few minutes only she lost her equanimity, then she speedily recovered herself again and cried : " If I only had my fair-haired boy again I should not trouble myself at all about any of you." She meant Friedrich, who had vanished from the chosen place and had not appeared again.

The next morning Mignon brought the news to his bedside that Philine had gone off in the night ; in the next room she had left everything belonging to Wilhelm very neatly laid out. He felt her absence ; in her he had lost a faithful nurse, a cheerful

companion ; he was no longer accustomed to be alone. But Mignon soon filled up the blank.

Since that light-minded fair one had surrounded our wounded friend with friendly attentions, the little one had by degrees drawn back and had remained silent by herself, but now that the field was clear, she came forth with attention and love, was eager to serve him and cheerful in entertaining him.

CHAPTER XI

WITH rapid steps he was approaching recovery ; he now hoped in a few days to start upon his journey. He did not wish to continue a somewhat aimless lounging sort of life, but steps with an object in the future wore to show his course. First of all he wished to find out the beneficent gentry, so as to express his gratitude, then to hurry to his friend, the Manager, to do the best he could to assist the unfortunate company, and at the same time to visit the commercial friends, with whose addresses he was provided, and to accomplish the business entrusted to him. He hoped that good fortune in the future, as formerly, would assist him and preserve for him opportunity by a lucky speculation of compensating for his loss and filling again the emptiness of his coffer.

The desire of seeing again his deliverer increased every day. In order to decide upon his journey he took counsel with the clergyman who had a fine knowledge of geography and statistics, and possessed a nice collection of books and maps. They searched for the place which this noble family had chosen for their residence during the war ; they searched for information about the family itself, but the place was not to be found in any geography book or map, and the genealogical manuals said nothing about such a family.

Wilhelm became restless, and when he let his trouble be known, the Harper disclosed to him that he had reason to think that the huntsman, for some reason or other, had kept silence about their real name.

Wilhelm, who now at last thought he was in the neighbourhood of the beautiful lady, hoped to obtain some news of her if he sent off the Harper, but this hope too was deceived. Though

the old man made many enquiries, he could not come upon any trace of her. In those days various rapid movements and unforeseen marches had taken place in those regions ; no one had paid special attention to the travelling party, so that the messenger who had been sent out, so as not to be regarded as a Jewish spy, had to come back and appear before his master and friend without any olive leaf. He gave a short account of how he had endeavoured to carry out his commission, and was anxious to remove from himself all suspicion of slackness. In every way he tried to alleviate Wilhelm's trouble, reflected on everything he had heard from the huntsman, and brought forward numerous conjectures, from which at last one circumstance emerged from which Wilhelm could explain some enigmatic words of his beautiful vanished deliverer.

The robber band apparently had been lying in wait, not for the wandering troop, but for that gentry which they rightly conjectured would be possessed of much money and valuables and of whose movements they must have had precise information. One did not know whether the deed was to be attributed to some volunteer corps, to marauders or to robbers. However, by good luck for the noble and rich caravan the poor and lesser folk had come first to the place and had suffered the fate which had been prepared for the others. The words of the young lady which Wilhelm quite well remembered had reference to this. If he was now pleased and happy that a provident genius had destined him for the sacrifice so as to save a perfect mortal, he was, on the other hand, almost in despair when all hope of finding and seeing her again, at least for the moment, had vanished. What increased this remarkable emotion in him was the resemblance which he thought he had discovered between the Countess and the beautiful unknown. They were like one another as two sisters may be, of whom one cannot say one is older or younger, for they seem to be twins.

The remembrance of the charming Countess was for Wilhelm infinitely sweet. He recalled her image to his memory only too willingly. But now the figure of the noble Amazon came between, the one vision changed into the other without his being able to hold either of them fixed.

How remarkable, then, did the resemblance of their handwriting seem to be ! for he preserved a delightful song from the

hand of the Countess in his pocket-book, and in the overcoat had found a little note enquiring with much tender care about the health of an uncle.

Wilhelm was convinced that his deliverer had written this note, that during the journey at some inn it had been sent from one room to another and stuck by the uncle in the pocket of the coat. He held both handwritings against one another, and if the delicately formed letters of the Countess had already pleased him much, he found in the similar but freer lines of the unknown one a flowing harmony which could not be described. The note contained nothing, yet the lines of it seemed to elevate him as the presence of the fair one had formerly done.

He fell into a dream-like yearning, and how harmonious with his feelings was the song which at the time Mignon and the Harper sang with the most heartfelt expression as an irregular duet.

You never longed and loved,
Alone and far removed ;
A foreign sky above,
To the south I look all day :

Are far, are far away,
My heart is waste, and sick, and sore ;
Cannot know what I deplore.

You know not grief like mine.
From joys or hopes, I pine,
And a foreign earth below me,
For the hearts that love and knew me
I burn, I faint, I languish,
Who has not longed in baffled anguish.

CHAPTER XII

THE soft allurements of his dear guardian angel, instead of leading our friend on any one path, nourished and increased the restlessness which he had previously felt. A secret fire glided through his veins ; definite and indefinite objects alternated in his soul and aroused an infinite yearning. At one time he wished he had a horse and another time for wings, and when it seemed impossible for him to remain where he was, he looked round to see where he really should go.

The threads of his destiny had become so marvellously entangled that he wanted to see the strange knots untied or cut in two. Often when he heard a horse trotting or the rolling of a carriage he looked hastily out of the window in the hope that it would be someone who was looking for him, who, were it only by chance, would bring to him some news, certainty and joy. He told stories to himself of how his friend Werner might come into this neighbourhood and surprise him, how perhaps Mariana might appear. Melina might be sending him news of his adventures, but especially the huntsman should come again and invite him to that beauty whom he worshipped.

Unfortunately nothing of all this came to pass, and he had at last to remain alone with himself, and while he brooded over the past again, there was one circumstance which, the more he considered and viewed it, became more unpleasant and intolerable. It was his unlucky generalship, which he could not think of without vexation. For, although on the evening of that unfortunate day he had made a fairly good speech before the company, he could not deny to himself that he was to blame. In hypochondriacal moments he considered the whole incident was due to himself.

Self-love makes our virtues as well as our faults appear much more important than they are. He had awakened confidence in himself, had guided the will of the rest, and led by inexperience and rashness they had gone forward ; a danger had seized them to which they were not equal. Loud and silent reproaches had pursued him, and if he had promised to the company, feeling so much their losses, that he would not abandon them until he had repaid with interest what they had lost, he had to blame himself for a new rashness of taking upon his shoulders a misfortune which was spread over all. One moment he rebuked himself for having made such a promise owing to the excitement and pressure of the hour ; at another he again felt that the generous stretching out of his hand which no one deigned to accept was only a trivial formality compared with the vow which his heart had made. He reflected on means of being helpful and useful to them, and found every reason for hastening his journey to Serlo. He packed all his things together and hurried, without awaiting his complete recovery, without listening to the advice of the clergyman and surgeon, in the singular society of

Mignon and the Harper, to escape the inactivity in which his destiny had only too long kept him.

CHAPTER XIII

SERLO received him with open arms, crying out as he met him : " Is it you I see, do I see you again ? You have little if at all changed. Is your love for the noblest of arts still so strong and lively ? I am so very glad of your arrival that I no longer feel the mistrust which your last letters had awakened in me."

Wilhelm with astonishment asked for a nearer explanation.

" You have," replied Serlo, " not behaved to me like an old friend ; you have treated me as a great gentleman to whom you might recommend useless people with a clear conscience. Our fate depends on the opinion of the public, and I fear that your Herr Melina and his company can with difficulty be received among us."

Wilhelm wanted to say something in their favour, but Serlo began to make such an unmerciful description of them that our friend was very glad when a lady came into the room, interrupted the conversation and was at once introduced to him by his friend as his sister Aurelia. She received him in the friendliest manner, and her talk was so pleasant that he was not once aware of a vein of sorrow which gave a special interest to her intellectual countenance.

For the first time for many months Wilhelm found himself again in his element. In his talks he had of late found listeners poorly equipped and ready to please, but now he had the good fortune to speak with artists and critics who not only fully understood him, but replied to his talk in an instructive manner. With what rapidity did they go through the newest pieces ! With what certainty did they judge them ! How they could test and value the judgment of the public ! With what rapidity did they throw light on each other's ideas ?

With Wilhelm's preference for Shakespeare he necessarily had to lead the conversation to this dramatist. He exhibited the liveliest hope of the epoch which these splendid productions must make in Germany, and he soon introduced his Hamlet which had busied him so very much.

Serlo assured him that he would long ago have acted the piece if it had only been possible ; that he himself would gladly take on the part of Polonius. Then he added with a smile : " And we can find Ophelia, if only we have the Prince."

Wilhelm did not notice that this jest of her brother's seemed to displease Aurelia ; he was rather in his manner copious and instructive as to the way in which he wished to have Hamlet played. He set before them in detail the results with which we have seen him busied with before, giving himself every trouble to make his opinion acceptable, though Serlo raised many doubts as to his hypothesis. " Well now," said the latter at last, " we grant you all this, now what will you explain by it ? "

" Much and everything," replied Wilhelm. " Picture to yourselves a prince, such as I have described him, whose father dies unexpectedly. Ambition and desire to rule are not the passions which animate him ; he would have been satisfied to be a king's son, but now he is compelled to be more attentive to the difference which separates the king from his subjects. The right to the throne was not hereditary, yet a longer life of his father would have strengthened the claims of his only son and secured his hopes of the throne. On the other hand, he now sees himself excluded by his uncle in spite of specious promises, perhaps for ever. He is now poor in favour, in goods and a stranger in that which from his youth he could regard as his property. Here his temper assumes its first mournful direction. He feels that he is not more, indeed not so much, as any nobleman ; he offers himself as the servant of everyone ; he is not polite, not condescending ; no, he is degraded and needy. He looks upon his former condition only as a vanished dream. It is in vain that his uncle wishes to cheer him and show him his position from another point of view ; the sensation of his nothingness will not leave him.

" The second blow that struck him wounded him deeper, bowed him down still more. It is the marriage of his mother. For him, the faithful and tender son, when his father died there still remained a mother ; he hoped in the society of his surviving noble-minded mother to honour the heroic form of the mighty departed one, but his mother too he loses, and it is worse than if death had robbed him of her. The trustworthy picture which a well-advised child is so glad to make of its parents vanishes away.

With the dead there is no help, with the living no hold. She, too, is a woman and her name is Frailty, like that of all her sex.

" Now for the first time he feels himself bowed down and orphaned, and no good fortune in the world can replace what he has lost. Neither melancholy nor reflective by nature, melancholy and reflection have become for him a heavy burden. This is how he enters on the scene. I don't think that I have added anything to the piece or exaggerated any feature of it."

Serlo looked at his sister and said : " Have I given you a false picture of our friend ? He begins well and he has still much to tell us and much to persuade us of."

Wilhelm asserted solemnly that he did not want to persuade, but to convince, and only begged for another moment's patience.

" Imagine this, you," he cried, " this son of a prince, represent to yourselves right vividly his condition and then observe him, when he learns that the spirit of his father is visible ; stand by him in that terrible night when the venerable spirit itself appears before him ; an unspeakable horror takes hold of him ; he addresses the miraculous form, sees it beckon, follows it and listens. The fearful accusation against his uncle rings in his ears, the challenge to revenge, and the pressing, oft-repeated prayers : ' Remember me ! ' and when the ghost has vanished, whom do we see standing before us ? A young hero, panting for revenge ? A prince by birth, who feels himself fortunate in being called out against the usurper of his crown ? No ! Astonishment and trouble overwhelm the young man in his solitude, he is bitter against smiling villains, swears that he will not forget the departed spirit and closes with the significant sigh :

The time is out of joint : O cursed spite,
That ever I was born to set it right !

In these words, it seems to me, lies the key to the whole behaviour of Hamlet, and it is clear to me that Shakespeare wished to describe the effects of a great action laid upon a soul which was unequal to it. In this sense I find the play to have been thoroughly worked out. Here is an oak tree planted in a costly vase which should only have borne pleasing flowers in its bosom, but the roots expand and the vase is shattered.

" A beautiful, pure, noble, highly moral nature without the sensuous strength which makes the hero, sinks beneath a burden

which it can neither bear nor cast away ; all duties are sacred to him, this one too hard. The impossible is demanded of him, not what is impossible in itself but what is impossible for him. How he winds and turns and torments himself, advances and goes back, is ever putting himself in mind, at last almost loses his aim from his thoughts, without however ever recovering his peace of mind."

CHAPTER XIV

VARIOUS people coming in broke off the conversation. They were musical dilettanti, who usually gathered themselves together at Serlo's once a week for a little concert. Serlo loved music very much, and maintained that an actor without this love could never come to a distinct understanding and feeling for his own art. As a man performs more easily and with more dignity when his gestures are accompanied and guided by a tune, so ought the actor alike in idea, as it were, to set to music his prosaic parts that he may not monotonously slur over them according to his individual style and manner, but treat them in suitable alternation by time and measure.

Aurelia seemed not to take much part in all that was going forward. At last she conducted our friend to an adjoining room, and as she came to the window and looked out at the starry sky she said to him : " You have still much to tell us about Hamlet ; I will not hurry you, and I wish that my brother may also hear what more you have to say ; but let me hear your ideas about Ophelia."

" Of her there is not much to be said," Wilhelm replied, " for her character is completed only with a few master-strokes. Her whole being a pure and sweet sensibility. Inclination to the prince to whose hand she may aspire flows so spontaneously ; her good heart yields itself so completely to its yearning that both father and brother have fears ; both give her warning directly and without restraint. Decorum, like the thin lawn upon her bosom, cannot conceal the movement of her heart ; on the contrary, it will betray this light movement. Her imagination is stimulated, her silent modesty breathes a loving desire, and should the friendly goddess ' Opportunity ' shake the little tree the fruit would at once fall."

" And now," said Aurelia, " when she sees herself forsaken, cast away and despised, when in the soul of her crazed lover all is changed from the highest to the lowest and instead of the sweet cup of love he offers her the bitter cup of woe."

" Her heart breaks," cried Wilhelm, " the whole structure of her being is loosened from its joints, the death of her father strikes against it and the beautiful edifice crumbles into pieces."

Wilhelm had not observed with what feeling Aurelia pronounced the words. His mind directed to this work of art, at its connection and completeness ; he did not suspect that his friend was feeling quite a different influence, that a deep sorrow of her own was vividly aroused in her by these dramatic shadow pictures.

Aurelia always kept her head supported by her arms, and her eyes, which filled with tears, turned towards heaven. At last she could no longer restrain her hidden sorrow ; she seized both hands of our friend and cried, while he stood astonished before her : " Forgive, forgive a troubled heart ! this company oppresses me ; I must try to conceal myself from my merciless brother ; now your presence has loosened all these bonds. My friend ! " she continued, " it is but for a moment that we have become acquainted and already you have become my confidant." She could scarcely speak out the words and sank upon his shoulder. " Don't think worse of me," she said, sobbing, " because I open myself to you so rapidly, that you see me so weak. Be my friend and remain so, I deserve it."

He spoke to her in the kindest manner—in vain. Her tears still flowed and choked her words.

At this moment Serlo entered, and most unwelcomely and most unexpectedly Philine, whom he held by her hand. " Here is your friend," he said to her, " he will be glad to greet you."

" What ! " cried Wilhelm in astonishment. " Am I to see you here ? "

With a modest, settled mien she went up to him, bade him welcome, praised Serlo's kindness, who, without any **merit** on **her part in the** hope of training her, had received her into his **splendid** company. She behaved at the same time in a friendly **manner to Wilhelm**, yet **with** a dignified distance.

This dissimulation did not last any longer when the two were **together**. For when Aurelia had gone away to conceal her sorrow

and Serlo had been called off, Philine first looked closely at the doors to see that both were certainly gone, then she skipped about the room in a mad fashion, and was like to die with giggling and laughing. Then she jumped up, flattered our friend and was delighted beyond measure that she had been clever enough to go on in front to reconnoitre the ground and get herself nestled in.

" Pretty things are going on here," she said ; "just what suits me. Aurelia has had some unfortunate love-affair with a nobleman, who must be a grand person, and whom I myself would like to see some day. Unless I am much mistaken, he has left her a memento. A boy is running about, of some three years old, beautiful as the sun ; the papa must be a charming man. Usually I cannot endure children, but this child delights me. I have calculated the affair. The death of her husband, the new acquaintance, the age of the child, everything agrees together. Now her friend has gone his way ; for a year she has seen no more of him. She is therefore beside herself and inconsolable. What a fool she is ! Her brother has a dancing girl in the troupe with whom he is flirting, an actress to whom he is betrothed, in the town there are some women whom he visits, and now I too stand on the list. What a fool he is ! Of the rest you shall hear to-morrow. And now a little word from Philine, whom you know ; the arch fool has fallen in love with you." She swore that it was true and maintained that it was a real joke. She earnestly besought Wilhelm to fall in love with Aurelia, for then the chase would go on capitally. " She is pursuing her faithless lover, you her, I you, her brother me. If that is not sport for us for half a year, I will die at the first episode which occurs in this four times complicated romance." She begged him not to spoil her trade and to show her such respect as her public behaviour should deserve.

CHAPTER XV

THE next morning Wilhelm thought of visiting Frau Melina. He did not find her at home ; he enquired after the other members of the itinerant company and gathered that Philine had invited them to breakfast. From curiosity he hurried off there and found them all comforted and in high spirits. The

clever creature had assembled them together, treated them with chocolate and gave them to understand that all prospects were not shut out from them ; she hoped by her influence to convince the Manager how advantageous it would be for him to receive into his company such clever people. They listened to her with attention, swallowed down one cup after another, found the girl was not at all bad and intended to speak the best of her.

" Do you think," said Wilhelm, who had remained behind with Philine, " that Serlo will decide to keep our companions ? "

" Not at all ! " replied Philine, " and I don't care if he doesn't ; I would just as soon they were gone. The only one I wish to keep is Laertes, the remainder we shall gradually get rid of."

Hereupon she gave our friend to understand that she was firmly convinced he should no longer bury his talent, but under the direction of Serlo go upon the stage. She could not sufficiently praise the discipline, the taste and spirit which prevailed here. She spoke so flatteringly to Wilhelm and so flatteringly of his talents, that his heart and his imagination were drawing near to this proposal while his understanding and his reason were retreating from it. He concealed his inclination from himself and from Philine, and passed a restless day on which he could not decide to visit his trading correspondents and to get the letters which might there be lying in wait for him. For though he could easily imagine the restlessness of his family at this time, he was afraid of learning in detail of their anxieties and reproaches, all the more so as he promised himself that evening a great and pure enjoyment from the performance of a new piece.

Serlo had refused to admit him to the rehearsal. " You must first get to know us on the best side," he said, " before we can allow you to look into our cards."

Our friend that evening attended the performance of the piece with the greatest satisfaction. It was the first time he had seen a theatre in such perfection. One relied on all the actors possessing excellent gifts, fortunate abilities and a lofty and clear conception of their art, and yet they were not equal, but they mutually restrained and supported one another : they kindled ardour in one another, and in all their acting they were most decided and exact. It was soon felt that Serlo was the soul of the whole, and he showed himself greatly to his advantage.

A cheerful mood, a restrained vivacity, a definite feeling for propriety, together with a great gift of imitation, were to be admired in him when he appeared upon the stage and when he opened his mouth. The inward contentment of his being seemed to spread itself all over the audience, and the intellectual manner in which he easily and gracefully expressed the finest shadings of his parts awakened the more delight as he knew how to conceal the art which he had made his own by long-continued practice. Aurelia, his sister, was not inferior to him, and obtained still greater applause, as she touched the hearts of the audience which it was his part to exhilarate and delight.

After some days which were passed pleasantly enough, Aurelia enquired after our friend. He hurried to her and found her lying on the sofa ; she seemed to be suffering from headache and her whole frame could not hide a feverish movement. Her eyes brightened when she saw Wilhelm coming in. "Forgive me," she cried, "the confidence with which you have inspired me has made me weak. Hitherto I have been able to support my sorrows in silence, indeed they gave me strength and consolation ; now, I don't know how it has happened, you have loosened the bonds of silence, and you must against your will take part in the battle I am fighting against myself."

Wilhelm answered her in friendly and courteous terms. He assured her that her image and her sorrows continually floated before his soul, that he begged for her confidence and devoted himself to her as a friend.

While he thus spoke, his eyes were attracted by the boy who sat on the floor in front of her and was throwing all kinds of playthings about. He might be about three years old, as Philine had already estimated, and Wilhelm understood how the frivolous girl, seldom dignified in her expressions, had likened him to the sun. For around his wide-open eyes and full countenance there were curled the most beautiful golden locks ; on a brow of dazzling whiteness, dark, delicate, softly bending eyebrows showed themselves and the living colour of health on his cheeks.

"Sit by me," said Aurelia ; "you are looking with wonder at the happy child ; certainly I have taken it with joy in my arms ; I keep it with care ; only by it I can measure the degree of my sorrows, for they seldom let me feel the worth of such a gift.

" Permit me," she continued, " to speak of myself and my destiny, for I am very anxious that you should not misunderstand me. I thought I should have a few quiet moments, and therefore I sent for you ; now you are here and I have lost the thread of my discourse. ' One more forsaken creature in the world,' you will say. You are a man, and are thinking, * What a fuss she makes about a necessary evil which more certainly than death hangs over a woman when there is infidelity among men ; she is a fool ! ' Oh my friend, if my destiny were a common one, I would gladly endure a common evil, but it is so extraordinary ; why can I not show it to you in a mirror, why can I not get someone to tell it you ! Oh had I been seduced, surprised and then forsaken, there would then be consolation in despair, but my condition is worse than that ; I have deceived myself; I have wittingly betrayed myself, this is what I can never forgive myself."

" With noble feelings such as yours, you cannot be entirely unhappy."

" And do you know to what I am indebted for my feelings ? " enquired Aurelia. " To the worst education which has ever ruined a girl, to the worst examples for misleading the senses and inclinations. After my mother had died early, I spent the best years of my development with an aunt who made it a principle to despise all that is respectable. She abandoned herself blindly to every inclination, whether the object of it was her tyrant or her slave, if only she could forget herself in wild enjoyment. What conceptions could we children, with the pure clear vision of innocence, have of the male sex ? How dull, importunate, brazen-faced, unmannerly, was everyone whom she allowed ! How sated, empty, insolent and tasteless, on the other hand, when he had found satisfaction for his wishes ! Thus I have seen this woman for years humbled under the command of the worst of men ; what treatment she had to endure, with what a front had she to accommodate herself to her destiny, in what fashion could she wear these shameful fetters !

" This is how I got to know your sex, my friend, and how absolutely did I hate it, when I appeared to observe that even tolerable men in relation to our sex seemed to renounce every good feeling, of which otherwise Nature might have made them capable. Alas, too, on such occasions I had to make many melancholy discoveries about my own sex, and really as a girl

of sixteen I was wiser than I am now, when I scarcely understand myself. Why are we so wise, when we are young, so wise and ever becoming more foolish ? "

The boy began to make a noise. Aurelia became impatient and rang the bell. An old woman came to take him away. " Have you still got toothache ? " said Aurelia to her, as her face was bound up.

" Almost intolerably," she replied, with a muffled voice, lifting up the boy, who seemed glad to go with her, and took him away.

The child was scarcely gone when Aurelia began to weep bitterly. " I can do nothing but lament and complain," she cried, " and I am ashamed to lie before you like a miserable worm. My presence of mind is already gone and I can relate nothing more."

She hesitated and became silent. Her friend, who did not wish to make some general remark and knew nothing specially applicable to say, pressed her hand and looked at her for a long time. At last in his embarrassment he took up a book which he saw lying on the table in front of him ; it was the works of Shakespeare, and opened at Hamlet.

Serlo, who just then entered to enquire about his sister's health, looked at the book which our friend held in his hand and exclaimed, " Do I find you here again with your Hamlet ? Quite right ! Many doubts have come to me which seem greatly to diminish the canonical aspect of the play as you wished to give it. The English themselves have recognized that the main interest of the play closes with the third act ; the last two acts only with difficulty keep the whole together, and it is indeed true that towards the end the play will neither advance nor keep going."

" It is quite possible," said Wilhelm, " that some members of a nation which has produced so many masterpieces may be misled by prejudices and narrowness of mind to make false judgments ; but that cannot prevent us from seeing with our own eyes and doing justice. I am far removed from finding fault with the plan of this play ; I think rather that a greater one has never been invented ; indeed it has not been invented, it is so."

" How will you interpret that ? " enquired Serlo.

" I will not interpret anything," replied Wilhelm. " I will only show you what I myself think about it."

Aurelia raised herself up from her pillow, leaned upon her hand and looked at Wilhelm who, with the greatest assurance that he was in the right, continued speaking. " We are so pleased, and greatly flattered, when we see a hero who acts on his own account, who loves and hates as his heart directs him, who undertakes and completes, casting aside all hindrances and attaining to a great object. Historians and poets are glad to persuade us that so proud a lot may fall to man. Here we are taught differently ; the hero has no plan, but the play is full of plan. Here there is no villain punished according to some rigid and self-willed idea of vengeance ; no, a monstrous deed occurs, it rolls itself along with its consequences, carrying along with it the innocent ; the criminal seems to avoid the abyss which is destined for him, and plunges just there where he fancies he will complete his course with good fortune. For it is the property of crime to extend its evil over the innocent, as it is that of good action to extend many advantages even over the undeserving, without the originator of either being punished or rewarded. Here in our play how wonderful it is ! The purgatorial fire sends its spirit and demands revenge ; in vain ! All circumstances work together and hurry on revenge ; but in vain ! Neither earthly nor unearthly power can succeed in what is reserved for destiny alone. The hour of judgment comes ; the wicked falls with the good. One race is mowed away and another springs up."

After a pause, during which they looked at one another, Serlo said, " You pay no special compliment to Providence while you exalt the poet, and then you seem to me to ascribe an object and a plan to him on which he had never thought."

CHAPTER XVI

LET me too now ask a question," said Aurelia. " I have again looked at the part of Ophelia. I am contented with it and am confident that in certain circumstances I could play it. But tell me, ought not the part to have provided the insane maiden with another kind of song ? Could not fragments

from melancholy ballads have been chosen ? What have ambiguous meanings and wanton trivialities to do in the mouth of this noble maiden ? "

" But, my friends," said Wilhelm, " I cannot here yield to you one iota. In these peculiarities too, in this apparent impropriety, there lies a deep meaning. Do we not know at once from the outset of the play what the mind of the good girl was busied with ? In silence she lived within herself, but hardly concealed her yearning and her wishes. Secretly the tones of desire were ringing in her soul, and how often may she have tried like an unwise nurse to bring her senses to repose with lullabies which only kept them more awake. At last when all power over herself is torn from her, when her heart hovers upon her tongue, this tongue betrays her and in the innocence of her insanity she enjoys herself in the presence of king and queen with the echo of her loose and well-loved songs :

To-morrow is St. Valentine's day,
All in the morning berime.' "

He had not yet finished speaking when all at once a remarkable scene took place before his eyes which he could not in any way explain. Serlo had walked up and down the room without showing any particular intention. All at once he stepped to Aurelia's dressing-table, quickly snatched at something which lay there and hurried out of the door with his booty. Aurelia had scarcely noticed this, when she jumped up, threw herself in his way, and with incredible passion got hold of him and was skilful enough to seize hold of the end of the article he was carrying away. They wrestled and struggled most obstinately, turned and twisted each other round vigorously ; he laughed ; she fell into a passion, and when Wilhelm hastened to separate them and calm them down, he saw all at once Aurelia spring aside with a naked dagger in her hand, while Serlo, much annoyed, threw the sheath on the ground, which had remained in his hand. Wilhelm started back in amazement, and his silent wonder seemed to enquire why so singular a strife could have arisen between them over so strange an implement.

" You shall act as judge between us two," said Serlo. " What has she to do with the sharp steel ? Just show it to him. This dagger is not suitable for any actress ; pointed and sharp like a

needle and knife. For what is the joke? Violent as she is, she will chance one day to do herself harm. I have an inward hatred of all such singularities; a serious thought of this kind is mad, and such a dangerous plaything is in bad taste."

"I have got it again," cried Aurelia, while she held the naked steel aloft. "I will now take better care of my faithful friend. Forgive me," she exclaimed, as she kissed the steel, "that I have so neglected you."

Serlo appeared to be seriously angry. "Take it as you will, brother," she continued; "can you know whether a precious talisman is not given me in this form, whether I may not find help and counsel in it? Must everything be harmful which appears dangerous?"

"Such kind of talk without meaning could drive me mad," said Serlo, and left the room with inward wrath.

Aurelia secured the dagger carefully in its sheath and put it by her. "Let us continue our talk, which my unhappy brother has disturbed," she said, as Wilhelm brought forward some questions about the extraordinary quarrel.

"I must admit your description of Ophelia to be right," continued Aurelia. "I will not misunderstand the intention of the poet; only I can rather pity her than sympathize with her. But now allow me to make a reflection, for which you have often given me an opportunity in this short time. I notice with astonishment in you the deep and correct glance with which you judge poetry and particularly dramatic poetry; the deepest abysses of invention are not hidden from you, and the finest features of the performance come within your line of vision. Without ever having seen the objects in nature, you recognize the truth in an image; there seems to lie in you a presentment of the whole world, which by the harmonious touch of poetry is awakened and developed. For in truth," she continued, "nothing comes to you from without; I have not readily seen anyone who knows so little of the people with whom he lives and so fundamentally misunderstands them as you do. Permit me to say, in hearing you explain Shakespeare, one would think you had just come from the council of the gods and had listened while they there discussed how men were to be formed; if, on the other hand, I see you going among people, you seem like the first great born child of the creation which stares with a strange

wonder and edifying good nature at lions and apes, sheep and elephants, and true-heartedly addresses them as his equals, just because they are there and in motion."

"The feeling of my student-like life," he replied, "is often a trouble to me, and I am obliged to you, my worthy friend, if you are willing to help me to a better insight about the world. From my youth I have been wont to direct the eyes of my spirit more inwards than outwards, and so it is very natural that I should have got to know mankind up to a certain point without understanding in the least or having any conception of men."

"Indeed," said Aurelia, "I was at first suspicious of you as though you wanted to make fun of us, when you had so much good to say of the people whom you had sent to my brother, when I compared your letters with the merits of these people."

The remark of Aurelia, true as it might be and willingly as our friend acknowledged this defect to himself, carried with it something painful, not to say insulting, so that he became silent and kept within himself, partly so as to let his sensibility be seen, partly to search within his breast for the truth of this reproach.

"You need not be surprised at this," continued Aurelia, "we are always able to reach the light of the understanding, but the fullness of the heart no one can give us. Are you destined to be an artist ; you cannot long enough preserve this dimness of vision and innocence ; it is the beautiful covering over the young bud ; unfortunate, indeed, if we burst out from it too early. Certainly it is well, if we do not always know the people for whom we are working.

"Oh ! I, too, was once in that happy condition when I entered on the stage with the highest belief in myself and my nation. What were not the Germans in my imagination, what might they not become ? I spoke to this nation, raised above it by a small framework from which I was separated by a row of lamps, the brightness and vapour of which prevented me from distinguishing with exactness the objects before me. How welcome was the ring of applause which sounded up to me from the crowd, how gratefully did I accept the present offered to me unanimously by so many hands. For a long time I rocked myself in these ideas ; how I affected the multitude and was affected by them in turn ; I was in the best relationship with my public ; I thought I felt a welcome harmony between us,

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and every time I saw before me the noblest and best. Unfortunately it was not the action alone whose gifts interested these friends of the stage, they also on the young and lively girl. They gave me clear stand that my duty was to share the emotions of them which I had excited in them. Unfortunately not my affair ; I wished to elevate their minds, which they called their heart I had not the smallest now there were men of all ranks, ages and characters another became a burden to me and nothing was more for me than that I could not, like any other honest gentleman and so spare myself much trouble.

" The men seemed to me much the same as those accustomed to see at my aunt's, and here again they have awakened abhorrence in me had not their peculiarities amused me. As I could not avoid them, sometimes at the theatre, sometimes in public sometimes at home, I undertook to spy upon them, my brother helped me valiantly in this. And if you reflect from the active shopman and the conceited merchant's sly adroit man of the world, the bold soldier and the inexperienced prince, all in succession passed before me, each ending in his way to form a small romance, you will pardon me if I imagined that I was tolerably well acquainted with my acquaintances. The fantastically adorned student, the humbly proud emigrant man of letters, the unsteady, self-satisfied prebendary, the heedful man of business, the heavy country baron, the flattering courtier, the young man from the clerical profession the calm as well as the quick and actively speculating merchant all these I have seen in motion and, good heavens ! there were few among them who were in a position to inspire in me any common interest ; much rather was it utterly vexatious for me to collect with trouble and ennui the applause of fools in a drama which had so well pleased me on a large scale and which I appropriated with pleasure.

" If I expected a sensible compliment on my acting, I hoped they would praise an author whom I highly esteemed they would make one silly remark after another and name so tasteless a play in which they wished to see me act. If in that society I listened to hear if some noble, intellectual, witty though

again at the right time, it was seldom that I could see of it. A mistake that had occurred, if an actor *i* or let some provincialism escape him, these *srtant* points to which they held and from which *ot* free themselves. In the end I knew not whither ; they thought themselves too clever to be enterley believed they were entertaining me wonderfully lade a great noise around me. I began heartily to 1 all, and I felt as though the whole nation had on these representatives wished to debase itself before appeared to me so awkward, so ill educated, so badly so void of pleasing qualities, so lacking in good taste, claimed : No German can buckle a shoe till he has do it from a foreign nation ! You see how blinded I hypochondriacal and unjust ; and the longer it lasted, did my illness increase. I could have killed myself, into another extreme ; I married, or rather I let myself ied. My brother, who had taken over the theatre, ery much to have a helper. His choice fell on a young om I did not dislike ; he was wanting in everything ly brother possessed—genius, vivacity, spirit and imy—but who also had everything in which my brother king—love of order, diligence, a valuable gift of houseand the management of money.

e became my husband, without my knowing how ; we ved together, without my knowing exactly why. Enough, fairs went on well. We made a good deal of money, that ue to the activity of my brother ; we managed well, and was the merit of my husband. I thought no more about orld or our nation. I had nothing to share with the world a had lost my conception of the nation. If I entered on the , I did it to earn a living ; I only opened my mouth because 1 not dare to be silent, because I had come out to speak.

However, not to make the matter too bad, I had given elf up entirely to the ideas of my brother ; he was anxious applause and money, for between ourselves, he likes to hear self praised and requires much money. I no longer played ccordance with my feeling and my conviction, but as he ected me, and if I made him grateful I was content. He ranged himself in accordance with **the** weaknesses of the

public ; plenty of money came in, he could live as he wished and we had good times with him.

" Meanwhile I had fallen into a mechanical routine. I passed away my days without joy or interest. My marriage was childless and lasted only a short time. My husband was ill, his strength visibly decreased ; care for him interrupted my general indifference. In these days I formed an acquaintance with which a new life began for me and a more rapid one, for it will soon be at an end." She remained silent for a long time, then continued : " All at once my talkative humour stagnates and I don't trust myself to open my mouth any further. Let me rest a little ! You shall not go away without knowing completely all my misfortune. However, call in Mignon and listen to what she wants."

During Aurelia's narrative the child had been in the room from time to time. As they spoke in low tones when she came in, she had glided away again, sat quietly in the hall and was waiting. When they told her to come in again, she brought a book with her, which by its form and binding one recognized to be an atlas. She had seen with great astonishment at the clergyman's house some maps for the first time, had asked him much about them and instructed herself as far as was possible. Her desire to learn something seemed to become still more lively by this new form of knowledge. She continually asked Wilhelm to bring her this book. She said she had pawned her large silver buckles with the picture-seller for it, and wished to get back the pledge early to-morrow morning, because it was too late this evening. This was allowed her. Now she began partly to repeat what she knew, partly in her own way to ask the most remarkable questions. One could here also observe that with a great effort she only understood with difficulty and laboriously. It was the same, too, with her handwriting, with which she took much trouble. She still spoke only very broken German, and only when she opened her mouth to sing, or when she touched her cithara, did she seem to be employing the only organ by which she could discourse and communicate her inner being.

We must, as we are at present speaking of her, also mention the embarrassment in which for some time she had often placed our friend. As she came or went, wished him good morning

or good evening, she clasped him so firmly in her arms and kissed him with such ardour that the violence of this budding nature made him anxious and disturbed. The palpitating vivacity of her behaviour seemed to increase every day, and her whole being moved in a restless stillness. She could not be without twisting a piece of thread in her hands, knotting together a napkin, chewing a piece of paper or wood. All of her games seemed only to drain off an inward violent commotion. The only thing which seemed to give her cheerfulness was being near the small Felix, with whom she knew how to play very prettily.

Aurelia, who after some rest was in the mood for at last explaining to her friend a matter which lay very close to her heart, this time became impatient over the persistence of the small girl, and gave her to understand that she must take herself off, and finally, when nothing else succeeded they had to send her off expressly and against her will.

"Now or never," said Aurelia, "I must tell you the remainder of my story. If my tenderly loved but unjust friend were but a few miles away, I would say : 'Get on horseback, seek by any means to make acquaintance with him ; when you come back, you will certainly forgive me, and pity me with all your heart.' Now I can only tell you with words how lovable he was and how greatly I loved him.

"It was just at the critical time when I was anxious for the days of my husband that I came to know this man. He had just returned from America, where in the company of some Frenchmen he had served with much distinction under the flag of the United States. He met me with easy dignity, with frank good nature ; he spoke about myself, my condition, my acting, like an old acquaintance, so sympathetically and clearly that for the first time I could rejoice in recognizing my existence reflected in the being of another. His judgments were right without being dogmatic, penetrating, yet not devoid of affection. He displayed no harshness and his spirits were at the same time pleasing. He seemed accustomed to good fortune with women, which made me pay attention ; in no way was he flattering or importunate ; this made me free from apprehension.

"In the town he had intercourse with few people ; for the most part he visited on horseback his numerous acquaintances in the neighbourhood, and managed the business of his house.

When he came back he would dismount at my house, always treated my sick husband with warm attention, procured for the sufferer by means of a skilled doctor some alleviation of his illness, and as he took an interest in everything which concerned me, he allowed me to take a share in his destiny. He told me the story of his campaigns, his invincible inclination to the life of a soldier, his family relations, and he confided to me his present occupations. He kept no secret from me, he unfolded to me his inmost being and let me look into the most hidden recesses of his soul. I got to know his capacities and his passions. It was the first time in my life that I enjoyed a cordial, intellectual intercourse with anyone. I was attracted by him, carried away by him before I was able to make reflection about myself.

" Meanwhile I lost my husband, almost just as I had taken him. The burden of the theatrical business now fell entirely on me. My brother, who was unsurpassable on the stage, was never any use in housekeeping. I looked after everything, and at the same time studied my part more diligently than ever. I played again as of old, indeed with quite another force and new life ; it was by reason of my friend and for his sake, yet I was not always at my best when I knew my noble friend was present at the play ; but sometimes he listened to me unobserved, and you can well imagine how pleasantly his unexpected applause surprised me.

" Certainly I am a strange creature. In many parts which I played it always seemed to me as if I praised him and spoke only in his honour, for that was the feeling of my heart, the words might be what they pleased. If I knew he was in the audience, I could not trust myself to speak out with my full power, just as I would not press my love or praise of him to his face ; when he was absent there was my acting free ; I did my best with a certain tranquillity, with an indescribable contentment. I was again pleased with applause, and when I delighted the public I would like to call down among them : ' This you owe to him.'

" Yes, indeed, my relation to the public, to the whole nation, had been changed by a miracle. All at once it appeared to me in the most advantageous light, and I was astonished at my former blindness. How senseless, said I often to myself, to revile a nation, as you did formerly, just because it was a nation. Is it necessary, is it possible for individual men to be so interesting ?

Not at all ! The question is whether among the great mass there is apportioned a quantity of talent, power and capacity, which developed by fortunate circumstances may be guided by superior men to a common object. I was glad now at finding so little prominent originality among my countrymen ; it pleased me that they did not despise accepting a guidance from without ; I enjoyed that they had found a leader.

" Lothario—allow me to call my friend by his Christian name—had always presented to me the Germans on the side of bravery, and shown to me that there was no more valorous nation in the world when well led, and I was ashamed that I had never thought of this the first quality of a people. The history was known to him, and he stood in relation with the most meritorious men of his generation. Young as he was, he had an eye for the budding youth of his Fatherland full of hope, on the quiet labours in so many departments of buried and active men. He allowed me to get a survey over Germany, what it is and what it could be, and I felt ashamed to have judged a nation according to the confused crowd which may press into the cloakroom of a theatre. He made it a duty for me also in my department to be true, intellectual and enlivening. Now I seemed to myself even inspired, as often as I came to the theatre. Ordinary passages became gold in my mouth, and if at that time a poet had aided me suitably, I had produced the most wonderful effects.

" Thus the young widow lived on for months. He could not do without me, and I was extremely unhappy if he remained away. He showed me the letters of his relations, of his excellent sisters. He took part in the smallest circumstances of my relations ; a unity more inward, more complete, is not to be thought of. The word love was not mentioned. He went and came, came and went, and now, my friend, it is high time that you also go."

CHAPTER XVII

WILHELM could no longer put off his visit among his business friends. He went there not without embarrassment, for he knew that he would find there letters from his family. He was afraid of the reproaches which they must contain ;

probably, also, news had been given to the house of business of the embarrassment in which it was on his account. He hesitated after so many chivalrous adventures, at the schoolboy-like aspect in which he would appear, and intended to act quite defiantly, and in this manner to conceal his embarrassment.

But to his great astonishment and satisfaction everything went off very well and tolerably. In the large, lively and busy office they had scarcely time to look for his letters ; his long absence was only thought of in passing, and when he opened the letters of his father and friend Werner, he found their contents altogether very tolerable. The old man, in the hope of a copious diary, the keeping of which he carefully recommended to his son on his departure, and for which he had given him a model synopsis, appeared fairly calmed over the silence of the early time, as he only complained about the enigmatic nature of the first and only letter yet sent off from the Castle of the Count. Werner only joked in his way, related amusing stories of the town, and asked for news of friends and acquaintances with whom Wilhelm would become acquainted in the large trading city. Our friend, who was extremely pleased to have got free at so cheap a price, answered at once in some very cheerful letters and promised his father a detailed diary with all the desired geographical, statistical and mercantile observations. On the journey he had seen much, and hoped therefrom to be able to write a tolerable sheet. He did not notice that he was nearly just in the case in which he was when he, in order to act a play which he had neither written, still less memorized, had lighted the candles and summoned the spectators. When, therefore, he really began to go to his composition, he became tolerably aware that he was able to speak and tell of feelings and thoughts, of many experiences of the heart and mind, but not of outward objects, to which he, as he now observed, had not paid the smallest attention.

In this embarrassment the knowledge of his friend Laertes stood him in good stead. Custom had united together both young people, so unlike as they were, and the former, with all his faults, with his peculiarities, was really an interesting man. Gifted with a cheerful, happy sense, he could have become old without reflecting on his condition at all. But now his misfortune and his illness had robbed him of the pure feeling of youth and,

on the other hand, had opened to him a look on the transience and fragmentary state of our life. From that there had arisen a moody, rhapsodical way of thinking about subjects, or much more expressing their immediate impressions. He did not like being alone, moved about in all coffee-houses and table d'hotes, and if indeed he stayed at home, descriptions of travel were his favourite, indeed his only, reading. This he could now satisfy as he wished, since he found a large lending library and soon half the world appeared in his good memory.

How easily, therefore, was he able to inspire his friend with courage, when the latter disclosed to him his complete lack of provision for the so solemnly promised account.

"There we wish to make a work of art," said the former, "which is not to have its equal. Has not Germany from one end to the other been travelled through, crossed through, pulled through, crept through and flown through? And has not every German traveller the splendid advantage of getting his large and small essays reimbursed by the public? Only give me the route of your journey before you came to us, the rest I know. The sources and expedients for this work I will hunt up for you; we must not be lacking in square inches, which are not measured, and in population, which is not counted. The incomes of the countries as taken from memorandum books and tables which, as is known, are the most reliable documents. On them we base our political reasonings; we must not be lacking in side glances at the government. A couple of princes we describe as true fathers of their fatherland, so that they believe us still more, if we append something to some others; and if we do not directly travel through the dwelling-place of some celebrated people, so we meet them in an inn and allow them to say to us the silliest stuff in confidence. In particular, we are not to forget to interweave a love story with some simple young girl in the most charming manner, and there is to be a work which not only fills with delight father and mother, but for which every bookseller pays you with pleasure."

They went to work, and both friends had much pleasure in their labour, while Wilhelm in the evening in the theatre and in intercourse with Serlo and Aurelia found the greatest satisfaction, and his ideas, which only too had turned round in a narrow circle, he broadened out every day.

CHAPTER XVIII

PIECE by piece he perceived the life of Serlo, not without the greatest interest, for it was not the way of this strange man to be confidential and to speak connectedly about anything. He was, we may say, born and suckled on the theatre. Already as speechless child, by his mere presence, he must move the spectators, but even already at that time authors knew this natural and innocent assistance, and his first "father" and "mother" in favourite pieces brought him already the greatest applause before he knew what the clapping of hands signified. As Cupid he came trembling more than once down in the wings, unfolded himself as harlequin from the egg and made as small chimney sweep easily the nicest pranks.

Unfortunately, for the applause which he obtained on brilliant evenings he had to pay for very dearly in the intervals. His father, convinced that only by means of blows can the attention of children be aroused and held firmly, beat him at the studying of each part at apportioned times—not because the child was unskilful, but that it might show itself in consequence more certain and continuously skilful. Thus, formerly, when a boundary stone was fixed they gave to the children standing round smart boxes on the ear, and the oldest people still remembered exactly the spot. He grew up and exhibited extraordinary capacities of mind and dexterities of body, and therewith a great flexibility as well in his method of representation as in his actions and gestures. His gift of imitation exceeded all belief. Already as a boy he imitated people so that we imagined we saw them, though they were completely unlike in form, age and being and were different from one another. Therewith he did not lack the gift of fitting himself into the world, and as soon as he to some extent was conscious of his powers, he found nothing more natural than to escape from his father who, as the understanding of the boy advanced, and his dexterity increased, found it still necessary to assist them by means of severe treatment.

How happy did the boy when released now feel in the free world where his waggeries procured for him everywhere a good reception. His lucky star led him first at Shrovetide into a convent, in which, because the Father, who had to take care of

the processions and by means of religious plays to amuse the Christian congregation, had just died, he entered as a helpful guardian angel. He also undertook at once the part of Gabriel in the Annunciation, and was not displeasing to the pretty maiden who, as Mary, very delicately with outward humility and inward pride received his obligatory salutation. Thereafter he played successively the most important parts in the mysteries, and knew himself no less when finally as Saviour of the world he was mocked, scourged and lifted on to the Cross.

Some soldiers on this occasion might play their parts indeed too naturally ; he, therefore, in order to revenge himself on them in the most skilful manner, on the occasion of the last judgment, put them into the most magnificent dresses of emperors and kings, and at the moment when they, very content with their parts, also took the step to walk in front of all others in heaven unexpectedly in the form of the devil, he met them and with the fork of fire, to the heartiest edification of the assembled audience and beggars, vigorously pressed through them and unmercifully plunged them back into the pit where they saw themselves received in most evil fashion by a fire pressing out.

He was clever enough to perceive that crowned heads do not well notice his impudent undertaking, and would even have no respect before his privileged accusers and beadles ; he therefore set about it before the thousand years' kingdom approached, in all quietness, and was received with open arms in a neighbouring town by a society which at that time was called " Children of Joy." They were sensible, intellectual, lively men, who well perceived that the sum of our existence divided by reason never comes out clear, that always a remarkable fraction remained over. They endeavoured intentionally to get rid at definite times of this obstructive, and if apportioned to the whole mass, dangerous fraction. They were for one day of the week quite complete fools, and reprov'd on the same alternately by means of allegorical representations that which they during the other days had noticed as foolish in themselves and others.

If this practice was at once ruder than a constant training in which the moral man is wont daily to take notice of himself to warn and reprove, it was, however, more amusing and secure ; for while they did not deny as certain, so he was treated only for what he was, instead of that he on the other way by the help of

self-deception often gains the mastery within and compels the reason to the secret servitude which it imagines it has long driven away. The mask of fools went round in the Society, and everyone was allowed to adorn it on his day characteristically with his own or strange attributes. At the time of the Carnival they took the greatest freedom and were in rivalry with the effort of the clergy to entertain and attract the people. The solemn and allegorical pageantry of Virtues and Vices, Arts and Sciences parts of the world and Seasons of the Year made sensible for the people a number of conceptions and gave it ideas of remote subjects, and so these jokes were not without use, since from one side the clerical buffooneries only strengthened still more a tasteless superstition.

The young Serlo was also here quite in his element ; real imagination he did not possess, but on the other hand the greatest skill in using what he had before him, placing it aright and making it plausible. His ideas, his gift of imitation, indeed his biting wit which he dared to practise completely free at least one day in the week, even towards his benefactor, made him of worth for the whole Society, indeed indispensable.

His restlessness soon drove him from this advantageous position into the regions of his fatherland, where he had to go through a new school. He came into the cultured part of Germany, but also into that which was devoid of images, where for the honouring of the good and beautiful there is want indeed not of truth but often of mind ; he was no more able to accomplish anything with his masks ; he was obliged to try and work on the heart and temper.

Only for a short time did he stay with small and large companies, and at this opportunity he learnt from general pieces and actors their peculiarities. The monotony which at that time reigned in the German theatre, the silly drop and ring of the Alexandrines, the forcibly flat dialogue, the dryness and commonness of the immediate preachers of morals he had soon grasped, and at the same time observed what touched and pleased. Not one part of the customary pieces, but the whole pieces remained easily in his memory, and at the same time the peculiar tone of the actor who had delivered it with applause ; how he came by chance, when his money was completely exhausted, on the idea alone to represent whole pieces, especially

at manors and in villages, and thereby at once everywhere to procure for himself maintenance and quarters for the night. In every tavern, for every room and garden his theatre was at once put up ; with a roguish seriousness and apparent enthusiasm he knew how to win the imagination of his audience, to deceive their senses, and before their eyes to change an old cupboard into a castle and a fan into a sword. His youthful ardour supplied the want of deep feeling ; his vehemence appeared strength and flattery tenderness. Those who already knew the theatre he reminded of everything they had seen or heard, and in the remainder he aroused the presentiment of something wonderful and the wish to become nearer acquainted with it.

What in one place had an effect he did not fail to repeat in another, and had the most hearty malicious joy if he could in like manner without preparation ridicule everybody.

With his lively mind, free and hindered by nothing, he improved himself, while he often repeated parts and pieces very rapidly. Soon he recited and played more suitably to the meaning as the models, which at the commencement he had only imitated. In this way he came gradually to play naturally and always, however, to be disguised. He appeared carried away and watched the effect, and his greatest pride was by degrees to put people in motion. Even the mad handicraft which he carried on compelled him to proceed with a certain moderation, and so he learned, partly under compulsion, partly from instinct, to be economical of voice and gestures, of which so few actors appear to have a conception.

Thus he knew himself how to restrain rude and unfriendly men and to interest them for himself. As he was everywhere satisfied with food and lodging, he thankfully accepted every present which was handed to him ; indeed he often gave up money, if he had enough of it according to his opinion, so he was sent with letters of introduction to one another, and so he wandered the whole time from one manor to the other, where he aroused much pleasure, enjoyed much, and did not remain without the pleasantest and nicest adventures.

With the inward coldness of his temper in reality he loved nobody ; with the clarity of his look he could respect nobody ; for he always only saw the outer peculiarities of men and gathered them into his collection of mimicry. But therewith his egoism

was extremely insulted if he did not please everyone, and if he did not everywhere awaken applause. How to arrive at this he had already by degrees given such exact attention, and had so sharpened his sense that he not only in his representations, but also in common life, he could not do otherwise than flatter. And so his disposition, his talent and way of life worked alternately towards one another in such a way that he saw himself without noticing it formed for a complete actor. Indeed, by means of an apparently unusual but quite natural action and reaction his recitation, declamation and his play of gesture rose to a high degree of truth, freedom and frankness, while in life and intercourse he appeared to become more secretive, more artificial, indeed disguised and uneasy.

Of his fortunes and adventures we speak perhaps in another place and remark here only so much that in latter times, when he was a made man in the possession of decided reputation and in a very good, though not firm position, he had accustomed himself in a delicate manner, partly ironical, partly mocking, to play the sophist and thereby to destroy almost every serious conversation. In particular he made use of this manner towards Wilhelm so soon as the latter, as he often met him, wished to start a general theoretical talk. All the same, they liked to be together, while by their mutual way of thinking the conversation had to become lively.

Wilhelm wanted everything to develop from the conceptions which he had formed, and wished the art to be treated in coherence. He wished to fix firmly pronounced rules, to determine what is right, beautiful and good, and what is deserving of applause; enough, treated everything in the most serious fashion. Serlo, on the contrary, took the matter very lightly, and while he never answered a question directly, he knew by means of a story or jest to contribute the nicest and most pleasing illumination and to instruct the company while cheering them.

CHAPTER XIX

WHILE now Wilhelm in this way passed very pleasant hours, Melina and the rest were in a still more vexatious position. They appeared to our friend often like evil spirits,

and made for him not merely by their presence, but also often by surly faces and bitter speeches, a vexatious moment. Serlo had not once left them starring parts, much less had he given them hope of engagement, and had nevertheless become acquainted with their general capabilities. So, often as actors were gathered socially with him, he had the habit of letting them read and often himself reading with them. He took in hand pieces which were still to be given, which were not given for long, and indeed mostly only in parts. So, too, after a first performance he had passages repeated in which he had something to remind them of, thereby increasing the insight of the actors and strengthening their security of hitting the right point. And as a lesser, but more correct, understanding can effect more for the contentment of others than a confused and unclarified genius, so he elevated moderate talents by means of the clear insight which he procured for them imperceptibly to a remarkable capability. No less contributed to it, that he caused them also to read poems, and in them maintained the feeling of that charm which a well-delivered rhythm awakens in our soul, instead of our beginning with other companies only to deliver those prose words which is in accordance with everyone's taste.

By such opportunities he had come to know all the actors who had arrived, what they were and what they were able to become, judged and in silence intended at once to draw advantage from their talents in a revolution which threatened his society. He let the matter rest for a while, rejected all Wilhelm's intercessions with a shrug of the shoulders until he saw his time, and quite unexpectedly made the proposal to his young friend that he should himself go on the theatre with him, and on this one condition he was willing to engage the remainder.

"The people, however, therefore must not be so useless as you have hitherto depicted them to me as such," replied Wilhelm. "If now all at once they can be received together, and I should think their talents without me must also remain the same."

Serlo disclosed to him thereupon, under the seal of silence, his position; as his principal lover on the renewal of the contract looked like raising it, and as he did not intend to give way to him, especially as the favour of the public to him was no more so great. If he let him go, all his adherents will follow him; in consequence the company would lose some good, but also some

moderate members. Hereupon he showed to Wilhelm what he hoped to win, on the other hand, with him, Laertes, the old blusterer and even Frau Melina. Yes, he promised to procure a decided applause for the poor pedant as Jew, minister, and, above all, as scoundrel.

Wilhelm was taken aback and received the proposal not without disquietude ; and as in order to say something he replied, after he had drawn a long breath : " You speak in a very friendly way only of the good which you hope to find in us and from us ; how does it look with the weak sides which have certainly not escaped your keen sight ? "

" By diligence, practice and reflection we wish soon to make them strong sides," replied Serlo. " There is among you all, who then, however, are only amateurs and bunglers, nobody who may give more or less hope of himself; for as far as I can judge all, there is no single stick among them and only sticks are unimprovable ; they may now from self-conceit, stupidity or hypochondriasis be awkward and inflexible."

Serlo thereupon laid down the conditions which he could and was willing to make, asked Wilhelm for a speedy decision and left him in no little disquietude.

With the remarkable work of that imaginary description of travel undertaken only as a joke which he had put together with Laertes, he had become more attentive to the circumstances and daily life of the real world than he had been formerly. He now understood himself for the first time the intention of his father when he so vigorously recommended the keeping of the diary. He felt for the first time how pleasant and useful it could be to make oneself the go-between of so many trades and necessities, and even into the deepest mountains and forests of the farm land to help to spread life and activity. The animated trading in which he was, gave to him, with the restlessness of Laertes who, everywhere, roamed around with him, the most evident conception of a great middle point from which everything flows out and to which everything returns, and it was the first time that he, in surveying this kind of activity, really found pleasure. In this condition Serlo had made him the proposal, and his wishes, his inclination, his confidence in an inborn talent and his obligation to the helpless company again revived.

" There now I stand," he said to himself again at the parting

of the ways between the two ladies who offered to me in my youth. The one looks no more so mean, so wretched, as at that time, and the other not so magnificent. You feel a kind of inner calling to follow the one as the other, and from both sides the outward motives are strong enough ; it appears to you impossible to decide ; you wish that some kind of preponderance from outside may determine your choice ; and, however, if you examine yourself aright, so are they only outward circumstances which inspire you with an inclination to trade, acquisition and possession ; but your innermost need produces and nurtures the wish always to develop and cultivate more the dispositions which may rest in you for the good and the beautiful ; they may be bodily or intellectual. And am I not to revere the destiny which without my co-operation leads me here to the goal of all my wishes ? Does not everything which I formerly thought about and proposed now come about by chance without my assistance ? Sufficiently wonderful ! Man appears to be with nothing more intimate than with his hope and wishes, which he for long nurtures and preserves in his heart and, however, if they now meet him, if they pressed themselves on him, likewise he does not recognize them and retreats before them. Everything which I, before that unhappy night which withdrew me from Mariana, only allowed myself to dream of, stands before me and offers itself to me. Here I wished to fly, and I am gently conducted hither ; with Serlo I wished to seek to get employment and he offers me conditions which I, as a beginner, could never expect. Was it then mere love to Mariana which fastened me on the theatre ? Or was it love for the art which bound me firmly to the young girl ? Was that view, that way out to the stage, only welcome to an undisciplined, restless man, who wished to continue a life which did not allow him the relations of the civic world, or was it all different, purer, worthier ? And what should be able to move you, to change your sentiments of that time ? Have you not much more yourself, hitherto without knowing it, pursued your plan ? Is not your last step still more to be approved, since your secondary intentions are therewith in play, and since you at the same time keep a solemnly given word and you knew how to free yourself from a heavy debt in an honourable manner ? "

Everything which stirred in his heart and imagination now

alternated in the most lively manner towards one another. That he could keep his Mignon, that he need not thrust aside the thought, was no small weight in the scale, and however it still shook to and fro, when he went to visit his friend Aurelia in his accustomed way.

CHAPTER XX

HE found her on her bed of rest ; she appeared quiet. " Do you think you can still play to-morrow ? " he enquired.

" Oh, yes," she replied in a lively manner. " You know nothing hinders me for that. If I only had a means of turning aside from me the applause of our pit ; they mean it well, and will yet destroy me. The day before yesterday I thought my heart must break. Formerly I could endure it well, if I pleased myself, if I had long studied and prepared myself ; then I was delighted if the welcome sign, now it has succeeded, rang out from all quarters. Now I do not say what I wish, nor as I wish it ; I will be hurried along. I am bewildered and my playing makes a far greater impression. The applause becomes louder, and I think : Did you know what enraptures you ! The dark, violent, undecided sounds touch you, extort from you astonishment, and you do not feel that they are the tones of sorrow of the unhappy one on whom you have bestowed your goodwill.

" To-day I have learnt early, now repeated and attempted. I am tired, broken, and to-morrow it begins over again. To-morrow evening it is to be played. So I shuffle to and fro ; it is tedious for me to get up and troublesome to go to bed. Everything makes an everlasting circle within me. Then come the disagreeable consolations before me. Then I cast them away and curse them. I will not surrender myself, not surrender to the necessity—why is that to be necessary which ruins me ? Could it not even be otherwise ? I must even pay for it that I am a German ; it is the character of the Germans that they are difficult over everything, that everything is difficult over them."

" Oh, my friend," interrupted Wilhelm, " could you however cease to sharpen the dagger with which you continually wound yourself ! Does nothing then remain for you ? Is, then, your youth, your figure, your health, are your talents nothing ?

If you have lost a property without any fault of yours, must you then cast all the remainder after? Is that, too, necessary?"

She was silent some moments, then she started up. "I know it is a waste of time! Love is nothing but a waste of time! What had I not been able to do! Should have done! Now everything has become purely nothing. I am a poor creature in love, nothing but in love! Have pity with me! With God, I am a poor creature."

She sank into herself, and after a short pause she exclaimed violently: "You are accustomed to everything falling on your neck. No, you cannot feel it, no man is in the position to feel the value of a woman who knows how to honour herself! By all holy angels, by all pictures of the blessedness which a pure, kind heart creates for itself, there is nothing more heavenly than a womanly being who gives herself to the beloved man. We are cold, proud, lofty, clear, clever, if we deserve to be called wives; and all these advantages we lay at your feet, so soon as we love, so soon as we hope to win your love in return. Oh, how have I thrown away my whole being with knowing and willing! But now I will also despair, intentionally despair. There is to be no drop of blood in me which is not punished, no fibres which I do not wish to pain. Only smile, only laugh at the theatrical expenditure of passion!"

Every touch of laughter was far from our friend. The frightful, half-natural, half-forced condition of his friend pained him only too greatly. He the tortures of the unhappy straining with her; his brain was disturbed and his blood was in a feverish movement.

She had got up and walked up and down in the room.

"I say everything to myself beforehand," she exclaimed, "why I should not love him. I know too that he is not worth it. I turn my heart away, hither and thither, occupy myself as only it will succeed. I soon take up a part, if also I have not to play it; I practise the old ones, which I know thoroughly, more diligently, still more diligently in detail, and I practise and practise—my friend, my confidant, what a horrible work it is forcibly to withdraw oneself from oneself! My understanding suffers, my brain is strained; to save myself from madness I abandon myself again to the feeling that I love him. Yes, I

love him, I love him ! " she exclaimed amid a thousand tears. " I love him and so will I die ! "

He grasped her by the hand and asked her most earnestly not to wear herself away. " Oh," said he, " how strange it is that for man not only so much that is impossible, but also so much that is possible is desired. You were not destined to find a loyal heart which would have made your whole happiness. I was destined firmly to attach the whole wellbeing of my life to an unfortunate one, whom I by the difficulty of my loyalty pulled like a reed to the ground, perhaps indeed quite broke it."

He had confided to Aurelia his history with Mariana and could therefore now make reference to it. She stared him in the eyes and asked, " Can you say that you have never yet deceived a woman, that you have not endeavoured to coax out of any woman her favour with frivolous gallantry, with wicked asseveration, with enticing vows ? "

" That can I," replied Wilhelm, " and indeed without praiseworthy honesty, for my life was very simple and I have seldom come into the temptation to try, and what warning, my beautiful and noble friend, is for me the melancholy condition in which I see you placed ! Take from me a vow which is completely in conformity with my heart, which by means of the sympathy which you have instilled into me, is destined for me to speech and form and by this moment is sanctified ; I will resist every fleeting inclination and preserve in my bosom even the most serious ones ; no womanly being is to receive from my lips of love, to whom I cannot devote my whole life."

She looked upon him with wild indifference and withdrew a few paces when he extended his hand to her. " It is no matter!" she cried ; " so many women's tears more or less, the sea will not however thereby increase. Yet," she continued, " among thousands one saved, that is however something ; among thousands one honest man to be found, that is to be accepted ! Do you also know what you promise ? "

" I know it," replied Wilhelm, smiling, and put out his hand.

" I take it," she replied, and made a movement with her right, so that he imagined she would hold his ; but she quickly slipped it into her pocket, quick as lightning tore out the dagger

and with point and edge drew it rapidly away over his hand. He drew it back quickly, but already blood ran down.

" We must mark you more sharply if you are to take notice," she exclaimed with a wild cheerfulness which soon passed over into a hasty activity. She took her handkerchief and wrapped his hand round with it so as to stop the first gush of blood. " Excuse a half-mad woman," she exclaimed, " and do not let yourself repent of these drops of blood. I am reconciled, I am myself again. On my knees I wish to ask pardon ; let me have the consolation of healing you ! "

She hastened to a cupboard, fetched some lint and vessels, stopped the blood and looked carefully at the wound. The cut went through the ball straight under the thumb, divided the line of life and ran out to the little finger. She bandaged him in silence and turned in upon herself with a thoughtful significance. He enquired several times : " My dear, how could you injure your friend ? "

" Quiet ! " she replied, while she laid her finger on her mouth, " quiet ! "

PART II

BOOK V

CHAPTER I

SO Wilhelm, in addition to his two wounds which were scarcely healed, had now got a third which was a new one and not a little uncomfortable. Aurelia would not admit that he required a surgeon ; she herself dressed the hand with all manner of strange speeches, ceremonies and sayings, and therewith placed him in a very painful situation. Yet not Wilhelm alone, but all persons in her vicinity suffered from her restlessness and singularity, but nobody more than the little Felix. The lively child was extremely impatient under this oppression, and showed himself ever more naughty the more she blamed and reprimanded him.

The boy delighted himself with some peculiarities which are usually called naughty and in which she would not by any means indulge him. For instance, he liked to drink out of the bottle rather than the glass, and his food seemed to him to taste better out of the dish than from the plate. Such awkwardness was not to be overlooked, and if he now left the door open or slammed it to, and when he was told to do something, he either did not move from where he was or ran off violently, he was sure to receive a long lecture without any improvement being seen in consequence. Rather did his affection for Aurelia seem to diminish daily ; there was nothing tender in his tone of voice when he called her " Mother " ; rather did he cling passionately to the old nurse who let him have his will in everything. But the latter had recently been so ill that they had been obliged to take her from the house into a quiet lodging, and Felix would have found himself quite alone had not Mignon appeared to him as a loving guardian angel. The two children entertained each other in the most charming manner ; she taught him little songs, and he, who had a very good memory, often recited them to the astonishment of those who heard him. She also wished to explain to him the maps. With these she was always much

occupied—however, she did not proceed in the best way, for the countries had no particular interest for her except as to whether they were cold or warm. Of the two poles, of the horrible ice there, and of the increasing warmth the farther one withdraws from them she could give a very good account. If anyone was travelling she only enquired whether he was going to the North or the South and busied herself in finding out the routes on their small maps, particularly when Wilhelm spoke of travelling she was very attentive and always seemed to be depressed when the conversation passed to another subject. Though she could not be persuaded to take a part, or else to go to the theatre when there was a play on, she gladly and diligently learned odes and songs by heart and awakened astonishment with everyone when she recited such a poem, usually in an earnest and solemn fashion, often of a sudden and, as it were, on the spur of the moment. Serlo, who was accustomed to give attention to every trace of rising talent, endeavoured to encourage her, but she recommended herself to him mostly by a very pretty, varied and often even wistful song. In just this way too the Harper had earned his favour.

Serlo, without himself possessing any genius for music or playing any instrument, knew how to prize their value ; he endeavoured to procure for himself this pleasure which cannot be compared with any other. He had a concert once a week, and now with Mignon, the Harper and Laertes, who was not unskilful with the violin, he had a wonderful little private band.

He was wont to say " Men are so inclined to occupy themselves with the commonest things, so easily to deaden themselves to the impressions of the beautiful and perfect, that everyone should maintain in every way his capacity for feeling such things, for no one can entirely dispense with such pleasure, and only because men are unaccustomed to enjoy what is good do they find pleasure in what is silly and tasteless, if only it is new. One should," he said, " every day at least hear one small song, read one good poem and see one fine picture, and if it were possible speak a few sensible words." With these ideas, which to some extent were natural to Serlo, the people who surrounded him could not lack pleasant conversation.

In the midst of these pleasurable circumstances Wilhelm one day had a letter sealed in black brought to him. Werner's seal

was suggestive of bad news, and Wilhelm was not a little shocked when he found the death of his father set down with only a few words. After an unexpected short illness he had passed from the world and had left his domestic affairs in the best order possible.

This unexpected news struck Wilhelm to the heart—he felt deeply with what cold neglect one often leaves friends and relations who enjoy with us this earthly sojourn, and only just repent of our negligence when this beautiful relationship is removed, at least on this side of the grave. His sorrow for the early death of this honest man could only be alleviated by the feeling that he had loved little in the world, and by the conviction that he had enjoyed but little.

Wilhelm's thoughts now turned to his own condition and he felt himself not a little disturbed. A person can scarcely be placed in a more dangerous position than where by external circumstances a great change in his condition is effected without his way of feeling and thinking being prepared for it. There is then an epoch without epoch, and there arises a still greater contradiction the less the person observes that he has not yet been trained for the new manner of existence.

