

WILHELM MEISTER'S
APPRENTICESHIP.

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**WILHELM MEISTER'S
APPRENTICESHIP.**

A NOVEL.

FROM THE GERMAN OF

GOËTHE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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WILHELM MEISTER.

CHAPTER I.

LAERTES was standing at the window in a thoughtful mood, resting on his arm, and looking out into the fields. Philina came gliding towards him, across the large hall; she leant upon him, and began to mock him for his serious looks.

“Do not laugh,” replied he; “it is frightful to think how time goes on, how all things change and have an end. See here! A little while ago there was a stately camp: how pleasantly the tents looked; what restless life and motion was within them; how carefully they watched the whole enclosure! And behold it is all vanished in a day! For a short time, that trampled straw, those holes which the cooks have dug, will shew a trace of what was here; and soon the whole will be ploughed and reaped as formerly, and the presence of so many thousand gallant fellows in this quarter will but glimmer in the memories of one or two old men.”

Philina began to sing, and dragged forth her friend to dance with her in the hall. “Since Time is not a person we can overtake when he is

past," cried she, "let us honour him with mirth and cheerfulness of heart while he is passing."

They had scarcely made a step or two, when Frau Melina came walking through the hall. Philina was wicked enough to invite her to join them in the dance, and thus to bring her in mind of the shape to which her pregnancy had reduced her.

"That I might never more see a woman *in an interesting situation!*" said Philina, when her back was turned.

"Yet she feels an *interest* in it," said Laertes.

"But she manages so shockingly. Didst thou notice that wabbling fold of her shortened petticoat, which always travels out before her when she moves? She has not the smallest knack or skill to trim herself a little, and conceal her state."

"Let her be," said Laertes; "time will soon come to her aid."

"It were prettier, however," cried Philina, "if we could shake children from the trees."

The Baron entered, and spoke some kind words to them, adding a few presents, in the name of the Count and the Countess, who had left the place very early in the morning. He then went to Wilhelm, who was busy in the side-chamber with Mignon. She had been extremely affectionate and taking; had asked minutely about Wilhelm's parents, brothers, sisters, and relations; and so brought to his mind the duty which he owed his people, to send them some tidings of himself.

With the farewell compliments of the family, the Baron delivered him an assurance from the Count, that his Lordship had been exceedingly obliged by his acting, his poetical labours, and his theatrical exertions. For proof of this statement, the Baron then drew forth a purse, through whose beautiful texture the bright glance of new gold coin was sparkling out. Wilhelm drew back, refusing to accept of it.

“Look upon this gift,” said the Baron, “as a compensation for your time, as an acknowledgment of your trouble, not as the reward of your talents. If genius procures us a good name and good-will from men, it is fair likewise that, by our diligence and efforts, we should earn the means to satisfy our wants; since, after all, we are not wholly spirit. Had we been in town, where every thing is to be got, we should have changed this little sum into a watch, a ring, or something of that sort; but as it is, I must place the magic rod in your own hands; procure a trinket with it, such as may please you best and be of greatest use, and keep it for our sakes. At the same time, you must not forget to hold the purse in honour. It was knit by the fingers of our ladies: they meant that the cover should give to its contents the most pleasing form.”

“Forgive my embarrassment,” said Wilhelm, “and my doubts about accepting of this present. It as it were annihilates the little I have done, and

hinders the free play of happy recollection. Money is a fine thing, when any matter is to be completely settled and abolished ; I feel unwilling to be so entirely abolished from the recollection of your house."

"That is not the case," replied the Baron ; "but feeling so tenderly yourself, you could not wish that the Count should be obliged to look upon himself as wholly your debtor ; especially when I assure you, that his Lordship's highest ambition has always consisted in being punctual and just. He is not uninformed of the labour you have undergone, or of the zeal with which you have devoted all your time to execute his views ; nay he is aware that, to quicken certain operations, you have even expended money of your own. With what face shall I appear before him, then, if I cannot say that his acknowledgment has given you satisfaction ?"

"If I thought only of myself," said Wilhelm ; "if I might follow merely the dictates of my own feelings, I should certainly, in spite of all these reasons, steadfastly refuse this gift, generous and honourable as it is ; but I will not deny, that at the very moment when it brings me into one perplexity, it frees me from another, into which I have lately fallen with regard to my relations, and which has in secret caused me much uneasiness. My management, not only of the time, but also of the money, for which I have to give account, has not

been the most satisfactory ; and now, by the kindness of his Lordship, I shall be enabled, with confidence, to give my people news of the good fortune to which this curious bypath has led me. I therefore sacrifice those feelings of delicacy, which like a tender conscience admonish us on such occasions, to a higher duty ; and, that I may appear courageously before my father, I must consent to stand ashamed before you."

"It is singular," replied the Baron, "to see what a world of hesitation people feel about accepting money from their friends and patrons, though ready to receive any other gift with joy and thankfulness. Human nature manifests some other such peculiarities, by which many scruples of a similar kind are produced and carefully cherished."

"It is not the same with all points of honour?" said our friend.

"It is so," replied the Baron ; "and with several other prejudices. We must not root them out, lest, in doing so, we tear up noble plants along with them. Yet I am always glad when I meet with men, that feel superior to such objections, when the case requires it ; and I think with pleasure on the story of that ingenious poet, which I dare say you have heard of. He had written several plays for the court-theatre, which were honoured by the warmest approbation of the monarch. 'I must give him a distinguished recompense,' said the generous prince: 'ask him whether he

would choose to have some jewel given him ; or if he would disdain to accept a sum of money.' In his humorous way, the poet answered the inquiring courtier : ' I am thankful, with all my heart, for these gracious intentions ; and as the Emperor is daily taking money from us, I see not wherefore I should feel ashamed of taking some from him ?''

Scarcely had the Baron left the room, when Wilhelm eagerly began to count the cash, which had come to him so unexpectedly, and, as he thought, so undeservedly. It seemed as if the worth and dignity of gold, not usually felt till later years, had now, by anticipation, twinkled in his eyes for the first time, as the fine glancing coins rolled out from the beautiful purse. He reckoned up, and found that, particularly as Melina had engaged immediately to pay the loan, he had now as much or more on the right-side of his account, as on that day when Philina first asked him for the nosegay. With a little secret satisfaction, he looked upon his talents ; with a little pride, upon the fortune which had led him and attended him. He now seized the pen, with an assured mind, to write a letter, which might free his family from their anxieties, and set his late proceedings in the most favourable light. He abstained from any special narrative ; and only by significant and mysterious hints, left them room for guessing at what had befallen him. The good condition of his cash-book, the advantage he had earned by his talents, the favour of the great

and of the fair, acquaintance with a wider circle, the improvement of his bodily and mental gifts, his hopes from the future, altogether formed such a fair cloud-picture, that Fata Morgagna itself could scarcely have thrown together a stranger or a better.

In this happy exaltation, the letter being folded up, he went on to maintain a conversation with himself, recapitulating what he had been writing, and pointing out for himself an active and glorious future. The example of so many gallant warriors had fired him; the poetry of Shakspeare had opened up a new world to him; from the lips of the beautiful Countess he had inhaled an inexpressible inspiration. All this could not and would not be without effect.

The Stallmeister came to inquire whether they were ready with their packing. Alas! with the single exception of Melina, no one of them had thought of it. Now, however, they were speedily to be in motion. The Count had engaged to have the whole party conveyed forward a few days' journey on their way: the horses were now in readiness, and could not long be wanted. Wilhelm asked for his trunk: Frau Melina had taken it to put her own things in. He asked for money: Herr Melina had stowed it all far down at the bottom of his box. Philina said she had still some room in hers; she took Wilhelm's clothes, and bade Mignon bring the rest. Wilhelm, not without reluctance, was obliged to let it be so.

While they were loading, and getting all things ready, Melina said : “ I am sorry we should travel like mountebanks and rope-dancers ; I could wish that Mignon would put on girl’s clothes, and that the Harper would let his beard be shorn.” Mignon clung firmly to Wilhelm, and cried, with great vivacity : “ I am a boy ; I will be no girl ! ” The old man held his peace ; and Philina, on this suggestion, made some merry observations on the singularity of their protector the Count. “ If the Harper should cut off his beard,” said she, “ let him sew it carefully upon a ribbon, and keep it by him, that he may put it on again whenever his Lordship the Count falls in with him in any quarter of the world. It was this beard alone that procured him the favour of his Lordship.”

On being pressed to give an explanation of this singular speech, Philina said to them : “ The Count thinks it contributes very much to the completeness of theatrical illusion, if the actor continues to play his part, and to sustain his character, even in common life. It was for this reason that he shewed such favour to the Pedant ; and he judged it, in like manner, very fitting that the Harper not only wore his false beard at nights on the stage, but also constantly by day ; and he used to be delighted at the natural appearance of the mask.”

While the rest were laughing at this error, and the other strange opinions of the Count, the Harper led our friend aside, took leave of him, and begged

with tears that he would even now let him go. Wilhelm spoke to him, declaring that he would protect him against all the world, that no one should touch a hair of his head, much less send him off against his will.

The old man seemed affected deeply; an unwonted fire was glowing in his eyes. "It is not that," cried he, "which drives me away. I have long been reproaching myself in secret for staying with you. I ought to linger nowhere; for misfortune flies to overtake me, and injures all that are connected with me. Dread every thing, unless you dismiss me: but ask me no questions; I belong not to myself; I cannot stay."

"To whom dost thou belong? Who can exert such a power on thee?"

"Leave me my horrid 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 the situation thou art now in, I certainly will not let thee go."

"It were high treason against you, my benefactor, if I should delay. I am secure while with you, but you are in peril. You know not whom you keep beside you. I am guilty, but more wretched than guilty. My presence scares happiness away; and good deeds grow powerless, when I become concerned in them. Fugitive, un-resting I should be, that my evil genius might

not seize me, which pursues but at a distance, and only appears when I have found a place, and am laying down my head to seek repose. More grateful I cannot shew myself, than by forsaking you."

"Strange man! Thou canst neither take away the confidence I place in thee, nor the hope I feel to see thee happy. I wish not to penetrate the secrets of thy superstition; but if thou livest in belief of wonderful forebodings and entanglements of Fate, then, to cheer and hearten thee, I say, unite thyself to my good fortune, and let us see which genius is the stronger, thy dark or my bright one."

Wilhelm seized this opportunity of suggesting to him many other comfortable things; for of late our friend had begun to imagine, that this singular attendant of his must be a man, who, by chance or destiny, had been led into some weighty crime, the remembrance of which he was ever bearing on his conscience. A few days ago, Wilhelm listening to his singing, had observed attentively the following lines:

For him the light of ruddy morn
But paints the horizon red with flame,
And voices, from the depths of nature borne,
Woe! woe! upon his guilty head proclaim.

But let the old man urge what arguments he pleased, our friend had constantly a stronger ar-

gument at hand. He turned every thing on its fairest side; spoke so bravely, heartily, and cheerily, that even the old man seemed again to gather spirits, and to throw aside his whims.

CHAPTER II.

MELINA was in hopes to get established with his company, in a small but thriving town at some distance. They had already reached the place where the Count's horses were to turn; and now they looked about for other carriages and cattle to transport them onward. Melina had engaged to provide them a conveyance: he showed himself but niggardly, according to his custom. Wilhelm, on the contrary, had the shining ducats of the Countess in his pocket, and thought he had the fullest right to spend them merrily; forgetting very soon how ostentatiously he had produced them in the stately balance transmitted to his father.

His friend Shakspeare, whom with the greatest joy he acknowledged as his godfather, and rejoiced the more that his name was Wilhelm, had introduced him to a prince, who frolicked for a time among mean, nay vicious companions, and who, notwithstanding his nobleness of nature, found pleasure in the rudeness, indecency, and coarse intemperance of these altogether sensual knaves. This ideal likeness, which he figured as the type and the excuse of his own actual condition, was most welcome to our friend; and the process of self-deception, to which already he displayed an almost

invincible tendency, was thereby very much facilitated.

He now began to think about his dress. It struck him that a waistcoat, over which, in case of need, one could throw a little short mantle, was a very fit thing for a traveller. Long knit pantaloons, and a pair of lacing-boots, seemed the true garb of a pedestrian. He next procured a fine silk sash, which he tied about him, under the pretence at first of securing warmth for his person. On the other hand, he freed his neck from the tyranny of stocks; and got a few stripes of muslin sewed upon his shirt; making the pieces of considerable breadth, so that they presented the complete appearance of an ancient ruff. The beautiful silk neck-kerchief, the memorial of Mariana, which had once been saved from burning, now lay slackly tied beneath this muslin collar. A round hat, with a party-coloured band, and a large feather, perfected the mask.

The women all asserted that this garb became him very well. Philina in particular appeared enchanted with it. She solicited his hair for herself; beautiful locks, which, in order to approach the natural ideal more nearly, he had unmercifully clipped. By so doing, she recommended herself considerably to his favour; and our friend, who, by his open-handedness, had acquired the right of treating his companions somewhat in Prince Harry's manner, ere long fell into the humour of himself contriving

a few wild tricks, and presiding in the execution of them. The people fenced, they danced, they devised all kinds of sports ; and, in their gayety of heart, partook of what tolerable wine they could fall in with, in copious proportions ; while, amid the disorder of this tumultuous life, Philina lay in wait for the coy hero ; over whom let his better Genius keep watch !

One chief diversion, which yielded the company a frequent and very pleasing entertainment, consisted in producing an extempore play, in which their late benefactors and patrons were mimicked and turned into ridicule. Some of our actors had seized very neatly whatever was peculiar, in the outward manner of several distinguished people in the Count's establishment ; their imitation of these was received by the rest of the party with the greatest approbation ; and when Philina produced, from the secret archives of her experience, certain peculiar declarations of love that had been made to her, the audience were like to die with laughing and malicious joy.

Wilhelm censured their ingratitude ; but they told him in reply, that these gentry well deserved what they were getting, their general conduct towards such deserving people, as our friends believed themselves, not having been by any means the best imaginable. The little consideration, the neglect they had experienced, were now described with many aggravations. The jesting, bantering, and

mimicry proceeded as before ; our party were growing bitterer and more unjust every minute.

“ I wish,” observed Wilhelm, “ there were no envy or selfishness lurking under what you say, but that you would regard those persons and their station in the proper point of view. It is a peculiar thing to be placed, by one’s very birth, in an elevated situation in society. The man for whom inherited wealth has secured a perfect freedom of existence ; who finds himself, from his youth upwards, abundantly encompassed with all the secondary essentials, so to speak, of human life,— will generally become accustomed to consider these qualifications as the first and greatest of all ; while the worth of that mode of human life, which nature from her own stores equips and furnishes, will strike him much more faintly. The behaviour of noblemen to their inferiors, and likewise to each other, is regulated by external preferences : they give each credit for his title, his rank, his clothes, and equipage, but his individual merits come not into play.”

This speech was honoured with the company’s unbounded applause. They declared it to be shameful, that men of merit should constantly be pushed into the background ; and that in the great world, there should not be a trace of natural and hearty intercourse. On this latter point, particularly, they overshot all bounds.

“ Blame them not for it !” said Wilhelm ; “ ra-

ther pity them ! They have seldom an exalted feeling of that happiness, which we admit to be the highest that can flow from the inward abundance of nature. Only to us poor creatures, is it granted to enjoy the happiness of friendship, in its richest fulness. Those dear to us, we cannot elevate by our countenance, or advance by our favour, or make happy by our presents. We have nothing but ourselves. This whole self we must give away ; and if it is to be of any value, we must make our friend secure of it forever. What an enjoyment, what a happiness, for giver and receiver ! With what blessedness does truth of affection invest our situation ! It gives to the transitory life of man a heavenly certainty ; it forms the crown and capital of all that we possess."

While he spoke thus, Mignon had come near him ; she threw her little arms about him, and stood with her cheek resting on his breast. He laid his hand upon the child's head, and proceeded : " It is easy for a great man to win our minds to him ; easy to make our hearts his own. A mild and pleasant manner, a manner only not inhuman, will of itself do wonders : and how many means does he possess of holding fast the affections he has once conquered ! To us all this occurs less frequently, to us it is all more difficult ; and we naturally therefore put a greater value on whatever in the way of mutual kindness we acquire and accomplish. What touching examples of faithful ser-

vants giving themselves up to danger and death for their masters ! How finely has Shakspeare painted out such things to us ! Fidelity, in this case, is the effort of a noble soul struggling to become equal with one exalted above it. By steadfast attachment and love, the servant is made equal to his lord, who but for this is justified in looking on him as a hired slave. Yes, these virtues belong to the lower class of men alone ; that class cannot do without them, and with them it has a beauty of its own. Whoever is enabled to requite all favours easily, will likewise easily be tempted to raise himself above the habit of acknowledgment. Nay in this sense, I am of opinion, it might almost be maintained that a great man may possess friends, but cannot be one.”

Mignon pressed still closer towards him.

“ It may be so,” replied one of the party: “ we do not need their friendship, and do not ask it. But it were well if they understood a little more about the arts, which they affect to patronise. When we played in the best style, there was none to mind us : it was all sheer partiality. Any one they chose to favour pleased ; and they did not choose to favour those that merited to please. It was intolerable to observe how often silliness and mere stupidity attracted notice and applause.”

“ When I abate from this,” said Wilhelm ; “ what seemed to spring from irony and malice, I

think we may nearly say, that one fares in art as he does in love. And after all, how shall a fashionable man of the world, with his dissipated habits, attain that intimate presence with a special object, which an artist must long continue in, if he intends to produce any thing approaching to perfection; a state of feeling without which it is impossible for any one to take such an interest, as the artist hopes and wishes, in his work.

“Believe me, my friends, it is with talents as with virtue; one must love them for their own sake, or entirely renounce them. And neither of them is acknowledged and rewarded, except when their possessor can practise them unseen, like a dangerous secret.”

“Meanwhile, until some proper judge discovers us, we may all die of hunger,” cried a fellow in the corner.