Wilhelm saw himself free at the moment when he could not be at unity with himself. His ideas were noble, his intentions frank and his purposes were not reprehensible. All this he could acknowledge to himself with some confidence, but he had sufficient opportunity for noticing that he was lacking in experience and therefore he laid an excessive value on the experience of others and the results which with conviction they deduced from it, and thereby he came still more deeply into error. What he lacked he thought he could just acquire if he undertook to collect and keep all the memorable things which he should come across in books and in conversation. He therefore wrote down his own and other people's opinions and ideas, indeed whole conversations which interested him. In this way, unfortunately, he kept the false as well as the true, stayed much too long on one idea—one might say on a simple maxim—and thus he abandoned his natural way of thinking and acting, often following foreign lights as his lodestars. Aurelia's bitterness and Laertes' cold contempt for mankind corrupted his judgment oftener than was right, but no one had been more dangerous to him than Jarno. This man had a clear intellect which could form a correct and

severe decision about present things, but with this he had the mistake of expressing these individual decisions with a kind of universality, whereas the verdicts of the intellect have force only once and that in the definite case, and would be incorrect if one applied them to others.

Thus Wilhelm, as he strove to be at unity with himself, always diverged more from a healthy unity, and in this confusion it was easier for his passions to use all their armoury to their advantage, only to perplex him still more as to what he had to do.

Serlo made use of the news of this death for his own advantage, and indeed he had daily ever more reason for thinking about a fresh arrangement of his company. He must either renew his old contracts, which he did not wish to do, as some of the actors who regarded themselves as indispensable were growing every day more insupportable, or he must entirely remodel his company, and this is what he wished to do.

Without personally putting pressure on Wilhelm, he aroused Aurelia and Philine ; and the rest of his comrades, who longed for an engagement in like manner, gave our friend no rest, so that with some embarrassment he stood at the parting of the ways. Who would have thought that a letter from Werner, written with entirely different ideas, should at last have driven him to a decision ! We will omit the introduction and only give the rest of his letters with a little alteration.

CHAPTER II

IT was and must always be right for everyone at any opportunity to follow his vocation and exhibit his activity. The worthy old man had hardly been gone when, in the next quarter of an hour, nothing was moving in the house as he would have done it. Friends, acquaintances and relations crowded forward, but especially all kinds of people who, on such occasions, are likely to gain something. They fetched and carried, they courted, wrote and reckoned ; some brought wine and cakes, others ate and drank, but I saw no one so seriously occupied as the women who were looking for mourning.

" You will pardon me then, my dear friend, if on this occasion I, too, thought of my advantage, showing myself as helpful and

active to your sister as possible and making it clear to her that as soon as it was in any way suitable, we ought to accelerate a union which our parents had hitherto put off owing to their ceremoniousness.

" But you must not imagine that we thought of taking into our possession that large, empty house. We are more modest and more sensible ; you shall hear our plan. As soon as we are married, your sister at once comes over into our house and your mother also.

" ' How is that possible ? ' you will say. ' You have scarcely room for yourselves in that small place.' That is the art of the thing, my friend ! Skilful arrangement makes everything possible, and you would not believe how much space there is when only a little room is required. We shall sell the large house, for which there will at once be a good opportunity ; the money we shall draw from it will produce a hundredfold interest.

" I hope you quite understand this ; I wish that you may not have inherited those unprofitable tastes of your father and grandfather. The latter placed his happiness in having a number of dull works of art which no one—I can well say no one—could enjoy with him. The former lived in a luxurious establishment which he did not allow anyone to enjoy with him. We intend to act differently, and I hope you will agree with us.

" It is true that I have in our whole house no room except at my writing-desk, and I don't yet see where they will be able to set down a cradle later on, but the room outside the house will be all the larger. Coffee-houses and clubs for the husband, walks and drives for the wife and pleasant country places for both. But in addition there is the greatest advantage that our round table too is now quite filled, and it is impossible for our father to see his friends who, the more he troubled to entertain them, the more easily they made game of him.

" Only now there is no superfluity at home ! Only not too much furniture and apparatus, no carriages and no horses ! Nothing but money and doing every day in a sensible way what you please. Only no wardrobe, always the newest and best on your back ; the man may wear out his coat and the wife get rid of her dress as soon as it has in some degree gone out of fashion. There is nothing more intolerable to me than an old shop full of possessions. If I were offered the most costly jewel

on condition that I wore it on my finger every day, I would not accept it, for how can one think of any pleasure in a dead capital ? This, then, is my cheerful confession of faith ; to transact your business, to make merry, to be festive with one's own household and to trouble oneself no more about the rest of the world except in so far as one can help it.

" But now you will be saying, ' How, then, do I come in with this next plan of yours ? Where am I to lodge when you have sold my father's house and in yours there is not the smallest room left ? '

" That is indeed the chief point, my dear brother, and in this I shall soon be able to serve you, but I must first accord to you fitting praise for the time which you have employed so admirably.

" Only tell me, how did you begin in such a few weeks to become a connoisseur of all useful and interesting objects ? Much as I knew your capabilities I had not thought of you as promising such attention and diligence. Your diary has convinced us of the profit which you have made from this journey ; the description of the iron and copper forges is excellent and shows great insight into the matter. I have also visited them in days gone by, but my description of them when compared with yours has a very bungling appearance. Your whole letter on the linen trade is full of instruction, and your remarks about competition very much to the point. In some places there are mistakes in the addition which, however, are very pardonable. But what pleases me and my father most, and in the highest degree, is your thorough insight into the management of an estate and, particularly, as regards the improvement of landed property. We are hoping to purchase a large property, at present under sequestration, in a very fruitful district. We are applying the money from the sale of your father's house to pay for it ; a part will be borrowed and a part can remain unpaid, and we count on you to go there and superintend the improvements, and so the property—not to say too much—may increase by a third of its value. We shall see it again, look out for a larger piece, improve it and trade again. For this, you are the man. Our pens, meanwhile, will not be idle here, and we shall soon place ourselves in an enviable position.

" Now farewell ! Enjoy your life on the journey and go off

wherever you find it pleasant and profitable. For the first half-year we shall not be wanting you ; you can look about in the world as you please, for a sensible person finds the best instruction in travelling. Farewell ! I am delighted at being so closely connected with you by relationship, also now being united with you in the spirit of activity."

Though this letter was well written and contained so many economic truths, yet it displeased Wilhelm in more than one way. The praise which he received for his pretended statistical, technical and rural knowledge was for him a silent reproof. The ideal of the happiness of civic life which his brother-in-law sketched for him, in no way charmed him ; he was rather by a secret spirit of contradiction drawn forcibly in the opposite direction. He was convinced that only on the stage could he complete the mental culture which he wished to give himself, and he seemed to be strengthened in his determination the more strongly Werner, without knowing it, was in opposition. He, therefore, collected all his arguments together, and in his own mind confirmed his own opinion all the more, as he wished to have cause to present them in a favourable light to the clever Werner, and in this way arose an answer which we also insert.

CHAPTER III

YOUR letter is so well written, so clearly and wisely conceived, that it leaves nothing to which one could object. But you will excuse me if I say that one may think, assert and act in exactly the opposite way and yet be also in the right. Your way of living and thinking turns on unlimited acquisition and an easy, amusing manner of enjoyment, and I need hardly tell you that I find in this nothing that can charm me.

" Unfortunately I must first confess to you that my diary was put together from necessity, so as to please my father, with the help of a friend from numerous books, and though I know the matters contained in them and more of this sort, yet I have no comprehension of them, nor can I occupy myself with them. What good were it for me to fabricate good iron when my own inner being is full of slack ; what good is it for me to bring a landed estate into order when I am not at unity with myself?

" To tell you of things in a word, the cultivation of myself here as I am, has from my youth upwards been my wish and purpose, though dimly. I still think these ideas, but the means of making them possible are now somewhat clearer. I have seen more of the world than you imagine, and have made better use of it than you think. Pay some attention then to what I say, though it may not be quite in accordance with your opinions. Had I been a nobleman, our dispute would soon have been settled, but since I am only a mere citizen I must take my own path, and I wish that you may understand me. I do not know how it may be in foreign countries, but in Germany a certain general and, if I may say so, personal cultivation is only possible for the nobleman. A citizen may acquire merit and with great trouble cultivate his mind, but his personality is lost, whatever he may do. Since the nobleman associates with the most distinguished society, it becomes a duty for him to give himself a distinguished manner, and this manner, since neither door nor gate is closed to him, grows to be an unconstrained one ; since his figure and person are a part of his possessions in court or camp, he has reason to put some value upon them and to show that he does so ; a certain dignified grace in common things, a sort of easy delicacy in serious and important ones, becomes him well, for he lets it be seen that he is everywhere in equilibrium. He is a public person, and the more cultivated his movements, the more sonorous his voice, the more restrained and measured his whole being, the more perfect he is. If to high and low, friends and relations he remains always the same, there is nothing to object to in him ; one cannot wish him to be otherwise. He may be cold, but with a clear head, playing a part, but clean. If at every moment of his life he can be master of himself outwardly, no one can make any further demand on him, and everything else which he has in him and about him—capacity, talents, riches—all seem to be only extra gifts.

" Now imagine a citizen only thinking of making some claim to these advantages ; he must absolutely fail and he must be all the more unfortunate the more Nature may have given him of impulse and capacity to that mode of being. Since the nobleman in common life knows no limits, since from him kings or king-like figures could be created, he can enter everywhere with a silent consciousness as before his equals ; he can press forward every-

where, while nothing more becomes the citizen than the absolutely quiet feeling of the limits which are drawn round him. The citizen cannot ask himself, 'What are you?' but only 'What have you?'—what insight, what knowledge, what capacity, how much wealth?

"If the nobleman by his personal carriage offers all that can be asked of him, the citizen by his personality offers nothing and can offer nothing. The former has a right to seem, the latter only to exist, and what he wishes to seem becomes ridiculous and in bad taste. The former is to ask and make, the latter is to effect and procure—he is to cultivate individual capabilities so as to become useful, and it is already presupposed that there is no harmony in his manner of existence nor can there be, because he is obliged to make himself useful in one direction and must, therefore, neglect everything else.

"This difference is perhaps caused not by the presumption of the nobles and the submissiveness of the citizen, but by the constitution of society itself; whether it will ever be changed and how it will be changed troubles me but little. As matters now stand I have enough to do to think of myself and consider how I can save myself and reach that which is indispensable for me.

"Now I have an inevitable longing for that harmonious cultivation of my nature which my birth has denied to me. Since I left you I have gained much by means of bodily exercise; I have got rid of much of my wonted embarrassment and can present myself tolerably well. I have also cultivated my speech and voice, and I can say without vanity that I am not displeasing in society. Now I will not deny to you that my inclination every day is becoming more irresistible to become a public person, and in a wider circle to please and be influential. Hence arises my inclination to poetry and all that is connected with it, and the necessity of cultivating my mental faculties and taste so that in this enjoyment, which I cannot dispense with, I should hold for good only that which is good, and for beautiful only that which is beautiful. You can easily see that all this can only be found on the stage, and that only in this element can I bestir and cultivate myself according to my wishes. On the boards a cultivated man appears in his splendour just as well personally as he does in the upper classes; body and spirit must advance with equal

steps in all his labours, and these I shall be able to be and seem as well as anywhere else. If I am on the look-out for further occupations, we have there quite enough mechanical vocations, and I can give my patience daily exercise.

" Don't dispute with me about this, for before you write, the step has been taken. On account of the prevailing prejudices I will change my name, for besides I feel ashamed of coming forward in public as ' Meister ' (Master). Fare thee well ! Our property is in good hands, so that I don't disturb myself about that. What I need I will ask from you as occasion requires—it will not be much, for I hope that my art will maintain me."

The letter had scarcely been sent off when Wilhelm at once kept his word, and to the great surprise of Serlo and the rest of them he declared at once that he would become an actor and wished to enter on a contract upon reasonable terms. About these they were soon agreed, for Serlo had before disclosed terms with which Wilhelm and his companions could well be satisfied. The whole unlucky company with which we have so long been occupied was at once received, but no one, except perhaps Laertes, showed any thankfulness to Wilhelm. As they had made claims without confidence, so they accepted without gratitude. Most wished rather to ascribe their appointment to the influence of Philine and directed their thanks to her. Meanwhile the contracts which had been drawn up were signed, and by an indescribable association of ideas there arose before the imagination of Wilhelm, just at the moment when he was signing his assumed name, the image of that spot in the forest where he lay wounded in Philine's lap. On her white horse the lovely Amazon out of the bushes ; she drew near to him and dismounted. Her humane anxiety made her come and go ; at length she stood before him. The cloak fell from her shoulders, her countenance and form began to shine and then she vanished. So he signed his name mechanically without knowing what he was doing, and after he had signed he felt for the first time Mignon standing at his side, holding him by the arm and gently trying to pull his hand away.

CHAPTER IV

ONE of the conditions under which Wilhelm had betaken himself to the stage had not been agreed to by Serlo without some limitations. Wilhelm demanded that *Hamlet* should be acted entire and unabbreviated, and Serlo had agreed to this singular request "in so far as it was possible." Now they had had many a dispute about this hitherto, for what may be possible or not possible and what can be omitted from a play without mutilating it, both of them had very different opinions.

Wilhelm was still in that happy season when it is not possible to understand how any defect can be found in the girl one loves or the author one honours. The feeling we have about them is so entire, so in harmony with itself, that we are obliged to think of such a complete harmony existing in themselves. Serlo, on the other hand, was willing to discriminate, almost too much, his acute understanding could recognize in a work of art only a more-or-less imperfect whole. He thought that as one usually found plays there was little reason to deal with them so circum-spectly, and so must Shakespeare and in particular *Hamlet* suffer much abbreviation.

Wilhelm would not listen when Serlo spoke of separating the wheat from the chaff. Chaff and wheat are not mixed together, cried the former, "It is a trunk with boughs, twigs, leaves, buds, blossoms and fruit. Is not one there with the other and by means of it? Serlo maintained that one did not bring the whole trunk on the table; the artist should present to his guests golden apples in silver bowls. They exhausted themselves in similes and their opinions seemed always to diverge further from one another.

Our friend was almost in despair when, after a long dispute, Serlo advised the simplest method—in short, to make a resolution, to grasp his pen and to strike out whatever would not or could not work in the tragedy, making several persons into one; and if he was not acquainted with their method of procedure, or had not yet the heart to carry it out, he might hand over the task to him—Serlo—and he would soon be finished with it.

"That is not in accord with our agreement," replied Wilhelm. "How can you, with so much taste, be so light-minded?"

" My friend," cried Serlo, " you will also soon take my view. I know only too well how detestable is this way of treating works which perhaps has not yet taken place in any theatre in the world. But when was ever one so neglected as ours ? Authors force on us their disgusting method of mutilation and the public allows it. How many plays have we then which do not overstep the measure of our company, of our decorations and theatrical apparatus, of the proper time, the dialogue and the physical strength of the actor ? And yet we have to play, and always play and play afresh. Should we not now make use of our advantage, as we can accomplish just as much with mutilated works as with complete ones. The public itself gives us the privilege ! Few Germans, and perhaps only a few men from all modern nations, have a feeling for an aesthetic whole ; they praise and blame only in parts, they are delighted with parts, and for whom is this a greater piece of good fortune than for the actor, since the stage remains always a patched-up and fragmentary business."

" It is," replied Wilhelm, " but must it ever remain so, must everything remain what it is ? You do not convince me that you are right, for no power on earth could move me to keep a contract which I had only closed with the greatest misunderstanding."

Serlo gave an amusing turn to the affair, and endeavoured to get Wilhelm to reflect again on their numerous conversations about *Hamlet*, and himself to think out means for a fortunate working out of the play.

After a few days which he spent alone, Wilhelm returned with joyful looks. " I must be making a great mistake," he cried, " if I have not discovered how the whole is to be managed; indeed I am convinced that Shakespeare himself would so have arranged it had not his genius been so greatly directed to the main point, and had he not perhaps been led astray by the tales in accordance with which he worked."

" Let me hear," said Serlo, as he placed himself solemnly on the sofa. " I shall listen calmly, but judge with greater severity."

Wilhelm replied, " I am not anxious, only listen ! After the most exact examination and the most mature consideration, I distinguish two things in the composition of this play. The first are the great internal relations of the persons and events, the powerful effects which arise from the characters and proceedings of the principal figures, and these are individually

excellent, and the sequence in which they are presented cannot be improved upon. They must not be destroyed by any kind of treatment or scarcely have their form changed. These are things which stamp themselves deep into the soul, which everyone longs to see and no one ventures to interfere with ; and so, as I hear, they have nearly all been retained in the German theatre. But in my opinion one has made a mistake with regard to the second-class matters in this play—I mean the external relations of the persons whereby they are brought from place to place or are combined in various ways by certain chance circumstances. These have been regarded as entirely unimportant, only spoken of in passing or omitted altogether. Doubtless these threads are thin and slack, but yet they run through the whole play and hold together what would otherwise fall asunder, and does actually fall asunder when you cut them away and imagine you have done everything when you have left the ends hanging.

" Among these external relations I reckon the disturbances in Norway, the war with the young Fortinbras, the Embassy to the old Uncle, the settling of the feud, the march of the young Fortinbras to Poland and his return at the end, similarly the return of Horatio from Wittenberg, Hamlet's desire to go there, the journey of Laertes to France, his return, the sending of Hamlet to England, his capture by pirates, the death of the two courtiers by the Uriah-like letter which they carried—all these circumstances and events would be suitable for expanding a novel, but they injure extremely the unity of the play, especially as the hero has no plan and they are therefore an entire mistake."

" I am listening to you gladly ! " cried Serlo.

" Don't interrupt me," replied Wilhelm. " You may not always praise me. These mistakes are like the flying buttresses of a building which we cannot take away until we first build a strong wall in their place. My proposal is, therefore, to disturb nothing in these first grand situations, but to spare them as much as possible, both collectively and individually, but to take away altogether these external dissipated and dissipating motives and to substitute a single one for them."

" And this would be ? " enquired Serlo, rising up from his sitting posture.

" It lies in the play itself," answered Wilhelm, " only I make

the right use of it. There are the disturbances in Norway. Here you have my plan for a trial.

" After the death of the old Hamlet the Norwegians, who had been lately conquered, became restless. The Lord Lieutenant of that country sends his son, Horatio, an old school friend of Hamlet's, distinguished beyond all others for his bravery and prudence, to Denmark, to force on the equipment of the fleet, which proceeds only slowly under the new king given over to luxury. Horatio knows the former king, for he had been present at his last battles, had stood in favour with him, and the first ghost scene loses nothing in consequence. The new king then gives Horatio audience and sends Laertes to Norway, with the news that the fleet will soon arrive, while Horatio receives the commission to accelerate the arming of it. The queen, on the other hand, will not agree that Hamlet, as he wished, should go to sea with Horatio."

" Thank heaven ! " cried Serlo. " So we shall be free from Wittenberg and the high school, which was always a troublesome interruption.

" I find your ideas quite good, for apart only from the two distant objects, Norway and the fleet, the spectator will not have to imagine anything—all the rest he sees, all the rest passes in front of him, instead of his imagination otherwise being hunted all over the world."

" You easily see," replied Wilhelm, " how I can now manage to keep the other parts together. When Hamlet reveals to Horatio the crime of his stepfather, the latter advises him to go to Norway with him, to make himself secure of the army and to return with an armed force. When Hamlet becomes too dangerous for the king and queen, they have no better method of getting free from him than by sending him to the fleet with Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern to watch over him, and as, meanwhile, Laertes returns, this youth, exasperated even to murder, is to be sent after him. The fleet, owing to unfavourable wind, is detained. Hamlet comes back again ; for his wandering over the churchyard, a lucky motive may perhaps be thought of. The meeting with Laertes at Ophelia's grave is an indispensable moment. Upon this the king considers that it would be better to get rid of Hamlet on the spot. The festival of his departure, of the apparent reconciliation with Laertes, are now solemnly

celebrated ; in consequence, knightly sports are held, and Hamlet and Laertes fight. Without the four corpses I cannot end the play—no one of them can be left remaining, since the right of popular election again comes in force Hamlet gives his vote, while dying, to Horatio."

" Only be quick ! " replied Serlo. " Sit down and work out the play. The idea has my entire approval, only do not let your pleasure in it evaporate."

CHAPTER V

WILHELM had for some time been occupied with translating *Hamlet*. For that purpose he had made use of the talented work of Wieland's, by means of which, above all, he had become acquainted with Shakespeare. What had been omitted by Wieland he replaced, and so he was in possession of a complete copy at the very time when he came fairly into agreement with Serlo as to the treatment of the play. He now began, according to his plan, to pick out and put in, to separate and unite, to alter and often again to restore ; for, satisfied as he was with his own idea, it always seemed to him as if in the execution the original was only injured.

As soon as it was finished he read it to Serlo and the rest of the company. They showed themselves to be very well contented with it ; in particular, Serlo made many favourable observations.

" You have," said he, among other things, " felt very rightly that some external circumstances must accompany this play, but they must be simpler than those which the great poet has given us. What goes on apart from the theatre, which the spectator does not see but must imagine for himself, is like a background in front of which the acting figures, move. The great and simple view of the fleet and Norway will very much improve the play ; if we had this taken away there would only be a family scene remaining, and the great conception that here a complete royal house by internal crimes and unseemly conduct goes down to ruin would not be presented with sufficient dignity. But if the background remains so varied, fluctuating and confused, it would injure the impression of the figures."

Wilhelm again took the part of Shakespeare and showed that he had written for islanders, for Englishmen who, even in the background, were accustomed to see only ships and sea-voyages, the coast of France and privateers, and that what is to them something quite ordinary, distracts and perplexes us.

Serlo was obliged to give way, and both were altogether in agreement that as the play was now to be produced upon the German stage, this more serious and simple background was best suited for our way of presentation.

The parts had been distributed earlier. Serlo undertook Polonius ; Aurelia—Ophelia. Laertes was already designated by his name ; a young, squarely built, cheerful newcomer was to take the part of Horatio ; only the king and the ghost caused some embarrassment, for both of these parts there was only the Old Blusterer. Serlo proposed the Pedant for the king ; on the other hand, Wilhelm protested against this in the strongest terms. They could not decide on anything.

Wilhelm, besides, in his play had let the two parts of Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern stand.

" Why could they not be joined into one ? " asked Serlo. " Such an abbreviation so easily made."

" Heaven defend me from such abbreviations which take away, at the same time, the sense and the effect," replied Wilhelm. " That which these two persons are, and do, cannot be represented by one. It is in such small details that Shakespeare's greatness is shown. This soft approaching, this crouching and bowing, this assenting, wheedling and flattering, this adroitness, this agility, this complete agreement and emptiness, this thorough reality, this incapacity—how can they be expressed by a single person ? There should be at least a dozen, if one could have them, for it is only in society that they are something, and Shakespeare showed himself very restrained and prudent in only bringing in two such representatives. Besides, I want them in my work as a pair which may be contrasted with the singly good, excellent Horatio."

" I understand you," said Serlo, " and we can manage it. One of them we can give to Elmira (this was the name of the eldest daughter of The Blusterer) ; it will do no harm if they look well, and I will dress and train the puppets so that they will give pleasure."

Philine was exceedingly pleased that she was to play the Duchess in the small comedy.

"I will make it seem so natural," she cried. "How you should quickly wed another when you have loved the first quite extraordinarily much. I hope to gain the greatest applause, and every man shall wish he were the third."

Aurelia looked vexed at these remarks. Her dislike of Philine increased every day.

"It is indeed a pity," said Serlo, "that we have no ballet, otherwise you should dance a *pas de deux* with your first, and then one with your second husband, and the old one might fall asleep after the dance, and your little feet and ankles would look so extremely pretty behind on the child's stage."

"Of my ankles you do not know very much," replied Philine snappishly, "and as to my little feet," she cried, hastily reaching beneath the table and bringing up her slippers which she placed together in front of Serlo, "here are my props, and I advise you to find me prettier ones."

"It would be a serious matter," he said, as he contemplated the delicate slippers. "Certainly it would be difficult to find anything nicer." They were of Paris make. Philine had received them as a present from the Countess, whose feet were celebrated for their beauty.

"A charming object," cried Serlo. "My heart leaps up when I see them."

"What raptures!" said Philine.

"There is nothing better than a pair of little slippers of such fine and beautiful workmanship," cried Serlo, "yet is their sound still more charming than their look." He lifted them up and let them fall one after another on the table. "What should that mean?"

"Only do it again," cried Philine.

"People may talk of nightingales, of bubbling brooks, of the murmuring of winds and of all the sounds of organ and pipe—I keep to the click-clack! click-clack! It is the most beautiful subject for a roundelay that one ever wishes to hear in front of one."

Philine took the slippers out of his hands and said, "How I have bent them; they are much too broad for me." Then she played with them and rubbed the soles against one another.

" How hot it is," she cried, as she held one of the soles against her cheek, then rubbed it again and held it out to Serlo. He was good natured enough to feel after the warmth, and " Click-clack ! " cried she, giving him a smart blow with the heel so that, screaming, he drew back his hand. " I will teach you to think differently of my slippers," said Philine, laughing,

" And I will teach you to manage old people like children," cried Serlo, and seized her violently, stealing many a kiss from her which she artfully allowed to be extorted from her with some show of resistance. In this romping her long hair fell down and wound itself round the group, the chair was flung to the ground, and Aurelia, who was inwardly insulted by this disorder, got up feeling much vexed.

CHAPTER VI

ALTHOUGH in the fresh modelling of *Hamlet* many persons had been cut out, a number of them still remained sufficiently large and the company would be enough to meet them.

" If this so proceeds," said Serlo, " our prompter must also come out of his lair, mix with us and become a personage like ourselves."

" In his position I have often admired him," replied Wilhelm.

" I do not think that there is anywhere a more perfect prompter," said Serlo. " No spectator will ever hear him ; we on the stage understand every syllable. He has formed within himself, as it were, a special organ, and is like a genius that whispers to us distinctly in our time of need. He feels instinctively what portion of his role the actor is completely master of, and anticipates from afar when his memory will fail him. In some cases in which I could scarcely read over my part, he said it over to me word for word, and I played it successfully. Only he has some peculiarities which would make anyone else useless : thus he takes such a keen interest in the plays that the pathetic passages he does not exactly declaim, but reads them with emotion. With this bad habit he has confused me more than once."

" And me, too," said Aurelia. " With another of his

peculiarities he once left me sticking fast in a very dangerous passage."

"How could that be possible with his attentiveness?" enquired Wilhelm.

"By certain passages," replied Aurelia, "he is so moved that he sheds warm tears and for some moments is quite overcome; and it is not exactly the so-called moving passages which put him in this condition but, if I may express myself clearly, the beautiful passages, out of which the pure spirit of the poet looks out, as it were, from bright, open eyes—passages which we others are at most only pleased with and which many thousands overlook."

"And with so tender a soul, why does he not appear on the stage?"

"A hoarse voice and a stiff demeanour exclude him from it," replied Serlo, "as does his melancholy temperament exclude him from society. How much trouble have I taken, but in vain, to get him to feel at home with me! He reads splendidly, better than anyone I have ever heard; no one keeps, as he does, the delicate boundary line between declamation and emotional recitation."

"Just what we want!" cried Wilhelm. "The very man! What a fortunate discovery. Now we have the actor who can give us the passage of 'The Rugged Pyrrhus.'"

"One must have a passion such as yours," replied Serlo, "in order to employ everything in the use for which it was intended."

"Indeed, I was in great anxiety," said Wilhelm, "that we should have to omit this passage, and thereby the whole play would be injured."

"That is what I cannot understand," replied Aurelia.

"I hope you will soon be of my opinion," said Wilhelm. "Shakespeare introduces these travelling players with a double object in view. The person who declaims the death of Priam with so much feeling, first of all makes a deep impression on the Prince himself; he sharpens the conscience of the wavering young man, and so this scene is the prelude to that in which the little play has so great an effect upon the king. Hamlet feels himself put to shame by the player, who takes so great a part in strange and fictitious sorrows, and the idea of making an experi-

ment on the conscience of his stepfather is in consequence at once awakened in him. What glorious monologue it is which closed the second act.

O what a rogue and peasant slave am I :
Is it not monstrous that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his whole conceit
That from her working all his visage wann'd,
Tears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect,
A broken voice and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit ? and all for nothing !
For Hecuba ! What's Hecuba to him,
Or he to Hecuba, that he should weep for her ?

" If we can but get our man to come upon the stage," said Aurelia.

" We must lead him to it by degrees," replied Serlo. " At the rehearsal he might read the passage, and we can say that we are expecting an actor who is to play it, and so we can see how we can get him nearer to the point."

After they had agreed about this, the conversation turned upon the ghost. Wilhelm could not decide to give the part of the living king to the Pedant, so that the Old Blusterer might play the Ghost, and he thought rather that they might wait for a time, since some other actors had announced themselves, and among them the right man might be found. We can therefore imagine how astonished Wilhelm was when he found on his table in the evening, addressed to his theatrical *nom de plume*, a billet which ran as follows :

" Strange young man ! We know that you are in great perplexity ; you can scarcely find enough men for *Hamlet*, not to mention ghosts. Your zeal deserves a miracle ; we cannot perform miracles, but something wonderful shall happen. If you have confidence, the Ghost shall appear at the proper time. Have courage and keep composed. This requires no answer. Your decision will be known to us."

With this strange sheet Wilhelm hurried back to Serlo, who read it again and again, and at last with a thoughtful look asserted that it was a matter of importance ; they must consider well whether they could risk it. They talked much of it at

times. Aurelia kept silent and smiled now and then, and when there was talk of it again after a few days, she let it be understood, not obscurely, that she thought it was a joke of Serlo's. She begged Wilhelm to be free from all anxiety and to await the Ghost patiently.

Above all, Serlo was in the best of humours, for the actors who were departing gave themselves great pains to play well, so that they should be really missed, and from curiosity about the new company he could expect the best results. Intercourse with Wilhelm had even some influence on him. He began to speak more about art, for, after all, he was a German, and this nation likes to give to itself an account of what it does. Wilhelm wrote down many of their conversations, and we will, so that our narrative may not be interrupted, lay before those of our readers who take an interest in the matter, such dramatic experiments on some other opportunity. Serlo was particularly testive one evening when he spoke of the part of Polonius and how he thought of understanding it. "I promise," said he, "to present on this occasion an entirely worthy man at his best. I shall introduce with delicacy in their suitable proportions his repose and security, his emptiness and significance, his amenity and lack of taste, his frankness and cunning, his sincere roguery and deceitful truth. I will represent in a most courtly style such a grey-haired, respectable, enduring, time-seeking half-rogue, and hereby the somewhat rough and coarse strokes of our author will be of good service to me here. I will speak like a book when I am prepared beforehand, and like a fool when I am in a good humour. I shall be insipid so as to suit everyone, and always so polite as not to notice when people are laughing at me. I have not readily undertaken a part with so much pleasure and roguishness."

"If I could only hope as much of my part," said Aurelia. "I have neither sufficient youth nor tenderness to fit in with this character. Only one thing do I know, alas, the feeling which upset Ophelia's brain I shall not lack."

"We must not take the matter so exactly," said Wilhelm, "for indeed my wish to act the part of Hamlet with all my study of the play has led me very greatly astray. The more I make a study of the part, the more I see that in my whole form there is no feature of my physiognomy such as Shakespeare presents Hamlet. When I consider rightly how exactly all things in the

part are adapted to one another, I can scarcely trust myself to produce even a tolerable effect."

" You enter upon your career with great conscientiousness," replied Serlo. " The actor fits himself into his part as best he can, and the part to him as it must. But how has Shakespeare represented his Hamlet ? Is he then so utterly unlike you ? "

" In the first place, Hamlet is fair," replied Wilhelm.

" I call that far-fetched," said Aurelia. " How do you infer that ? "

" As a Dane and a Northerner he is fair-haired fundamentally and has blue eyes."

" Had Shakespeare thought about that ? "

" I do not find it definitely expressed, but in conjunction with other passages it seems to me incontestable. The fencing is painful for him, the sweat runs from his face, and the Queen says : *He is fat and let him get his breath*. Can you imagine him otherwise than fair and plump ? For dark people in their youth are seldom in this condition. His fluctuating melancholy also, his irresolute activity suits better with such a figure than with a slender, dark-haired, young man from whom you would expect more decision and activity."

" You destroy my imagination," said Aurelia. " Away with your Hamlet ! Do not present before us your corpulent Prince ! Give us rather anything else which charms and moves us. The intention of the author does not lie so near to us as our enjoyment ; and we yearn for a charm which is adapted to us."

CHAPTER VII

ONE evening there was a dispute among the company as to whether the novel or the drama deserved the preference. Serlo asserted that it was a fruitless and misunderstood dispute ; both could be excellent in their way, only they must keep within the limits of their nature.

" I am not quite clear about such matters," replied Wilhelm.

" Who indeed is ? " said Serlo, " and yet it may be worth while to go closer into the matter."

They talked for long on all aspects of the matter, and finally the following was nearly the result of their conversation.

In the novel as well as in the drama we see human nature and human action. The difference between these two kinds of fiction lies not only in their outward form, nor in the fact that the persons in the one speak while in the other their story is narrated. Unfortunately many dramas are only novels working by dialogue, and it would not be impossible to write a drama in the form of letters.

In the novel it is feelings and events that are chiefly represented ; in the drama characters and deeds. The novel must proceed slowly and the feelings of the principal person must, in some way or other, restrain the tendency of the whole to its development. The drama should hurry on, and the character of the principal person must press forward to the end and only be restrained. The hero of the novel must be suffering, at least he must not be in a high degree active. Grandison, Clarissa, Pamela, the Vicar of Wakefield, Tom Jones himself, are, if not suffering, yet retarding personalities and all the events are modelled to some extent according to their feelings. In the drama the hero models nothing after himself; everything withstands him ; he clears and removes the hindrances out of his way, or sinks beneath them.

They were also agreed that in the novel one could certainly allow some scope to chance, but it must always be directed and guided by the feelings of the personalities ; on the other hand, that Fate which presses men on without their co-operation by means of unconnected circumstances to an unforeseen catastrophe, can only have place in drama ; that chance may indeed produce pathetic situations, but certainly not tragic ones. Fate, on the other hand, must always be terrible, and is in the highest sense tragic when it brings into an unhappy combination guilty and innocent deeds which are independent of one another.

These considerations led again to the wonderful *Hamlet* and to the peculiarities of this play. The hero, it was said, possesses properly only feelings ; it is only events that push him on, and therefore this play has something of the expansion of the novel. But because it is Fate that has drawn the plan, because the play issues from a deed of terror, and the hero is continually pressed forward to a deed of terror, the work is therefore tragic in the highest sense and admits of no other than a tragic end.

Now a reading rehearsal was to be held, and this Wilhelm

looked forward to as a festival. He had previously collated all the parts so that on this side there should be no obstruction. All the actors were acquainted with the play, and he only tried, before they began, to convince them of the importance of a reading rehearsal. Just as one requires of every musician that he shall be able to play to some extent from the music, so should every actor, indeed every well-educated man, train himself to read from the book and to catch at once the character of any drama, poem or narrative, and to deliver them with readiness. Learning by heart is of no use if the actor has not first penetrated into the spirit and sense of the good author ; the letter can effect nothing.

Serlo asserted that he would overlook every other rehearsal, even the principal rehearsal, if justice were done to the reading rehearsal. " For, as a rule," said he, " there is nothing more amusing than when actors speak of study ; it is as if freemasons were to talk of building."

The rehearsal went off according to their wishes, and we can say that the fame and good reception was based on these few well-spent hours.

" You have done well, my friend," said Serlo, when they were again alone, " in speaking so earnestly to our fellow-workers, though I fear they will with difficulty fulfil your wishes."

" How so ? " replied Wilhelm.

" I have found," said Serlo, " that easily as you can set in motion the imagination of men, gladly as they like tales to be narrated to them, yet it is seldom that we can find among them any kind of imagination which is productive. In the case of actors this is very striking. Each one of them is well content to undertake a beautiful, praiseworthy, brilliant part, but seldom does any one man more than place himself with self-satisfaction in the position of the hero without troubling himself in the least as to whether other people so regard him. But to seize with vivacity what the author thought when writing the play, how much of his own individual qualities he must cast away in order to do justice to a part, how by his own conviction that he is to become quite another man, he may carry with him the conviction of the audience, how by the inward truth of his powers of presentation he can transform these boards into a temple, these pasteboards into woods, is given to few. This internal strength of mind by which alone the audience can be deceived, this deceptive

truth which alone will produce the effect by which alone the illusion is arrived at, who has any conception of these things ? It is therefore not laying too much stress on mind and feeling. The surest method is when we first composedly declare to our friends the literal meaning of the piece, and then open their understanding. Whoever has talent then hastens to the mode of expression which is full of mind and feeling ; and he who has it not, will at least not act or recite entirely falsely. But with actors, as indeed everywhere, I have found no worse presumption than when anyone makes claims to spirit when the literal meaning of the thing is not yet clear and ready to him.

CHAPTER VIII

WILHELM came to the first stage rehearsal early and found himself alone on the boards. The place surprised him and gave him the strangest recollections. The forest and village scene stood exactly as it did on the stage of his native town ; there was then a rehearsal, and it was the morning when Mariana eagerly disclosed her love to him and promised their first happy night. The peasants' cottages resembled one another on the stage as they did on the land ; the true morning sun shone through a half-open window-shutter, falling on a part of the bench near to an ill-fastened door, only unhappily not now as at that time on Mariana's bosom. He sat down, reflected on this singular coincidence and thought he had a presentiment of soon seeing her again on this very spot. Alas, it was nothing more than that an after-piece to which this scene belonged had at that time been very often played on the German stage.

Amid these reflections he was disturbed by the other actors, together with two friends who frequented the stage and cloak-room, who entered and greeted Wilhelm with enthusiasm. One of these was in some degree attached to Frau Melina, but the other was an entirely real friend of the theatrical art, and both were of a kind which a good company would always wish to have as friends. One could not say whether their knowledge of the stage or their love of it were greater. They loved it too much to know it correctly ; they knew it sufficiently to value the good and discard the bad. But with their inclinations

the mediocre was not intolerable, and the glorious pleasure which they experienced from the foretaste and aftertaste of what was good was beyond all expression. The mechanical elements gave them delight, by the intellectual they were enraptured, and their susceptibility was so strong that even a fragmentary rehearsal afforded them some kind of illusion. Deficiencies always appeared to them to move into the distance ; that which was good moved them like an object near at hand. In a word, they were amateurs, such as the artist always likes to have in his own department. Their favourite movement was from the side-scenes to the pit and from the pit to the side-scenes, their most pleasant resting-place was in the cloakroom, their most active employment was to support the position, dress, recitation and declamation of the actors, their liveliest conversation was about the effect produced, and their continual emotion was to keep the actor attentive, active and exact, to do him some service or kindness, and without being wasteful, to procure for the company many enjoyments. They had both obtained the exclusive privilege of appearing in the theatre at rehearsals and performances ; as regards the performance of *Hamlet* they were not in all points in agreement with Wilhelm. Here and there he gave way, but for the most part he maintained his opinion, and on the whole their conversation served for the cultivation of his taste. He let his two friends see how much he valued them, and they, on the other hand, from these joint endeavours predicted nothing less than a new epoch for the German theatre.

The presence of these two men at the rehearsals was very useful. In particular, they convinced our actors that at the rehearsal the posture and action, as they were to be shown at the performance, should always be combined with the words and everything together should be mechanically united by custom. In particular, in the rehearsal of a tragedy no common movement of the hands should be undertaken ; a tragic actor who in the rehearsal took snuff, always made them anxious, for most probably at such a passage in the performance he would miss his pinch. Indeed they maintained that no one should rehearse in boots if his part was to be played in shoes. But nothing, they asserted, distressed them more than when the women in rehearsing stuck their hands in the folds of their dresses. Besides, by the persuasion of these men yet another very good thing was effected,

namely, that all the actors should learn the use of arms. When so many military parts appear, they said, nothing seems more wretched than to see men with no ideas of military discipline strolling about the stage in the uniforms of captains and majors. Wilhelm and Laertes were the first to submit themselves to the instructions of a non-commissioned officer, and continued their fencing with great exertion.

So much trouble did these two men give themselves with the culture of a company which had come together so fortunately. They were providing for the future satisfaction of the public, which was usually laughing at their amateurish ways. People did not know how much cause they had for being thankful to them, particularly because they did not hesitate to impress on the actors the most important point, namely, that it was their duty to speak loud and audibly. Here they found more opposition and unwillingness than they had at first expected. Most of them wished to be heard just as they spoke, and only a few took the trouble to speak so that they could be heard. Some found fault with the building, others said we cannot yell when one has to speak naturally, secretly or tenderly.

Our two theatrical friends, who had endless patience, endeavoured in every way to free them from this illusion. They spared neither reasons nor flatteries, and at last they attained their object, to which they were especially assisted by the good example of Wilhelm. He requested them at the rehearsals to sit in the remotest corners, and when they could not understand him properly to rap on the bench with a key. His articulation was good ; he pronounced in a measured manner, raised his tone gradually and did not shout in the most vehement passages. The rapping of the key was heard less at every rehearsal. Gradually the others submitted to the same operation, and at last it was to be hoped that the play could be understood by everyone in all corners of the house.

From this example one may see how glad people are to reach their object in their own way, how necessary it is to make them understand that which is self-evident, and how difficult it is to get a man who wants to effect something to recognize the first conditions under which alone his enterprise is possible.

CHAPTER IX

THEY now proceeded to make the necessary preparations for the scenery and dresses and whatever else was required. Over certain scenes and passages Wilhelm had special fancies of his own to which Serlo gave way, partly in consideration of their contract, partly from conviction and because he hoped by this complacency to gain Wilhelm and in course of time to lead him all the more according to his own purposes.

So, for example, the King and Queen at the first audience were to appear sitting on the throne, the courtiers at the sides and Hamlet standing undistinguished among them. "Hamlet," said he, "must keep himself quiet : his black clothes will sufficiently mark him out. He should rather be concealed than come forward. Only when the audience is ended and the King speaks with him as a son, should he come forward and let the scene take its course."

Yet another great difficulty was caused by the two pictures to which Hamlet so passionately refers in the scene with his mother. They ought both to be visible, life size, at the bottom of the room near the main door, and the old King, clad in armour like the Ghost, must hang at the side where he enters. I should like the figure to hold its right hand in a commanding attitude and somewhat turned away, that it might be entirely like the Ghost at the moment when he goes out of the door. It will produce a great effect when at this moment Hamlet looks at the Ghost and the Queen at the picture. The stepfather may be represented in royal ornaments, yet not so striking as the other.

There were still different points about which we may have occasion to speak.

"Are you then determined on Hamlet dying in the end?" enquired Serlo.

"How can I keep him alive," said Wilhelm, "when the whole play is pressing to his death? We have already talked a good deal on this matter."

"But the public wishes him to be alive."

"I will gladly meet the public in any other way; but this is impossible. We may wish that a fine useful man who is dying of a chronic disease may live rather longer. The family weeps

and confuses the physician, who cannot help him, and no more than he can withstand a necessity of Nature can we give commands to a recognized necessity of art. It is a false compliance to the multitude when we stir up the feelings which they wish to have and not those which they ought to have."

"Who pays the piper calls the tune," said Serlo.

"To some extent, no doubt," replied Wilhelm; "but a great public deserves to have respect paid to it, not to be treated as children from whom one wants to extract money. By showing it what is really good, one brings it to a feeling and taste for what is really good, and it will lay out its money with double satisfaction because its understanding and indeed its reason has nothing for which to reproach itself at this outlay. You may flatter the public as you flatter a beloved child, so as to improve it and enlighten it in the future, not as you do to a child of the rich aristocracy to perpetuate an error from which you made a profit."

In this way much else was discussed with special reference to the question what could be changed in the play and what must remain untouched. We shall not enter further into these questions, but perhaps at some future time we may put this revised *Hamlet* itself before each of our readers who are at all interested in the matter.

CHAPTER X

THE principal rehearsal was over. It had lasted very long. Serlo and Wilhelm still found much to provide for, since in spite of all the time which had been expended on the preparation, some very necessary arrangements had been postponed to the last moment.

Thus, for example, the pictures of the two kings were not yet ready, and the scene between Hamlet and his mother, from which we hoped to have so great an effect, still had rather a poor aspect, as neither the Ghost nor his painted image were forthcoming. Serlo joked on this occasion and said: "We should be in a pretty bad state if the Ghost stayed away and the guard had really to fight with the air, and our prompter from the side-scene had to provide the delivery of the Ghost."

" We will not frighten away our wonderful friend by our want of faith," replied Wilhelm ; " he will, doubtless, come at the right time and astonish us as well as the spectators/'

" Certainly," said Serlo, " I shall feel happy to-morrow when the play has been acted ; it involves us in more arrangements than I had thought likely."

" But no one in the world will be more pleased than I when the play is over to-morrow," replied Philine, " though my part troubles me but little. For always and everlastingly to hear one subject talked of, from which nothing comes beyond a performance which will be forgotten like hundreds of others, for this my patience will not hold out. In heaven's name, not so much ceremony ! The guests, when they get up from dinner, have always some complaint to make about every dish ; indeed, if you hear them talk of it at home, one could scarcely understand how they could have put up with such distress."

" Let me make use of your simile for my own advantage," replied Wilhelm. " Reflect how much must be procured by nature and art, tradesmen and manufacturers, before a banquet can be given. How many years must the stag wander in the forest, the fish in the river or the sea, before they are worthy of being seen at our table ? What has not the lady of the house with her cook and everything had to do ? With what indifference do people swallow down the labour of the remote vine-dresser, the seaman and the butler at dessert, as if it were a matter of course ? And ought these men not to labour, make provision and preparation ; ought the master of the house not carefully to gather everything together and keep it there, because in the end the enjoyment is but transitory ? But no enjoyment is transitory, for the impression which it leaves behind is permanent, and that which is done with diligence and effort communicates to the spectator himself a hidden force, of which it is not possible to say how far it may have its effect."

" All that is a matter of indifference to me," replied Philine, " only this I can't help knowing, that you men are always in opposition with yourselves. With all your conscientiousness about not wishing to mutilate the great author, you have yet left out the finest thought of the play."

" The finest ? " exclaimed Wilhelm,

"Undoubtedly the finest," said Philine," in which Hamlet himself takes pleasure."

" And that is ? " said Serlo.¹

" If you wore a wig," replied Philine, " I would quite gently pluck it off you, for it seems necessary that your understanding should be opened."

The others reflected, and there was a pause in the conversation. They got up ; it was already late and they seemed to want to separate. While they stood undecided, Philine began to sing a little song with a very delicate, pleasing tune :

Sing not thus in notes of sadness
Of the loneliness of night :
No ! 'tis made for social gladness
Converse sweet and love's delight.

As to rugged man his wife is
For his fairest half decreed,
So dear night the half of life is
And the fairest half indeed.

Who could hail the day with pleasure,
Which but interrupts our joys,
Scares us from our dreams of leisure,
With its glare and irksome noise ?

But when night is come, and glowing
Is the lamp's attempered ray,
And from lip to lip are flowing
Love and mirth in sparkling play.

When the fiery boy, that wildly
Gambols in his wayward mood,
Calms to rest, disporting mildly
By some trivial gift subdued.

When the nightingale is trilling
Songs of love to lovers' ears
Which to hearts with sorrow thrilling
Seem but sighs and waken tears.

How with pulses lightly bounding,
Leaps thy heart to hear the bell,
Which, the hour of midnight sounding,
Doth of rest and safety tell.

¹ Act II. Scene 2 in the conversation between Hamlet and Ophelia before the Play.

Then, dear heart, this comfort borrow
In the long day's lingering light—
Every day has its own sorrow,
Gladness cometh with the night.

THEODORE MARTIN.

She made a little curtsey when she had finished, and Serlo started a loud " Bravo ! "

She sprang out of the door and hurried away, laughing. They heard her singing and tapping with her heels as she went downstairs.

Serlo went into the next room and Aurelia remained standing a few moments before Wilhelm, who wished her good-night, and said, " How odious is that woman to me, to my innermost being odious even to her smallest details. The brown eyelashes with her fair hair which my brother finds so charming, I cannot endure looking at, and the scar on her forehead has in it something so repulsive and low that I could always step back ten paces when I meet her. Lately she told as a joke that her father had thrown a plate at her head when she was a child, from which she still bears the mark. It is right that she should be marked in her eyes and brow, so that people may be on their guard against her."

Wilhelm made no reply, and Aurelia seemed to go on with still more vexation.

" It is for me almost impossible to speak a friendly or civil word to her, so greatly do I hate her, and yet she is so wheedling. I wish that we were free from her. Even you, my friend, have a certain complaisance towards this creature, a behaviour towards her which grieves me in my soul, an attention which borders on respect and which, by Heaven, she does not deserve."

" Whatever she is, I owe her thanks," replied Wilhelm. " Her upbringing is to blame, for her character I must do justice."

" Character ! " cried Aurelia. " Do you think such a creature has a character ? Oh you men, how I know you ! These are the women you deserve ! "

" If you suspect me, my friend," replied Wilhelm, " I could give an account of every minute I have passed with her."

" Well, well," said Aurelia, " it is late, we will not quarrel. All like each, each like all ! Good-night, my friend ! Good-night, my fine Bird of Paradise ! "

Wilhelm asked how he came by this title of honour.

" Another time," replied Aurelia, " another time. It is said that they have no feet, they float in the air and live on the ether. But it's only a story, a poetic fiction. Good-night, may you have beautiful dreams if you are in luck."

She went into her room and left him alone, and he hurried off to his.

Half angrily he walked to and fro. The jesting but decided tone of Aurelia had hurt him ; he felt deeply how unjust she had been to him. He could not meet Philine with unkindness nor ungraciously ; she had done no harm to him, and he felt so far from any affection for her that he could proudly and firmly survive such an accusation. He was just about to undress, going to his bed to draw aside the curtains, when to his great astonishment he saw a pair of woman's slippers in front of his bed ; one was upright, the other lying down. They were Philine's slippers, which he recognized only too well. He also thought he saw some disorder in the curtains ; indeed it seemed as if they moved. He stood and looked with unaverted eyes. A new impulse which he thought was annoyance took away his breath, and after a short pause, in which he recovered himself, he cried firmly :

" Stand up, Philine ! What do you mean by this ? Are we to-morrow to be the talk of the house ? "

Nothing moved.

" I am not joking," he continued. " These little games don't meet with my approval."

No sound. No movement.

Determined and annoyed he at last went up to the bed and tore the curtains aside.

" Get up," he said, " unless I am to give you up my room to-night."

To his great surprise he found the bed empty, the pillows and sheets in the most beautiful order. He looked around, searched everywhere through and through and found no trace of the rogue. Behind the bed, the stove and the cupboards there was nothing to be seen ; he searched with greater and greater diligence ; indeed a mischievous onlooker might have thought he searched in the hopes of finding.

There was to be no sleep. He put the slippers on his table,

walked up and down ; often he remained standing by the table, and a roguish sprite that listened to him asserted that he occupied himself a great part of the night with the darling little shoes ; that he had looked at them with a certain interest, handled them and played with them, and towards morning had thrown himself on the bed in his clothes, where he fell asleep amid the strangest fancies.

And he was still really asleep when Serlo entered and cried : " Where are you ? Still in bed ? Unpardonable ! I looked for you in the theatre, where there are still a great many things to be done."

CHAPTER XI

THE morning and afternoon passed rapidly away. The house was already full and Wilhelm hurried off to get dressed. He could not now put on the garb of Hamlet with the same delight with which he had tried it the first time ; he only dressed himself so as to be ready. When he came to the ladies in the room of assembly they cried unanimously that nothing sat upon him rightly, the fine plume was turned away, the buckle did not fit ; they began to unstitch, to sew and piece together. The music began ; Philine had something to object to in his ruff ; Aurelia had much to say against his cloak. " Leave me alone, my children," he cried ; " it is just this negligence which will make me really like Hamlet." The music ceased, and the play had begun. He looked at himself in the glass, pressed his hat closer down on his face and renewed the rouge.

At this moment somebody burst in and cried, " The Ghost ! The Ghost ! "

Wilhelm, the whole day, had not had time to think about the chief anxiety, namely, whether the Ghost would come. Now this anxiety was removed and they had to await the most remarkable part played by a stranger. The stage manager came and enquired about various matters ; Wilhelm had not time to look round for the Ghost ; he hastened to appear before the throne, where the King and Queen, already surrounded by their court, shone in all their glory. He only heard the last words of Horatio, who spoke of the Ghost quite confusedly and almost seemed to have forgotten his part.

The intermediate curtain went aloft and Hamlet saw the whole house in front of him. After Horatio had finished his speech and had been dismissed by the King, he pressed towards Hamlet as though he were presenting himself to the Prince. He said, " The Devil is in harness, he has driven us all into a fight."

In the interval two tall men in white cloaks and cowls were to be seen standing in the side-scenes, and Wilhelm, whose first soliloquy in his distraction, hurry and embarrassment had been, as he imagined, a failure, though timely applause accompanied his **exit**, came forward very uncomfortable in the dreary winter night of dramatic condemnation. However, he pulled himself together and spoke the suitable passage of the revels and wassails of the Danes with appropriate indifference ; he had, like the audience, forgotten about the Ghost and was really frightened when Horatio cried out : " Look, it comes ! " He whirled round violently, and the tall noble figure, the soft inaudible tread, the light movement in the heavy-looking armour made so powerful an impression on him that he stood there as if petrified and could only with a faint voice utter " Angels and ministers of grace defend us ! " He gazed fixedly at the form, drew a deep breath several times and made his address to the Ghost in so confused, broken and constrained a manner that the highest art could not have expressed the matter so aptly.

His translation of this passage now stood him in good stead. He had kept close to the original, in which the arrangement of the words seemed to him to express the state of a mind astounded, terrified and seized with terror :

" Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd,
Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,
Be thy intents wicked or charitable,
Thou comest in such a questionable shape,
That I will speak to thee : I'll call thee Hamlet,
King, father, royal Dane : O ! answer me ! "

One observed the deepest effect in the audience. The Ghost beckoned, the Prince followed him amid the loudest applause.

The scene was changed ; and when they came to the distant spot, the Ghost stopped unexpectedly and turned round, and thereby Hamlet came to stand almost too close to it. With yearning and curiosity Wilhelm looked between the lowered **vizor**, but could only discern the deep-lying eyes and a well-

formed nose. Gazing in alarm he stood before the Ghost, but when the first tones issued from the helmet and a well-sounding but slightly hoarse voice let itself be heard in the words, " I am thy father's spirit," Wilhelm retreated some steps, shuddering, and the whole audience shuddered too. The voice seemed known to everyone, and Wilhelm thought he noticed a likeness to his father's voice. These wondrous feelings and remembrances, the curiosity about discovering the strange friend, the anxiety about offending him, even the unsuitability as an actor of coming too near him in this situation affected Wilhelm in different directions. During the long narrative of the Ghost he changed his position so often, seemed so uncertain and embarrassed, so attentive and yet so distracted that his acting aroused a universal admiration as the Ghost aroused a universal horror. The latter spoke rather with a deep feeling of disgust than of sorrow, but of disgust, spiritual, heavy and immense. It was the discontent of a great soul which is separated from all earthly things and yet is subjected to endless woes. At last the Ghost vanished, but in a singular fashion, for a light-grey transparent gauze, which like a vapour seemed to arise from where he had descended, spread itself over him and seemed to drag him down with it.

Hamlet's friends now came back and swore upon the sword. The old mole was so busy underground that wherever they might be standing he called out ever just beneath them : " Swear," and they, as if the ground beneath them was burning, hurried from one place to another. There also appeared, where they were standing at each time, a small flame out of the ground. This increased the effect and left upon the spectators a profound impression.

The play now proceeded on its way smoothly ; nothing went wrong ; everything came off ; the audience showed its satisfaction ; the pleasure and the spirit of the actors seemed to increase with every scene.

CHAPTER XII

THE curtain fell and the most lively applause rang out from every corner of the house. The four princely corpses sprang aloft and embraced each other with joy ; Polonius and Ophelia

also came forth from their graves, and listened with great pleasure as Horatio stepped forwards to announce the next piece and was greeted with most vigorous cheers. The public wanted to have no announcement of another play, but violently desired the repetition of the present piece.

" Now we have won," said Serlo, " but not another word of reason this evening. Everything depends on the first impression ; one must not take it ill of any actor if, on the occasion of his first performance, he is cautious and self-willed."

The cashier came and handed over a heavy sum. " We have made a good start," he said, " and prejudice will stand us in good stead. But where is now the supper we were promised ? This evening we should be allowed to relish it."

They had agreed that they should remain in their theatrical costumes and celebrate a feast among themselves. Wilhelm had undertaken to find the place and Frau Melina to provide the food.

A room, which was otherwise occupied by painters, was cleaned up as well as possible, and surrounded with small decorations and so set off, that it looked half like a garden, half like a colonnade. On entering therein, the company were blinded by the glitter of many lights which, through the vapour of the sweetest perfumes, of which they had been lavish, spread a solemn appearance over a well-adorned and well-furnished table. These preparations were praised with loud exclamations, and places were taken with a certain dignity ; it seemed as though a royal family had come together in the Kingdom of Spirits. Wilhelm sat between Aurelia and Frau Melina ; Serlo between Philine and Melina ; nobody was dissatisfied with himself or his place.

The two theatrical amateurs who had likewise been present increased the pleasure of the company. During the performance they had several times come to the stage, and they could not sufficiently express the satisfaction which both they and the public felt ; now they descended to particulars, everyone was nobly rewarded for his part.

With incredible vivacity they extolled the merit of one after another, and passage after passage of the play.

To the prompter, who sat modestly at the bottom of the table, great praise was accorded for his " rugged Pyrrhus " ;

the fencing of Hamlet and Laertes could not be praised sufficiently ; Ophelia's mourning was beautiful and elevated beyond all expression ; of Polonius's acting they dared not speak ; everyone present heard his own praise in the other and through him.

But the absent Ghost, too, carried off his share of praise and admiration. He had spoken his part with a very fortunate voice and in a lofty manner, but what was most surprising he seemed to have been instructed in all that had passed in the company. He was as completely like the painted picture as if he had sat to the artist, and the two dramatic amateurs could not sufficiently extol how terrible it had looked when he had entered not far from the picture and stepped before his own image. Truth and error were mingled in so marvellous a way that they were really convinced the Queen did not see the Ghost. Frau Melina was particularly praised on this occasion, because she had gazed upwards at the picture while Hamlet turned downwards to the Ghost.

They enquired how the Ghost could have entered. They learnt from the stage manager that a back door, which otherwise was always concealed by decorations, had this evening been left open, as the Gothic hall was used ; that two tall figures in white cloaks and cowls, who could not be distinguished from one another, had entered by this way and so probably they had gone out at the end of the third act. Serlo especially praised the Ghost because he had not lamented like a tailor, and indeed to fire his son with enthusiasm had introduced a passage at the end which was more suited to so great a hero. Wilhelm kept it in his memory and promised to add it to his manuscript.

In the enjoyment of the festival it had not been noticed that the children and Harper were missing ; but they soon made a very pleasant appearance. For they came in together most fantastically adorned. Felix was beating a triangle, Mignon a tambourine, and the old man had his heavy harp hung round him and played it as he carried it before him. They went round the table and sang all kinds of songs. They were given things to eat, and the guests imagined they showed great kindness to the children in giving them as much sweet wine as they wished to drink. For the company had not been sparing of costly wine, which that evening had arrived in baskets as a present from the two dramatic amateurs. The children continued jumping and

singing and, in particular, Mignon was frolicsome as one had never seen her before. She beat the tambourine with all possible delicacy and vivacity, now with her fingers pressed upon the parchment she swiftly hummed across it to and fro, now she struck it with the back of her hand, now with her knuckles ; indeed, with changing rhythms she struck it now against her knee, now against her head and now, shaking it, she let the bells jingle by themselves, and so from the simplest instrument she drew forth a great variety of tones. After she and Felix had been noisy for a long time, they sat down on an easy-chair which remained empty at the table exactly opposite Wilhelm.

" Keep away from the chair," cried Serlo ; " it is there, I imagine, for the Ghost ; and if he comes it will be bad for you."

" I am not afraid of him," cried Mignon ; " if he comes, we can get up. He is my uncle and does me no harm." No one comprehended this speech save those who knew that she had called her reputed father the Great Devil.

The company looked at one another, and were still more confirmed in their suspicion that Serlo knew about the appearance of the Ghost. They chattered and drank, and the girls glanced fearfully from time to time towards the door.

The children sitting in the large chair stood out over the table like puppets from their box. In this fashion they began to perform a play. Mignon imitated their rattling tone very neatly, and at last they knocked their heads together and on the corner of the table in a way that only wooden puppets could endure. Mignon became frenzied in her gaiety, and the company, much as they had at first laughed over the joke, at last had to put a stop to it. But persuasion was of little use, for she now sprang up and raced round the table with the tambourine in her hand. Her hair flying behind her, with her head thrown back and all her limbs cast, as it were, into the air, she seemed like one of the Maenads whose wild and almost impossible postures on antique monuments still often strike us with astonishment.

Stimulated by the talents of the children and their uproar, everyone endeavoured to contribute something to the entertainment of the company. The ladies sang some " canons," Laertes whistled like a nightingale, and the Pedant gave a *concert pianissimo* on the Jew's harp. Meanwhile those of both sexes who sat **near one** another played **all** kinds of games, in which hands met

and crossed and some pairs did not lack an expression of hopeful tenderness. Frau Melina in particular made no secret of a lively inclination towards Wilhelm. It was late at night, and Aurelia, who almost alone of the party retained her self-possession, stood up and advised the others to separate.

As a termination to their proceedings Serlo gave a firework, imitating with his mouth the sound of rockets, crackers and Catherine wheels in an almost indescribable manner. You had only to shut your eyes and the deception was complete. Meantime they had all got up ; the men gave their arms to the ladies to escort them home. Wilhelm walked last with Aurelia. On the stairs the stage manager met them and said, " Here is the veil in which the Ghost vanished. It remained hanging to the place where he sank and we have just found it."

" A remarkable relic," cried Wilhelm, and took it away.

At that moment he felt his arm grasped and at the same time a smart pain. Mignon had hidden herself, had seized him and bitten his arm. She went past him down the stairs and disappeared.

When the company came into the open air, almost all of them noticed that they had enjoyed the good things of that evening too liberally. Wilhelm taking leave they lost one another.

Wilhelm had scarcely reached his room when he threw off his clothes, and putting out the light hastened to bed. Sleep at once overpowered him; but a noise, which seemed in his room to arise behind the stove, made him watchful. There hovered before his heated imagination the image of the King in harness. He sat upright to address the Ghost when he felt himself encircled with tender arms, his mouth shut with lively kisses and a bosom against his which he had not the force to push away.

CHAPTER XIII

WILHELM, the next morning, started up with an uncomfortable feeling and found his bed empty. His head was still dim with the noise which he had not quite slept off, and the recollection of the unknown nightly visit made him restless. His first suspicion fell upon Philine, and yet the loving person whom he had held fast in his arms did not seem to be she. Amid lively caresses our friend had fallen asleep by the side of this

singular, speechless visitant, and now no trace of it was to be discovered. He sprang up, and while he dressed he found his door, which usually he was wont to bolt, was only ajar, and he could not remember whether he had shut it the previous evening.

But the most remarkable thing seemed to him to be the Ghost's veil, which he found on his bed. He had brought it upstairs with him and had probably himself thrown it there. It was of gray gauze ; on the edge of it he noticed an inscription embroidered with black letters. He unfolded it and read the words : " For the first and last time ! Fly, Youth ! Fly ! " He was struck by this and did not know what he should say. Just at that moment Mignon came in and brought him breakfast. Wilhelm was astonished at the sight of the child, indeed one could say he was alarmed. She seemed during the night to have grown taller ; she came before him with a lofty, noble demeanour and looked him earnestly in the face, so that he could not endure her glance. She did not touch him as at other times, when usually she would press his hand, kiss his cheeks, his mouth, his arm or his shoulders, but she departed in silence after she had put his things in order. The time for the appointed rehearsal now arrived ; they assembled together, and all, owing to the festival of the previous day, were put out of humour. Wilhelm pulled himself together as well as he could, so as not to violate at the outset the principles which he had preached with so much vigour. His great practice in the matter helped him through, for practice and habit must in every art fill up the gaps which genius and mood will so often leave.

But really on this occasion we must find the remark very true that no one should begin with a festival any condition which is to last long, particularly when it is a trade or way of living. We should only celebrate what has been happily accomplished ; all ceremonies at the beginning exhaust the pleasure and force which should bring forth the struggle and support us in a long-continued toil. Of all festivals, that of marriage seems the most unsuitable ; no ceremony should be undertaken more in quiet, humility and hope.

So the day passed on and never had one seemed to Wilhelm so dull. Instead of their accustomed conversation in the evening they began to yawn, the interest in *Hamlet* was exhausted and they found it rather inconvenient that the play had to be per-

formed for the second time the following day. Wilhelm showed the veil of the Ghost, from which it was concluded he would not come again. Serlo, in particular, was of this opinion ; he seemed to be closely entrusted with the plans of this remarkable being. On the other hand, the words " Fly ! Youth ! Fly ! " could not be explained. How could Serlo be in agreement with anyone who seemed to have the intention of taking away the finest actor of his company ?

It was now necessary to give the part of the Ghost to the Blusterer, and that of the King to the Pedant. Both declared that they had already well studied the part, and no wonder ; for with so many rehearsals and extensive treatment of this play, they were all of them so well acquainted with it that they could easily have interchanged their parts. However, they rehearsed a little in haste, and when they parted at a late hour, Philine whispered softly to Wilhelm on parting : " I must get my slippers ; don't bolt the door." These words, when he reached his room, put him into some embarrassment, for the conjecture that the guest of the preceding evening was Philine was thereby confirmed, and we are forced to fall in with this idea, especially as the causes cannot be discovered which made him doubtful and aroused in him another and strange suspicion—that it was Mignon. Her behaviour, previously described, is against such a conjecture. He walked up and down his room restlessly, and had not yet bolted the door.

All at once Mignon burst into the room, seized hold of him and cried, " Master ! save the house ! It is burning ! "

Wilhelm sprang before the door and a strong smoke oppressed him, coming down from the upper storey. In the street he already heard the cry of " Fire ! " and the Harper with his instrument in his hand came downstairs, breathless owing to the smoke. Aurelia burst out of her room and threw the little Felix into Wilhelm's arms.

" Save the child ! " she cried. " We will get hold of the rest."

Wilhelm, who did not believe the danger was so great, thought first to penetrate to the origin of the fire so as perhaps to stifle it at the outset. He gave the child to the old man, ordering him to hurry down the stone spiral staircase which by a small garden-vault led into the garden, and to stay with **the children** out of doors. Mignon **took** a candle to **light him**.

Wilhelm thereupon begged Aurelia to save her things in this way. He, himself, pressed upwards through the smoke, but it was in vain that he exposed himself to danger. The flame seemed to issue from the neighbouring house, and had already got hold of the woodwork of the floor and a light staircase ; others who had hastened to the rescue suffered as he did from the smoke and fire. However, he encouraged them and called for water ; he conjured them to give way to the flame only step by step, and promised to remain with them. At this moment Mignon sprang up and cried, " Master, save your Felix ! The old man is mad ! He is killing him ! " Wilhelm, without thinking what he was doing, sprang downstairs and Mignon followed close behind.

On the last steps which led into the garden vault he stood still with horror. Great bundles of straw and brushwood which had been heaped up there were burning with a clear flame. Felix lay on the ground and cried ; the old man stood sideways with his head lowered, leaning against the wall. " What are you doing, unhappy fellow ? " cried Wilhelm. The old man kept silence. Mignon had lifted up Felix and carried him into the garden with some trouble, while Wilhelm endeavoured to pull apart the fire and to extinguish it, but by so doing he only increased the force and violence of the flames. At last he, too, had to fly into the garden with burnt eyelashes and hair, tearing the old man along with him, who followed him unwillingly with singed beard.

Wilhelm hurried immediately to look for the children in the garden. On the threshold of a remote summer-house he found them, and Mignon did all that she could to quiet the little one. Wilhelm took him on his lap, questioned him, felt him, but could not get any coherent account from either of the children.

Meantime the fire had fiercely seized several houses and illuminated the whole neighbourhood. Wilhelm looked at the child by the red light of the flame ; he could perceive no wound or blood or swelling of any kind. He examined him all over his body ; he gave no sign of pain, rather by degrees grew more calm, began to wonder at the flames and to take delight in the sight of rafters and beams burning in order, and so beautifully like an illumination. Wilhelm did not think of his clothes and of the things he might have lost ; he felt deeply of what great value to him were these two human creatures whom he had

rescued from so great a danger. He pressed the little one to his heart with quite a new emotion and wished to embrace Mignon with joyful tenderness ; this she gently put aside, but took him by the hand and held it fast.