“Not quite inevitably,” answered Wilhelm. “I have observed that so long as one stirs and lives, he always finds food and raiment, though they be not of the richest sort. And why should we repine? Were we not, altogether unexpectedly, and when our prospects were the very worst, taken kindly by the hand, and substantially entertained? And now, when we are in want of nothing, does it once occur to us to attempt any thing for our improvement; or to strive though never so faintly, towards advancement in our art? We are busied

about indifferent matters ; and, like school-boys, we are casting all aside that might bring our lesson to our thoughts."

"In sad truth," said Philina, "it is even so ! Let us choose a play ; we will go through it on the spot. Each of us must do his best, as if he stood before the largest audience."

They did not long deliberate ; a play was fixed on. It was one of those which at that time were meeting great applause in Germany, and have now passed away. Some of the party whistled a symphony ; each speedily bethought him of his part ; they commenced ; and played all the piece with the greatest attention, and really well beyond all expectation. Mutual applauses circulated ; our friends had seldom been so pleasantly diverted.

On finishing, they all felt exceedingly contented, partly on account of their time being spent so well ; partly because each of them experienced some degree of satisfaction with his own performance. Wilhelm expressed himself copiously in their praise ; the conversation grew cheerful and merry.

"You would see," cried our friend, "what advances we should make, if we continued this sort of training, and ceased to confine our attention to mere learning by heart, rehearsing, and playing mechanically, as if it were a barren duty, or some handicraft employment. How different a character do our musical professors merit ! What interest they take in their art ! How correct are they

in the practisings they undertake in common! What pains they are at in tuning their instruments! How exactly they observe time! How delicately they express the strength and the weakness of their tones! No one there thinks of gaining credit to himself by a loud accompaniment of the solo of another. Each tries to play in the spirit of the composer, each to express well whatever is committed to him be it much or little.

“Should not we too go as strictly and as ingeniously to work, seeing we practise an art far more delicate than that of music; seeing we are called on to express the commonest and the strongest emotions of human nature with elegance, and so as to delight? Can any thing be more shocking than to slur over our rehearsal, and in our acting to depend on good luck or the capricious choice of the moment? We ought to place our highest happiness and satisfaction in mutually desiring to gain each other’s approbation; we should even value the applauses of the public, only in so far as we have previously sanctioned them among ourselves. Why is the master of the band more secure about his music than the manager about his play? Because, in the orchestra, each individual would feel ashamed of his mistakes, that offend the outward ear: but how seldom have I found an actor disposed to acknowledge or feel ashamed of mistakes, pardonable or the contrary, by which the inward ear is so outrageously offended! I could wish, for

my part, that our theatre were as narrow as the wire of a rope-dancer, that so no inept fellow might dare to venture on it; instead of being as it is, a place where every one discovers in himself capacity enough to flourish and parade."

The company gave this apostrophe a kind reception; each being convinced that the censure conveyed in it could not apply to him, after acting a little while ago so excellently with the rest. On the other hand, it was agreed that during this journey, if they remained together, they would regularly proceed with their training in the manner they had just adopted. Only it was thought, that as the present was a thing of good humour and free will, no formal manager must be allowed to have a hand in it. Taking it for an established fact, that among good men, the republican form of government is the best, they declared that the post of manager should go round among them; he must be chosen by universal suffrage, and every time have a sort of little senate joined in authority along with him. So delighted did they feel with this idea, that they longed to put it instantly in practice.

"I have no objection," said Melina, "if you incline making such an experiment while we are travelling; I shall willingly suspend my own directorship until we reach some settled place." He was in hopes of saving cash by this arrangement, and of casting many small expenses on the shoulders of the little senate or of the interim manager. This

fixed, they went very keenly to counsel, how the form of the new commonwealth might best be adjusted.

“It is an itinerating kingdom,” said Laertes; “we shall at least have no quarrels about frontiers.”

They directly proceeded to the business, and elected Wilhelm as their first manager. The senate also was appointed, the women having seats and votes in it; laws were propounded, were rejected, were agreed to. In such playing, the time passed on unnoticed; and as our friends had spent it pleasantly, they also conceived that they had really been effecting something useful; and by their new constitution, had been opening up a new prospect for the stage of their native country.

CHAPTER III.

SEEING the company so favourably disposed, Wilhelm now hoped that he might farther have it in his power to converse with them on the poetic merit of the pieces which might come before them. "It is not enough," said he next day, when they were all again assembled, "for the actor merely to glance over a dramatic work, to judge of it by his first impression, and thus, without investigation, to declare his satisfaction or dissatisfaction with it. Such things may be allowed in a spectator, whose purpose it is rather to be entertained and moved than formally to criticise. But the actor, on the other hand, should be prepared to give a reason for his praise or censure: and how shall he do this, if he have not taught himself to penetrate the sense, the views and feelings of his author? A common error is, to form a judgment of a drama from a single part in it; and to look upon this part itself in an isolated point of view, not in its connexion with the whole. I have noticed this, within a few days, so clearly in my own conduct, that I will give you the account as an example, if you please to hear me patiently.

“ You all know Shakspeare’s incomparable Hamlet : our public reading of it at the Castle yielded every one of us the greatest satisfaction. On that occasion, we proposed to act the piece ; and I, not knowing what I undertook, engaged to play the Prince’s part. This I conceived that I was studying, while I began to get by heart the strongest passages, the soliloquies, and those scenes in which force of soul, vehemence and elevation of feeling have the freest scope ; where the agitated heart is allowed to display itself with touching expressiveness.

“ I farther conceived that I was penetrating quite into the spirit of the character, while I endeavoured as it were to take upon myself the load of deep melancholy, under which my prototype was labouring, and in this humour to pursue him through the strange labyrinths of his caprices and his singularities. Thus learning, thus practising, I did not doubt that I should by and by become one person with my hero.

“ But the farther I advanced, the more difficult did it become for me to form any image of the whole, in its general bearings ; till at last this seemed to me almost impossible. I next went through the piece entirely, and all at once ; but here also I found much that I could not away with. At one time the characters, at another time the manner of displaying them, seemed inconsistent ; and I almost despaired of finding any ge-

neral tint, in which I might present my whole part with all its shadings and variations. In such devious paths I toiled, and wandered long in vain ; till at length a hope arose that I might reach my aim in quite a new way.

“ I set about investigating every trace of Hamlet’s character, as it had shewn itself before his father’s death : I endeavoured to distinguish what in it was independent of this mournful event ; independent of the terrible events that followed ; and what most probably the young man would have been, had no such things occurred.

“ Soft, and from a noble stem, this royal flower had sprung up under the immediate influences of majesty : the idea of moral rectitude with that of princely elevation, the feeling of the good and dignified with the consciousness of high birth, had in him been unfolded simultaneously. He was a prince, by birth a prince ; and he wished to reign, only that good men might be good without obstruction. Pleasing in form, polished by nature, courteous from the heart, he was meant to be the pattern of youth and the joy of the world.

“ Without any prominent passion, his love for Ophelia was a still presentiment of sweet wants. His zeal in knightly accomplishments was not entirely his own ; it needed to be quickened and inflamed by praise bestowed on others for excelling in them. Pure in sentiment, he knew the honourable-minded, and could prize the rest which

an upright spirit tastes on the bosom of a friend. To a certain degree, he had learned to discern and value the good and the beautiful in arts and sciences; the mean, the vulgar was offensive to him; and if hatred could take root in his tender soul, it was only so far as to make him properly despise the false and changeful insects of a court, and play with them in easy scorn. He was calm in his temper, artless in his conduct, neither pleased with idleness, nor too violently eager for employment. The routine of a university he seemed to continue when at court. He possessed more mirth of humour than of heart; he was a good companion, pliant, courteous, discreet, and able to forget and forgive an injury; yet never able to unite himself with those who overstept the limits of the right, the good, and the becoming.

“When we read the piece again, you shall judge whether I am yet on the proper track. I hope at least to bring forward passages, that shall support my opinion in its main points.”

This delineation was received with warm approval: the company imagined they foresaw that Hamlet's manner of proceeding might now be very satisfactorily explained; they applauded this method of penetrating into the spirit of a writer. Each of them proposed to himself to take up some piece, and study it on these principles, and so unfold the author's meaning.

CHAPTER IV.

Our friends had to continue in the place for a day or two ; and it was not long till sundry of them got engaged in adventures of a rather pleasant kind. Laertes in particular was challenged by a lady of the neighbourhood, a person of some property ; but he received her blandishments with extreme, nay unhandsome coldness ; and had in consequence to undergo a multitude of jibes from Philina. She took this opportunity of detailing to our friend the hapless love-story which had made the youth so bitter a foe to womankind. " Who can take it ill of him," she cried, " that he hates a sex which has played him so foul, and given him to swallow, in one stoutly concentrated potion, all the miseries that man can fear from women ? Do but conceive it : within the space of four and twenty hours, he was lover, bridegroom, husband, cuckold, patient, and widower ! I wot not how any one could treat a mortal worse."

Laertes hastened from the room half-vexed, half-laughing ; and Philina in her sprightliest style began to relate the story ; that Laertes, a young man of eighteen, on joining a company of actors, found in it a girl of fourteen years on the point of de-

parting with her father, who had quarrelled with the manager. That on the instant he had fallen mortally in love ; had conjured the father by all possible considerations to remain, promising at length to marry the young woman. That after a few pleasing hours of courtship, he had accordingly been wedded, and been happy, as he ought ; for which, next day, while he was occupied at the rehearsal, his wife, according to the rules of her profession, had honoured him with a pair of horns : while he, out of excessive tenderness, hastening home too soon, had found a former lover in his place ; had interfered in the affair with thoughtless anger, calling out both father and lover, and sustaining a grievous wound in the duel. That father and daughter had thereupon set off by night, leaving him behind to labour with a double wound. That the leech whom he applied to was unhappily the worst in nature ; and the poor fellow had got out of the adventure with blackened teeth and watering eyes. That he was greatly to be pitied, being otherwise the bravest young man on the surface of the earth. “ Especially,” said she, “ it grieves me that the poor soul now hates women ; for, hating women, how can any one keep living ? ”

Melina interrupted them with news, that all things being now ready for the journey, they would set out to-morrow morning. He handed them a plan, arranging how they were to travel.

“ If any good friend take me upon his lap,” said Philina, “ I shall be contented though we sit crammed together never so closely and sorrowly : other things I mind not.”

“ It does not signify,” observed Laertes, who now entered.

“ It is pitiful,” said Wilhelm, hastening away. By the aid of money he secured another very comfortable coach, though Melina had pretended that there were no more. A new distribution then took place ; and our friends were rejoicing in the thought that they would now travel pleasantly, when intelligence arrived that a party of military volunteers had been seen upon the road, from whom little good could be expected.

In the town, these tidings were received with great attention, though they were but variable and ambiguous. As the contending armies were at that time placed, it seemed impossible that any hostile corps could have advanced, or any friendly one staid back, so far. Yet every man was eager to exhibit to our travellers the danger that awaited them as truly dangerous ; every man was eager to suggest that some other route might be adopted.

By these means, most of our friends had been seized with anxiety and fear ; and when, according to the new republican constitution, the whole members of the state had been called together to take counsel on this extraordinary case, they were almost unanimously of opinion that it would be

proper either to keep back the mischief by abiding where they were, or to evade it by choosing another road.

Wilhelm alone, not participating in the panic, regarded it as mean to abandon, for the sake of mere rumours, a plan which they had not entered on till after so much thought. He endeavoured to put heart into them; his reasons were manly and convincing.

“It is but a rumour,” he observed; “and how many such arise in time of war! Well-informed people say that the occurrence is exceedingly improbable, nay almost impossible. Shall we, in so important a matter, allow a vague report to determine our proceedings? The route pointed out to us by the Count, and to which our passport was adapted, is the shortest and the best made. It leads us to the town, where you see acquaintances, friends before you, and may hope for a good reception. The other way will also bring us thither; but by what a circuit, and along what miserable roads! Have we any right to hope, that, in this late season of the year, we shall get on at all; and what time and money shall we squander in the meanwhile!” He added many more considerations, presenting the matter on so many advantageous sides, that their fear began to dissipate, and their courage to increase. He talked to them so much about the discipline of regular troops, he painted the marauders and wandering

rabble so contemptuously, and represented the danger itself as so pleasant and inspiring, that the spirits of the party were altogether cheered.

Laertes from the first had been of his opinion ; he now declared that he would not flinch or fail. Old Boisterous found a consenting phrase or two to utter in his own vein ; Philina laughed at them all ; and Madam Melina, who, notwithstanding her advanced state of pregnancy, had lost nothing of her natural stout-heartedness, regarded the proposal as heroic. Herr Melina, moved by this harmonious feeling, hoping also to save somewhat by travelling the short road which had been first contemplated, did not withstand the general consent, and the project was agreed to with universal alacrity.

They next began to make some preparations for defence at all hazards. They bought large hangers, and slung them in well quilted straps over their shoulders. Wilhelm, farther, stuck a pair of pistols in his girdle ; Laertes, independently of this occurrence, had a gun. So they all took the road in the highest glee. On the second day of their journey, the drivers, who knew the country well, proposed to take their noon's rest in a certain woody spot of the hills ; since the town was far off, and in good weather the hill road was generally preferred.

The day being beautiful, all easily agreed to the proposal. Wilhelm on foot, went on before them

through the hills ; making every one that met him stare with astonishment at his singular figure. He hastened with quick and contented steps across the forest ; Laertes walked whistling after him ; none but the women continued to be dragged along in the carriages. Mignon too ran forward by his side, proud of the hanger, which, when the party were all arming, she would not go without. Around her hat she had bound the pearl-necklace, one of Mariana's reliques, which Wilhelm still possessed. Friedrich, the fair-haired boy, carried Laertes' gun. The Harper had the most pacific look ; his long cloak was tucked up within his girdle, to let him walk more freely ; he leaned upon a knotty staff ; his harp had been left behind him in the carriage.

Immediately on reaching the summit of the height, a task not without its difficulties, our party recognised the appointed spot, by the fine beech-trees which encircled and screened it. A spacious green, sloping softly in the middle of the forest, invited one to tarry ; a trimly-bordered well offered the most grateful refreshment ; and on the farther side, through chasms in the mountains, and over the tops of the woods, appeared a landscape distant, lovely, full of hope. Hamlets and mills were lying in the bottoms, villages upon the plain ; and a new chain of mountains, visible in the distance, made the prospect still more significant of hope, for they entered only like a soft limitation.

The first comers took possession of the place :

some lay down to rest in the shade, others lit a fire; then diligently singing, they awaited the remainder of the party, who by and by arrived, and with one accord saluted the place, the lovely weather, and the still lovelier scene.

CHAPTER V.

If our friends had frequently enjoyed a good and merry hour together while within four walls, they were naturally much more pleasant here, where the freedom of the sky and the beauty of the place seemed as it were to purify the feelings of every one. All felt nearer to each other ; all wished that they might pass their whole lives in so pleasant an abode. They envied hunters, charcoal-men, and wood-cutters ; people whom their calling constantly retains in such happy places : but, above all, they prized the delicious economy of a band of gipsies. They envied these wonderful companions, entitled to enjoy in blissful idleness all the adventurous charms of nature ; they rejoiced at being in some degree like them.

Meanwhile the women had begun to boil potatoes, and to unwrap and get ready the victuals brought along with them. Some pots were standing by the fire. The party had placed themselves in groups, beneath the trees and bushes. Their singular apparel, their various weapons, gave them a foreign aspect. The horses were eating their provender at a side. Could one have concealed

the coaches, the look of this little horde would have been romantic, even to complete illusion.

Wilhelm enjoyed a pleasure he had never felt before. He could now imagine his present company to be a wandering colony, and himself the leader of it. In this character he talked with those around him, and figured out the fantasy of the moment as poetically as he could. The feelings of the party rose in cheerfulness: they ate and drank and made merry; and repeatedly declared, that they had never passed more pleasant moments.

Their contentment had not long gone on increasing, till activity awoke among the younger part of them. Wilhelm and Laertes seized their rapiers, and began to practise on this occasion with theatrical intentions. They undertook to represent the duel, in which Hamlet and his adversary find so tragical an end. Both were persuaded that, in this powerful scene, it was not enough merely to keep pushing awkwardly hither and thither, as it is generally exhibited in theatres: they were in hopes to shew, by example, how, in presenting it, a worthy spectacle might also be afforded to the critic in the art of fencing. The rest made a circle round them. Both fought with skill and ardour. The interest of the spectators rose higher every pass.

But all at once, in the nearest bush, a shot went off; and immediately another; and the party flew

asunder in terror. Next moment, armed men were to be seen pressing forward to the spot where the horses were eating their fodder, not far from the coaches that were packed with luggage.

A universal scream proceeded from the females: our heroes threw away their rapiers, seized their pistols, and ran towards the robbers; demanding, with violent threats, the meaning of such conduct.

This question being answered laconically, with a couple of musket-shots, Wilhelm fired his pistol at a crisp-headed knave, who had got upon the top of the coach, and was cutting the cords of the package. Rightly hit, this artist instantly came tumbling down; Laertes also had not missed. Both of them, encouraged by success, drew their side-arms; when a number of the plundering party rushed out upon them, with curses and loud bel-lowing; fired a few shots at them, and fronted their impetuosity with glittering sabres. Our young heroes made a bold resistance. They called upon their other comrades, and endeavoured to ex-cite them to a general resistance. But ere long, Wilhelm lost the sight of day, and the conscio-usness of what was passing. Stupified by a shot that wounded him between the breast and the left arm, by a stroke that split his hat in two, and almost penetrated to his brain, he sank down, and only by the narratives of others came afterwards to un-derstand the luckless end of this adventure.

On again opening his eyes, he found himself in

the strangest posture. The first thing that pierced the dimness, which yet swam before his vision, was Philina's face bent down over his. He felt himself weak ; and making a movement to rise, he discovered that he was in Philina's lap ; into which, indeed, he again sank down. She was sitting on the sward. She had softly pressed towards her the head of the fallen young man ; and made for him an easy couch, as far as this was in her power. Mignon was kneeling with dishevelled and bloody hair at his feet, which she embraced with many tears.