" Master," said she (never till this evening had she given him this name, for at first she used to call him " Sir," and afterwards " Father "), " Master, we have escaped from a great danger ; your Felix was almost dead."

By much questioning Wilhelm at last gathered that the Harper, when they had got into the vault, tore the light out of her hand and immediately set fire to the straw. Thereupon he had thrown down Felix, laid his hands on the child's head with strange gestures and drawn a knife, as if he wished to sacrifice him. That she sprang forward, tore the knife out of his hand. She had shrieked and someone from the house, bringing things to the garden to be saved, came to her assistance ; but in the confusion he must have gone away again, leaving the old man and the child alone.

Two or three houses were now enveloped in flames. No one had been able to take shelter in the garden owing to the conflagration in the vault. Wilhelm felt embarrassed because of his friends, less so on account of his own property. He could not trust himself to leave the children and save the mischief ever increasing. He passed some hours in a state of anxiety. Felix had gone to sleep on his lap ; Mignon lay near him and held his hand tightly. At length the necessary arrangements had got the fire under. The burnt-out houses sank down together. The morning came along, the children began to feel the cold, and for him in his night clothing the falling dew became intolerable. He brought the children to the ruins of the fallen building, and they found near the heaps of ashes and embers a very grateful warmth.

The breaking day now by degrees brought all the friends and acquaintances together. Everyone was saved, nobody had lost much.

Wilhelm's trunk was also found again, and Serlo, when it was nearly ten o'clock, pressed them to a rehearsal of *Hamlet*—at least of some of the scenes which were to be taken by new actors. Thereupon he had some dispute with the police. The clergy desired that after such a judgment of God the theatre should remain closed, but Serlo maintained that, partly as compensation

for what he had lost that night, and partly to exhilarate the frightened spirits of the people, the performance of an interesting play was more than ever in place. This last opinion prevailed, and the house was full. The actors played with exceptional fire and with more of a passionate freedom than the first time. The feelings of the audience had been elevated by the terrible scenes of the previous night, and through the tedium of a wasted and dissipated day were more keen about an interesting entertainment and had more susceptibility for what is extraordinary. The greater part of the spectators were new, drawn thither by the fame of the play, and could make no comparison with the previous evening. The Blusterer acted quite in the style of the unknown Ghost ; the Pedant, too, had well grasped the manner of his predecessor ; besides, his own pitiable condition stood him in good stead, so that Hamlet did not seem to be wrong when, in spite of his purple cloak and ermine collar, he called him a " king of shreds and patches."

No one perhaps had reached the throne in a more singular manner than he had done. Although the others, and particularly Philine, made for themselves great sport about his new dignity, he let it be noted that the Count, who was a great connoisseur, had predicted this of him and much more at first sight ; on the other hand, Philine advised him to be humble, saying that she would occasionally powder the sleeves of his coat, that he might remember that unfortunate night in the castle and wear his crown with modesty.

CHAPTER XIV

THE company had looked around for lodgings in great haste, and so they were very much scattered. Wilhelm had taken a fancy for the summer-house in the garden where he had spent the night of the fire ; he obtained the key without difficulty and settled himself down there, but Aurelia in her new abode was very much restricted. He was obliged to keep Felix by him, and Mignon would not leave the boy.

The children had been put into a nice room on the first floor. Wilhelm had settled himself in the lower parlour. The children slept, but he could find no rest.

Near to the charming garden, which the full moon which had just risen splendidly illuminated, stood the melancholy ruins from which smoke was still rising here and there. The air was pleasant and the night exceptionally beautiful. Philine, in going out of the theatre, had touched him with her elbow and whispered some words to him which he had not understood. He was perplexed and annoyed, and did not know what he was to expect or to do. For some days Philine had avoided him, and it was only this evening that she had given him any signal. Unfortunately the door, which he was not to bolt, was burnt through and the little slippers had disappeared in smoke. How the fair one could get into the garden, if such were her intention, he did not know. He did not want to see her, and yet he would have been very glad to have had an explanation with her.

But what lay more heavily on his heart was the fate of the Harper, who had not been seen again by anyone since the fire. Wilhelm was afraid that in the general clearance they would find him dead beneath the rubbish. Wilhelm had concealed from everyone the suspicion which he entertained that the Harper had been the author of the fire. For the old man came first to meet them from the burning and smoking floor, and his despair in the garden vault seemed to be the consequence of some such unfortunate deed. However, from the enquiry which the police had instituted, it seemed probable that the fire had not originated in the house where they lived, but in the third house from theirs, and had crept along beneath the roofs.

Sitting in an arbour, Wilhelm considered everything when he heard someone stealing by in a neighbouring walk. By the melancholy song which was started, he recognized the Harper. The song which he was very well able to understand contained the consolation of an unfortunate man who felt himself very near to insanity. Unfortunately, Wilhelm only remembered the last verse :

Whereso'er my steps may lead me,
Meekly at the door I'll stay ;
Pious hands will come to feed me
And I'll wander on my way.
Each will feel a touch of gladness
When my aged form appears,
Each will shed a tear of sadness,
Though I reckon not of his tears.

Amid these words he came to the gardens which led into an unfrequented street. As he found it closed, he wanted to climb over the railing, but Wilhelm held him back and spoke to him in a kindly way. The old man besought him to open the door, because he would and must escape. Wilhelm represented to him that he could come out of the garden but not out of the town, and showed him how, by such a step, he would lay himself open to suspicion ; but in vain. The old man kept by his opinion. Wilhelm did not give way, and partly by force pushed him into the garden house, shut himself in along with him and brought on a remarkable conversation which we will rather be silent about than communicate in detail, so as not to torment our readers with disconnected ideas and anxious feelings.

CHAPTER XV

FROM the perplexity in which Wilhelm found himself as to what to do with the unfortunate old man who showed clear signs of insanity, Laertes delivered him on that very morning. He, as was usual with him, camped about everywhere. At the coffee-house he had seen a man, who a short time before suffered from the most violent attack of melancholy. He had been entrusted to the care of a country clergyman who made it a special business to treat such people. In this case, too, he had succeeded ; he was still in the town and the friends of him who had been restored to health showed him great honour.

Wilhelm at once hastened to find out the man, entrusted the case to him and came to an agreement. Under certain pretexts the Harper was to be handed over to him. The separation distressed Wilhelm deeply, and only the hope of seeing him restored to health could make this feeling tolerable for him ; he was so accustomed to seeing the man about him and hearing his spirited and moving strains. The harp had been also burnt ; they found another for him and gave it him on the journey.

The fire had also consumed Mignon's small wardrobe, and when they wished to provide her with new clothes, Aurelia proposed that they should now at last dress her as a girl.

" No, not at all ! " cried Mignon, and with great vivacity insisted on having her old attire, so that they had to give way to her.

The company had not much time for consideration. The performances took their course ; Wilhelm often listened with the audience, and but seldom did there come to him a voice such as he wished to hear ; indeed, he often heard that which troubled and vexed him. For example, shortly after the first performance of *Hamlet*, a young man with great animation was telling how pleased he had been that evening in the playhouse. Wilhelm listened and, to his shame, heard that the young man, for the annoyance of those behind him, had kept his hat on, and had stubbornly refused to take it off throughout the whole play ; on this heroic deed he looked back with the greatest pleasure. Another assured him that he had played the part of Laertes very well ; on the other hand, they could not feel so satisfied with the actors who had undertaken *Hamlet*. This confession was not quite unnatural, for Wilhelm and Laertes were like one another, though in a very distant manner. A third person praised his acting more heartily, particularly in the scene with his mother, only regretting that in this fiery moment a white ribbon had peeped out below the waistcoat, by which the illusion was entirely spoilt.

Meanwhile within the company all manner of changes were taking place. Philine, since the evening after the fire, had not given Wilhelm the slightest sign of intimacy. She had, as it seemed on purpose, hired a remote lodging, lived with Elmira, came rarely to Serlo, which gave Aurelia great satisfaction. Serlo, who always continued friendly to her, often visited her, particularly when he hoped to find Elmira with her, and one evening he took Wilhelm with him. Both, on entering, were astonished to see Philine in an adjoining room in the arms of a young officer who had on a red uniform with white trousers ; they could not see his face as it was turned away. Philine came to meet her visitors in the front room, and shut the door of the other. " You surprise me in the midst of a remarkable adventure," she exclaimed.

" It is not so remarkable," said Serlo. " Let us have a look at the handsome, young, enviable friend. You have, besides, so trained us that we should not dare to be jealous."

" I must leave you with this suspicion for a time," said Philine jokingly. " However, I can assure you that the young man is only one of my lady friends who wishes to stay here with me

a few days, while remaining undiscovered. You shall hear of her fate later on, indeed perhaps you may get to know the interesting young girl herself, and then I shall probably have reason to practise my discretion and indulgence, for I am afraid you gentlemen, with your new acquaintance, will forget your old friend."

Wilhelm stood as if petrified, for at once the red uniform at the first glance reminded him of the red coat of Mariana he loved so dearly. It was her figure, her fair hair, only the officer before him seemed a little taller.

"For heaven's sake," cried he, "let us know more of your friend; let us see the young girl who is disguised. We are now partakers of the secret; we will promise, we will swear, but let us see the young girl."

"Oh, how he is on fire," cried Philine; "only keep calm, only be patient, nothing will come of it to-day."

"Let us know her name," cried Wilhelm.

"That would be then a fine secret," replied Philine.

"Only her Christian name at least."

"If you guess it, I agree. You may have three guesses, but no more; otherwise you might lead me through the whole calendar."

"All right," said Wilhelm. "Cecilia, then?"

"None of your Cecilians."

"Henrietta?"

"Not at all! be careful, your curiosity will have to sleep it off."

Wilhelm hesitated and trembled; he wanted to open his mouth, but his speech forsook him. "Mariana," at last he stammered. "Mariana?"

"Bravo!" cried Philine, "you have hit it!" While, as was her wont, she turned round on her heel.

Wilhelm could not utter a word, and Serlo, not noticing his emotion, continued to press Philine to open the door.

How astounded were they both when Wilhelm all at once vehemently interrupted their chaff, threw himself at Philine's feet, and with the loveliest expression of passion besought and conjured her. "Let me see the young girl," he cried. "She is mine, she is my Mariana! It is she for whom I have yearned all the days of my life. She it is who is more to me than all the

women in the world. At least go in to her and say that I am here, that the man is here who united to her his first love and the whole happiness after youth. He will justify himself for leaving her unkindly, he will ask her pardon, he will forgive her for her failings towards him, he will even make no more claims upon her if he can only once more see her, if he may but see that she is alive and happy."

Philine shook her head and said, " My friend, speak gently ! Do not betray us. If the lady is indeed your friend we must spare her feelings, for she does not in the least expect to see you here. Quite different matters bring her here, and that you too know ; one would rather see a spectre before one's eyes than an old lover at an inconvenient time. I will ask her, I will prepare her and we will consider what is to be done. I will write you a note to-morrow, saying when you can come, or whether you may come at all. Obey me punctually ! for I swear that against my will and hers, no one shall see this lovable creature. I shall keep my doors better shut, and you will not visit me with axe and hatchet."

Wilhelm conjured her, Serlo begged her, but in vain. Both friends had at last to give way and vacate the room and the house.

Anyone can imagine what a restless night Wilhelm passed. How slowly the hours of the day dragged on while he awaited Philine's note, can be understood. Unfortunately, he had to act the same evening ; he had never before endured greater mental pain. When the play was over he hurried to Philine without even enquiring whether he had been invited. He found her door shut and the people of the house told him that Made-moiselle had gone off early in the morning with a young officer. She had, indeed, said that she would come back in a few days, but they did not believe it, as she had paid everything and had taken her things with her.

Wilhelm was beside himself with the news. He hurried off to Laertes and proposed to him to set out after her and, cost what it might, to obtain certainty about her attendant. Laertes, on the other hand, rebuked his friend's passion and credulity. " I will bet," he said, " it is no one else but Freidrich. The young fellow is of a good family, he is madly in love with Philine and he has probably abstracted from his relatives enough money

to enable him to live again with her for some time. By these remonstrances Wilhelm was not convinced, yet he felt in doubt. Laertes represented to him how impossible the story was which Philine had played off to them, how the figure and hair would very well correspond with Freidrich's, how with a twelve hours' start they could not easily be overtaken and, above all, that Serlo could not do without either of them at the play.

By all these reasons Wilhelm was at last brought to the point of giving up the idea of pursuing them. On the same night Laertes was able to get hold of a capable man to whom the task of pursuing them could be entrusted. He was a steady man who had served as courier and guide to parties when travelling, and was just now without employment. They gave him money, instructed him in the whole affair with the commission of finding out and overtaking the fugitives and not letting them out of his sight, and at once informing our friends where and how he had found them. At that very hour he mounted on horseback and rode after the dubious pair, and Wilhelm by this arrangement was in some degree tranquillized.

CHAPTER XVI

THE withdrawal of Philine made no striking sensation either in the theatre or with the public. With her nothing was ever serious ; the women detested her absolutely, and the men rather liked to see her *tite-a-tete* than in the theatre. And so her fine and happy talent for the stage was lost. The other members of the company gave themselves in consequence more trouble ; in particular, Frau Melina much distinguished herself by her diligence and attention. She took note, as formerly, of Wilhelm's principles, directed herself according to his theory and his example, and she had of late something in her nature which made her more interesting. She soon obtained a correct mode of playing, and acquired completely the natural tone of conversation and that of emotion up to a certain degree. She knew how to fit in with Serlo's moods and devoted herself to singing for his pleasure, and soon got on so well that she was wanted for social converse.

By the arrival of some new players the company became

more complete, and while Wilhelm and Serlo each worked in his own way, the former laid stress on the general tone and spirit of the whole in each play; the latter conscientiously elaborated the individual parts, a laudable zeal also inspired the actors and the public took a lively interest in their doings.

"We are on the right road," said Serlo once, "and if we so continue, the public too will soon be on the right path. Men are easily confused by wild and unskilful performances, but if one lays before them what is rational and suitable in an interesting way, they will without doubt catch on to it. The chief defect of our German theatre, by reason of which neither actor nor spectator can come to a sound view, is that it has too variegated an outlook on the whole, and that there are no boundaries on which one's judgment can be propped. It seems to me no advantage to have expanded our stage into, as it were, an infinite arena for the whole of nature, yet neither a manager nor actor can now contract it until perchance the taste of the nation shall hereafter mark out the correct circle. Every good society exists only on certain conditions, and so, too, must every good theatre. Certain manners and modes of speech, certain objects and ways of behaving, must be excluded. One is not any poorer if one limits one's household expenditure.

They were here more or less united or at variance. Wilhelm and the majority were in favour of the English theatre, Serlo and some others were for the French. They agreed that in vacant hours, of which an actor unfortunately has so many, they should go through together the most famous plays of both theatres and observe what was best in them and most worthy of imitation. They actually made a start with some French plays. Aurelia always went away as soon as the reading began. At first they thought she was unwell, but once it occurred to Wilhelm to question her about it.

"I will not be present at any of these readings," she said, "for how can I listen and judge when my heart is rent in twain? I detest the French language from the bottom of my soul."

"How can you be hostile to a language," exclaimed **Wilhelm**, "to which we Germans are indebted for the greater part of our culture, and to which we must be still more indebted if our natural qualities are to acquire a suitable form?"

" It is no prejudice," replied Aurelia ; " an unhappy impression, a hateful recollection of my faithless friend, has robbed me of all pleasure in that beautiful and cultivated language. How I hate it now with my whole heart. During the time of our friendly union he wrote in German, and what a heartfelt, true, forcible German ! Now, when he wished to be free from me, he began to write in French which previously he had sometimes done only in fun. I felt, I noticed what it was intended to mean. That which he blushed to utter in his mother tongue he could now write with a good conscience. It is a fine language for equivocation, *double-entendre* and lies ; it is a perfidious language ! I find, thank God, no German word to express in all its compass this ' perfide ' of theirs. Our poor ' faithless ' is an innocent child by comparison. ' Perfid ' means faithless with pleasure, with insolence and malice. Oh, the culture of a nation is enviable which knows how to express so many shades of meaning in one word ! French is rightly the language of the world, worthy of being the universal language, so that all may have it in their power to deceive and betray one another ! His French letters were always well enough to read. If one wished to imagine it, they sounded warm and even passionate, yet looked at closely they were but phrases, accursed phrases. He has destroyed for me all pleasure in that language, in French literature, even in the beautiful and exquisite expression of noble souls in their speech. I shudder when I hear a French word ! "

In this way she could continue for hours on end to show her depression, interrupting or spoiling every other kind of conversation. Sooner or later Serlo put an end to these ill-humoured utterances with some bitterness, but as a rule the talk for that evening was destroyed.

Above all, it is unfortunately the case that everything which has to be produced by a number of co-operative men and circumstances cannot for long maintain itself perfect. Of a theatrical company as well as of a kingdom, of a circle of friends as well as of an army, there is usually a moment when they are standing on the highest pinnacle of their perfection, their harmony, their contentment and activity ; but the individuals quickly change, new members arrive, the persons are no longer suited to the circumstances, or the circumstances to the persons ; everything becomes

different, and what was formerly united now soon falls to pieces. This we could say of Serlo's company, that for a time it was as complete as any German company could boast of being. Most actors stood in their proper places ; all had enough to do and all were glad to do what there was to do. Their personal conditions were good enough, and each seemed to promise great things in his art because each made the first steps with animation and liveliness. But it soon appeared that a part of them were only automaton who could only attain to that which could be reached without feeling ; and before long, passions arose among them which usually stand in the way of every sound arrangement, and easily distort everything which reasonable and sensible men wish to keep united.

Philine's departure was not so unimportant as was at first thought. She had with great skill known how to entertain Serlo and to charm the others more or less. She put up with Aurelia's violence with great patience, and her special business had been to flatter Wilhelm. So she acted as a bond of union for the whole, and her loss soon made itself felt.

Serlo could not live without some small love affair. Elmira had in a short time grown up, and one could almost say had become beautiful. She had already for some time attracted his attention, and Philine, when she observed this passion, was clever enough to favour it. " We should train ourselves in time," she used to say, " to the business of match-making, for nothing else remains for us when we are old." By this means Serlo and Elmira had come near to one another so that after Philine's departure they were soon united, and the small romance interested them both all the more, as they had every reason to keep it secret from the old man who did not understand any jokes about such an irregularity. Elmira's sister was in the secret, and Serlo had therefore to overlook many things in both of them. One of their greatest bad habits was an immoderate love of dainty things, or, if you will, an intolerable greediness, in which they were in no way like Philine, who thereby had a new aspect of lovingness, that she seemed only to live on air, ate very little and merely skimming off the froth from a glass of champagne with the greatest delicacy.

But now Serlo, if he wished to please his fair one, had to combine breakfast with dinner, and by an afternoon meal to

connect supper with this. At the same time Serlo had a plan, the carrying out of which disturbed him. He thought he discovered a certain affection between Wilhelm and Aurelia, and he very much wished that it might become serious. He hoped to cast the whole mechanical part of the theatrical economy on Wilhelm's shoulders, and to find in him, as in his former brother-in-law, a faithful and industrious tool. He had already by degrees, without its being noticed, shifted over to him the larger part of the management. Aurelia kept the cash-box, and Serlo lived again as he had done before entirely in his own way. There was, however, something which annoyed him as well as his sister.

The public has a special way of proceeding towards well-known men of acknowledged merit. It begins gradually to be indifferent to them and to favour talents which are *new*, though inferior ; on the former it makes exaggerated demands, and lets anything from the latter please it.

Serlo and Aurelia had sufficient opportunity for reflecting upon this. The new arrivals, especially the young and handsome, had drawn to themselves the whole attention and applause, while the brother and sister, after their most zealous efforts, had to make their exits without the welcome sound of clapping of hands. This, no doubt, was due to some special causes. Aurelia's pride was striking, and many knew of her contempt for the public. Serlo indeed flattered everyone individually, but his cutting speeches about the whole were often put about and repeated. The new members, on the other hand, were partly strangers and unknown ; some of them young, amiable, and wanting help, and therefore all of them had found patrons.

Now there soon arose internal unrest and much discontent, for they had scarcely noticed that Wilhelm had taken over the business of manager, when most of the actors began to be all the more disobliging when, in his way, he wanted to bring in more order and accuracy throughout and, in particular, insisted that everything mechanical should, before all things, be carried out with precision and regularity.

In a short time the whole concern, which actually for a time had maintained itself almost ideally, became so vulgar as one could only meet with in a travelling company. And, unfortunately, at the moment when Wilhelm by labour, diligence and

effort had made himself acquainted with all the requirements of the profession and had cultivated his own person and his activities to that end, it seemed to him at last in hours of melancholy that this craft, less than any other, deserved the necessary expenditure of time and talent. The business was burdensome and the recompense was small. He would rather have undertaken a different one in which, when it is finished, peace of mind can be enjoyed, than this in which, after undergoing mechanical drudgery, the end of one's activity can only be reached by the highest effort of thought and emotion. He had to listen to Aurelia's complaints of her brother's wastefulness ; he had to turn the blind eye to Serlo's winks when the latter tried to lead him from afar to a marriage with his sister. He had, besides, to hide his own grief which laid heavy on his heart, because the messenger whom he had sent after the ambiguous officer had not returned and nothing was to be heard of him, and our friend had therefore to fear that his Mariana was lost to him a second time.

Just at this time there occurred a public mourning which necessitated their closing the theatre for some weeks. Wilhelm seized upon this interval to visit that clergyman with whom the Harper was lodging. He found him in a pleasant neighbourhood, and the first thing he observed in the parsonage was the old man teaching a boy to play on his instrument. He seemed greatly delighted at seeing Wilhelm again, held out his hand, and said, " You see I am still of some use in the world ; permit me to continue, for my lessons are distributed."

The clergyman greeted Wilhelm in the most friendly manner, and told him that the old man was promising well and that there were hopes of his complete recovery.

Their conversation naturally turned on the method of treating the insane. " Apart from physical disorders," said the clergyman, " which often place insuperable difficulties in the way, and for which I take the advice of a wise physician, I find the means of curing insanity very simple. They are the same by which you prevent healthy people from becoming insane. Their activity has to be aroused, accustom them to order, get them to understand that they hold their being and their fate in common with so many, that extraordinary talent, the greatest happiness and the deepest misery are only slight variations from the customary lot ; so no insanity will creep in, and if it does, it will gradually

disappear. I have divided out the old man's hours : he gives lessons to some children on the harp ; he helps with work in the garden and is already much more cheerful. He wishes to enjoy the cabbages which he plants, and he wishes with assiduity to instruct my son, to whom he has bequeathed his harp in case of death, so that the boy too may be able to use it. As a clergyman I endeavour to say but little about his remarkable scruples, but an active life brings with it so many incidents that he must soon feel how true it is that every kind of doubt can be removed by activity. I go to work gently, but if I could only get rid of his beard and cowl, I should reckon I had gained much ; for we are brought nearer to insanity when we distinguish ourselves from others, and nothing helps so much to maintain our common sense as living with many people in the universal way. Alas ! how much there is in our education and in our civic institutions by which we and our children are prepared for madness."

Wilhelm stayed some days with this intelligent man, heard from him the most interesting stories, not only of men who were insane, but also of such who one was accustomed to regard as clever and wise, but who had peculiarities which bordered on insanity.

But the conversation become doubly animated when the doctor appeared upon the scene and often visited his friend the clergyman, and assisted him in his philanthropic labours. He was an elderly man, who, though weak in health, had passed many years in the practice of the noblest duties. He was a strong advocate of life in the country, and could scarcely live except in the open air. With that he was extremely sociable and active, and for many years had a special inclination to making friends with all country clergymen. He endeavoured in every way to help those whom he knew to have any useful occupation ; others who were still unsettled he tried to persuade to have an inclination for doing something. As he was at the same time in connection with noblemen, magistrates and judges, he had in the space of twenty years contributed in secret very much to the cultivation of many branches of husbandry, and he had set in motion everything that might be beneficial to agriculture, animals and men, and had so forwarded the truest kind of enlightenment. "For man," he used to say, "there is only one misfortune : when some idea gets fixed upon him which exerts no influence

upon active life or still more withdraws him from it. I have," he said, "at present such a case before me; it has to do with a rich and noble pair, where up to the present my art has been entirely unsuccessful. The case almost belongs to your department, my worthy Doctor, and this young man will not make any further mention of it.

"In the absence of a certain nobleman the people of the house, by way of a joke which was not entirely praiseworthy, dressed up a young man in the garment of the master. His wife was to be imposed upon by this deception, and though it was told to me as only fun, I can't help fearing that there was the intention of drawing this noble and charming lady away from the path of honour. The husband comes back unexpectedly, enters the room, fancies that he sees himself; from that time he falls into a melancholy temper, in which he fosters the conviction that he will die before long. He abandons himself to people who flatter him with religious ideas, and I do not see how he is to be prevented from going with his wife among the Moravian brethren and, as he has no children, depriving his relations of the greatest part of his property "

"With his wife?" cried Wilhelm, much agitated, being greatly alarmed by this story

"And, unfortunately," replied the doctor, who regarded Wilhelm's exclamation only as a word of common sympathy, "this lady is burdened with a still deeper sorrow which makes the removal from the world not undesirable for her. Just as this young man is taking leave of her—she is not sufficiently circumspect to conceal a growing inclination towards him—he becomes bold, clasps her in his arms and presses a large portrait of her husband which was set with diamonds forcibly against her breast. She feels a violent pain which gradually passes off, leaving at first a slight redness and then no trace of it remains. As a man, I am persuaded that she has nothing further to reproach herself with; as a physician, I am certain that this pressure will not have any evil consequences. But she will not be dissuaded from thinking there is an induration there, and if by feeling one tries to undeceive her of this fancy, she maintains that it is only at this moment not to be felt. She has firmly come to imagine that this evil will end in cancer; and so her youth, her charm, are completely lost both for herself and others."

" Unfortunate that I am ! " cried Wilhelm, as he struck himself on the forehead and ran from the company into the fields. He had never yet found himself in such a condition.

The physician and the clergyman were extremely astonished at this singular discovery. In the evening when he returned they had enough to do with him, and with a detailed confession of this occurrence he accused himself in the most vehement fashion. Both men took the greatest interest in him, particularly as he painted his former condition with the gloomy colours arising from the mood of the moment.

The next day the physician, without much entreaty, agreed to go into the town to keep him company and if possible to procure help for Aurelia, whom our friend had left in rather critical circumstances.

They found her indeed worse than they had expected. She had a kind of intermittent fever which could the less be helped as, in her way, she purposely maintained and aggravated the attacks of it. The stranger was not introduced as a physician, and behaved with politeness and prudence. They spoke about the condition of her body and of her mind ; her new friend related many stories of persons who, in spite of such a morbid state, had reached a good old age, but that in such cases nothing was more harmful than the intentional recalling of passionate emotions. In particular, he did not conceal the belief that he had found that those persons who were suffering from not quite curable disorders were very fortunate when they were disposed within themselves to cherish true feelings of religion. He said this in a most modest manner and, as it were, historically ; at the same time he promised to procure for his new friends the reading of a very interesting manuscript which he had received from the hands of an excellent lady friend, now no longer living. " For me it is of infinite value, and I entrust you with the original itself. Only the title is in my handwriting : ' The Confessions of a Beautiful Soul.' "

As regards the medical and dietetic treatment of the racked and unhappy Aurelia, the physician entrusted Wilhelm with his best advice, promising to write and, if possible, himself to come again.

Meanwhile in Wilhelm's absence a change was being prepared, of which he was not aware. During the time of his

directorship he had managed the whole business with a certain freedom and liberality, looking chiefly at the main result. In particular, what was wanted in the way of costumes, decorations and such like, he had procured in a plentiful and dignified style ; and to retain the goodwill of his people he had flattered this self-interest as he could not get at them by nobler motives. He felt himself all the more justified in this, as Serlo himself never made any claim to being a strict economist ; he liked to hear the splendour of his theatre commended, and was contented if Aurelia, who managed the housekeeping, after deduction of all expenses, assured him that she had no debts and could supply as much as was necessary for clearing off the debts which Serlo meanwhile, by his exceptional liberality to his fair ones or otherwise, might have incurred.

Melina, who meanwhile had the care of the wardrobe, had been looking into the matter in his cold and mischievous manner. On the departure of Wilhelm and the increasing illness of Aurelia, he had managed to make Serlo realize that one must really get in more money and expend less, and either lay up something or that they could live at pleasure in a more festive fashion. Serlo heard this gladly and Melina was ready to risk his plan.

" I will not assert," he said, " that any of the actors at present is having too large a salary ; they are meritorious people, and they would be welcome anywhere, but for the income which they procure they are receiving too much. My proposal would be to start an opera, and as regards the theatre I must say to you : ' For establishing a complete theatre, you are just the man.'⁵ Do you not yourself observe that your merits are misjudged ? Not because your fellow-actors are excellent, but because they are merely good, they will not allow your exceptional talent to have any justice. Put yourself forward alone, as used to be the case ; look out for middling, I may say, inferior people for a small salary, startle the public with mechanical displays as you so well know how to do ; apply your remaining means to the opera, and you will see that with the same labour and the same expense you will arouse greater satisfaction and will gain greatly more money."

Serlo was so very much flattered that his objections could not have much weight. He readily confessed to Melina that with his great love for music he had long wished for something of

the kind, yet he did indeed perceive that the inclination of the public would, by this procedure, be led further astray, and with such a mixture of a theatre, which was not properly an opera nor a playhouse, what was left of taste for definite and detailed works of art must be lost completely. Melina jested in no very good taste about Wilhelm's pedantic notions in this matter, about his claim to educate the public mind instead of letting himself be educated by it. Both were agreed in the conviction that the only thing was to make money, to become rich and have a festive life, and they scarcely concealed from themselves that they wished to be rid of these people who stood in their way. Melina regretted that Aurelia's weak state of health promised no length of life, but he thought rather the opposite. Serlo seemed to complain that Wilhelm was nothing of a singer, and thereby let it be understood that he was not indispensable. Melina came forward with a whole list of economies which could be made, and in him Serlo saw his former brother-in-law replaced three-fold. They felt well that they must keep secret this conversation, and they were in consequence only the more united to one another. They took the opportunity of conversing together about everything which happened, of blaming all that Aurelia and Wilhelm undertook, and always expanding further in their thoughts their new project.

Though they both might keep silent about their plan and betrayed themselves but little in their words, they were not so wise in their behaviour as to conceal their purposes. Melina was in opposition to Wilhelm in many instances, and Serlo, who had never shown indulgence to his sister, was now more bitter as her illness increased and the more her variable and passionate humours deserved toleration.

Just about this time the *Emilie Galotti* (Lessing) was taken up. This play was very happily filled, and within the narrow circle of this tragedy they were all able to display the whole variety of their acting. Serlo, as Marinelli, was just in his right place; Odorado was very well performed. Madame Melina acted the part of the Mother with much insight; Elmira distinguished herself in the part of Emilie; Laertes appeared as Appiani with much dignity, and Wilhelm had bestowed the study of several months on the part of the Prince. On this occasion he had often handled the question both with himself

and with Serlo and Aurelia as to what is the difference between a noble and well-bred manner, and to what extent the former must be included in the latter, but not the latter in the former.

Serlo, who himself as Marinelli, represented the courtier correctly, without caricature, expressed many a good idea on this point. " Good behaviour," he said, " is difficult to imitate, because actually it is negative and presupposes a long, continuous practice. One should not in one's behaviour exhibit anything which betokens dignity, for in this way one is likely to fall into a formal and haughty manner ; one should rather avoid everything which is unworthy and vulgar. One should never forget oneself, one should have a careful regard for oneself and others. One should forgive nothing in one's own conduct, in that of others neither too much nor too little. One should not appear to be affected by anything nor disturbed. One should never be in a hurry, should know how to keep oneself composed and thus maintain an outward equilibrium, though inwardly one storms away as much as one likes. The noble character can at times give way to his feelings, the well-bred never. The latter is like a well-dressed man ; he will not lean on anything, and everyone will be careful not to rub against him. He is distinguished from others and yet he may not remain apart, for as in every art, so too in this, the most difficult thing must at length be done with ease, and so the well-bred man, in spite of all separation, must always seem united with others, never stiff, everywhere at home. He should always appear the first, and never insist on so appearing. Therefore it seems that a man in order to appear well bred, must really be so. This is why women on the average are better able to have the air of breeding than men, and why courtiers and soldiers come to it most quickly among men."

Wilhelm was now in despair about his part, but Serlo assisted him, while communicating to him the most subtle observations on individual points, and he fitted him out in such a way that at the performance he represented a very proper Prince, at least in the opinion of the public.

Serlo had promised after the performance to give him the observations which he had made about his acting, but an unpleasant quarrel between brother and sister prevented all critical conversation. Aurelia had played the part of Orsina in a way that was not likely to be seen again. She was very well acquainted

with the part, and in the rehearsals had treated it with indifference. At the performance itself she had, so to speak, opened all the sluices of her personal sorrow, and thus was a representation of a character such as no poet in the first glow of his invention could have imagined. A boundless applause from the public rewarded her painful efforts, but she was found half-fainting on a chair when she was visited after the performance was over.

Serlo had already shown his displeasure, as he was wont to do when angry, over her exaggerated acting and over the revelation of her innermost feelings before the public, which was more or less acquainted with her fatal story. He gnashed his teeth and stamped with his feet. "Leave her alone," he said, when he found her in the chair, surrounded by the others, "she will soon go stark naked on the stage and then the applause will be entirely welcome."

"Thankless, inhuman man!" she exclaimed. "Soon they will carry me naked to the place where no applause can reach our ears!" With these words she jumped up and hurried to the door. The servant had delayed in bringing her cloak and the sedan chair was not there. It had rained and there was a rough wind driving through the streets. They spoke, dissuading her in vain, for she was very much overheated. She walked slowly on purpose and praised the cool air which she seemed to inhale very eagerly. She had scarcely got home when she could hardly speak a word; she was so hoarse, but she did not admit that there was complete stiffness down her neck and back. It was not long before a kind of paralysis invaded her tongue, so that she said one word in place of another. They put her to bed. By remedies frequently applied one evil abated, while another appeared. The fever gained in strength and her condition was dangerous.

The next morning she had a quiet hour. She had Wilhelm summoned and handed over to him a letter. "This sheet," she said, "has long been waiting for this moment. I feel that the end of my life is drawing near; promise me that you will yourself deliver it, and that by my few words you will avenge my sorrows on the faithless man. He is not devoid of feeling, and at least my death should cause him pain for a moment."

Wilhelm took the letter, trying to console her and wishing to remove from her the thought of death.

"No!" she replied, "do not deprive me of my nearest hope."

I have long waited for him and shall joyfully clasp him in my arms."

Soon after that the manuscript arrived which had been promised by the physician. She implored Wilhelm to read it aloud to her. The effect which it had upon her, the reader will best be able to judge when he has made himself acquainted with the following book. The vehement and defiant temper of our poor friend at once became more gentle. She took back the letter and wrote another, as it appeared, in a milder tone. She also asked Wilhelm to console her friend if he should be distressed by the news of her death, and to assure him that she had forgiven him and wished him every kind of happiness.

From this time onwards she was very quiet, and seemed to occupy herself only with a few ideas from the manuscript which she sought to make her own, and Wilhelm had to read to her from time to time. The diminution of her powers was not visible, and it was quite unexpectedly that Wilhelm found her dead when he went to see her.

Having such a respect for her, and being accustomed to live in her society, the loss of her was very painful for him. She was the only person who really meant well with him, and the coldness of Serlo he had felt of late only too deeply. He therefore hastened to carry out the message which she had given him. He wished to be away for some time. On the other hand, his departure was very much desired by Melina, for he had, by the extensive correspondence which he undertook, come in contact with a male and female singer who, by performances in interludes, should prepare the public for the future opera. The loss of Aurelia and the retirement of Wilhelm was at first to be got over in this way, and our friend was satisfied with everything which made easier his leave of absence for a few weeks.

He had formed for himself a singularly important idea of his commission. The death of his friend had deeply moved him, and when he saw her pass so prematurely from the scene, he necessarily felt very hostile to the man who had shortened her life and made that short life so full of distress.

In spite of the last gentle words of the dying woman, he intended, on the delivery of the letter, to pass a severe judgment on the faithless friend, and as he did not wish to trust himself to the mood of the moment, he thought over an address which in

course of preparation became more pathetic than was right. After he had learnt it by heart he made preparations for his departure. While he was packing up, Mignon was present and asked him whether he was journeying south or north, and when she gathered from him that it was the latter, she said, " Then I will wait for you here again." She asked him for the pearl necklace of Mariana, which he could not refuse the dear creature ; the neckerchief she had already. On the other hand, she put the veil of the Ghost into his travelling-bag, though he told her that this could be of no use to him.

Melina took over the management and his wife promised to keep a motherly eye upon the children, from whom Wilhelm tore himself away unwillingly. Felix was very festive at the departure, and when he was asked what he would like to have brought back, he said, " Listen, bring me a father." Mignon took our departing friend by the hand. While standing on tiptoe, she pressed upon his lips a cordial kiss, full of life, but without tenderness.

And so we leave our friend to enter upon his journey amid a thousand thoughts and emotions ; and here we subjoin in conclusion a poem which Mignon had recited several times with great expression, and which we were prevented from communicating sooner by the presence of so many singular events.

O, ask me not to speak, I pray thee !
It must not be revealed but hid ;
How gladly would my tongue obey thee
Did not the voice of Fate forbid.

At his appointed time revolving,
The sun these shades of night dispels ;
The rock, its rugged breast dissolving
Gives up to earth its hidden wells.

In Friendship's arms each heart reposes ;
There soul to soul pours out its woe ;
My lips an oath for ever closes,
My sorrows God alone can know.

T. CARLYLE.

BOOK VI

THE CONFESSIONS OF A BEAUTIFUL SOUL

UP to my eighth year I was a quite healthy child, but of that period I can remember as little as the day of my birth. At the beginning of my eighth year I had a violent haemorrhage, and at that moment my soul became all feeling and memory. The slightest circumstances of this accident stand before my eyes as if they had happened yesterday.

During the nine months which I patiently endured lying on a bed of sickness, it seems to me that the basis of my whole way of thinking was laid, as the first means were then afforded to my mind of developing in its own way.

I suffered and I loved ; this was the special form of my heart. In the most violent attacks of coughing and exhausting fever I remained quiet like a snail which draws back within its house ; as soon as I had a little freedom I wanted to experience something pleasant, and as all other pleasure was denied me, I tried to keep myself harmless by the delights which come through the eye and ear. People brought me dolls and picture-books, and whoever wanted to sit on my bed had to relate something to me.

I enjoyed hearing the Bible stories from my mother ; my father entertained me with the objects of Nature. He possessed a very neat cabinet. From this, on occasion, he brought to me drawer after drawer, showed me the things and their true meaning. Dried plants and insects, many kinds of anatomical preparations such as human skin, bones, mummies, were brought to the sick-bed of the small girl ; birds and animals which he had killed out hunting were shown to me before they were taken into the kitchen, and that the Prince of the World¹ should also have a voice in this assemblage, my aunt related to me stories of love and fairy tales. All was accepted and all took root. I had hours in which I conversed vividly with the Invisible King. I still know some verses which I at that time dictated to my mother, who wrote them down. Often I would relate to my father again

¹ *I.e.* Self-love.

what I had learnt from him. I would not readily take a medicine without enquiring " where the things grew from which it was made, what they looked like, and how they were called." But the stories of my aunt also had not fallen on stony ground. I pictured myself in beautiful clothes and meeting the most charming princes who could not rest until they discovered who the unknown beauty was. A similar adventure with a charming little angel dressed in a white garment with golden wings, who busied himself about me, I dwelt upon for so long that my imagination raised his form almost to the point of his becoming visible.

In the course of a year I was fairly well restored to health, but nothing of the wildness of childhood was left with me. I could no longer play with dolls ; I longed for beings who could return my love. Dogs, cats and birds, of which my father kept many varieties, gave me much pleasure, but what would I not have given for a creature which played a very important part in one of the stories of my aunt. It was a lamb which had been taken up and nourished by a peasant girl in a wood, but in this pretty animal an enchanted prince lay hidden, who at last displayed himself as a beautiful youth and rewarded his benefactress by his hand. Such a little lamb I would gladly have possessed.

But now there was none to be found, and as everything around me went on in a natural manner, by degrees all hope of so rare a possession faded away. Meanwhile, I consoled myself by reading such books as described the most singular events. Among them all, my favourite was the Christian German Hercules ; that devout love story was entirely in accordance with my way of thinking. When anything befell Valisha, and many cruel things did befall her, he prayed first before he hastened to help her, and his prayers stand in the book in detail. What pleasure this gave ! My longing for the Invisible which I had always dimly felt was thereby only increased ; for once for all, God was also to be my confidant.

When I grew older I read, heaven knows what, everything one after another ; but the *Roman Octavia*¹ held the prize before all others. The persecutions of the Early Christians, clothed in the form of a novel, aroused in me the liveliest interest.

¹ By Anton Ulrich, Duke of Brunswick.

My mother now began to scold me for this continuous reading, and my father, to please her, took the books away from me one day, but gave them back the next. She was wise enough to observe that nothing was to be effected in this way, and only insisted that the Bible, too, should be read just as diligently. To this I did not need to be impelled, and I read the sacred books with much interest. Besides, my mother was always careful that no books with a corrupting tendency should come into my hands, and I should of myself have thrown away any shameful piece of writing, for my princes and princesses were all extremely virtuous, and besides, I knew more about the natural history of the human race than I allowed to be seen, and had learnt most of it from the Bible. Important passages in words and deeds which came before my eyes, I kept together, and with my thirst for knowledge and power of putting things together, elicited the truth. If I had heard about witches I should have been obliged to make myself acquainted with witchcraft also.

I have to thank my mother and this thirst for knowledge that, with my excessive longing for knowledge, I nevertheless learnt to cook, but by that there was something to see. To cut up a hen, a young pig, was quite a treat for me. I used to bring the entrails to my father, and he talked to me about them as if I had been a young student of medicine. Often with an inward delight he would call me his misbegotten son.

I had now completed my twelfth year. I learned French, dancing and drawing, and received the usual instruction in religion. In the latter many thoughts and feelings were aroused, but nothing which related to my own condition. I liked to hear people speak of God ; I was proud of being able to speak of Him better than my equals. I now read many books which put me in a position to talk about religion, but it never occurred to me to think how matters stood with me, whether my soul was formed also in such a way, whether it was like a mirror from which the everlasting sun could be reflected ; all this I had presupposed from the first.

French I learned with eagerness. My teacher was an excellent man. He was not a thoughtless empiric, nor was he a dry grammarian ; he possessed learning, he had seen the world. At the same time as he instructed me in the language, he satisfied my thirst for knowledge in many a way. I loved him so much that

I always awaited his coming with a palpitation of the heart. Drawing was not difficult for me, and I should have got further with it if my teacher had possessed the mind and knowledge for it, but he had only hands and practice.

Dancing was at first my least pleasure ; my body was too sensitive, and I learnt only in the company of my sister. Our dancing master had the idea of giving a ball for all his scholars, male and female, and my desire for dancing was thus animated quite differently.

Among many boys and girls, two sons of the Marshal of the Court were distinguished. The younger was of my age, the other two years older ; they were children of such beauty that, according to the universal opinion, they were beyond everything one had ever seen in the way of beautiful children. I, too, had hardly seen them when I lost sight of all the rest. At that moment I paid attention to my dancing, and wished to dance beautifully. How did it happen that these boys also noticed me especially among all the others ? No matter, in the first hour we had become the best friends, and our little amusement did not come to an end until we had arranged where we should next meet again. What a pleasure for me ! But I was quite delighted the next morning when both of them enquired after my health each with a gallant note, accompanied with a nosegay. I have never felt any more as I then did ! Kindness met with kindness ; letter answered letter. From now onwards church and public worlds were our rendezvous ; our young acquaintances always invited us together, but we were shy enough to conceal the affair so that our parents saw no more of it than we thought good.

Now I had all at once got two lovers. I had not decided on either, they both pleased me and we were in the best of relations. All at once the elder of the two became very ill ; I had often myself been very ill, and I knew how to give pleasure to the suffering by sending over many delicacies and dainties suitable for an invalid. His parents were grateful for my attention, listened to the request of their loved son, and invited me, together with my sister, to their house as soon as he had left his bed. The tenderness with which he received me was not childish, and from that day onwards I had decided for him. He at once warned me to keep it secret from his mother, but our flame was not to be concealed any more, and the passion of the younger one made

our romance complete. He played a thousand tricks upon us ; he delighted in trying to disappoint our joy and thereby increased the passion he tried to destroy.

Now I had then found the little lamb I longed for, and this passion had an effect upon me like my former illness : it made me calm and withdrew me from all restless joys. I was solitary, I was touched, and God came back to me again. He remained my confidant, and well I know with what tears I kept on praying for the boy who continued to be ill.

Though there was much of childishness in this occurrence, it contributed not a little to the forming of my heart. We had now daily for our French teacher to write letters of our own invention instead of the usual translation. I brought my love story to market under the names of Phyllis and Damon. The old man soon saw through it and praised my work very much, so as to make me sincere. I became bolder, came open-heartedly out with the affair, in the merest details keeping loyal to the truth. I do not remember at what passage it was he once took the opportunity of saying : " How nice that is, how natural ! But the good Phyllis must take care, the thing may soon become serious."

I was vexed that he did not already regard the matter as serious, and asked him, somewhat piqued, what he meant by serious. He did not require to be asked twice. He explained himself so clearly that I could scarcely conceal my fear. As, however, my vexation was quickly appeased and I took it ill of him that he should harbour such thoughts, I composed myself and wished to justify my fair heroine, saying, with glowing cheeks, " But, sir, Phyllis is an honourable girl."

He was now roguish enough to make fun of me about my honourable heroine, and as we were speaking French, to play upon the word " honnete " so as to carry the honourableness of Phyllis through all its meanings. I felt the absurdity of this and was extremely composed. He, not wishing to frighten me, broke off, but with other opportunities brought the conversation on the same track. Plays and little stories which I read and translated to him often gave him the opportunity of showing what a weak protection our so-called virtue is against the demands of a passion. I did not contradict him, but I was secretly annoyed, and his remarks became a burden to me. With my good Damon

too, I, by degrees, ceased to be united. The artifices of the younger brother rent asunder our intercourse. Not long afterwards both these blooming young fellows died. I was sorry, but they were soon forgotten.

Phyllis now grew up rapidly. She was healthy and began to see the world. The hereditary prince married, and soon after his father's death entered upon the government. Court and town were in the liveliest state of movement. My curiosity had now all kinds of nourishment. Now there were plays and balls with all their usual accompaniments, and though our parents kept us back as much as possible, they were obliged to appear at Court, where I was introduced. Strangers streamed in from all parts ; in every house there was great company ; even to us some cavaliers were recommended and others introduced, and at my uncle's men of all nations were to be met with.

My honest mentor continued in a modest and yet striking way to warn me, and I always in secret took it ill of him. I was not convinced of the truth of his assertion that women under all circumstances are weak, perhaps at that time I was right and he was in the wrong ; but he spoke at the same time so seriously that I began to feel anxious that he might be right, so I said to him with much sincerity, " As the danger is so great and the human heart so weak, I will pray to God to protect me."

This simple answer seemed to please him. He praised my purpose, but with me it was not meant in earnest. This time it was only an empty word, for my feelings for the invisible were almost entirely extinguished. The great crowd which surrounded me distracted me and carried me along with it like a strong river. These were the most empty years of my existence. For days on end, to speak of nothing, to have no sound thought, only to revel, that was my occupation. I never once thought about my beloved books. The people, by whom I was surrounded, had no idea of learning ; they were German courtiers, and at that time this class of people were entirely devoid of culture.

Such a society, it may be thought, must have led me to the brink of destruction. I lived only in the cheerfulness which the senses bestow, I never collected my thoughts, I did not pray, I neither thought about myself nor of God ; but I regarded it as a providential guidance that none of the handsome, rich and

well-dressed men pleased me. They were dissolute and did not conceal it ; that frightened me away from them ; they adorned their conversation with ambiguities which offended me, and I held myself coldly towards them. Their ill-breeding often exceeded all belief and I allowed myself to be rude.

Besides, my old counsellor had once confidentially opened out to me that with the majority of these dissolute fellows not only was the virtue, but even the health, of a girl in danger. I now had an aversion from them, and I was apprehensive if anyone came too near me. I was careful about the glasses and cups and even of the chair on which one of them had been sitting. In this way I became morally and physically very much isolated from them, and all the nice things they said to me I accepted as incense which was my due.

Among the strangers staying among us at that time was a young man who specially distinguished himself, and whom in fun we used to call Narciss. He had obtained a good reputation in the diplomatic career, and with the various changes which were going on at our Court, he hoped to find some advantageous place. He soon became acquainted with my father ; his acquirements and behaviour opened for him the way into a select society of the most estimable men. My father spoke much in praise of him, and his handsome figure would have made a still better impression had not his whole being exhibited a kind of self-satisfaction. I had seen him, thought well of him, but we had never spoken. At a great ball, where he also was, we danced a minuet together ; that, too, went off without any nearer acquaintance. When the violent dances went forward, which I was accustomed to avoid in compliance with my father's wishes, who was anxious about my health, I betook myself to an adjoining room and began to converse with elderly friends who had sat down to play cards. Narciss, who had danced about for a time, came once into the room where I was and, after he had recovered from a nose bleeding caused by the dancing, began to speak about all kinds of things. In half an hour our conversation had become so interesting, though without any trace of tenderness, that neither of us could stand dancing any more. We were rather talked about by the others, but we were not disturbed by this. The next evening we could take up our conversation again, and were very careful of our health.

The acquaintance was now madd. Narciss called on me and my sisters, and now I first began again to become conscious of all that I knew, what I had thought about, what I had felt and on what I understood how to express myself in conversation. My new friend, who had always been in the best society, besides the department of history and politics of which he had a complete view, possessed very extensive literary knowledge, and there was nothing new with which he was not acquainted, especially that which came from France. He brought and sent to me many a pleasant and useful book, but that had to be kept more secret than a forbidden confession of love. Learned women had been made ridiculous, even well-instructed women were not tolerated, probably because it was not thought polite to put so many ignorant men to shame. Even my father, who was very desirous of this new opportunity for cultivating my mind, expressly required that this literary intercourse should remain a secret.

So our society continued for a year and a day, and I cannot say that Narciss had in any way expressed love or tenderness towards me. He remained nice and obliging, but showed no affection ; much more did the charm of my youngest sister, who at that time was exceptionally beautiful, seem not to leave him indifferent. In jest he gave her all kinds of friendly names from foreign languages, several of which he spoke very well, and he liked to mingle their peculiar idioms with his German talk. She did not reply to his civil speeches in any special way ; she was tied up with a different thread and as, above all, she was very impetuous and he was sensitive, they were not infrequently in disagreement over trifles. With my mother and aunts he managed to get on well, and so by degrees he had become a member of the family.

Who knows how long we might have continued to live in this way had not our relations been changed all at once by a singular accident. I was invited with my sisters to a certain house, to which I did not like going. The society was too mixed, and there were often there persons if not of the rudest yet of the dullest stamp. This time Narciss was also invited with us, and for his sake I was inclined to go, for I was certain of finding someone with whom I could converse in my own way. At dinner already we had much to put up with, for several men had drunk to excess ; after dinner a game of forfeits had to be played. It

went on with great vivacity and noise. Narciss had lost a forfeit ; he was ordered to say something pleasant in the ear of everyone of the whole company. He may have dallied too long by my next neighbour, the wife of a captain. All at once the latter gave him a box on the ear, so that the powder flew into my eyes, as I sat close by. When I had wiped my eyes and to some extent recovered from my fright, I saw both men with drawn swords. Narciss was bleeding, and the other, beside himself with wine, anger and jealousy, could scarcely be restrained by all the rest of the company. I took Narciss by the arm and led him to the door upstairs into another room, and as I did not think my friend was safe from his mad enemy I bolted the door at the same time.

We both considered the wound was not serious, for we only saw a slight cut across the hand. But we soon perceived there was a stream of blood flowing down his back and there showed a great wound on the head. I now felt anxious. I hurried to the landing to look for help, but I could see no one, for everyone had remained below to restrain the raving man. At last a daughter of the house came running up, and her cheerfulness annoyed me not a little ; she was like to die of laughing at the mad spectacle. I asked her urgently to get a surgeon for me, and she in her wild fashion sprang down the stairs to fetch one herself.

I went back to my wounded friend, bound my handkerchief about his hand and a neck-cloth, which was hanging on the door, about his head. He was still bleeding considerably. No surgeon arrived. He grew pale and seemed about to faint. There was no one at hand who could assist me. I took him quite freely by the arm and tried to cheer him up by stroking and little flatteries. This seemed to have the effect of spiritual remedy ; he remained conscious but sat there with a deathly pallor.

Now at last the active mistress of the house arrived, and how alarmed she was when she saw our friend in this condition, lying in my arms and blood streaming over both of us. No one had imagined that Narciss was wounded. All thought I had got him away without mishap.

Now wine and smelling-bottles and everything that could arouse and refresh him were there in abundance. The surgeon, too, now came, and I could easily have departed, but Narciss

held me firmly by the hand and I would have stayed without his holding. During the dressing of his wounds I continued to refresh him with wine, and paid little attention to all the company standing round about us. The surgeon had finished. The wounded man took a mute but obliging leave of me and was carried home.

The mistress of the house now led me to her bedroom. She had to undress me completely, and I cannot refrain from saying that as they washed away the blood from me, I saw with pleasure for the first time in a mirror that I might be regarded as beautiful without the assistance of dress. I could not put any of my clothes on again, and as all the people in the house were either smaller or stouter than myself, I came home in a strange disguise to the great astonishment of my parents. They were extremely annoyed about my fright, the wounds of my friend, the senselessness of the captain, and about the whole affair. It wanted but little to make my father send a challenge to the captain and avenge his friend on the spot. He blamed the gentlemen who were present, because they had not on the spot revenged such a murderous attempt, for it was only too clear that the captain, after he had struck, had at once drawn his sword and wounded Narciss from behind. The cut across the hand had been given when Narciss himself was grasping for his sword. I was indescribably affected and changed, or how shall I express it? The affection which was resting in the depth of my heart broke loose all at once, like a flame when it gets air. And if pleasure and joy are very suited for first producing love and nourishing it in silence, yet when by nature it lies deeply in the heart it is most easily driven by terror to decide and declare itself. The little daughter was given some medicine and put to bed. In the earliest morning my father hastened to our wounded friend whom he found lying quite ill with wound fever.

My father told me little of what he said to him, and endeavoured to calm me as regards the consequences which this occurrence might have. The question was whether they should be contented with an apology, or whether the matter should be judicially heard and other things of that kind. I knew my father too well to think that he would wish the affair to be settled without a duel, but I kept quiet, for I had early learnt from him that women should not mix themselves in such business. Besides,

it did not appear as if anything had passed between the two friends in which I was concerned. However, my father soon confided to my mother the purport of his further conversation. Narciss, he said, had been greatly moved by the assistance I had afforded him, had embraced him, declared himself everlastingly my debtor, showed that he desired no happiness which he could not share with me, and entreated his permission to look upon him as his father. My mother told me all this again faithfully, but added the well-meaning reminder that one should not pay too much attention to what was said in the first agitation. Certainly not, I answered with assumed coldness, and felt all the time heaven knows what.

Narciss remained ill for two months ; owing to the wound of his right hand he could not once write, but in the meantime he showed me his regard with the most obliging attentions. All this unusual politeness I compared with what I had learnt from my mother, and continually my head was full of fancies. The whole town talked of the event. They spoke with me about it in a peculiar tone : they drew conclusions which, much as I tried to put them aside, always came very closely to me. That which had formerly been custom and dallying was now serious and showed inclination. The restless state in which I lived was the more violent, the more carefully I endeavoured to conceal it from everyone. The idea of losing him frightened me, and the possibility of a closer union made me tremble. The thought of marriage for a half-developed girl has certainly something alarming in it. By such vehement agitations I came to recollect myself again. The bright pictures of a distracted life which formerly looked before my eyes by day and night were not all at once blown away. My soul began again to bestir itself, but the acquaintance with my Invisible Friend, which had been so frequently interrupted, was not so easily renewed. We still remained at a suitable distance ; it was again something, but a great difference compared with former times.

A duel, in which the captain was severely wounded, passed by without my having heard anything of it. The opinion of the public was in every sense on the side of my lover, who at length appeared again upon the scene. First of all, he let himself be carried into our house with his head bound up and his arm in a sling. How my heart beat at this visit. The whole family was

present ; general thanks and politeness were all that passed on both sides. He did, however, find opportunity of showing me some secret signs of his affection by which my agitation was only too much increased. After he had completely recovered, he visited us during the whole winter on the same footing as before, and in spite of all the gentle signs of feeling and love which he gave me everything remained undecided.

In this way I was kept in constant practice. I could not trust my feelings to a single person, and I was too far removed from God. I had quite forgotten Him during those four wild years. I now began to think of Him again from time to time, but our acquaintance had grown cold. These were only visits of ceremony which I made to Him, and besides, when I used to appear before Him I used to put on my fine clothes, my virtue, honour and advantages which I thought I had over others, these I set before Him with self-complacency, and so in this adornment He hardly seemed to notice me.

A courtier would have been very much disturbed if the prince from whom he expected his good fortune had thus behaved to him, but this did not make me feel uncomfortable. I had what I wanted, good health and ease. If God was pleased to think of me, it was good ; if not, I thought I had still done my duty. Thus I did not easily think of myself at that time, but it was, however, the true picture of my soul. But preparations were already being made to change and purify my feelings. The spring came, and Narciss visited me unannounced at a time when I was quite alone at home. He now appeared as a lover, and asked me if I could give him my heart and my hand too when he should some day have obtained an honourable and well-paid position.

He had been taken into our service, but at first he had been kept back, because they were afraid of his ambition and he was not rapidly promoted, and as he had some money of his own he was left with a small salary.

In spite of all my inclination to him, I knew he was not the man with whom one could treat quite frankly. Therefore I gathered myself together and referred him to my father, of whose consent he did not appear to doubt, but wished first to be in agreement with me on the spot. At last I said " Yes," but made the consent of my parents a necessary condition. He then spoke

formally with both. They showed their satisfaction : they gave their promise on the expectation of his being- soon promoted. Sisters and aunts were informed of the matter and the strictest secrecy enjoined on them.

Now from a lover I had got a bridegroom. The difference between the two showed itself to be very great. Could anyone transform the lovers of all honourable maidens into bridegrooms it would be a great- benefit for our sex, even if no marriage resulted from this connection. The love between two persons does not diminish, but it becomes more reasonable. Innumerable little sillinesses, all coquetries and caprices disappear. If the bridegroom tells us that we please him better in a morning-cap than in the finest head-dress, then for a sensible young woman her hair-dressing will certainly be a matter of indifference, and nothing is more natural than that he too should think seriously and would wish rather to form a housewife for himself than a trrcked-out doll for the world, and so it is in all departments of the business. If such a young woman has the good fortune to have a bridegroom with understanding and knowledge, she learns more from him than high schools and foreign countries can teach. Not only does she willingly receive all the instruction which he gives her, but she tries also always to advance herself further on this path. Love makes much that is impossible possible, and finally there begins that subjection which is so necessary and becoming for the female sex. The bridegroom does not govern like the husband ; he only asks and his loved one tries to perceive what he wishes, so as to accomplish it before he asks. Thus experience has taught me what I would not have missed for much. I was happy, truly happy, as far as we can be in the world—that is to say, for a short time.

A summer passed away amid these quiet joys. Narciss gave me not the slightest reason for complaint ; he became ever more dear to me ; my whole soul hung upon him. This he knew well and he knew how to treasure it. Meanwhile, from apparent trifles, there rose something which, by degrees, became hurtful to our relation.

Narciss, as bridegroom, went about with me and never ventured to desire from me what was still forbidden. But about the boundaries of virtue and decorum we were of very different opinions. I wanted to go securely, and would not permit him

any freedom at all which the whole world might not have witnessed. He, being accustomed to dainties, found this diet very strict. And now there was a continual opposition ; he praised my restraint, but endeavoured to undermine my decision. The idea of " *serious* " set forward by my old French teacher occurred to me, and at the same time the remedy which I had offered for it.

With God I had become a little more acquainted. He had given me so dear a bridegroom, and for this I felt some gratitude. Earthly love itself concentrated my soul and set it in motion, and my intercourse with God did not contradict it. Quite naturally I complained to Him of what made me anxious, and did not observe that I was wishing and desiring the very thing which made me anxious. I thought myself to be very strong and did not pray, " Lead me not into temptation." In my own thoughts I was far beyond temptation. In this loose spangle-work of virtue I came boldly before God. He did not drive me away ; on the smallest movement towards Him He left a gentle impression on my soul, and this impression moved me always to seek Him again. Apart from Narciss, the whole world was for me dead ; excepting him, nothing had any charm for me. Even my love for finery was only with the view of pleasing him ; if I knew that he was not to see me, I could spend no care upon it. I liked dancing, but if he was not beside me, it seemed to me that I could not even endure the movement. At a brilliant festival at which he was not present, I could neither procure new things nor fit old ones to the fashion. For me, one was as good as another, or I might rather say, one was as burdensome as the other. I thought my evening was very well spent if I could make up a card game with some old people, for which, formerly, I had no liking ; and if some good old friend joked me about it, I laughed perhaps for the first time the whole evening. It was the same with walks, and all kinds of social pleasures that can be thought of.

Him had I chosen from all others,
His would I be and not another's,
To me his love was all in all.

So I was often lonely while in society, and complete loneliness was, for the most part, pleasant for me. But my active spirit could neither sleep nor dream. I felt and I thought, and by

degrees attained some facility in speaking of my feelings and thoughts with God. There developed in my soul feelings of another sort which did not contradict the former. For my love to Narciss was in accordance with the general plan of creation and in no way interfered with my duties. They did not contradict one another, and yet were infinitely different. Narciss was the only image which hovered before me and to which my whole love was directed, but the other feeling was directed to no image and was unspeakably pleasant. I no longer have it, and cannot bestow it on myself.

My lover, who otherwise knew all my secrets, knew nothing of this. I soon observed that he thought differently. He often gave me writings which disputed with light and heavy weapons all that can be called connection with the Invisible. I read the books because they came from him, and in the end I knew nothing of all which they contained.

With regard to science and learning, there was also some contradiction. He did as all men do, laughed at learned women, yet instructed me without ceasing. He used to speak to me about all subjects except law, and while he continually brought me writings of every kind, he often repeated the doubtful doctrine that a woman should keep her knowledge more secretly than the Calvinist his creed in Catholic countries ; and while I, in a quite natural manner, was not accustomed to show myself to the world wiser or more instructed than formerly, he was the first who could not occasionally resist the vanity of speaking of my superiorities.

A man of the world, of high reputation and greatly valued on account of his influence, his talents and intellect at that time found at our Court great applause. He especially noticed Narciss and kept him continually about him. They disputed also about the virtue of women. Narciss confided to me their conversation at some length. I was not behind with my observations, and my friend required of me a written essay on the subject. I wrote French fairly fluently. I had laid a good foundation with my old French teacher. My correspondence with my friend was always carried on in this language, and at that time, above all, a more refined instruction could only be obtained from French books. My essay had pleased the Count ; I had to hand over some little songs which I had recently composed. In short, Narciss appeared

without restraint to find enjoyment in his loved one, and the story ended to his great satisfaction with an intellectual epistle in French verse, which the Count sent to him on his departure, in which mention was made of their friendly dispute, and my friend was praised for his happiness in learning, after so many doubts and errors, with greatest certainty what virtue was in the arms of a virtuous and charming wife. This poem was shown to me first of all, and then to almost everyone, each thinking about it what he pleased. Thus it went on in several cases, and all strangers, whom he valued, must be made acquainted with our house.

The family of a Count was staying here for a time on account of our skilled physician. In this house, too, Narciss was treated like a son ; he introduced me there. Among these worthy persons we found pleasant entertainment for mind and heart. Even the ordinary pastimes of society did not seem in this house so empty as elsewhere. Everyone understood our relation to each other ; they treated us as circumstances would allow, and left the main relationship untouched upon. I mention this one set of acquaintances as they had much influence on me in the later period of my life.

Now, almost a year of our engagement had passed by and with it our spring, too, was over. Summer came and everything became more fervid and more serious.

By several unexpected deaths, offices became vacant to which Narciss might have some claim. The moment drew near in which my whole fate was to be decided, and while Narciss and all our friends at Court gave themselves every possible trouble to remove certain impressions which were unfavourable to him, and to procure for him the place he wished for, I turned with my anxiety to my Invisible Friend. I was received with such kindness that I was glad to come again. Quite freely I confessed my wish that Narciss might obtain the post, but my request was not impetuous and I did not ask that it should happen on account of my prayer.

The post was obtained by a much inferior competitor. I was greatly alarmed at the news and hurried to my room, which I locked behind me. At first I was dissolved in tears by this grief. My next thought was " Yet it was not by chance that this happened," and at once there followed the decision to leave the

matter alone as far as I was concerned, for this apparent evil would come to what was truly best for me. Now, the gentlest feelings pressed in upon me which divided all the clouds of my sorrow. With this help I felt that I could endure everything. I came to table quite cheerfully, to the greatest astonishment of those in the house.

Narciss had less strength than I, and I was obliged to comfort him. Even in his own family he met with many oppositions, which greatly oppressed him, and, with the real trust which subsisted between us, he confided to me everything. His negotiations for going into foreign service were also not more fortunate. I felt everything deeply, both for his own sake and mine, and carried everything at last to the place where my requests had been so well received.

The more gentle these experiences were, the more often did I wish to renew them and also the comfort where I had so often found it. But I did not always find it ; it was as when one wants to warm oneself at the sun and something stands in the way which makes a shadow. "What is it ?" I asked myself. I traced the matter keenly, and observed clearly that all depended on the condition of my soul ; if this were not directed in the straightest direction to God, I remained cold. I did not feel its reaction and could not perceive its answer. Now the second question was : "What is hindering this direction ?" Here I found myself in a wide field, and involved myself in an investigation which lasted nearly the whole of the second year of my love story. I might have ended it sooner, for I soon came upon the track, but I would not confess it and sought for a thousand ways of escape.

I soon discovered that the straight direction of my soul was disturbed by foolish distractions and occupation with unworthy things. The How and the Where were soon clear enough to me. But now how was I to get on in a world where all is a matter of indifference or entirely mad ? I would gladly have let the matter stand where it was, and lived on at random like other people whom I saw quite happy, but I dared not ; my inmost being contradicted me too often. If I wished to withdraw from society and alter my relations, I could not do so. I was now shut in as by a ring ; from certain connections I could not free myself, and in the matter which lay closest to me, fatalities heaped themselves upon me and oppressed me. Often I lay down on my bed

in tears, and rose up again after a sleepless night. I wanted a powerful support, and this God would not grant me while I was going about with cap and bells. Now I had a weighing up of all my doings. Dancing and card-playing were first of all investigated. Never was anything said, thought or written about these things which I did not search out, speak of, read, consider, aggravate, reproach myself with and plague myself with in an unprecedented fashion. If I gave up these things I was certain to offend Narciss, for he was extremely afraid of the ridicule which the appearance of an anxious conscientiousness gives us in the eyes of the world. Because I now did that which I held to be folly, and harmful folly, not from my own taste but simply on his account, everything became dreadfully difficult for me.

Without unpleasant prolixities and repetitions, I am unable to represent the trouble which I took to accomplish these occupations, which now distracted and disturbed my inner peace in such a way that my heart should remain open to the influences of the Invisible Being, and how painful it was for me to feel that the quarrel could not be composed in this way. For as soon as I clothed myself in the garment of folly, it remained with me not merely a mask, but the foolishness penetrated me at once through and through.

May I here pass over the realm of a more historical account and make some remarks about what was going on within me. What could that be which so changed my tastes and way of feeling, that in my twenty-second year, indeed earlier, I could find no pleasure in the things in which people of that age took an innocent delight? Why were they not innocent for me? I can easily answer; they were just not innocent because I was not, like others of my contemporaries, unacquainted with my soul. No, I knew from experiences which I had obtained without seeking for them, that there are loftier feelings which afford us a real pleasure which one seeks for in vain in amusements, and that in these higher joys there is at the same time preserved a secret treasure for strengthening one in misfortune.

But the social pleasures and distractions of youth must necessarily have had a strange charm for me, for it was impossible for me to enter upon them as though I had nothing to do with them. How many things could I now do with complete coldness, if I only wished it, which at that time perplexed me, nay,

threatened to obtain the mastery over me ? Here no middle way could be observed. I must dispense with either the delightful amusements or my quickening internal feelings.

But already the strife within my soul had been decided without my being conscious of it. Even if there was still anything in me which longed for the pleasures of the senses, I could, however, no longer enjoy them. Though a man may love wine very much, all desire for drinking would leave him if he were in a cellar with full barrels, where the bad air threatened to stifle him. Pure air is more than wine ; that I felt only too keenly, and from the outset it would have cost me but little consideration to prefer what was good to what was charming, had not the fear of losing the goodwill of Narciss kept me back. But at last, after a struggle made a thousand times, and continually renewed consideration, I cast also a keen glance on the bond which held me to him, and I discovered that it was only a weak one and that it could be torn asunder. I recognized that it was only like a glass ball which shut me into a space devoid of air. " Only so much strength is wanted to break it in pieces and you are rescued."

No sooner thought than ventured. I took off the mask and acted always in accordance with my heart. I had always a very tender feeling for Narciss, but the thermometer which I had formerly stood in hot water, now was hanging in the natural air ; it could rise no higher than the warmth of the atmosphere.

Unfortunately, it cooled very much. Narciss began to withdraw himself and to take up a distant air, but my thermometer fell the more he drew back. My family noticed it ; they asked me questions about it and seemed surprised. I declared with virile defiance that I had hitherto sacrificed myself enough, that I was ready still further and to the end of my life to share with him all difficulties, but that I demanded complete freedom for my actions ; that what I did and what I left undone must depend on my own conviction, that I would never persist in my own opinions in a self-willed way, but I was willing to listen to all reasons ; but as regards my own happiness, the decision must depend on me and I would not put up with any kind of compulsion. The reasoning of the greatest physician would as little move me to take a quite healthy food, very much liked by many people, when my experience taught me that it

was always harmful for me, as I could adduce, for example, the use of coffee. Just as little, and even still less, would I allow any line of conduct which confused me to be demonstrated to me as morally advantageous, as for a long time I had prepared myself in silence, so were these discussions pleasant for me rather than vexatious. I gave full vent to my feelings and experienced the entire worth of my decision. I did not give way by a hair's breadth, and those to whom I owed no filial respect were unceremoniously dismissed. In my own family I was soon successful. My mother had from youth onward similar feelings, only with her they had not ripened ; no necessity had pressed upon and exalted her courage so as to carry through her conviction. She was glad to see her silent wishes come to fulfilment in me. My younger sister seemed to cling to me; the second was attentive and quiet. My aunt had most objections to make. The reasons which she brought forward appeared irrefutable to her, and indeed they were so because they were quite commonplace. I was at last compelled to tell her that in no sense had she any voice in this affair, and after this she only seldom let it be seen that she remained by her opinion. She, too, was the only one who saw this event close at hand and remained entirely without any feeling for it. I don't go too far when I say that she had no soul and the most limited understanding.

My father behaved entirely in accordance with his own way of thinking. He spoke little, but frequently, with me on the subject ; his arguments were rational, and being his arguments were irrefutable ; only the profound feeling of my right gave me strength to dispute against him. But the scene soon changed. I was obliged to appeal to his heart. Pressed back by his intellect I broke into expostulations full of affectionate feeling. I gave free course to my tongue and to my tears. I showed him how greatly I loved Narciss and what constraint I had put upon myself for two years, how certain I was that I was acting rightly ; I was ready to certify this certainty if it were necessary by the loss of my beloved bridegroom and prospective happiness ; that I would rather forsake my fatherland, parents and friends, and earn my living in a foreign country than be willing to act against my inward insight. He concealed his emotion, remained silent for some time, and finally declared himself openly on my side.

From that time Narciss avoided our house, and my father gave up the weekly society where he used to meet Narciss. The affair created a sensation at Court and in the town. People talked about it as they are accustomed to do in such cases in which the public is wont to take a strong interest, because it has acquired the bad habit of having an influence over the decisions of weak minds. I knew the world sufficiently well, and understood that one is often blamed by persons for that which they might have persuaded one to do, and so without that, with my internal state of mind, all such transient opinions would have been as if they had not existed.

On the other hand, I did not hinder myself from giving way to my inclination for Narciss. He had become invisible for me, and my heart had not changed towards him. I loved him tenderly, as it were anew, and in a more steady manner than formerly. If he was willing not to disturb my condition, I was his ; without this condition I would, even with him, have refused a kingdom. For many months I carried these feelings and thoughts about with me, and when I felt myself quiet and strong enough to go to my work in a peaceful and settled manner, I wrote to him a polite but not a tender letter and asked him why he did not come to see me any more.

As I knew his way of not liking to open himself out in small matters, but of silently doing what seemed good to him, in the present instance I urged him with purpose. I received a long and, as it seemed to me, tasteless answer in a style with unmeaning phrases, saying that without a better position he could not arrange himself and offer me his hand ; that I knew how difficult it had been for him hitherto; that he thought a long-continued, fruitless intercourse might be damaging to my reputation ; that I would permit him to keep a distance as at present; as soon as he was in a position to make me happy, he would regard the word he had given me as sacred.

I replied to him on the spot. As the affair was known to all the world, it would be too late now to be careful about my reputation, for which my conscience and my innocence were the surest guarantees ; but at the same time I freely gave him back his word, and hoped that in this he would find happiness. The same hour I received a short reply which was, in essentials, completely in harmony with the first. He kept by what he had

said before, that when he had obtained the position he expected, he would ask me to share his happiness with him.

For me, this was as much as to say nothing. I declared to my relations and friends that the affair was finished with, and so, indeed, it really was. For when, after nine months, the position he had wished for was attained, he again offered to me his hand, but indeed with the stipulation that, as wife of a man who must maintain a house, I would have to alter my sentiments. I thanked him politely, and with my heart and mind hurried away from the business as one longs to be out of the playhouse when the curtain falls. A short time afterwards he found a rich and advantageous match, which it was now very easy for him to do, and as I knew him to be happy in the way he wished, my peace of mind was now complete.

I should not pass over in silence that several times before he obtained his position, and afterwards also, quite good proposals were made to me which I refused without any hesitation, much as my father and mother would have wished for more compliance on my part.

Now, after a stormy March and April, there was bestowed upon me the most beautiful May weather. With good health I enjoyed an undeniable quietude of mind. Look around me as I liked, by my loss I yet had gain. Young and full of sensibility as I was, creation seemed to me a thousand times more beautiful than formerly, when I had to attend society and play so that the time in the beautiful gardens should not be too long for me. As I was not ashamed of my piety, I took courage not to conceal my love for the arts and sciences. I drew and painted and read and found plenty of people to support. Instead of the great world, which I had forsaken, or rather which had forsaken me, a smaller one was formed around me which was far richer and more entertaining. I had an inclination for social life, and I do not deny that on giving up my old acquaintances I dreaded the idea of solitude. I now found myself sufficiently, perhaps too much, indemnified. My acquaintances were at first quite numerous, not only with those at home whose sentiments harmonized with mine, but also with those at a distance. My story was well known, and there were many people curious to see the young girl who had valued God more than her bridegroom. At that time there was certainly a religious mood to be observed

in Germany. In the homes of many princes and courts a care for the salvation of the soul was alive. There were not wanting among noblemen those who cherished a like attention, while among the humbler classes sentiments of this kind were widely diffused.

The family of the Count, which I have mentioned before, drew me now nearer to itself. In the meantime they had become stronger, as some of their relations had settled in the town. These valued persons sought my intercourse as I did theirs. They had a large number of connections, and in this house I came to know a large number of the princes, counts and nobles of the kingdom. My sentiments were no secret to anyone ; they might either honour them or only tolerate them. I obtained my object and remained unattached.

I was now led into the world by another way. Just at that time a stepbrother of my father, who had formerly only visited us in passing, now stayed longer with us. He had given up the service of the Court, where he was honoured and influential, only because everything was not going according to his ideas. His understanding was just and his character severe, and in that way he was very like my father. Only with that the latter had a certain degree of pliancy which made it easier for him to give way in affairs, and though not to do, yet to allow, some things to be done against his conviction, and then to get over his antagonism to them either silently by himself or confidentially with his family. My uncle was very much younger, and his independence of mind strengthened not a little by his outward circumstances. He had had a very rich mother, and from her near and distant relations he had expectations of a further large property. He required no addition from outside sources, whereas my father, with his moderate property, was firmly bound to the service by the necessity of his salary.

My uncle had become still more unyielding from domestic misfortune. He had early lost an amiable wife and a son who was full of hope, and from that time he seemed to wish to withdraw himself from everything which did not depend upon his will.

In the family it was said occasionally, and with some self-complacency in our ears, that he was unlikely to marry again, and that we children could look upon ourselves as heirs of his

large property. I thought no more about it, but the behaviour of the others was not a little determined by these expectations. In the firmness of his character he had accustomed himself to contradict no one in conversation, to listen rather to everyone's opinion in a friendly manner, and the way in which each individual thought of a thing he would himself strengthen by arguments and examples. Those who did not know him constantly thought that he was of their opinion, for he had an overmastering intellect and could place himself into all different ways of conceiving of things. With me he was not so fortunate, for here it was a question of feelings, and of these he had no idea, and so, though he spoke with tolerance, sympathy and understanding with me about my sentiments, I was, however, struck by the fact that he had no conception of the basis of all my actions.

With all his secrecy, the main object of his unusual stay with us was discovered after a time. As could at length be observed, he had selected my youngest sister to marry and to make happy in his own way, and certainly from her physical and mental gifts, especially when a considerable property weighed in the scale, she might make claim to the best of matches. His feelings towards me at the same time he let us know through his actions by procuring for me the post of canoness, the income of which I very soon began to draw.

My sister was not so contented with his care nor so thankful as I was. She disclosed to me a secret affection, which she had hitherto very wisely concealed, as she feared, what indeed actually happened, that I in every possible way would dissuade her from union with a man who would not have suited her. I did all I could, and I succeeded. The intentions of my uncle were too serious and too clear, and the prospect of my sister with her feeling for the world too charming that she should have the strength to give up an inclination which her understanding disapproved.

As she no longer, as before, resisted the gentle guidance of our uncle, the basis of his plan was soon laid. She was appointed lady-in-waiting at a neighbouring Court, where he could hand her over to the care and instruction of a friend whose position there as governess was one of great distinction. I accompanied her to the place of her new residence. We could both be very well contented with the reception which we received, and often

I felt obliged in secret to smile at the character which I now played in the world as canoness—as young and pious canoness.

In earlier days such a situation would have perplexed me very much, indeed perhaps turned my head, but now I was quite composed with all my surroundings. In great tranquillity I let them spend a couple of hours dressing my hair, decked myself out and thought no more about it than that in my position I had to put on the gala livery. In the crowded drawing-rooms I spoke with all and sundry, but no figure or character had left behind any strong impression on me. When I came back to my house, the only feeling which I brought back was that of tired limbs. The numerous people whom I saw were helpful to my understanding, and I got to know several ladies who were patterns of all human virtues, of a good and noble demeanour, and in particular the governess, under whom my sister was to have the good fortune of being trained.

On my return, however, from this journey the consequences to my health were not so favourable. With the greatest temperance and most precise diet I was not, however, mistress of my time and my strength. Food, exercise, getting up and going to bed, dressing and undressing, did not depend, as at home, on my own will and feeling. In the course of social life you cannot stop without being impolite ; everything that was necessary I had willingly performed, because I thought it was my duty and because I knew it would soon be over, and because I felt myself healthier than before. Nevertheless, this strange, restless mode of life must have affected me more strongly than I felt. For I had scarcely returned home and delighted my parents with a satisfying account of events when a hæmorrhage attacked me which, though it was not dangerous and even soon over, for a considerable time it left behind a noticeable weakness.

Here again I had another lesson to repeat, and I did it joyfully. Nothing tied me to the world, and I was convinced that what was right was never to be found there, and so I was in the most cheerful and tranquil condition, and having renounced life, I was retained in it.

A new trial I had to endure, as an oppressive malady befel my mother, which she bore for five years before she paid the debt of Nature. During this time we had much disciplining. Often, when her anxiety became too great, she would have us all

called at night to her bed, so as at least she might be diverted by our presence if not made better. The load was heavier, indeed hardly to be borne, when my father too began to be ill. From youth onwards he had often suffered from violent headaches which, however, lasted at most not more than thirty-six hours. But now they were continuous, and if they reached a severe degree his moanings tore my heart. It was in these tempestuous times that I chiefly felt my bodily weakness, because it prevented me from fulfilling my most sacred and dearest duties, or rendered their performance extremely difficult.

Now I could prove myself as to whether the path which I had chosen was that of fancy or truth, whether I had only thought after the manner of others, or whether the object of my belief had a reality, and for my greatest support I always found the latter was the case. I had sought and found the straight direction of my heart to God, the fellowship "of the beloved ones," and it was that which made everything easier for me. As a wanderer in the shadows, when everything oppressed me from outwards, my soul hastened to this place of refuge and never came back empty.

In more recent times some champions of religion, who seemed to have more zeal than feeling for it, challenged their brethren to make known examples of prayers actually heard, probably because they wished to have something in writing so as to attack their enemies in a thoroughly diplomatic and juridical fashion. How unknown to them must be the true feeling, and how little can they themselves have had real experiences !

I may say that I never came back empty when I sought God in need and oppression. It is saying infinitely much, and yet I must not and cannot say more. Important as was every experience for me at the critical moment, the narration of it would be flat, insignificant and improbable, if I were to adduce individual cases. How fortunate I was that a thousand little incidents together proved to me that I was not without God in the world, as certainly as the drawing of my breath proves that I am alive. He was close to me, I was before Him. That is what I can say with the greatest truth and avoiding conscientiously all theological, systematic terms.

How much did I wish that at that time, too, I had found myself quite without a system, but which of us comes early to

the happiness of being conscious of his own self in a pure combination without extraneous forms ? I was in earnest about my salvation. I modestly confided in the views of others ; I gave myself up entirely to the Halle system of conversion,¹ but. my whole being would in no way suit with it.

According to this plan of teaching, the change of heart must begin with a profound fear about sin ; the heart must in this distress recognize more or less the punishment it has deserved, and have a foretaste of hell which embittered the pleasure of sin. At last a very noticeable assurance of grace is felt, but this in its progress often gets hidden, and has to be sought again with earnestness.

Of all this, nothing came near to me. If I sought God with sincerity, He suffered Himself to be found by me and did not reproach me for things that had passed. I saw afterwards where I had been unworthy, and I also know where I still was so, but the confession of my faith was altogether without anxiety. Not for a moment did a fear of hell come before me, indeed the idea of a wicked Spirit and of a place of punishment and torment after death could not in any way find a place within the circle of my ideas. I found that people who lived without made me disconcerted. At once I turned to my Invisible Guide, and as He permitted me, I went forward on my way without hesitation.

A man of spirit, heart and talent had purchased a property in our neighbourhood. He and his family were among the strangers whom I came to know. We were in agreement in our manners, household arrangements and habits, and could, therefore, soon unite ourselves with one another.

Philo, for this is the name I will give him, was already middle-aged and in some affairs of business was of the greatest help to my father whose powers were beginning to fail. He soon became the close friend of our family, and as he found in me, so he said, a person free from the extravagance and emptiness of the great world and without the aridity and gloom of the Pietists, we soon became intimate friends. He was very pleasing to me and useful.

Though I had not the slightest disposition nor inclination to mix with worldly affairs and to seek my influence therein, yet I was glad to hear of such things and to know of what was going forward both near at hand and at a distance. Of worldly

¹ From Spncr, the founder of Pietism.

things I loved to have a clear conception without any feeling for them ; my feeling, inner life and affection I kept for my God, for my family and for my friends.

These last, if I may say so, were jealous of my new intimacy with Philo and in more than one way they were right and warned me about it. I suffered much in silence, for I could not regard their objects in themselves as entirely empty or selfish. I had always been accustomed to subordinate my views to them ; this time, however, my conviction would not follow. I prayed to my God that here, too, He would warn, restrain and guide me, and as my heart did not dissuade me *in this* I went on my way comforted.

Philo had, on the whole, a distant resemblance to Narciss ; only a pious education had more concentrated and enlivened his feelings. He had less vanity and more character, and if the former in worldly affairs was refined, exact, persistent and unwearied, the latter was clear, sharp, rapid and worked with incredible ease. By means of him I learnt the inner relations of nearly all the noble persons whose outward aspect I had become acquainted with in society, and I was pleased to look on at the turmoil of the world from my watch-tower at a distance. Philo could conceal nothing more from me ; by degrees he confided to me his own connections, both outward and inward. I felt alarm on account of him, for I foresaw certain circumstances and complexities, and the evil came more rapidly than I had conjectured. For he had kept back certain confessions, and even at last he only told me so much that I could divine the worst.

What an effect did this have on my heart! I came upon experiences which were quite new to me. With indescribable sorrow I beheld an Agathon who, educated in the groves of Delphi, still had to pay his school fees and with their accumulated back interest, and this Agathon was my intimate friend. My sympathy was lively and complete. I suffered with him and we both found ourselves in the most singular situation.

After I had been long occupied with his mental temper, I turned to the consideration of myself. The thought, " Thou art no better than he is," rose before me like a little cloud, spread out by degrees and darkened my whole soul.

Now I not only thought " You are no better than he " ; I felt it, and I felt it so that I would not wish to feel it again, and

it was not merely a transitory mood. For more than a year I had to feel that if an invisible hand had not restrained me, I might have become a Giraud, a Cartouche, a Damiens,¹ and any horrible thing one can name. Such a disposition I felt clearly within my heart. God, what a discovery !

If, hitherto, I had not been able to be conscious of the reality of sin in the slightest degree by experience, the possibility of it had now become clear to me by anticipation in the most frightful manner, and yet I did not know the evil, I only feared it ; I felt I might be guilty, and had nothing to accuse myself of.

So deeply was I convinced that such a constitution of the soul, as I had to recognize mine to be, could not be suited to a union with that highest Being which I hoped for after death, so little did I fear becoming separated from Him. In spite of all the evil which I discovered in myself, I still loved Him, and I hated what I felt ; indeed, I wished to hate still more earnestly, and my whole wish was to be delivered from this sickness and from the disposition to sickness, and I felt certain that the great Physician would not refuse me His help.

The only question was : What is to heal this evil ? The practice of virtue ? I could not for a moment think of that. For ten years I had practised more than a mere virtue, and the horrors which I now recognized had remained hidden deep in my soul. Might they not also have broken loose as they did with David when he looked upon Bathsheba, and was he not also a friend of God, and was I not convinced in my innermost being that God was my friend ? Was it then an unavoidable weakness of human nature ? Must we then let ourselves feel the domination of our inclination, and is there nothing else left for us but to abhor what we had done and on a similar occasion to fall again ? From the teachings of morality I could draw no consolation. Neither their severity, by which they try to master our inclinations, nor the pleasant way in which they may bring our inclinations to the side of virtue, could satisfy me. The basic ideas which had influenced me by intercourse with my Invisible Friend was of a much more decided value for me.

Once when I studied the Songs (Psalm xli. 7-12) which David composed after that odious catastrophe, I was struck by the fact that he perceived the evil which dwelt in him in

¹ Notorious evil-doers in 18th century.

the substance out of which he had been made, but he wished to be freed from sin and he prayed most urgently for a pure heart.

But how was I to attain to this ? I knew well the answer from the sacred books ; it was for me a Bible truth that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. But now I observed for the first time that I had never yet understood the saying so often repeated. The questions : " What does it mean ? " " How is it to end ? " were working through me day and night. At last I thought I saw, as by a gleam of light, that what I sought for was to be found in the incarnation of the everlasting word, through whom all things and we ourselves were created. That the original Creator had descended as an inhabitant into the depths in which we are fixed, which He surveys and comprehends ; that He passed through our conditions step by step from conception and birth to the grave, and by this marvellous circuit ascended again to those heights of light, where we too must dwell if we are to be happy ; all this was revealed to me in a distant twilight Oh, why must we in speaking of such things make use of symbols which only show us external circumstances. Before Him, where is there aught high or deep, aught dark or clear ? It is only we who have an Under and an Upper, a day and a night. And just for this He became like unto us, as otherwise we could have no part in Him. But how can we take a part in this priceless benefit ? The Scripture tells us " By faith." What, then, is " Faith " ? To regard the account of an event as true, how can that help me ? I must be able to make my own its effects and consequences. This faith when made our own must be a peculiar state of mind and unaccustomed to the natural man !

Now, Almighty, grant me faith ! I prayed once in the deepest depression of heart. I leaned against a little table where I was sitting, and hid in my hands my face full of tears. Here I was in the condition in which we seldom are, but in which we ought to be in if God is to listen to our prayers.

Ah, indeed, who could describe what I then was feeling ! A force drew my soul to the Cross where once Jesus died ; it was a force, I cannot name it otherwise, entirely like that which leads our soul to an absent loved one, a drawing near, which perhaps is far more real and true than we imagine. So my soul drew near to Him, who became Man and died upon the Cross and at that moment I knew what faith was.

" This is faith ! " said I, and sprang up as if half frightened. I tried to become certain of my own feeling and of my way of looking at things, and shortly I became convinced that my spirit had acquired a capacity for soaring on high, which was entirely new to it.

Words fail us in speaking of these feelings. I could quite clearly separate them from all fancies ; they were entirely without fancy, without image, yet they gave us just the certainty of an object to which they referred as does our imagination when it paints for us the features of an absent loved one.

When the first rapture was over, I observed that this condition of the soul had been formerly known to me, but I had never felt it in such strength. I had never held fast to it, nor been able to make it my own. Beyond all, I believe that every soul of man at one time or another had felt something of it. Doubtless, it is this which teaches everyone that there is a God.

With this power, which formerly visited me from time to time, I had hitherto been very well content, and had not by a singular providential arrangement that unexpected trouble fallen upon me for over a twelve month, had not my own power and strength lost all credit with me, I should perhaps have remained content with such a state of things always. But now, since that great moment, I had taken wings. I could soar aloft above that which formerly threatened me, as a bird can fly with ease singing over the swiftest stream, before which the little dog stands anxiously barking.

My joy was indescribable, and though I revealed nothing of it to anyone, my friends observed in me an unusual cheerfulness without being able to comprehend the cause of my pleasure. If I had always kept silence and endeavoured to maintain this pure temper in my soul ! had I not allowed myself to be mixed by circumstances and come out with my secrets, then I might have been spared again a long circuit. As in the previous ten years of my Christian course this necessary power was not in my soul, I found myself in the same case as other honest people ! I had helped myself by always filling my imagination with pictures which had some reference to God. And this, too, is truly useful, for harmful pictures and their evil consequences were in thin manner kept away from me. Often, then, our soul seizes one or other of these spiritual pictures and soars with it

a little way upwards, as a young bird flutters from one twig to another. As long as one has nothing better, this practice should not be entirely rejected.

Pictures and impressions directed towards God are provided for us by the institution of the church, by bells, organs and "singing," and especially by the sermons of our pastors. For these I was unspeakably desirous ; no weather, no bodily weakness, kept me from going to church, and only the sound of the Sunday bells could cause me impatience on my sick-bed. Our Chief Court Preacher, who was also an excellent man, I heard with a great liking ; his colleagues, too, were valued by me, and I knew how to draw out the golden apples of the Word of God from among the common fruit upon earthen platters. To the public ordinances all kinds of private devotional exercises were added, and by these means imagination and a more refined form of sensibility were nourished. I was so accustomed to this course, I respected it so much, that even now nothing higher came before me. For my soul has only feelers and no eyes, it touches but does not see. Ah, if it could only get eyes and look !

Now I went again, full of yearning, to the sermons ; but alas, what happened to me ? I found no longer what I had found formerly. These preachers blunted their teeth on the shell, while I enjoyed the kernel. I now soon grew tired of them ; I had been so spoilt I could only abide by that which I knew how to find.

I wanted to have pictures, I required impressions from without, and I imagined that I felt a pure spiritual desire.

Philo's parents had come into connection with the Moravian community ; in his library there were many writings of Count Zinzendorf. He had on several occasions spoken with me very clearly and justly, and exhorted me to peruse some of these writings if it were only for the sake of getting to know a psychological phenomenon. I looked upon the Count as quite a mischievous heretic, so I left the Eberndorf Hymn Book lying by me aside, which my friend, with a similar intention, had pressed upon me.

However, in complete want of all external means of excitement, I took up as by chance the above-mentioned hymn **book**, and to my astonishment found therein songs which, under very singular forms, seemed to point to what I felt. I was attracted

by the originality and naivete of the expressions. Peculiar emotions seemed to be expressed in a peculiar way ; no school terminology reminded me of anything stiff or commonplace. I was convinced that the people felt as I felt, and I was very glad to lay hold of a small stanza, to fix it in my memory and to carry it about with me for some days. From the moment when the truth had been bestowed upon me, some three months had in this way elapsed. At last I took the resolution of revealing everything to my friend Philo, and asking him to communicate to me those writings about which I had now become excessively curious. And so I did it, in spite of there being something in my heart which earnestly dissuaded me.

I related to him all my story in detail and, as he was a principal person in it and my narrative contained the most severe penitential sermon for him, he was greatly affected and touched. He melted into tears. I was glad, believing that with him, too, a complete change of mind had been effected.

He provided me with all the writings which I was requiring, and I had superfluous nourishment for my imagination. I made great progress in the Zinzendorf manner of thought and speech. One must not imagine that I did not know how to value at present the special manner of the Count. I willingly do him justice ; he is no empty visionary ; he speaks of great truths for the most part with a bold flight of imagination, and those who despise him do not know how to value or to discriminate his qualities.

I experienced an indescribable liking for him. Had I been my own mistress I would certainly have forsaken fatherland and friends and gone to join him. We should infallibly have understood one another, and with difficulty have been able to put up with one another for long.

I thank my good genius that now kept me so confined to my household duties. It was already a great journey if I only went into the garden. The care of my old and weak father gave me work enough to do, and in the hours of recreation I passed my time with noble imaginations. The only person whom I saw was Philo, whom my father greatly loved, but his frank relation with me had suffered to some extent by the late explanation. He had not been deeply moved by it, and as some attempt to talk in my manner of speaking did not succeed with him, he

avoided this kind of subject, and all the more easily as by his extensive knowledge he always knew how to introduce new topics in his conversation.

I was therefore a Moravian sister on my own footing, and this turn of my mood and my inclination I had to conceal especially before the Chief Court Preacher, whom as my confessor I had much reason to value, and whose great merits were not diminished in my eyes by his extreme aversion from the Moravian community. Unfortunately, this worthy man had to suffer much trouble from me and others. Many years ago he had become acquainted while abroad with an upright, pious gentleman, and with him, as one who earnestly sought after God, he had remained in uninterrupted correspondence. How painful was it for his spiritual guide when this gentleman later on joined himself to the Moravian community and remained with the brethren for a long time ; on the other hand, how pleasant it was when his friend quarrelled with the brethren, decided to settle near us and seemed again to give himself anew completely to the guidance of his former friend.

Now was the new arrival, as it were, a triumph to all the specially chosen lambs of the Chief Pastor. Only in our house he was not introduced, because my father did not see anyone now. This gentleman obtained great approbation ; he possessed the polished manner of the Court and the attractiveness of the community, and besides having many fine qualities by nature, he was soon the great saint for all who knew him, at which his spiritual patron was greatly delighted. But, unfortunately, it was only in external matters that he had quarrelled with the community, and in his heart he was still entirely a Moravian. He attached himself specially to the reality of the matter, but the trifling matters with which the Count had surrounded it was very much suited to him. He had now become accustomed to their modes of speaking and representing things, and if he now had to conceal it carefully from his old friend, so it became all the more necessary for him, when he saw a small band of trusted persons around him, to come forth with his little litanies and little figures, and he found, as can be imagined, great applause.

I knew nothing of the whole affair and dawdled along in my own way. For a long time we remained unknown to one another.

Once in a leisure moment I visited a sick lady friend. I met there school acquaintances, and I soon noticed that I had disturbed them in a conversation. I affected not to notice anything, but with great astonishment I saw some Moravian pictures on the wall in ornamented frames. I quickly grasped what had happened at the time when I was not in the house, and welcomed this new appearance with some appropriate verses. Imagine the surprise of my friends.

We explained ourselves and at once were agreed and in each other's confidence.

I now often sought opportunity for going out. Unfortunately, I only found it once in every three or four weeks, became acquainted with the noble apostle and, by degrees, with the whole secret community. I visited their meetings when I could, and with my social feelings it was infinitely agreeable to hear from others and to communicate to them that which I had only hitherto thought out within myself.

I was not so prepossessed with my friends as not to have noticed that only a few of them felt the meaning of the tender words and expressions, and how they were no more helped by these than they had been formerly by the symbolic language of the Church. Nevertheless, I went along with them and did not let this disturb me. I considered that I was not called to examination and trial of the hearts of others. Had I not by long-continued and innocent exercises been prepared for something better? I took away my share from our meetings; when it came to speaking I laid stress on the meaning which, in subjects so delicate, is rather disguised by words than indicated by them, and for the rest left each with silent tolerance to follow his own path.

In these quiet times of secret social pleasure there soon followed storms of open strife and contradictions which aroused great commotion at the Court and in the town, and I might also say gave rise to not a little scandal. The period had now arrived when our Chief Court Preacher, this vigorous opponent of the Moravian community, had to discover, to his sanctified humiliation, that his best and otherwise most devoted hearers were now all inclining to the side of the Moravian community. He was extremely hurt, forgot in the first moment all moderation, and could not retract afterwards even if he had wished to do so. There were violent disputes in which, fortunately, I was not

mentioned, as I was only an accidental member of those so-hated meetings, and our zealous leader could not do without my father and my friend in regard to civic matters. I maintained my neutrality with a quiet contentment, for conversation about such feelings and subjects, even with people who wished well, was for me vexatious when they could not grasp the deepest meaning and only dwelt on what was superficial. But to strive with adversaries over matters in which friends can hardly understand one another seemed to be unprofitable, nay, pernicious. For I was soon able to observe that amiable noble men, who in this matter could not entirely restrain their heart from enmity and hatred, quickly passed over to injustice, and in order to defend an external form had almost destroyed their best inward nature.

Much as the worthy man in the present case may have been in the wrong, and much as they tried to bring me out against him, I could never deny him my heartfelt respect. I knew him thoroughly ; I could easily put myself in his position of looking at these things. I have never seen a man without his weakness, only in the case of distinguished men it is more striking. We wish and will, now once and for all, that those who are greatly privileged should also pay no tribute whatever. I honoured him as a distinguished man, and hoped the influence of my silent neutrality would be helpful if not to a peace, at least to a truce.

I don't know what I might have effected, but God concluded the matter more shortly and took him to Himself. At his funeral we all wept, who only a short time before had been disputing with him about words. His integrity and his reverence for God no one had doubted.

I, too, was obliged at this time to put aside the childish things (of the Moravians) which, owing to these contentions, appeared to me in some measure in a different light. Our uncle had in silence carried out his plans for my sister. He introduced to her a young man of position and property as her bridegroom, and showed by a rich dowry what might be expected from him. My father joyfully consented, my sister was free and forewarned, and gladly changed her condition.

The wedding was undertaken at my uncle's castle. Family and friends were invited and we all came in the most cheerful spirits.

For the first time in my life the entrance to the house aroused my admiration. I had often heard people speak of my uncle's good taste, of his Italian architect, of his collections and of his library. I compared all this with what I had seen, and it made a very variegated picture in my thoughts. Great, therefore, was my astonishment at the serious and harmonious impression which I felt on entering the house, and which grew stronger in every hall and room. Elsewhere, grandeur and decoration had only distracted me ; here I felt myself concentrated and drawn back upon myself. Also, in all the preparations for these solemnities and festivals, their splendour and dignity produced a quiet pleasure, and to me it was just as incomprehensible that one man could have invented and arranged all this as that many could have united together so as to work together in so high a spirit. And withal, the host and his friends appeared so natural—not a trace of stiffness or empty ceremonial was to be observed.

The wedding itself was managed unexpectedly in a spirit of cordiality ; a vocal music surprised us and the clergyman understood how to give the ceremony all the solemnity of truth. I stood near Philo, and, instead of congratulating me, he said with a deep sigh : " When I saw your sister give away her hand, I felt as if boiling water had been poured over me." " Why ? " I enquired. " It is always so with me when I see people joined in marriage," he replied. I laughed at him, but I have often since had sufficient reason to think of his words.

The cheerfulness of the society among which were many young people appeared once again so brilliant, while everything surrounding us was dignified and serious. All the furniture, table linen, plate and table ornaments were in harmony with the whole, and if in other places the architect seemed to spring from the same school as the confectioner, here it appeared that the confectioner and butcher had been at school with the architect.

As we remained together for several days, our intelligent and understanding host had provided for the entertainment of the society in the most varied manner. I did not here repeat the melancholy experience which I have so often had in my life—how badly a large mixed society is situated ; when left to itself it has to seize upon the most general and vapid pastimes,

so that the good, rather than the bad, members of the society felt the want of entertainment.

Our uncle had arranged things quite differently. He had appointed two or three marshals, if I may so describe them. One had to provide for the amusements of the young people : dances, excursions, little games were of his invention and remained under his direction ; and as many young people like being out of doors and are not afraid of the influences of the air, the garden and the garden hall were given over to them, and for this object some galleries and pavilions had been erected, doubtless made of boards and canvas, but in such noble proportions we were reminded only of stone and marble. How seldom is there a festival at which the person who calls together the guests feels that it is his duty to provide for their wants and conveniences in every way ! Hunting and card parties, short walks, opportunities for intimate, solitary conversations were provided for the older people, and whoever wished to go earliest to bed was certainly lodged farthest away from all noise.

By this good arrangement the space in which we were seemed to be a little world, and yet if one regarded it closely the castle was not large, and without an exact knowledge of it, and without the spirit of the host, it would have been impossible to have lodged so many people in it and to have entertained them each according to his own taste.

Pleasant as is the aspect of a well-formed person, so are we pleased by a complete establishment in which the presence of a rational intelligent mind makes itself felt.

We feel joy either on entering a clean house, even though it has been built and decorated in a tasteless fashion, for it shows us the presence of a person cultivated at least under one aspect. How doubly pleasant is it then to us when from a human dwelling the spirit of a more elevated, though doubtless only a sensuous, culture speaks to us.

Most vividly did this appear to me at my uncle's castle. I had heard and read much about art. Philo himself was a great lover of pictures and had a fine collection. I too, myself, had drawn much, but partly I was too much occupied with my feelings, striving only after the one thing which is needful so as first to bring it to perfection, and partly all the things I had seen, like other worldly things, seemed to distract my attention. Now,

for the first time I was brought back to myself by something outward, and I learnt to my greatest astonishment the difference between the natural splendour of the nightingale's song and a four-voiced Hallelujah from the organs of men full of feeling.

I did not conceal from my uncle my joy over this way of looking at things. When all the others went their own way, he was wont to converse with me especially. He spoke with great modesty of what he possessed and had produced here with great definiteness of the meaning with which it had been gathered together and displayed, and I could easily observe that he spoke with toleration for me, as he seemed in his usual manner to subordinate that excellence of which he thought himself master, to that which, according to my conviction, was the best and most right.

"If we are able to think it possible," he once said, "that the Creator of the world Himself assumed the form of His creature, and in that manner lived for a time in the world, so must this Being appear to us of infinite perfection, because the Creator was able to unite Himself so intimately with it. Therefore, in our idea of man there should be no contradiction with our idea of the godhead, and if we often feel a certain unlikeness and remoteness from it, it is all the more on that account our duty, not, like the *Advocatus Diaboli*, always to keep our eyes on the nakedness and weakness of our nature, but rather to seek out all the perfections by which our claims to similarity with the godhead may be made good."

I smiled and replied: "Do not make me ashamed, dear Uncle, by your kindness in speaking after my language. What you have to say to me is of so great importance to me that I should like to hear it in your own peculiar language, and then the parts of it which I cannot make my own endeavour to translate."

"I will," he said, "thereupon continue in my own most peculiar way without any alteration of my tone. Man's greatest merit is to determine his circumstances as much as possible, and as little as possible to be determined by them. The whole world lies before us as a great quarry before the architect, who only deserves the name when out of the fortuitous mass **he** can put together with the greatest economy, fitness and durability, a form which **originated** in his **spirit everything without us**,

indeed, I may say, everything in us, is only an element, but deep within us lies this creative force which can create what it was meant to be, and does not let us rest until out of us, or in us, in one way or another that thing has been represented. You, my dear Niece, have perhaps chosen the better part ; you have endeavoured to bring your moral being and your deeply loving nature into agreement with itself and with what is highest, but we others are not to be blamed if we endeavour to become acquainted with the sensuous man in his universality, and bring him to unity in his activity."

Through such talk we became by degrees more intimate, and I desired him to speak with me as with himself, without condescension. " Don't imagine," said my uncle, " that I am flattering you when I praise your way of thinking and acting. I honour the individual who knows clearly what he wishes, goes forward unweariedly, who knows the means to his object, can group and use them ; how far his object may be great or small, deserving of praise or blame ; of that I reflect upon afterwards. Believe me, my dear one, the great part of the misery and of that which is called sin in the world arises simply from the fact that men are too neglectful of getting to know their aims, and when they do know them, of working seriously to get them.

" They appear to me like people who have the idea that a tower can and must be built, and yet expend on the foundation not more stones and labour than would be required for a hut. Had you, my friend, whose highest need was to come absolutely into harmony with your moral nature, instead of those great and bold sacrifices only so contented yourself between your family, a bridegroom and perhaps a husband, you would have been in constant contradiction with yourself and never have enjoyed a moment of satisfaction."

" You employ the word sacrifice," I here replied, " and I have given thought that to a higher purpose as to a divinity we bring by way of sacrifice that which is of lesser value, though it lies closely at our heart, just as one would gladly and willingly bring a favourite lamb to the altar for the health of a beloved father."

" Whatever it may be," he replied, " reason or feeling that bids us give up one thing for the other, choose one thing instead of another, decision and perseverance are, in my opinion, the

qualities of men most worthy of respect. You cannot have the wares and the money at the same time ; and he is in just as bad a case who is always longing for the wares without having the heart to give the money for it, as he who regrets the purchase when he has the wares in his hands. But I am far from blaming men on this account, for it is not really their fault, but the position in which they are situated is so entangled that they do not know how to guide themselves. Thus, for instance, you will find fewer bad managers in the country than in the towns, and again fewer in small towns than in large ones. And what is the reason for this ? Man is born for a limited condition, objects which are single, new and definite he is able to look into, and he accustoms himself to make use of such means as are at hand, but when he enters upon a wider sphere he does not know what he wants to do, nor what he should do ; and it comes to the same thing whether he is distracted by the multitude of objects or is overwhelmed by their greatness and dignity. It is always his misfortune for him when he is obliged to strive after something with which he cannot connect himself by the regular exercise of his activities.

" Truly," he continued, " without earnestness in the world nothing is possible, and among the people whom we call cultivated, there is really little earnestness to be found ; they proceed, if I may say it, towards labours and employments, towards arts, indeed even towards pleasures only with a kind of self-defence ; they live as they read a heap of newspapers, only to be done with them, and there comes into my mind that young Englishman who, in a society, in the evening, related with the utmost satisfaction how he had to-day done six churches and two galleries. People want to know and learn a great many things, and just those with which they are least concerned, and they do not see that hunger is not stilled by snapping at the air. When I get acquainted with a man, my first reaction is : with what does he employ himself ? how and with what perseverance ? With the answer to the question the interest I should take in him for life is decided."

" You are," I replied, " dear Uncle, perhaps too severe, and withdraw your helping hand from many a good man to **whom** you could be useful."

" Can he be blamed," he answered, " who for so long has

laboured in vain for them and about them? How much we have to suffer in youth from those who think to invite us to an agreeable party of pleasure, when they promise to introduce us into the society of the Danaids or Sisyphus.

" Thank God, I have freed myself from them, and if one of them unfortunately comes into my circle, I endeavour in the politest manner with compliments to remove him from it ; for it is just from these people that one hears the most bitter complaints about the confused state of politics, the superficiality of the sciences, the frivolity of artists, the emptiness of poets, and much more of that sort ; least of all do they and the many like them reflect that they would never read a book which had been written just as they requied it, that true poetry is strange to them, and that even a good work of art can only obtain their applause by means of prejudice. However, let us now break off; this is not the time to scold and complain."

He drew my attention to the different pictures which hung upon the wall. My eye rested on those whose look was charming, or their subject important. He allowed this for a time, then he said, " Pay some attention to the Spirit which has produced these works ! Good minds like to see the finger of God in Nature, why should we not also bestow some regard to the hand of His imitation." He then got me to observe some insignificant-looking pictures, and tried to make me comprehend that it was really the history of art alone which could give us the idea of the worth and dignity of a work of art, that we should know the weary steps of mechanism and handicraft on which the man of capacity has laboured in the course of centuries, so as to know how it is possible for the genius to move freely and joyfully on the pinnacle, whose mere aspect makes us feel giddy.

With this view he had gathered together a beautiful series of pictures, and as he interpreted them to me I could not restrain myself from thinking I saw before me moral culture as in a symbol. When I uttered my thoughts to him, he replied : " You are perfectly right, and hence we see that he does not act well who in solitary exclusion by himself follows after moral culture ; much rather will it be found that he whose spirit strives after moral culture has every reason at the same time to cultivate his finer sensuous powers, that so he may not run the risk of sinking down from his moral height by giving himself over to the

enticements of a lawless fancy, and getting into the condition of degrading his nobler nature by taking pleasure in tasteless triflings, if not in something worse."

I did not suspect him of aiming at me, but I felt myself struck when I reflected that among the songs which had edified me there might have been much that was in bad taste, and that the little figures which were joined to my ideas would, with difficulty, have found favour with my uncle.

Philo had meantime frequently occupied himself in the library, and he now brought me along with him. We admired the selection and the number of the books ; they had been collected from the same point of view as the pictures, for those were almost only such to be found as lead us to correct knowledge, or direct us to right arrangement, which either give us fit materials or convince us of the unity of our spirit.

In my lifetime I had read an unspeakable amount, and in certain departments was hardly a book unknown to me ; it was therefore pleasanter to speak about the general survey of the whole, to observe the deficiencies and not, as formerly, to see only a limited confusion or a boundless expansion.

At the same time we made the acquaintance of a very interesting quiet man. He was a physician and naturalist, and seemed to belong more to the penates than to the inmates of the house. He showed us the Museum, which, like the Library, in closed glass cases at the same time adjoined the walls of the room, and ennobled the space without making it unduly narrow. Here, I remembered with delight my youth, and showed to my father many of the objects which he had formerly brought to the sick-bed of his child scarcely then opening her eyes upon the world. At the same time and in our following conversations, the physician did not conceal the fact that he drew near to me in respect of my religious sentiments. He greatly praised my uncle for his tolerance and esteem of all which indicates and advances the worth and unity of human nature, only indeed he demanded something similar from all other men, and would condemn and avoid nothing so much as individual conceit and narrow exclusiveness.

After the marriage of my sister, joy beamed from the eyes of my uncle, and on several occasions he spoke with me of what he thought of doing for her and her children. He had fine

estates, which he managed himself and which he hoped to leave in the best condition to his nephew. With regard to the small estate where we actually were, he appeared to entertain peculiar ideas. "I will," he said, "only leave it to someone who can understand, value and enjoy what it contains, and who perceives how a man of wealth and position, especially in Germany, has reason to put forward something as a pattern for others."

The larger part of the guests had now departed by degrees ; we were making preparations to go, thinking we had experienced the final scene of this solemnity, when we were surprised afresh by his attention in affording us a dignified enjoyment. We could not conceal from him the delight which we felt when at my sister's wedding a chorus of voices was heard without the accompaniment of any instrument whatever. We suggested to him to procure this pleasure for us once again, but he seemed to pay no attention to us. We were therefore greatly surprised when he said to us one evening : "The music of the dance has passed away ; our young friends who were passing have left us ; the bridal pair themselves seem to be more serious than they were a few days ago ; and to separate at such a time, when perhaps we shall never meet again, at least meet in the same circumstances, stirs us to a solemn mood which I know not how to entertain more nobly than by a music which you already seemed to wish to have repeated."

The choir, which had become stronger and had practised quietly, was made to sing us songs with four and eight voices, which I may well say gave us a foretaste of bliss. Hitherto I had only been acquainted with friars' singing, with which worthy souls, often with hoarse voices, imagine they are praising God like wild birds, because they procure a pleasant feeling for themselves ; for the empty music of the concert room, where one is expected to admire the talent of a singer, seldom carries one away even only with a transient pleasure. Now I perceived a music which originated in the deepest feeling of the most excellent human beings, was, by definite and practised organs in harmonious unity, made to speak to the deepest and best ideas of man and to let him really at that moment feel in a living manner his likeness to the Deity. All were spiritual songs in the Latin language, which marked themselves out as jewels in the golden rings of a polished society in this world, and, without making any claim

to so-called edification, they elevated and made me happy in the most spiritual manner.

At our departure we were all presented with handsome gifts. He handed over to me the cross of my Order, more beautifully and artistically worked and enamelled than one had ever been accustomed to see it before. It was hung upon a large brilliant by which it was fastened to the ribbon, and which he gave me as the noblest stone in his collection of natural objects.

My sister with her husband went to his estates ; the rest of us all returned to our abodes and appeared to ourselves, as far as our outward circumstances were concerned, to have returned to a quite ordinary existence. We had been, as it were, set down upon the flat earth from a fairy palace, and we had to behave and help ourselves as best we could.

The remarkable experiences which I had had in that new circle left upon me a fine impression. This, however, did not remain long in its complete liveliness, though my uncle endeavoured to nourish and renew it by sending me from time to time his best and most pleasing works of art, and when I had enjoyed them long enough he exchanged them with others.

I was so much accustomed to be occupied with myself, bringing into order the concerns of my heart and my temper, and conversing about them with similarly minded people, that I could not consider a work of art with attention without soon turning back upon myself. I was in the habit of looking at a picture or a copperplate only as at the letters of a book. A fine print is certainly pleasing, but who would take in hand a book on account of its print ? So I required of a pictorial representation that it should say something : it should teach me, move me, improve me, and my uncle in his letters with which he expounded his works of art, might say what he liked, I always remained in my old temper.

Yet more than my own special disposition, outward incidents and changes in my own family drew me away from such considerations, indeed for a time even from myself. I had to suffer and to act more than my weak powers seemed able to endure.

My unmarried sister had been up till now, as it were, my right arm ; healthy, strong and indescribably kind, she had taken over the whole management of the home, as I was busied with the personal care of our aged father. She was seized with a

catarrh from which developed a disease of the chest, and in three weeks she was lying in her coffin. Her death inflicted wounds upon me, the scars of which I am now not yet willing to look upon.

I lay ill in bed before she was buried ; the old trouble in my chest seemed to be reawakening ; I coughed violently and was so hoarse that I could not produce a clear sound.

My married sister from fright and grief was confined before her time. My old father was afraid that he would lose all at once his children and the hopes of posterity ; his natural tears increased my sorrow. I prayed to God that He would restore to me a tolerable state of health, and only asked Him to spare my life until after the death of my father. I recovered and was, as I thought, well, could carry on my duties again, though only in a wretched sort of way.

My sister was again in the family way. Many cares which in such cases are entrusted to the mother were given to me. She did not live quite happily with her husband, and this had to be hidden from our father. I had to be arbitrator in their disputes, and I could do so more readily as my brother-in-law had confidence in me and both of them were really worthy persons, only each of them, instead of overlooking things, remonstrated with the other, and from eagerness to live completely in harmony with one another, they never could agree. I now learned, too, to lay hold of worldly affairs seriously, and to practise that of which I had only sung formerly.

My sister gave birth to a son. The ailing condition of my father did not prevent him from travelling to her. At the sight of the child he was incredibly cheerful and joyful, and at the christening, contrary to his habit, he appeared to me enthusiastic, indeed I might say, like a genius with two faces. With the one he looked forward joyfully to those regions which he soon hoped to enter ; with the other, to the new, earthly life, full of hope, which had arisen in the boy descended from him. On the way back he was never tired of talking with me about the boy, his form, his health, and his wish that the gifts of this new citizen of the world should be fortunately cultivated. His reflections about this continued when we had reached home ; it was not till some days later that a kind of fear was noticed, which showed itself after dinner without shivering, by some degree of heat

which caused weakness. He did not, however, lie down ; went out in the morning, faithfully performed the duties of his office, till at last continuous and serious symptoms kept him indoors.

I shall never forget the calm, the clearness and distinctness of mind with which he arranged in the greatest order the concerns of his house, provision for his funeral, as if it were the business of another person.

With a cheerfulness which was not usual with him, and which now mounted to a lively joy, he said to me : " Where is the fear of death which I formerly felt ? Should I be afraid of dying ? I have a gracious God ; the grave awakens no terror in me ; I have an eternal life."

To recall the circumstances of his death, which soon ensued, is for me in my loneliness one of my most pleasing entertainments, and the visible workings of a higher power at that time no one shall argue me out of.

The death of my dearly loved father changed the life which I had led hitherto. From the strictest obedience, from the greatest confinement, I came into the greatest freedom, which I enjoyed like a food from which one has long been deprived. Formerly I was seldom out of the house for a couple of hours, now I scarcely lived one day in my room. My friends, with whom I could not make interrupted visits, wanted to enjoy my company continuously, as I did theirs. I was often invited to dinner ; walks and small parties of pleasure came along and I was never wanting. But when the circle of friends had been gone through I saw that the invaluable happiness of freedom does not consist in doing what one likes and what circumstances may invite us to do, but in being able, without hindrance or restraint, to do in the direct way what one thinks is right and fitting, and I was old enough in this case to reach a fine conviction without having to pay for it.

What I could not deny myself, as soon as it was possible, was intercourse with the members of the Moravian community and binding myself closer to them. I hastened to visit one of their establishments which was close at hand, but here I, in a way, found what I had put before myself. I was honest enough to let my opinion be noticed, and they endeavoured to persuade me that this settlement was nothing compared with a properly organized community. I let myself be satisfied with

that, yet according to my idea the true spirit could have shown itself as well from a small institution as from a great one.

One of their bishops who was present, an immediate disciple of the Count, occupied himself much with me. He spoke English perfectly, and as I understood it a little he thought it was a sign that we belonged together. But I did not mean this at all ; his intercourse did not please me in the least. He was a cutler and a native of Moravia ; his way of thinking still betrayed that of the artisan. I got on better with Herr van L,' who had been a Major in the French service, but I felt that I was never capable of the submissiveness which he showed to his superiors ; indeed I felt as if I had been given a box on the ear when I saw the Major's wife and other more or less women of position kiss the hand of the Bishop. Meanwhile a journey to Holland was proposed, but which, certainly for my good, never took place.

My sister now gave birth to a daughter, and now it was the turn for us women to be satisfied and to consider how the child should be brought up like one of us. My brother-in-law, on the other hand, was very much dissatisfied when, in the following year, again a daughter followed. With his large estates he wanted to sec sons around him, who in the future could assist him in their management. With my weak health I kept myself quiet, and by a tranquil mode of life in tolerable equilibrium. I was not afraid of death, I wanted to die, but I felt in silence that God was giving me time to examine my soul and always to come nearer to Him. In my many sleepless nights I have especially felt something which I cannot describe clearly. It was as if my soul were thinking apart from the body ; it looked upon the body itself as something foreign to it, as one looks upon a piece of clothing. It pictured to itself with extraordinary vivacity times and events long past, and felt what was to follow from them. All those times arc past, the future will also pass away, the body will fall to pieces like a garment, but I, the well-known I, I am.

This feeling so great, exalted and consoling I was taught to dwell on as little as possible by a noble friend who was ever becoming more intimate with me. He was the physician whom I had come to know in my uncle's house, and who had very well informed himself of the condition of my body and my mind. He showed me how greatly these feelings, when we nurture them within ourselves independently of external objects, to some

extent undermine us and sap the whole foundation of our being. "To be active," he used to say, "is the vocation of man, and all the intervals, in which he is obliged to take rest, he ought to employ in acquiring a clearer knowledge of outward things, which in the future will once more facilitate this activity."

As my friend knew my custom of regarding my body as an external object, and as he knew that I understood fairly well my constitution, my malady and the medical remedies for it, and that really by the continual sufferings of myself and other people I had become half a doctor, he now directed my attention from the knowledge of the human body and of the drugs which act upon it to the other kindred objects of the creation, and led me about as in Paradise, and only at last, if I may continue my comparison, did he allow me to surmise from a distance the Creator wandering in the Garden in the cool of the evening. How gladly did I now see God in Nature ; when I carried Him with such certainty within my heart, how interesting to me was the work of His hands and how thankful I was when He had willed to give me life by the breath of His mouth.

With my sister we were again in hopes of a boy, and my brother-in-law looked longingly for it, but, alas, he did not live to see its birth. This excellent man died from a fall from his horse, and my sister followed him after she had brought into the world a beautiful boy. The four children she had left behind I could not look at without sadness. So many healthy people had passed away before me, who was the sickly one. Was not I, perhaps, to see many of these hopeful blossoms fading away ? I knew the world well enough to realize in what dangers a child, especially one of position, grows up, and it seemed to me that since the period of my youth these had increased. I felt that with my weak health I was not in a position to do much or anything for the children ; all the more was the decision of my uncle desired by me. This naturally arose from his way of thinking, as he applied all his attention to the upbringing of these lovable creatures, and without doubt they deserved it in every sense. They were well formed and with their great diversities gave promise altogether of being well-conditioned and sensible persons. Since my worthy physician had called my attention to it, **I gladly** considered family likenesses in the children and our relatives. My father had carefully preserved the pictures of his ancestors,

had had himself and his children painted by fairly good masters ; my mother, too, and her relations were not forgotten. We knew exactly the characters of the whole family, and as we had often compared them with one another, we now endeavoured to discover in the children similarities, both outward and inward. The eldest son of my sister seemed like his grandfather on the father's side, of whom a very well-painted youthful portrait was placed in my uncle's collection. He loved him too, as one who had always shown himself to be a born soldier, and he liked to busy himself with arms whenever he visited me. For my father had left behind a very fine armoury, and the young fellow had no rest until I had given him a pair of pistols and a fowling-piece, and until he had brought himself out as if to mount guard on a German castle. At the same time there was nothing of rudeness in his actions or his whole conduct, but he was much rather gentle and sensible.

The eldest daughter had attracted all my affection, and that perhaps was because she seemed like me, and of all four held closest to me. But I can indeed say, the more exactly I regarded her as she grew up, the more she put me to shame ; I could not look on the child without admiration, I may almost say, without reverence. One would not easily see a nobler figure, a more peaceful spirit and an activity so equal and confined to no particular object. At no moment of her life was she unoccupied, and every occupation in her hands became a worthy one. All seemed alike to her, if only she could accomplish what was suited to the time and place, and in the same way she could remain quiet without impatience when she found nothing to do. This activity without need of occupation I have never again met with in my life. From earliest youth her behaviour to the suffering and destitute was inimitable. I willingly confess that I never had the talent of making a business of beneficence. I was not niggardly towards the poor, indeed I often in my circumstances gave too largely ; yet in some measure I merely bought myself off, and someone had to be a blood relation of mine if he were to receive attention from me. It is rather the opposite that I praise in my niece. I have never seen her give money to a poor person, **and** whatever she received from me for this purpose she always **first** changed into **the** most necessary article. She never seemed **more lovable to me** than when she rummaged my clothes and

wash cupboards ; she always found something which I was not wearing and did not want, and to sew these old cast-off things together and to fit them on to some ragged child was her greatest happiness.

The ideas of her sister displayed themselves differently. She inherited much from her mother, she promised early to be very elegant and charming, and she seems to wish to keep her promise. She is very much taken up with her external appearance, and from her earliest years she understood how to adorn and carry herself in a striking manner. I still remember with what delight when quite a small child she looked at herself in her glass when I had decked her out with some beautiful pearls which my mother had bequeathed to me and which she, by chance, had found.

When I reflected on these different inclinations, it was pleasant for me to consider how my possessions after my death would be divided among them, and by means of them again become alive. I saw again the fowling-piece of my father on the back of my nephew travelling round the fields, and birds once more falling from his hunting pouch ; my whole wardrobe I could see, at the Easter confirmation, fitted on to clean young women coming out of church, and with the best pieces of it some virtuous burgher girl was adorned on her wedding-day. Natalie had a special inclination for fitting out such children and honest poor young girls, though she, as I must here observe, had not shown any kind of love or need for an attachment to a visible or invisible being which had manifested itself so strongly in my youth. When I now reflected that the youngest sister on just the same day would carry my pearls and jewels to Court, I could see with tranquillity my possessions, like my body, given back to the elements.

The children have grown up and arc, to my satisfaction, healthy, beautiful and honest creatures. That my uncle keeps them from me I put up with patiently, and I see them but seldom when they are in the neighbourhood or even in the town. A remarkable man, who is regarded as a French clergyman, though no one knows rightly his origin, has the oversight of all **these** children, who have been brought up in various places and are boarded now here and there.

At first I could see no method in this education, until **at last**

my physician explained to me that my uncle had let himself be persuaded by the Abbe, that if one wants to effect anything by education one must first see what are the inclinations and wishes of the pupil. Then he should be placed in a position in which he can satisfy the former as soon as possible and attain the latter, so that if he has been mistaken, he can become aware of his error soon enough, and when he has found what suits him, he may hold more zealously to it and therefore continue his studies more assiduously. I wish this wonderful experiment may succeed ; with such excellent natures it is perhaps possible.

But that which I cannot approve of in these instructors is that they seek to withdraw from the children everything which could lead them to intercourse with themselves and with the invisible, only, faithful Friend. Indeed I often feel vexed with my uncle because, on this account, he regards me as dangerous for the children. When it comes to practice, no man is tolerant ! For he who assures us that he wishes everyone to take his own course, yet always endeavours to exclude from activity all those who do not think as he docs.

This way of removing the children troubles me all the more, as I am the more convinced of the reality of my belief. Why should it not have an origin from God, a real object, since in practice it shows itself to be so effective ? Is it not by practice that we first become certain of our own existence ? Why should we not, just in the same way, be able to be convinced of that Being who stretches out His hand to us for all that is good ?

That I am always advancing, never going backwards ; that my actions are always becoming more like the idea which I have formed of perfection ; that I feel every day more facility in doing what I hold to be right, in spite of the weakness of my body, which precludes me from many services. Can all this be explained from human nature, into the corruption of which I have seen so deeply ? For me, now, not at all.

I scarcely remember a commandment ; nothing appears to me under the aspect of law. It is an impulse that guides and leads me always aright ; I follow my feelings and know as little of restraint as of repentance. Thank God, I know to whom I am indebted for this happiness, and that I can only think of these privileges with humility. For I shall never get into the danger of being proud of what I could do and of my abilities, as

I have so clearly learned what a monster can be produced and nurtured in every human bosom if a higher power does not watch over us.

BOOK VII

CHAPTER I

SPRING had appeared in its full splendour. An early thunderstorm which had been threatening all day descended on the mountains with violence, the rain passed over the land, the sun came forth again in its glory, and on the gray ground there appeared a splendid rainbow. Wilhelm rode towards it and looked at it sorrowfully. " Ah ! " he said to himself, " do the most beautiful colours in life only appear to us on a dark ground ? And must drops fall, just when we ought to be enraptured ? A cheerful day is like a gray one when we look at it unmoved, and what is able to move us but the silent hope of the inborn inclinations of our heart not remaining without an object ? We are moved by the story of a good deed and by the sight of every harmonious object ; we then feel that we are not quite in a strange country ; we fondly imagine that we are nearer a home, towards which what is best and most inward within us is striving,"

Meanwhile a man on foot overtook him and kept him company, with long strides keeping by the side of the horse, and after some indifferent talk he said to the rider, " If I am not mistaken, I must have already seen you somewhere."

" I, too, remember you," replied Wilhelm. " Did we not make together an amusing water picnic ? "

" Quite right ! " replied the other.

Wilhelm regarded him more closely, and said after some silence : " I don't know what changes may have taken place with you. At that time I thought you were a Lutheran clergyman, and now you seem to me like a Catholic priest."

" To-day, at least, you are not deceived," said the other, taking off his hat and letting his tonsure be seen. " Where has your company gone to ? Have you still remained with it ? "

" Longer than was right, for, unfortunately, when I look back upon that time which I spent with it, I think I am looking into an infinite void ; nothing remains to me from it."

" There you make a mistake ; everything we meet with leaves traces behind ; everything, though unnoticed, contributes to our culture, but it is dangerous to wish to give an account of it. We become, in consequence, either proud and sluggish, or cast down and low spirited, and in the sequel the one hinders us as much as the other. The safest thing is always to do that which lies nearest to us, and that is now," he continued with a smile, " that we hurry on to get to our lodging."

Wilhelm enquired how far it was to Lothario's estate. The other replied that it lay behind the mountain. " Perhaps I shall meet you there," he continued. " I have only got to see about something in the neighbourhood. Good-bye for the present," and with these words he went on a steep path which seemed to lead more quickly over the mountain.

" Yes, indeed, he is right," said Wilhelm to himself as he rode farther on, " we ought certainly to think of what is nearest to us, and for me there is now nothing nearer than the melancholy commission which I have to execute. Let me see if I have got in my memory the words which are to put to shame the cruel friend."

He thereupon began to rehearse this work of art. He did not miss a syllabic, and the more his memory stood him in good stead, the more did his passion and courage increase. The sorrow and death were vividly present before his soul.

" Spirit of my friend," he exclaimed, " hover round me, and if it is possible for you, grant me a sign that you are appeased, that you are reconciled ! "

With these words and thoughts he had ascended the top of the mountain, and saw lying on a slope on the other side a remarkable building, which he at once thought was the abode of Lothario. An old, irregularly shaped castle with some towers and gables seemed to have been the first plan, but the newly adjoining buildings were still more irregular. They had been erected partly close by and partly at some distance, connected together by galleries and covered corridors. All outward symmetry, every architectural appearance seemed to have been sacrificed to the requirements of internal convenience. There

was no trace to be seen of rampart and trench, even as little of artificial gardens and avenues. A vegetable garden and an orchard came close up to the buildings, and small useful gardens were laid out even in the intermediate spaces. A cheerful little village lay at some distance, gardens and fields seemed to be everywhere entirely in the best condition.

Deep in his own impassioned feelings, Wilhelm rode on farther, without thinking much of what he saw. He put up his horse at an inn, and not without emotion hastened to the castle.

An old servant received him at the door, and intimated to him with much good nature that it would be difficult for him to see his master that day, for he had many letters to write and had already had to send away some of those who had business with him. Wilhelm became more pressing, and the old man was at last obliged to give way and announce him. He came back and conducted Wilhelm into a large ancient hall, desiring him to have patience as his master might not be there for some time. Wilhelm walked restlessly up and down and cast some glances at the knights and ladies whose ancient pictures hung around on the wall. He repeated the beginning of his speech, and it seemed now quite in place in the presence of these ruffs and coats of mail. As often as he heard something rustic, he put himself in a position to receive his enemy with dignity—first of all, to hand him over the letter and then to assail him with the weapons of reproach. Several times he was deceived, and began to be really annoyed and out of humour when at last a well-built man in boots and light overcoat came in from a side door. "What good news do you bring me?" he said to Wilhelm with a friendly voice. "Pardon me that I have kept you waiting."

As he said this, he was folding a letter which he had in his hand. Wilhelm, not without embarrassment, delivered to him Aurelia's paper and said, "I bring to you the last words of a friend, which you will not read without emotion."

Lothario took the letter and at once went back into the room, where, as Wilhelm could quite well see through the open door, he first sealed and addressed several letters, then opened Aurelia's letter and read it. He seemed to have read it through once, and Wilhelm, feeling the pathetic speech would not harmonize very well with the natural reception, gathered himself together, went straight to the threshold and wanted to begin his speech,

when a door in the tapestry of the room was opened and the clergyman entered.

" I have received the most wonderful message in the world," cried Lothario as he met him. " Pardon me," he continued as he turned to Wilhelm, " if I am not at this moment in the mood to converse further with you. You will stay with us to-night ! And you, Abbe, will look after our guest and take care that he is not in want of anything."

With these words he bowed to Wilhelm. The clergyman took our friend by the hand and he followed without opposition.

They went in silence through remarkable passages and came to a nice room. The clergyman brought him there and left him without further excuse. A lively boy soon made his appearance and announced himself as at Wilhelm's service, and brought supper, explained the arrangements of the household—when it was customary to breakfast, to dine, to work and amuse oneself. He told a great deal and, in particular, brought forward much in praise of Lothario.

Pleasant as the boy was, Wilhelm, however, tried to be rid of him. He wanted to be alone, for in his condition he felt extremely depressed and uneasy. He reproached himself for having accomplished his plan so badly, having only half executed his commission. He soon decided to recover the next morning that which he had delayed about, but he soon became aware that the presence of Lothario had brought quite different feelings to him. The house in which he was also seemed to him remarkable ; he did not know where he was in his condition ; he wanted to undress and opened his carpet-bag. With his night things he brought out at the same time the veil of the Ghost, which Mignon had packed up. The sight of it increased his mournful mood. " Fly, Youth ! Fly ! " he exclaimed. " What was that mystical word to mean ? From what was he to fly ? " " What was that mystical word to mean ? From what was he to fly ? Whither should he fly ? It would have been far better if the Ghost had called to me : ' Turn back upon yourself ! '* He looked at the English engravings which hung in frames on the wall ; he looked away over most of them with indifference. At last he found portrayed on one of them a ship unluckily stranded ; a father with his beautiful daughter awaited death from the waves flowing in upon them. The one

woman seemed to have a resemblance to that Amazon. An unspeakable compassion seized our friend ; he felt an irresistible need to open his heart ; tears poured from his eyes, and he could not recover himself until he was overpowered by sleep.

Singular dreams appeared to him towards morning. He found himself in a garden which he had often visited as a boy, and he saw again with pleasure the well-known avenues, hedges and flower-beds. Mariana met him ; he conversed lovingly with her and without any recollection of a past misunderstanding. Immediately upon this, his father came to them in his overalls and with an air of intimacy, which was unusual with him, asked his son to fetch a couple of chairs from the summer-house, took Mariana by the hand and conducted her to an arbour. Wilhelm hurried to the summer-house, but found it quite empty ; he only saw Aurelia standing at the opposite window. He went to speak to her, but she did not turn round, and though he put himself quite near her, he yet could not see her face. He looked out from the window and saw in a strange garden many people, some of whom he at once recognized. Frau Melina sat beneath a tree and played with a rose which she held in her hand ; Laertes stood near her and counted money from one hand into the other. Mignon and Felix lay on the grass, the former stretched out on her back, the latter on his face. Philine came forward and clapped her hands over the children. Mignon remained unmoved, Felix jumped up and fled from Philine. He first laughed as he ran when Philine pursued him, then he screamed in alarm when the harp-player came after him with large, slow strides. The child ran straight to a pond. Wilhelm hastened after him, but too late—the child lay in the water ! Wilhelm stood as if rooted to the spot. He now saw the beautiful Amazon on the other side of the pond ; she stretched out her right hand to the child and went to the bank. The child struck through the water in just the direction of her finger and followed after her as she went. At last she reached him her hand and drew him out of the pond. Meanwhile, Wilhelm had come nearer. The child was all in flames and fiery drops were falling from him. Wilhelm was still more anxious. The Amazon, however, quickly **took** a white veil from her head and carried the child with it. The fire was at once extinguished ; when she lifted up the veil two boys sprang out, who played mischievously to an fro while

Wilhelm with the Amazon went hand in hand across the garden, and in the distance saw his father walking with Mariana in an avenue which served with lofty trees to surround the whole garden. He directed his way towards them, and with his beautiful companion was going across the garden, when all at once the fair-haired Friederich came in their path and kept them back with loud laughter and all kinds of jokes. All the same, they wanted to continue their way farther, so he hurried away and ran towards the distant pair. His father and Mariana seemed to flee from before him ; he only ran all the quicker and saw them floating away in flight through the avenue. Nature and inclination demanded that he should go to their assistance, but the hand of the Amazon held him back. How gladly did he let himself be held. With these mingled feelings he awoke, and found his room already illuminated by the bright sun.

CHAPTER II

THE boy invited Wilhelm to breakfast. The latter found the Abbe already in the hall. Lothario, apparently, had gone out riding. The Abbe was not very conversational and seemed rather to be meditative ; he enquired after Aurelia's death and listened with sympathy to Wilhelm's story. " Ah ! " he exclaimed, " the man, for whom it is clearly alive what endless operations Nature and Art have to make before a cultivated being is formed, who himself as far as possible takes a share in the cultivation of his fellow-man, might despair when he sees how wantonly men will often destroy themselves and will often, whether with or without blame, come near to be destroyed. When I reflect on this, it appears to me that life itself is such an uncertain gift, that I could praise the man who does not value it higher than is reasonable."