On noticing his bloody clothes, Wilhelm asked, in a broken voice, where he was, and what had happened to himself and the rest. Philina begged him to be quiet : the others, she said, were all in safety, and none but he and Laertes wounded. Farther, she would tell him nothing ; but earnestly entreated him to keep still, as his wounds had been but slightly and hastily bound. He stretched out his hand to Mignon, and inquired about the bloody locks of the child, who he supposed was also wounded.

For the sake of quietness, Philina let him know that this true-hearted creature, seeing her friend wounded, and in the hurry of the instant, being able to think of nothing which would staunch the blood, had taken her own hair that was flowing round her head, and tried to stop the wounds with it ; but had soon been obliged to give up the

vain attempt: that afterwards they had bound him with moss and dry mushrooms, Philina herself giving up her neck-kerchief for that purpose.

Wilhelm noticed that Philina was sitting with her back against her own trunk, which still looked firmly locked and quite uninjured. He inquired if the rest also had been so lucky as to save their goods? She answered with a shrug of the shoulders, and a look over the green, where broken chests and coffers beaten into fragments, and knapsacks ripped up, and a multitude of little wares, lay scattered all around. No person now was to be seen upon the place: this strange group formed the only living object in the solitude.

Inquiring farther, our friend learned more and more particulars. The rest of the men, it appeared, who at all events might still have made resistance, were struck with terror, and soon overpowered. Some fled, some looked with horror at the accident. The drivers, for the sake of their cattle, had held out more obstinately; but they too were at last thrown down and tied; after which, in a few minutes, every thing was thoroughly ransacked, and the booty carried off. The hapless travellers, their fear of death being over, had begun to mourn their loss; had hastened with the greatest speed to the neighbouring village, taking with them Laertes, whose wounds were slight, and carrying off but a very few fragments of their property. The Harper having placed his damaged



instrument against a tree, had proceeded in their company to the place ; to seek a surgeon, and return with his utmost rapidity to help his benefactor, whom he had left apparently upon the brink of death.

CHAPTER VI.

MEANWHILE our three adventurers continued yet a space in their strange position, no one returning to their aid. Evening was advancing; the darkness threatened to come on. Philina's indifference was changing to anxiety; Mignon ran to and fro, her impatience increasing every moment; and at last, when their prayer was granted, and human creatures did approach, a new alarm fell upon them. They distinctly heard a troop of horses coming up the road, which they had lately travelled; they dreaded lest a second time, some company of unbidden guests might be purposing to visit this scene of battle, and gather up the gleanings.

The more agreeable was their surprise, when, after a few moments, a young lady issued from the thickets, riding on a gray courser, and accompanied by an elderly gentleman and some cavaliers. Grooms, servants, and a troop of hussars, closed up the rear.

Philina stared at this phenomenon, and was about to call, and entreat the fair Amazon for help; when the latter, turning her astonished eyes on the group, instantly checked her horse, rode up to

them, and halted. She inquired eagerly about the wounded man, whose posture in the lap of this light-minded Samaritan seemed to strike her as peculiarly strange.

“Is it your husband?” she inquired of Philina. “Only a good friend,” replied the other, with a tone that Wilhelm liked extremely ill. He had fixed his eyes upon the soft, elevated, calm, sympathizing features of the stranger: he thought he had never seen aught nobler or more lovely. Her shape he could not see: it was hid by a man’s white great-coat, which she seemed to have borrowed from some of her attendants, to screen her from the chill evening air.

By this, the horsemen also had come near. Some of them dismounted: the lady did so likewise. She asked, with humane sympathy, concerning every circumstance of the mishap which had befallen the travellers; but especially concerning the wounds of the poor youth, that lay before her. Thereupon she turned quickly round, and went aside with the old gentleman to some carriages, which were slowly coming up the hill, and which at length stopped upon the scene of action.

The young lady having stood with her conductor a short time at the door of one of the coaches, and talked with the people in it, a man of a squat figure stepped out, and came along with them to our wounded hero. By the little box which he held in his hand, and the leathern pouch with

instruments in it, our friends soon recognised him for a surgeon. His manners were rude rather than attractive; but his hand was light, and his help was welcome.

Having examined strictly, he declared that none of the wounds were dangerous. He would dress them, he said, on the spot; after which the patient might be carried to the nearest village.

The anxious attentions of the young lady seemed to augment. "Do but look," she said, after going to and fro once or twice, and again bringing the old gentleman to the place; "look how they have treated him! And is it not on our account that he is suffering?" Wilhelm heard these words, but did not understand them. She went restlessly up and down: it seemed as if she could not tear herself away from the presence of the wounded man, while at the same time, she feared to violate decorum by remaining, when they had begun, though not without difficulty, to remove some part of his apparel. The surgeon was just cutting off the left sleeve of his patient's coat, when the old gentleman came near, and represented to the lady, in a serious tone, the necessity of proceeding on their journey. Wilhelm kept his eyes bent on her; and was so enchanted with her looks, that he scarcely felt what he was suffering or doing.

Philina, in the mean time, had risen up to kiss the hand of this kind young lady. While they stood beside each other, Wilhelm thought he had

never seen such a contrast. Philina had never till now appeared in so unfavourable a light. She had no right, as it seemed to him, to come near that noble creature, still less to touch her.

The lady asked Philina various things, but in an under tone. At length she turned to the old gentleman, and said, "Dear uncle, may I be generous at your expence?" She took off the great-coat, with the visible intention to give it to the stript and wounded youth.

Wilhelm, whom the healing look of her eyes had hitherto held fixed, was now, as the surtout fell away, astonished at her lovely figure. She came near, and softly laid the coat above him. At this moment, as he tried to open his mouth, and stammer out some words of gratitude, the lively impression of her presence worked so strongly on his senses, already caught and bewildered, that all at once it appeared to him as if her head were encircled with rays; and a glancing light seemed by degrees to spread itself over all her form. At this moment the surgeon, making preparations to extract the ball from his wound, gave him a sharper twinge: the angel faded away from the eyes of the fainting patient: he lost all consciousness; and, on returning to himself, the horsemen and coaches, the fair one with her attendants, had vanished like a dream.

CHAPTER VII.

WILHELM's wounds once dressed, and his clothes put on, the surgeon hastened off; just as the Harper with a number of peasants arrived. Out of some cut boughs, which they speedily wattled with twigs, a kind of litter was constructed; upon which they placed the wounded youth, and under the conduct of a mounted huntsman, whom the noble company had left behind them, carried him softly down the mountain. The Harper, silent and shrouded in his own thoughts, bore with him his broken instrument. Some men brought on Philina's box, herself following with a bundle. Mignon skipped along through copse and thicket, now before the party, now beside them, and looked up with longing eyes at her hurt protector.

He, meanwhile, wrapt up in his warm surtout, was lying peacefully upon the litter. An electric warmth seemed to flow from the fine wool into his body: in short, he felt himself in the most delightful frame of mind. The lovely being, whom this garment lately covered, had affected him to the very heart. He still saw the coat falling down from her shoulders; saw that noble form, begirt with radiance, stand beside him; and his soul hied

over rocks and forests on the footsteps of his departed benefactress.

It was nightfall ere the party reached the village, and halted at the door of the inn where the rest of the company, in the gloom of despondency, were bewailing their irreparable loss. The one little chamber of the house was crammed with people. Some of them were lying upon straw ; some were occupying benches ; some had squeezed themselves behind the stove. Frau Melina, in a neighbouring room, was painfully expecting her delivery. Fright had accelerated this event. With the sole assistance of the landlady, a young inexperienced woman, nothing good could be expected.

As the party just arrived required admission, there arose a universal murmur. All now maintained, that by Wilhelm's advice alone, and under his especial guidance, they had entered on this dangerous road, and exposed themselves to such misfortunes. They threw the blame of the disaster wholly upon him ; they stuck themselves in the door to oppose his entrance, declaring that he must go elsewhere and seek for quarters. Philina they received with still greater indignation : nor did Mignon and the Harper escape their share.

The huntsman, to whom the care of the forsaken party had been earnestly and strictly recommended by his beautiful mistress, soon grew tired of this discussion : he rushed upon the company with oaths and menaces ; commanding them to fall

to the right and left and make way for this new arrival. They now began to pacify themselves. He made a place for Wilhelm on a table, which he shoved into a corner; Philina had her box put there, and then sat down upon it. All packed themselves as best they could; and the huntsman went away to see if he could not find for "the young couple" a more convenient lodging.

Scarcely was he gone, when spite again grew noisy, and one reproach began to follow close upon another. Each described and magnified his loss; censuring the foolhardiness which they had smarted for so keenly. They did not even hide the malicious satisfaction, which they felt at Wilhelm's wounds: they jeered Philina, and imputed to her as a crime the means by which she had saved her trunk. From a multitude of jibes and bitter innuendos you were required to conclude, that during the plundering and discomfiture, she had endeavoured to work herself into favour with the captain of the band, and had persuaded him, Heaven knew by what arts and complaisance, to give her back the chest unhurt. To all this she answered nothing; only clanked with the large padlocks of her box, to impress her censurers completely with its presence, and by her own good fortune to augment their desperation.

CHAPTER VIII.

THOUGH our friend was weak from loss of blood, and though ever since the appearance of that helpful angel his feelings had been soft and mild, yet at last he could not help getting vexed at the harsh and unjust speeches which, as he continued silent, the discontented company went on uttering against him. Feeling himself strong enough to sit up, and expostulate on the annoyance with which they were disturbing their friend and leader, he raised up his bandaged head, and propping himself with some difficulty, and leaning against the wall, he began to speak as follows :

“ Considering the pain which your losses occasion, I forgive you for assailing me with injuries at a moment when you should condole with me ; for opposing me and casting me from you, the first time I have needed to look to you for help. The services I did you, the complaisance I shewed you, I regarded as sufficiently repaid by your thanks, by your friendly conduct : do not warp my thoughts, do not force my heart to go back and calculate what I have done for you ; the calculation would be painful to me. Chance brought me near

you, circumstances and a secret inclination kept me with you. I participated in your labours and your pleasures: my slender abilities were ever at your service. If you now blame me with bitterness for the mishap that has befallen us, you do not recollect that the first project of taking this road came to us from stranger people, was tried by all of you, and sanctioned by every one as well as me.

“ Had our journey ended happily, each would have taken credit to himself for the happy thought of suggesting this plan and preferring it to others; each would joyfully have put us in mind of our deliberations and of the vote he gave: but now you make me alone responsible; you force a piece of blame upon me, which I would willingly submit to, if my conscience with a clear voice did not pronounce me innocent, nay if I might not appeal with safety even to yourselves. If you have aught to say against me, bring it forward in order, and I shall defend myself; if you have nothing reasonable to allege, then be silent, and do not torment me now, when I have such pressing need of rest.”

By way of answer, the girls once more began whimpering and whining, and describing their losses circumstantially. Melina was quite beside himself; for he had suffered more in purse than any of them; more indeed than we can rightly estimate. He stamped like a madman up and down the little

room, he knocked his head against the wall, he swore and scolded in the most unseemly manner; and the landlady entering at this very time with news, that his wife had been delivered of a dead child, he yielded to the most furious ebullitions, while in accordance with him all howled and shrieked and bellowed and uproared with double vigour.

Wilhelm, touched to the heart at once with sympathy in their sorrows, and with vexation at their mean way of thinking, felt all the vigour of his soul awakened, notwithstanding the weakness of his body. "Deplorable as your case may be," exclaimed he, "I shall almost be compelled to despise you. No misfortune gives us right to load an innocent man with reproaches. If I had share in this false step, am not I suffering my share? I lie wounded here; and if the company has come to loss, I myself have come to most. The wardrobe of which we have been robbed, the decorations that are gone, were mine; for you, Herr Melina, have not yet paid me, and I here fully acquit you of all obligation in that matter."

"It is well to give what none of us will ever see again," replied Melina. "Your money was lying in my wife's coffer, and it is your own blame that you have lost it. But ah! if that were all!"—And thereupon he began anew to stamp, and scold, and squeal. Every one recalled to memory the superb clothes from the Count's wardrobe; the buckles, watches, snuff-boxes, hats, for which Me-

lina had so happily transacted with the head valet. Each then thought also of his own, though far inferior treasures. They looked with spleen at Philina's box; and gave Wilhelm to understand, that he had indeed done wisely to connect himself with that fair personage, and to save his own goods also, under the shadow of her fortune.

"Do you think," he exclaimed at last, "that I shall keep any thing apart while you are starving? And is this the first time that I have honestly shared with you in a season of need? Open up the trunk; all that is mine shall go to supply the common wants."

"It is *my* trunk," observed Philina, "and I will not open it till I please. Your rag or two of clothes, which I have saved for you, could amount to little, though they were sold to the most conscientious of Jews. Think of yourself; what your cure will cost, what may befall you in a strange country."

"You, Philina," answered Wilhelm, "will keep back from me nothing that is mine; and that little will help us out of the first perplexity. But a man possesses many things besides coined money to assist his friends with. All that is in me shall be devoted to these hapless persons; who doubtless, on returning to their senses, will repent their present conduct. Yes," continued he, "I feel that you have need of help, and what is mine to do I will perform. Give me your

confidence again ; compose yourselves for a moment, and accept of what I promise ! Who will receive the engagement of me in the name of all ?”

Here he stretched out his hand and cried : “ I promise not to flinch from you, never to forsake you till each shall see his losses doubly and trebly repaired ; till the situation you are fallen into, by whose blame soever, shall be totally forgot by all of you, and changed with a better.”

He kept his hand still stretched out : but no one would take hold of it. “ I promise it again,” cried he, sinking back upon his pillow. All continued silent ; they felt ashamed, but nothing comforted ; and Philina sitting on her chest, kept cracking nuts, a stock of which she had discovered in her pocket.

CHAPTER IX.

THE huntsman now came back with several people, and made preparations for carrying away the wounded youth. He had persuaded the parson of the place to receive the "young couple" into his house; Philina's trunk was taken out; she followed with a natural air of dignity. Mignon ran before; and when the patient reached the parsonage, a wide couch, which had long been standing ready as guest's bed and bed of honour, was assigned him. Here it was first discovered, that his wound had opened and bled profusely. A new bandage was required for it. He fell into a feverish state; Philina waited on him faithfully, and when fatigue overpowered her, she was relieved by the Harper. Mignon, with the firmest purpose to watch, had fallen asleep in a corner.

Next morning, Wilhelm, who felt himself in some degree refreshed, learned by inquiring of the huntsman, that the honourable persons who last night had assisted him so nobly, had shortly before left their estates, that they might avoid the movements of the contending armies, and remain till the time of peace in some more quiet district. He

named the elderly nobleman as well as his niece ; mentioned the place they were first going to ; and told how the young lady had charged him to take care of Wilhelm.

The entrance of the surgeon interrupted the warm expressions of gratitude, in which our friend was pouring out his feelings. He made a circumstantial description of the wounds ; and certified that they would soon heal, if the patient took care of them, and kept himself at peace.

When the huntsman was gone, Philina signified that he had left with her a purse of twenty louis d'ors ; that he had given the parson a remuneration for their lodging, and left with him money to defray the surgeon's bill when the cure should be completed. She added, that she herself passed everywhere for Wilhelm's wife : that she now begged leave to introduce herself once for all to him in this capacity, and would not allow him to look out for any other sick-nurse.

“ Philina,” said Wilhelm, “ in this disaster that has overtaken us, I am already deeply in your debt for kindness shown me ; and I should not wish to see my obligations increased. I am restless so long as you are near me : for I know of nothing by which I can repay your labour. Give me my things which you have saved in your trunk ; unite yourself to the rest of the company ; seek another lodging, take my thanks, and the gold watch as a

small acknowledgment: only leave me; your presence disturbs me more than you can fancy."

She laughed in his face when he had ended. "Thou art a fool," she said, "thou wilt not gather wisdom. I know better what is good for thee; I will stay, I will not budge from the spot. I have never counted on the gratitude of men; and therefore not on thine; and if I have a touch of kindness for thee, what hast thou to do with it?"

She staid accordingly; and soon wormed herself into favour with the parson and his household; being always cheerful, having the knack of giving little presents, and of talking to each in his own vein; at the same time always contriving to do exactly what she pleased. Wilhelm's state was not uncomfortable: the surgeon, an ignorant but no unskilful man, let nature play her part; and the patient was not long till he felt himself recovering. For such a consummation, being eager to pursue his plans and wishes, he vehemently longed.

Incessantly he kept recalling that event which had made an ineffaceable impression on his heart. He saw the beautiful Amazon again come riding out of the thickets; she approached him, dismounted, went to and fro, and strove to serve him. He saw the garment she was wrapt in fall down from her shoulders; he saw her countenance, her figure vanish in their radiance. All the dreams of his youth now fastened on this image. Here he

conceived he had at length beheld the noble, the heroic Clorinda with his own eyes : and again he bethought him of that royal youth, to whose sick-bed the lovely sympathizing princess came in her modest meekness.

“ May it not be,” said he often to himself in secret, “ that in youth as in sleep, the images of coming things hover round us, and mysteriously become visible to our unobstructed eyes ? May not the seeds of what is to betide us be already scattered by the hand of Fate ; may not a foretaste of the fruits we yet hope to gather possibly be given us ?”

His sick-bed gave him time to repeat those scenes in every mood. A thousand times he called back the tone of that sweet voice ; a thousand times he envied Philina, who had kissed that helpful hand. Often the whole incident appeared before him as a dream ; and he would have reckoned it a fiction, if the white surtout had not been left behind to convince him that the vision had a real existence.

With the greatest care for this piece of apparel, he combined the greatest wish to wear it. The first time he arose he put it on ; and was kept in fear all day, lest it might be hurt by some stain or other injury.

CHAPTER X.