He had scarcely spoken when the door was violently flung open. A young woman burst in, thrusting back the old servant who stood in her way. She hurried straight to the Abbe and, while grasping him by the arm, could scarcely for weeping and sobbing bring out a few words : " Where is he ? Where have you got him ? It is a horrible treachery ! Only confess, I know what is happening ! I will go after him ! I will know where he is ! "

"Calm yourself, my child," said the Abbe with assumed composure. "Come to your room, you shall learn everything, only you must be able to hear, if I am to tell it you." He offered her his hand with the intention of leading her away.

"I will not go to my room," she exclaimed. "I hate the walls within which you have so long kept me a prisoner! I have, however, learned everything. The colonel had challenged him: he has ridden off to look for his enemy, and perhaps now at this very moment—it seems to me now and then as though I heard shooting. Put to the horses and drive with me, or I will fill the house, the whole village, with my cries."

They heard a carriage driving past; she wrenched open the window.

"He is dead!" she cried. "They are bringing him here."

"He is getting out," said the Abbe. "You see, he is alive."

"He is wounded," she replied violently, "otherwise he would come on horseback! They are carrying him in! He is dangerously wounded!"

She ran out of the door and down the stairs. The Abbe hurried after her, and Wilhelm followed them. He saw how the fair one met her loved one who was coming upstairs.

Lothario leaned on his attendant, whom Wilhelm at once recognized as his old patron Jarno, spoke in a friendly and loving way to the disconsolate woman, and while also supporting himself against her, came slowly up the stairs. He greeted Wilhelm and was led into his private room.

Not long after, Jarno came out and walked up to Wilhelm, saying, "It seems that you are destined everywhere to find actors and theatres. We are just now in the midst of a dream which is not entirely amusing."

"I am glad," replied Wilhelm, "to find you again at this singular moment. I am astonished and alarmed, and your presence makes me at once calm and composed. Tell me, is there danger? Is the Baron seriously wounded?"

"I think not," replied Jarno.

After some time the young surgeon came out of the room. "Now, what do you say?" cried Jarno to him.

"That it is very dangerous," replied the latter, and put some instruments together into his leathern pocket.

Wilhelm looked at the band which hung down from the pocket. He thought he knew it. Bright, corresponding colours, an unusual pattern, gold and silver in remarkable figures distinguished this band from all other bands in the world. Wilhelm was convinced that he saw before him the case of instruments of the old surgeon who had bandaged him in that wood, and the hope after so long a time of finding again a trace of his Amazon struck like a flame through his whole being.

"Where did you get that pouch?" he exclaimed. "To whom did it belong before you? Please, tell me!"

"I bought it at an auction," replied the other. "What does it matter to me to whom it belonged?"

With these words he withdrew, and Jarno said, "If there came only one word of truth from the young man's lips!"

"So then he has not bought this pouch," replied Wilhelm.

"As little as that there is any danger to Lothario," answered Jarno.

Wilhelm stood immersed in many reflections when Jarno asked him how things had gone with him hitherto. Wilhelm gave a general account of his history, and when at last he had spoken of Aurelia's death, Jarno exclaimed, "It is indeed singular, very singular!"

The Abbe came out of the room, beckoned to Jarno to go in there instead of him, and said to Wilhelm: "The Baron asks you to remain here a few days to enlarge the society, and in those circumstances to contribute to his comfort. If it is necessary for you to send anything to your family, your letter shall be at once despatched, and that you may understand this remarkable occurrence, of which you are an eye-witness, I must relate to you what certainly is no secret. The Baron had a slight adventure with a lady which created more sensation than was reasonable, because she wished to enjoy in too lively a manner the triumph of having taken him away from a rival. Unfortunately, after some time he did not find the same entertainment in her company and he avoided it, but with her violent temperament it was impossible for her to endure her fate with composure. At a ball there was an open quarrel; she thought that she had been extremely insulted and wanted to be revenged. No knight appeared to take up her case till at last her husband, from whom she had been separated for a long time, heard of the affair and

took it up, challenged the Baron, and to-day has wounded him. The Colonel, however, as I hear, has come off still worse."

From this moment our friend was treated in the house as if he were a member of the family.

CHAPTER III

THEY had sometimes read aloud to the invalid. Wilhelm performed this little service with pleasure. Lydia did not come away from the bedside ; her care for the wounded man swallowed up all the rest of her attention, but to-day Lothario, too, seemed absent-minded, indeed he asked that they should not read any more.

" To-day I feel so acutely," he said, " how foolishly men let their time slip away. How much have I proposed for myself, how much reflected upon and how one delays with one's best projects. I have read proposals about the changes which I wish to make on my estates, and I can say that I am especially glad on this account that the bullet has not taken a more dangerous course."

Lydia looked at him tenderly, indeed with tears in her eyes, as if she wished to ask whether she, whether his friends, could not also take a share in his life's joys. Jarno, on the other hand, replied, " Changes such as you are proposing should be considered reasonably from every side before a decision is arrived at."

" Lengthy considerations," replied Lothario, " usually show that one has not got the point in question clearly in one's eye about which the talk is, over hasty actions that one does not know it at all. I perceive very clearly that in the management on many matters I cannot dispense with the service of my country people, and that I must resolutely and strictly insist on certain rights ; but I see also that other powers are undoubtedly advantageous to me, but not quite indispensable, so that I can give some of them to my people. We do not always lose when we do without something. Do I not use my estates far better than my father did ? Shall I not push my rents still higher ? And am I alone to enjoy the increasing profit ? Should I not also grant to

him who works with me, and for me, profits which widened knowledge and the advance of time offer to us ? "

" Thus is man's nature," cried Jarno, " and I don't blame myself when I surprise myself, too, in this peculiarity. Man wishes to get everything for himself, so as to do as he likes according to his pleasure. Money, which he does not expend himself, seldom seems to him well spent."

" Oh, yes," replied Lothario, " we can do without much of the capital when we occupy ourselves less arbitrarily with the interest."

" The only thing which I remember," said Jarno, " and about which I cannot give advice, is that you are making alterations just now by which, at least for the moment, you will lose ; you have yourself still debts, the payment of which limits you. I would advise you to put off your plan until you are completely clear."

" And meanwhile to leave over to a bullet or a tile, whether the results of my life and my activity are to be destroyed ! Oh, my friend," continued Lothario, " that is the great mistake of cultivated men, that they direct everything to one idea, less or not at all to an object. Why have I contracted debts ? Why have I quarrelled with my uncle and for so long forsaken my brothers and sisters, save only for an idea ? I thought of doing work in America, beyond the sea. I thought I should be useful and necessary ; if a line of action was not surrounded by a thousand dangers, it did not appear to me to be important or worthy. How differently do I now look at things, and how has what is nearest to me become of so much worth and so dear."

" I remember yet well the letter," replied Jarno, " which I received from overseas. You wrote to me. I will return and in my house, in my orchard in the midst of my people, will say : ' Here or nowhere is America ! ' "

" Yes, my friend, and I yet always regret the same thing, and however I scold myself at the same time, because I am not so active here as I was there. For a certain equable continuous mode of life we want only understanding and nothing more, so that we do not see the extraordinary things which each in-different day demands of us, and if we do recognize them, yet we find a thousand excuses for not doing them. A man of understanding is much for himself, but little for the general whole."

" We do not wish," said Jarno, " to come too close to the understanding, and confess that the extraordinary thing when it happens is mostly foolish."

" Yes, and just because men do the extraordinary outside the proper arrangement."

" Thus my brother-in-law is giving his property, so far as it is in his power to alienate it, to the Moravian brotherhood, and imagines that he is thereby advancing the salvation of his soul. If he had sacrificed a small portion of his income he could have made many people happy, might have made for them and himself a heaven upon earth. Our sacrifices are seldom of an active kind ; we quickly renounce what we give away. Not from resolution, but from despair, we renounce what we possess. In these days, I confess it, the image of the Count is constantly hovering before my eyes, and I am firmly determined to do that from conviction to which an amazing madness is impelling him. I will not wait for my recovery. Here are the papers ; they only want to be drawn out clearly. Take the lawyer with you for the purpose ; our guest will also help you. You know as well as I what the question is about, and here, recovering or dying, I will stand by it and exclaim : ' Here or nowhere is the Moravian brotherhood !' "

When Lydia heard her friend speak of dying, she threw herself down before his bed, hung upon his arms and wept bitterly. The surgeon came in. Jarno gave Wilhelm the papers and obliged Lydia to withdraw.

" For heaven's sake ! " cried Wilhelm, when they were alone in the hall, " what is the matter with the Count ? What Count is it, who betakes himself to the Moravian brotherhood ? "

" One whom you know well," replied Jarno. " You are the ghost that drives him into the arms of piety ; you are the rascal who has brought his charming wife into the condition in which she feels she ought to follow him."

" And is she Lothario's sister ? " cried Wilhelm.

" No other."

" And Lothario knows—— ? "

" Everything."

" Oh, let me fly," exclaimed Wilhelm. " How can I stand in front of him ? What can he say ? "

" That no man should cast a stone against another, and that

no one should compose long speeches so as to put people to shame unless he should speak them before a looking-glass."

" You know that, too."

" And many other things," replied Jarno, smiling. " But this time I will not let you go so easily as last time, and you have nothing to fear from my recruiting activity. I am no longer a soldier, and even as a soldier I would not have let you have this suspicion of me. Since the time that I have not seen you, many things have changed. After the death of my prince, my only friend and benefactor, I have withdrawn myself from the world and all worldly affairs. I was glad to advance what was sensible, and did not keep silence when I came across something in bad taste, and people were always talking of my rotten head and vile tongue. The mass of men fear nothing so much as a sound understanding ; they ought to be afraid of stupidity if they understood what is really alarming. But the former is unpleasant and that must be pushed aside, the latter is only pernicious and can be allowed to stay. Well, let that pass, I have to live and you shall hear further about my plans later on ; you may have a share in them, if you like. But, tell me, how have things gone with you ? I see, I feel you, too, have altered. How is it with your old fancy of producing something beautiful and good in the society of gipsies ? "

" I have been sufficiently punished ! " exclaimed Wilhelm. " Don't remind me of where I come from and where I am going. People talk a great deal about the theatre, but no one who has not been connected with it can form any idea of it. How entirely are these men unacquainted with themselves, how they carry on their business without reflection, how boundless their pretensions are, no one can form any conception. Not only will each be the first, but even the only one ; each would like to exclude all the rest, and does not perceive that he can scarcely accomplish anything even with them. Each one thinks he has marvellous originality, and yet is incapable of finding himself in anything outside the beaten track, though he has a perpetual restlessness after novelty. How violently do they work against one another ! It is only the smallest amount of self-love, the narrowest self-interest which unites them. There is no talk of mutual accommodation, an endless mistrust is kept up by secret trickery and scandalous talk. He who does not live in a dissolute fashion,

lives as a simpleton. Each one makes claims to the most unconditioned respect, each one is sensitive to the slightest blame. He has known everything already better himself. Always in want and always mistrustful, it seems as if they were afraid of nothing so much as reason and good taste, and they endeavoured to maintain nothing so much as the magisterial right of their personal self-will."

Wilhelm drew his breath to continue his jeremiad still further, when immoderate laughter from Jarno interrupted him. "The poor actors!" he exclaimed, throwing himself into a chair and continuing to laugh. "Do you know, my friend," he continued, when he had in some degree recovered himself, "that you have not described the theatre, but the world? And that from all ranks I could find you enough characters and actions to suit the same strokes of your pencil. Forgive me, but I must laugh at your thinking these fine qualities are only to be found on the stage."

Wilhelm composed himself, for really the unrestrained and untimely laughter of Jarno had really vexed him. "You cannot," he said, "entirely conceal your hatred of mankind when you maintain that these faults are universal.

"And it shows your want of knowledge of the world when you attribute these phenomena so greatly to the theatre. Truly I forgive the actor every fault which arises from self-deception and the desire to please, for if he does not appear to be something to himself and others, he is worth nothing. He is summoned for the sake of appearance; he must value highly the applause of the moment, for he receives no other reward; he must endeavour to shine, for on that account he stands there."

"You permit," replied Wilhelm, "that I, on my side, may smile a little. I never imagined that you could be so just and tolerant."

"No, by God! this is my complete and well-thought-out seriousness. I forgive the actor all the faults of men, but I do not forgive men any of the faults of the actor. Don't let me begin to sing my songs of complaint about this: they would sound more violent than yours."

The surgeon came out of the room, and when questioned as to the condition of the invalid, he said with a lively friendliness, "Very well; I hope soon to see him completely restored to health."

He at once hurried out of the hall and did not await Wilhelm's question, who had already opened his mouth to enquire again and more pressingly about the pocket-book. His longing to learn something about his Amazon gave him confidence in Jarno ; he revealed his condition to him and asked for his help. " You know so much," he said, " ought you not also to have experience of this ? "

Jarno was for a moment reflective ; then he said to his young friend : " Be at rest, and don't notice anything further. We want to come upon the track of the fair one. Now I am only disturbed by Lothario's condition ; the affair is dangerous, the friendliness and kindly goodness of the surgeon tells me this. I should like already to have sent Lydia out of the way, for she is of no use here ; but I don't know how I should begin. This evening I hope our old physician is coming, and then we will deliberate further."

CHAPTER IV

THE physician arrived. He was the little, good old doctor whom we already know, and whom we have to thank for the communication of the interesting manuscript. He first of all visited the wounded man, and did not appear at all satisfied with his state of health. Then he had a long conversation with Jarno ; however, they did not let anything be observed when they came to dinner in the evening.

Wilhelm greeted him in the most friendly manner and enquired after his harp-player.

" We are still in hopes of getting right the unfortunate man," replied the doctor.

" This man was a melancholy *addition to your limited and singular life*," said Jarno. " What further happened *to him* ? Let me know *it*."

After Jarno's curiosity had been satisfied, the physician continued : " I have never seen a mind in so remarkable a condition. For many years he had not taken the smallest interest in what lay outside himself, indeed he had hardly noticed anything, was entirely withdrawn inwards ; he reflected upon his hollow, empty ego, which appeared to him like an immeasurable abyss.

How moving it was when he spoke of this melancholy condition ! ' I see nothing in front of me, nothing behind me,' he exclaimed, ' but an endless night in which I find myself in terrible solitude. I have no feeling remaining with me but the feeling of my guilt, which, however, only lets itself be seen behind like a remote misshapen ghost. Yet there is no height, nor depth, no before and no behind, no word can express the condition which is always alike. Many a time, in the misery of this indifference, I call out violently : " For ever ! for ever ! " And this strange, incomprehensible word is bright and clear contrasted with the darkness of my condition. No light of God appears to me in this night ; I pour out all my tears for myself and about myself. Nothing is for me more cruel than friendship and love, for they alone entice away from me the wish that the apparitions which surround me might be real. But even these two ghosts have only risen from the abyss to torment me, and finally to rob me, too, of the precious consciousness of this frightful existence.'

" You should hear him," continued the physician, " when in confidential hours he unburdens his heart in this way. With the greatest emotion I have sometimes listened to him. When something presses on him, which obliges him to confess that a moment of time has passed away, he seems like one astounded, and then refers the changes to the things about him, as an appearance of appearances.

" One evening he sang a song about his gray hair ; we all sat round him and shed tears."

" Oh, get it for me ! " exclaimed Wilhelm.

" But have you, then," enquired Jarno, " discovered nothing about what he calls his crime, nor the reason for his singular garb, his behaviour at the fire, his wrath towards the child ? "

" It is only by conjectures that we can come nearer to a knowledge of his fate ; to enquire of him directly would be contrary to our principles. As we can easily see that he has been brought up a Catholic, we have thought to procure some alleviation for him by a confession, but each time he withdraws himself in a singular way when we endeavour to bring him near a clergyman. But so as not to leave your desire to know something of him quite unsatisfied, I will at least reveal to you our conjectures. He has passed his youth in the position of a clergyman ; on that

account he seems to want to keep his long cloak and his beard. The joy of love remained unknown to him for the greater part of his life. Not till late in life there was an aberration with a lady very nearly related to him ; it may be her death on giving birth to an unlucky creature which has completely unsettled his brain. His greatest delusion is that he brings ill-luck everywhere, and that death caused by an innocent boy awaits him. He was first afraid of Mignon, until he knew she was a girl ; now Felix has caused him alarm, and as with all his misery he has an infinite love of life, his aversion from the child may thus have arisen."

" What hope, then, have you of his improvement ? " enquired Wilhelm.

" Things go forward slowly," replied the physician, " but not backwards. He goes on with his definite occupations, and we have accustomed him to read the newspapers and he now always looks forward to them with great eagerness."

" I am curious about his songs," said Jarno.

" Of these I shall be able to give you some," said the physician. " The eldest son of the clergyman, who is accustomed to write down his father's sermons has, without being observed by the old man, recorded many stanzas, and several of the songs have been gradually pieced together from them."

The next morning Jarno came to Wilhelm and said to him : " You must do us a kindness. Lydia must for a time be withdrawn ; her violent, and I may say, inopportune love and passion hinder the recovery of the Baron. His wound has need of quiet and composure, though with his healthy constitution it is not dangerous. You have seen how Lydia torments him with her tempestuous anxieties, her uncontrollable alarm and her tears which never cease to flow, and—enough."

He added, after a pause, with a smile, " The doctor expressly demands that she leave the house for some time. We have got her to believe that a very good friend who is in the neighbourhood is longing to see her and awaiting her every moment. She has been persuaded to drive to the lawyer, who lives only eight miles from here. This man has been informed, and he will greatly regret that Theresa had just had to go away ; he will make it seem probable that she could still be overtaken. Lydia will hasten after her, and with luck will be led from one place to

the other. At last, when she insists on returning, do not contradict her. The night must come to your assistance ; the coachman is a clever fellow, and we must make an arrangement with him. Sit beside her in the coach, converse with her and manage the adventure."

" You are giving me a singular and hazardous commission," replied Wilhelm. " How painful is the sight of true love injured, and am I ever to be the instrument for it ? It is the first time in my life that I have deceived anyone in this way, for I have always thought that we should be led too far if we once begin to deceive for the sake of good and useful objects."

" We cannot bring up children except in this way," replied Jarno.

" With children it may still be so," said Wilhelm, " as we love them so tenderly and openly take charge of them ; but in the case of our equals, for whom our heart does not always summon us so clearly to show indulgence, it may often be dangerous.

" Don't think," he continued, after a short reflection, " that I should refuse this commission on this account. With the reverence which I have for your understanding, with the attachment which I feel for your excellent friend, with the lively desire to further his recovery by whatever means may be possible, I am glad to forget myself. It is not enough for one to risk his life for a friend, one must even in case of necessity disavow one's conviction. Our dearest passion, our best wishes, we should sacrifice for him. I will undertake the commission, though I foresee already the discomfort which I shall have to endure from Lydia's tears and from her despair."

" On the other hand, no small reward is awaiting you," replied Jarno, " as you will make the acquaintance of Fräulein Theresa, a lady such as there are few ; she puts to shame a hundred men and I might call her a true Amazon, while others are only pretty hermaphrodites who wander about the world in this ambiguous attire." Wilhelm was struck. He hoped in Theresa he would find his Amazon again ; all the more so, as Jarno, from whom he derived information, broke off abruptly and retired.

The new, near hope of seeing again that honoured and beloved being wrought in him the most wonderful emotions. He now held the commission which had been given for a task of an express

Providence, and the thought that he was about treacherously to take away a poor young girl from the object of her most sincere and vehement affection, appeared to him only transitorily, as the shadow of a bird which flits over the earth when bathed in sunshine.

The coach stood at the door. Lydia hesitated a moment in getting in. "Greet your master again," she said to the old servant, "I shall be back again before evening." Tears stood in her eyes as she looked back again when they were starting. She then turned to Wilhelm, gathered herself together and said, "In Fräulein Theresa you will find a most interesting person. I wonder why it is that she is in the neighbourhood, for you must know that she and the Baron had loved each other passionately. In spite of the distance Lothario was often with her ; it would seem as though they only lived for one another. But all at once it was broken off, without anyone being able to understand the reason. He had got to know me, and I don't deny that I was cordially envious of Theresa, that I scarcely concealed my attachment, and I did not repel him when he once seemed to choose me in place of Theresa. She behaved herself towards me in a way I could not think of as being better, though it must almost seem as though I had robbed her of so worthy a lover. But how many thousands of tears and griefs has this love cost me! At first we only saw each other at times, secretly by appointment ; but I could not long endure this life ; only in his presence was I happy, entirely happy ! When away from him my eyes were not dry and my pulse gave no quiet beat. He once stayed away several days ; I was in despair, set out on the road and surprised him here. He received me lovingly, and had not that unlucky quarrel occurred, I should have had a heavenly life. But what I have endured since he was in danger and in pain, I will not say, and yet at this moment I made myself the most lively reproaches for having been able to be absent from him for only one day."

Wilhelm was wishing to inform himself more nearly about Theresa when they drove up at the lawyer's house, who came to the coach and was extremely sorry that Theresa had already gone away. He invited the travellers to breakfast, saying at the same time the coach could yet catch her up in the next village. They decided to drive after her, and the coachman did not

delay. They had already passed several villages and met with no one. Lydia now insisted that they should turn round ; the coachman drove as though he did not understand. At last she asked about it with the greatest vehemence. Wilhelm called to the coachman and gave him the sign that had been agreed upon. The coachman answered, " We don't need to go back the same way ; I know a nearer one, which is at the same time more convenient." He drove now sideways through a wood across long commons. At length, when no recognized object appeared, the coachman confessed that he had unfortunately gone wrong, but he would soon get right again, as he saw there a village. The night came on, and the coachman managed the matter so skilfully that he made enquiries everywhere and nowhere waited for an answer. So they drove on all night. Lydia closed her eyes. In the moonshine she found everywhere similarities and they always vanished again. The next day she seemed to recognize the objects, but all the more unexpectedly. The coach stopped before a small, nicely built, quiet country house ; a lady came out of the house and opened the coach door. Lydia gazed fixedly at her, looked around, looked at her again and lay fainting in Wilhelm's arms.

CHAPTER V

WILHELM was led into a small room in an attic. The house was new and so small, as was almost only possible, extremely clean and orderly. In Fräulein Theresa, who had received him and Lydia at the coach, he did not find his Amazon ; it was a different being, very remote from the Amazon. Well-formed, without being tall, she moved with much vivacity, and nothing of what was going forward seemed to be hidden from her clear, blue, frank eyes.

She came into Wilhelm's room and enquired whether he wanted anything. " Excuse me," she said, " if I put you up in a room which the smell of oil still makes unpleasant ; my small house is only just ready, and you are to inaugurate this little room which is destined for my guests. If you were only here on a more pleasant task ! The poor Lydia will not give us nice days, and above all, you must put up with things. My cook at a quite

inconvenient time has left my service, and a servant has bruised her hand. It is necessary that I myself accomplish everything, and in the end, when one has so adapted oneself, things must go on. One is not more bothered with anyone than with servants ; no one will serve not even himself for once."

She said much further about different subjects ; above all, she seemed to like talking. Wilhelm made enquiries about Lydia—whether he could not see the nice young girl and make his excuses to her.

" That will not now do with her," replied Theresa. " Time makes excuses as well as consoles. In both cases words have little power. Lydia will not see you. ' Don't let him come before my eyes ! ' she cried, when I left her. ' I would like to despair of mankind ! Such an honest face, such a frank behaviour and these secret tricks ! ' She entirely excuses Lothario ; he says, too, in a letter to the young girl : ' My friends persuaded me, my friends compelled me.'⁵ Lydia counts you among these also, and condemns you with the rest."

" She shows me too much honour in blaming me," replied Wilhelm. " I can yet make no claim to the friendship of this excellent man, and on this occasion I am only an innocent tool. I don't wish to praise my action ; it is enough that I was able to do it. It was a question of the health, of the life of a man whom I must value more highly than anyone else whom I have known previously. Oh, what a man is he, my dear lady ! and what men surround him ! In this society I have, I may well say, for the first time carried on a conversation ; for the first time the actual meaning of my words came to me from the mantle of another in a richer, fuller and greater range ; what I suspected became clear to me, and what I thought I learnt to see. Unfortunately, this pleasure was interrupted by all kinds of anxieties and fancies, then through this unpleasant commission. I undertook it with resignation, for I regarded it as a duty, even to the sacrifice of my own feeling, to pay my entrance fee to this excellent circle of men."

In the midst of these words Theresa had looked at her guest in a friendly way. " How sweet it is," she cried, " to hear one's conviction from the lips of a stranger ! How do we then only first feel right when another fully justifies us ? I, too, think about Lothario completely as you do ; everyone does not justify him,

but all who know him more clearly are also enthusiastically in his favour, and the painful feeling which there is in my heart on the thought of him cannot keep me every day from thinking of him." A sigh rose from her bosom as she said this, and in her right eye there shone a beautiful tear. "Do not think," she continued, "I am so soft, so easily moved. It is only the eye which weeps. I had a small wart on my under-eyelid ; happily, they have got rid of it, but from that time the eye has always remained weak ; the least cause brings me out in tears. This is where the little wart was ; you can see no trace of it any more."

He saw no trace of it, but he looked into her eye. It was clear as crystal ; he thought he saw to the bottom of her soul.

"We have," she said, "now expressed the watchword of our union ; let us, as soon as possible, become fully acquainted with one another. The history of man is his character. I will tell you how things have gone with me ; give me a little confidence and let us even at a distance remain united ! The world is so empty when we only think of mountains, cities and towns in it, but here and there to know someone who is in harmony with us, with whom we, too, in silence continue our life, that makes for us this circle of the earth an habitable garden."

She hurried off, and promised to take him soon for a walk. Her presence had a very pleasant effect upon him ; he wanted to know her relationship to Lothario. He was called ; she came out of her room to meet him.

When they had to get down the narrow and almost steep staircase separately, she said : "That could all have been wider if I had waited to listen to the offer of your magnanimous friend ; however, to remain worthy of him I must retain that on myself which makes me of so much value to him. Where is the steward ?" she enquired as she came completely down the staircase. "You mustn't think that I am rich enough to need a steward," she continued ; "the few acres of my freehold I can quite well manage myself. The steward belongs to my new neighbour, who has bought the fine property which I know by heart in and out: the worthy old man is ill with gout; his people are new in this neighbourhood and I am glad to help them to get settled."

They took a walk through fields, meadows and some orchards. Theresa pointed out the steward in everything ; she could give him an account of every detail, and Wilhelm had every reason to marvel at her knowledge, her precision and the skill with which in every case she knew how to suggest means. She did not stop anywhere, always hurried on to the important points, and so the matter was soon finished. " Greet your master," she said, as she dismissed the man. " I shall go and see him as soon as possible and wish for his complete improvement. I could now too," she said with a smile when he was out of the way, " soon be rich and prosperous, for my good neighbour would not be indisposed to give me his hand."

" The old man with the gout," cried Wilhelm. " I did not know how in your years you could come to so despairing a resolution."

" I am not at all tempted," replied Theresa. " Everyone is prosperous who knows how to manage what he possesses ; to have many possessions is a burdensome affair if one does not understand it."

Wilhelm showed his astonishment at her knowledge of economics. " Decided inclination, early opportunity, impulse from outside and a continued occupation in a useful affair, make in the world still much more possible," said Theresa, " and when you first learn what has moved me to it, you will no longer be surprised at the apparition of this wonderful talent."

When they arrived at the house, she left him in her small garden in which he could scarcely turn round ; the paths were so narrow and everything was planted in such abundance. He must smile when he turned back over the courtyard, for there lay the firewood so neatly sawn up, split and in bars. All the vessels stood clean in their places, the little house was painted white and red, and was pleasant to look at. That which the work of the hand can produce, which has no knowledge of fine relations, but works for what is required for what is lasting and cheerful, seemed to be united on the spot. They brought him his food in his room, and he had time enough to start reflections. In particular, it occurred that he had now again made acquaintance with a person who had stood in so close a relationship with Lothario. " It is right," he said to himself, " that an excellent man should also draw to himself the souls of excellent women !

How widely is spread the effect of virility and worth, if only others did not fall so short of it ! Yes, only confess your fear to yourself! If some day you meet your Amazon again, this form of all forms, in spite of all your hopes and dreams, you find her to your shame and humiliation still at the end of all—his bride."

CHAPTER VI

WILHELM had passed a restless afternoon, not without ennui, when towards evening a young huntsman's boy entered with a bow. " Shall we go for a walk ? " said the young man, and in a moment Wilhelm recognized Theresa by her beautiful eyes.

" Pardon me this masquerade," she began, " for, alas, it is only masquerade. Since, however, I am to tell you once of the time in which I was so pleased to see myself in this get-up, I will also represent to myself those days in every way. Are you coming ? Even the spot on which we so often rested from our hunting and our walks should contribute to it."

They went, and on the way Theresa said to her companion, " It is not right that you should let me alone do the talking ; you already know enough of me, and I don't know the least bit about you. Tell me something of yourself, that I may have the courage to set before you my history and relationships."

" Unfortunately," replied Wilhelm, " I have nothing to tell you of except mistakes after mistakes, confusion on confusion, and I do not know from whom I would rather conceal the perplexities in which I have been, and still am, than from you. Your look and everything surrounding you, your whole being and your demeanour shows me that you have walked on a beautiful, pure way with a secure result; that you have lost no time, that you have nothing with which to reproach yourself."

Theresa smiled and replied, " You must wait and see if you still so think, when you have heard my story."

They went some way farther, and in the midst of some general conversation Theresa asked him, " Are you free ? "

" I imagine I am," he replied, " but I don't want to be."

" Good ! " said she. " That points to a complicated romance, and shows me that you, too, have something to relate."

With these words they mounted the hill and settled themselves down by a large oak, which spread its shadow far all round.

" Here," said Theresa, " beneath this German tree I will tell you the story of a young German girl. Listen to me patiently :

" My father was a prosperous nobleman of this province, a cheerful, clear-sighted, active, vigorous man, a tender father, an honest friend, an excellent economist, in whom I only knew of one fault—that he was too indulgent to his wife, who did not know how to value him. Unfortunately, of my own mother I must say this : her nature was quite the opposite to his. She was quick and changeful, without affection either for her home or for me, her only child ; extravagant, but beautiful, intellectual, full of talent, the charm of a circle she had managed to gather round her. No doubt her society was never large, but it did not last long. This circle consisted mostly of men, for no woman was to be found near her, still less could she endure the merit of any woman. I was like my father both in appearance and temperament. As a young duck at once seeks the water, so from my earliest youth the kitchen, the store-rooms, the barns and fields were my element. Order and cleanliness in the house seemed, even when I was still there at play, to be my only instinct, the only object of my eyes. My father was pleased about this, and gave step by step to my childish activity the most suitable occupations. My mother, on the other hand, did not love me and did not conceal it for a moment.

" I grew up ; with the years my activity increased and the love of my father to me. When we were alone, walking over the fields, when I helped him to look through his accounts, then I could feel right well how happy he was. When I looked into his eyes, it was just as if I looked into myself, for it was the eyes which made me completely like him. But he did not even maintain his courage nor the expressing of it in the presence of my mother. He gently made excuses for me, when she blamed me violently and unjustly ; he took my part, not as if he could protect me, but as if he could excuse my good qualities. He did not then oppose obstacles to any of her inclinations. She began, very passionately, to devote herself to the play. A theatre was built. There was no lack of men of all ages and figures who appeared with her on the stage ; of women, on the other hand, there were

often an insufficient supply. Lydia, a nice young girl who had been brought up with me and who promised at once in her early youth to be charming, had to undertake the secondary parts, and an old waiting-woman had to represent mothers and aunts, while my mother reserved for herself the part of lovers, heroines and shepherdesses. I cannot tell you how ridiculous it appeared to me when the men, whom I knew perfectly well, disguised themselves, stood up there and wanted to be thought something different from what they were. I saw always only my mother and Lydia, this baron and that secretary ; they might now appear as princes and counts or as peasants, and I could not understand how they could expect me to believe that it was going well or ill with them, that they were in love or indifferent, avaricious or generous, since for the most part I was exactly informed that the opposite was the case. Consequently, I stayed very seldom among the spectators. I always trimmed the lights, so as to have something to do, provided the supper, and the next morning, when they still slept, had already put their wardrobe in order, as in the evening they had usually left things one on the top of another.

" My mother thought this activity quite right, but I could not gain her affection. She despised me, and I knew still quite well that she more than once repeated with bitterness : * If the mother could be so uncertain as the father, you would scarcely think this housemaid was my daughter.' I don't deny that her behaviour gradually withdrew me from her entirely. I regarded her actions as the actions of a stranger, and as I used to watch our servants like a falcon, for, let it be said in passing, on this rests the basis of all housekeeping. So naturally the proceedings of my mother and her friends came before me. It was easy to observe that she did not look on all men alike. I gave a keener attention, and soon observed that Lydia was her confidante and with this opportunity she had become more acquainted with a passion which, from her earliest youth, she had so often represented. I knew of all their meetings, but I kept silence and I told my father nothing about it, as I did not want to trouble him, but at last I was obliged to do so. Many things they were unable to undertake without bribing the servants. They began to show me defiance, to neglect my father's regulations and not to carry out his commands. The disorder which thus arose I

could not endure. I discovered everything and complained of it to my father. He listened to me composedly. ' Good child,' he said at last, with a smile, ' I know it all ; keep quiet, bear it patiently, for it is only on your account that I endure it.'

" I did not keep quiet, I did not have patience. I silently blamed my father, for I did not think that he should endure such things for any reason. I insisted on regularity, and was determined to drive matters to extremity.

" My mother had riches of her own, but she spent more than she should, and this, as I could well observe, gave rise to many a discussion between my parents. For a long time there was no help for the matter, until the passion of my mother herself brought forward a kind of development.

" The first lover became unfaithful in a startling manner ; the house, the neighbourhood, her whole circumstances became unpleasant to her. She wanted to go to another property ; there it was too lonely for her. She wanted to go to the town ; there she was not of sufficient importance. I don't know how everything passed between her and my father. At last he decided, under stipulations which I did not come to know, to agree to her taking a journey, which she wished to make, to the South of France.

" We were now free, and lived as if in heaven ; nay, I think my father lost nothing when he purchased her absence with a considerable sum. We dismissed all our unnecessary domestics, and good fortune seemed to favour our arrangements. We had some very prosperous years, everything succeeded according to our wish. But, alas, this delightful state did not last long. Quite unexpectedly my father had a stroke which paralysed his right side and took from him the proper use of his speech. One had to guess at everything he required, for he could never utter the word which he had in mind. I had many very anxious moments when he expressly wished to be alone with me. He signified by vehement gesture that everyone should withdraw, and when we found ourselves alone, he was not in the condition to bring out the right word. His impatience became extreme, and his state grieved my inmost heart. This much seemed to me certain, that he wished to confide something to me which particularly concerned me. What a longing I felt to know it. Formerly, I could

see everything of him by his eyes, but now this was in vain ! Even his eyes spoke no more. Only this much was clear to me : he wanted nothing, he desired nothing ; he only strove to reveal something to me which, unfortunately, I did not understand. His malady occurred again ; he was soon quite inactive and incapable, and before long he was dead.

" I don't know how the idea became firmly rooted in my mind that he had somewhere laid down a treasure which, after his death, he wished to give to me rather than to my mother. I had already searched in his lifetime, but found nothing ; after his death, everything was sealed up. I wrote to my mother and offered to remain as steward in the house ; she refused it, and I had to remove from the property. There appeared a mutual will, by which my mother remained in possession and enjoyment of everything, and I, at least during her lifetime, remained completely dependent on her. Now, for the first time, I thought I rightly understood the signs made by my father. I regretted that he had been so weak as to be unjust towards me even after his death. Some of my friends wished even to assert that it would have been almost no better than if he had disinherited me, and desired that I should dispute the will, but I could not bring myself to a decision on that. I revered the memory of my father too much ; I felt confidence in my destiny, I felt confidence in myself.

" I had always kept in a pleasant relationship with a lady in the neighbourhood who possessed large estates. She received me with pleasure, and it was easy for me soon to superintend her housekeeping. She led a very regular life, and loved order in everything, and I loyally assisted her in her struggle with the steward and the servants. I am neither avaricious nor jealous, but we women above all insist much more seriously than even a man that nothing shall be wasted. Every fraud is for us intolerable ; we wish everyone to enjoy only in so as he is justified in so doing.

" Now I was again in my element, and mourned in silence over the death of my father. My protectress was content with me ; only one small circumstance disturbed my peace—Lydia came back. My mother was cruel enough to get rid of the poor girl after she had completely spoilt her. With my mother she had learned to look on passion as her occupation ; she was

accustomed to restrain herself in nothing. When she unexpectedly reappeared, my benefactress received her too. She wished to give me a helping hand, and could not suit herself for anything.

" About this time the relations and future heirs of my lady frequently came to the house and amused themselves with the hunting. Lothario, too, was often with them. They soon noticed how greatly he distinguished himself from the others, without, however, the least reference to myself. He was polite towards everybody, and Lydia soon appeared to draw his attention to herself. I had always plenty to do and was seldom in their company. In his presence I spoke less than usual, for I will not deny that a lively conversation was for me always the spice of life. I gladly spoke with my father about everything which occurred. That which we do not talk about, we do not think right. To no one had I ever listened to more gladly than to Lothario, when he told of his travels, of his campaigns. The world lay clearly open to him, so clear as the neighbourhood is to me in which I had kept house. I heard not about the marvellous destinies of the adventurer, the exaggerated half-truths of a limited traveller who always only puts his person in the place of the country of which he promises to give us a picture ; he related nothing, he led us to the place itself. I have not readily experienced so pure a pleasure.

" But my contentment was unspeakable when I heard him one evening speak about ladies. The conversation originated quite naturally. Some ladies from the vicinity had visited us and had led the usual talk about the education of women. People are unjust to our sex, it is said. Men wished to retain all higher culture for themselves ; they do not wish to admit us to any sciences ; they desire that we are to be only dolls or housekeepers. Lothario spoke little to all this, but when the company became smaller, he said openly his opinion about it. ' It is remarkable,' he explained, ' that we blame the man who sets the woman in the highest place which she is capable of occupying ; and what is higher than the government of the house ? If the man torments himself with other relations, if he is obliged to collect and protect his possessions, if he even takes a share in **the** administration of the State, everywhere is he dependent on circumstances and, I might say, governs nothing, while he

imagines he is governing ; always is obliged to be only political, where he would gladly be sensible, concealed where he wished to be open, false where he wished to be honest ; if he, for the sake of an aim which he never reaches—the most beautiful aim, harmony with oneself—is obliged at any moment to give up ; while a sensible housekeeper really rules in the inner affairs, and makes every activity, every contentment, possible for a whole family. What is the highest happiness of man, except that we carry out that which we see to be right and good ; that we really are masters over the means to our ends. And where should, where can, our next end lie, except within the home? All such recurring, indispensable needs—where do we await them, where do we demand them, except when we rise up and lie down, where kitchen and cellar and every kind of store is to be always ready for us and our friends ? What regular activity is demanded, so as to carry through this ever-recurring order in an unchanged, living sequence ! To how few men is it given to return regularly as a star, and to stand in front of the day as well as the night ; to form their domestic tools, to plant and to reap, to preserve and to spend, and to wander through the circle always with calm, love and suitability. If a woman has once seized this inner governance, so does she make the man, whom she loves, first master in consequence. Her attention gains all knowledge, and she knows how to make use of all her activity. Thus she is dependent on nobody, and procures for her husband that true independence, the domestic, the inward ; that which he possesses he sees assured, that which he gains, well made use of ; and so he can turn his spirit to great subjects, and if there is good fortune, be that for the State, which stands so well for his wife at home.

" He thereupon made a description, how he wished a wife for himself. I blushed, for he described me in my actual life. I enjoyed my triumph in silence, all the more as I saw, from all the circumstances, that he had not meant me, that he did not really know me. I remember no more pleasant feeling in my whole life, that a man whom I so greatly valued gave the preference not to me personally, but to my innermost nature. What reward did I feel ? What encouragement had come to me ?

" When they were gone, my worthy lady friend said to me, smiling : ' It is a pity that men often think and talk that which

they do not allow to be carried out, otherwise an excellent match would be found directly for my dear Theresa ! ' I joked about this remark and added that the understanding of men looked about for housekeepers, but that their heart and their imagination looked about for other qualities, and that we housewives cannot really uphold a combat against loving and charming young girls. These words I said in the hearing of Lydia, for she did not conceal that Lothario had made a great impression on her, and he seemed to become always more attentive towards her at each fresh visit. She was poor, she was not of position, she could not think of any marriage with him, but she could not withstand the delight of charming and being charmed. I had never loved and now also did not love, but though it was infinitely pleasant to me to see how my nature was placed and estimated by so honoured a man, I will not deny that I was not quite content with it. I wished now also that he might know me, that he might take a personal share of me. This wish arose with me without any definite idea of what could follow from it.

" The greatest service which I accomplished for my benefactress was that I endeavoured to bring into order the beautiful woods of her properties. In these precious possessions, the great value of which time and circumstances always increase, it was, alas, only always after the old humdrum way ; nowhere was there plan and order, and of stealing and embezzlement no end. Many mountains stood bare, and a like growth had only the oldest forest clearings. I inspected everything myself with a skilled forester. I had the woods measured, I had them broken up, sown, planted, and in a short time everything was going. I had men's clothes made for me, so that I got on horseback more easily and also on foot I was nowhere hindered. I was in many places, and they were afraid of me everywhere.

" I heard that the company of young friends with Lothario had again started a hunt ; for the first time in my life it occurred to me, or that I should not do myself wrong, to pass in the eyes of the excellent man for that which I was. I put on my man's clothes, took the gun on my back and went out with our huntsmen to await the company at the boundary. It came. Lothario did not know me. One of the nephews of my benefactress introduced me to him as a skilled forester, joked about my youth, and carried his game in praise of me so far that Lothario at last recognized

me. The nephew seconded my intention as though we had concocted it. He related in detail and thankfully what I had done for the properties of his aunt, and therefore for him too.

" Lothario listened to me with attention, conversed with me, and enquired after all the conditions of the properties and the neighbourhood, and I was glad to be able to lay out before him my knowledge. I stood my examination very well. I laid before him some proposals for certain improvements to be tested ; he approved of them, related to me similar examples and fortified my reasons by the connection which he gave to them. My satisfaction increased with every moment. But, fortunately, I only wished to be known ; I did not wish to be loved. We came home, and I noticed more than formerly that the attention which he showed to Lydia appeared to betray a secret affection. I had reached my main object and was, however, not calm. From that day onwards he showed a true respect and a beautiful trust towards me ; he addressed me usually in society, asked me my opinion and appeared, especially in matters connected with housekeeping, to have confidence in me, as if I knew everything. His sympathy encouraged me extraordinarily ; even if the question was of agricultural economy and finance, he drew me into the conversation, and I endeavoured in his absence to acquire more knowledge of the province, indeed of the whole country. It was easy for me, for there was repeated, only on a large scale, what I understood and knew so exactly on a small one.

" From this time he often came to our house. We spoke, I can well say, of everything, but to some extent our conversation at best was always on economics, though only in the figurative sense. What man, by means of logical application of his powers, his time, his money, even by the smallest means, can produce enormous effects, was much spoken about.

" I did not withstand the inclination which drew me to him, and I felt, alas, only too soon, how great, how heartfelt, how pure and sincere my love was, as I always imagined I observed more that his more frequent visits had value for Lydia and not for me. She, at least, was convinced of it in the liveliest manner ; she made me her confidante, and therefore I found myself, to some extent, consoled. That which she interpreted so greatly to her advantage, I did not find in any way important ; no trace

was shown of a serious, lasting union. All the more clearly I saw the inclination of the passionate young girl to become his at any price.

" Thus matters stood when the lady of the house surprised me with an unexpected offer.

" ' Lothario,' said she, ' offers you his hand, and wishes in his life always to have you at his side.'

" She expanded herself over my qualities and said to me, what I gladly heard, that Lothario is convinced that he has found in me the person for whom he had so long wished.

" The highest happiness was now attained by me. A man desired me whom I so greatly valued, with whom, and by whom, I saw before me a full, free, extended, useful effect of my inborn inclination and of my talent gained by practice ; the sum of my whole talent appeared to be multiplied infinitely. I gave my consent. He came himself, he spoke with me alone, he reached me his hand, he looked into my eyes, he embraced me and pressed a kiss upon my lips. It was the first and last. He confided to me his whole condition, what his American campaign cost him, with what debts he had burdened his property, how he had quarrelled in some degree with his great-uncle, how this worthy man thinks of providing for him, but indeed in his own way. He wished to give him a rich wife, as a well-thinking man is only served with one who can keep house ; he hopes by means of his sister to talk over the old man. He put before me the state of his property, his plans, his prospects, and asked for my co-operation. Only it was to remain a secret till the consent of his uncle.

" He had scarcely withdrawn, when Lydia enquired of me whether he had spoken anything of her. I said ' No,' and caused her ennui with the relation of economic subjects. She was restless, ill-humoured and her behaviour, when he came again, did not improve her position.

" I see, however, that the sun is near setting ! It is your good fortune, my friend, otherwise you would have been obliged to hear through the story with all its small details, which I relate to myself so gladly. Let me hurry ! We are near a time on which it is not good to dwell.

" Lothario made me acquainted with his excellent sister, and she in a skilful manner knew how to introduce me with the uncle. I gained the old man ; he consented to our wishes and

I returned to my benefactress with the fortunate news. The affair was now no more a secret in the house. Lydia learnt it ; she thought she perceived something impossible. When at last she could no more be in doubt about it, she all at once disappeared and we did not know where she had lost herself.

" The day of our union drew near. I had already often asked for his likeness, and I reminded him again of his promise just as he wished to ride away. ' You have forgotten,' said he, ' to give me the case in which you wish it fitted.' It was so. I had a present from a friend, which I held very precious. By her hair there was a name drawn, wrongly fastened under the outer glass ; inside remained an empty ivory on which just her picture was to be painted when she, unfortunately, was snatched away by death. Lothario's affection made me happy at the moment when her loss was still very painful for me, and I wished to fill the vacancy which she had left behind in her present, by the picture of my friend.

" I ran to my room, fetched my jewel-casket and opened it in his presence. Scarcely does he look in, when he sees a medalion with the picture of a lady. He takes it in his hand, regards it with attention and enquires hastily, ' Whom does this portrait represent ? '

" ' My mother,' I replied.

" ' Had I sworn,' he exclaimed, ' it was the portrait of a Madame St. Alban, whom I met in Switzerland a few years ago.'⁵

" ' It is just the person,' replied I, smiling. ' You have therefore been acquainted with your mother-in-law without knowing it. St. Alban is the romantic name under which my mother travels ; under the same name she is still present in France.'

" ' I am the most unfortunate of all men,'⁵ he exclaimed, while throwing back the picture into the casket. He covered his eyes with his hand and at once left the room. He threw himself on to his horse ; I ran to the balcony and called after him ; he turned round, cast his hand to me, withdrew rapidly, and I have never seen him again.⁵⁵

The sun went down. Theresa looked into the glow with averted glance, and her two beautiful eyes filled with tears.

Theresa was silent and laid her hand on the hands of her new friend. He kissed it sympathetically, she dried her eyes and

stood up. "Let us return," she said, "and look after our friend."

The conversation on the way was not lively. They came to the garden door and saw Lydia sitting on a seat. She got up, turned aside from them and betook herself into the house. She had a paper in her hand, and two small girls were with her. "I see," said Theresa, "she still carries always with her the letter from Lothario, her only consolation. Her friend promises her that she is again to be at his side ; as soon as he is well, he begs her so long to stay quietly with me. She hangs upon these words, consoles herself with these lines, but his friends are written down as bad with her."

Meantime the two children had come in. They greeted Theresa and gave her account of everything which had happened in her house in her absence. "You see here another part of my occupation," said Theresa. "I have made an alliance with Lothario's excellent sister. We bring up a number of children in common ; I educate the lively and obliging housekeepers, and she takes over those in whom is displayed a more peaceful and finer talent, for it is right that we, in every way, provide for the happiness of the men and the housekeeping. If you get to know my noble lady friend, you will begin a new life. Her beauty, her goodness make her worthy of the devotion of the whole world." Wilhelm did not trust himself to say that he, alas, already knew the beautiful Countess, and that his transient relation to her will be for ever painful. He was very satisfied that Theresa did not continue the conversation, and that her business obliged her to go back into the house. He was now alone, and the last news that young beautiful Countess was already also obliged to replace by means of beneficence the want of her own happiness, made him extremely sad. He felt that it was with her only a necessity for distracting herself, and in place of a cheerful enjoyment of life, setting her hope on the happiness of strangers. He considered Theresa happy that even in that melancholy change no change in herself had come forward.

"How happy is he beyond everything," he exclaimed, "who, in order to place himself in unity with his destiny, does not require to throw away his whole past life !"

Theresa came to his room and asked pardon for disturbing him. "Here in the cupboard of the wall," said she, "stands my

whole library ; they are rather books that I do not throw away, than what I keep. Lydia longs for an intellectual book ; there are among them one and another. Men who are worldly for the whole year, imagine they must at the time of necessity be intellectual. They look on everything good and moral as a medicine which one takes with repugnance, if one is ill ; they look on a clergyman, a teacher of morals only, as a doctor whom one cannot get out of the house quickly enough, but I gladly confess I have of morality the conception as of diet, which is just only diet, if I made it for the rule of life, if I do not leave it out of sight the whole year."

They searched among the books and found some so-called writings of Edification. "The recourse to these books," said Theresa, "has Lydia learned from my mother. Plays and novels were her life, so long as her lover remained faithful. His withdrawal at once brought these books into credit again. Above all, I cannot understand," she continued, "how we can imagine that God speaks to us by means of books and histories. He to whom the world is not immediately opened, to whom his heart does not say what he owes himself and others, will certainly with difficulty learn it out of books, which are really only skilful in giving names to our errors."

She left Wilhelm alone, and he passed his evening with reviewing the small library. It was really only by chance it had come together.

Theresa, the few days which Wilhelm passed with her, remained always like herself; she related the consequences of her adventure circumstantially in different periods. To her memory, day and hour, place and names were present, and we here draw together shortly what is necessary for our readers to know.

The cause of Lothario's rapid withdrawal did not let itself be easily explained. He had met Theresa's mother on her journey ; her charms attracted him ; she was not niggardly towards him, and now this unfortunate, rapidly transient adventure withdrew him from the union with a lady whom Nature herself seemed to have formed for him. Theresa remained in the pure circle of her occupation and her duty. It was learned that Lydia had kept herself in the neighbourhood. She was happy when the marriage, though for unknown causes, was not

accomplished ; she sought to draw near to Lothario, and it appeared that he, more out of despair than from inclination, more surprised than with deliberation, more from ennui than from intention, met her wishes.

Theresa was quiet about it. She made no further demands on him, and even if he had been her husband, she had had perhaps sufficient courage to endure such a relation, if only it had not disturbed her domestic arrangement. At least, she often said that a woman who keeps together aright the household, can overlook in her husband every small fancy, and always be certain of his return.

Nothing remains less concealed and unused as suitable activity. Scarcely had she established herself on her small property, when the neighbours already sought her nearer acquaintance and her advice, and new owners of the adjoining properties gave it to be understood not indistinctly, that it was only a question for her if she wished to accept his hand and become heiress of the greatest part of his property.

" There is," said she, " nothing more to say to men than if once a marriage takes place, which they can after their fashion call a mesalliance, and, however, the mesalliances are much more customary than marriages, for unfortunately after a short time it looks quite in a bad way with most unions. The mingling of ranks by means of marriages deserve only to be called mesalliances when the one part can take no share in the innate, customary existence of the other, which has become almost necessary. The different classes have different modes of life, which they cannot share nor change with one another, and that is why unions of this kind were better not formed, but exceptions, and very happy exceptions, are possible. Thus the marriage of a young girl with a man in years is always a mistake, and yet I have seen it turn out very well. For my part, I know only one mesalliance, if I were obliged to solemnize and represent it I would rather give my hand to any honest farmer's son of the neighbourhood."

Wilhelm now thought of returning, and asked his new friend to get for him a farewell word with Lydia. The passionate young woman allowed herself to be stirred. He said to her some kind words. She replied : " I have overcome the first pain ; Lothario will always be dear to me, but I know his friends. It is painful

for me that he is so surrounded. The Abbe would be capable, on account of a fancy, to leave men in need or to plunge them into it; the doctor might gladly bring everything into equilibrium; Jarno has no spirit, and you—at least, no character! Only continue, and let yourself be used as the tool of these three men; they will lay upon you many a thing to do. For a long time, it is quite well known to me, my presence was objectionable to them. I had not discovered their secret, but I had discovered that they concealed a secret. Why these shut-up rooms? these wonderful passages? Why can nobody come to the great tower? Why did they banish me into my rooms as often as they could? I will confess that jealousy first brought me to this discovery. I feared a fortunate rival was hidden somewhere or other. Now I do not think that any more; I am convinced that Lothario loves me, that he means it honourably with me, but I am just as certainly convinced that he is deceived by his artificial and false friends. If you wish to deserve well of him, if you are to be forgiven for the wrongs you had done me, set him free from the hands of these men! Yet what do I hope? Hand over to him this letter, repeat what it contains—that I shall love him for ever, that I rely upon his word. Ah!" she exclaimed, while rising and weeping on the neck of Theresa, "he is surrounded by my enemies; they will endeavour to persuade him that I have sacrificed nothing for him. Oh! the best of men may gladly hear that he is worthy of every sacrifice without having to be thankful for it."

Wilhelm's departure from Theresa was more cheerful. She wished to see him again soon. "You know me entirely," she said; "you have let me talk all the time; it is your duty on the next occasion to answer my candour."

On his return journey he had time enough to reflect on this new and bright phenomenon with the liveliest recollection. What confidence she had inspired him with! He thought of Mignon and Felix; how fortunate the children could be under such a supervision, for he thought on himself and felt how delightful it would be to live near to so bright a human being. When he came near the castle, the tower with its numerous passages and side-buildings did not appear to him as before; he resolved on the next opportunity to speak with Jarno or the Abbe about them.

CHAPTER VII

WHEN Wilhelm returned to the castle he found the noble Lothario on the way to complete recovery. The doctor and the Abbe were not there, only Jarno had remained. In a short time the convalescent rode out again, now alone, now with his friends. His talk was serious and pleasing, his conversation instructive and enlivening ; often traces of a tender sensibility were to be noticed, though he quickly endeavoured to conceal them and if it showed itself against his will, he seemed almost to disapprove of it.

Thus he was one evening silent at table, though he looked cheerful.

" You have, doubtless, had an adventure to-day," said Jarno at last, " and indeed a pleasant one."

" How you understand your people," replied Lothario. " Yes, I have met with a very pleasant adventure. At another time I should perhaps not have found it so charming as now, since it found me in so susceptible a state. Towards evening I rode on the other side of the river through the villages, a path which I had often visited in earlier years. My bodily suffering must have made me more weary than I myself imagined ; I felt myself impressionable and with returning powers as one newborn. All objects appeared to me just in the light in which I had seen them in earlier years ; everything so lovely, so graceful, so charming, as they had not appeared to me for a long time. I observed clearly that it was due to weakness, but I allowed myself to be quite well pleased, rode on gently, and it became quite comprehensible to me how people are able to get to like an illness, which puts us in harmony with sweet sensations. Perhaps you know what led me formerly so often along this path."

" If I remember aright," replied Jarno, " it was a slight love affair which had arisen with the daughter of a farmer."

" It might well be called a great one," replied Lothario, " for we were both very fond of each other, quite in earnest and also for a fairly long time. As it chanced to-day everything worked together to represent in a very lively fashion the first period of our love. The boys again shook cockchafers from the trees, and the leaves of the oak trees were no farther out than

on the day that I saw her for the first time. Now it was a long time since I have seen Margaret, for she is married far away ; only I heard by chance that a few weeks ago she had come with her children to visit her father."

" So this ride was not altogether by chance ? "

" I don't deny," said Lothario, " that I wanted to meet her. When I was not far from the dwelling I saw her father sitting in front of the door ; a child, about a year old, stood near him. When I approached I quickly saw a woman at the window upstairs, and when I came to the door, I heard someone running down the stairs. I certainly thought it was she, and I will confess I flattered myself that she had recognized me and came hurriedly to meet me. But how ashamed I felt when she sprang to the door, seized the child as the horses were coming near and carried it into the house. It was for me an unpleasant sensation, and my vanity was only a little consoled when, as she hurried away, I thought I saw a noticeable blush on her neck and uncovered ear.

" I remained quiet and spoke with her father, glancing meantime sideways at the window to see if she would not let herself appear here or there, but I observed no trace of her. I did not want to ask questions, and so I rode past. My vexation was, to some extent, alleviated by astonishment, for though I had scarcely seen her face, she did not appear to me to be at all changed, and yet ten years is a fair time. Yes, she seemed to me younger, just as slender and as light of foot, her neck if possible still more delicate and her cheeks blushed ever so readily, though she was the mother of six children, perhaps of more. This apparition fitted so well with the magic world surrounding me that I rode on with feelings the more rejuvenated, and did not turn round till I was at the next forest, when the sun was setting. Much as the falling dew reminded me of the prescription of the doctor, and it would have been more advisable to turn straight home, I made my way again to the side of the farmer's house. I observed a woman who was walking up and down in the garden, which was surrounded by a light hedge. I rode on the footpath to the hedge, and found myself not far from the person whom I yearned to see.

" Though the setting sun was in my eyes, I yet saw that she was occupied with the hedge which only slightly covered her. I thought I recognized my old loved one. When I came to her

I halted, not without palpitation of the heart. Some high twigs of wild roses which a light breeze was blowing to and fro made her figure indistinct to me. I spoke to her and asked how she was. She answered me in an undertone, 'Quite well.'⁵ Meantime, I noticed that a child behind the hedge was busy picking flowers, and I took the opportunity of asking her where her other children were. 'This is not my child; she said; 'that would be rather early!' And at this moment it so happened that I was able to see her face quite clearly, and I did not know what to say to the apparition. It was my loved one and yet it was not; almost younger, almost more beautiful than when I had known her ten years previously.

" 'Are you not the daughter of the farmer?' I enquired, half confused.

" 'No,' she said, 'I am her cousin.'

" 'But you are so extraordinarily like one another,' I replied.

" 'Everyone says so, who has known her ten years ago.'

" I continued to ask her different things. My mistake was pleasant to me, though I had already discovered it. I could not tear myself away from the living image of former happiness which stood before me. The child, meanwhile, had departed from me, and looking for flowers had gone to the pond. She said good-bye and hurried after the child.

" Meantime, however, I had learned my old love was still really in her father's house, and as I rode on I busied myself with conjecturing whether it was she herself or the cousin who had secured the child from the horses. I repeated many times the whole story in thought. I cannot easily think of anything which has had a more pleasant effect upon me. But I feel that I am still not well, and we will ask the doctor to free us from the remains of this mood."

In confidential narrative of pleasing love adventures it is wont to happen, as with ghost stories, when only the first is told, the others follow of themselves. Our small company, in calling to memory bygone times, found many things of this kind. Lothario had most to relate. Jarno's stories were all of one peculiar character, and we knew already what Wilhelm had to confess. Meantime he felt anxious lest he should be reminded of his story with the Countess, but nobody thought of it even in the remotest manner.

"It is true," said Lothario, "that there is no sensation in the world more pleasant than when the heart, after an indifferent pause, opens itself to love and to a new object, yet I should have renounced that happiness for my life, if fate had wished to unite me with Theresa. We are not always young, and we must not always remain childless. For the man who knows the world, who knows what he has to do in it, and what he has to expect from it, what can be more desirable for him than to find a wife who, everywhere, co-operates with him and who knows how to prepare everything for him, whose activity takes up what he has to leave alone, whose occupation expands itself on every side, while his must only go straightforward. What a heaven had I dreamed of with Theresa ! Not the heaven of a visionary happiness, but of a secure life on earth—order in prosperity, courage in adversity, care for the smallest matters and a soul capable of grasping the greatest, and again to let it go. Oh, in her I saw the qualities, the development of which makes us marvel when we see women in history who appear far superior to all us men ; their clearness of view over circumstances, this adroitness in all cases, this sureness in details by which the whole appears so well, without their ever seeming to think about it. You can," he continued, turning with a smile to Wilhelm, "forgive me when Theresa led me away from Aurelia ; with the former I could hope for a cheerful life, with the latter one hour of happiness was not to be thought of."

"I don't deny," replied Wilhelm, "that I have come here to you with great bitterness of heart, and that I had intended to blame very severely your conduct to Aurelia."

"It deserves blame, too," said Lothario. "I should not have changed my friendship for her with the feeling of love ; I ought not, in the place of respect which she deserved, to have forced in an affection which she could neither awaken nor maintain. Ah ! she was not lovable, when she loved, and that is the greatest misfortune which can befall a woman."

"So it is," answered Wilhelm. "We cannot always avoid what is blameworthy, that our feelings and actions should be turned aside from their natural and right direction, but certain duties we should never leave out of sight. May the ashes of our friend rest tranquilly ! Without scolding and blaming ourselves, we will with pity strew flowers upon her grave. But at

the grave where the unhappy mother rests, let me ask why you do not receive the child, a son, with whom everyone would be pleased and whom you seem entirely to neglect? How can you, with your pure and tender feelings, entirely disown the heart of a father? All this time you have not mentioned a syllable about this precious creature of whose grace there is so much to tell."

"Of whom are you speaking?" replied Lothario. "I don't understand you."

"Of whom else but your son, the son of Aurelia, the beautiful child for whom nothing is lacking but a tender father to receive him?"

"You are making a great mistake, my friend. Aurelia had no son, at least not by me. I know of no child, otherwise I would receive it with joy, but even in the present case I will gladly regard it as a bequest from her and make provision for its education. Has she, then, let anything be noticed that the boy belongs to her, and to me?"

"I don't remember to have heard a word from her expressly about it, but it was just so accepted and I have not for a moment doubted it."

"I can," interrupted Jarno, "give some explanation about it. An old woman, whom you must often have seen, brought the child to Aurelia. She received it passionately, and hoped that her griefs would be alleviated by its presence. It has, too, given her many a pleasurable moment."

At this disclosure Wilhelm had become very much disturbed. He reflected in the most lively manner of the good Mignon by the side of the beautiful Felix; he showed his desire to bring the two children out of the position in which they were.

"We will soon settle that," replied Lothario. "Let us hand over the singular young girl to Theresa; it is impossible for her to be in better hands, and as regards the boy, you should take him to yourself, for what women leave as uncultivated, that is cultivated by children if we occupy ourselves with them."

"Above all, I should think," replied Jarno, "you gave up the theatre altogether, for which at least you have no talent."

Wilhelm was taken aback. He had to pluck up courage, for Jarno's hard words had wounded his self-love not a little. "If you convince me of it," he replied with a forced smile, "you

will do me a service, though it is but a sad one when we are shaken out of our darling dreams.⁵⁵

"Without talking more about it," replied Jarno, "I would only urge you first to fetch the children, the rest will settle itself."

"I am ready for it," replied Wilhelm. "I am restless and curious whether I cannot discover something nearer of the fate of the boy; I am longing to see the young girl again who has attached herself to me with so much peculiarity."

They were agreed that he should soon depart.

The next day he had made preparations; the horse was saddled, he only still wanted to take leave of Lothario. When it was time for the meal, they sat down at table as usual, without waiting for the master of the house. He did not come till late, and sat down by them.

"I would bet," said Jarno, "you have again to-day put your tender heart to the proof; you could not resist the desire to see your former love again."⁵⁵

"Well guessed!" replied Lothario.

"Let us hear," said Jarno, "how it went off. I am extremely curious."⁵⁵

"I don't deny," replied Lothario, "that the adventure lay upon my heart more than was right. I therefore decided to ride there again and really to see the person whose rejuvenated image had made for me such a pleasant illusion. I dismounted at some distance from the house and let the horses go aside, so as not to disturb the children who were playing in front of the gate. I went into the house and, by chance, she came to meet me, for it was she herself, and I recognized her again in spite of the great change. She had become stouter and seemed taller; her grace shone through a sedate personality, and her liveliness passed over into a quiet contemplation. Her head, which formerly she used to carry easily and without restraint, hung down a little, and her brow was slightly knitted.

"She cast down her eyes when she saw me, but no blush announced an inner emotion of the heart. I extended my hand to her; she gave me hers; I enquired after her husband, he was away; **after** her children, she went to the door and called them in; they all came and gathered round her. There is nothing more chaining than to see a mother with a child on her arm, and nothing more honourable than a mother among many

children. I asked after the names of the little ones, so as just to say something. She asked me to come in and wait for her father. I accepted. She led me into the room, where I found almost everything still in its old place, and—wonderful! the beautiful cousin. Her exact likeness sat on the footstool behind the distaff where I had so often found my loved one in just that manner. A small girl, who was completely like her mother, had followed after us, and so I stood in the most singular present, between the past and the future, as in an orange grove wherein a small compass of flowers and fruits live near one another in the successive stages of their growth. The cousin went out to fetch some refreshment. I gave my hand to the being I had loved so much formerly, and said to her, 'It is a real joy for me to see you again.'

" 'You are very good to say that to me,' she replied, 'but I also can assure you that I have an unspeakable joy. How often have I wished to see you once more in my life; I have wished it in moments which I thought to be my last.' She said that in a voice of composure, without emotion, with that naturalness which formerly gave me so much delight in her. The cousin came back and the father with her, and I leave you to imagine with what feelings I remained and with what I came away."

CHAPTER VIII

ON his way to the town Wilhelm had in his mind the noble women he had known or had heard of, their strange destinies which contained so little happiness and were present to him with sorrow. "Oh!" he exclaimed, "poor Mariana! what am I yet to learn of thee? And you, glorious Amazon, noble protecting spirit, to whom I am so much indebted, whom I am everywhere expecting to meet and whom I nowhere see, in what mournful circumstances may I perhaps find you, if you must meet me once again?"

In the town none of his acquaintances were at home. He hurried to the theatre: he thought to find them rehearsing. Everything was quiet; the house appeared empty, yet he saw one shop door still open. When he came on the stage he found Aurelia's old sewing-woman busied in sewing linen for a new

decoration ; there was only so much light as was necessary for her work. Felix and Mignon sat near her on the ground ; both held a book, and while Mignon read aloud, Felix repeated all the words after her, as if he knew his letters, as if he, too, understood how to read.

The children jumped up and greeted him as he came to them. He embraced them in the tenderest manner and led them nearer to the old woman. " Is it you," he said earnestly, " who has brought this child to Aurelia ? " She looked up from her work and turned her face to him. He saw her in the clearest light ; he was alarmed and went back some steps—it was the old Barbara.

" Where is Mariana ? " he exclaimed.

" Far from here," replied the old woman.

" And Felix ? "

" Is the son of this unhappy young girl who loved only too tenderly. May you never feel what you have cost us ? May the treasure which I now hand over to you make you as happy as it has made us unhappy ! "

She got up to go away. Wilhelm held her firmly. " I am not thinking of escaping from you," she said. " Let me fetch a document which will make you glad and sorrowful." She retired, and Wilhelm looked at the boy with a painful joy. He dared not yet regard the child as his own. " It is yours," said Mignon, and pressed the child to Wilhelm's knees.

The old woman came and handed to him a letter. " Here are Mariana's last words," said she.

" She is dead ! " he exclaimed.

" Dead ! " said the old woman. " May I spare you all reproaches."

Astounded and confused, Wilhelm broke open the letter, but he had scarcely read the first words when bitter sorrow took hold of him. He let the letter fall, sank on to a grassy bank and remained lying there some time. Mignon busied herself with him. Meanwhile Felix had picked up the letter and worried his companion so long, till she gave way, knelt down and read it out to him. Felix repeated the words, and Wilhelm was obliged to hear them a second time : " If this paper ever comes to you, mourn over your unhappy loved one. Your love has given death to her. The boy, whose birth I shall only survive a few days, is yours ; I die faithful to you, though appearances

may speak against me. With you, I lost everything which bound me to life. I die contented, since I am assured that the child is healthy and will live. Listen to the old Barbara, forgive her. Farewell, and don't forget me !"

What a painful letter, and yet for his consolation half enigmatic ; the content he was first able to feel as the children, stuttering and stammering, explained and repeated it.

" Now you have it," cried the old woman, without waiting till he had recovered. " Thank heaven that after the loss of so good a young girl there is still left for you a splendid child. Nothing will equal your sorrow when you perceive how the good young girl remained faithful to you to the end, how unhappy she became and how she sacrificed everything to you."

" Let me drink at once the cup of sorrow and joy," exclaimed Wilhelm. " Convince me, nay, only persuade me, that she was a good young girl, that she deserved my respect as well as my love, and leave me my sorrow over her irreplaceable loss."

" It is not time now," replied the old woman. " I have things to do and don't wish that we should be found together. Let it be a secret that Felix belongs to you. I had already, for my previous deception, to await too many reproaches from the company. Mignon does not betray us ; she is good and keeps silence."