LAERTES visited his friend. He had not assisted in that lively scene at the inn, being then confined to bed in an upper chamber. For his loss he was already in a great degree consoled; he helped himself with his customary: "What does it signify?" He detailed various laughable particulars about the company; particularly charging Frau Melina with lamenting the loss of her still-born daughter, solely because she herself could not on that account enjoy the Old-German satisfaction of having a Mechthilde christened. As for her husband, it now appeared that he had been possessed of abundant cash; and even at first had by no means needed the advances, which he had cajoled from Wilhelm. Melina's present plan was to set off by the next Postwagen; and he meant to require of Wilhelm an introductory letter to his friend, the Manager Serlo, in whose company, the present undertaking having gone to wreck, he now wished to establish himself.

For some days Mignon had been singularly quiet; when pressed with questions, she at length admitted that her right arm was out of joint. "Thou hast thy own folly to thank for that,"

observed Philina, and then told how the child had drawn her sword in the battle; and seeing her friend in peril, had struck fiercely at the freebooters; one of whom at length had seized her by the arm, and pitched her to a side. They chid her for not sooner speaking of her ailment; but they easily saw that she was apprehensive of the surgeon, who had hitherto looked on her as a boy. With a view to remove the mischief, she was made to keep her arm in a sling; which arrangement too displeased her; for she now was forced to surrender most part of her share in the management and nursing of our friend to Philina. That pleasing sinner but shewed herself the more active and attentive on this account.

One morning, on awakening, Wilhelm found himself in a strange neighbourhood with her. In the movements of sleep, he had hitched himself quite to the back of his spacious bed. Philina was lying across from the front part of it; she seemed to have fallen asleep while sitting on the bed and reading. A book had dropt from her hand; she had sunk back, and her head was lying near his breast, over which her fair and now loosened hair was spread in streams. The disorder of sleep enlivened her charms more than art or purpose could have done; a childlike smiling rest hovered on her countenance. He looked at her for a time; and seemed to blame himself for the pleasure which this gave him. He had

viewed her attentively for some moments, when she began to awake. He softly closed his eyes; but could not help glimmering at her through his eyelashes, as she trimmed herself again, and went away to consult about breakfast.

All the actors had at length successively announced themselves to Wilhelm; asking introductory letters, requiring money for their journey with more or less impatience and ill-breeding; and constantly receiving it against Philina's will. It was in vain for her to tell our friend, that the huntsman had already left a handsome sum with these people, and that accordingly they did but cozen him. To these remonstrances he gave no heed; on the contrary, the two had a sharp quarrel on the subject; which ended by Wilhelm signifying once for all, that Philina must now join the rest of the company, and seek her fortune with Serlo.

For an instant or two she lost her temper; but speedily recovering composure, she cried: "If I had but my fair-haired boy again, I should not care a fig for any of you." She meant Friedrich, who had vanished from the scene of battle, and never since appeared.

Next morning Mignon brought news to the bedside, that Philina had gone off by night, leaving all that belonged to Wilhelm very neatly laid out in the next room. He felt her absence; he had lost in her a faithful nurse, a cheerful companion;

he was no longer used to be alone. But Mignon soon filled up the blank.

Ever since that light-minded beauty had been near the patient with her friendly cares, the little creature had by degrees drawn back, and remained silent and secluded in herself; but the field being clear once more, she again came forth with her attentions and her love; again was eager in serving, and lively in entertaining him.

CHAPTER XI.

WILHELM was rapidly approaching complete recovery: he now hoped to be upon his journey in a few days. He proposed no more to lead an aimless routine of existence: the steps of his career were henceforth to be calculated for an end. In the first place, he purposed to seek out that beneficent lady, and express the gratitude he felt to her; then to proceed without delay to his friend the Manager, that he might do his utmost to assist the luckless company; intending at the same time to visit the commercial friends whom he had letters for, and to transact the business which had been intrusted to him. He was not without hope that fortune as formerly would favour him; and give him opportunity, by some lucky speculation, to repair his losses and fill up the vacuity of his coffer.

The desire of again beholding his beautiful deliverer augmented every day. To settle his route, he took counsel with the clergyman, a person well skilled in statistics and geography, and possessing a fine collection of charts and books on those subjects. They two searched for the place, which

this noble family had chosen as their residence while the war continued ; they searched for information respecting the family itself. But their place was to be found in no geography or map ; and the heraldic manuals made no mention of their name.

Wilhelm became restless ; and having mentioned the cause of his uneasiness, the Harper told him he had reason to believe that the huntsman, for whatever reason, had concealed the real designations.

Conceiving himself now to be in the immediate neighbourhood of his lovely benefactress, Wilhelm hoped he might obtain some tidings of her if he sent out the Harper : but in this too he was deceived. Diligently as the old man kept inquiring, he could find no trace of her. Of late days a number of quick movements and unforeseen marches had taken place in that quarter ; no one had particularly noticed the travelling party ; and the ancient messenger, to avoid being taken for a Jewish spy, was obliged to return and appear without any olive-leaf, before his master and friend. He gave a strict account of his conduct in this commission ; striving to keep far from him all suspicions of remissness. He endeavoured by every means to mitigate the trouble of our friend ; bethought him of every thing that he had learned from the huntsman, and advanced a number of conjectures ; out of all which, one circumstance at

length came to light, whereby Wilhelm could explain some enigmatic words of his vanished benefactress.

The freebooters, it appeared, had lain in wait, not for the wandering troop, but for that noble company, whom they rightly guessed to be provided with store of gold and valuables, and of whose movements they must have had precise intelligence. Whether the attack should be imputed to some free-corps, to marauders, or to robbers, was uncertain. It was clear, however, that by good fortune for the high and rich company, the poor and low had first arrived upon the place, and undergone the fate which was provided for the others. It was to this that the lady's words referred, which Wilhelm yet well recollected. If he might now be happy and contented, that a prescient Genius had selected him for the sacrifice, which saved a perfect mortal ; he was, on the other hand, nigh desperate, when he thought that all hope of finding her and seeing her again was, at least for the present, completely gone.

What increased this singular emotion still farther, was the likeness which he thought he had observed between the Countess and the beautiful unknown. They resembled one another, as two sisters may, of whom neither can be called the younger or the elder, for they seem to be twins.

The recollection of the amiable Countess was to Wilhelm infinitely sweet. He recalled her image but too willingly into his memory. But anon, the

figure of the noble Amazon would step between ; one vision melted and changed into the other, and the form of neither would abide with him.

A new resemblance, the similarity of their hand-writings, naturally struck him with still greater wonder. He had a charming song in the Countess' hand laid up in his portfolio ; and in the surtout he had found a little note, inquiring with much tender care about the health of an uncle.

Wilhelm was convinced that his benefactress must have penned this billet ; that it must have been sent from one chamber to another, at some inn during their journey, and put into the coat-pocket by the uncle. He held both papers together ; and if the regular and graceful letters of the Countess had already pleased him much, he found in the similar but freer lines of the stranger a flowing harmony which could not be described. The note contained nothing ; yet the strokes of it seemed to affect him, as the presence of their fancied writer once had done.

He fell into a dreamy longing ; and well accordant with his feelings was the song which at that instant Mignon and the Harper began to sing, with a touching expression, in the form of an irregular duet :

You never long'd and loved,
You know not grief like mine :
Alone and far removed
From joys or hopes, I pine :

A foreign sky above,
And a foreign earth below me,
To the south I look all day ;
For the hearts that love and know me
Are far, are far away.
I burn, I faint, I languish,
My heart is waste, and sick, and sore ;
Who has not long'd in baffled anguish,
Cannot know what I deplore.

CHAPTER XII.

THE soft allurements of his dear presiding angel, far from leading our friend to any one determined path, did but nourish and increase the unrest which he had previously experienced. A secret fire was gliding through his veins; objects distinct and indistinct alternated within his soul, and awoke unspeakable desire. At one time he wished for a horse, at another for wings; and not till it seemed impossible that he could stay, did he look round him to discover whither he was wanting to go.

The threads of his destiny had become so strangely entangled, he wished to see its curious knots unravelled or cut in two. Often, when he heard the tramp of a horse, or the rolling of a carriage, he would run to the window and look out, in hopes it might be some one seeking him; some one, even though it were by chance, bringing him intelligence and certainty and joy. He told stories to himself, how his friend Werner might visit these parts and come upon him; how perhaps Mariana might appear. The sound of every post's horn threw him into agitation. It would be Melina sending news to him of his adventures; above all, it would be

the huntsman coming back to carry him to the beauty whom he worshipped.

Of all these possibilities, unhappily no one occurred; he was forced at last to return to the company of himself; and in again looking through the past, there was one circumstance, which, the more he viewed and weighed it, grew the more offensive and intolerable to him. It was his unprosperous generalship; of which he never thought without vexation. For although, on the evening of that luckless day, he had produced a pretty fair defence of his conduct when accused by the company, yet he could not hide from himself that he was guilty. On the contrary, in hypochondriac moments he took the blame of the whole misfortune.

Self-love exaggerates our faults as well as our virtues. Wilhelm thought he had awakened confidence in him, had guided the will of the rest; that, led by inexperience and rashness, they had ventured on, till a danger seized them, for which they were not match. Loud as well as silent reproaches had then assailed him; and if in their sorrowful condition, he had promised to the company, misguided by him, never to forsake them till their loss had been repaid with usury; this was but another folly for which he had to blame himself, the folly of presuming to take upon his single shoulders a misfortune that was spread over many. One instant he accused himself of uttering this promise, under the excitement and the pressure of the moment; the

next he again felt, that this generous presentation of his hand, which no one deigned to accept, was but a light formality compared with the vow which his heart had taken. He meditated means of being kind and useful to them; he found every cause conspire to quicken his visit to Serlo. Accordingly he packed his things together; and without waiting his complete recovery, without listening to the counsel of the parson or the surgeon, he hastened, in the strange society of Mignon and the Harper, to escape the inactivity, in which his fate had once more too long detained him.

CHAPTER XIII.

SERLO received him with open arms, crying out as he met him : " Is it you ? Do I know you again ? You have scarcely changed at all. Is your love for that noblest of arts still as lively and strong ? I myself am so glad at your arrival, that I feel no longer the mistrust which your last letters had excited in me."

Wilhelm asked with surprise for a clearer explanation.

" You have treated me," said Serlo, " not like an old friend, but as if I were a great lord, to whom with a safe conscience you might recommend useless people. Our destiny depends on the opinion of the public ; and I fear, Herr Melina and his suite can hardly be received among us."

Wilhelm tried to say something in their favour ; but Serlo began to draw so merciless a picture of them, that our friend was happy when a lady came into the room, and put a stop to the discussion. She was introduced to him as Aurelia, the sister of his friend : she received him with extreme kindness ; and her conversation was so pleasing, that

he did not once remark a shade of sorrow visible on her expressive countenance, to which it lent peculiar interest.

For the first time during many months, Wilhelm felt himself in his proper element once more. Of late in talking, he had merely found submissive listeners, and even these not always; but now he had the happiness to speak with critics and artists, who not only fully understood him, but repaid his observations by others equally instructive. With wonderful vivacity they travelled through the latest pieces; with wonderful correctness, judged them. The decisions of the public they could try and estimate: they speedily threw light upon each other's thoughts.

Loving Shakspeare as our friend did, he failed not to lead round the conversation to the merits of that dramatist. Expressing, as he entertained, the liveliest hopes of the new epoch which these exquisite productions must form in Germany, he ere long introduced his Hamlet, who had busied him so much of late.

Serlo declared that he would long ago have played the piece, had this been possible, and that he himself would willingly engage to act Polonius. He added, with a smile: "An Ophelia, too, will certainly cast up, if we had but a Prince."

Wilhelm did not notice that Aurelia seemed a little hurt at her brother's sarcasm. Our friend was in his proper vein, becoming copious and di-

dactic, expounding how he would have Hamlet played. He circumstantially delivered to his hearers the opinions we before saw him busied with; taking all the trouble possible to make his notion of the matter acceptable, sceptical as Serlo shewed himself regarding it. "Well then," said the latter, finally, "suppose we grant you all this, what will you explain by it?"

"Much; every thing," said Wilhelm. "Conceive a prince such as I have painted him, and that his father suddenly dies. Ambition, and the love of rule, are not the passions that inspire him. As a king's son, he would have been contented; but now he is first constrained to consider the difference which separates a sovereign from a subject. The crown was not hereditary; yet a longer possession of it by his father would have strengthened the pretensions of an only son, and secured his hopes of the succession. In place of this, he now beholds himself excluded by his uncle, in spite of specious promises, most probably for ever. He is now poor in goods and favour, and a stranger in the scene which from youth he had looked upon as his inheritance. His temper here assumes its first mournful tinge. He feels that now he is not more, that he is less, than a private nobleman; he offers himself as the servant of every one; he is not courteous and condescending, he is needy and degraded.

"His past condition he remembers as a vanished

dream. It is in vain that his uncle strives to cheer him, to present his situation in another point of view. The feeling of his nothingness will not forsake him.

“ The second stroke that came upon him wounded deeper, bowed still more. It was the marriage of his mother. The faithful tender son had yet a mother, when his father passed away. He hoped, in the company of his surviving noble-minded parent, to reverence the heroic form of the departed; but his mother too he loses, and it is something worse than death that robs him of her. The trustful image, which a good child loves to form of its parents, is gone. With the dead there is no help, on the living no hold. She also is a woman, and her name is Frailty, like that of all her sex.

“ Now first does he feel himself completely bent and orphaned; and no happiness of life can repay what he has lost. Not reflective or sorrowful by nature, reflection and sorrow have become for him a heavy obligation. It is thus that we see him first enter on the scene. I do not think that I have mixed aught foreign with the piece, or overcharged a single feature of it.”

Serlo looked at his sister, and said, “ Did I give thee a false picture of our friend? He begins well; he has still many things to tell us, many to persuade us of.” Wilhelm asseverated loudly, that

he meant not to persuade, but to convince: he begged for another moment's patience.

“Figure to yourselves this youth,” cried he, “this son of princes; conceive him vividly, bring his state before your eyes, and then observe him when he learns that his father's spirit walks; stand by him in the terrors of the night, when the venerable ghost itself appears before him. A horrid shudder passes over him; he speaks to the mysterious form; he sees it beckon him; he follows it, and hears. The fearful accusation of his uncle rings in his ears; the summons to revenge, and the piercing oft-repeated prayer, Remember me!

“And when the ghost has vanished, who is it that stands before us? A young hero panting for vengeance? A prince by birth, rejoicing to be called to punish the usurper of his crown? No! trouble and astonishment take hold of the solitary young man: he grows bitter against smiling villains, swears that he will not forget the spirit, and concludes with the expressive ejaculation:

The time is out of joint: O! cursed spite,
That ever I was born to set it right!

“In these words, I imagine, will be found the key to Hamlet's whole procedure. To me it is clear that Shakspeare meant, in the present case, to represent the effects of a great action laid upon a soul unfit for the performance of it. In this

view the whole piece seems to me to be composed. There is an oak-tree planted in a costly jar, which should have borne only pleasant flowers in its bosom ; the roots expand, the jar is shivered.

“ A lovely, pure, noble, and most moral nature, without the strength of nerve which forms a hero, sinks beneath a burden which it cannot bear, and must not cast away. All duties are holy for him ; the present is too hard. Impossibilities have been required of him ; not in themselves impossibilities, but such for him. He winds, and turns, and torments himself ; he advances and recoils ; is ever put in mind, ever puts himself in mind ; at last does all but lose his purpose from his thoughts ; yet still without recovering his peace of mind.”

CHAPTER XIV.

SEVERAL people entering interrupted the discussion. They were musical dilettanti, who commonly assembled at Serlo's once a week, and formed a little concert. Serlo himself loved music much: he used to maintain, that a player without taste for it never could attain a distinct conception and feeling of the scenic art. "As a man performs," he would observe, "with far more ease and dignity, when his gestures are accompanied and guided by a tune; so the player ought, in idea as it were, to set to music even his prose parts, that he may not monotonously slight them over in his individual style, but treat them in suitable alternation by time and measure."

Aurelia seemed to give but little heed to what was passing; at last she conducted Wilhelm to another room, and going to the window, and looking out at the starry sky, she said to him: "You have still much to tell us about Hamlet; I will not hurry you; my brother must hear it as well as I: but let me beg to know your thoughts about Ophelia."

"Of her there cannot much be said," he answered; "for a few master-strokes complete her

character. The whole being of Ophelia floats, in sweet and ripe sensation. Kindness for the Prince, to whose hand she may aspire, flows so spontaneously, her tender heart obeys its impulses so unresistingly, that both father and brother are afraid; both give her warning harshly and directly. Decorum, like the thin lawn upon her bosom, cannot hide the soft, still movements of her heart; it on the contrary betrays them. Her fancy is smit; her silent modesty breathes amiable desire; and if the friendly goddess Opportunity should shake the tree, its fruit would fall."

"And then," said Aurelia, "when she beholds herself forsaken, cast away, despised; when all is inverted in the soul of her crazed lover, and the highest changes to the lowest, and instead of the sweet cup of love he offers the bitter cup of wo—"

"Her heart breaks," cried Wilhelm; "the whole structure of her being is loosened from its joinings; her father's death strikes fiercely against it; and the fair edifice altogether crumbles into fragments."

Our friend had not observed with what expressiveness Aurelia pronounced these words. Looking only at this work of art, at its connexion and completeness, he dreamed not that his auditress was feeling quite a different influence; that a deep sorrow of her own was vividly awakened in her breast by these dramatic shadows.

Aurelia's head was still resting on her arms;

and her eyes, now full of tears, were directed to the sky. At last, no longer able to conceal her secret grief, she seized both hands of her friend, and exclaimed, while he stood surprised before her: "Forgive, forgive a heavy heart! I am girt and pressed together by these people; from my hard-hearted brother I must seek to hide myself: your presence has untied these bonds. My friend!" continued she, "it is but a few minutes since we saw each other first, and already you are going to become my confidant." She could scarcely end the words, and sank upon his shoulder. "Think not worse of me," she said with sobs, "that I disclose myself to you so hastily, that I am so weak before you. Be my friend, remain my friend; I shall deserve it." He spoke to her in his kindest manner: but in vain; her tears still flowed and choked her words.

At this moment Serlo entered, most unwelcomely; and most unexpectedly, Philina with her hand in his. "Here is your friend," said he to her; "he will be glad to make his compliments to you."

"How!" cried Wilhelm in astonishment: "are you here?" With a modest settled mien, she went up to him; bade him welcome; praised Serlo's goodness, who, she said, without merit on her part, but purely in the hope of her improvement, had agreed to admit her into his accomplished troop. She behaved, all the while, in a friendly manner towards Wilhelm, yet with a dignified distance.

But this dissimulation lasted only till the other two were gone. Aurelia having left them, that she might conceal her trouble, and Serlo being called away, Philina first looked very sharply at the doors, to see that both were really out; then began skipping to and fro about the room, as if she had been mad; at last dropt down upon the floor, and almost died of giggling and laughing. She then sprang up, patted and flattered our friend; rejoicing above measure that she had been clever enough to go before, and spy the land and get herself nestled in.

“ Pretty things are going on here,” she said; “ just of the sort I like. Aurelia has had a hapless love-affair with some nobleman, who seems to be a very stately person, one that I myself could like to see some day. He has left her a memorial, or I much mistake. There is a boy running over the house, of three years old or thereby; the papa must be a very pretty fellow. Commonly I cannot suffer children, but this brat quite delights me. I have calculated Aurelia’s business. The death of her husband, the new acquaintance, the child’s age, all things agree.

“ But now her spark has gone his ways; for a year she has not seen a glimpse of him. She is beside herself and inconsolable for this. The more fool she! Her brother has a dancing girl among his troop, with whom he stands on pretty terms; an actress to whom he is betrothed; in the town,

some other women whom he courts; I too am on his list. The more fool he! Of the rest thou shalt hear to-morrow. And now one word about Philina whom thou knowest: the arch-fool is fallen in love with thee." She swore that it was true, and a proper joke. She earnestly requested Wilhelm to fall in love with Aurelia; for then the chase would be worth beholding. "She pursues her faithless swain, thou her, I thee, her brother me. If that will not divert us for a quarter of a year, I engage to die at the first episode which occurs in this four times complicated tale." She begged of him not to spoil her trade, and to shew her such respect as her external conduct should deserve.

CHAPTER XV.

NEXT morning Wilhelm went to visit Frau Melina; but found her not at home. On inquiring here for the other members of the wandering community, he learned that Philina had invited them to breakfast. Out of curiosity, he hastened thither; and found them all cleared up and not a little comforted. The cunning creature had collected them, was treating them with chocolate, and giving them to understand that some prospects still remained for them; that, by her influence, she hoped to convince the manager how advantageous it would be for him to introduce so many clever hands among his company. They listened to her with attention; swallowed cup after cup of her chocolate; thought the girl was not so bad after all; and went away proposing to themselves to speak whatever good of her they could.

“Do you think then,” said our friend, who staid behind, “that Serlo will determine to retain our comrades?” “Not at all,” replied Philina; “nor do I care a fig for it. The sooner they are gone the better! Laertes alone I could wish to keep: the rest we shall by and by pack off.”

Next she signified to Wilhelm, her firm persuasion that he should no longer hide his talent ; but, under the direction of a Serlo, go upon the boards. She was lavish in her praises of the order, the taste, the spirit which prevailed in this establishment : she spoke so flatteringly to Wilhelm ; with such admiration of his gifts, that his heart and his imagination were advancing towards this proposal, as fast as his understanding and his reason were retreating from it. He concealed his inclination from himself and from Philina ; and passed a restless day, unable to resolve on visiting his trading correspondents, to receive the letters which might there be lying for him. The anxieties of his people during all this time he easily conceived ; yet he shrunk from the precise account of them ; particularly at the present time, as he promised to himself a great and pure enjoyment from the exhibition of a new piece that evening.

Serlo had refused to let him witness the rehearsal. " You must see us on the best side," he observed, " before we can allow you to look into our cards."

The acting of the piece, however, where our friend did not fail to be present, yielded him a high satisfaction. It was the first time he had ever seen a theatre in such perfection. The actors were evidently all possessed of excellent gifts, of superior capacities, and a high clear notion of their art : they were not equal ; but they mutually re-

strained and supported one another ; each breathed ardour into those around him ; throughout all their acting, they shewed themselves decided and correct. You soon felt that Serlo was the soul of the whole : as an individual he appeared to much advantage. A merry humour, a measured vivacity, a settled feeling of propriety, combined with a great gift of imitation, were to be observed in him the moment he appeared upon the stage. The inward contentment of his being seemed to spread itself over all that looked on him ; and the intellectual style, in which he could so easily and gracefully express the finest shadings of his part, excited more delight, as he could conceal the art which, by long-continued practice, he had made his own.

Aurelia, his sister, was not inferior ; she obtained still greater approbation, for she touched the souls of the audience, which it was his to exhilarate and amuse.

After a few days had passed pleasantly enough, Aurelia sent to inquire for our friend. He hastened to her : she was lying on a sofa ; she seemed to be suffering from headache ; her whole frame had visibly a feverish movement. Her eye lighted up as she noticed Wilhelm. " Pardon me ! " she cried, as he entered ; " the trust with which you have inspired me has made me weak. Till now I have contrived to bear up against my woes in secret ; nay, they gave me strength and consola-

tion: but now, I know not how it is, you have loosened the bands of silence; you must, against your will, take part in the battle I am fighting with myself."

Wilhelm answered her in friendly and obliging terms. He declared that her image and her sorrows had not ceased to hover in his thoughts; that he longed for her confidence, and devoted himself to be her friend.

While he spoke his eyes were attracted to the boy who sat before her on the floor, and was busy rattling a multitude of playthings. This child, as Philina had observed, might be about three years of age; and Wilhelm now conceived how that giddy creature, seldom elevated in her phraseology, had likened it to the sun. For its cheerful eyes and full countenance were shaded by the finest golden locks, which flowed round in copious curls: dark, slender, softly-bending eyebrows, shewed themselves upon a brow of dazzling whiteness; and the living tinge of health was glancing on its cheeks. "Sit by me," said Aurelia: "you are looking at the happy child with admiration; in truth, I took it on my arms with joy; I keep it carefully: yet by it I can also measure the extent of my sufferings; for they seldom let me feel the worth of such a gift.

"Allow me," she continued, "to speak to you about myself and my destiny; for I have it much at heart that you should not misunderstand me. I

thought I should have a few calm instants, and accordingly I sent for you ; you are now here, and the thread of my narrative is lost.

“ ‘One more forsaken woman in the world !’ you will say. You are a man ; you are thinking : ‘What a noise she makes, the fool, about a necessary evil, which certainly as death awaits women when such is the fidelity of men !’ O my friend ! if my fate were common, I would gladly undergo a common evil. But it is so singular : why cannot I present it to you in a mirror, why not command some one to tell it you ? O had I, had I been seduced, surprised, and afterwards forsaken ! there would then be comfort in despair : but I am far more miserable ; I have been my own deceiver ; I have wittingly betrayed myself ; and this, this is what shall never be forgiven me.”

“ With noble feelings, such as yours,” said Wilhelm, “ you can never be entirely unhappy.”

“ And do you know to what I am indebted for my feelings ?” asked Aurelia. “ To the worst education that ever threatened to contaminate a girl ; to the vilest examples for misleading the senses and the inclinations.

“ My mother dying early, the fairest years of my youth were spent with an aunt, whose principle it was to despise the laws of decency. She resigned herself headlong to every impulse ; careless whether the object of it proved her tyrant or her

slave, so she might forget herself in wild enjoyment.

“By children, with the pure clear vision of innocence, what ideas of men were necessarily formed in such a scene! How stolid, brutally bold, importunate, unmannerly, was every one whom she allured! How sated, empty, insolent, and tasteless, when he left her! I have seen this woman live for years humbled under the control of the meanest creatures. What incidents she had to undergo! With what a front she contrived to accommodate herself to her destiny; nay, with how much skill, to wear these shameful fetters!

“It was thus, my friend, that I became acquainted with your sex: and deeply did I hate it, when, as I imagined, I observed that even tolerable men, in their conduct to ours, appeared to renounce every honest feeling, of which nature might otherwise have made them capable.

“In such a situation, also, I was forced to make a multitude of painful discoveries about my own sex: and in truth I was then wiser, as a girl of sixteen years, than I now am; now that I scarcely understand myself. Why are we so wise when young; so wise, and ever growing less so?”

The boy began to make a noise; Aurelia became impatient, and rung. An old woman came to take him out. “Hast thou toothache still?” said Aurelia to the crone, whose face was wrapped

in cloth. "Unsufferable," said the other, with a muffled voice; then lifted up the boy, who seemed to like going with her, and carried him away.

Scarcely was he gone, when Aurelia began bitterly to weep. "I am good for nothing," cried she, "but lamenting and complaining; and I feel ashamed to lie before you like a miserable worm. My recollection is already fled; I can relate no more." She faltered and was silent. Her friend, unwilling to reply with a common-place, and unable to reply with any thing particularly applicable, pressed her hand, and looked at her for some time without speaking. Thus embarrassed, he at length took up a book, which he noticed lying on the table before him: it was Shakspeare's works, and open at Hamlet.

Serlo at this moment entering, inquired about his sister; and looking in the book which our friend had hold of, cried: "So you are again at Hamlet? Quite right! Many doubts have arisen within me, which seem not a little to impair the canonical aspect of the piece as you would have it viewed. The English themselves have admitted that its chief interest concludes with the third act; the last two lagging sordily on, and scarcely uniting with the rest: and certainly about the end it seems to stand stock still."

"It is very possible," said Wilhelm, "that some individuals of a nation, which has so many master-pieces to feel proud of, may be led by pre-

judice and narrowness of mind to form false judgments: but this cannot hinder us from looking with our own eyes, and doing justice where we see it due. I am very far from censuring the plan of Hamlet; on the other hand, I believe there never was a grander one invented; nay it is not invented, it is real."

"How do you make that appear?" inquired Serlo.

"I will not make any thing appear," said Wilhelm; "I will merely shew you what my own conceptions of it are."

Aurelia rose up on her cushion; leaned upon her hand, and looked at Wilhelm; who, with the firmest assurance that he was in the right, went on as follows: "It pleases us, it flatters us to see a hero acting on his own strength; loving and hating as his heart directs him; undertaking and completing; casting every obstacle aside; and at length attaining some great object which he aimed at. Poets and historians would willingly persuade us that so proud a lot may fall to man. In Hamlet we are taught another lesson: the hero is without a plan, but the piece is full of plan. Here we have no villain punished on some self-conceived and rigidly-accomplished scheme of vengeance: a horrid deed occurs; it rolls itself along with all its consequences, dragging guiltless persons also in its course; the perpetrator seems as if he would evade the abyss which is made ready for him; yet he plunges in,

at the very point by which he thinks he shall escape and happily complete his course.

“ For it is the property of crime to extend its mischief over innocence, as it is of virtue to extend its blessings over many that deserve them not ; while frequently the author of the one or of the other is not punished or rewarded at all. Here in this play of ours, how strange ! The pit of darkness sends its spirit and demands revenge ; in vain ! All circumstances tend one way, and hurry to revenge ; in vain ! Neither earthly nor infernal thing may bring about what is reserved for Fate alone. The hour of judgment comes : the wicked falls with the good : one race is mowed away that another may spring up.”

After a pause, in which they looked at one another, Serlo said : “ You pay no excessive compliment to Providence, in thus exalting Shakspeare ; and, besides, it appears to me, that for the honour of your poet, as others for the honour of Providence, you ascribe to him an object and a plan, which he himself had never thought of.”

CHAPTER XVI.

“LET me also put a question,” said Aurelia. “I have looked at Ophelia’s part again; I am contented with it, and conceive that under certain circumstances I could play it. But tell me; should the poet not have furnished the insane maiden with another sort of songs? Could not one select some fragments out of melancholy ballads for this purpose? What have double meanings and lascivious insipidities to do in the mouth of such a noble-minded person?”

“My dear friend,” said Wilhelm, “even here I cannot yield you one iota. In these singularities, in this apparent impropriety, a deep sense is hid. Do we not understand from the very first what the mind of the good soft-hearted child was busied with? Silently she lived within herself, yet she scarce concealed her wishes, her longing; the tones of desire were in secret ringing through her soul; and how often may she have attempted, like an unskilful nurse, to lull her senses to repose with songs which only kept them more awake. But at last, when her self-command is altogether gone,

when the secrets of her heart are hovering on her tongue, that tongue betrays her, and in the innocence of insanity she solaces herself, unmindful of king or queen, with the echo of her loose and well-beloved songs: *To-morrow is Saint Valentine's day*; and *by Gis and by Saint Charity*."

He had not finished speaking, when at once an extraordinary scene took place before him, which he could not in any way explain.

Serlo had walked once or twice up and down the room, without evincing any special object. On a sudden, he stepped forward to Aurelia's dressing-table; caught hastily at something that was lying there, and hastened to the door with his booty. No sooner did Aurelia notice this, than springing up, she threw herself in his way; laid hold of him with boundless vehemence, and had dexterity enough to clutch an end of the article which he was carrying off. They struggled and wrestled with great obstinacy; twisted and threw each other sharply round: he laughed; she exerted all her strength: and as Wilhelm hastened towards them, to separate and soothe them, Aurelia sprang aside with a naked dagger in her hand, while Serlo cast the scabbard, which had staid with him, angrily upon the floor. Wilhelm started back astonished; and his dumb wonder seemed to ask the cause why so violent a strife, about so strange an implement, had taken place between them.

“ You shall judge betwixt us,” said the brother. “ What has she to do with sharp steel? Do but look at it. That dagger is not fit for any actress : Point and edge like a needle’s and a razor’s ! What good is it ? Passionate as she is, she will one day chance to do herself a mischief. I have a heart’s hatred at such singularities : a serious thought of that sort is insane, and so dangerous a plaything is not in taste.”

“ I have it back !” exclaimed Aurelia, and held the polished blade aloft : “ I will now keep my faithful friend more carefully. Pardon me,” she cried, and kissed the steel, “ that I have so neglected thee.”

Serlo was like to grow seriously angry. “ Take it as thou wilt, brother,” she continued : “ how knowest thou but that under this form a precious talisman may have been given me ; but that in extreme need I may find help and counsel in it ? Must all be hurtful that looks dangerous ?”

“ Such talk without a meaning might drive one mad,” said Serlo, and left the room with suppressed indignation. Aurelia put the dagger carefully into its sheath, and placed it in her bosom. “ Let us now resume the conversation which our foolish brother has disturbed,” said she, as Wilhelm was beginning to put questions on the subject of this quarrel.

“ I must admit your picture of Ophelia to be just,” continued she ; “ I cannot now misunder-

stand the object of the poet: I must pity, though as you paint her, I shall rather pity her than sympathize with her. But allow me here to offer a remark, which in these few days you have frequently suggested to me. I observe with admiration the correct, keen, penetrating glance, with which you judge of poetry, especially dramatic poetry: the deepest abysses of invention are not hidden from you, the finest touches of representation cannot escape you. Without ever having viewed the objects in nature, you recognise the truth of their images: there seems as it were a presentiment of all the universe to lie within you, which by the harmonious touch of poetry is awakened and unfolded. For in truth," continued she, "from without, you receive not much: I have scarcely seen a person that so little knew, so totally misknew the people whom he lived with as you do. Allow me to say it; in hearing you expound the mysteries of Shakspeare, one would think you had just descended from a synod of the gods, and had listened there while they were taking counsel how to form men: in seeing you transact with your fellows, I could imagine you to be the first large-born child of creation, standing agape and gazing with strange wonderment and edifying good nature at lions and apes and sheep and elephants, and true-heartedly addressing them as your equals, simply because they were there, and moving like yourself."

“ The feeling of my ignorance in this respect,” said Wilhelm, “ often gives me pain ; and I should thank you, my worthy friend, if you would help me to get a little better insight into life. From youth, I have been accustomed to direct the eyes of my spirit inwards rather than outwards ; and hence it is very natural that to a certain extent I should be acquainted with man, while of men I have not the smallest knowledge.”

“ In truth,” said Aurelia, “ I at first suspected that, in giving such accounts of the people whom you sent to my brother, you meant to make your sport of us ; when I compared your letters with the merits of these persons, it seemed very strange.”

Aurelia’s remarks, well-founded as they might be, and willing as our friend was to confess himself deficient in this matter, carried with them something painful, nay offensive to him ; so that he grew silent, and retired within himself, partly to avoid showing any irritated feeling, partly to search his mind for the truth or error of the charge.

“ Let not this alarm you,” said Aurelia : “ the light of the understanding it is always in our power to reach ; but this fulness of the heart no one can give us. If you are destined for an artist, you cannot long enough retain the dim-sightedness and innocence of which I speak : it is the beautiful hull upon the young bud ; woe to us if we are forced too soon to burst it ! Surely it were

well, if we never knew what the people are for whom we work and study.

“ Oh ! I too was in this happy case, when I first betrod the stage, with the loftiest opinion of myself and of my nation. What a people, in my fancy, were the Germans ! what a people might they yet become ! I addressed this people ; raised above them by a little joinery, separated from them by a row of lamps, whose glancing and vapour threw an indistinctness over every thing before me. How welcome was the tumult of applause, which sounded to me from the crowd ; how gratefully did I accept the present, offered me unanimously by so many hands ! For a time I rocked myself in these ideas ; I affected the multitude and was again affected by them. With my public I was on the fairest footing ; I imagined that I felt a perfect harmony betwixt us, and that on each occasion I beheld before me the best and noblest of the land.