" I knew it a long time and said nothing," replied Mignon.

" How is that possible ? " cried the old woman.

" Where ? " interrupted Wilhelm.

" The spirit has told it me."

" How ? Where ? "

" In the vault, when the old man drew his knife, he called to me, ' Call his father,' and then you came into my mind."

" Who called thus ? "

" I don't know whether in my heart or head. I was so alarmed, I trembled. I prayed, then there was a call, and I understood it."

Wilhelm pressed her to his bosom, entrusting Felix to her, and withdrew. He noticed at last that she had become paler and thinner than when he had left her. Among his acquaintances he first found Frau Melina. She greeted him in the most friendly manner. " Oh, if only you might find everything with us as you wish ! "

" I am doubtful of that, and do not expect it. Only confess all arrangements have been made so as to dispense with me."

" Why did you go away ? " replied his friend.

" One cannot learn early enough how easily one is dispensed with in the world. What important persons we imagine ourselves to be ! We think that it is only we who enliven the circle in which we are active ; in our absence we fancy life, food and breath will stop, and the gap which arises is scarcely noticed ; it is so quickly filled up again, nay, often it gives place, if not for something better, yet for something more agreeable, and do we not take into consideration the sorrows of our friends ?

" And our friends also do well when they recover, when they say to themselves, ' There where you are, there where you stay ; do what you can, be active and pleasant and let the present be cheerful for you ! ' "

On closer information Wilhelm found what he had conjectured ; the opera was established and attracted to itself the whole attention of the public. His parts meanwhile were taken by Laertes and Horatio, and both drew from the spectators a far more lively applause than he had ever been able to obtain.

Laertes came in, and Frau Melina exclaimed : " Look at this happy man who will soon be a capitalist on God knows what ! " Wilhelm embraced him, and felt round his neck excellent cloth on his coat. The rest of his clothes were simple, but all of the best material.

" Solve this riddle for me ! " exclaimed Wilhelm.

" There is still time enough," replied Laertes, " to learn that my wanderings to and fro are now paid, that a master of a large business house draws profit from my restlessness, my knowledge and acquaintances, and leaves to me a part of it. I would give a good deal for it if I could gain back confidence with the women, for in the house there is a pretty niece, and I observe that if I wished I could soon be a made man."

" You do not know," said Frau Melina, " that in the meantime a marriage has taken place amongst us. Serlo is actually wedded to the beautiful Elmira, as her father would not sanction their secret intimacy."

Then they conversed about various things which had taken place in his absence, and he could easily observe that, according

to the present mind and temper of the company, he had long ago been dismissed from it.

He awaited the old woman with impatience, who had arranged her visit to him late at night. She wanted to come when everyone was asleep ; she required such preparations as if she had been the youngest maiden gliding to her beloved. Meantime he had read through Mariana's letter a hundred times, read with unspeakable delight the word " faithful " in the hand of his loved one, and with horror the announcement of her death, whose near approach she did not seem to fear.

Midnight was past when something entered at the half-open door, and the old woman came in with a basket. " I am," she said, " to tell you the story of our sorrows, and I must expect you to sit by without moving ; that you are only waiting for me so anxiously to satisfy your curiosity, and that you will now, as formerly, shroud yourself in your cold selfishness while our hearts are breaking. But, see here ! On that happy evening I brought out the bottle of champagne, put the three glasses on the table, and as you began to beguile us with pleasant nursery tales and send us to sleep, I will now enlighten you with melancholy truth and keep you awake."

Wilhelm had no idea what he should say, when the old woman actually let go the cork and filled full the three glasses.

" Drink," she said, after she had quickly emptied her foaming glass, " drink before the spirit evaporates ! This third glass shall froth away untasted in memory of my unhappy young friend. How red were her lips when she said good-bye to you at that time ! Oh ! and now for ever pale and chilled."

" Sibyl ! Fury !" exclaimed Wilhelm, jumping up and striking the table with his fist. " What evil spirit possesses and impels you ? For what do you take me, if you think that the simplest story of Mariana's death and sorrows will not grieve my sensibility enough, but you make use of these hellish artifices to sharpen my martyrdom. Does your insatiable greed go so far that you must revel at the funeral meal ? Drink, then, and speak. I felt a horror of you from of old, and I cannot yet think of Mariana as innocent while I look upon you as her companion."

" Gently, my good sir," replied the old woman ; " you will not bring me from my composure. You are still very much in our debt, and one is not angered by what a debtor may say.

But you are right, my simplest narrative is punishment enough for you. So listen, then, to the struggle and victory of Mariana so as to remain yours."

"Mine?" exclaimed Wilhelm. "What a fable will you begin?"

"Don't interrupt me," she said. "Listen to me and then think what you like; it is, besides, all the same to me. Did you not on that last evening, when you were with us, find a note and take it with you?"

"I found the paper first when I had taken it with me; it was enveloped in the neckcloth which I seized in the ardour of my affection, and put it in my pocket."

"What did the paper contain?"

"The intentions of a vexed lover to be better received on the following night than on the previous one. And that word was kept with him. I have seen with my own eyes; he stole away early out of the house before daybreak."

"You may have seen him; but what happened with us, how melancholy was Mariana during this night, how miserably I passed it, you will now learn for the first time. I will be quite sincere, neither denying nor palliating the fact that I persuaded Mariana to give herself to a certain Norberg; she followed, nay, I can say, she obeyed me with reluctance. He was rich, he seemed to be in love, and I hoped he would be constant. Soon after that he had to take a journey and Mariana got to make your acquaintance. What had I not to endure? What to hinder and to put up with? 'Oh!' she often cried, 'had you only spared my youth, my innocence only another four weeks, I should have found a worthy object of my love; I would have been worthy of him, and I would have given my love with a calm consciousness which now I have sold against my will.' She gave herself up entirely to her affection for you, and I dare not ask whether you were happy. I had an unlimited power over her understanding, for I knew every means of satisfying her small inclination. I had no power over her heart, for she never approved of what I did for her, to what I stirred her, if her heart contradicted it. Only to unconquerable necessity did she yield, and the necessity appeared to her soon to be very pressing. In the early period of her youth she had wanted nothing; through a confusion of affairs her family lost their property. The poor

young girl was accustomed to all kinds of wants ; certain good principles had been impressed on her young spirit, which made her restless without helping her much. She hadn't the least skill in worldly matters, she was innocent in a peculiar sense, she had no idea that one can buy without paying ; for nothing was she more anxious than about being in debt ; she would always rather have given than taken, and it was only such a position which made it possible for her to be obliged to surrender herself so as to be free from a number of small debts."

" And could you not have saved her," continued Wilhelm.

" Oh, yes," replied the old woman, " with hunger and poverty, with trouble and privation, and for that I was never adapted."

" Horrible, abject procuress ! So you have sacrificed the unfortunate creature, you have surrendered her to your greed, to your insatiable appetite."

" You would do better to be moderate and restrain your abusive language," replied the old woman. " If you want to be abusive, go into the houses of the great and respectable ! There you will find mothers who are really anxiously occupied in finding out for a healthy young girl the most abominable man, if only at the same time he is the richest. Look at the poor creature trembling and shaking before her fate, and never finding consolation except when some experienced friend makes her understand that, by marriage, she earns the right of being able to dispose of her heart and person as she pleases."

" Silence ! " cried Wilhelm. " Do you think that one crime can be excused by another ? Go on with your story, without making further observations."

" Listen, then, without finding fault with me. In this adventure I have nothing to reproach myself with. Norberg returned ; he hastened to see Mariana, who received him coldly and angrily, and would not even allow him a kiss. I used all my skill to excuse her behaviour ; I gave him to understand that a confessor had awakened her conscience, and that conscience, so long as it speaks, must be respected. I got so far that he went away, and I promised to do my best for him. He was rich and rough, but he had a basis of good humour in him, and he loved Mariana to the uttermost. He promised me patience, and I laboured all the more vigorously so as not to try him too much. With Mariana I had a difficult position ; I persuaded her, nay, I can say I forced

her, by the threat of abandoning her, to write to her lover and invite him for the night. You came, and by chance picked up his answer in the neckcloth. Your unexpected presence upset my game.

" You were scarcely gone when her trouble began anew. She swore she could not be unfaithful to you and was so passionate, so beside herself, that she drew from me heartfelt pity. At last I promised her that I would this night calm down Norberg, and withdraw him with all kinds of pretences. I asked her to go to bed, but she did not appear to trust me ; she remained dressed and at last fell asleep in her clothes, agitated and exhausted by weeping as she was.

" Norberg came. I endeavoured to keep him back ; I represented to him her remorse, her repentance in the blackest colours. He only wished to see her, and I went into the room to prepare her ; he strode after me, and we both came before her bed at the same time. She awoke, sprang up wrathfully and tore herself from our arms ; she swore and begged, entreated, threatened and assured us she would not yield. She was sufficiently imprudent to let fall some words about her real passion, which the poor Norberg had to understand in a spiritual sense. At last he left her and she locked herself in. I kept him some time longer with me, and spoke with him about her condition, that she was expecting a child and that one must spare the poor girl. He felt himself so proud of his fatherhood, he was so delighted at the prospect of a boy, that he granted everything she desired, and he promised rather to go off on a journey for some time than to cause anxiety to his loved one, and do her harm by these emotional disturbances. With these words he slunk off early in the morning from me, and if you, my good sir, had stood sentry, nothing further was wanting to your happiness but to see into the bosom of your rival, whom you thought to be favoured and so fortunate, and whose appearance brought you to despair."

" Are you saying what is true ? " said Wilhelm.

" As true," said the old woman, " as I yet hope to bring you to despair. Yes, certainly, you will despair, if I could put before you in a lively fashion the picture of our next morning. How cheerfully she woke up ! In how friendly a way did she call me in ! In how lively a manner did she thank me ! How cordially did she press me to her bosom ! ' Now,' she said, as with a smile

she went before the looking-glass, ' may I again be pleased with myself and my figure, as I again belong to myself and to my beloved friend. How sweet it is to have conquered ! What a heavenly feeling it is to follow one's own heart ! How thankful I am to you that you have come to my assistance, that you have applied your cleverness, your understanding, once again for my advantage ! Stay with me and consider what can make me perfectly happy ! '

" I gave way to her ; I did not want to irritate her ; I flattered her hopes and she caressed me in the most graceful manner. Withdraw yourself from the window for a moment, for I must stand on guard, for you, of course, would pass by ; we wished at least to see you. So the whole day passed in restlessness. At night, at the usual hour, we expected you quite certainly. I looked out on the staircase ; the time seemed long to me. I went into her again. To my astonishment I found her in her officer's dress ; she looked extremely cheerful and charming. 'Don't I deserve,' she said, 'to appear to-day in male costume? Have I not shown myself fine ? My lover is to see me to-day as on the first time. I will press him to my heart so tenderly and with more freedom than at that time, since a noble resolution had not yet made me free. But,' she added, after some reflection, 'I have not yet won everything ; I must still venture the uttermost so as certainly to be worthy of him and his possession ; I must disclose everything to him, lay open my whole condition and then leave it to him whether he wishes to keep me or thrust me away. This scene I am preparing for him, and I prepare it for myself, and if his feeling is capable of thrusting me away, I should then again belong entirely to myself; in my punishment I would find my consolation, and endure everything which fate wished to put upon me.' With these thoughts, with these hopes, my good sir, the loving young girl awaited you. Oh ! how am I to describe the condition of waiting and hoping ? I still see you in front of me, with what love, with what ardour you spoke of the man, whose cruelty you had not yet experienced."

" Good ! my dear Barbara," cried Wilhelm, as he jumped up and grasped the old woman by the hand. " We have now had enough dissimulation, enough prevarication ; your indifferent, your peaceful, your contented love has betrayed you. Give Mariana again to me ; she is alive, she is close at hand.

It is not for nothing that you have chosen this late and lovely hour for your visit, it is not for nothing that you have prepared me through this delightful narrative. Where have you got her? Where are you hiding her? I believe everything, I promise you to believe everything, when you show her to me, when you give her back to my arms. I have already seen her shadow in flight; let me hold her again in my arms! I will lie on my knees before her, I will ask her forgiveness, I will congratulate her on her struggle, on her victory over herself and you. I will introduce my Felix to her. Come! Where have you hidden her? Leave me, leave her no longer in uncertainty! Your object is attained. Where have you hidden her? Come, let me light you with this candle, that I may see again her kindly countenance."

He had drawn the old woman up from the chair; she stared at him, tears started from her eyes and a terrible pain seized her. "What an unfortunate error," she exclaimed, "allows you still to hope for a moment! Yes, I have hidden her, but under the earth. Neither the light of the sun nor a familiar taper will ever enlighten again her kindly countenance. Take the good Felix to her grave and say to him, 'There lies your mother, whom your father has condemned unheard. The loving heart beats no more with impatience of seeing you; in no neighbouring chamber does she await the issue of my narrative, or of my fable. The dark chamber has received her, whither her bridegroom follows, from which one goes out not to meet a loved one.'⁵"

She threw herself down on the ground by a chair and wept bitterly. For the first time, Wilhelm was fully convinced that Mariana was dead; he was in a mournful state. The old woman got up. "I have nothing more to tell you," she cried, and threw a packet on the table. "Here are these writings which will put your cruelty to shame. Read through these pages with dry eyes, if it is possible for you to do so."

She glided away gently, and during that night Wilhelm had not the heart to open the pocket-book. He had himself given it to Mariana; he knew that she had kept carefully in it every small letter which she had received from him. Next morning he prevailed on himself. He untied the ribbon, and little notes came out, written in pencil with his own hand, and recalled to him every situation from the first day of their pleasing acquaintance to the last of their cruel separation.

Alone, not without the keenest pain, he read through a small collection of the notes which were written to him and which, as he saw from the contents, had been sent back by Werner.

MARIANA'S LETTERS

" None of my letters have been able to get through to you ; my entreaties and prayers have not reached you ; have you yourself given these cruel commands ? Am I never to see you again ? Once again I attempt it. I beseech you : Come, oh come ! I do not ask to keep you if I could but once more press you to my heart.

" When I used to sit beside you, hold your hands, look into your eyes and with a heart full of love and confidence, said to you : ' Dear, dear, good Wilhelm,' you liked so much to hear it. I had so often to repeat it to you. I am repeating once again : ' Dear, dear, good Wilhelm : be good as you used to be ! Come, and don't leave me to perish in my misery.'

" You think I am guilty. I am so, but not as you think. Come, that I may have my only comfort to be entirely known by you ; afterwards, let happen what will.

" Not for my sake only, but also for yours, I beg of you to come. I feel the intolerable pains which you are suffering, while you flee from me. Come, that our separation may be less cruel. Perhaps I was not worthy of you until this moment when you are thrusting me back into endless misery.

" By all that is holy, by all that can touch a human heart, I call upon you. It has to do with a soul, with a life, two lives, of which one must ever be dear to you. Your suspicion will not even believe it, and yet I will speak it out in the hour of death : the child which I am carrying beneath my heart is yours. Since I loved you, no other man has even pressed my hand. Oh that your love, your uprightness, had been the companions of my youth !

" Will you not hear me ? So, then, I must at last be dumb. But these letters will not perish ; perhaps they can still speak to you when the shroud already covers my lips, and the voice of your repentance cannot reach my ears. Through my sorrowful life, to the last moment, my only consolation will be that I was guiltless towards you, though I cannot call myself free from guilt."

Wilhelm could read no further. He abandoned himself completely to his grief, but he was still more troubled when Laertes came in, from whom he endeavoured to hide his feelings. Laertes brought out a purse of ducats, counted and reckoned them up, and assured Wilhelm that there is nothing finer in the world than for a man to be on the way to become rich, nothing that disturbs him or keeps him back. Wilhelm remembered his dream and smiled, but at the same time he thought, with a shudder, that in his dream-vision Mariana had forsaken him to follow his dead father, and that both of them at last had moved around the garden, hovering about like spirits.

Laertes forced him out of his reflections and brought him to a coffee-house, where soon several people were gathered round him who had formerly been glad to see him on the stage. They were pleased at meeting him, but only regretted that, as they heard, he wished to leave the stage. They spoke so definitely and sensibly of him, of his play, of the degree of his talent, of their expectations, that Wilhelm, not without emotion, at last exclaimed : " Oh, how infinitely valuable would this sympathy have been for me a few months ago ! How instructive and how encouraging ! Never would I have turned my mind so entirely from the stage, and never would I have gone so far as to despair of the public."

" So far as that we should not go," said an elderly man, who came forward. " The public is great; true understanding and true feeling are not so rare as one thinks, only the artist must never look for an unconditional applause for what he produces, for unconditional approval is least valuable, and you gentlemen will not be satisfied with the conditional."

" I know in life, as in art, that one must consult with oneself if one is to do and produce something, but when it is done or completed, one can listen with attention to many people, and with some practice from these many voices, one quite soon gathers together a complete judgment, for those who can spare us this trouble are mostly silent enough."

" That is just what they should not be," said Wilhelm. " I have so often heard that men who keep silence even over good words, yet complained and regretted that silence was kept."

" So to-day we will be vocal," cried a young man. " You

must dine with us, and we will make up all for which we remain indebted to you, and often to the good Aurelia."

Wilhelm declined the invitation and betook himself to Madame Melina, to whom he wanted to speak about the children, as he thought of taking them away from her.

The secret of the old woman was not kept by him in the best way. He betrayed himself as he was again looking at Felix. "Oh, my child," he exclaimed, "my dear child!" He lifted him up and pressed him to his heart.

"Father! What have you brought for me," cried the child.

Mignon looked at them both, as if she wanted to warn them not to betray themselves.

"What new phenomenon is this?" said Madame Melina. They tried to bring the children aside, and Wilhelm, who did not feel himself indebted to the old woman for the strictest secrecy, disclosed to his friend the whole situation.

Frau Melina looked at him, smiling.

"Oh, credulous men," she exclaimed. "If there is only something in their way, it is very easy to impose on them; but, another time, they look round neither to the right nor left, and do not know how to value anything except what they have previously marked with a stamp of an arbitrary passion."

She could not repress a sigh, and if Wilhelm had not been quite blind, he must have recognized in her demeanour an inclination to him which had not been quite overcome.

He spoke with her of the children, as he thought of keeping Felix by himself and Mignon on the land. Frau Melina, though she at last parted from the two unwillingly, found the proposal good, nay, necessary. Felix ran wild with her, and Mignon seemed to require a freer air and different conditions. The good child was sickly and could not recover.

"Make no mistake," continued Frau Melina, "that I have expressed some doubt thoughtlessly as to whether the boy really does belong to you. One can really put little trust in the old woman. Yet he who invents untruth for his own advantage, can also speak the truth when truths seem to be useful to him. The old woman had represented to Aurelia that Felix was the son of Lothario, and we women have this peculiarity, that we love heartily the children of our lovers when the mothers do not know them, or hate them from the bottom of their heart."

Felix came jumping in. She pressed him to her with a tenderness which was not customary with her.

Wilhelm hurried home and sent for the old woman, who, however, did not promise to meet him till twilight. He received her with annoyance, and said to her, " There is nothing more shameful in the world than to establish oneself with lies and fables ! Already you have done much harm with them ; and now when your word could decide the fortune of my life, now I stand in doubt and dare not clasp the child in my arms, though the possession of him, without any doubt, would constitute my greatest happiness. I cannot, shameful creature, look upon you without hatred and contempt."

" If I am to speak sincerely," replied the old woman, " your behaviour appears to be quite intolerable. And if it were not your son, it is the most beautiful, most charming child in the world, which one would be glad to purchase at any price, so as always to have him near one. Is it not worth while that you should accept him ? For my care and my trouble with him, don't I deserve a small succour for my future life ? Oh, you men, whom nothing escapes, it is all very well for you to speak of truth and integrity ; but how a poor creature, when nothing came to meet her slightest need, in her embarrassment sees no friend, no advice, no help, has to press through the crowd of selfish men and to starve in silence. Of this there is much to be said if you would and could hear it. Have you read Mariana's letters ? They are those which she wrote at that unhappy time. I tried in vain to come near you, in vain to put these pages before you ; your cruel brother-in-law had so surrounded you that all cunning and cleverness were in vain, and finally, when he threatened me and Mariana with prison, I was obliged to give up all hope. Does not all this which I have told you agree together ? And does not Norberg's letter put the whole story beyond all doubt ? "

" What letter ? " enquired Wilhelm.

" Haven't you found it in the pocket-book ? " replied the old woman.

" I have not yet read through everything."

" Only give me here the pocket-book ! Everything depends on this document. Norberg's unfortunate note has given rise to the melancholy confession ; another one from his hand may

even untie the knot, in so far as something is still laid on the string." She took a page from the pocket-book.

Wilhelm recognized the hateful hand. He gathered himself together and read :

" Tell me why, maiden, how you have that influence over me ? If I had not believed that a goddess herself could transform me into a sighing lover. Instead of hastening to meet me with open arms, you draw back ; one might really have taken it for shyness in the way you deceive yourself. Is it permitted that I am to pass the whole night with the old Barbara on a chest in the room ? And my darling girl was only two doors distant. It is, I tell you, too mad ! I have promised to leave you some time for reflection, not to thrust myself upon you, and I might become infuriated over every lost quarter of an hour. Have I not given you presents such as I knew of and could ? Do you still doubt my love ? What will you have ? Only mention it ! You shall want for nothing. I wished the clergyman were drunk and blind who has put such stuff in your head. Were you obliged to come upon such a one ? There are many who know how to overlook something in the case of young people. Enough, I tell you ; things must change. In a couple of days I must have an answer, for I am soon going away again, and if you are not again friendly and pleasant, you shall not see me again."

In this manner the letter continued. For Wilhelm's sorrowful satisfaction it revolved always round the same point, and bore witness to the truth of the story which he had received from Barbara. A second page showed clearly that Mariana had not yielded subsequently, and Wilhelm perceived from these and further pages, not without pain, the story of the unfortunate young girl up to the hour of her death.

The old woman had, by degrees, tamed the rough man, while she told him of Mariana's death and left him with the belief that Felix was his son. He had sent her money several times, which she had kept for herself, since she had talked over Aurelia into having care for the education of the child. But, unfortunately, these secret earnings did not last long. Norberg had squandered the greatest part of his property by a wild life, and repeated love affairs had hardened his heart against his first and imaginary son.

Probable as all this sounded, and beautifully as it fitted in,

yet Wilhelm did not yet abandon himself to his joy ; he appeared to be afraid of a gift which an evil spirit handed over to him.

" Only time can cure your scepticism," said the old woman, who guessed his mental temper. " Look at the child as a stranger and pay therefore more exact attention to him ; take notice of his gifts, his nature, his capacities, and if you do not, by degrees, recognize yourself, you must have bad eyes. For I assure you that if I were a man, no one would foist a child upon me ; but, fortunately for women, in these cases men are not so sharp sighted."

After all this, Wilhelm came to an understanding with the old woman. He wished to have Felix with himself. She was to bring Mignon to Theresa and expend a small pension which he promised, as she wanted it.

He had Mignon summoned, so as to prepare her for this change.

" Meister," she said, " keep me by you ! It will do me good and do me harm."

He explained to her that she was now grown up, and that something had to be done for her further education.

" I am sufficiently educated," she said, " to love and to mourn."

He called her attention to her state of health ; that she was a continual anxiety, and required the guidance of a skilful physician.

" Why should people be taking care of me, when there is so much to be taken care of? "

After taking much trouble to persuade her that he could not now take her with him, that he wished to bring her to people where he would often see her—of all this she seemed to hear nothing.

" You won't have me with you," she said. " Perhaps it is better. Send me to the old harp-player, the poor man is so lonely."

Wilhelm tried to make her understand that the old man was well provided for.

" I yearn for him every hour," replied the child.

" But I have not noticed," said Wilhelm, " that you were so inclined towards him when he was still living with us."

" I was afraid of him when he woke up ; I could just not

see his eyes, but when he was asleep, I liked to sit by him. I kept the flies away from him, and could not be satisfied with looking at him. Oh ! he has stood by me in dreadful moments ; no one knows how much I owe to him. If I had only known the way, I should have already run to him."

Wilhelm put before her the circumstances in detail, and said she was such a reasonable child she should this time follow his wishes.

" Reason is cruel,⁵" she said, " the heart is better. I will go where you will, but leave me your Felix."

After much talk on both sides, she always remained by her opinion, and at last Wilhelm had to decide to hand over the two children to the old woman and to send them together to Fl. Theresa. This was all the easier for him to do, as he was still always afraid of recognizing the beautiful Felix as his son. He took him on his arm and carried him about. The child would have liked to have been lifted up before the mirror, and, without acknowledging it to himself, Wilhelm liked to carry him before the mirror and endeavour to find out the resemblances between himself and the child. If, for a moment, it was quite probable, he pressed the child to his bosom, but all at once, alarmed by the thought that he could be deceived, he put down the child and let it run away. " Oh ! " he exclaimed, " if I were to make my own this priceless treasure and it were torn away from me, I should be of all men the most unhappy."

The children had now been sent away, and Wilhelm now wished to take his formal leave of the theatre, when he felt that he had already taken leave and only had to go.

Mariana was no longer. His two guardian spirits had departed, and his thoughts hastened after them. The beautiful boy hovered before his imagination like a charming, uncertain vision. He saw him by Theresa's hand, running through fields and woods and cultivating himself in the free air beside a free and cheerful companion. Theresa had become of still greater value to him, since he thought of the child as in her society. Even as a spectator in the theatre he thought of her with smiles ; he was almost in her own condition—the plays produced no more illusion on him.

Serlo and Melina were extremely polite to him ; as soon as they observed that, he made no further claim to his former

position. A part of the public wished to see him once more appear on the stage. It would have been impossible for him, and no one in the company desired it except Frau Melina.

Of this friend he now really took leave. He was moved and said, "A man should not dare to promise anything for the future ! The slightest thing he may not be able to hold by, not to mention his project of importance. How ashamed I feel when I think of what I promised you all together on that unfortunate night when we were robbed, were sick, injured and wounded, herded together in a miserable inn. At that time, how did the misfortune elevate my courage, and what a treasure I thought I had found in my goodwill. Now of all this nothing has come about. I leave you as your debtor, and my happiness is that my promise was not estimated at more than it really was worth, and therefore that no one had ever reminded me of it."

"Do not be unjust to yourself," replied Frau Melina. "If no one recognizes what you have done for us, I will not forget it, for our whole condition would have been totally different if you had not been with us. It is, however, with our projects as with our wishes. They do not seem alike when they have been accomplished, when they have been fulfilled, and we think we have done nothing and attained nothing."

"You will not by your friendly interpretation calm my conscience, and I shall always seem to myself as your debtor."

"It is possible, too, that you are so," replied Frau Melina, "only not in the way that you think. We consider it a shame not to fulfil a promise which we have made with our lips. Oh, my friend, a good man by his presence promises always only too much ! The confidence which he elicits, the inclination he inspires, the hopes which he arouses, are infinite ; he is and continues our debtor without knowing it. Farewell ! If our outward circumstances under your guidance have been happily restored, there arises by your departure a void in my inner being which will not so easily be filled up again."

Before his departure from the town, Wilhelm wrote another detailed letter to Werner. They had, indeed, exchanged some letters, but because they were not able to be in harmony, they finally ceased writing. Now Wilhelm again approached his brother-in-law. He was on the point of doing that which the latter had so much wished ; he was able to say : "I am giving

up the theatre and I am uniting myself with men whose intercourse must, in every sense, lead me to a clear and sure activity." He made enquiries about his property, and it now seemed to him singular that for so long he had not troubled himself about it. He did not know that it is the manner of all men, who lay stress upon their inward cultivation, altogether to neglect entirely their outward circumstances. Wilhelm was in this condition; he seemed now to notice for the first time that he required outward means in order to work continuously. He journeyed forth with an entirely different idea from the first time. The prospects which displayed themselves to him were charming, and on the way he hoped to experience something delightful.

CHAPTER IX

WHEN he returned to Lothario's estate he found a great change. Jarno came to meet him with the news that the uncle was dead, that Lothario had gone away to take possession of the goods bequeathed to him. "You have just come at the right time," he said, "to assist me and the Abbe. Lothario had laid upon us the business connected with the important estates in this neighbourhood. For a long time he has made preparations for it, and now we have cash and credit just at the right time. The only thing which made us hesitate was that a foreign trading house had already views on these estates; now we have, in short, decided to make common cause with that firm, for otherwise we might outbid each other without necessity or reason. As it seems, we have to do with a clever man. Now we make calculations and designs. It must also be economically considered how we can divide the estates, so that each receives a fair property."

They spent several days with these labours, and Wilhelm had scarcely time to relate to his friends his adventures and his doubtful fatherhood. They treated an event for him so important with indifference and levity.

He had observed that often in confidential talks at table, and on walks, they had all at once restrained themselves, given to their words a different turn, and thereby showed at least that they settled many things among themselves which were hidden

from him. He remembered what Lydia had said, and thought all the more about it, since a whole side of the castle had always been inaccessible for him. To certain galleries, and particularly to the old tower, which he knew quite well from outside, he had hitherto sought in vain for a way and an entrance.

One evening Jarno said to him : " We can now look upon you as securely as on our own friends, so that it would be unfair if we did not introduce you more deeply into our secrets. It is good that a man, on his first entry into the world, should think much of himself; that he thinks of gaining many advantages for himself, that he endeavours to make everything possible, but when his education stands on a certain level, then it is advantageous for him to learn to live for the sake of others, and to forget himself in conscientious activity. Then he first gets to know himself, for it is action which really reconciles us with others. You should soon learn what a small world there is in your vicinity, and how well you are known in this small world. To-morrow morning, before sunrise, be dressed and ready."

Jarno came at the appointed hour and guided him through known and unknown rooms of the castle, then through some galleries, and at length they arrived in front of a large, high door, which was strongly plated with iron. Jarno knocked, the door opened a little so that a person could just slip in. Jarno pushed Wilhelm in without following him. Wilhelm found himself in a dark and narrow enclosure. It was obscure all round him, and when he wanted to go a step forward he knocked against something. A voice which was not quite unknown cried out to him, " Enter ! " and now he noticed for the first time that the sides of the room in which he was were hung only with carpets, through which a faint light glimmered. " Enter ! " was again cried out. He lifted up the carpet and entered.

The hall in which he now was seemed formerly to have been a chapel ; instead of the altar there stood a large table on some steps hung with a green carpet ; above, there appeared to be a curtain drawn close, covering a picture ; at the sides were beautifully carved cupboards, closed with wire grating such as one is accustomed to see in libraries, only instead of books one saw many rolls arranged. There was no one in the hall. The rising sun fell through the coloured windows just opposite Wilhelm and greeted him in a friendly manner.

" Be seated ! " cried a voice which seemed to sound from the altar. Wilhelm sat down on a small armchair which stood against the wooden screen of the entrance ; there was no other seat in the whole room. He had to resign himself to it, though he was blinded by the morning sun. The seat remained fixed ; he could only hold his hand before his eyes.

Meanwhile the curtain over the altar was opened with a slight noise, and there was displayed within a frame an empty, dark opening. A man came forward in ordinary dress, saluted him and said, " Don't you recognize me again ? Among other things which you might wish to know, do you not wish to learn where the art collection of your grandfather is at present ? Don't you remember any more the picture which you found so charming ? Where do you suppose the sick king's son is now pining away ? "

Wilhelm easily remembered the stranger who, on that important night, had conversed with him at the inn. " Perhaps," continued the former, " we should now be able to come to agreement about destiny and character."

Wilhelm was going to answer when the curtain quickly drew together again. " Singular," he said to himself. " Should chance events have a connection ? And is that which we call Destiny but Chance ? Where is my grandfather's collection ? And why am I reminded of it in these solemn moments ? "

He hadn't time to think further, for the curtain again opened, and a man at once stood before his eyes whom he recognized as the country clergyman who had made the water picnic with him and the merry company. He resembled the Abbe, but did not seem to be the same person. With a cheerful countenance and a dignified expression the man began : " It is not the duty of the teacher of men to preserve from error, but to guide the erring pupil, nay, to let him quaff his error from full cups ; this is the wisdom of the teacher. He who only tastes his error, dwells with it for a long time ; he takes pleasure in it as in peculiar happiness, but he who quite exhausts it, he will get to know it, if he is not crazy."

The curtain was again closed and Wilhelm had time to reflect. " Of what error can the man speak," he said to himself, " except that which has pursued me all through my life. I have sought for culture where it was not to be found, and I imagined

that I could acquire a talent for which I had not the slightest disposition."

The curtain tore itself apart more rapidly. An officer came forward and said only in passing, " Learn to know men in whom you can put trust ! " The curtain closed, and Wilhelm did not want long to consider before recognizing this officer as the one who had embraced him in the Count's park, and had been the cause of his taking Jarno for a recruiting officer. How he had come here, and who he was, for Wilhelm was a complete riddle. " If so many men take an interest in you, knew and understood your way of life and how it was to be carried on, why did they not guide you with greater strictness and more seriously ? Why did they favour your sports instead of leading you away from them ? "

" Do not dispute," said a voice. " You are saved and on the way to the goal. You will regret none of your follies, and wish none of them back ; there can be no happier destiny for a man." The curtain was torn aside, and in full armour stood the King of Denmark in the room. " I am the spirit of thy father," said the likeness, " and depart consoled as my wishes for you are fulfilled more than I myself understood. Steep regions can only be climbed by circuitous routes ; on the level, straight paths lead from one place to the other. Farewell, and think of me when you are enjoying what I have prepared for you."

Wilhelm was extremely taken aback. He thought he heard the voice of his father, and yet it was not so. The present and his memory placed him in the most confused state.

He was not able to reflect for long, when the Abbe entered and put himself behind the green table. " Come here ! " he cried to his astonished friend. He came there and mounted the steps. On the carpet there was a small roll. " Here is your apprentice's indenture."

INDENTURE OF AN APPRENTICE

" Art is long, life is short, judgment difficult, opportunity fleeting. Action is easy, thought is difficult ; to act upon reflection is uncomfortable. Every beginning is cheerful ; the threshold is the place of expectation. The boy is astonished, his impression decides him ; he learns as he plays, seriousness surprises him.

Imitation is innate in us ; what should be imitated is not easily recognized. That which is excellent is seldom found, still more seldom valued. The height attracts us, not the steps ; with the summit in our eye we are glad to wander on the plain. Only a part of art can be learnt ; the artist requires it completely. He who half knows it, is always in error and talks much ; he who possesses it completely, may only act, and speaks seldom or late. The former have no secrets and no power ; their teaching is like baked bread, pleasant to the taste and satisfying for one day ; but meal cannot be sown and the fruit of the seed cannot be spoilt in grinding. The words are good, but they are not the best. The best is not clearly expressed by means of words. The spirit in which we act is the highest thing. Action is only comprehended by the spirit and again represented. No one knows what he does, when he acts rightly ; but we are always conscious of what is wrong. He who only works with outward signs is a pedant, a hypocrite or a bungler. There are many of them, and they go very well together. Their talk keeps back the scholar and their persistent mediocrity causes anxiety for the best. The teaching of the true artist discloses the meaning, for where words are wanting, the deed speaks. The true scholar learns to develop the unknown from the known and approximates to the master."

" Enough ! " cried the Abbe, " the remainder in its own time. Now look around in these cupboards ! "

Wilhelm went up and read the inscriptions of the rolls. He found, with astonishment, Lothario's indenture, Jarno's indenture and his own set out among many others, the names of which were unknown to him.

" May I hope to have a glance at these rolls ? "

" In this room now, for you, nothing is shut up."

" May I ask a question ? "

" Without hesitation ! And you can expect a decided answer, if it has reference to a circumstance which lies near to your heart and ought to be there."

" Well, then ! You wonderful and wise man, whose glance penetrates into so many secrets, can you tell me whether Felix really is my son ? "

" Good luck to you for this question," cried the Abbe, as he clapped his hands together for joy. " Felix is your son ! By the holiest things which lie hidden from us, I swear to you that

Felix is your son, and according to her feelings, the departed mother was not unworthy of you. Receive the loving child from our hand ! Turn round, and venture to be happy."

Wilhelm heard a rustling behind him ; he turned round and saw a child's face peeping roguishly through the carpet of the entrance—it was Felix. The boy at once hid himself in fun, when he was seen. " Come up," cried the Abbe. He came running ; his father rushed to meet him, took him in his arms and pressed him to his heart. " Yes, I feel it," he exclaimed. " Thou art mine ! What a gift of heaven I have to thank my friends for. Where did you come from, my child, just at this moment ? "

" Do not enquire," said the Abbe. " Good luck to you, young man ! Your years of apprenticeship are over. Nature has set you free."

BOOK VIII

CHAPTER I

FELIX had sprung into the garden. Wilhelm followed him with delight. The most beautiful morning displayed every object with new charms, and Wilhelm enjoyed the most cheerful moment. Felix was fresh in the free and glorious world, and his father was not much more acquainted with the objects about which the youngster repeatedly and unweariedly enquired. At last they made comparisons with the gardener, who had to relate to them the names and uses of many plants. Wilhelm beheld Nature through a new organ, and the curiosity and thirst for knowledge on the part of the child made him feel for the first time what a faint interest he had taken in things outside himself, how little he knew and was acquainted with. On this day, the most pleasurable of his life, it seemed as though his own culture had just begun ; he felt the necessity of teaching himself, as it was demanded of him to teach.

Jarno and the Abbe had not let themselves be seen again. In the evening they came and brought a stranger with them. Wilhelm went to meet him with surprise ; he did not trust his

eyes. It was Werner, who also stood by for a moment to recognize him. They embraced one another most tenderly, and they each could not conceal that they found themselves changed. Werner asserted that his friend had become taller, stronger, more upright, more cultivated in his being, and in his demeanour more pleasant.

"I miss something of his old sincerity,"⁵⁵ he added.

"It will show itself again, when we have recovered from our first astonishment," said Wilhelm.

By a long way, Werner did not make an equally advantageous impression on Wilhelm. The good man seemed to have gone back rather than forward. He was much thinner than formerly; his peaked face seemed sharper, his nose to be longer, his forehead and skull were deprived of hair, his voice, clear, vehement and shrill, his colourless cheeks let no doubt remain that there was here present a laborious hypochondriac.

Wilhelm was modest enough to declare himself with much moderation about this great change, since the other, on the contrary, gave full rein to his friendly delight. "Really," he exclaimed, "if you have expended your time badly, and, as I conjecture, not gained anything, you have, however, meanwhile become a personality who can and must make his fortune; only do not waste and squander this again. With this figure you should purchase a rich and beautiful heiress."⁵⁵

"You will not," replied Wilhelm, smiling, "believe your character. After a long time you have hardly found your friend, but you look upon him as a piece of goods, as an object for your speculation, with which some gain may be made."⁵⁵

Jarno and the Abbe did not seem at all astonished at this recognition, and let the two friends expatiate over the past and present as they pleased. Werner walked round his friend, turned him in this direction and that, so that he made Wilhelm almost embarrassed. "No, no," he exclaimed, "such a thing has never yet come before me, and yet I know that I am not mistaken. Your eyes are deeper, your forehead broader, your nose has become finer and your mouth more loving. Look at him, how he stands! How it all suits and fits together! How idling makes one flourish! I, on the other hand, poor devil"—he looked at himself in the glass—"if I had not during this time gained a good deal of money, there would be nothing about me at all."

Werner had not received Wilhelm's last letter. Their business was the foreign trading house with which in common Lothario had the intention of purchasing the estates. It was this business which brought Werner here ; he had no idea of finding Wilhelm on the way. The lawyer came, the papers were produced and Werner found the proposals reasonable. " If you mean well with this young man, as it seems you do," he said, " you will take care that our part is not abridged. It shall depend on my friend whether he will receive the estate and will lay out a portion of his property upon it."

Jarno and the Abbe assured them that they did not require this reminder. They had scarcely settled the matter in general terms, when Werner longed for a game of " Hombre," to which Jarno and the Abbe quickly set themselves also. He had now become so accustomed to it, he could not live an evening without cards. When the two friends were alone after dinner, they conversed and asked each other in the most lively manner about everything which they wanted to communicate to one another. Wilhelm praised his position and the good fortune of his reception among such excellent men. Werner, on the other hand, shook his head and said : " We should not believe in anything unless we see it with our own eyes ! More than one obliging friend has assured me that you lived with a dissolute young nobleman, introduced him to actresses, helped him to run through his money and were the cause of his being estranged from all his relations."

" Neither for my own sake, nor for that of the worthy men, should I be annoyed at our being so misjudged," replied Wilhelm, " if my theatrical career had not reconciled me to every kind of slander. How should men judge our actions, which appear to them only singly and in isolation, of which they see the least part, because good and evil occur in secret, and for the most part only an indifferent appearance comes to the light of day. If, however, actors and actresses are brought upon raised-up boards, lights kindled on every side, the whole business is closed in a few hours, and yet each one seldom knows what he ought to make of it."

Now there were enquiries about the family, youthful friends and their native town. Werner narrated with great rapidity everything which had changed, and what was still remaining and

happening. "The women at home," he said, "are pleased and happy; there is no lack of money. Half their time they pass in dressing, and the other half in letting themselves be seen when dressed. They are fond of housekeeping, as much as is right. My children promise to be clever young fellows. I see them in my mind's eye already sitting and writing and doing accounts, running about, doing business, having a spree; each one, as soon as it is possible, should be established in a trade, and as regards our property, you should see pleasure in it. When we have got the estates in order, you must at once come home with me, for it looks as if with some sense you would be able to enter into human undertakings. Your new friends ought to be praised, as they have brought you on to the right path. I am a foolish devil, and observe for the first time how fond I am of you, when I cannot sufficiently satisfy myself as to how well and good you are looking. It is yet quite a different figure from the portrait which you once sent to the sister, and about which there was great dispute at home. Mothers and daughters found the young fellow charming, with his open neck and chest, large curl, hair hanging down, round hat, short waistcoat and loosely hanging trousers, while I maintained that the costume was just two fingers' breadth of a Merry Andrew. Now, however, you look like a man; you are only wanting a plait, into which I ask you to bind up your hair, otherwise on the way people take you for a Jew and demand toll and duty."

Meanwhile, Felix had come into the room, and as no one paid attention to him, laid himself on the sofa and fell asleep.

"What sort of a creature is this?" enquired Werner. At the moment Wilhelm had not the courage to tell the truth, nor the desire to relate an always ambiguous story to a man who, by nature, was nothing less than credulous.

The whole company now betook itself to the estates to inspect them, and to conclude the business. Wilhelm did not let Felix go from his side, and was delighted, for the sake of the boy, most keenly about the possessions which they saw before them. The desire of the child for cherries and berries reminded him of the time of his own youth, and on the manifold duty of the father to prepare, procure and maintain the pleasure for his own children. With what interest did he regard the nurseries and the buildings! How keenly did he think of restoring again

what had been neglected, and renewing what had fallen into decay. He no longer looked upon the world as a bird of passage, a building now more as a quickly put together arbour, which gets dry before one leaves it. Everything which he thought of laying out should grow to meet the boy, and everything which he restored should last for several generations. In this sense his years of apprenticeship were ended, and with the feeling of the father he had gained all the virtues of a citizen. He felt it, and nothing could equal his delight. " Oh, the unnecessary severity of morality," he exclaimed, " when Nature in her loving fashion forms us for everything which we ought to be. Oh, the curious demands of the civic society, which first perplexes and misleads us, and then makes more demands from us than Nature herself. Woe to that kind of culture which destroys the most effective means of true culture, and drives us to the end instead of rendering us happy on the way itself."

Much as he had already seen in his life, yet human nature seemed first to become clear to him through the observation of the child. The theatre, like the world, appeared to him only like a number of shaken-out dice, each of which on its surface signifies now more, now less, and they at all events when counted together make one sum. Here, in the child, one could say there lies before him one single dice, on the various sides of which the value and the valuelessness of human nature is so clearly engraved.

The longing of the child for discrimination in its ideas grew each day. When it had once learnt that things have names, it wanted to hear the name of everything. It could not but think that its father must know everything ; tormented him often with questions, and gave him occasion for informing himself about subjects to which, formerly, he had directed but little attention. Also, the inborn impulse to learn the origin and end of things showed itself in the boy at an early age. If he asked where the wind came from and whither the flame was going, the father, for the first time, became conscious of his limitations. He wished to learn how far man may venture with his thoughts, and what he may hope even to give an account of to himself and others. The anger of the child when he saw wrong being done to any living creature pleased the father greatly as the sign of an excellent spirit. The child struck angrily at the kitchenmaid for having cut up some pigeons. This fine impression was indeed soon again

destroyed when he found the boy who, without pity, killed frogs and tore butterflies to pieces. This picture reminded him of so many men who seem to be highly just when they are without passion and observe the proceedings of others.

This pleasing feeling that the boy had such a beautiful and true influence on his own being was disturbed one moment when Wilhelm shortly observed that really the boy was educating him rather than he the boy. He had nothing to complain about in the boy. He was not in the position to give him a teaching which he was not himself taking, and even the bad manners, against which Aurelia had worked so much, appeared after the death of his friend to enter again upon their ancient privileges. The child still never shut the door behind him, he still never wanted to eat from his plate, and his enjoyment was never greater than when he was overlooked and could take his piece off the dish, and leave the full glass standing and drink out of the bottle. He was also quite charming when he seated himself with a book in the corner, and said very seriously, "I must study that learned stuff," though he was a long way off being able, on writing, to distinguish the letters.

Wilhelm now reflected how little he had done for the child hitherto, how little he was capable of doing, so there arose a restlessness within him which was in a position to outweigh all his happiness. "Are we men then," he said to himself, "born so selfish that it is impossible for us to have care for a creature outside us? Am I not with the boy just in the way I was with Mignon? I attracted the dear child; its presence gave me pleasure, and at the same time I have neglected it in the most cruel fashion. What have I done for its education, after which it strove so eagerly? Nothing! I left it to itself, and to all the chances to which it could truly be exposed in an uncultivated society; and then for this boy, who was for you so wonderful, before he could be of so much value to you, and has your heart bidden you at any time to do any least thing for him? There is no more time for you to waste your own years and the years of others. Gather yourself together, and consider what you have to do for yourself and the good creatures whom Nature and love have bound so closely to you."

Actually this conversation with himself was only an introduction to admitting to himself that he had already considered,

made provision, sought and chosen ; he could no longer delay confessing it to himself. Often after the sorrow for the loss of Mariana, repeated in vain, he felt only too clearly that he must look out for a mother for the boy, and that he would not find one with greater security than in Theresa. He knew this admirable woman completely. Such a wife and helpmate seemed to be about the only one to whom he could entrust himself and his own. Her noble affection for Lothario caused him no hesitation. Owing to a remarkable fate they were for ever separated. Theresa considered herself free and had, indeed, spoken of marriage with indifference, yet as of a thing which was a matter understood.

After he had long deliberated with himself, he decided to tell her of himself as much as he knew. She ought to get to know him, as he knew her, and he began to reflect on his own history ; but it seemed to him so barren of events, and in general each confession seemed so little to his credit, that more than once he was on the point of giving up his project. At length he decided to ask Jarno for the roll of his apprenticeship from the tower. The latter said, " It is just the time for it," and Wilhelm received it.

It is a feeling of awe when an honourable man stands at a point with the consciousness that an explanation of his character is to be made to him. All transitions are crises, and is not a crisis an illness ? How unwillingly do we stand before the looking-glass after an illness. We feel an improvement, but we only see the effects of the evil which have passed. Meanwhile, Wilhelm was sufficiently prepared ; circumstances had already spoken loudly to him and his friends had not spared him. If he opened the parchment with some haste, he always became calmer the further he read. He found the detailed history of his life delineated with large, sharp strokes ; neither isolated events nor limited sentiments confused his view ; general reflection, full of affection, gave him signposts without causing him shame. For the first time he saw his figure outside himself—not as in a mirror a second self, but as in a portrait a different self. We do not indeed recognize ourselves in all the features, but we are pleased that a thinking spirit has so understood us, that a great talent has so wished to represent us, that a picture of what we were exists, and that it may endure longer than we do ourselves.

Wilhelm now, as all the circumstances by means of this manuscript came back to his memory, busied himself in setting

out for Theresa the story of his life, and he felt almost ashamed that he had nothing to bring forward in comparison with her great virtues, which could point to a useful activity.

Though he was full of detail in his design, he was concise in the letter which he wrote. He ached for her friendship, for her love, if that were possible ; he asked for her hand in marriage and asked her for a speedy decision.

After some inward doubt as to whether he should first take counsel in this important matter with Jarno and the Abbe, he decided to remain silent. He was too firmly determined that the matter was, for him, too important for him to subject it to the judgment of the wisest and best of men ; indeed, he even had the prudence to deliver the letter himself by the next post. Perhaps the idea that he had in so many circumstances of his life, in which he imagined he acted freely and in secret, he had been observed, nay, even guided, as it appeared to him from the written parchment, not indistinctly, had given him an unpleasant feeling, and now he wished with Theresa at last to have a heart-to-heart talk and for his destiny to be decided by her resolution and decision, and so he had no scruple about eluding his guardians and protectors at least in this important point.

CHAPTER II

THE letter had hardly been despatched when Lothario returned. Everyone was delighted at seeing the important business which had been prepared, finished off and ended ; and Wilhelm awaited with yearning to see how so many threads were partly to be united afresh, or partly loosened, and how his own condition should be determined for the future. Lothario greeted everyone in the best way possible. He was again completely restored to health and cheerful ; he had the appearance of a man who knew what he should do, and for whom there was no obstacle in the way of what he wished to do. Wilhelm was not able to return his hearty greeting. He was obliged to say to himself, " This is the friend, the lover, the bridegroom of Theresa, into whose position you think of forcing yourself. Do you imagine that you can ever obliterate or get rid of such an impression ? " If the letter had not yet been despatched, perhaps he would not

have dared to send it. Fortunately, the die was already cast; perhaps Theresa had already decided ; only the distance still covered with its veil a fortunate completion. Gain and loss must soon be decided. He endeavoured to calm himself by all these considerations, and yet the emotions of his heart were almost feverish. He was only able to apply a little attention to the important business on which, to some extent, the fate of his whole property depended. Ah, in moments of passion how unimportant does everything seem to man which surrounds him and which belongs to him !

To his good fortune Lothario dealt with the matter with magnanimity, and Werner with ease. The latter, with his vehement desire for gain, had a lively pleasure in this fine possession which was to come to him, or rather to his friend. Lothario, on his part, appeared to have quite different considerations. " I cannot so well," said he, " rejoice over a possession as over the justness of it."

" Now, in heaven's name," cried Werner, " is not this possession of ours justly acquired ? "

" Not quite," replied Lothario.

" Are we not giving our ready money for it ? "

" No doubt," said Lothario, " you will perhaps regard as an empty scruple what I have to remind you of. No possession appears to me quite just, quite right, unless the State takes from it its due proportion."

" How ? " said Werner. " So you would rather that our freely purchased property were liable to taxation ? "

" Yes," replied Lothario, " up to a certain degree ; for by this equality with all other kinds of property alone arises the security of our possession. In these modern times, when so many ideas are tottering, what is the main reason why the peasant regards the possession of the nobleman as less equitably based than his own ? Only that the nobleman's property is not taxed and his is."

" But how will it be with the interest of our capital ? " replied Werner.

" Not at all worse if the State, for a fair and regular contribution, would free us from the hocus-pocus of loans, and allow us to proceed with our estates as we liked, so that we were not **obliged to keep them** together in **large** quantities ; so **that we**

could divide them more equally among our children, and place them in a vigorous and free activity, instead of bequeathing our limited and limiting privileges to enjoy which we must always be invoking the spirits of our ancestors. How much happier men and women were when they looked around them with free eyes, and were able, by their choice, to raise up now a worthy maiden, now an excellent young fellow, without other considerations. The State would have more, perhaps better, citizens, and not so often be in perplexity for heads and hands."

"I can assure you," said Werner, "that in my life I never thought about the State; my taxes, duties and customs I have only paid because it was traditional."

"Now," said Lothario, "I am hoping to make you into a good patriot. For, as he only is a good father who at table helps his children first, so is he only a good citizen who, before all other payments, puts aside what is owing to the State."

By means of such general considerations, their particular business was not retarded but rather hastened. When they were fairly settled about it, Lothario said to Wilhelm: "I must now send you to a place where you are more necessary than here. My sister is anxious for you to come to her as soon as possible. Poor Mignon appears to be fretting, and they think that your presence could perhaps put a stop to the evil. My sister sent this note after me, from which you can see how much importance is attached to this" Lothario handed to him a small sheet of paper.

Wilhelm, who already had listened in the state of greatest embarrassment, recognized at once on these casual pencil strokes the hand of the Countess, and did not know what he ought to answer.

"Take Felix with you," said Lothario, "so that the children may cheer each other up. You must be off to-morrow morning early betimes. My sister's carriage, in which my people have come here, is still here; I will provide you with horses for half the way, then you must take the post. Farewell, and give her many warm greetings from me. Tell my sister as well, I shall soon be seeing her again and, above all, she must make preparations for some guests. The friend of our great-uncle, the Marquis, is on his way here; he hoped to meet with the old man while still alive, and they wanted to rejoice together over the memory

of earlier conditions, and to be delighted in this mutual love of art. The Marquis was much younger than my uncle, and thanked him for the best part of his education. We must make every effort to fill up the gaps which he will find, and that is best done by means of a large company,"

Lothario then went with the Abbe into his room. Jarno had ridden on in front. Wilhelm hurried to his room ; he had nobody in whom he could confide, nobody by means of whom he would have been able to turn aside a step, which caused him alarm. The young servant came and asked to pack up as they wanted that night to fasten up everything so as to drive away at break of day. Wilhelm did not know what he ought to do. At last he called out: " Only make arrangements for coming out of this house ; on the way, consider what is to be done, and in any case stop half-way, send back a message and write what you cannot trust yourself to say, and then let come what will." In spite of this decision he passed a sleepless night ; only a glance at Felix, so beautifully at rest, gave him some refreshment. " Oh ! " he exclaimed, " who knows what further trials are awaiting me, who knows how greatly bygone errors are still tormenting me, how often good and sensible plans for the future have to miscarry ? But this treasure which I once possess, do thou, destiny, whether exorable or inexorable, keep for me ! If it were possible that this best part of myself were destroyed before me, that this heart of my heart were torn asunder, then farewell understanding and reason, farewell all care and foresight ; vanish away, thou impulse to self-persecution. May all that separates us from the animal be lost ! and if it is not permissible to end one's days of sorrow voluntarily, may consciousness be taken away by a premature madness before death, which destroys it for ever, ushers in the long night."

He held the child in his arms, kissed him, pressed him to him and wetted him with copious tears. The child waked up ; its bright eye, its friendly look touched the father to his innermost depths. " What a scene stands before me," he exclaimed, " if I am to present you to the beautiful unhappy Countess when she presses you to the bosom which your father has so deeply injured ! Must I not fear she may thrust you again from herself with a cry as soon as your touch renews her real or imaginary pain ? "

The coachman did not leave him time for thinking or choosing

further ; he forced him into the carriage before it was day, and he wrapped up his Felix. The morning was cold, but bright. The child for the first time in its life saw the sun rise. His astonishment over the first fiery look of the sun, over the increasing power of the light, his delight and his singular observations rejoiced his father, and let him cast a glance into the heart before which the sun rises up and hovers as over a clear and quiet lake. In a small town the coachman drew up and rode back. Wilhelm at once took possession of a room and now asked himself whether he should stay or go forward. In this state of indecision he again took out the little piece of paper which hitherto he had not trusted himself to look at again. It contained the following words : " Send me your young friend right soon. Mignon has got worse during these last two days. Sorrowful as is this occasion, I should be pleased to make his acquaintance."

At the first glance Wilhelm had not noticed the last words. He was alarmed by them and was at once decided that he would not go. " How," he exclaimed, " Lothario, who knows of the circumstances, has he not disclosed to her who I am ? She is awaiting not with a composed mind an acquaintance whom she would rather not see again ; she is awaiting a stranger, and I am to enter ! I see her start back in alarm, I see her blushing ! No, it is impossible for me to go to meet this scene." So the horses were brought out and harnessed. Wilhelm had decided to unpack and remain here. He was in the greatest agitation when he heard a maid coming up the stairs who wished to show him that everything was ready. He quickly thought of a reason for obliging him to remain here, and his eyes rested, without attention, on the note which he held in his hand. " In heaven's name," he exclaimed, " what is this ? This is not the hand of the Countess, it is the hand of the Amazon ! "

The maid entered, asked him to come downstairs, and brought Felix along with her.

" Is it possible," he exclaimed, " is it true ? What should I do ? Remain and wait and make an explanation ? Or hurry on ? Hurry and come up against a denouement ? You are on the way to her, and can you hesitate ? This evening you should see her, and do you wish voluntarily to shut yourself in prison ? It is her hand, certainly it is ! this hand is calling you, her carriage is ready to lead you to her. Now the riddle is solved : Lothario

has two sisters. He knows my relation to the one ; how much I am indebted to the other he does not know. Also she does not know that the wounded vagabond who owes to her, if not his life, yet his health, has been so undeservedly yet kindly received into the house of her brother."

Felix, who fidgetted below in the carriage, cried, " Father, come ! Oh come, look at the beautiful clouds, their beautiful colours."

" Yes, I am coming," cried Wilhelm, springing down the stairs, " and all the appearances of the sky which you, my good child, so greatly admire, are as nothing compared with the look which I am awaiting."

As he sat in the coach he recalled to memory all the circumstances. So then this Natalia is the friend of Theresa ! What a discovery, what hopes, and what prospects. How strange that the fear of speaking of the one sister and hearing of her should entirely have concealed from me the existence of the other. With what joy he looked upon his Felix. He anticipated for the boy as well as for himself the best reception.

Evening came on, the sun had set, the road was not of the best. The postillion drove slowly. Felix had fallen asleep. Now cares and doubts arose in the bosom of our friend. " By what delusion, by what fancies are you being governed ? " he said to himself. " An uncertain similarity of the handwriting makes you all at once secure, and gives you the opportunity of imagining the most wonderful legend." He again brought out the note, and with the waning daylight he again thought he recognized the handwriting of the Countess. His eyes would not find again in the part what his heart had once said to him in the whole. " So these horses are bringing you to a scene of terror. Who knows if, in a few hours, they may not be bringing you back again ? And if you should only meet with her alone ! But perhaps her husband will be present, perhaps the Baroness ! How changed shall I find her ? Shall I be able to stand on my feet before her ? "

Only a faint hope that he was going to meet his Amazon could often gleam through his gloomy reflections. It had become night, the coach rattled into a courtyard and stopped. A servant with a torch stepped out of a grand portal and came down the broad steps to the coach. " You have been expected a long

time," he said, as he opened the carriage door. Wilhelm, after getting out, took the sleeping Felix in his arms ; the first servant called to the second, who stood with a light in the doorway : " Take the gentleman at once to the Baroness ! "

Quick as lightning it went through Wilhelm's soul : What good fortune ! Is it intentionally, or by chance, that the Baroness is here ? I ought to see her first ! Probably the Countess is already asleep ! Ye good spirits, help me so that the moment of greatest embarrassment may pass by tolerably !

He entered the house and found himself, according to his feelings, in the most serious, the holiest place that he had ever trod. A pendant, dazzling lantern illuminated a broad, softly rising staircase which was in front of him and divided into two paths at a turning above. Marble statues and busts stood arranged in pedestals and in niches ; some of them appeared known to him. Youthful impressions are not extinguished, even in their smallest details. He recognized a muse that had belonged to his grandfather, not indeed by its form or worth, but by an arm which had been restored and a newly inserted piece of the dress. It was as if he were experiencing a fairy tale. He found the child heavy ; he dallied on the stairs and knelt down as if he wanted to grasp him more conveniently. Actually, he wanted a momentary respite. He was scarcely able to raise himself up again. The servant, who was carrying the light in front, wished to take the child from him, but he would not part from it. He then entered the antechamber, and, to his still greater astonishment, he saw on the wall the well-known picture of the Sick King's Son. He had scarcely time to cast a glance upon it as the servant hurried him through two rooms into a cabinet.

There, behind a screen which shaded her, sat a lady, reading. " Oh, that it were she ! " he said to himself at the decisive moment. He put down the child, which seemed to wake up, and thought of approaching the lady, but the child sank, overcome by sleep. The lady stood up and came to meet him. It was the Amazon ! He could not contain himself. He fell upon his knees and exclaimed, " It is she ! " He grasped her hand and kissed it with infinite delight. The child lay between them both on the carpet, sleeping softly.

Felix was brought to the sofa. Natalia sat by him ; she bade Wilhelm sit on the armchair which stood nearest them. She

offered him some refreshment, which he refused, while he was only occupied in assuring himself that it was she, and that he could see again her features shaded by the screen and accurately recognize her again. She told him, in a general way, of Mignon's illness, that the child, affected by a few deep feelings, was gradually wasting away, that with its great irritability, which it conceals, often suffers violently and dangerously from a spasm at its poor heart, that this first organ of life, on unexpected mental agitations, would often suddenly stop still, and no trace of the healthy, vital movement could be felt in the bosom of the good child. When this nervous spasm was over, the force of nature expressed itself again in violent pulsations, and now troubled the child by its excess as it had previously suffered from defect.

Wilhelm remembered such a spasmodic scene, and Natalia referred him to the doctor, who would speak further with him on the matter and the reason why he had called the friend and benefactor of the child to be present to set before them things more in detail. "A singular change," continued Natalia, "you will find in her. She now goes about in women's clothes, from which, before, she seemed to have so great an aversion."

"How have you arrived at that?" enquired Wilhelm.

"If it was desirable, we are indebted only to chance. You know, perhaps, that I always have a number of young girls about me whose feelings, while they are growing up near me, I wish to train for what is good and right. From my mouth they hear nothing but what I, myself, consider to be true; yet I neither can, nor will, prevent them from perceiving many things from other people which as error and prejudice went on, and goes on, in the world. If they ask me about them, I endeavour, as far as is possible, to unite those strange, unsuitable ideas with right ones, so as to render them thereby if not useful, yet harmless. For some time already my girls have heard from the mouth of peasant children much of angels of Knight Robert, of the Holy Christ who, at certain times, appear in person and are to give presents to good children and punish the naughty ones. They had an idea that these must be persons in disguise, and in this belief I strengthened them, without venturing on interpretations, and intended at the first opportunity to give them such a play. It so happened that the birthday of twin sisters, who had always behaved themselves very well, was near at hand; I promised

them this time an angel should bring the small presents, which they had so well deserved. They were extremely excited about this apparition. I had selected Mignon for this part, and on the fixed day she was suitably clad in a long white garment. There was not wanting a golden girdle round the waist and a like diadem in the hair. At first I wanted to leave aside the wings, but the ladies who adorned her insisted on a pair of golden wings, on which they wished to display their skill. So she entered with a lily in one hand and with a small basket in the other—a wonderful apparition in the midst of the girls—and surprised me myself. 'There comes the angel,' said I. The children all moved back. At last they cried out, 'It is Mignon!' and did not, however, trust themselves to approach nearer to this marvellous apparition.

" 'Here are your presents,' she said, and handed out the little basket. They gathered round her, regarded her, felt her and asked her questions.

" 'Are you an angel?' enquired one child.

" 'I wish I were,' replied Mignon.

" 'Why do you carry a lily?'

" 'If my heart were as pure and open, then I would be happy.'

" 'What about the wings? Let us see them.'

" 'They represent more beautiful ones, which are not yet unfolded.'

" And so she answered significantly every innocent, simple question.

" When the curiosity of the small society was satisfied and the impression of this apparition began to abate, they wanted to undress her again. She resisted it, took her cithern, seated herself here on this high writing-table and began a song with marvellous grace.

Such let me seem till such I be ;
Take not my snow-white dress away !
Soon from this beauteous earth I flee
Up to the glittering lands of day.

There first a little space I rest,
Then wake so glad to scene so kind,
In earthly robes no longer drest
This band, this girdle left behind.

WILHELM MEISTER

And those calm, shining sons of morn,
They ask not who is maid or boy ;
No robes, no garments there are worn,
Our body free from sin's alloy.

Through little life not much I toiled,
Yet anguish long this heart has wrung,
Untimely woe my blossom spoiled
Make me again for ever young !

T. CARLYLE

" I decided at once," continued Natalia, " to leave her the dress and to procure some more of the kind she now wears, and in which, as it seems to me, her being has quite a different expression.

As it was already late, Natalia let the new arrival go, who parted from her not without anxiety. Is she married or not ? he reflected within himself. He feared, when anything stirred, a door might open and her husband enter. The servant who showed him to his rooms withdrew before he had courage to enquire about this. His restlessness kept him awake for a long time, and he occupied himself in comparing the picture of the Amazon with that of his new friend. The two would not harmonize with one another ; the former he had, as it were, himself fashioned, and the latter seemed as if it wanted to refashion him.

CHAPTER III

THE next morning, while everything was still silent and quiet, he went to look round in the house. It was the finest, most beautiful, most dignified architecture he had seen. " True art," he exclaimed, " is like good society ; it constrains us in the most delightful manner to recognize the measure by which, and to which, our innermost nature has been cultivated. The impression which the statues and busts of his grandfather made upon him was extremely delightful. With yearning he hastened to the picture of the Sick King's Son, and always felt it to be charming and touching. The servant opened for him various other rooms. He found a library, a natural history collection, a cabinet of physical instruments. He felt himself so strange before all these objects. Meanwhile, Felix had awakened and was running after him. The thought of how and when he might receive Theresa's

letter caused him anxiety. He was afraid of seeing Mignon and, to some extent, of Natalia. How different was his present condition from those moments when he had sealed the letter to Theresa, and with a joyful mood gave himself up entirely to that noble being !

Natalia invited him to breakfast. He entered the room, in which various neatly dressed girls—all, as it seemed, under ten years of age—were arranging a table, while an elderly person brought in various kinds of beverages.

Wilhelm looked attentively at a picture which hung over the sofa ; he had to recognize in it the portrait of Natalia, little as it satisfied him. Natalia came in, and the likeness seemed to vanish entirely. For his consolation there was on the breast the cross of a religious order, and he saw a similar one on the breast of Natalia.

" I have seen the portrait here," he said to her, " and I am surprised that a painter can at the same time be so true and so false. The picture, in general, is very well like you, and yet there are neither your features nor your character."

" It is much more a matter of surprise," replied Natalia, " that it has so much similarity, for, actually, it is not a picture of me ; it is the picture of an aunt who resembled me at her age, when I was just a child. It was painted when she was about my age, and at the first glance everyone thinks that they see me. You ought to have known this excellent person ! I owe to her so much. Very poor health, perhaps too much occupation with herself, did not admit of her being to the world what, in different circumstances, she might have been. She was a light that only lightened a few friends, and me especially."

" Is it possible," replied Wilhelm, who had reflected for a moment, while all at once so many circumstances seemed to synchronize, " is it possible that that beautiful, glorious soul, whose silent confessions have also been communicated to me, was your aunt ? "

" Have you read the paper ? " enquired Natalia.

" Yes," replied Wilhelm, " with the greatest sympathy and not without effect upon my whole life. What illuminated me most in this writing was, I might say, the purity of being not only of herself, but also of all that surrounded her ; this independence of her nature, and the impossibility of taking into herself

anything which did not harmonize with her noble, loving temper."

" You are, then," replied Natalia, " more fair, indeed I may well say, more just towards this beautiful nature than many others to whom the manuscript has been communicated. Every cultivated man knows how much he has to fight in himself and others with a certain roughness, how much his culture costs him, and how very much he yet, in certain cases, only thinks about himself and forgets what he is owing to others. How often does the good man reproach himself because he has not acted with sufficient tenderness ? and yet now, if a beautiful nature cultivates itself too tenderly, too conscientiously, nay, if you like, cultivates itself too much, for such there seems to be in the world no patience, no pity. People, however, of this kind are externally to us what their ideals are internally—models not to be imitated, but to be striven after. We laugh about the cleanliness of the Dutch, but would my friend Theresa be what she is if a similar idea were not always floating " before her housekeeping " ?

" So I find," exclaimed Wilhelm, " in Theresa's friend, that Natalia before me, on whom the heart of that precious relation hung ; that Natalia, who from youth upwards was so sympathetic, loving and helpful ! Only from such a family could such a nature arise. What a union reveals itself before me, when I, all at once, look upon your ancestor and the whole circle belonging to you ! "

" Yes," replied Natalia. " In a certain sense you could not be better informed about us than by that essay of our aunt ; indeed, her attachment to me has allowed too much good to be said of the child. When we speak of a child, we are never expressing the object, always only its hopes."