“ Unhappily it was not the actress alone that inspired these friends of the stage with interest ; they likewise made pretensions to the young and lively girl. They let me understand, in terms distinct enough, that my duty was not only to excite emotion in them, but to share it with them personally. This unluckily was not my business : I wished to elevate their minds ; but to what they called their hearts I had not the slightest claim. Yet now men of all ranks, ages, and characters, by

turns afflict me with their addresses ; and nothing grieved me more, than that I could not, like an honest young woman, shut my room, and spare myself so vast a quantity of labour.

“ The men appeared, for most part, much the same as I had been accustomed to observe about my aunt ; and here again I should have felt disgusted with them, had not their peculiarities and insipidities amused me. As I was compelled to see them, in the theatre, in open places, in my house, I formed the project of spying out their follies, and my brother helped me with alacrity to execute it. And if you reflect that, up from the whisking shopman and the conceited merchant's son, to the polished calculating man of the world, the bold soldier and the impetuous prince, all in succession passed in review before me, each in his way endeavouring to found his small romance, you will pardon me if I conceived that I had gained some acquaintance with my nation.

“ The fantastically dizened student ; the awkward and humbly proud man of letters ; the taper-footed, sleek, contented canon ; the stiff and heedful man of office ; the heavy country-baron ; the smirking, vapid courtier ; the young, erring parson ; the cool, as well as the quick and sharply-speculating merchant ; all these I have seen in motion ; and I swear to you that there were few among them fitted to inspire me even with a sentiment of toleration : on the contrary, I felt it

altogether irksome to collect, with tedium and annoyance, the suffrages of fools; to pocket those applauses in detail, which in their accumulated state had delighted me so much, which in the gross I had appropriated with such pleasure.

“ If I expected a rational compliment upon my acting; if I hoped that they would praise an author whom I valued, they were sure to make one empty observation on the back of another, and to name some tasteless piece in which they wished to see me play. If I listened in their company, to hear if some noble, brilliant, witty thought had met with a response among them, and would reappear from some of them in proper season, it was rare that I could catch an echo of it. An error that had happened, a mispronunciation, a provincialism of some actor; such were the weighty points by which they held fast, beyond which they could not pass. I knew not, in the end, to what hand I should turn: themselves they thought too clever to be entertained; and me they imagined they were entertaining rarely, if they romped and made noise enough about me. I began very cordially to despise them all; I felt as if the whole nation had, on purpose, deputed these people to debase it in my eyes. They appeared to me so clownish, so ill-bred, so wretchedly instructed, so void of pleasing qualities, so tasteless; I frequently exclaimed: No German

can buckle his shoes, till he has learned to do it of some foreign nation !

“ You perceive how blinded, how unjust, and splenetic I was ; and the longer it lasted, my spleen increased. I might have killed myself with these things : but I fell into the contrary extreme ; I married, or rather let myself be married. My brother, who had undertaken to conduct the theatre, wished much to have a helper. His choice lighted on a young man, who was not offensive to me ; who wanted all that my brother had ; genius, vivacity, spirit, and impetuosity of mind ; but who also in return had all that my brother wanted ; love of order, diligence, and precious gifts in house-keeping and the management of money.

“ He became my husband, I know not how ; we lived together, I do not well know why. Enough ! our affairs went prosperously forward. We drew a large income : of this my brother's activity was the cause. We lived with a moderate expenditure ; and that was the merit of my husband. I thought no more about world or nation. With the world I had nothing to participate : my idea of the nation had faded away. When I entered on the scene, I did so that I might subsist ; I opened my lips because I durst not continue silent, because I had come out to speak.

“ Yet let me do the matter justice. I had altogether given myself up to the disposal of my brother. His objects were applause and money ;

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for, between ourselves, he has no dislike to hear his own praises, and his outlay is always great. I no longer played according to my own feeling, to my own conviction; but as he directed me: and if I did it to his satisfaction, I was well content. He steered entirely by the caprices of the public. Money flowed upon us; he could live according to his humour, and so we had good times with him.

“ Thus had I fallen into a dull, handicraft routine. I spun out my days without joy or sympathy. My marriage was childless, and not of long continuance. My husband grew sick; his strength was visibly decaying; anxiety for him interrupted my general indifference. It was at this time that I formed an acquaintance, which opened up a new life for me; a new and quicker one, for it will soon be done.”

She kept silence for a time, and then continued: “ All at once my prattling humour falters; I have not the courage to go on. Let me rest a little. You shall not go, till you have learned the whole extent of my misfortune. Meanwhile, call in Mignon, and ask her what she wants.”

The child had more than once been in the room, while Aurelia and our friend were talking. As they spoke lower on her entrance, she had glided out again, and was now sitting quietly in the hall, and waiting. Being bid return, she brought a book with her, which its form and binding shewed to be a small geographical atlas. She had seen some maps,

for the first time at the parson's house, with great astonishment; had asked him many questions, and informed herself so far as possible about them. Her desire to learn seemed much excited by this new branch of knowledge. She now earnestly requested Wilhelm to purchase her the book; saying she had pawned her large silver buckle with the printseller for it, and wished to have back the pledge to-morrow morning, as this evening it was late. Her request was granted; and she then began repeating several things she had already learned; at the same time, in her own way, making many very strange inquiries. Here again one might observe, that, with a mighty effort, she could comprehend but little and laboriously. So likewise was it with her writing, at which she still kept busied. She yet spoke very broken German: it was only when she opened her mouth to sing, when she touched her cithern, that she seemed to be employing an organ, by which, in some degree, the workings of her mind could be disclosed and communicated.

Since we are at present on the subject, we may also mention the perplexity which Wilhelm had of late experienced from certain parts of her procedure. When she came or went, wished him good morning or good night, she clasped him so firmly in her arms, and kissed him with such ardour, that often the violence of this expanding nature gave him serious fears. The spasmodic vi-

vacuity of her demeanour seemed daily to increase; her whole being moved in a restless stillness. She would never be without some piece of packthread to twist in her hands; some napkin to tie in knots; some paper or wood to chew. All her sports seemed but the channels which drained off some inward violent commotion. The only thing that seemed to cause her any cheerfulness was being near the boy Felix, with whom she could go on in a very dainty manner.

Aurelia, after a little rest, being now ready to explain to her friend a matter which lay very near her heart, grew impatient at the little girl's delay, and signified that she must go; a hint, however, which the latter did not take; and at last, when nothing else would do, they sent her off expressly and against her will.

"Now or never," said Aurelia, "must I tell you the remainder of my story. Were my tenderly-beloved and unjust friend but a few miles distant, I would say to you: 'Mount on horseback, seek by some means to get acquainted with him; on returning you will certainly forgive me, and pity me with all your heart.' As it is, I can only tell you with words how amiable he was, and how much I loved him.

"It was at the critical season, when care for the illness of my husband had depressed my spirits, that I first became acquainted with this stranger. He had just returned from America, where, in

company with some Frenchmen, he had served with much distinction under the colours of the United States.

“ He addressed me with an easy dignity, a frank kindliness ; he spoke about myself, my state, my acting, like an old acquaintance, so affectionately and distinctly, that now for the first time I enjoyed the pleasure of perceiving my existence reflected in the being of another. His judgments were just though not severe ; penetrating, yet not void of love. He shewed no harshness ; his pleasantry was courteous with all its humour. He seemed accustomed to success with women ; this excited my attention : he was never in the least importunate or flattering ; this put me off my guard.

“ In the town, he had intercourse with few ; he was often on horseback, visiting his many friends in the neighbourhood, and managing the business of his house. On returning, he would frequently alight at my apartments ; he treated my ever ailing husband with warm attention ; he procured him mitigation of his sickness by a good physician. And taking part in all that interested me, he allowed me to take part in all that interested him. He told me the history of his campaigns ; he spoke of his invincible attachment to military life, of his family relations, of his present business. He kept no secret from me ; he displayed to me his inmost thoughts, allowed me to behold the most secret corners of his soul : I became acquainted with his passions and

his capabilities. It was the first time in my life that I enjoyed a cordial, intellectual intercourse with any living creature. I was attracted by him, borne along by him, before I thought about inquiring how it stood with me.

“ Meanwhile I lost my husband, nearly just as I had taken him. The burden of theatrical affairs now fell entirely on me. My brother, not to be surpassed upon the stage, was never good for any thing in economical concerns: I took the charge of all; at the same time, studying my parts with greater diligence than ever. I again played as of old; nay with new life, with quite another force. It was by reason of my friend, it was on his account that I did this; yet my success was not always best when I knew him to be present. Once or twice he listened to me unobserved; and how pleasantly his unexpected applauses surprised me you may conceive.

“ Without doubt, I am a strange creature. In every part I played, it seemed as if I had been speaking it in praise of him; for that was the temper of my heart, the words might be any thing they pleased. Did I understand him to be present in the audience, I durst not venture to speak out with all my force; just as I would not press my love or praise upon him to his face: was he absent, I had then free scope; I did my best, with a certain peacefulness, with a contentment not to be described. Applause once more delighted me;

and when I charmed the people, I longed to call down among them: 'This you owe to him!'

"Yes, my relation to the public, to the nation, had been altered by a wonder. On a sudden they again appeared to me in the most favourable light; I felt astonished at my former blindness.

"How foolish, said I often to myself, was it to revile a nation; foolish, simply since it was a nation. Is it necessary, is it possible, that individual men should generally interest us much? Not at all! The only question is, whether in the great mass there exists a sufficient quantity of talent, force and capability, which lucky circumstances may develop, which men of lofty minds may direct upon a common object. I now rejoiced in discovering so little prominent originality among my countrymen; I rejoiced that they disdained not to accept of guidance from without; I rejoiced that they had found a leader.

"Lothario—allow me to designate my friend by this his first name, which I loved—Lothario had constantly presented the Germans to my mind on the side of their courage: he had shewn me, that when well commanded, there was no braver nation on the face of the earth; and I felt ashamed at never having noticed this first quality of the people. History was known to him; he was in connexion and correspondence with the most distinguished persons of the age. Young as he was, his eye was open to the budding youthhood of his na-

tive country ; to the silent labours of active and busy men in so many provinces of art. He afforded me a glimpse of Germany ; what it was and what it might be ; and I felt ashamed at having formed my judgment of a nation from the motley crowd, that press themselves into the wardrobe of a theatre. He made me look upon it as a duty, that I too in my own department should be true, spirited, enlivening. I now felt as if inspired, every time I stepped upon the boards. Mediocre passages grew golden in my mouth ; had any poet been at hand to support me adequately, I might have produced the most astonishing effects.

“ So lived the young widow for a series of months. He could not want me ; and I felt exceedingly unhappy when he staid away. He shewed me the letters he received from his relations, from his amiable sister. He took an interest in the smallest circumstances that concerned me ; more complete, more intimate no union ever was than ours. The name of love was not mentioned. He went and came, came and went—And now, my friend, it is high time that you too should go.”

CHAPTER XVII.

WILHELM could put off no longer the visiting of his commercial friends. He proceeded to their place with some anxiety; knowing he should there find letters from his people. He dreaded the reproofs which these would of course contain: it seemed likely also that notice had been given to his trading correspondents, concerning the perplexities and fears which his late silence had occasioned. After such a series of knightly adventures, he recoiled from the school-boy aspect, in which he must appear; he proposed within his mind to act with an air of sternness and defiance, and thus hide his embarrassment.

To his great wonder and contentment, however, all went off very easily and well. In the vast, stirring, busy counting-room, the men had scarcely time to seek him out his packet; his delay was but alluded to in passing. And on opening the letters of his father and his friend Werner, he found them all of very innocent contents. His father, in hopes of an extensive journal, the keeping of which he had strongly recommended to his son at parting, giving him also a tabulary scheme for that purpose, seemed pretty well pacified about the silence

of the first period ; complaining only of a certain enigmatical obscurity in the last and only letter, despatched, as we have seen, from the Castle of the Count. Werner joked in his way ; told merry anecdotes, facetious burgh-news ; and requested intelligence of friends and acquaintances, whom Wilhelm in the large trading city would now meet with in great numbers. Our friend, extremely pleased at getting free so cheaply, answered without loss of a moment, in some very cheerful letters ; promising his father a copious journal of his travels, with all the required geographical, statistical, and mercantile remarks. He had seen much on his journey, he said ; and hoped to make a tolerably large manuscript out of these materials. He did not observe, that he was almost in the same case as he had once experienced before, when he assembled an audience and lit his lamps to represent a play, which was not written, still less got by heart. Accordingly, so soon as he commenced the work of composition, he became aware that he had much to say about emotions and thoughts, and many experiences of the heart and spirit ; but not a word concerning outward objects, on which, as he now discovered, he had not bestowed the least attention.

In this embarrassment, the acquisitions of his friend Laertes came very seasonably to his aid. Custom had united these young people, unlike one

another as they were ; and Laertes, with all his failings and singularities, was actually an interesting man. Endowed with warm and pleasurable senses, he might have reached old age, without reflecting for a moment on his situation. But his ill fortune and his sickness had robbed him of the pure feelings of youth ; and opened up for him instead of it a view into the transitoriness, the discontinuity of man's existence. Hence had arisen a humorous, flighty, rhapsodical way of thinking about all things, or rather of uttering the immediate impressions they produced on him. He did not like to be alone ; he strolled about all the coffee-houses and *tables d'hote* ; and when he did stay at home, books of travels were his favourite, nay his only kind of reading. Having lately found a large circulating library, he had been enabled to content his taste in this respect to the full ; and ere long half the world was figuring in his faithful memory.

It was easy for him therefore to speak comfort to his friend, when the latter had disclosed his utter lack of matter for the narrative so solemnly promised by him. " Now is the time for a piece of art," said Laertes, " that shall have no fellow !

" Has not Germany been travelled over, cruised over, walked, crept, and flown over repeatedly from end to end ? And has not every German

traveller the royal privilege of drawing from the public a repayment of the great or small expenses he may have incurred while travelling? Give me your route previous to our meeting; the rest I know already. I will find you helps and sources of information: of miles that were never measured, populations that were never counted, we shall give them plenty. The revenues of provinces we shall take from almanacks and tables, which, as all men know, are the most authentic documents. On these we shall ground our political discussions; we shall not fail in side glances at the ruling powers. One or two princes we shall paint as true fathers of their country, that we may gain more ready credence in our allegations against others. If we do not travel through the residence of any noted man, we shall take care to meet such persons at the inn, and make them utter the most foolish stuff to us. Particularly, we must not forget to insert, with all its graces and sentiments, some love-story with a pastoral barmaid. I tell you it shall be a composition, which will not only fill father and mother with delight, but which booksellers themselves shall gladly pay you current money for."

They went accordingly to work; and both of them found pleasure in their labour. Wilhelm, in the mean time, frequenting the play at night, and conversing with Serlo and Aurelia by day,

experienced the greatest satisfaction; and was daily more and more expanding his ideas, which had been too long revolving in the same narrow circle.

CHAPTER XVIII.

It was not without deep interest that he became acquainted with the history of Serlo's career. Piecemeal he learned it; for it was not the fashion of this extraordinary man to be confidential, or to speak of any thing connectively. He had been, one may say, born and suckled in the theatre. While yet literally an infant, he had been produced upon the stage to move spectators merely by his presence; for authors even then were acquainted with this natural and very guiltless mode of doing so. Thus his first "Father!" or "Mother!" in favourite pieces, procured him approbation, ere he understood what was meant by that clapping of the hands. In the character of Cupid, he more than once descended with terror in his flying-gear; as harlequin he used to issue from the egg; and as a little chimney-sweep to play the sharpest tricks.

Unhappily, the plaudits of these glancing nights were too bitterly repaid by sufferings in the intervening seasons. His father was convinced, that the minds of children could be kept awake and steadfast by no other means than blows; hence, in the studying of any part, he used to thrash him at

stated periods ; not because the boy was awkward, but that he might become more certainly and constantly expert. It was thus that in former times, while putting down a landmark, people were accustomed to bestow a hearty drubbing on the children who had followed them ; and these, it was supposed, would recollect the place exactly to the latest day of their lives. Serlo waxed in stature ; and shewed the finest capabilities of spirit and of body ; in particular an admirable pliancy at once in his thoughts, looks, movements, and gestures. His gift of imitation was beyond belief. When still a boy he would mimick persons, so that you might think you saw them ; though in form, age, and disposition, they might be the most dissimilar to him and to each other. Nor with all this, did he want the knack of suiting himself to his circumstances, and picking out his way in life. Accordingly, so soon as he had grown in some degree acquainted with his strength, he very naturally eloped from his father ; who, as the boy's understanding and dexterity increased, still thought it needful to forward their perfection by the harshest treatment.

Happy was the wild boy, now roaming free about the world, where his feats of waggery never failed to secure him a good reception. His lucky star first led him in the Christmas season to a cloister, where the friar, whose business it had been to arrange processions, and to entertain the

Christian community by spiritual masquerades, having just died, Serlo was welcomed as a helping angel. On the instant he took up the part of Gabriel in the Annunciation ; in which he did not by any means displease the pretty girl, who acting the Virgin, very gracefully received his most obliging kiss, with external humility and inward pride. In their Mysteries, he continued to perform the most important parts ; and thought himself no slender personage, when at last, in the character of Martyr, he was mocked of the world, and beaten, and fixed upon the cross.

Some Pagan soldiers had, on this occasion, played their parts a little *too* naturally. To be avenged on these heathen in the proper style, he took care at the Day of Judgment to have them decked out in gaudy clothes as emperors and kings ; and at the moment when they, exceedingly contented with their situation, were about to take precedence of the rest in heaven as they had done on earth, he on a sudden rushed upon them in the shape of the Devil ; and, to the cordial edification of all the beggars and spectators, having thoroughly curried them with his oven-fork, he pushed them without mercy back into the Chasm, where, in the midst of waving flame, they met with the most sorry welcome.

He was acute enough, however, to perceive that these crowned heads might feel offended at such bold procedure ; and perhaps forget the reverence

due to his privileged office of Accuser and Turn-key. So in all silence, before the Millennium commenced, he withdrew, and betook him to a neighbouring town. Here a society of persons, denominated Children of Joy, received him with open arms. They were a set of clever, strong-headed, lively genuises, who saw well enough that the sum of our existence, divided by reason, never gives an integer number, but that a surprising fraction is always left behind. At stated times, to get rid of this fraction which impedes, and if it is diffused over all the mass of our conduct, endangers us, was the object of the Children of Joy. For one day a week each of them in succession was a fool on purpose; and during this, he in his turn exhibited to ridicule, in allegorical representations, whatever folly he had noticed in himself or the rest, throughout the other six. This practice might be somewhat ruder than that constant training, in the course of which a man of ordinary morals is accustomed to observe, to warn, to punish himself daily: but it was also merrier and surer. For as no Child of Joy concealed his bosom-folly, so he and those about him held it for simply what it was: whereas, on the other plan, by the help of self-deception, this same bosom-folly often gains the head authority within, and binds down reason to a secret servitude, at the very time when reason fondly hopes that she has long since chased it out of doors. The mask of folly circulated round in

this society ; and each member was allowed, in his particular day, to decorate and characterize it with his own attributes or those of others. At the time of Carnival, they assumed the greatest freedom, vying with the clergy in attempts to instruct and entertain the multitude. Their solemn figurative processions of Virtues and Vices, Arts and Sciences, Quarters of the World, and Seasons of the Year, bodied forth a number of conceptions, and gave images of many distant objects to the people ; and hence were not without their use : while, on the other hand, the mummeries of the priesthood tended but to strengthen a tasteless superstition, already strong enough.

Here again young Serlo was altogether in his element. Invention in its strictest sense, it is true, he had not ; but, on the other hand, he had the most consummate skill in employing what he found before him ; in ordering it ; and shadowing it forth. His roguish turns ; his gift of mimickry ; his biting wit, which at least one day weekly he might use with entire freedom, even against his benefactors, made him precious, or rather indispensable, to the whole society.

Yet his restless mind soon drove him from this favourable scene to other quarters of his country, where other means of instruction were awaiting him. He came into the polished but also barren part of Germany ; where, in worshipping the good

and the beautiful, there is indeed no want of truth, but frequently a grievous one of spirit. His masks would here do nothing for him: he was forced to aim at working on the heart and mind. For short periods, he attached himself to small or to extensive companies of actors; and marked, on these occasions, what were the distinctive properties both of the pieces and the players. The monotony which then reigned on the German theatre, the mawkish sound and cadence of their Alexandrines, the flat and yet distorted dialogue, the shallowness and commonness of these undisguised preachers of morality, he was not long in comprehending; or in seizing, at the same time, what little there was that moved and pleased.

Not only single parts in the current pieces, but the pieces themselves, staid easily and wholly in his memory; and along with them, the special tone of any player who had represented them with approbation. At length, in the course of his rambles, his money being altogether done, the project struck him of acting entire pieces by himself, especially in villages, and noblemen's houses; and thus in all places making sure at least of entertainment and lodging. In any tavern, any room, or any garden, he would accordingly at once set up his theatre: with a roguish seriousness and a show of enthusiasm, he would contrive to gain the imaginations of his audience; to deceive their senses, and before their

eyes to make an old press into a tower, or a fan into a dagger. His youthful warmth supplied the place of deep feeling; his vehemence seemed strength, and his flattery tenderness. Such of the spectators as already knew a theatre, he put in mind of all that they had seen and heard; in the rest he awakened a presentiment of something wonderful, and a wish to be more acquainted with it. What produced an effect in one place he did not fail to repeat in others; and his mind overflowed with a wicked pleasure when, by the same means, on the spur of the moment, he could make gulls of all the world.

His spirit was lively, brisk, and unimpeded: by frequently repeating parts and pieces, he improved very fast. Ere long he could recite and play with more conformity to the sense than the models whom at first he had imitated. Proceeding thus, he by degrees arrived at playing naturally, although he did not cease to feign. He seemed transported, yet he lay in wait for the effect; and his greatest pride was in moving, by successive touches, the passions of men. The mad trade he drove itself soon forced him to proceed with a certain moderation; and thus, partly by constraint, partly by instinct, he learned the art of which so few players seem to have a notion, the art of being frugal in the use of his voice and gestures.

Thus did he contrive to tame, and to inspire

with interest for him, even rude and unfriendly men. Being always contented with food and shelter; thankfully accepting presents of any kind as readily as money; which latter, when he reckoned that he had enough of it, he frequently declined,—he became a general favourite; was sent about from one to another with recommendatory letters; and thus he wandered many a day from castle to castle, exciting much festivity, enjoying much, and meeting in his travels with the most agreeable and curious adventures.

With such inward coldness of temper, he could not properly be said to love any one; with such clearness of vision, he could respect no one. In fact, he never looked beyond the external peculiarities of men; and he merely carried their characters in his mimical collection. Yet withal his selfishness was keenly wounded, if he did not please every one, and call forth universal applause. How this might be attained, he had studied in the course of time so accurately, and so sharpened his sense of the matter, that not only on the stage, but also in common life, he no longer could do otherwise than flatter and deceive. And thus did his disposition, his talent, and his way of life, work reciprocally on each other, till by this means he had imperceptibly been formed into a perfect actor. Nay, by a mode of action and re-action, which is quite natural, though it seems paradoxical, his recitation,

declamation, and gesture, improved, by critical discernment and practice, to a high degree of truth, ease, and frankness; while, in his life and intercourse with men he seemed to grow continually more secret, artful, or even hypocritical and constrained.

Of his fortunes and adventures we perhaps shall speak in another place: it is enough to remark at present, that in later times, when he had become a man of circumstance, in possession of a distinct reputation, and of a very good though not entirely secure employment and rank, he was wont, in conversation, partly in the way of irony, partly of mockery, in a delicate style, to act the sophist, and thus to destroy almost all serious discussion. This kind of speech he seemed peculiarly fond of using towards Wilhelm; particularly when the latter took a fancy, as often happened, for introducing any of his general and theoretical disquisitions. Yet still they liked well to be together; with such different modes of thinking, the conversation could not fail to be lively. Wilhelm always wished to deduce every thing from abstract ideas which he had arrived at; he wanted to have art viewed in all its connexions as a whole. He wanted to promulgate and fix down universal laws; to settle what was right, beautiful, and good: in short, he treated all things in a serious manner. Serlo, on the other hand, took up the matter very lightly: never an-

swering directly to any question, he would contrive by some anecdote or laughable turn, to give the finest and most satisfactory illustrations ; and thus to instruct his audience while he made them merry,

CHAPTER XIX.

WHILE our friend was in this way living very happily, Melina and the rest were in quite a different case. Wilhelm they haunted like evil spirits; and not only by their presence, but frequently by rueful faces and bitter words, they caused him many a sorry moment. Serlo had not admitted them to the most trifling part, far less held out to them any hope of a permanent engagement; and yet he had contrived by degrees to get acquainted with the capabilities of every one of them. Whenever any actors were assembled in leisure hours about him, he was wont to make them read, and frequently to read along with them. On such occasions, he took plays which by and by were to be acted, which for a long time had remained unacted; and in general by portions. In like manner, after any first representation, he caused such passages to be repeated as he had any thing to say respecting; by which means he sharpened the discernment of his actors, and strengthened their certainty of hitting the proper point. And as a person of slender but correct understanding may produce more agreeable effect on others, than a perplexed and unpurified genius, he would frequently exalt men of me-

diocre talents by the clear views which he imperceptibly afforded them, to a wonderful extent of power. Nor was it an unimportant item in his scheme, that he likewise had poems read before him in their meetings; for by these he nourished in his people the feeling of that charm, which a well pronounced rhythm is calculated to awaken in the soul; whereas in other companies, those prose compositions were already getting introduced, for which any tyro was adequate.

On occasions such as these, he had contrived to make himself acquainted with the new-come players: he had decided what they were, and what they might be; and silently made up his mind to take advantage of their talents, in a revolution which was now threatening his own company. For a while he let the matter rest; declined every one of Wilhelm's intercessions for his comrades, with a shrug of the shoulders; till at last he saw his time, and altogether unexpectedly made the proposal to our friend, "that he himself should come upon the stage; that on this condition, the others too might be admitted."

"These people must not be so useless as you formerly described them," answered Wilhelm, "if now they can be all received at once; and I suppose their talents would remain the very same without me as with me."

Under the seal of secrecy, Serlo hereupon explained his situation; how his first actor was giving

hints about a rise of salary at the renewal of their contract ; how he himself did not incline conceding this, particularly as the individual in question was no longer in such favour with the public ; how, if he dismissed him, a whole train would follow ; whereby, it was true, his company would lose some good, but likewise some indifferent actors. He then shewed Wilhelm what he hoped to gain in him, in Laertes, old Boisterous, and even Frau Melina. Nay, he promised to procure for the silly Pedant himself, in the character of Jew, minister, but chiefly of villain, a decided approbation.

Wilhelm faltered ; the proposal fluttered him, he knew not what to say. That he might say something, he rejoined, with a deep-drawn breath : “ You speak very graciously about the good you find and hope to find in us : but how is it with our weak points, which certainly have not escaped your penetration ? ”

“ These,” said Serlo, “ by diligence, practice, and reflection, we shall soon make strong points. Though you are yet but freshmen and bunglers, there is not one among you all that does not warrant expectation more or less : for, so far as I can judge you, no blockhead, properly so called, is to be met with in the company ; and your blockhead is the only person that can never be improved, whether it be self-conceit, stupidity, or hypochondria, that renders him unpliant and unguidable.”

The Manager next stated, in a few words, the

terms he meant to offer; requested Wilhelm to determine soon, and left him in no small perplexity.

In the marvellous composition of those travels, which he had at first engaged with as it were in jest, and was now carrying on in conjunction with Laertes, his mind had by degrees grown more attentive to the circumstances and the every-day life of the actual world, than it ever was before. He now first understood the object of his father in so keenly recommending him to keep a journal. He now, for the first time, felt how pleasant and how useful it might be to become participator in so many trades and requisitions, and to take a hand in diffusing activity and life into the deepest nooks of the mountains and forests of Europe. The busy trading town in which he was; the unrest of Laertes, who dragged him about to examine every thing, afforded him the most impressive image of a mighty centre, from which every thing was flowing out, to which every thing was coming back; and it was the first time that his spirit, in contemplating this species of activity, had really felt delight. At such a juncture Serlo's offer had been made him; had again awakened his desires, his tendencies, his faith in a natural talent, and again brought into mind his solemn obligation to his helpless comrades.

"Here standest thou once more," said he within himself, at the Parting of the Ways, between the

two women who appeared before thee in thy youth. The one no longer looks so pitiful as then; nor does the other look so glorious. To obey the one, or to obey the other, thou art not without a kind of inward calling; outward reasons are on both sides strong enough; and to decide appears to thee impossible. Thou wishest that some preponderancy from without would fix thy choice: and yet, if thou considerest well, it is external circumstances only that inspire thee with a wish to trade, to gather, to possess; whilst it is thy inmost want that has created, that has nourished the desire still farther to unfold and perfect what endowments soever for the beautiful and good, be they mental or bodily, may lie within thee. And ought I not to honour Fate, which without furtherance of mine has led me hither to the goal of all my wishes? Has not all that I in old times meditated and forecast now happened accidentally, and without my co-operation? Singular enough! We seem to be so intimate with nothing as we are with our wishes and our hopes, which have long been kept and cherished in our hearts; yet when they meet us, when they as it were press forward to us, then we know them not, then we recoil from them. All that, since the hapless night which severed me from Mariana, I have but allowed myself to dream, now stands before me, entreating my acceptance. Hither I intended to escape by flight; hither I am softly guided: with Serlo I meant to seek a place;

he now seeks me, and offers me conditions which, as a beginner, I could not have looked for. Was it then mere love to Mariana that bound me to the stage? Or love to art that bound me to the girl? Was that prospect, that outlet, which the theatre presented to me, nothing but the project of a restless, a disorderly, and disobedient boy, that wished to lead a life which the customs of the civic world would not admit of? Or, was all this different, worthier, purer? If so, what moved thee to alter the persuasions of that period? Hast thou not hitherto, even without knowing it, pursued thy plan? Is not the concluding step still farther to be justified, now that no side purposes combine with it; now that in making it thou mayest fulfil a solemn promise, and nobly free thyself from a heavy debt?"

All that could affect his heart and his imagination was now moving, and conflicting in the keenest strife within him. The thought that he might retain Mignon, that he should not need to put away the Harper, was not an inconsiderable item in the balance; which, however, had not ceased to waver to the one and to the other side, when he went, as he was wont, to see his friend Aurelia.

CHAPTER XX.

SHE was lying on the sofa; she seemed quiet; "Do you think you will be fit to act to-morrow?" he inquired. "O, yes!" cried she with vivacity, "you know there is nothing to prevent me. If I but knew a way," continued she, "to rid myself of those applauses! The people mean it well, but they will kill me. Last night, I thought my very heart would break! Once, when I used to please myself, I could endure this gladly: when I had studied long, and well prepared myself, it gave me joy to hear the sound: 'It has succeeded!' pealing back to me from every corner. But now I speak not what I like, nor as I like; I am swept along, I get confused, I scarce know what I do; and the impression which I make is far deeper. The applause grows louder, and I think: Did you but know what charms you! These dark, vague, vehement tones of passion move you, force you to admire; and you feel not that they are the cries of agony wrung from the miserable being whom you praise.

"I learned my part this morning; just now I have been repeating it and trying it. I am tired,

broken down ; and to-morrow I must do the same. To-morrow evening is the play. Thus do I drag myself to and fro : it is wearisome to rise, it is wearisome to go to bed. All moves within me in an everlasting circle. Then come their dreary consolations, and present themselves before me ; and I cast them out, and execrate them. I will not surrender, not surrender to necessity : why should that be necessary, which crushes me to the dust ? Might it not be otherwise ? I am paying the penalty of being born a German ; it is the nature of the Germans that they bear heavily on every thing, that every thing bears heavily on them."

" O my friend !" cried Wilhelm, " could you cease to whet the dagger wherewith you are ever wounding me ! Does nothing then remain for you ? Are your youth, your form, your health, your talents nothing ? Having lost one blessing, without blame of yours, must you throw all the others after it ? Is that also necessary ?"

She was silent for a few moments, and then burst forth : " I know well, it is a waste of time, nothing but a waste of time, this love ! What might not, should not I have done ! And now it is all vanished into air. I am a poor, wretched, lovelorn creature ; lovelorn, that is all ! O have compassion on me : God knows I am poor and wretched !"

She sunk in thought ; then, after a brief pause, she exclaimed with violence : " You are accus-

tomed to have all things fly into your arms. No, you cannot feel; no man is in a case to feel the worth of a woman that can reverence herself. By all the holy angels, by all the images of blessedness, which a pure and kindly heart creates, there is not any thing more heavenly than the soul of a woman that gives herself to the man she loves!

“We are cold, proud, high, clear-sighted, wise, while we deserve the name of women; and all these qualities we lay down at your feet, the instant that we love, that we hope to excite a return of love. Oh! how have I cast away my entire existence wittingly and willingly! But now will I despair, purposely despair. There is no drop of blood within me but shall suffer, no fibre that I will not punish. Smile, I pray you; laugh at this theatrical display of passion.”

Wilhelm was far enough from any tendency to laugh. This horrible, half-natural, half-factitious condition of his friend afflicted him but too deeply. He sympathized in the tortures of that racking misery: his thoughts were wandering in painful perplexities, his blood was in a feverish tumult.

She had risen, and was walking up and down the room. “I see before me,” she exclaimed, “all manner of reasons why I should not love him. I know he is not worthy of it: I turn my mind aside, this way and that; I seize upon whatever business I can find. At one time I take up a part, though I have not to play it; at an-

other, I begin to practise old ones, though I know them through and through; I practise them more diligently, more minutely, I toil and toil at them— My friend, my confidant! what a horrid task is it to tear away one's thoughts from one-self! My reason suffers, my brain is racked and strained: to save myself from madness I again admit the feeling that I love him. Yes, I love him, I love him!" cried she with a shower of tears; "I love him, I will die loving him!"

He took her by the hand, and entreated her in the most earnest manner not to waste herself in such self-torments. "Oh! it seems hard," said he, "that not only so much that is impossible should be denied us, but so much also that is possible. It was not your lot to meet with a faithful heart that would have formed your perfect happiness. It was mine to fix the welfare of my life upon a hapless creature, whom by the weight of my fidelity I drew to the bottom like a reed, perhaps even broke in pieces!"

He had told Aurelia of his intercourse with Mariana, and could therefore now refer to it. She looked him intently in the face, and asked: "Can you say that you never yet betrayed a woman, that you never tried with thoughtless gallantry, with false asseverations, with cajoling oaths, to wheedle favour from her?"

"I can," said Wilhelm, "and indeed without much vanity; my life has been so simple and se-

questered, I have had but few enticements to attempt such things. And what a warning, my beautiful, my noble friend, is this melancholy state in which I see you ! Accept of me a vow, which is suited to my heart ; which, under the emotion you have caused me, has settled into words and shape, and will be hallowed by the hour in which I utter it : Each transitory inclination I will study to withstand ; and even the most earnest I will keep within my bosom : no woman shall receive an acknowledgment of love from my lips, to whom I cannot consecrate my life !”

She looked at him with a wild indifference ; and drew back some steps as he offered her his hand. “ ’Tis of no moment !” cried she : “ so many women’s tears more or fewer ; the ocean will not swell by reason of them. And yet,” continued she, “ among thousands one woman saved ; that still is something : among thousands one honest man discovered ; this is not to be refused. Do you know then what you promise ?”

“ I know it,” answered Wilhelm with a smile, and holding out his hand.

“ I accept it then,” said she, and made a movement with her right hand, as if meaning to take hold of his : but instantly she darted it into her pocket, pulled out her dagger quick as lightning, and scored with the edge and point of it across his hand. He hastily drew back his arm, but the blood was already running down.