Meanwhile Wilhelm had reflected that he was now informed about Lothario's heredity and early youth : the beautiful Countess appeared to him a child with the pearls of her aunt about her neck ; he, too, had been so near these pearls that her tender, loving lips bent down to his. He endeavoured to withdraw these beautiful memories by means of other thoughts. He ran through the acquaintances which that writing had procured for him. " So I am, then," he exclaimed, " in the house of your worthy uncle ! It is no house, it is a temple and you are the worthy priestess, nay, the genius itself I will re-

member all my life the impression of yesterday evening, when I entered here and again saw standing in front of me the old works of art of my youth. I remembered the pitying marble statues in Mignon's song ; but these pictures had no sorrow for me ; they looked on me with a lofty earnestness, and brought my earliest years into immediate contact with this moment. Here I find displayed among so many other works of art this our old family treasure, this joyous life of my grandfather, and myself, whom Nature made to be the darling of this good old man ; I find myself, unworthy as I am, here too. Oh, God ! in what connections, in what society ? "

The young girls had gradually left the room to pursue their little occupations. Wilhelm, who was left alone with Natalia, had to make clearer to her his last words. The discovery that a valuable part of the works of art displayed belonged to his grandfather imparted a very cheerful social temper. As by the manuscript he had become acquainted with the house, so he found himself, too, now in his inheritance. He now wanted to see Mignon. His friend asked him to have patience a little longer till the doctor, who had been called into the neighbourhood, had returned. We can easily imagine that the doctor was the same active little man whom we already knew, and who was mentioned in " The Confessions of a Beautiful Soul."

" As I am now in the midst of that family circle," continued Wilhelm, " the Abbe, whom the writing mentions, is, I suppose, the strange inexplicable man whom I found again in your brother's house after the most singular events ? Perhaps you can give me some more accurate account of him."

Natalia replied : " About him there is much to be said. What I know now particularly about him is the influence which he has had on our education. He was for a time, at least, conscious that education ought to be adapted to the inclinations ; what he now thinks I cannot say. He maintained that with man the first and last consideration was activity, and that we could not do anything without the disposition for it, without an instinct which impels us to it. We admit, he was wont to say, that poets are born such ; we admit it with regard to all arts, because we must, and because those workings of human nature can scarcely be imitated. But if we accurately consider the matter, we find that every capacity, even the slightest, is born with us, and that

there is no indefinite capability. It is only our ambiguous, dissipating education which makes men uncertain ; it awakens wishes instead of animating impulses ; instead of animating our real capacities it turns them to strive after objects which are often quite out of harmony with the nature that is working at them. A child or a youth who goes astray on a path of their own are, in my opinion, better than many who wander aright on a path which is foreign to them. If the former find the right way either by themselves or through guidance, that is the path suited to their nature ; they will never leave it, whereas the latter are every moment in danger of shaking off a foreign yoke and abandoning themselves to unrestricted licence."

" It is singular," said Wilhelm, " that this remarkable man should also have taken an interest in me, and in accordance with his own way, as it appears, where he has not guided, has at least for some time confirmed me in my errors. I must, no doubt, await with patience how, in the future, he will account for the fact of having hoaxed me in conjunction with others."

" There's nothing to complain about this whim, if it is one," said Natalia, " for I have had the best of things with my brothers and sisters. I do not see how my brother Lothario could have been more finely cultivated. Only perhaps my dear sister, the Countess, should have been differently treated ; perhaps more earnestness and strength might have been infused into her nature. I cannot think what is to become of my brother Frederick. I am afraid he will be sacrificed to this pedagogic experiment."

" You have, then, another brother ? " cried Wilhelm.

" Yes," replied Natalia, " and indeed a very merry, frivolous nature, and since we have not been able to keep him from wandering about in the world, I don't know what is to become of this slack and dissolute nature. I have not seen him for a long time. The only thing which quite calms me is that the Abbe and, above all, the society of my brother are always informed as to where he is staying and what he is engaged upon."

Wilhelm was on the point of investigating Natalia's thoughts about these paradoxes, as well as also asking from her elucidation about the secret society, when the doctor entered, and after the first welcome began at once to speak of Mignon's condition. Natalia thereupon took Felix by the hand and said she would bring him to Mignon and prepare the child for the appearance of

her friend. The doctor was now alone with Wilhelm and continued : "I have remarkable things to tell you, which you can scarcely imagine. Natalia leaves us the room, so that we may speak more freely of things which, though I could only have learnt them by means of her herself, yet they cannot be so freely dealt with in her presence. The singular nature of the dear child, of whom we are now speaking, consists almost only in a profound desire : the yearning to see again her native land, and the yearning for you, my friend, is, I might almost say, the only earthly thing about her. She grasps at both only in an infinite distance, both objects lie unattainable before this unique temperament. She may have been at home in the vicinity of Milan, and was kidnapped from her parents by a company of rope-dancers. It is not possible to learn anything more intimate from her, partly because she was too young to be able to give the place and name accurately, but especially because she has sworn an oath not to reveal more closely to any living person the name of her dwelling-place and parentage. For just those people, who found her wandering about and to whom she described so exactly her dwelling with such urgent entreaties that they would take her home, took her along with them all the more hurriedly, and joked during the night at the inn, as they thought the child was already asleep, about their good capture, and asserted that she could not find the way back again. The poor creature was overmastered by a cruel despair, during which at last the Mother of God appeared and assured her that she would help her. She then swore to herself a holy oath that in future she would not trust anyone ; she would not tell her story to anyone, and would live and die in the expectation of an immediate help from heaven. Even this which I am telling you here, she did not expressly confide in Natalia ; our good friend has gathered it together from isolated utterances, from songs and childish indiscretions, which have just betrayed that about which she wished to keep silence."

Wilhelm could now explain to himself many a song, many a word of this dear child. He besought his friend most urgently to keep nothing back from him of what was known of the strange songs and confessions of this unique being.

" Oh," said the doctor, " be prepared for a strange confession, a story with which you have a considerable share, without

remembering it, which, as I fear, is decisive for the life and death of this dear creature."

"Let me hear," replied Wilhelm. "I am extremely impatient."

"Do you remember," said the doctor, "of a secret, nightly visit from a female after the performance of *Hamlet*?"

"Yes, I remember it quite well," cried Wilhelm, with a feeling of shame, "but I did not expect to be reminded of it at this moment!"

"Do you know who it was?"

"No! you alarm me. For heaven's sake, it wasn't Mignon? Who was it? Tell me!"

"I do *not* myself know."

"Then it was not Mignon?"

"No, certainly not! but Mignon was on the point of gliding to you, and had to see with horror from a corner that a rival had anticipated her."

"A rival!" exclaimed Wilhelm. "Tell me more; you perplex me absolutely."

"Be glad," said the doctor, "that you cannot learn these results so quickly from me. Natalia and I, who only took a distant share in the matter, were sufficiently tormented until we were able clearly to see into the perplexed condition of this dear creature whom we wanted to help. By the frivolous speeches of Philine and the other girls, and by a little song made attractive, the thought came to her how delightful it would be to pass the night with one whom she loved, without thinking of anything further than a happy and intimate rest. The affection for, my friend, was already lively and powerful in her dear heart, and in your arms the dear child had found rest from many a sorrow and she wished for this happiness in all its fullness. At one moment she thought of asking you for it in a friendly way, at another a secret terror held her back. At last the festive evening, and the mood induced by the wine which was frequently drunk, gave her courage to make the attempt and glide in beside you during that night. She had already run on in front so as to hide herself in the room, which was not locked, but when she had come up the stairs she heard a rustling; she hid herself, and saw a female clad in white glide into your room. You, yourself, came soon after, and she heard the large bolt pushed. Mignon

experienced unutterable torment. All the violent feelings of a passionate jealousy mingled with the unacknowledged yearning of an obscure desire had powerfully seized upon her half-developed nature. Her heart, which hitherto had beaten vigorously from yearning and expectation, all at once began to falter and pressed upon her bosom like a leaden weight. She could not get her breath. She did not know how to help herself; she heard the harp of the old man ; she hurried to him under the roof, and passed the night at his feet in dreadful convulsions."

The doctor paused a moment, and as Wilhelm was still silent, he continued : " Natalia has assured me that nothing in her life has so alarmed and taken hold of her as the condition of the child. While she related this, indeed our noble friend reproached herself for having by her questions and directions drawn out these confessions, and by recollection had so cruelly renewed the violent pains of the dear young girl. The good creature, so Natalia has told me, had scarcely come to this point of her story, or rather of her answers to my numerous questions, when all at once she sank down before me, and with her hand on her bosom bemoaned the recurring pain of that terrible night. She turned herself about like a worm on the ground, and I had to gather together all my composure to think of applying the measures which were known to me for mind and body in these circumstances."

" You put me in an anxious state," cried Wilhelm ; " while just in the moment when I am to see the dear creature again, you let me feel so keenly my various wrong-doings towards her. If I am to see her, why do you take from me the courage of going to meet her freely ? And am I to confess to you, since her temper is so attuned, I do not see what good my presence can do ? Are you, as a doctor, convinced that that twofold yearning has so far undermined her nature that she threatens to depart from life ? Why should I, by my presence, renew her sorrows and perhaps hasten her end ? "

" My friend," replied the doctor, " where we cannot help, we are yet bound to alleviate, and I have the most important examples of how greatly the presence of a loved object takes away the disturbing power of the imagination, and the ardent yearning is transformed into a tranquillizing vision. Everything with moderation and aim ! For just so can your presence kindle

an expiring passion. See the dear child, show yourself friendly and let us await what comes of it."

Just then Natalia came back and asked that Wilhelm should follow her to Mignon. " She seems to be quite happy with Felix and will receive, I hope, her friend, quite well." Wilhelm followed not without some reluctance. He had been deeply moved by what he had heard, and was afraid of a passionate scene. When he entered, just the opposite took place.

Mignon, in the long white dress of women, partly with curled, partly with rich brown hair tied up, was sitting. She had Felix on her lap and pressed him to her heart ; she looked entirely like a departed spirit, and the boy like life itself; it seemed as if heaven and earth kissed one another. She gave Wilhelm her hand, smiling, and said : " Thank you for bringing back the child to me again ; they had removed him, Heaven knows how, and hitherto I couldn't live. As long as my heart is upon the earth, it still wanted something and this child must fill the void."

The calm with which Mignon had received her friend made the company quietly contented. The doctor demanded that Wilhelm should see her often, and that she was to be kept both bodily and mentally in equilibrium. He himself withdrew, promising to come again shortly.

Wilhelm was now able to observe Natalia in her circle ; one could not have wished for anything better than to live near her. Her presence had the finest influence upon young girls and women of different ages, who lived partly in her house, partly came from the neighbourhood more or less to visit her.

" The course of your life," said Wilhelm to her once, " has been always very even, for the description which your aunt makes of you as a child appears, if I mistake not, still always to fit you. One feels clearly in you that you have never been perplexed. You have never been obliged to take a step back."

" I owe that to my uncle and the Abbe," replied Natalia, " who understood so well how to judge my peculiarities. From my youth onwards I scarcely remember a keener impression than that of seeing everywhere the needs of mankind, and an invisible longing to smooth them out. The child that cannot yet stand upon its feet, the old man who can no longer support himself on his, the longing of a rich family for children, the incapacity of a poor one to maintain them, every silent yearning

after some calling, the impulse to any talent, the natural dispositions to a hundred small necessary capacities—to discover these everywhere, my eye seemed by nature formed. I saw things to which no one directed my attention, but I seemed, too, only born to see them. The attractions of inanimate nature, for which so many people are extremely susceptible, had no effect upon me, almost still less the attractions of art. My most delightful sensation was, and still is, when a need or want showed itself, at once in my mind to find a supply, a remedy, a help for it. If I saw a poor person in rags, I thought of the superfluous clothes which I had seen hanging in the cupboards of my friends ; if I saw children wasting, without care or tendance, I remembered this or that lady who, with riches and conveniences, suffered from tedium ; if I saw many people crammed in a narrow space, I thought they should be lodged in the large rooms of many houses and palaces. This way of looking at things was with me quite natural, without the least reflection, so that as a child I made the strangest work in the world of it, and more than once embarrassed people by the most singular demands. Another peculiarity was that only with trouble, and late, did I come to look on money as a means of satisfying wants ; all my benefits consisted in kind, and I know that I have often enough been laughed at about this. The Abbe alone seemed to understand me ; he met me everywhere, he made me acquainted with myself, with these wishes and tendencies, and taught me how to satisfy them in a suitable way.

" Have you, then," inquired Wilhelm, " in the education of your small female world accepted the principles of those remarkable men ? Do you, then, leave every nature to cultivate itself ? Do you, then, leave your girls to seek and go astray and make mistakes, reaching their goal happily or unhappily losing themselves in error ? "

" No," said Natalia, " this way of dealing with mankind is quite against my ideas. He who does not help at the moment appears to me never to help ; he who does not give advice at the moment, never gives any. It is also essential, it seems to me, that we express certain laws and impress them on the children, so as to give them a certain hold upon life. Yes, I might almost assert it would be better to be in error by rule, than to be in error when the caprice of our nature impels us hither and thither, and

as I see mankind, there always seems to me to be a void in their nature which can only be filled up by a decided and expressed law."

" So, then, your method of handling things," said Wilhelm, " is entirely different from that which our friends observe ? "

" Yes," replied Natalia, " but from this you can see the incredible tolerance of those men, that they in no way disturb me in my way, just because it is my way, but they meet me in everything which I can wish."

A more detailed account of how Natalia proceeded with her children we reserve for another occasion.

Mignon often longed to be in the company, and it was permitted to her all the more readily as she by degrees became again accustomed to Wilhelm, to open her heart to him and altogether seemed to be more cheerful and keen on life. When walking out she gladly hung upon his arm, as she easily became tired. " Now," said she, " Mignon does not climb and jump any more, and yet she always feels the desire for walking away over the tops of the mountains, for striding from one house on to another, from one tree on to another. How enviable are the birds, especially when they build their nests so neatly and with such confidence."

It was now soon customary for Mignon to invite her friend more than once into the garden. If he were occupied or could not be found, Felix had to take his place, and if the dear girl at many times seemed quite removed from the earth, at others she kept herself alike closely to father and son, and seemed to fear being separated from them more than anything else.

Natalia appeared reflective. " We have wished, by means of your presence," she said, " to re-open the poor dear heart; whether we have acted rightly I do not know." She was silent and seemed to wait for Wilhelm to say something. It also occurred to him that by his union with Theresa, Mignon in the present circumstances must be extremely upset ; but in his uncertainty he did not trust himself to speak of this intention ; he did not suppose that Natalia was informed of it. Just as little could he pursue with freedom of mind the conversation when his noble friend spoke of her sister, praised her good qualities and regretted her condition. He felt not a little embarrassed when Natalia announced to him that he would soon see the Countess again

here. " Her husband," she said, " has now no other idea than to make amends for the departed Count¹ in the Community, by insight and activity to support this great institution and to build it up further. He comes to us with her to take a sort of leave ; afterwards he will visit the various places where the Community has settled down. They seem to treat him in accordance with his wishes, and I almost think he ventures on a journey to America with my poor sister, so as to be really like his predecessor, and as he is once almost already convinced that he does not lack much in order to become a saint, the wish often hovers before his soul, where possible to shine at last also as a martyr."

CHAPTER IV

THEY had often enough hitherto spoken of Fl. Theresa, often enough mentioned her in passing, and almost every time Wilhelm was on the point of confessing to his new friend that he had offered his heart and his hand to that excellent lady, a certain feeling which he could not explain to himself kept him back. He hesitated so long till at last Natalia herself, with the cheerful, modest, heavenly smile which was wont to be seen on her, said to him, " So I must then break the silence at last, and press myself forcibly into your confidence ! Why, my friend, do you make a secret from me of a circumstance which is so important, and which also concerns me so closely ? You have offered your hand to my friend ; I mix myself in the matter, not without a call. Here is my justification ! here is the letter which she writes to you, which she sends to you by me."

" A letter from Theresa ! " he exclaimed.

" Yes, my good sir, and your fate is decided. You are fortunate. Let me congratulate you and my friend."

Wilhelm was struck dumb, and considered.

Natalia looked at him. She observed that he had become pale. " Your joy is strong," she continued ; " it takes the form of terror and deprives you of speech. My share in it is not less cordial, because it allows me to show it in words. I hope you will be grateful; for I may tell you that my influence on Theresa's decision was not slight; she asked me for advice, and in a strange

¹ Count Zinzendorf died in 1760 at Herrnhut.

manner you were just here. I was happily able to put aside the slight doubt which she still entertained. Messages went to and fro swiftly. Here is her decision ! here is the development ! And now you must read all her letters, you must take a free, clear look into the beautiful heart of your bride."

Wilhelm unfolded the paper, which she handed to him unsealed. It contained the friendly words :

" I am yours, as I am, and as you know me. I call you mine, as you are, and as I know you. That which the married state changes in us and our condition we shall know how to carry through by understanding, a joyous spirit and goodwill. As it is not passion, but inclination and confidence which draws us together, we venture less than thousands of others. You will, doubtless, forgive me, if I often remember cordially my old friend ; I will therefore as a mother press your son to my heart. If you are willing at once to share my small house, you are lord and master of it ; meanwhile the purchase of the estate is settled. I wished that no new arrangement should be made without me, to show at once that I am deserving of the confidence which you are giving me. Farewell, dear, dear friend, beloved bridegroom, honoured husband ! Theresa presses you to her breast with hope and the joy of life. My friend will tell you more, will tell you everything."

Wilhelm, who by this paper had his Theresa fully brought to his mind, had also fully come to himself again. During his reading of it, thoughts most rapidly alternated through his soul. With horror he found within his heart lively traces of an inclination to Natalia ; he blamed himself, he declared that every thought of the kind was absurd. He set before himself Theresa in her full perfection, he read the letter again, he became cheerful, or rather he recovered himself so far that he was able to appear cheerful, as Natalia put before him the letters they had exchanged, from which we extract some passages.

After Theresa had described her bridegroom in her own way, she continued : "I put before you the man who now offers me his hand. What he thinks of himself you will see by and by from these papers, in which he describes himself to me quite candidly. I am convinced that I shall be happy with him.

" As regards rank, you know what I have always thought about it. Some people feel the disparities of their outward

conditions so horrible that they cannot carry on with them. I will not persuade anyone that I shall act according to my conviction. I am not thinking of setting an example, though I am not acting without example. It is only inward disparities which trouble me—a vessel which is not suited to what it ought to contain, much show and little enjoyment, riches and avarice, nobility and rudeness, youth and pedantry, poverty and ceremonies—these were the conditions which could annihilate me; the world may stamp and value them as it likes.

" If I hope that we shall suit one another, I base my decision particularly on this, that he is like you, my dear Natalia, whom I value and honour so infinitely. Yes, he has from you the noble seeking and striving after what is better, by which we ourselves bring forth the good which we think to find. How often have I not silently blamed you because you dealt differently with this or that person, that in this or that case you behaved yourself differently from what I would have done, and yet for the most part the result showed that you were right. If we, you said, only take people as they are, we make them worse ; if we treat them as if they were what they ought to be, we bring them on the way in which they should be brought. I cannot thus see or act ; that I know quite well. I might order, discipline, command, that is my affair. I well remember what Jarno said : ' Theresa trains her pupils, Natalia forms them.' Yes, he went so far as to say that I was completely lacking in the beautiful qualities—faith, love and hope. Instead of faith, he said, she has insight ; instead of love, she has steadfastness ; and instead of hope, she has trust. I will also gladly confess to you that before I knew you I knew nothing higher in the world than clearness and prudence ; it was your presence only which convinced, animated and overcame me, and to your beautiful and lofty soul I gladly yield place. In the same manner I honour, too, my friend ; the description of his life is an everlasting seeking and not finding ; not empty seeking, but wondrous, generous seeking ; he fancies that can be given him which can proceed from himself alone. So, my love, my clearness of vision has not injured me this time. I know my husband better than he knows himself, and I honour him all the more. I see him, but I do not see over him, and my insight does not reach so far as to let me conjecture what he is able to accomplish. If I think of him, his image always blends

with yours, and I do not know how I am worthy of belonging to two such persons. But I will deserve it by doing my duty, that I may fulfil what is expected and hoped for from me.

" Do I think of Lothario ? Vividly and daily. I cannot for a moment miss him in the company which in thought surrounds me. Oh, how I regret this excellent man, who, owing to a youthful error, is related to me, that Nature has wished him to come so near to you. Truly a being such as you are is more worthy of him than I am. To you I would, I must, yield him. Let us be to him all that is possible, till he finds a worthy wife, and then let us also be and remain together."

" But what now will our friend say ? " began Natalia.

" Does your brother know nothing of it ? "

" No, as little as do your friends. This time the affair is only dealt with among us women. I don't know what fancies Lydia has put into the head of Theresa ; she seems to the *Abb6* and Jarno to be mistrustful. Lydia has inspired her at least with some suspicion with regard to certain secret connections and plans, of which I have a general knowledge, but with which I have never thought of penetrating, and in this deciding step of her life she did not wish to give any influence to anyone except me. With my brother she had come to agreement earlier that they should only announce their marriage in turn, and did not wish to take advice about it."

Natalia now wrote a letter to her brother. She invited Wilhelm to add a few words ; Theresa had asked her to do so. They wanted just to seal it, when Jarno had himself unexpectedly announced. He was received in the friendliest manner. He appeared also very lively and full of jokes, and finally could not omit saying : " I have really come here to bring you a very wonderful and yet pleasant piece of news ; it has reference to our Theresa. You have often blamed us, my fair Natalia, because we cumber ourselves about so many things ; but now see what a good thing it is to have spies everywhere. Take advice and let us for once see your sagacity."

The self-complacency with which he spoke these words, the roguish manner in which he looked at Wilhelm and Natalia, convinced them both that their secret was discovered. Natalia answered with a smile : " We are much more artful than you

think. We have already put on paper the solution of the riddle, before it had been given up."

With these words she handed to him the letter to Lothario, and was in this way content to meet the slight surprise and feeling of shame which had been intended for them. Jarno took the letter with some astonishment, only skimmed it, was amazed, let it fall from his hands and stared at them both with an expression of surprise, nay, of horror, which they were not accustomed to see on his face. He did not say a word.

Wilhelm and Natalia were no less struck. Jarno walked up and down in the room. "What am I to say," he exclaimed, "or am I not to say it? It cannot remain a secret; the confession is not to be avoided. Then, therefore, there is secret against secret! surprise against surprise! Theresa is not the daughter of her mother! The difficulty is removed. I am come here to ask you to make preparations for a union of the noble girl with Lothario."

Jarno saw the consternation of the two friends, who cast their eyes down to the ground. "This case," he said, "is one of those which can be endured at worst in company. What each has to think about it, is best thought in solitude; at least, I ask for an hour's leave." He hurried into the garden. Wilhelm followed him mechanically, but at a distance.

After the lapse of an hour they found themselves together again. Wilhelm began, and said: "Formerly, when I lived easily, without aim and plan, nay, frivolously, there came to meet me with open arms friendship, love, affection and trust; indeed, they pressed in upon me. Now, when things are serious, fate appears to take a different way with me. The decision to offer my hand to Theresa is perhaps the first which comes quite purely from myself. I made my plan after reflection, my reason was fully united with it, and by the consent of the splendid girl all my hopes were fulfilled. Now the most singular destiny presses down my outstretched hand. Theresa reaches me hers from afar, as in a dream. I cannot grasp it, and the beautiful picture forsakes me for ever. So adieu, you beautiful picture, and you pictures of the richest happiness which were gathered round it." He was silent for a moment, looked in front of him, and Jarno wished to speak. "Let me yet say something," interrupted Wilhelm, "for my whole destiny is this time decided by this lot. At this moment there comes to my assistance the impression

which Lothario's presence made upon me at the first sight, and which has remained continuously with me. This man is deserving of every kind of affection and friendship, and without sacrifice no friendship can be thought of. For his sake it was easy for me to delude an unhappy girl, for his sake it shall be possible for me to renounce the worthy bride. Go ! relate the strange story to him, and tell him for what I am ready."

Jarno replied upon this : " In such cases I am of opinion that everything is already done, if one does not act overhastily. Let us take no step without Lothario's consent ! I will go to him ; await my return or his letter quietly ! " He rode away and left the two friends in the greatest distress. They had time to repeat the occurrence in more than one way, and to make their reflections about it. Now it first occurred that they had received this remarkable declaration straight from Jarno, and they had not informed themselves about the attendant circumstances. Wilhelm, indeed, was willing even to raise some doubt, but their astonishment rose to the highest pitch, indeed their perplexity, when the next day a messenger came from Theresa, bringing to Natalia the following singular letter :

" Strange as it may appear, after my former letter, I must yet send another and ask you to send my bridegroom to me quickly. He is to be my husband, whatever plans they make to rob me of him. Give him the enclosed letter, only not before witnesses, whoever they may be."

The letter to Wilhelm contained the following : " What will you think of your Theresa, when she all at once passionately insists on a union, which the calmest reason alone seemed to have appointed ? Let nothing prevent you immediately after receiving this letter from setting off ! Come, my dear, dear friend, now three times more beloved since they are wishing to rob me of the possession of you, or at least to make it more difficult."

" What is to be done ? " exclaimed Wilhelm, when he had read this letter.

" In no case," replied Natalia, after some reflection, " have my heart and reason been so silent as in this. I do not know at all what to do or what to advise."

" Would it be possible," exclaimed Wilhelm vehemently, " that Lothario himself knew nothing of this, or if he does know,

that he, like ourselves, is the sport of hidden plans ? Did Jarno, while he looked at our letter, invent the story on the spur of the moment ? Would he have said something different to us if we had not been in too much of a hurry ? What can they want ? What intentions can they have ? What plan can Theresa mean ? Yes, it is not to be denied Lothario is surrounded by secret forces and combinations. I have myself learnt that they are active, that they trouble themselves in a certain sense over the action and destinies of many people, and know how to guide them. I understand nothing of the ultimate objects of these secrets, but this latest intention of tearing Theresa away from me, I see only too clearly. On one side they depict for me the possible happiness of Lothario, perhaps only in appearance ; on the other, I see my loved one, my honoured bride, who calls me to her heart. What am I to do ? What am I not to do ? "

" Only a little patience," said Natalia, " only a short time of consideration ! In this singular connection I only know this much, that we should not be in a hurry about that which is irretrievable. Against a story, against an artful plan, we are supported by steadfastness and good sense. It must soon be disclosed whether the matter is true, or whether it has been invented. If my brother really has hope of uniting himself with Theresa, it would be cruel to rob him for ever of a happiness at the moment when it appears to him in so pleasing a way. Let us only wait to see whether he knows something of it, whether he believes it himself, whether he hopes for it. "

Fortunately, a letter came from Lothario to assist the basis of their counsel :

" I am not sending Jarno back again," he wrote. " A line from my hand is worth more to you than the detailed words of a messenger. I am certain that Theresa is not the daughter of her mother, and I cannot abandon the hope of possessing her until she, too, is convinced and decides between me and the friend, with calm reflection. Don't let him from your side, I beg of you ! The happiness, the life of a brother depends on it. I promise you **this** uncertainty shall not last long. "

" You see how the matter stands," she said kindly to Wilhelm. " Give me your word of honour that you will not go out of **the** house. "

" I give it ! " he exclaimed, reaching his hand to hers. " I

will not leave this house against your will. I thank God and my good genius that this time I am being guided, and indeed by you."

Natalia wrote to Theresa all the details of the matter, and declared that she would not let her friend go from her. At the same time she sent Lothario's letter with her own.

Theresa answered : " I am not a little surprised that Lothario is himself convinced, for towards his sister he will not dissemble to this extent. I am vexed, very vexed ; it is better I say nothing more. It is best if I come to you when I have first settled the poor Lydia, whom they manage cruelly. I am afraid we are all deceived, and are so deceived that we can never get into a clear light. If our friend had my sense, he would yet have escaped from you and thrown himself on the heart of his Theresa, from whom no one should take him away ; but I am afraid I am to lose him and not win Lothario again. They tore Lydia away from him, while from afar they showed to him the hope of being able to possess me. I will say nothing more ; the bewilderment will become still greater. Time may show whether, meanwhile, the fairest relations thus put on one side, so undermined and confused, when all is made clear, cannot again be helped. If my friend does not tear himself away, I am coming in a few days to seek for him with you and to keep firm hold of him. You wonder how this passion has overmastered your Theresa. It is no passion ; it is a conviction that Lothario cannot be mine ; this new friend will make the happiness of my life. Tell him in the name of the small boy who sat with him beneath the oak and rejoiced in his sympathy ! Tell him in the name of Theresa, who met his proposal with a cordial frankness ! My first dream that I would live with Lothario is far removed from my soul ; the dream that I thought of living with my new friend stands yet quite present before me. I am so little respected that they think it an easy matter to change again this one with that on the spur of the moment ! "

" I rely on you," said Natalia to Wilhelm, as she handed to him Theresa's letter. " You are not escaping from me ; consider that you have the happiness of my life in your hand. My being and that of my brother are so intimately united and rooted that he can feel no sorrow which I do not experience, no joy which does not also make my happiness. Indeed, I can truly

say that I alone, by means of him, have felt that the heart can be touched and exalted, that in the world there can be joy, love and emotion which, beyond everything, affords satisfaction for every need."

She stopped. Wilhelm took her hand and cried, " Oh, continue ! this is the right time for a true and mutual trust; it was never more necessary for us to know each other more intimately."

" Yes, my friend," she said with a smile, with the calm, gentle indescribable dignity, " it is not perhaps an unsuitable time for me, if I say to you that everything which so many a book and the world calls and displays as love, has always appeared to me as a legend."

" You have never loved ! " exclaimed Wilhelm.

" Never, or always," replied Natalia.

CHAPTER V

DURING this conversation they walked up and down in the garden. Natalia had picked various flowers of unusual form which were completely unknown to Wilhelm, and he enquired their names.

" You have no idea," said Natalia, " for whom I am plucking this nosegay. It is for my uncle, whom we are to visit. The sun is even now shining so brightly over the Hall of the Past, I must at this moment lead you in, and I never go there without the flowers which my uncle especially liked. He was a singular man and capable of the most peculiar impressions. For certain plants and animals, for certain persons and neighbourhoods, indeed even for some kinds of minerals, he had a decided inclination which could seldom be explained. ' If I had not,' he was accustomed to say, ' from youth onwards withstood myself and striven to form my understanding on wide and general principles, I should have been the narrowest and most intolerable of men ; for nothing is more intolerable than a circumscribed peculiarity in one from whom a pure and suitable activity could be expected.' He had, however, himself to confess that he would, as it were, have to give up life and breath if he did not from time to time indulge himself and allow himself passionately to enjoy

what he could not always praise and justify. ' My fault,' he said, ' it is not that I have been unable to bring into complete harmony my impulses and my reason.' On such occasions he was accustomed to joke with me and say, ' We can call Natalia happy in her lifetime, because her nature demands nothing but what the world wishes and is able to use.' "

With these words they had again arrived at the main building. She led him through a spacious passage to a door, in front of which lay two sphinxes in granite. The door itself was, in Egyptian fashion, a little narrower above than below ; its brazen leaves prepared one for a serious, indeed even for a gloomy, sight. How pleasantly, therefore, was Wilhelm surprised when his expectation issued in a feeling of pure cheerfulness as they entered a hall in which art and life removed every recollection of death and the grave. In the walls, proportionable arches had been hollowed out, in which there were large sarcophagi ; in the pillars between them one saw smaller openings adorned with urns and similar vessels ; the remaining spaces of the walls and vaulted roof were regularly divided, and between cheerful and variegated borders, wreaths and cheerful ornaments and significant figures had been painted on grounds of different sizes. The architectural limbs were covered with beautiful yellow marble which passes into a reddish colour, bright blue stripes of a chemical composition happily imitating lapis lazuli, while at the same time they satisfied the eye with contrast, giving unity and combination to the whole. All this pomp and decoration displayed itself in the purest architectural relations, and thus everyone, as he entered, felt as if he were exalted above himself, while by the co-operating power of art he learnt for the first time what man is, and what he can become.

Opposite the door was to be seen on a splendid sarcophagus the marble statue of a worthy man leaning on a cushion. In front of him he held a roll, and appeared to look at it with quiet attention. It was so directed that the words it contained could be conveniently read. There stood thereon the words : " Think of living."

Natalia, while she took away a withered bunch of flowers, laid a fresh one in front of the picture of her uncle, for he was represented in the figure, and Wilhelm thought he still remembered the features of the old gentleman whom he had seen

formerly in the forest. " Here we have passed many hours," said Natalia, " until this hall was ready." In his last years he had attracted to himself some skilled artists, and his best entertainment was to think out the drawings and cartoons for these pictures and to help in deciding about them.

Wilhelm could not sufficiently enjoy the objects surrounding him. " What a life," he exclaimed, " in this Hall of the Past ! " One could equally well call it the Hall of the Present and the Future. There everything was, there will everything be. Nothing passes away, but the one who enjoys and looks at it. Here this picture of the mother, who presses her child to her heart, will outlive many generations of happy mothers. After hundreds of years, perhaps some father will take pleasure in this bearded man, laying aside his seriousness and playing with his son. Thus bashful through all time will the bride sit, and in her silent wishes still need to be comforted and spoken to ; so impatiently will the bridegroom listen at the threshold to know if he may enter.

Wilhelm's eyes wandered round innumerable pictures. From the first joyous impulses of the child, where every limb is in play only for use and practice, up to the calm seriousness of the wise man, one could see in beautiful living sequence how man possesses no inborn inclination and capacity without enjoying and using them. From the first delicate consciousness, when the maiden lingers in drawing up her pitcher again, and meanwhile looks with pleasure at her picture in the water to those lofty solemnities, when kings and peoples call gods to the altar as witnesses of their unions, everything was depicted full of meaning and of force.

It was a world, it was a heaven, which surrounded the spectator in this place, and from the thoughts which those polished forms aroused, from those feelings which they inspired, there seemed something different to be present, by which the whole man felt himself taken hold of. Wilhelm also noticed it without being able to explain it to himself. " What is that," he exclaimed, " which, independent of all significance, free from all sympathy, influences for us human events and destinies, and which can work upon me so strangely and at the same time so pleasantly ? It touches me from the whole and from every part, without my comprehending it, without my being able to appropriate it to myself. What magic do I forebode in these flat

surfaces, these lines, these heights and breadths, these masses and colours ? What is it that these figures, even only looked at slightly, makes them as ornaments so delightful ? Yes, I feel it is possible to stay here, to rest, to grasp everything with the eyes ; find myself happy, and yet feel and think something quite different from that which stands before the eyes."

And certainly, could we describe how happily everything was apportioned, how on the spot, by union or contrast, by one colour only or by a variety, everything is so determined, and does not appear different from what it should appear and has produced as complete, as clear an effect, so we would transport the reader to a place from which he would not soon wish to withdraw.

Four large marble candelabra stood in the corner of the hall, four smaller ones in the middle around a very beautifully worked sarcophagus, which from its size could have held a young person of middling stature.

Natalia remained standing at the monument, while she laid her hand upon it, saying, " My good uncle had a great predilection for this work of antiquity. He used often to say : ' Not only the first blooms decay, which you can preserve in those small spaces above, but also fruits which, hanging on a branch, give to us for a longer time the fairest hope, while a secret worm prepares their premature ripeness and their destruction.' I fear," she continued, " he has predicted this dear girl, who seems gradually to withdraw herself from our tendance and to incline to this tranquil dwelling-place."

As they were about to go away, Natalia said, " I must call your attention to something. Observe these semicircular openings high up on both sides. The choirs of the singers can here stand concealed, and these ornaments of brass serve beneath the cornice to keep firm the tapestry, which, according to the arrangement of my uncle, ought to be hung up at every burial. He could not live without music, particularly not without singing, and he had the peculiarity of not wishing to see the singers. He was wont to say : ' The theatre spoils us altogether too much ; music serves there only the eye, it accompanies the movements, not the feelings. For oratorios and concerts the form of the musician is always a disturbing factor for us. True music is for the ear only ; a beautiful voice is the most universal thing we can imagine, and while the narrow individual who produces it

stands before our eyes, he destroys the pure effect of that universality. I wish to see everyone with whom I am to speak, for it is an individual person whose form and character makes the talk of value or no value. On the other hand, he who sings to me ought to be invisible ; his form should not corrupt or confuse me. Here one human organ speaks to another organ, not spirit to spirit, not a thousandfold world to the eye, not a heaven to man. Just so he wished, with instrumental music, the orchestra to be concealed as much as possible, because by the mechanical movements, and by the necessary always strange gestures of the performers, people get so much distracted and confused. He was therefore accustomed to listen to music with closed eyes, so that his whole being was concentrated on the simple, pure enjoyment of the ear."

They were just intending to leave the Hall when they heard the children hastily running along the corridor and Felix crying, " No, I ! No, I ! "

Mignon, first, threw herself in at the open door ; she was out of breath and could not say a word. Felix, still some way off, cried : " Mother, Theresa is there ! " The children had run a race, as it appeared, so as to bring the news. Mignon lay in Natalia's arms, her heart beating violently.

" Naughty child," said Natalia, " are you not forbidden all violent exercise ? Look how your heart is beating."

" Let it break," said Mignon, with a deep sigh. " It beats already too long."

They had scarcely recovered from their confusion, from the kind of consternation, when Theresa came in. She flew to Natalia, kissed her and the dear child. Then she turned to Wilhelm, looked at him with her clear eyes and said, " Now, my friend, how is it ? You have not, after all, allowed yourself to make a mistake." He made a step towards her. She sprang to him and hung upon his neck. " Oh, my Theresa !" he exclaimed.

" My friend, my beloved ! my husband ! Yes, for ever thine ! " she cried, with the warmest kisses.

Felix pulled her by the coat and cried : " Mother Theresa, I am here too ! "

Mignon all at once drew her left hand to her heart, while she violently stretched out her right arm, fell down dead with a shriek at Natalia's feet.

The horror was great ; no movement of the heart, none of the pulse could be traced. Wilhelm took her on his arm and hurriedly carried her upstairs. The body hung lax over his shoulders. The presence of the doctor gave little comfort. He and the young surgeon, whom we already know, busied themselves in vain. The dear creature was not to be called back into life.

Natalia signed to Theresa. The latter took her friend by the hand and led him out of the room. He was dumb and speechless, and had not the courage to meet her eyes. He sat near her on the sofa, on which he had first met Natalia. With great rapidity he thought through a number of fateful destinies, or rather he did not think, but let them work upon his soul, which he was unable to withdraw. There are moments in life when the events, like winged shuttles, move hither and thither before us, and unceasingly complete a web which we have more or less ourselves spun and planned. " My friend," said Theresa, " my beloved ! " interrupting the silence and taking him by the hand, " let us keep together this moment firmly, as we shall often have to do, perhaps in similar cases. These are the events, for the endurance of which there must be two in the world. Reflect, my friend ; feel that you are not alone ! Show that you love your Theresa, first of all in that you can share your sorrows with her." She embraced him and pressed him gently to her bosom. He grasped her in his arms and pressed her vehemently to himself. " The poor child," he exclaimed, " in moments of sorrow sought for protection and a refuge on my unstable heart ; let the stability of yours be helpful to me in this terrible hour." They held one another closely clasped together ; he felt her heart beat on his, but in his spirit it was empty and desolate ; only the figures of Mignon and Natalia floated like shadows before his imagination.

Natalia came in.

" Give us your blessing," cried Theresa, " let us in this sad moment be united before you."

Wilhelm had hidden his face on Theresa's neck ; he was fortunate enough to be able to weep. He did not hear Natalia coming, he did not see her ; only at the sound of her voice his tears were redoubled.

" What God puts together, I will not sunder," said Natalia,

smiling ; " but I cannot unite you and I cannot praise you, for it appears that sorrow and affection completely banish from your hearts the memory of my brother." At these words Wilhelm tore himself from the arms of Theresa.

" Where are you off to ? " cried both ladies.

" Let me see the child," he exclaimed, " that I have killed. The misfortune which we see with our eyes is less than when our imagination lets the evil sink powerfully into our heart ; let us look at the departed angel ! "

As the friends could not keep back the agitated young man, they followed him ; but the worthy doctor, who, with the surgeon came to meet them, kept them back from coming near to the departed one, and said, " Keep yourselves at a distance from the mournful object, and permit me, as far as my art can do it, to give some permanence to the remains of this singular being. I want my beautiful art not to embalm a body, but to maintain for it a living aspect, and to apply it at once to this loved creature. When I foresaw her death I made arrangements, and with this assistance I should certainly succeed. Let me only have a few days' time, and do not ask to see the dear child again until we have brought it into the Hall of the Past."

The young surgeon had again in his hands that wonderful instrument case.

" From whom can he have it ? " Wilhelm enquired of the doctor.

" I know it quite well," replied Natalia. " He has got it from his father, who at that time in the forest bandaged you."

" Oh, then, I am not mistaken," cried Wilhelm. " I recognized the band at once ! Get it for me ! It first brought me again to the track of my benefactress. How much weal and woe does not such a lifeless thing survive ? At how many pains has not this band been present, and its threads are still holding together. The last moments of how many men has it not accompanied, and its colours have not yet faded ! It was present at one of the most beautiful moments of my life, when I lay wounded on the ground, and your helpful form appeared before me ; when the child with blood-stained hair, whose early death we are now lamenting, with the most tender care was anxious for my life."

The friends had not a long time to talk over the mournful

event, and Fri Theresa to enlighten them about the child and the probable cause of its unexpected death, when strangers were announced, who, when they showed themselves, were in no way strangers. Lothario, Jarno and the Abbe entered. Natalia went to meet her brother ; with the others there ensued a momentary silence.

Theresa said to Lothario with a smile : " You scarcely thought you would find me here ; at least it is not advisable that we should seek each other at this moment ; meanwhile, may you be cordially greeted by me after so long an absence."

Lothario extended his hand to her and replied : " If we are once to suffer and renounce, may it always occur in the presence of a loved and desirable good. I ask for no influence on your decision, and my confidence in your heart, your understanding and clear sense is always still so great that my fate and that of my friend I willingly put in your hand."

The conversation quickly turned to general subjects ; indeed, one may say, to unimportant ones. The company soon separated for taking walks in pairs. Natalia was with Lothario, Theresa went with the Abbe and Wilhelm remained with Jarno at the castle. The appearance of the three friends at the moment when a severe pain lay on Wilhelm's heart, instead of diverting him had irritated his temper and made it worse. He was vexed and suspicious and neither could nor would conceal it when Jarno began to speak to him about his sullen silence.

" What further is wanted ? " exclaimed Wilhelm. " Lothario comes with his allies, and it would be wonderful if those secret powers of the Tower, which are always so active, did not now work upon us, and I don't know what kind of a strange object they are carrying out with us and for us. So far as I know these holy men, it always seems to be their praiseworthy object to separate that which is united, and to unite that which is separated. What kind of a web their weaving will produce may well remain ever a riddle for our unholy eyes."

" You are vexed and bitter," said Jarno ; " that is very fine. If you were only once just thoroughly angry, it would be still better."

" That, too, might come about," replied Wilhelm, " and I am very much afraid that people enjoy irritating to the utmost this time my inborn and acquired patience."

" So I should like, however, meanwhile," said Jarno, " until we see where our stories are to issue, to tell you something of **the** Tower, against which you seem to cherish so great a mistrust."

" It is up to you," replied Wilhelm, " if you wish to take risks on my distraction. My mind is busied in so many ways that I do not know whether it can take the part it should in these worthy adventures."

" I don't let myself," said Jarno, " be frightened by your pleasant mood from explaining to you about this point. You regard me as a clever fellow, and you are also to consider me to be an honourable one, and what is more, this time I have a message."

" I could wish," replied Wilhelm, " you spoke from your own motives and from goodwill in explaining matters to me. As I cannot hear you without mistrust, why should I listen to you ? "

" If I had now nothing better to do," said Jarno, " than to tell you stories, you, too, would have time to devote some attention to them ; perhaps you would be more inclined to do so if I at once tell you at the outset. All which you have seen in the Tower are still only relics of a youthful undertaking, at which there was great earnestness for more of the initiated at the outset, and about it now all of them occasionally smile."

" Then with these dignified signs and words they are only playing ! " exclaimed Wilhelm. " They lead us with solemnity to a place which instils reverence into us, they let us see the most wonderful phenomena, they give us rolls replete with splendid secret sayings, of which, really, we understand very little. They disclose to us that we have hitherto been pupils ; they set us free, and we are as wise as we were before."

" Have you not got the parchment at your hand ? " enquired Jarno. " It contains much that is good, for those universal sayings are not invented ; doubtless they seem empty and obscure to one who has no experience. Give me the so-called indenture of the apprentice, if it is at hand."

" Certainly, it is quite at hand," replied Wilhelm. " An amulet should always be carried in one's bosom."

" Now," said Jarno, smiling, " who knows if the contents do not find some time a place in your head and heart ? " Jarno looked at it and ran with his eyes over the first half. " This," he

said, has reference to the cultivation of the feeling for art, of which others may speak ; the second deals with life, and there I am more at home."

He thereupon began to read passages, spoke at intervals and added remarks and narratives. " The inclination of youth to what is secret, to ceremonies and grand words is extraordinary, and is often a sign of a certain depth of character. In those years we wish to feel our whole being seized and moved, though only obscurely and uncertainly. The youth who forebodes much, thinks that he finds much in secrets, that he must lay much stress on secrets and by means of them effect much. In these ideas the Abbe confirmed a Society of young men, partly according to his principles, partly from inclination and habit, since he formerly stood in connection with an Association which may itself have worked much in secret. I was least of all at home in this matter. I was older than the others. From my youth up I had looked at what is clear and wished in all things nothing but what is clear. I had no other interest but to know the world as it was, and infected with this inclination the remainder of my best companions, and in consequence our whole culture had almost taken a false direction ; for we began to see only the faults of others and their limitation, and to regard ourselves as splendid people. The Abbe came to our assistance and taught us that we ought not to observe people without taking an interest in their culture, and that one can really only be in a position to observe through action in a state of activity and to watch ourselves. He advised us to retain those primary forms of the Society ; therefore there remained a sort of law in our meetings. We saw well the first mystical impressions in the constitution of the whole ; afterwards it took, as by means of a symbol, the form of a handicraft which was elevated to art. Hence came the nomenclature of Apprentices, Assistants and Masters. We wished with our own eyes to see and to form a special register of our knowledge of the world ; therefore there were the numerous confessions which we partly wrote ourselves, partly induced others to write, and from these afterwards the years of apprenticeships were compiled. All men are not specially occupied with their culture ; many only wish for a means of good health, methods for obtaining wealth and every kind of happiness. All these who did not wish to be set upon their feet were partly sustained with mystifications

and other hocus-pocus, partly set aside after our fashion. We released only those who keenly felt and clearly knew for what they were born and had practised themselves sufficiently, so as to pursue their path with a certain joyfulness and lightness of spirit."

"So you have been in too much of a hurry with me," replied Wilhelm, "for what I can, will, or should do I knew from that moment when you pronounced me free least of all."

"It is not our fault that we have come into this perplexity; good luck may again help us out. Meanwhile, only listen. He who has much to be developed will be later in getting illuminated as regards himself and the world. There are only a few who have thought and at the same time are capable of action. Thought enlarges, but disables; action enlivens, but narrows."

"I beg of you," interrupted Wilhelm, "don't read me any more of these wonderful words! These phrases have confused me enough already."

"I will then keep to the narrative," said Jarno, half rolling up the parchment only after casting a look at it. "I myself have least of all been useful to the Society and my fellow-men; I am a very bad teacher; for me it is intolerable to see anyone making unskilful attempts. I must at once call to the person wandering from the right path, though he were a somnambulist, whom I see going straight to the danger of breaking his neck. I had now always my contact with the Abbe, who maintains that error can only be cured by erring. We have often disputed about you too. He has specially taken you into favour, and it will already mean something to attract to oneself his attention in so high a degree. You must admit that when I have met you, I told you the naked truth."

"You have not spared me much," said Wilhelm, "and you appear to remain true to your principles."

"What, then, is the use of sparing," replied Jarno, "if a young man with various good dispositions takes a false direction?"

"Pardon me," said Wilhelm, "you have strongly enough denied me all capacity as an actor. I confess to you that, although I have entirely renounced this art, I cannot possibly declare myself to be quite incapacitated for it."

"And with me," said Jarno, "it is so clearly decided that he who can play only himself, is no actor. He who cannot in temper and form change himself into many forms, does not

deserve this name. Then you have played very well Hamlet and some other parts, in which your character, your form and the mood of the moment helped you. That would be good enough for an amateur theatre and for everyone who sees no other way before him.

"One should," continued Jarno, as he looked into the roll, "guard oneself from a talent which there is no hope of practising in perfection. It is possible to bring it as far as one will, yet always at last, when the merit of the master is once clear, one will painfully regret the loss of time and powers which have been expended on such bungling."

"Read nothing," said Wilhelm, "I ask you earnestly, continue to speak, tell me of things, illuminate me ! And so the Abbe has helped me in *Hamlet*, as he procured a Ghost."

"Yes, for he asserted that it was the only way to cure you, if you were to be cured."

"And therefore he left me the veil behind, and told me to fly?"

"Yes. He even hoped with the performance of *Hamlet*, your whole desire for acting would be satisfied. You would afterwards not enter on the stage, so he asserted ; I thought the opposite and was right. We still disputed the same evening about it after the performance."

"And you have therefore seen me act ?"

"Oh, certainly."

"Who then represented the Ghost ?"

"That I cannot say myself; either the Abbe or his twin brother ; yet I think the latter, for he is rather taller."

"You had, then, also secrets between each other ?"

"Friends can and must also have secrets from one another ; they are yet not secrets to each other."

"The thought of the perplexity already confuses me. Explain to me about this man, to whom I am so much indebted and to whom I have made so many reproaches."

"That which makes him so valuable to us," replied Jarno, "that which, to a certain extent, maintains for him the dominance over us all, is the free and keen glance which Nature has given to him over all powers, which are only found among men, and of which each is susceptible of being cultivated after its kind. Most men, even the most distinguished, are only limited ; every-

one values some qualities in himself and others ; it is only these that he favours, only these will he have cultivated. The Abbe works in an entirely opposite way ; he has feeling for everything, pleasure in everything, knowing it and advancing it. There I am obliged to look again into the roll," continued Jarno. " It is only all men who complete mankind, only all powers taken together which complete the world. These are often in opposition among themselves, and while they seek to destroy each other, Nature holds them together and produces them again. From the slightest animal impulse to a craft to the loftiest practice of the most intellectual art, from the lisping and crowing of the child to the most splendid utterance of the orator and singer, from the first romping of boys to the vast organizations by which countries are conquered and maintained, from the slightest kindly feeling and the most fleeting affection to the most violent passion and most serious union, from the clearest feeling of the presence of the senses to the most imperceptible forebodings and hopes of the most distant spiritual future—all that, and still more, lies within man and has to be cultivated, not in one person however, but in many. Every disposition is important, and it has to be developed. If one advances only the beautiful, the other only the useful, the two together first constitute a man. That which is useful promotes itself, for the multitude produces it and all cannot dispense with it ; the beautiful must be promoted, for few exhibit it and many require it."

" Stop ! " cried Wilhelm. " I have read all that."

" Only a few more lines," replied Jarno. " Here I find the Abbe quite contrary. One power rules over the other, but none can cultivate another ; in every disposition there lies alone the power of completing itself, that is understood by so few men, who, however, wish to teach and be effective."

" And I, too, do not understand it," replied Wilhelm.

" You will often enough hear the Abbe on this text ; so let us always clearly see and firmly hold what is in ourselves, and what we can cultivate in ourselves ; let us be just towards others, for we are only to be esteemed in so far as we know how to value."

" For heaven's sake, no more maxims ! I feel they are a bad remedy for a wounded heart ; tell me rather with your cruel precision what you expect from me, and how and in what manner **you** wish to sacrifice me."

" In the future, I assure you, you will apologize for every suspicion. It is your affair to prove and to choose, and ours to assist you. Man is not ever happy until his vaguer striving determines his limit. Do not look to me, but to the Abbe ; do not think of yourself, but of that which surrounds you. Learn, for example, to comprehend Lothario's excellence, how his penetrating glance and activity are inseparably bound up with one another, how he is always moving onwards, how he gains ground and carries each one along with him. He bears, wherever he is, a world with him ; his presence enlivens and kindles. Look, on the other hand, at our doctor ! He appears to be quite the opposite nature. If the former is active only in regard to the general whole and at a distance, the latter directs his clear glance only to the things which are nearest. He procures rather the means to activity than that he himself displays and enlivens activity ; his way of dealing with things is exactly like a good manager ; his working is silent, while he advances everyone in his sphere ; his knowledge is a continual gathering together and giving out, receiving and communicating on a small scale. Perhaps Lothario could in one day destroy what the doctor has built in long years ; but perhaps Lothario in one moment might communicate power to others to restore again a hundredfold what has been destroyed."

" It is a melancholy business," said Wilhelm, " when one has to think in a moment of the pure privileges of others, when we are not at unity with ourselves ; such reflections suit very well the quiet man, but not him who is stirred by passion and uncertainty. At no time is it harmful to reflect quietly and reasonably, and while accustoming ourselves to think over the privileges of others, ours, without being noticed, imitate them, and every false activity to which we are enticed by our fancy is then gladly given up by us. Free your mind, where it is possible, from all suspicion and all anxiety ! There comes the Abbe. Be friendly towards him until you learn still more how much gratitude you owe him. The rogue ! there he goes between Natalia and Theresa. I would bet he is thinking something out. As he above all likes to play a little the part of Destiny, so he does not often let a marriage be made from love-making."

Wilhelm, whose passionate and annoyed temper had not been improved by all the clever and worthy words of Jarno, found it in extremely bad taste that his friend, just at this moment,

should make mention of such a relationship, and said with a smile, yet not without bitterness : " I should have thought one would leave love-making and making marriages to those who loved one another."

CHAPTER VI

THE company had met again, and our friends saw themselves obliged to break off their conversation. In a short time a courier was announced who wanted to deliver a letter into Lothario's own hand. The man was introduced ; he looked vigorous and capable ; his livery was rich and in good taste. Wilhelm thought he knew him, and he was not mistaken. He was the same man whom he had formerly sent after Philine and the supposed Mariana, and he had not come back again. He was going to address him when Lothario, who had read the letter, enquired of him in a serious, almost annoyed, tone, " What is your master's name ? "

" Of all questions," replied the courier with modesty, " that is the one which I least know how to answer. I hope the letter will announce what is necessary ; verbally, nothing has been charged upon me."

" Be it as it is," replied Lothario, smiling, " as his master has confidence in me to write facetiously, he shall be welcome to us."

" He will not keep you waiting long," replied the courier with a bow, and withdrew.

" Only hear," said Lothario, " the mad, tasteless message. ' As of all guests,' so writes the unknown one, ' good humour should be most agreeable, when he appears, and as I continually keep him with me as travelling companion, I am convinced that the visit which I have thought of paying your lordship will not be taken ill ; rather do I hope to come with complete satisfaction to your illustrious family and at a suitable time to depart. I am, as always, Count Snailfoot.' "

" That is a new family," said the Abbe.

" He may be a viscount," replied Jarno.

" The secret is easily guessed," said Natalia. " I bet it is brother Friederich who, since my uncle's death, has threatened us with a visit."

" Good shot, beautiful and wise sister ! " cried someone from a bush close by, and at the same time there came out a pleasant, cheerful young man.

Wilhelm could hardly restrain a cry. " How," cried he, " is it our fair rogue, who is still to appear to me here ? "

Friederich was all attention, looked at Wilhelm and cried : " Truly I should have been less astounded to find here in my uncle's garden the ancient pyramids which are still standing firm in Egypt, or the grave of King Marsolus, which I am assured no longer exists, as you my old friend and frequent benefactor. May you be specially and most handsomely greeted by me ! "

After he had welcomed and kissed everyone all round, he flew off to Wilhelm and cried, " Keep him warm for me, this hero, leader and dramatic philosopher ! On our first acquaintance I have dressed his hair badly ; indeed I may truly say with the flax comb, and he has, however, afterwards spared me a good thrashing. He is magnanimous like Scipio, generous like Alexander ; occasionally also in love, yet without hating his rival. Not, indeed, that he heaped coals on the heads of his enemies, which, as they say, should be a bad service which can be shown to anyone ; no, he sends rather good and true servants after the friends who have carried off his beloved, lest she should dash her foot against a stone."

In this fancy he continued without ceasing, without anyone being in a position to stop him, and as no one was able to answer him in this fashion, he kept the conversation almost alone. " Do not be surprised," he exclaimed at my wide reading in sacred and profane writers ! You shall know how I arrived at this knowledge." They wanted to know from him how he was, and where he came from, but from sheer moral maxims and ancient stories he could not come to a clear explanation.

Natalia said to Theresa : " His form of amusement pains me. I would like to bet that he is not well."

When Friederich, apart from some jokes, with which Jarno answered him, found no response in the company to his buffoonery, he said : " There is nothing left for me but with the serious family to be serious also, and because, in such important circumstances, all my entire load of sins falls heavier on my soul, I will, in short, decide on a general confession, of which you, my worthy ladies and gentlemen, are to take no notice. This

noble friend here, who is already acquainted with some of my life, is alone to learn it ; all the more because he alone has cause for enquiry about it. Were you not anxious to know," he continued to Wilhelm, " how and where ? who ? when and why ? How is it with the conjugation of the Greek verb φιλεω, φιλῶ and with the derivatives of this delightful verb ? " With that he took Wilhelm by the arm, led him forth, while he squeezed and kissed him in all manner of ways.

Friederich had scarcely come up to Wilhelm's room when he found, lying on the window, a powder knife with the inscription : " Think of me." " You can pick up your good things," he said. " Truly, this is Philine's powder knife, which she bestowed on you that day when I had so pulled your hair. I hope you have, when looking at it, diligently thought about the beautiful girl, and I can assure you she has not forgotten you, and if I had not long ago already banished every trace of jealousy from my heart, I would not look upon you without envy."

" Don't talk of this creature," replied Wilhelm. " I do not deny that I could not rid myself for a long time of the impression of her agreeable presence, but that was all."

" Fie ! be ashamed of yourself," cried Friederich, " who will disown a loved one ? And you have loved her as entirely as could be wished. Not a day passed, but you presented the girl with something, and when the German gives presents, he certainly loves. There is nothing left for me but at last to whisk her away from you, and in this the little red officer has also at last succeeded."

" How ? You were the officer whom we met with Philine, and with whom she journeyed away."

" Yes," replied Friederich, " whom you took for Mariana. We have laughed enough about your mistake."

" What cruelty," cried Wilhelm, " to leave me in such uncertainty ! "

" And yet at once to take into our service the courier whom you sent after us," replied Friederich. " He is a capable fellow, and this time has not come away from us. And the girl I always love still as madly as ever. She has so peculiarly bewitched me that I find myself almost quite in a mythological condition, and every day I am afraid of being metamorphosed."

" Only tell me," enquired Wilhelm, " where did you get

your extensive learning? I listen with astonishment to the strange fashion you have taken up of always speaking with reference to ancient histories and fables."

"In the most amusing manner," said Friederich. "I have become learned and indeed very learned. Philine is now with me. We have got a lease from a farmer of an old knightly castle, in which we live like goblins in the merriest fashion. There we have found a library which is certainly compact, but yet choice, containing a folio Bible, *Gottfried's Chronicle*, two volumes of the *Theabrum Europaum*, the *Acura Philologica*, the writings of Gryphius, and still some less important books. Now we then, however, when we had ceased our excitement, were often bored; we wanted to read, and before we were aware of it our boredom was still worse. At last Philine had the splendid inspiration to open all the books on a large table. We sat opposite one another and read opposite one another, and always only in detached passages from one book as well as from another. That was now real sport. We imagined we were really in good society, where it is thought unfitting to continue any subject-matter too long, or to wish to discuss it fundamentally. We imagined we were in lively society, where no one allows the other to get a word in. We had this entertainment regularly every day, and by this means we became gradually so learned that we were ourselves astonished by it. We find already there is nothing new under the sun, and science offers us a voucher for everything. We varied this manner of instructing ourselves in all sorts of ways. Often we read according to an old damaged sandglass, which has run out in a few minutes. The other quickly turns it round and begins to read from a book, and the sand is scarcely again in the lower glass when the other starts again on his speech, and so we study in a truly academic fashion, only we have shorter hours and our studies are extremely varied."

"I quite well understand this madness," said Wilhelm, "when such a merry pair is together, but how this frivolous pair can long remain together, that is for me almost incomprehensible."

"That is," cried Friederich, "just the good fortune and the bad. Philine does not let herself be seen, she may not look at herself, she is expecting a child. Nothing in the world is more shapeless and ridiculous than she is. Just shortly before

I went away, she came by chance in front of the mirror. ' The devil,' she said, and turned her face away. The living image of Frau Melina ; nasty picture ! One looks thoroughly vile ! "

" I must confess," said Wilhelm with a smile, " that it may be rather comic to see you together as father and mother."

" It is a thoroughly roguish trick," said Friederich, " that I, at last, should be considered to be a father. She asserts it, and the time fits too. At first the accursed visit which she paid you after *Hamlet* made me a little in error."

" What sort of a visit?"

" You have not altogether slept away the memory of that ? The darling, palpable ghost of that night, if you don't yet know it, was Philine, The story was certainly for me a severe dowry ; yet, if you may not let something of the kind happen, you must not love. Fatherhood rests above all on conviction ; I am convinced and therefore I am a father. There, you see I know how to use logic in the right place. And if the child directly after its birth does not laugh itself to death on the spot, it can become, if not a useful, yet a pleasant citizen."

While the friends entertained one another in this amusing fashion by frivolous subjects, the rest of the company had begun a serious conversation. Friederich and Wilhelm had scarcely retired, when the Abbe, unnoticed, led his friends into the garden room, and when they had taken their places, began his discourse.

" We have," said he, " asserted in general that Frl. Theresa is not the daughter of her mother. It is necessary that we now explain ourselves about this in detail. Here is the story which I then offer to prove and authenticate in every way :

" Frau Von——lived the first years of her married life with her husband in the best understanding, only they had the misfortune that the children, which she was once expecting, were born dead, and with the third the doctors almost announced death for the mother, and prophesied that it would be quite unavoidable if there were another. They were obliged to come to a decision ; they did not wish to give up the marriage tie, they found themselves too comfortable, regarded as citizens. Frau Von——sought in the cultivation of her mind, in a certain habit of display, in the delights of vanity, a kind of compensation for the happiness of motherhood which had been denied her. She indulged her husband with much cheerfulness when he took

an inclination to a lady who managed the whole household, had a beautiful figure and a very firm character. Frau Von——, after a short time, herself offered her hands to an arrangement, according to which the good girl gave herself over to Theresa's father, continued in the management of household matters and showed herself to the lady of the house almost more obliging and submissive than before.

" After some time she expected a child, and the two married people at this opportunity had the same thoughts, though for different reasons. Herr Von——wished to introduce the child of his beloved into the house as legitimate, and Frau Von——annoyed because, owing to the indiscretion of her doctor, her condition had become known in the neighbourhood, thought that by means of a supposititious child to put herself again in a position of consideration, and by such complaisance to maintain an ascendancy in the house which otherwise she was afraid of losing. She was more reserved than her husband ; she perceived his wish and knew how, without opposing him, to render an explanation easier. She made her own terms and obtained nearly all she longed for, and hence the Will in which so little provision seemed to have been made for the child. The old doctor had died ; they directed themselves to a young, active, clever man, who was well paid. He was able to look for honour in exposing and remedying the lack of skill and overhaste of his departed colleague. The real mother was not unwilling to agree. The dissimulation was very well acted. Theresa came into the world and was appropriated by her stepmother, while her real mother was a sacrifice to this dissimulation, as she ventured out again too early, died and left the worthy man inconsolable.

" Frau Von——had meantime entirely attained her purpose. In the eyes of the world she had a lovable child, which she paraded in an exaggerated fashion. She was at the same time rid of a rival, whose condition she looked upon with envious eyes, and whose influence, at least for the future, she was afraid of. She overwhelmed the child with tenderness, and in hours of confidence she understood how to attract her husband to herself by means of so lively a sympathy with his loss, that one may almost say he gave himself up entirely to her ; his own happiness and that of his child he placed in her hands, and it was only a short time before his death, and still, to some extent, by means

of his grown-up daughter, that he was again master in his house. That was, my fair Theresa, the secret which your invalid father would probably have disclosed. It is that which I wished to put in detail before you, just when our young friend is absent from the company, has become your bridegroom by the most remarkable combination of events in the world. Here are the papers which prove in the most rigorous manner what I have asserted. You will learn from them at the same time how long I was on coming upon the track of this discovery, and how now I was but just able to arrive at certainty ; how I did not dare to say anything to my friend of the possibility of his happiness, since it would have grieved him too deeply if this hope had vanished for the second time. You will comprehend Lydia's suspicion, for I gladly confess that the inclination of our friend to this young woman did not, in any way, meet with my favour, since I again looked to his union with Theresa."

No one made any answer to this story. The ladies returned the paper after a few days, without making further mention of them.

There were means enough for occupying the company, which was still together in the neighbourhood ; the scenery offered so many attractions that they could gladly go about singly or together on horseback, in carriages or on foot. With such an opportunity Jarno fulfilled his commission to Wilhelm, laid before him the papers, but did not seem to demand any decision from him.

" In this most extraordinary condition in which I am placed," said Wilhelm, " I only want to repeat to you what I said at the beginning in the presence of Natalia, and certainly I have said it with a pure heart. Lothario and his friends can demand from me every kind of sacrifice. Herewith I lay all my claims to Theresa in your hand ; procure, on the other hand, for me my formal release ! Oh ! my friend, there is no need of great hesitation for my decision. I have already felt during these days that Theresa has trouble to maintain only an appearance of the liveliness with which she first greeted me. Her affection has turned away from me, or rather I have never possessed it."

" Such cases are better explained by degrees in silence and expectation," replied Jarno, " than by much talk, whereby there always arrives a kind of embarrassment and fermentation."

"I thought much rather," said Wilhelm, "that just this case was capable of the most calm and clearest decision. **I have** been so often reproached for making delays and uncertainty. Why will you now, when I am decided, commit against myself the very fault for which I am blamed? Does the world only take so much trouble to train us so as to let us feel that it may not train itself? Yes, grant me right soon the cheerful feeling of becoming free from a misunderstanding into which I have come with the purest sentiments in the world."

In spite of this request some days elapsed in which he heard nothing of this matter, nor did he observe even any further change in his friends. The conversation was rather general and of indifferent matters.

CHAPTER VII

ONE day Natalia, Jarno and Wilhelm were sitting together, and Natalia began, "You are reflective, Jarno; I have noticed it for some time."

"So I am," replied he, "for I see an important business before which for long we have been preparing, and must now, of necessity, be taken in hand. You know already something about it, and I may speak of it before our young friend, for it will depend on him whether he has pleasure in taking a share in it. You will not see me much longer, for I am on the point of sailing off to America."

"To America!" replied Wilhelm, smiling. "From you I had not expected such an adventure, still less that you would choose me for a companion."

"When you entirely get to know our plan," replied Jarno, "you will give it a better name and perhaps be disposed to join in it. Listen to me. One need only be slightly acquainted with the business of the world to observe that great changes are coming before us, and that properties are almost nowhere quite secure."

"I have no clear understanding of the business of the world," interrupted Wilhelm, "and only just recently have I troubled myself about my property. Perhaps I should have done **well** to drive it out of my mind still longer, as I am obliged to

observe that the care for its maintenance makes people so hypochondriacal."

"Hear me out," said Jarno. "Care is suitable for mature age, so that you, for a time, may live free from care. Equilibrium in the affairs of us mortals can, unfortunately, only be restored by contraries. At present it is nothing less than advisable to have property only in one place, to place one's money only in one spot, and it is again difficult to keep an oversight yet in many places. We have therefore thought out something different. From our ancient tower a society should issue forth which extended itself to all parts of the world, to which one could enter from every part of the world. We made secure an existence among one another against the only case of a national revolution, dispossessing one or the other of his property. I am now going over to America in order to make one of the good relations which our friend had made for himself by his residence there. The Abbe intends to go to Russia and you are to have the choice, if you are willing to join on with us, whether you assist Lothario in Germany, or are willing to go with me. I should think you would choose the last, for to make a great journey is for a young man extremely useful."

Wilhelm gathered himself together and replied: "The proposal is worthy of every consideration, for my motto will be, shortly, 'The farther away, the better.' You will, I hope, make me more closely acquainted with your plan. It may come from my want of acquaintance with the world, but for such an engagement, insuperable difficulties seem to be opposed."

"Of these, most can only be removed," replied Jarno, "in that, up to the present, there are only a few honest, clever and determined people, who have a certain general sense, from which alone the social sense can arise."

Friederich, who hitherto had only been listening, replied upon this: "And if you give me a kind word, I, too, will go with you."

Jarno shook his head.

"Now what have you to set against me?" continued Friederich. "In a new colony, young colonists are also required, and I will quickly bring them along with me, amusing colonists, too, of that I assure you. And then I know a good young girl is no more in place over here. The sweet, attractive Lydia,

where is the poor child to go with her pain and sorrow if she cannot at times throw it into the depths of the sea and if a fine fellow does not espouse her? I should think, my youthful friend, since you are in the way of consoling the forsaken, you should decide that each should take his maiden under his arm and we should follow the old gentleman."

This proposal annoyed Wilhelm. He answered with a feigned calm: "I don't, however, know if at once she is free, and as, above all, I do not seem to be fortunate in wooing, I would rather not make such an attempt."

Upon this Natalia said: "Brother Friederich, you imagine because you act so frivolously that your ideas have the same value for others. Our friend deserves a womanly heart, which belongs to him entirely, which at his side is not perturbed by strange memories; only with a highly rational and pure character like Theresa's was an enterprise of this kind to be advised."

"What enterprise?" cried Friederich. "In love everything is an enterprise. In the arbour or before the altar, with embraces or golden rings, by the singing of the cricket or by trumpets and shawms, everything is only a venture, and it is chance which does everything."

"I have always observed," replied Natalia, "that our principles are a supplement to our existence. We are only too glad to hang in front of our faults the garment of a valid law. Only pay attention to what path the fair one will guide you, who has attracted you in so powerful a fashion and holds you firmly."

"She is herself on a very good path," replied Friederich, "on the path to sanctity. It is indeed a bypath, but therefore pleasanter and more secure. Maria of Magdala has travelled it, and who knows how many others. Above all, sister, if the talk is about love, you should not mingle in it. I imagine you will not marry until there is a want of a bride somewhere, and then, with your habitual good nature, you will give yourself as a supplement to some kind of existence. Therefore let us now conclude our business with this soul-broker and agree about our travelling company."

"You come too late with your proposals," said Jarno, "for Lydia is provided for."

" And how so ? " enquired Friederich.

" I have myself offered her my hand," replied Jarno.

' Old gentleman," said Friederich, " you have done a stroke, which if one regards it as a substantive, various adjectives could be applied, and if as a subject, various predicates could be found."

" I must confess sincerely," replied Natalia, " it is a dangerous experiment to appropriate a young woman at the very moment when she is driven to despair by her love for another."

" I have ventured," replied Jarno, " she shall be mine under a certain condition. And believe me, there is nothing more to be treasured in the world than a heart which is capable of love and passion. Whether it has loved or is still loving, are things I do not regard. The love with which another is loved is for me nearly more attractive than that with which I could be loved. I see the strength, the force of a beautiful heart without my self-love troubling the pure vision."

" Have you already talked with Lydia at this time ? " replied Natalia.

Jarno nodded with a smile.

Natalia shook her head and said, as she got up, " I don't know at all what to make of you, but certainly you will not get me into error."

She was just wanting to retire when the Abbe entered with a letter in his hand, and said to her : " Stay, please ; I have a proposal for which your advice will be welcome. The Marchese, the friend of your late uncle, whom we have expected for some days, must be here soon. He writes to tell us that the German language is not so fluent with him as he thought ; that he wanted a companion who knew it perfectly as well as other languages, as he wished to enter more into scientific than political societies ; such an interpreter was for him indispensable. I knew of no one more skilled in this respect than our young friend. He knows the language, besides is instructed in many things, and for him it will be a great advantage to see Germany in such good society and in such advantageous circumstances. He who does not know his native land has no standard for judging other lands. What do you say, my friends, what do you say, Natalia ? "

No one had anything to object to the proposal. Jarno appeared to regard his proposal of travelling to America as no

hindrance, as he would not at once be going off. **Natalia kept** silent and Friederich produced various proverbs about the utility of travelling.

Wilhelm was so exasperated by this proposal that he could scarcely conceal it. He saw only too clearly an agreement for getting rid of him as soon as possible, and the worst of it was that it could be seen so openly and so regardless of his feelings. The suspicion, too, which Lydia had aroused in him, all that he had himself experienced, became again renewed before his soul, and the natural manner in which Jarno had put everything before him seemed to him only a piece of artifice.

He gathered himself together and answered : " This proposal anyhow deserves a mature consideration."

" A quick decision would be necessary," replied the Abbe.

" I am not yet prepared for that," answered Wilhelm. " We can await the arrival of the man, and then see how we are suited together. But one essential condition I must make to the proposal is that I take my Felix with me, and bring him everywhere."

" This condition will be with difficulty allowed," replied the Abbe.

" And I do not see," exclaimed Wilhelm, " why I should allow conditions to be prescribed for me by anyone, and why, if I want to see my native land, I should want an Italian as companion ? "

" Because a young man," replied the Abbe, with a certain imposing earnestness, " has always reason for forming connections."

Wilhelm, who clearly observed that he was not in position to restrain himself longer, as his condition was only in some degree alleviated by the presence of Natalia, with some haste gave his opinion : " Allow me only a short time for reflection, and I imagine it can quickly be decided whether I have cause for making further connections or whether I am not rather commanded irresistibly by heart and head to free myself from so many bonds, which threaten me with a perpetual miserable imprisonment."

So he spoke with his spirit keenly moved. A glance at Natalia calmed him in some measure, while in this passionate moment her form and her worth impressed themselves upon him all the more deeply.

" Yes ! " he said to himself, when he was alone, " only confess to yourself you love her, and you feel again what it means when man can love with all his powers. Thus I loved Mariana and was so dreadfully mistaken. I loved Philine, and was obliged to despise her. Aurelia I esteemed, and could not love her. I honoured Theresa, and my paternal love took the form of an affection for her ; and now, when all emotions meet together in your heart, which should make man happy, you are now obliged to fly ! Ah ! why must the most insuperable desire of possession now be united with these emotions, these perceptions ? and why, without possession, do just these emotions and these convictions direct every other kind of happiness completely to the bottom ? Shall I in future enjoy the sun, and the world, society or any other good fortune ? Will you not always say to yourself : * Natalia is not there ! ' and yet, alas, Natalia will always be present to you. If you close your eyes she will stand before you ; if you open them she will hover in front of all objects, like the apparition which a dazzling picture leaves behind in the eye. Was not earlier the very transient form of the Amazon ever present to your imagination ? and you had only seen her, you did not know her. Now, when you know her, when you are close to her, when she has shown so much interest in you, now her qualities are as deeply impressed in your mind as her image ever was in your sense. It is ever a matter of anxiety to be seeking, but a much more anxious matter to have found and to be obliged to abandon. Where in the world am I to make further enquiries ? What country, what town keeps a treasure like this ? and am I to travel only to find always that which is of less value ? Is, then, life only like a racecourse, where one must at once quickly turn round again when the farthest limit has been reached ? And does the good, the excellent, stand only as a firm, unmoved object from which we have with swift horses so rapidly to withdraw when we imagine we have reached it ? While everyone else who strives after worldly goods can find them for himself in various regions, or indeed procure them at the fair."

" Come, my dear boy," he cried to his son, who just then came jumping along, " be and remain everything to me ! You were given me as a substitute for your beloved mother ; you must compensate me for the second mother, whom I had destined

for you, and now you have the great gap to fill. Occupy my heart, occupy my mind with your beauty, your lovingness, your desire for knowledge and your capacities."

The boy was busied with a toy. His father endeavoured to adjust it for him better, more regularly and more suitably, but at the moment when he succeeded, the child also lost pleasure in it. "You are a true son of Adam," exclaimed Wilhelm. "Come, my son, come, my brother ! let us play about aimlessly in the world, as well as we can." His decision to retire, to take his child with him and to distract himself with objects in the world, was now his firm intention. He wrote to Werner, sought from him money and letters of credit and sent away Friederich's courier with the message that he was to return soon. In such ill-humour as he felt towards the other friends, so pure did his relationship to Natalia remain. To her he confided his intention. She, too, accepted as recognized that he could and must go, and though this apparent indifference on her part caused him pain, yet her kindly manner and presence completely calmed him. She advised him to visit various towns, so as to become acquainted there with some of her friends.

The courier returned, bringing what Wilhelm wanted, though Werner did not appear to be satisfied with this new departure. "My expectation that you would become sensible," wrote the latter, "is now again postponed for a good while. Where are you now all wandering about ? and where, then, is the lady, of whose housekeeping assistance you gave me hopes ? The remaining friends, too, are not present, and the whole business has been put on the shoulders of the lawyer and myself. It is fortunate that he is as good a man of law as I am of finance, and that we are both accustomed to be burdened with things. Farewell ! Your excuses are to be forgiven you, as without them our situation in this neighbourhood could not have been so good."

With regard to external matters he would now have been quite ready to start on his travels, but his mind was still held by two hindrances. Once for all they did not want to show him Mignon's body except at the obsequies, which the *Abb6* thought of holding ; for this solemnity everything was not yet ready. The doctor, too, had been called away by a singular letter of the country clergyman. It had reference to the harp-player, of whose fate Wilhelm wished to be more closely instructed.

In these circumstances, neither by day nor night did he find rest for soul or body. When all were asleep, he walked up and down in the house. The presence of the ancient well-known works of art attracted and repelled him. He could grasp nothing of what surrounded him, nor leave it alone ; everything reminded him of everything. He overlooked the whole circle of his life ; only, alas, it lay broken in pieces in front of him, and seemed never to want to unite again. These works of art, which his father had purchased, seemed to him a symbol that he, too, had been partly excluded from a quiet and secure possession of what is desirable in the world, partly he was to be robbed of it by his own fault, or that of strangers. He lost himself so far in these strange and mournful reflections that he often appeared to himself as a spirit, and even when he felt and handled things outside himself, he could scarcely keep himself from doubting whether he was then actually alive and there.

Only the keen pain which often seized him that he so wrongly and yet so necessarily had to abandon all that he had found and found again, only his tears gave him the feeling again of his actual life. In vain he called before his memory the fortunate condition in which he yet actually was. " So is then everything nothing," he exclaimed, " when the one thing is lacking which makes everything else of value to man ! "

The Abbe announced to the company the arrival of the Marchese. " You are then, as it seems," he said to Wilhelm, " determined to go away with your boy ; at least, however, make the acquaintance of this man, who in every case can be useful to you, when you meet with him by the way." The Marchese appeared. He was a man not yet far advanced in years, a well-built, pleasing figure, of Lombardy. As a young man he had made acquaintance with Lothario's uncle, who was already much older, in the Army and then in business. Afterwards they had travelled through a great part of Italy together, and the works of art, which the Marchese here found again, had to a large extent been purchased and procured in his presence, and in many happy circumstances which he still well remembered.

The Italian, in general, has a deeper feeling for the high value of art than other nations. Everyone in Italy who does anything of the kind, wishes to be called artist, master and

professor, and by this pretension he acknowledges at least that it is not sufficient to lay hold of something by tradition, or by practice to arrive at some kind of dexterity, but everyone much more should have power of thinking what he does, of laying down principles and the causes, and making it clear to himself and others why he proceeds in this way or in that.

The stranger was affected at seeing these beautiful possessions without the owner, and pleased to hear speaking the spirit of his friend from the excellent people left behind him. They went through the different works and found a great happiness in being able to understand each about them. The Marchese and the Abbe were the spokesmen. Natalia, who felt herself transported in the presence of her uncle, understood very well how to enter into their opinion and sentiments. Wilhelm had to translate it for himself into theatrical terminology if he was to understand something of it. It was necessary to keep Friederich's jesting within bounds. Jarno was seldom present.

By the reflection that first-class works of art in modern times are so rare, the Marchese said : " It is not easy to think and perceive what circumstances have to do for the artist, and then with the greatest genius, with the most decided talent, the demands are always infinite which he has to make on himself, the industry unspeakable which is necessary for his complete development. If now the circumstances do little for him, if he notices that it is very easy to satisfy the world, which only desires a superficial, pleasing, agreeable appearance, so one would be surprised if comfort and self-complacency did not root him firmly to the mediocre ; it would be unusual if he were not rather to exchange money and affluence for goods of fashion, than to choose the right path which leads him more or less to a pitiful martyrdom. Consequently, the artists of our time only offer always, never give anything. They wish only to excite and not to satisfy ; everything is only hinted at, and nowhere is found basic principle nor execution. But it is only necessary to stay quietly for a time in a gallery and observe to which works of art the multitude is drawn, which are praised and which are neglected, and one will have little pleasure for the present and little hope for the future."

" Yes," replied the Abbe, " and so amateurs and artists cultivate themselves alternately. The amateur looks **for only a**

general, indefinite pleasure ; the work of art is to please him almost like a work of Nature, and people imagine that the organs for enjoying a work of art are developed of themselves like the tongue and the palate ; people judge of a work of art as if it were a food. They do not comprehend what a different kind of culture is required so as to elevate oneself to a real enjoyment of art. The most difficult thing I find is the kind of separation which one must effect within oneself if one wants really to be cultivated ; consequently we find so many one-sided cultures, each of which claims to make pronouncements over the whole."

" What you are saying is not quite clear to me," said Jarno, who just came in.

" It is also difficult," replied the Abbe, " to make oneself clear concisely in this matter. I only say thus much : as soon as a man claims a manifold activity or manifold enjoyment, he must also be capable of cultivating in himself a variety of organs, alike independent of one another. He who wishes to do or to enjoy everything in his complete humanity, he who wishes to unite to such a kind of enjoyment everything outside himself, he will spend his time with an everlastingly unsatisfied striving. How difficult it is, which seems so natural, to look at a good statue, an excellent painting in, and for, itself; to perceive a song for the sake of the song, to marvel at the actor in the actor, to find pleasure in a building for sake of its own harmony and permanence ! But now it appears most people deal with different works of art, just as if they were soft clay. In accordance with their inclination, opinion and fancies, the formed marble should at once be remodelled, the strongly built edifice be expanded or contracted ; a painting is to teach, a play is to improve and everything become everything. But, actually, because most men are themselves without form, because they are unable to themselves and their nature even to give any form, they labour to take their form from the objects, so that everything may become loose and slack stuff, to which they, too, belong. Everything is at last reduced to the so-called effect, everything is relative and so is everything relative, except the senselessness and lack of taste which then reigns absolutely supreme."

" I understand you," replied Jarno, " or rather I see clearly how what you say harmonizes with the principles to which you hold ; I cannot with the poor devils of mankind make allowances.

I know enough of those who, at the greatest works of art and nature, at once remind themselves of their most paltry requirements ; they take their conscience and their morals with them into the opera ; their love and hate they do not lay aside in front of a colonnade, and what is greatest and best which can be brought to them from outside, they feel obliged first to disparage as much as possible in their way of representing it, so as to unite it only in some measure with their miserable natures.

CHAPTER VIII

IN the evening the Abbe gave an invitation to the obsequies of Mignon. The company betook itself to the Hall of the Past, and found it illuminated and adorned in the most singular manner. The walls, almost from top to bottom, were covered with tapestries of a heavenly blue, so that only plinth and frieze appeared. On the four candelabras in the corners there burnt large wax torches, and, in proportion, on the four smaller ones which surrounded the middle sarcophagi. Near this stood four boys clad in heavenly blue with silver, and seemed with broad fans and ostrich feathers to blow on to a figure resting on the sarcophagus. The company sat down, and two invisible choirs began with lovely singing to ask : " Whom are you bringing to the silent company ? "

The four children made answer with sweet voice : " A tired playmate we are bringing to you. Suffer him to repose with you until the jubilation of the heavenly brotherhood some day awakens her."

CHOIR : First of youth in our circle, be welcome ! Welcome with morning ! No boy, no girl is following after you ! Only age willingly and composed draws near to the quiet Hall, and in serious company reposes the dear, dear child.

BOYS : Ah ! how unwillingly did we bring her here ! Ah ! and here she must stay ! Let us also stay ! Let us weep, weep by her coffin.

CHOIR : Look yet at the mighty wings ! Look at the light, pure garment ! how the golden band shines from the head. Look at the fair, the dignified repose.

BOYS : Ah ! the wings rise not ; in easy play the garment

no longer flutters as we crowned her head with roses ; she looked at us in friendly and lovely manner.

CHOIR : Look up with the eyes of the Spirit ! In you lives the forming power, which bears the most beautiful, the highest life up over the stars.

BOYS : But, ah ! We miss her here ; she wanders not in the gardens, no more gathers the flowers of the meadow. Let us weep, we are leaving her here ! Let us weep and stay with her.

CHOIR : Children, turn back to life. Let the fresh air, which plays around the meandering water, dry your tears. The night flies ! Day and pleasure and permanence is the lot of the living.

BOYS : Up ! We are returning to life. Let the day give us work and pleasure, till the evening brings us rest and the sleep of night refreshes us.

CHOIR : Children ! hasten into life ! In the pure garment of beauty may love meet you with heavenly look and the crown of immortality.

The boys were already far away. The Abbe stood up from his seat and went behind the coffin. " It is the command of the man," he said, " who has prepared this tranquil dwelling-place, that every new arrival should be received with solemnity. According to him, the builder of this house, the constructor of these places, we have just brought a young stranger here, and so this small room already holds two quite different sacrifices to the stern arbitrary and inexorable goddess of death. We enter on life in accordance with settled laws ; the days are counted which bring us mature for the sight of light, but for length of life there is no law. The weakest thread of life is drawn out to unexpected lengths, and the strongest is violently cut by the shears of a fate who seems to delight in opposition. Of the child we are now burying we have little to say. It is still unknown to us where she came from ; her parents are unknown to us, and the number of her years we can only conjecture. Her deep, reserved heart permits us only to guess at its inmost affairs ; nothing was clear about her, nothing open, except love to the man who rescued her from the hands of a barbarian. This tender affection, this lively gratitude, seem to be the flame consuming the oil of her life ; the skill of the doctor could not sustain her beautiful life ; friendship, with the greatest care,

was unable to prolong it. But if art was **unable to bind the** departing spirit, it had applied all its means to maintain her body and withdraw it from the past. A quantity of balsam is driven through the veins and now, in place of the blood, colours the cheeks that had so early become pale. Come nearer, my friends, and behold this miracle of art and care ! "

He lifted up the veil, and the child lay in its angelic raiment as if asleep, in the most charming posture. All came near and marvelled at the appearance of life. Wilhelm alone remained seated on his chair. He could not compose himself. What he felt he dared not think, and every thought seemed as though it wanted to destroy his feeling.

The address, for the sake of the Marchese, had been spoken in French. He, with the others, came near and regarded the form with attention. The Abbe continued : " With a holy trust this good heart, so reserved towards man, was continually turned to its God. Humility, nay, an inclination to self-abasement outwardly seemed innate in it. With zeal it clung to the Catholic religion in which it had been born and brought up. She often expressed the calm wish to rest upon consecrated ground, and in accordance with the usages of the Church, we have consecrated this marble case and the small piece of earth which is concealed in her pillows. With what fervour in her last moments did she kiss the picture of the crucified One, which stands on her tender arms portrayed very delicately with many kindred points." At the same time as he spoke, he uncovered her right arm, and one saw in blue upon the white skin a crucifix accompanied by different signs and letters.

The Marchese regarded this new appearance quite closely. " O God ! " he exclaimed, as he lifted himself up and raised his hands to heaven. " Poor child ! unhappy niece ! Do I find you again here ? With what a painful joy do we find you again here, dead indeed, but preserved, this good and loved body which we had already long ago given up and believed was a prey to the fish in the lake ! I am present at your burial, so splendid in its outward setting, and still more splendid is it on account of **the** good men who accompany you to your abode of rest. **And** if I am able to speak," he said in broken accents, " **I will thank them.**"

The tears prevented him from saying more. By pressing a

spring the *Abbe* lowered the body into the depth of the marble. Four youths, clad like those boys, came out from behind the tapestries, lifted the heavy, beautifully adorned covering on to the coffin and at once began their song.

THE YOUTHS : Now is the treasure well preserved, the beautiful image of the Past ! Here in marble it rests unconsumed ; in your hearts, too, it lives and continues. Step, step back into life ! Take the holy earnestness with you, for the earnestness which is holy, alone renders life eternal.

The invisible choir joined in the last words, but no one of the company perceived the strengthening words ; each was too busied with the wonderful disclosures and his own sensations. The *Abbe* and Natalia led out the Marchese, Wilhelm, Theresa and Lothario, and then, when the singing completely died away, the pains, the reflections, the thoughts and the curiosity came upon them in full force, and with yearning did they wish themselves back in that exalted mood.

CHAPTER IX

THE Marchese avoided speaking of the matter, but he had secret and prolonged conversations with the *Abbe*. He often asked for music when the company was together. People were glad to provide that, because everyone was contented to be lifted above conversation. Thus they continued for some time, when it was observed that he was making arrangements for departure.

One day he said to Wilhelm, " I do not wish to disturb the remains of the dear child ; let them remain behind in the place where it has loved and suffered, but its friends must promise me to visit me in its native land, where the poor creature was born and brought up ; they must see the pillars and the statues, of which a dim idea still remained for it. I will lead them into the bays where she was so pleased to pick up little stones. You will not, my dear young man, take yourself away from the gratitude of a family which is so much indebted to you. I go on my journey to-morrow. I have confided the whole story to the *Abbe* ; he will relate it to you again. He was able to forgive me when my pain interrupted me, and he will, as a third person,

put before you the events with more connection. If you will still follow my journey through Germany, as the *Abb6* proposed, you are welcome. Do not leave your boy behind ! At every slight inconvenience which he causes us, we will remember again your care for my poor niece."

On the same evening they were surprised by the arrival of the Countess. Wilhelm trembled in all his limbs when she came in, and she, although prepared, kept close to her sister, who soon reached a chair for her. How wonderfully simple was her dress, and how changed her form ! Wilhelm dared hardly look at her. She greeted him with friendliness, and some general words could not conceal her sentiments and feelings.

The Marchese had gone to bed betimes, and the company had still no desire to separate. The *Abb6* brought out the manuscript. "I have," he said, "at once committed to paper the singular story as it was confided to me. We should be least sparing of pen and ink when there has to be a setting down of simple circumstances regarding remarkable events." The Countess was informed about the speech, and the *Abb6* read : "'My father,' said the Marchese, 'much as I have seen of the world, I must always consider to be one of the most remarkable men. His character was noble and straightforward, his ideas broad, and one may say great; he was strict towards himself; in all his plans an incorruptible sequence, in all his actions a gradual moderation. Well, therefore, as on one side he let things go with him and managed his business, he was on account of these very qualities little able to find his way in the world, as he demanded from the State, from his neighbours, from children and servants the observation of all regulations, which he had imposed on himself. His most moderate demands were exaggerated owing to his severity, and he was never able to come to full enjoyment, because nothing turned out in the way which he imagined. I have seen him at the moment when he built a palace, laid out a garden, acquired a large new property in the most beautiful position, inwardly convinced with the most serious sullenness that fate had condemned him to be abstinent and to endure. In his outward bearing he observed the greatest dignity ; if he jested, he only displayed the superiority of his understanding. It was intolerable for him to receive blame, **and** I have only once in my life seen him entirely disconcerted,

when he heard once of his institutions being spoken of as ridiculous. In just this spirit he made dispositions about his children and his property. My eldest brother was brought up as a man who, in the future, had expectation of large properties. I was to adopt the profession of a clergyman, and my youngest brother to become a soldier. I was lively, passionate, active, quick, skilled in all bodily exercises. The youngest seemed inclined to a visionary tranquillity, given up to the sciences, music and poetry. Only after the most severe struggle, after the most complete conviction of the impossibility, did my father give way, though against his will, so that we might exchange our professions ; and though he looked upon each of us with satisfaction, he could not yet see his way in it, and assured us that nothing good would come of it. The older he became, the more he felt himself cut off from all society. He lived, finally, almost quite alone. Only one old friend, who had served among the Germans, lost his wife during the campaign and had brought with him a daughter about ten years old, remained his sole intercourse. This man purchased a nice property in the vicinity, saw my father on fixed days and hours of the week, when he often brought his daughter with him. He never contradicted my father, who at last became completely accustomed to him, and tolerated him as the only endurable companion. After the death of our father, we clearly observed that this man had been excellently equipped by our old man, and had not passed his time for nothing. He enlarged his properties ; his daughter could anticipate a fine dowry. The young girl grew up and was a wonderful beauty. My elder brother often joked with me, saying that I ought to court her.

" ' Meantime, my brother Augustine had spent his years in the monastery in the most wonderful circumstances. He abandoned himself completely to the enjoyment of a holy enthusiasm, to those half-spiritual, half-physical sensations which, as they elevated him for a time to the *seventh* heaven, soon afterwards let him sink into an abyss of impotence and misery. In my father's lifetime no change was to be thought of, and what did we not have to wish for and propose ? After the death of our father he visited us diligently ; his condition, which at first grieved us, by degrees became much more tolerable, for understanding had triumphed. But the more securely it promised

him complete contentment and cure in the pure way of Nature, all the more vigorously did he ask of us that we should set him free from his vows. He gave us to understand that his intention was directed towards Sperata, our neighbour.

" ' My eldest brother had suffered too much from the severity of our father for him to remain unmoved by the condition of the youngest. We spoke with the father confessor of our family, an old and worthy man ; we disclosed to him the twofold intention of our brother, and begged him to introduce the affair and to forward it. He delayed, contrary to his custom, and when at last our brother put pressure on us, and we vigorously recommended the matter to the clergyman, he was obliged to decide to disclose to us the singular story.

" ' Sperata was our sister, both on the father's and mother's side. This man had once more been overpowered by inclination and sensuality in later years, when the *power* of parentage seems to be extinguished. A short time before, a similar case had amused people in the neighbourhood, and my father, not in like manner to be exposed to ridicule, decided to keep secret this late and lawful fruit of love with just as much care as men are wont to conceal the early and carnal fruits of their affection. Our mother returned secretly ; the child was taken into the country, and the old friend of the family who, besides the father confessor, alone knew of the secret, easily let himself be persuaded to pass her off as his daughter. The father confessor had only stipulated in the most extreme case to be able to disclose the secret. The father had died ; the tender young girl lived under the protection of an old lady. We knew that singing and music of our brother had already introduced him to her, and as he repeatedly challenged us to separate his old bonds so that he could knit new ones, it was necessary as soon as possible to inform him of the danger which was hanging over him.

" ' He looked at us with wild, contemptuous glances. Reserve your improbable fairy tales,' he exclaimed, ' for children and credulous fools ! You will not tear Sperata from my heart. She is mine ! Disavow at once your horrible spectre, which will only torment me in vain. Sperata is not my sister, she is my wife ! ' With rapture he described to us how the heavenly maiden had led him out of the condition of his unnatural separation from mankind into the true life, how the two spirits harmonized like

two voices, how he blessed all his sorrows and errors because till then she had kept him removed from all women, and because he could now utterly and entirely give himself to the most lovable maiden. We were horrified at the discovery ; his condition grieved us ; we did not know how to help ourselves. He assured us vehemently that Sperata was carrying a child by him. Our father confessor did everything which his duty suggested, but thereby the evil only became worse. The relation of nature and religion, of moral rights and civic laws had been fought through in the most violent fashion. Nothing seemed to him sacred but his relation to Sperata ; nothing seemed to him worthy but the name of father and wife. ' These alone,' he exclaimed, ' are in accordance with Nature, all else are fancies and opinions. Are there not nations which approved of a marriage with a sister ? Do not name your gods !' he exclaimed. ' You never want their names except to befoul us, to lead us from the way of Nature and to disfigure the noblest impulses by a shameful compulsion to crime. To the greatest confusion of spirit, to the most shameful misuse of the body, you compel the victims whom you bury alive. I may speak, for I have suffered like no one from the loftiest, sweetest fullness of enthusiasm to the most perfect wastes of weakness, emptiness, destruction and despair ; from the loftiest premonitions of life beyond this earth to the most complete disbelief—disbelief in myself. I have drained all these horrible dregs of the cup which flatter us at the brim, and my whole life has been poisoned to its core. Now, when kindly Nature by her greatest gifts, by love, has again cured me, when I again feel on the bosom of a heavenly maiden that I am alive, that she is, too ; that we are one, that from this living union a third is to arise and to smile to us, now you open the flames of your hell, your purgatorial fires, which can only burn a diseased imagination, and place them against the living, true, indestructible enjoyment of pure love ! Meet us beneath those cypresses which turn their solemn tops to the heaven, visit us at those espaliers where the lemons and oranges are blooming beside us, where the delicate myrtle stretches out to us her tender flowers, and then dare to plague us with your gloomy dark nets which men have spun.'

" ' Thus he continued a long time in a stubborn incredulity about our story, and at last, when we protested the truth of it,

when the father confessor assured him of it, he did not, however, allow himself to be disconcerted, but rather exclaimed : ' Do not enquire about the echoes of your cloisters, nor your moth-eaten parchment, nor your limited fancies and regulations ! Enquire of Nature and your own heart ! they will teach you what you have to fear ; they will point to you with strictest finger about what they pronounce eternally and irrevocably your curse. Behold the lilies ! do not husband and wife arise from one stem ? Does not the flower unite both which gave birth to both, and is the lily not the picture of innocence and her sisterly union not fruitful ? When Nature is shocked, she expresses it aloud. The creature which is not to be, cannot be ; the creature which lives wrongly is destroyed early. Infertility, wretched existence, premature decay—these are her curses, the signs of her severity. She only punishes by means of immediate consequences. Now look around you ! and what is forbidden, what is accursed, is obvious. In the tranquillity of the monastery and in the turmoil of the world, a thousand transactions are hallowed and honoured, on which her curse rests. She looks down with sorrowful eyes on comfortable leisure as well as on overstrained work, on what is arbitrary and superfluous as well as on need and want ; she calls to moderation ; all her relations are true, and all her actions are peaceful. He who has suffered as I have done has the right to be free. Sperata is mine, only death shall take her from me. How can I keep her ? How can I be happy ? That is for you to care about ! I am now going at once to her, not to be separated from her again.'

" ' He wished to go to a ship to pass over to her. We restrained him and begged him to take no step which might have the most dreadful consequences. He was to reflect that he was not living in the free world of his own thoughts and ideas, but in a constitution the laws and relations of which had assumed the inexorability of a law of Nature. We had to promise the father confessor that we would not let the brother out of our sight, still less from the castle. After that he went away, promising to return in a few days. What we had foreseen, occurred : reason had strengthened our brother, but his heart was weak ; the earlier impressions of religion were actively alive, and the most horrible doubts overpowered him. He spent two fearful days and nights. The father confessor came to his assistance, in vain ! His free,

unbridled reason released him, his religion, all his accustomed conceptions proclaimed him as a criminal.

" ' One morning we found his room empty ; a sheet of paper lay on the table, in which he declared to us, that since we kept him a prisoner by force, he was justified in seeking his freedom. He was running away, he was going to Sperata, he hoped to escape with her ; he was prepared for everything, if they wanted to separate them.

" ' We were not a little alarmed, but the father confessor besought us to keep calm. Our poor brother was closely watched. The sailors, instead of transporting him, led him into his monastery. Wearied out from a wakefulness of forty hours, he fell asleep as soon as the boat began to rock him in the moonshine, and he did not wake up before he saw himself in the hands of his clerical brethren. He did not recover himself till he heard the door of the monastery slam behind him. Painfully moved by the fate of our brother, we reproached our father confessor in the most lively manner, but this honourable man understood soon how to persuade us with the reason of the surgeon, that our pity for the poor invalid was fatal. He did not act on his own accord, but on the command of the Bishop and the Chapter. The object was to avoid all public scandal, and to cover the melancholy case with the veil of a secret Church discipline. Sperata was to be spared ; she was not to learn that her lover was at the same time her brother. She was recommended to a clergyman, to whom she had previously confided her condition. They knew how to conceal her pregnancy and confinement. As mother, she was quite fortunate in the small creature. As like most of our young girls, she could neither write nor read what was written ; she therefore gave to the Father messages as to what he was to say to her lover. The latter thought that the pious fraud was due to a nursing mother ; he brought to her news of our brother whom he never saw, exhorted her in his name to be at rest, begged her to take care of herself and the child, and for the future to trust in God.

" ' Sperata was by nature inclined to religion. Her condition and her loneliness increased this feature ; the clergyman supported it so as by degrees to prepare her for an everlasting separation. Scarcely was the child weaned, scarcely did he consider her body strong enough to endure the fearful sorrows of the soul, when he

began to depict the error with alarming colours—the error, having given herself over to a clergyman he treated as a kind of sin against Nature, as incest. For he had the singular idea of rendering her repentance like that repentance which she would have felt if she had learnt the true condition of her error. Thereby he brought so much sorrow and woe into her mind ; he raised up so much before her the idea of the Church and its *overlordship* ; he showed her the dreadful consequences for the salvation of all souls, if one gave way in such cases and were willing still to reward those who were liable to punishment by a legitimate union ; he showed her how salutary it was to expiate in time such a fault, and therefore to earn the crown of glory hereafter ; that at last, like a poor sinner, she willingly held out her neck to the axe and continually begged that they would keep her for ever away from our brother. After so much had been obtained from her, she was allowed to have liberty, yet under a certain supervision—now in the house, now in the cloister as far as he thought fit.

" ' Her child grew up and soon exhibited a remarkable nature. At a very early age it could run and move itself with great skill ; it soon sang very prettily and learnt also the cithern by herself. Only in words it could not express itself, and the obstacle seemed to lie more in its way of thinking than in the mechanism of speech. Meanwhile the poor mother felt a melancholy relationship to the child. The treatment of the clergyman had so bewildered her way of thinking that she, without becoming crazy, found herself in the most strange condition. Her error seemed to her always more dreadful and deserving of punishment. The clergyman's oft-repeated simile of incest had impressed itself on her so deeply that she felt such a horror as though the relationship had been known to her. The father confessor prided himself not a little on this clever trick by which the heart of an unfortunate being was torn asunder. It was wretched to see how the maternal love which was disposed to rejoice so heartily over the existence of the child was at variance with the horrible thought that this child ought not to be there.

" ' Now these two feelings strove together, now that of horror prevailed over love. The child had already for some time been taken away from her and handed over to some worthy people on the lake, and in the greater freedom which it had it soon

showed its special desire for climbing. To climb the highest summits, to run along the sides of boats and to imitate the most wonderful tricks of the rope-dancers, was a natural impulse.

" ' So as to practise all this more easily, she loved to change her clothes with boys, and though by her foster-parents it was considered to be most indecorous and inadmissible, we yet indulged her as much as possible. Her wonderful ways and gambols often led her afar ; she lost her way, remained out and always returned. Generally, when she came back, she sat among the pillars of the gateway in front of a country house in the neighbourhood. They did not look for her any more, they awaited her. There she appeared to be resting on the steps, for she ran into the great hall, looked at the statues, and when they did not specially stop her, she hurried home.

" ' Then at last our hope was deceived and our indulgence punished. The child remained away; her hat was found floating on the water not far from the spot where a waterfall emptied itself into the lake. We conjectured that on climbing between the rocks she had met with an accident. With all our searching after it the body could not be found.

" ' Owing to the imprudent talk of her companions, Sperata soon learnt of the death of her child. She seemed calm and cheerful, and let it be clearly understood that she was glad God had taken the poor creature to Himself, and so preserved her from suffering or originating a greater misfortune.

" ' On this occasion all the legends were talked about which they are wont to relate of these waters. It was said that the lake every year must have an innocent child ; it endures no dead body, and throws it on to the bank sooner or later ; indeed, even the last small bone, if it has sunk to the bottom, has to come out again. They told the story of an inconsolable mother whose child was drowned in the lake, who had called on God and His saints to give her at least only the bones for burial. The next storm had brought the skull to the bank ; the following one, the body, and after everything had been put together, she had carried all the bones in a cloth to the church. But, what marvel ! when she had entered into the church, the packet became heavier, and finally when she laid it on the steps of the altar, the child had begun to cry, and to everyone's amazement, free itself from the cloth. Only a small bone of the little finger on the right hand

was lacking, which the mother then afterwards carefully sought for and found, which was then preserved in the church for a memorial among other relics.

" ' These stories made the greatest impression on the poor mother ; her imagination felt a fresh motion and favoured the sensation of her heart. She assumed that the child had now made expiation for itself and its parents, that curse and punishment, which hitherto rested upon them, were now entirely removed, and it was only a question of finding again the bones of the child, so as to bring them to Rome, so would the child on the steps of the great altar of St. Peter's stand again before the people, clad in its beautiful fresh skin. It would look again with its own eyes on father and mother and the Pope, convinced of the agreement of God and His saints, amid the loud shout of the people would forgive the sin of the parents, set them free and unite them.

" ' Now were her eyes and her care always directed to the lake and the bank, whereby in the moonshine the waves suddenly shifted ; she imagined every glittering edge of foam was bringing up her child ; someone had to run down to fish it up on the bank. So, too, by day she was unwearied at the places where the pebbly bank shelved into the lake ; she collected in a little basket all the bones which she found. No one ventured to say to her that they were the bones of animals ; the large ones she buried, the small ones she preserved. In this occupation she continued to live unremittingly. The clergyman who, by the unceasing practice of his duty had given rise to her condition, took an interest in her *with all his powers*. Owing to his influence, she was regarded in the neighbourhood as one enraptured, not as deranged. People stood with folded hands when she passed by, and the children kissed her hand.

" ' To her old friend and companion the father confessor imparted the guilt which she may have had at the unfortunate union of both persons, only on condition that she should accompany with continued loyalty the unhappy one for the whole of her future life, and she has, with a marvellous patience and conscientiousness, practised her duties to the last.

" ' Meanwhile, we had not lost sight of our brother. Neither the doctor nor the clergy of his monastery were willing to allow us to appear before him, but to convince us that all was going

well with him in his way, we could as often as we wished listen to him in the garden, in the corridors, indeed through a window in the roof of his room.

" ' After many dreadful and singular periods, which I will omit, he came into a strange condition of tranquillity of mind and restlessness of body. He hardly ever sat down, except when he took his harp and played thereon ; he then generally accompanied it with a song. He was, besides, always in motion, and in everything he was extremely manageable and obedient, for all his passions seemed to be resolved into the single fear of death. He could be moved to do anything in the world, if he were threatened with a dangerous illness or death.

" ' Apart from the singularity of unweariedly walking up and down the monastery, he let it be clearly understood that it would be much better for him if he wandered over hill and valley ; he also spoke of an apparition which usually caused him alarm. He asserted, indeed, that on waking up at any hour of the night, a beautiful boy stood at the foot of his bed and threatened him with a bare knife. They put him in another room, but he asserted that it was there too, and finally in other places even of the monastery the boy stood behind him. His wandering up and down became still more restless ; indeed, they remembered afterwards that he, at that time oftener than formerly, stood at the window and looked over the lake below. Meantime our poor sister appeared, from her only thought and her limited occupation, to be gradually wearing out, and our doctor proposed that we should gradually, among her other bones, mix the joints of a child's skeleton, so as thereby to increase her hopes. The experiment was doubtful, yet at least so much seemed to be gained that, when all the parts were together, one was able to get her away from the everlasting search and make her hope for a journey to Rome. It came about, and her companion, without its being noticed, interchanged the small relics entrusted to her with those she had found, and an incredible delight was spread over the poor invalid, and the parts were gradually found together, and one could show those which were still lacking. She had with great care fastened with threads and ribbons every part where it belonged ; she had, in the way one is accustomed to honour the bodies of saints, filled up the interspaces with silk and embroidery.

" ' In this way they had had the limbs put together, only a few of the extremities were missing. One morning while she was still asleep, and the doctor had come to enquire how she was, the old woman took away the honoured relics from the casket, which stood in the bedroom, to show the doctor how the worthy invalid occupied herself. Shortly afterwards they heard her jump out of bed ; she lifted up the cloth and found the casket empty. She threw herself on her knees ; they came and heard her joyful, fervent prayer. ' Yes, it is true ! ' she exclaimed. ' It was no dream, it is real ! Rejoice, my friends, with me. I have again seen alive the good, beautiful creature. It stood up and threw the veil from itself; its brightness illuminated the room, its beauty was transfigured ; it could not tread on the ground, though it wished to do so. It was lifted lightly on high, and could not once reach its hands to me. Then it called me to itself and showed me the way which I ought to go. I shall follow it, and follow it soon. I feel it, and my heart is so lightened. My misery has vanished, and already the sight of my risen one has given me a foretaste of the joys of heaven.'

" ' From that time forward, her whole mind was busied with the most cheerful prospects. She no longer directed her attention to any earthly object, she enjoyed but few kinds of food, and her spirit freed itself by degrees from the bonds of the body. At last they found her unexpectedly pale and without sensation. She opened her eyes no more ; she was, as we say, dead.

" ' The report of her vision had soon spread itself abroad among the people, and the honourable esteem which she enjoyed in their life was, after her death, quickly transformed into the idea that she should at once be regarded as blessed, indeed as holy.

" ' When they wished to bury her, many pressed forward with incredible vehemence ; they wanted to touch her hand, or at least her garment. In this impassioned elevation various invalids did not feel their maladies by which they were formerly tormented ; they considered themselves cured, they acknowledged it, they praised God and His new saint. The clergy were obliged to place the body in a chapel. The people longed for an opportunity of attending to their devotions ; the crowd was unbelievable. The inhabitants of the mountain, who, moreover, were prone to lively religious feelings, pressed forward from their valleys. The devotion, the wonder, the adoration increased

every day. The episcopal regulations, which had to check and by degrees put an end to such a new worship, could not be carried out. At every opposition the people were violent and prepared to break out into blows against every unbeliever. ' Did not,' they cried, ' the Holy Borromeo wander among our forefathers ? Did not his mother experience the rapture of his being canonized ? Have not, by means of that great statue on the rocks of Arona, we wished to represent to ourselves his spiritual greatness in material form ? Do not his descendants live among us ? And has not God promised continuously to renew his miracles among a people who believe ? '

" ' When the body after some days showed no signs of putrefaction and became rather whiter and more transparent, the trust of the people rose still higher, and among the people a variety of cures were shown which the attentive observer himself was unable to explain, and could not exactly call them deception. The whole neighbourhood was in commotion, and he who did not himself come to see it, for a time at least heard of nothing else talked about.

" ' The monastery, wherein my brother was, resounded with these miracles as well as the rest of the neighbourhood, and we took less care of speaking about it in his presence, as he was, besides, not accustomed to pay attention to anything, and his connection with the circumstance was not known to anyone. But this time he seemed to have listened with greater attention. He carried out his flight with such cunning that no one could ever understand how he got out of the monastery. It was learnt afterwards that he allowed himself to cross the water with a number of pilgrims, and that he begged the boatmen, who did not suspect anything further amiss with him, to take the greatest care that the boat should not *capsize*. Late at night he came to that chapel where his unhappy loved one rested from her sorrow. Only a few worshippers were kneeling in the corners. Her old friend sat at the head of the corpse. He entered and greeted her, and enquired how her mistress was. ' You see her,' replied the old friend, not without embarrassment. He looked at the dead body only sideways. After some pause he took her hand. Frightened by its coldness, he at once let it go again ; he looked around him restlessly, and said to the old woman : ' I cannot stay with her now. I have now a very distant journey

to make, but I will be here again at the right time. Tell her that when she wakes up.'

" ' Thus he went away. It was not till late that we were informed of the occurrence. We searched where he had got to, but in vain ! How he may have made his way through mountains and valleys is incomprehensible. Finally, after a long time, we found a trace of him in the country of the Grisons, but too late, and it was soon lost. We conjectured that he had gone to Germany, but the war had completely obliterated such weak footprints.' "

CHAPTER x

THE *Abbe* ceased reading, and no one had listened without tears. The Countess did not take her handkerchief from her eyes. At last she got up and left the room with Natalia. The others kept silent, and the *Abbe* spoke : " The question now arises, whether we are to allow the worthy Marchese to depart without disclosing to him our secret. For who doubts for a moment that Augustine and our harp-player are the same person ? Let us consider what is to be done, as well for the sake of the unhappy man as for his family. My advice would be, not to be in any hurry, to wait the news the doctor brings, whose return from there we are expecting."

Everyone was of the same opinion, and the *Abbe* continued : " Another question, which perhaps is more quickly settled, arises at the same time. The Marchese is wonderfully touched by the hospitality which his poor niece has found with us, and especially with our young friend. I have related to him the whole story in detail, indeed repeatedly, and he shows his liveliest gratitude. ' The young man,⁵ he said, ' has refused to travel with me before knowing the connection which exists between us. I am not now to him a mere stranger, of whose manner of life and temper he would not be at all certain. I am his associate, if you like, his relation, and as his boy, whom he did not wish to leave behind, was the obstacle in the first place which kept him back from being my companion, now suffer this child to become a more beautiful bond to knit us only more closely to one another. Beyond the obligation which I now have already, he may be

still useful to me on the journey ; let him turn back with me, my elder brother will receive him with pleasure; let him not scorn the inheritance of his foster-child, for, in accordance with a secret agreement of our father with his friend, the property, which he had given to his daughter, has returned back again to us, and we certainly do not wish to withhold from the benefactor of our niece that which he has deserved.' "

Theresa took Wilhelm by the hand and said, " Again we experience here a beautiful instance of unselfish well-doing, bringing the highest and most beautiful interest. Follow this singular call, and in making yourself doubly serviceable to the Marchese, hasten to a beautiful country, to which your imagination and heart have more than once drawn you."

" I leave myself entirely to my friends and their guidance," said Wilhelm. " It is in vain in this world to strive after one's own will. What I wished to keep firmly, I must let go, and an undeserved benefit obtrudes itself upon me."

With a pressure on Theresa's hand, Wilhelm took his own away. " I give over to you entirely," he said to the Abbe, " what you decide about me. If I do not have to leave my Felix from me, I am content to go everywhere and to undertake everything which is thought to be right."

With this declaration the Abbe at once sketched out his plan. They were to let the Marchese depart. Wilhelm was to await news from the doctor and then, after deliberating what was to be done, Wilhelm with Felix could travel after him. Thus he gave the Marchese to understand, with the proviso that the arrangements of their young friend for the journey should not keep him back from viewing the curiosities of the town. The Marchese departed, not without repeated lively assurance of his gratitude, of which there was sufficient evidence in the presents which he left behind, consisting in jewels, cut stones and embroideries.

Wilhelm was now completely ready for the journey, and they were all the more embarrassed that no news would come from the doctor. They were afraid that some misfortune had befallen the harp-player just at the time when it could be hoped to place him in an entirely better condition. They sent away the courier, who had scarcely ridden off when the doctor entered with a stranger, whose form and conduct were significant, serious and

striking, and he knew no one. Both newcomers were for some time silent; at last the stranger went up to Wilhelm, stretched out his hand to him, saying, "Don't you know your old friend any more?" It was the voice of the harp-player, but there seemed to be no trace left of his form. He was in the ordinary dress of a traveller, neatly and decorously clad. His beard had vanished; there was visible some art in the arrangement of his hair, and what made him quite peculiarly unrecognizable was that the features of age no longer appeared on his significant countenance. Wilhelm embraced him with the liveliest delight. He was introduced to the others, and behaved himself very sensibly and did not know that he had been known to the company just a short time before. "You will have patience," he continued with great composure, "with a man who, though he looks so grown up, has, after a prolonged sorrow, first entered the world as an inexperienced child. To this good man I am indebted for being able to appear again in a human society." We bade him welcome, and the doctor at once proposed a walk, so as to break off the conversation and to lead to indifferent matters.

When they were alone, the doctor gave the following explanation: "We have been fortunate in the recovery of this man by a singular chance. We had for long treated him morally and physically according to our conviction. It went quite well up to a certain point, but the fear of death was always great with him, and his beard and long robe he would not sacrifice for us. In other respects, he took more part in worldly matters, and his songs as well as his imagination seemed to draw closer to life. You know what a singular letter of the clergyman summoned me from here. I came. I found our man entirely changed; he had of his own accord given up his beard; he had permitted his locks to be cut in a customary fashion; he longed to have ordinary clothes, and appeared to have become all at once a different man. We were curious to get to the bottom of this transformation, and did not dare, however, to venture upon it with himself. At last we discovered by chance the strange state of affairs. A glass of liquid opium was missing in the domestic pharmacy of the clergyman. It was felt to be necessary to institute the strictest investigation. Everyone endeavoured to defend himself from suspicion; there were violent scenes among the domestics. At last this man came forward and said it was

in his possession. They asked him whether he had taken from it. He said 'No,' but continued : ' I thank this possession for the return of my reason. It depends on you to take this little phial from me, and you will see me fall back without hope into my old condition. The feeling that it was desirable to see the pains of this earth terminated by death, brought me first of all on to the way of recovery. Soon afterwards arose the idea to end it by a freewill death, and with this intention I took the glass away. The possibility of at once removing for ever the great pains, gave me strength to endure the pains ; so, since I possess this talisman, I have pushed myself back into life through the nearness of death. Do not be anxious,' he said, * that I shall make use of it, but determine, as those who know the human heart, to make one really first dependent on life while you concede to me the independence of life.' After mature consideration, we put no more pressure on him, and he now carries with him in a strong, polished little glass phial this poison as the most wonderful antidote by itself."

They informed the doctor of everything which had meantime been disclosed, and they decided to maintain the most profound silence towards Augustine. The Abbe proposed not to leave him from his side, and to continue him along the good path which he had trodden.

Meantime, Wilhelm had to complete his journey through Germany with the Marchese. If it appeared possible to inspire in Augustine again an inclination towards his fatherland, they would disclose the circumstances to his relations, and Wilhelm was to conduct him again to his friends.

The latter had now made all preparations for his journey, and if it had appeared remarkable at the outset that Augustine should be pleased when he heard how his old friend and benefactor was quickly to retire again, the Abbe, however, soon discovered the cause of this strange change of temper. Augustine could not overcome his old fear of Felix, and wished to see the boy removed, the sooner the better.

Now, by degrees, so many people had arrived that they could scarcely all be lodged in the castle and adjoining buildings ; all the more so as, at the outset, preparation had not been made for the accommodation of so many guests. They breakfasted, they dined together, and would have gladly persuaded themselves

to live in a pleasant agreement, if already in silence their spirits had to some extent moved apart. Theresa had sometimes ridden out with Lothario, still oftener alone ; she had already become acquainted with all the farmers, both male and female, in the neighbourhood. It was the principle of her housekeeping, and she may not have been wrong, that with neighbours of both sexes one should stand on the best terms, and always in a continued interchange of good offices. The two sisters had much to say to each other. The Abbe appeared to seek the society of the harp-player, Jarno had frequent conferences with the doctor, Freiderich kept close to Wilhelm, and Felix was everywhere, as he liked. Thus they united themselves in pairs for the most part, or a walk when the company separated, and when they came together again they quickly took refuge in music, so as to unite all while each returned to himself.

Unexpectedly, the Count increased the society, intending to fetch his wife and, as it appeared, to take a solemn leave of his worldly relations. Jarno hastened to meet him at the carriage, and when the newcomer enquired what society he should find, the former said in an access of mad humour, which always seized him when he met with the Count : " You will find all the nobility of the world together, Marcheses, Marquis, Mylords and Barons ; there has only been lacking a Count." So they went upstairs and Wilhelm was the first person who came to meet him in the antechamber. " My lord," said the Count to him in French, after regarding him for an instant, " I am very pleased unexpectedly to renew your acquaintance, for I must be very much mistaken if I have not seen you in my castle in the retinue of the Prince?"

" I had the good fortune to wait on your excellency at that time, only you show me too much honour when you take me for an Englishman, and indeed one of the first rank. I am a German, and——"

" Certainly a very fine young man," broke in Jarno at once.

The Count looked at Wilhelm with a smile, and just wanted to say something in answer when the rest of the company came by and greeted him in the most friendly manner. They excused themselves for not being able at once to show him a suitable chamber, and promised to procure the necessary room immediately.

" Well, well ! " said he, smiling. " I see clearly that they have left chance to act the part of quartermaster ; with foresight and preparation, how much is not then possible ? I beg of you not to move a slipper from its place on my account, for, besides, I see clearly there is great disorder. Everyone will be lodging uncomfortably, and no one shall do that on my account where possible, not even for an hour. You were witnesses," he said to Jarno, " and you, too, Meister," turning to Wilhelm, " how many people I have at that time comfortably lodged in my castle.

" Let them give me a list of the persons and servants ; let them show me how each is at present quartered. I will make a dislocation of plan, so that with the least trouble everyone may find a spacious apartment, and there shall remain room for a guest who, by chance, could appear among us."

Jarno constituted himself at once the adjutant of the Count, procured for him all the necessary information, and in his way had the greatest amusement when he could now and then lead the old gentleman astray. But the latter soon won a great triumph. The arrangements were ready ; he had the names written on all the doors while he was present, and it could not be denied that, with few details and alterations, the object had been attained. Jarno had also so managed the affair that the persons who at the present moment took an interest in each other were lodged together.

After everything had been arranged, the Count said to Jarno : " Help me to come on the track of the young man whom you call Meister, and who should be a German." Jarno kept silence, for he knew very well that the Count was one of those people who, when they ask a question, really wish to give information ; so, without waiting for an answer, the latter continued his speech : " You had at that time introduced him to me, and in the name of the Prince given him the best recommendation. If his mother was a German, I am certain that his father is an Englishman, and indeed one of rank. Who would estimate the English blood as everything which has been flowing in German veins for thirty years ? I will not insist further about it ; you have always such family secrets. In such cases, however, you will not impose upon me at all. After that, he related more different things which then should have happened with Wilhelm at the castle, to which

Jarno likewise remained silent, though the Count was quite wrong, and mistook Wilhelm more than once for a young Englishman in the retinue of the Prince. The excellent gentleman had in earlier days a splendid memory, and was still always proud of it, being able to recollect the smallest details of his youth. Now, with equal certainty, he decided that remarkable connections and legends were true which, with increasing failure of memory, his imagination had once pictured for him. In other respects he had become very gentle and agreeable, and his presence had a most favourable influence on the company. He desired that they should read together something useful, indeed he often suggested small plays which, though he did not join in playing, he yet directed with great care, and when there was surprise at his condescension, he said that it was the duty of everyone, who in essentials withdraws from the world, all the more to put himself on an equality with it in matters of indifference.

At these plays Wilhelm had more than one anxious and vexatious moment. The frivolous Friederich seized many an opportunity of alluding to an inclination of Wilhelm's to Natalia. How could he hit upon that? In what way was he justified? Must not the company think that because both went about a good deal with each other that Wilhelm had given such an imprudent and unfortunate confidence to him?

One day they were at one of their games more cheerful than usual, when all at once Augustine burst in at the door, which he tore open with a gesture of terror. His countenance was pale, his eyes wild; he seemed to want to speak, speech was denied him. The company was startled. Lothario and Jarno, who suspected a return of the frenzy, sprang upon him and held him fast. Stammering and muttering, he then spoke vehemently and powerfully, and cried: "Do not hold me! hasten! help! save the child! Felix is poisoned."

They let him go. He hastened out of the door, and the company, full of horror, pressed after him. They called after the doctor. Augustine directed his steps to the chamber of the *Abbé*. They found the child, which seemed frightened and confused when they called to him from afar: "What have you done?"

"Dear father," cried Felix, "I have not drunk from **the bottle**, I have drunk from the glass. I was so thirsty!"

Augustine struck his hands together, crying, " He is lost ! " pressed through the bystanders and hurried away.

They found a glass of milk of almonds standing on the table, and a decanter close by which was half empty. The doctor came. He learnt what they knew, and looked with horror at the well-known little phial, in which was the liquid opium lying empty on the table. He had vinegar brought, and called to his assistance all the means of medical art.

Natalia had the boy brought into a room. With anxiety she took trouble about him. The Abbe had run forward to look for Augustine and to get some explanation out of him. In the same way the unhappy father had taken trouble without result, and found on his return anxiety and care shown on all faces. Meanwhile the doctor had examined the almond milk in the glass ; there was discovered the strongest mixture of opium. The child lay on the sofa and seemed very ill ; it begged its father that they should not pour anything more into him, and that he might be no more tormented. Lothario had sent off his people, and had himself ridden away so as to come on the track of Augustine's flight. Natalia sat by the child ; it fled to her lap and begged her imploringly for protection, and for a little bit of sugar ; the vinegar was really too sour ! The doctor consented. They must let the child, which was dreadfully restless, rest for a moment, he said. Everything advisable was done ; he wished to do what was possible. The Count came along with some unwillingness, as it seemed. He looked serious, indeed solemn, laid his hands on the child, looked up to heaven and for some minutes remained in this position. Wilhelm, who lay inconsolable on a chair, jumped up, cast a look full of despair at Natalia and went out of the door. Shortly afterwards the Count also left the room.

" I do not understand," said the doctor, after a pause, " how the child does not show the slightest trace of a dangerous condition. Even with only a single gulp it must have taken a great dose of opium, and now I find on its pulse no further movement but that I can ascribe to the means I used, and to the fear in which we have placed the child."

Soon afterwards Jarno entered with the news that Augustine had been found on the upper floor lying in his blood ; a razor was lying near him ; apparently he had cut his throat. The doctor hurried away, and met the people bringing the body down

the stairs. **He** was laid **upon** a bed and carefully **examined**. The cut had gone into the trachea ; fainting had followed a considerable loss of blood. However, it could soon be observed that life and hope were still left. The doctor brought the body into the right position, joined together the parts that were separated and applied a bandage to them.

All passed a sleepless and anxious night. The child would not let itself be separated from Natalia. Wilhelm sat on a chair in front of her. He had the feet of the boy on his lap, his head and chest lay on hers. Thus they divided the pleasing burden and the painful cares, and remained till break of day in this uncomfortable and melancholy position. Natalia had given Wilhelm her hand ; they did not speak a word ; they looked at the child and looked at one another. Lothario and Jarno sat at the other end of the room and carried on a very important conversation, which we would gladly communicate here to our readers, if events did not press on us too much. The boy slept quietly, awoke in the early morning quite cheerful, jumped up and asked for a slice of bread and butter.

As soon as Augustine had to some extent recovered, they endeavoured to obtain from him some explanation. They gathered, not without trouble and only by degrees, that owing to the unfortunate change of plans made by the Count, he had been put in a room with the Abbe. He had found the manuscript and in it his history. His horror had been unspeakable, and he now had convinced himself that he ought not to live any longer. At once he had his usual recourse to opium ; he had shaken it into a glass of almond milk and had, however, shuddered when he put it to his mouth. Thereupon he had let it stand in order yet again to run through the garden and see the world. On his return he had found the child busied in filling full again the glass from which he had drunk.

They begged the unhappy man to remain quiet. He grasped Wilhelm convulsively by the hand. " Ah," he said, " why have I not long left you? I knew for certain that I should kill the boy, and he, me."

" The boy is alive ! " said Wilhelm.

The doctor, who had listened attentively, asked Augustine whether all the drink had been poisoned. " No ! " he replied, " only the glass."

" So, by the most fortunate chance," cried the doctor, " the child has drunk out of the bottle ! A good genius has guided his hand so that he did not snatch at death, which stood so near prepared."

" No ! no ! " cried Wilhelm, with a shriek, holding his hands before his eyes. " How terrible is it what you say ! My child expressly said that he had not drunk out of the bottle, but out of the glass. The state of health is only in appearance ; it will die away between our hands."

He hurried off. The doctor went downstairs and asked, as he caressed the child : " Isn't it true, Felix, you have drunk out of the bottle and not out of the glass ? " The child began to cry. The doctor told Natalia quietly how the matter stood ; she, too, took trouble, but in vain, to learn the truth from the child. It only cried more violently and so long, until it fell asleep. Wilhelm watched by its side. The night passed quietly. The next morning they found Augustine dead in his bed. By an apparent calm he had deceived the attention of those watching over him, had quietly loosened the bandage and bled to death.

Natalia went for a walk with the child. It was lively as in its happiest days. " You are good," said Felix to her. " You don't scold me, you don't beat me ; I will just tell it you only, I have drunk out of the bottle. Mother Aurelia always used to rap me on the fingers when I grasped the decanter. My father looked so angry, I thought he would strike me."

With winged steps Natalia hastened to the castle. Wilhelm came to meet her, still full of anxiety. " Fortunate father," she cried aloud, lifting up the child and throwing it into his arms, " here is your son ! He has drunk out of the bottle ; his bad habit has saved him."

They told the fortunate result to the Count, but he listened with the smiling, quiet, modest certainty with which one tolerates the error of good men. Jarno, attentive to everything, could not this time declare such a lofty self-complacency, until at last, after many detours, he learnt that the Count was convinced that the child had really taken the poison, but he had through his prayers and laying-on of his hands wonderfully maintained it in life. Now he was decided to go away at once ; everything with him was packed up in a moment, and at the departure the beautiful Countess seized Wilhelm's hand before she let go the

hand of her sister, pressed all four hands together, turned round quickly and mounted into the carriage.

So many terrible and remarkable events pressing in one upon another necessitated an unusual way of life, and put everything in confusion and disorder, and brought the house into a state of feverish movement. The hours for sleeping and waking, eating, drinking and mutual intercourse were displaced and altered. Apart from Theresa, no one had remained in his accustomed course. The men endeavoured by alcoholic drinks to restore again their good temper, and while they induced for themselves an artificial vivacity, they withdrew the natural one which alone affords us true cheerfulness and power of action. Wilhelm was moved and shattered by the most violent passions. The unexpected and dreadful attacks had brought his inmost being out of all composure for withstanding a passion which had so powerfully taken possession of his heart. Felix had been given back to him, and yet everything seemed to be lacking. The letters from Werner with their injunctions were true ; he wanted nothing for his journey except the courage to retire. Everything pressed him to make the journey. He could conjecture that Theresa and Lothario were only waiting for his departure to get married. Jarno, contrary to his custom, was silent, and one could almost say that he had lost something of his customary cheerfulness. Fortunately the doctor helped our friend to some extent out of his embarrassment, while he said that he was ill and gave him medicines.

The company came together in the evening, and Friederich, the frolicsome fellow, who usually drank more wine than was right, took possession of the conversation and in his way, with a hundred quotations and buffooneries, brought the company to laughter and also occasionally into embarrassment, by allowing himself to think aloud.

He did not appear to believe at all in the illness of his friend. Once, when they were all together, he exclaimed, "What do you call the disease, doctor, which has befallen our friend? Does not one of the three thousand names, with which you adorn your ignorance, fit here? In similar case it has seldom been wanting. There is," he continued, with an emphatic **tone**, "such a case in the Egyptian or Babylonian history." The company looked at one another and smiled.

" What is the name of the king ? " he exclaimed, and stopped for a moment. " If you will not help me," he continued, " I shall know how to help myself." He tore open the wings of the door and pointed to the large picture in the antechamber. " What is the name of the goat-beard with the crown there, who at the foot of the bed pines away for his invalid son ? What is the name of the fair one, who comes in and in her modest, roguish eyes carries at the same time poison and antidote ? What is the name of the bungling doctor, for whom for the first time in this moment a light arises, and he for the first time in his life finds the occasion for prescribing a sensible prescription, giving a medicine which is fundamentally curative and tastes pleasant as well as being health-giving ? "

In this tone he continued swaggering. The company gathered itself together as well as possible, and concealed its embarrassment behind a forced laughter. A slight blush spread on Natalia's cheeks and betrayed the emotions of her heart. Fortunately, she walked up and down with Jarno. When she got to the door she stepped out with a skilful movement, up and down in the antechamber, and then went to her room.

The company was silent. Friederich began to dance and sing.

O, ye shall wonders see
What has been, is not to be,
What is said, is not to say
Before the day breaks, the break of day, ye shall wonders see !

Theresa had gone after Natalia. Friederich drew the doctor in front of the large picture, held an amusing eulogy of medicine and slipped away.

Hitherto Lothario had stood in the recess of a window and looked down into the garden without moving. Wilhelm was in the most terrible condition. He now saw himself there alone with his friend ; for a time he remained quiet; with a fleeting glance he ran over his history, and looked at last with a shudder at his present condition. Finally he jumped up and cried, " If I am guilty of that which is going forward, of that which is meeting me and you, punish me ! Take your friendship away from me in addition to my other sorrows, and let me go out into the world without consolation, in which I should long have lost myself! See in me the victim of a cruel accidental confession,

from which I was incapable of extricating myself; grant me the assurance of your love, your friendship on a journey which I dare not put off any longer. A time will come in which I can tell you what has passed in me during these days. Perhaps I am just now suffering this punishment because I did not disclose to you early enough, because I delayed showing you entirely how I am ; you would have stood by me ; you would have assisted me freely at the right time. But again and again my eyes have been opened over myself, always too late, always in vain. How well did I deserve the reprimand of Jarno ! How I imagined I had grasped it, how I hoped to use it, to win a new life ? Could I ? Should I ? In vain we mortals accuse ourselves, in vain, fate. We are watched and destined for wretchedness, and is it not completely all the same, whether our own fault, higher influence or chance, virtue or vice, wisdom or madness plunge us into ruin ? Farewell ! I will not stay a single moment longer in this house in which, against my will, I have so terribly injured the right of hospitality. The indiscretion of your brother is unpardonable ; it drives my misfortune to the highest pitch, it makes me despair."

" And now if," replied Lothario, taking Wilhelm by the hand, " your union with my sister were the secret condition by which Theresa had decided to give her hand to me. Such amends has the noble maiden thought of for you, she vowed that these two pairs should appear at the altar on one day. ' His understanding has chosen me,' she said, ' his heart demands Natalia, and my understanding will come to the assistance of his heart.' We were united in watching you and Natalia ; we made the *Abb6* our confidant, to whom we had to promise to take no step towards this union, but to let everything go its own way. We have done so. Nature has effected it, and the madcap brother has only stolen the ripe fruit. Let us lead no common life, since we have once come together so wonderfully ; let us together be active in a worthy fashion ! It is astonishing what a cultivated man can do for himself and others, if he, without wishing to domineer, has the spirit to be guardian of many, guides them into doing that at the right time, which they would all gladly do, leads them to their objects, which for the most part they have quite clearly in their eye, and only the ways thereto are lacking. Let us upon this make a covenant ! it is no wild

imagining, it is an idea which can quite well be carried out, and which often, only not always with a clear consciousness, is carried out by good men. Unattainable will the mode of dealing with this always remain, which Nature has prescribed for this beautiful soul. Yes, she deserved this name of honour before many others ; more, if I may say so, than our noble aunt herself, who, at the time when our good doctor made this inscription, was the most beautiful nature known to our circle. Meantime Natalia has developed and mankind are delighted with such an appearance."

He wanted to read further, but Friederich sprang in with a loud shout. " What a crown do I deserve ! " he exclaimed, " and how will you reward me ? Twine together myrtles, laurels, ivy, oak leaves, the freshest you can find ! So many merits you have to crown in me. Natalia is thine ! I am the magician who has raised up this treasure for you."

" He is in wild enthusiasm," said Wilhelm, " and I am going away."

" Have you a message ? " said the Baron, while he held Wilhelm firmly.

" With my own might and power," replied Friederich, " also by the grace of God, if you will, as I was the wooer, so am I now the messenger. I have listened at the door. She has disclosed everything to the Abbe."

" Impudent fellow," said Lothario, " who told you to listen ? "

" Who told her to lock herself up ? " replied Friederich. " I heard everything quite exactly. Natalia was greatly moved. In the night when the child seemed so ill and half rested on her lap, when you inconsolably sat in front of her and shared with her the beloved burden, she made a vow that if the child died she would confess her love to you and herself offer you her hand ; now, when the child is alive, why should she change her mind ? What one so promises once, is kept under every condition. Now the clergyman is coming and will be surprised at the novelties he is bringing."

The Abbe entered the room. " We know everything," cried Friederich, as he met him. " Make it short ! for you have come only for the sake of formality ; the gentlemen require nothing more."

" He has listened," said the Baron.

" **What bad manners,**" said **the Abbe.**

" Now, quickly," replied Friederich. " **What about the ceremony ?** They can be reckoned up on the fingers. You must travel, the invitation of the Marchese comes in splendidly of use for you. When you are once over the Alps, you will find yourself everywhere at home. Men know how to be thankful to you when you undertake something remarkable ; you procure for them a subject of entertainment, for which they do not have to pay. It is just as if you gave a free masquerade—all ranks can take part in it."

" With such popular festivals you have certainly made yourself deserving of the public," replied the Abbe, " and to-day it seems I can no more get a word in."

" If everything is not as I say," replied Friederich, " teach me something better. Come over here, come over here ! We must see them and rejoice."

Lothario embraced his friend and led him to his sister ; she came with Theresa to meet them. All were silent.

" No delay ! " cried Friederich. " In a couple of days you can be ready for the journey."

" What are you thinking, my friend ? " he continued, as he turned to Wilhelm. " When we made acquaintance, when I demanded from you the beautiful nosegay, who could think that you would ever receive such a flower as this out of my hand ? "

" Do not remind me of those times at this moment of my highest happiness."

" You should not be ashamed of them, as little as one is ashamed of his parentage. The times were good, and I must laugh when I look at you. You appear to me like Saul, the son of Kish, who went off in search of his father's asses and found a kingdom."

" I do not know the value of a kingdom," replied Wilhelm, " but I know that I have attained a happiness which I do not deserve, and that I would exchange for nothing in the world."