“ One must mark you men rather sharply, if one means you to take heed,” cried she with a wild mirth, which soon passed into a quick assiduity. She took her handkerchief, and bound his hand with it to staunch the fast-flowing blood. “ Forgive a half-crazed being,” cried she, “ and regret not these few drops of blood. I am appeased, I am again myself. On my knees will I crave your pardon: leave me the comfort of healing you.”

She ran to her drawer; brought lint, with other apparatus; staunched the blood, and viewed the wound attentively. It went across the palm, close under the thumb; dividing the life-lines, and running towards the little finger. She bound it up in silence, with a significant, reflective look. He asked once or twice: “ Aurelia, how could you hurt your friend?”

“ Hush!” replied she, laying her finger on her mouth; “ Hush!”

WILHELM MEISTER'S
APPRENTICESHIP.

BOOK V.



WILHELM MEISTER.

CHAPTER I.

THUS Wilhelm, to his pair of former wounds which were yet scarcely healed, had now got the accession of a third, which was fresh and not a little disagreeable. Aurelia would not suffer him to call a surgeon; she dressed the hand with all manner of strange speeches, saws, and ceremonies; and so placed him in a very painful situation. Yet not he alone, but all persons who came near her, suffered by her restlessness and singularity: and no one more than little Felix. This stirring child was exceedingly impatient under such oppression, and shewed himself still naughtier, the more she censured and instructed him.

He delighted in some practices which commonly are thought bad habits, and in which she would not by any means indulge him. He would drink, for example, rather from the bottle than the glass; and his food seemed visibly to have a better relish when eaten from the bowl than from the plate. Such ill-breeding was not overlooked: if

he left the door standing open, or slammed it to; if when bid do any thing, he stood stock still, or ran off violently, he was sure to have a long lecture inflicted on him for the fault. Yet he shewed no symptoms of improvement from this training: on the other hand, his affection for Aurlia seemed daily to diminish; there was nothing tender in his tone when he called her Mother; whereas he passionately clung to the old nurse, who let him have his will in every thing.

But she likewise had of late become so sick, that they had been at last obliged to take her from the house into a quiet lodging; and Felix would have been entirely alone, if Mignon had not, like a kindly guardian-spirit, come to help him. The two children talked together, and amused each other in the prettiest style. She taught him little songs; and he, having an excellent memory, frequently recited them to the surprise of those about him. She attempted also to explain her maps to him. With these she was still very busy, though she did not seem to take the fittest method. For, in studying countries, she appeared to care little about any other point than whether they were cold or warm. Of the north and south Poles, of the horrid ice which reigns there, and of the increasing heat the farther one retires from them, she could give a very clear account. When any one was travelling, she merely asked whether he was going northward or southward; and strove to find

his route in her little charts. Especially when Wilhelm spoke of travelling, she was all attention, and seemed vexed when any thing occurred to change the subject. Though she could not be prevailed upon to undertake a part, or even to enter the theatre when any play was acting, yet she willingly and zealously committed many odes and songs to memory; and by unexpectedly, and as it were on the spur of the moment, reciting some such poem, generally of the earnest and solemn kind, she would often cause astonishment in every one.

Serlo, accustomed to regard with favour every trace of opening talent, encouraged her in such performances: but what pleased him most in Mignon was her sprightly, various, and often even mirthful singing. By means of a similar gift, the Harper likewise had acquired his favour.

Without himself possessing genius for music, or playing on any instrument, Serlo could rightly prize the value of the art: he failed not, as often as he could, to enjoy this pleasure, which cannot be compared with any other. He held a concert once a week; and now, with Mignon, the Harper, and Laertes, who was not unskilful on the violin, he had formed a very curious domestic band.

He was wont to say: "Men are so inclined to content themselves with what is commonest; the spirit and the senses so easily grow dead to the impressions of the beautiful and perfect; that every

one should study to nourish in his mind the faculty of feeling these things by every method in his power. For no man can bear to be entirely deprived of such enjoyments: it is only because they are not used to taste of what is excellent, that the generality of people take delight in silly and insipid things, provided they be new. For this reason," he would add, "one ought every day at least to hear a little song, read a good poem, see a fine picture, and if it were possible, to speak a few reasonable words."

With such a turn of thought in Serlo, which in some degree was natural to him, the persons who frequented his society could scarcely be in want of pleasant conversation. It was in the midst of these instructive entertainments, that Wilhelm one day received a letter sealed in black. Werner's hand betokened mournful news; and our friend was not a little shocked when, opening the sheet, he found it to contain the tidings of his father's death, conveyed in a very few words. After a short and sudden illness he had parted from the world, leaving his domestic affairs in the best possible order.

This unlooked-for intelligence struck Wilhelm to the heart. He deeply felt how careless and negligent we often are of friends and relations, while they inhabit with us this terrestrial sojourn; and how we first repent of our insensibility when the fair union, at least for this side of time, is finally cut asunder. His grief for the early death of this

lionest parent was mitigated only by the feeling, that he had loved but little in the world, and the conviction that he had enjoyed but little.

Wilhelm's thoughts soon turned to his own predicament; and he felt himself extremely discomposed. A person can scarce be put into a more dangerous position, than when external circumstances have produced some striking change in his condition, without his manner of feeling and of thinking having undergone any preparation for it. There is then an epoch without epoch; and the contradiction which arises is the greater, the less the person feels that he is not trained for this new manner of existence.

Wilhelm saw himself in freedom, at a moment when he could be at one with himself. His thoughts were noble, his motives pure, his purposes were not to be despised. All this he could with some degree of confidence acknowledge to himself: but he had of late been frequently enough compelled to notice, that experience was sadly wanting to him; and hence on the experience of others, and on the results which they deduced from it, he put a value far beyond its real one; and thus led himself still deeper into error. What he wanted, he conceived he might most readily acquire if he undertook to collect and retain whatever memorable thought he should meet with in reading or in conversation. He accordingly recorded his own or other men's opinions, nay

wrote whole dialogues, when they chanced to interest him. But unhappily by this means, he held fast the false no less firmly than the true; he dwelt far too long on one idea, particularly when it was of an apophthegmatic shape; and thus he left his natural mode of thought and action, and frequently took foreign lights to be his loadstars. Aurelia's bitterness and Laertes' cold contempt for men warped his judgment oftener than they should have done: but no one, in his present case, would have been so dangerous as Jarno, a man whose clear intellect could form a just and rigorous decision about present things; but who erred withal in enunciating these particular decisions with a kind of universal application; whereas, in truth, the judgments of the understanding are properly of force but once, and that in the strictest cases, and become inaccurate in some degree when applied to any other.

Thus Wilhelm, striving to become consistent with himself, was deviating farther and farther from wholesome consistency; and this confusion made it easier for his passions to employ their whole artillery against him, and thus still farther to perplex his views of duty.

Serlo did not fail to take advantage of the late tidings: and in truth he daily had more reason to be anxious about some fresh arrangement of his people. Either he must soon renew his old contracts; a measure he was not especially inclined to,

for several of his actors, who held themselves as indispensable, were growing more and more intolerable; or else he must entirely new-model and reform his company; which plan he looked upon as preferable.

Though he did not personally importune our friend, he set Aurelia and Philina on him: and the other wanderers, longing for some kind of settlement, on their side gave Wilhelm not a moment's rest; so that he stood hesitating in his choice, in no slight embarrassment, until he should decide. Who would have thought that a letter of Werner's, written with quite different views, could have forced him on resolving? We shall omit the introduction, and give the rest of it with little alteration.

CHAPTER II.

“—IT was, therefore, and it always must be right for every one, on any opportunity, to follow his vocation and exhibit his activity. Scarcely had the good old man been gone one quarter of an hour, when every thing about the house had ceased to move according to his mind. Friends, acquaintances, relations, crowded forward; especially all sorts of people that on such occasions use to gain any thing. They fetched and carried, they counted, wrote and reckoned; some brought wine and meat, others ate and drank; and none seemed busier than the women getting out the mournings.

“ Such being the case, thou wilt not blame me that, in this emergency, I likewise thought of *my* advantage. I made myself as active and as helpful to thy sister as I could; and so soon as it was any way decorous, signified to her that it had now become our business to accelerate a union, which our parents in their too great circumspection had hitherto postponed.

“ Thou must not suppose, however, that it came into our heads to take possession of that monstrous empty house. We are more modest,

and more rational. Thou shalt hear our plan: thy sister comes, so soon as we are married, to our house; and thy mother comes along with her. 'How can that be?' thou wilt say; 'you yourselves have scarcely room in that hampered nest.' There lies the art of it, my friend! Good packing renders all things possible; thou wouldst not believe what space one finds, when he wants to occupy but little. The large house we shall sell; an opportunity occurs for this; and the money we shall draw for it will produce a hundred-fold.

"I hope this meets thy views: I hope also that thou hast not inherited the smallest particle of those unprofitable tastes for which thy father and thy grandfather were noted. The latter placed his greatest happiness in having round him a multitude of dull-looking works of art, which no one, I may well say no one, could enjoy with him; the former lived in a stately pomp, which he suffered no one to enjoy with him. We mean to manage otherwise, and we expect thy approbation.

"It is true, I myself in all the house possess no place whatever but the stool before my writing desk; and I see not clearly where they will be able to put down a cradle: but in return, the room we shall have out of doors will be the more abundant. Coffee-houses and clubs for the husband; walks and drives for the wife; and pleasant country jaunts for both. But the chief advantage in our plan is, that the round table being now completely filled,

our father cannot ask his friends to dinner, who the more he strove to entertain them, used to laugh at him the more.

“ Now no superfluity for us ! Not too much furniture and apparatus ; no coach, no horses ! Nothing else but money ; and the liberty to do whatever pleases you in reason. No wardrobe ; still the best and newest on your back : the man may wear his coat till it is done ; the wife may truck her gown, the moment it is going out of fashion. There is nothing so unsufferable to me as an old huckster’s shop of property. If any one would offer me a jewel, on condition of my wearing it daily on my finger, I would not accept of it ; for how can you conceive any pleasure in a dead capital ? This then is my confession of faith : To transact your business, to make money, to be merry with your household ; and about the rest of the earth to trouble yourself no farther than where you can be of service to it.

“ But ere now thou art saying : ‘ And pray what is to be done with me in this sage plan of yours ? Where shall I find shelter, when you have sold my own house, and not the smallest room remains in yours ?’

“ This is in truth the main point, brother ; and in this too I shall have it in my power to serve thee. But first I must present the just tribute of my praise for time so spent as thine has been.

“ Tell me, how hast thou within a few weeks

become so skilled in every useful, interesting object? Highly as I thought of thy powers, I did not reckon such attention and such diligence among the number. Thy journal shews us with what profit thou art travelling. The description of the iron and the copper forges is exquisite, it evinces a complete knowledge of the subject. I myself was once there; but my relation, when compared with this, has but a very bungled look. The whole letter on the linen trade is full of information; the remarks on commercial competition are at once just and striking. In one or two places there are errors in addition, which indeed are very pardonable.

“ But what most delights my father and myself, is thy thorough knowledge of husbandry, and the improvement of landed property. We have thoughts of purchasing a large estate, at present under sequestration, in a very fruitful district. For paying it, we mean to use the money realized by the sale of the house; another portion we shall borrow; a portion may remain unpaid. And we count on thee for going thither, and superintending the improvement of it; by which means, ere many years are passed, the land, to speak in moderation, will have risen above a third in value. We shall then bring it to the market again; seek out a larger piece; improve and trade as formerly. For all this, thou

art the man. Our pens, meanwhile, will not lie idle here; and so by and by we shall rise to be enviable people.

“For the present, fare thee well! Enjoy life on thy journey, and turn thy face wherever thou canst find contentment and advantage. For the next half year we shall not need thee; thou canst look around thee in the world as thou pleasest; a judicious person finds his best instruction in his travels. Farewell! I rejoice at being connected with thee so closely by relation, and now united with thee in the spirit of activity.”

Well as this letter might be penned, and full of economical truths as it was, Wilhelm felt displeased with it for more than one reason. The praise bestowed on him for his pretended statistical, technological and rural knowledge, was a silent reprimand. The ideal of the happiness of civic life, which his worthy brother sketched, by no means charmed him; on the contrary, a secret spirit of contradiction dragged him forcibly the other way. He convinced himself, that except upon the stage, he could nowhere find that mental culture which he longed to give himself: he seemed to grow the more decided in his resolution, the more strongly Werner without knowing it opposed him. Thus assailed, he collected all his arguments together

and buttressed his opinions in his mind the more carefully, the more desirable he reckoned it to shew them in a favourable light to Werner; and in this manner he produced an answer, which also we insert.

CHAPTER III.

“ THY letter is so well written, and so prudently and wisely conceived, that no objection can be made against it. Only thou must pardon me, when I declare that one may think, maintain, and do directly the reverse, and yet be in the right as well as thou. Thy mode of being and imagining appears to turn on boundless acquisition, and a light mirthful manner of enjoyment: I need scarcely tell thee, that in all this I find little that can charm me.

“ First, however, I am sorry to admit, that my journal is none of mine! Under the pressure of necessity, and to satisfy my father, it was patched together by a friend’s help, out of many books; and though in words I know the objects it relates to, and more of the like sort, I by no means understand them, or can occupy myself about them. What good were it for me to manufacture perfect iron, while my own breast is full of dross? What would it stead me to put properties of land in order, while I am at variance with myself?

“ To speak it in a word; the cultivation of my individual self, here as I am, has from my youth

upwards been constantly though dimly my wish and my purpose. The same intention I still cherish, but the means of realizing it are now grown somewhat clearer. I have seen more of life than thou believest, and profited more by it also. Give some attention then to what I say, though it should not altogether tally with thy own opinions.

“ Had I been a nobleman, our disputes would soon have been decided; but being a simple burgher, I must take a path of my own; and I fear it may be difficult to make thee understand me. I know not how it is in foreign countries; but in Germany, a universal, and if I may say so, personal cultivation is beyond the reach of any one except a nobleman. A burgher may acquire merit; by excessive efforts he may even educate his mind; but his personal qualities are lost, or worse than lost, let him struggle as he will. Since the nobleman, frequenting the society of the most polished, is compelled to give himself a polished manner; since this manner, neither door nor gate being shut against him, grows at last an unconstrained one; since, in court or camp, his figure, his person, are a part of his possessions, and it may be, the most necessary part,—he has reason enough to put some value on them, and to shew that he puts some value on them. A certain stately grace in common things, a sort of gay elegance in earnest and important ones, becomes him well; for it shews him to be every where in equilibrium. He is a public per-

son, and the more cultivated his movements the more sonorous his voice, the more staid and measured his whole being is, the more perfect is he. If to high and low, to friends and relations, he continues still the same, then nothing can be said against him, none may wish him otherwise. His coldness must be reckoned clearness of head, his dissimulation prudence. If he can rule himself externally at every moment of his life, no man has aught more to demand of him; and whatever else there may be in him or about him, capacities, talents, wealth, all seem gifts of supererogation.

“ Now imagine any burgher offering ever to pretend to these advantages, he will utterly fail; and the more completely, the greater inclination and the more endowments nature may have given him for that mode of being.

“ Since, in common life, the nobleman is hampered by no limits; since kings, or kinglike figures do not differ from him, he can everywhere advance with a silent consciousness, as if before his equals, everywhere he is entitled to press forward; whereas nothing more beseems the burgher than the quiet feeling of the limits that are drawn around him.

The burgher may not ask: ‘ What art thou?’ He can only ask: ‘ What hast thou? What discernment, knowledge, talent, wealth?’ If the nobleman, merely by his personal demeanour, offers all that can be asked of him, the burgher by his personal demeanour offers nothing, and can offer nothing.

The former had a right to seem ; the latter is compelled to be, and what he aims at seeming becomes ludicrous and tasteless. The former does and makes, the latter but effects and procures ; he must cultivate some single gifts in order to be useful, and it is beforehand settled, that in his manner of existence there is no harmony, and can be none, since he is bound to make himself of use in one department, and so has to relinquish all the others.

“ Perhaps the reason of this difference is not the usurpation of the nobles and the submission of the burghers, but the constitution of society itself. Whether it will ever alter, and how, is to me of small importance : my present business is to meet my own case, as matters actually stand ; to consider by what means I may save myself, and reach the object which I cannot live in peace without.

“ Now this harmonious cultivation of my nature, which has been denied me by my birth, is exactly what I long for most. Since leaving thee, I have gained much by voluntary practice : I have laid aside much of my wonted embarrassment, and can bear myself in very tolerable style. My speech and voice I have likewise been attending to ; and I may say, without much vanity, that in society I do not cause displeasure. But I will not conceal from thee, that my inclination to become a public person, and to please and influence in a larger cir-

cle, is daily growing more insuperable. With this, there is combined my love for poetry and all that is related to it; and the necessity I feel to cultivate my mental faculties and tastes, that so, in this enjoyment henceforth indispensable, I may esteem as good the good alone, as beautiful the beautiful alone. Thou seest well, that for me all this is nowhere to be met with except upon the stage; that in this element alone can I affect and cultivate myself according to my wishes. On the boards, a polished man appears in his splendour with personal accomplishments, just as he does so in the upper classes of society; body and spirit must advance with equal steps in all his studies; and there I shall have it in my power at once to be and seem as well as anywhere. If I farther long for solid occupations, we have there mechanical vexations in abundance; I may give my patience daily exercise.

“Dispute not with me on this subject: for ere thou writest the step is taken. In compliance with the ruling prejudices, I will change my name, as indeed that of Meister or Master does not suit me. Farewell! Our fortune is in good hands: on that subject I shall not disturb myself. What I need I shall, as occasion calls, require from thee: it will not be much; for I hope my art will be sufficient to maintain me.”

Scarcely was the letter sent away, when our

friend made good his words. To the great surprise of Serlo and the rest, he at once declared that he was ready to become an actor, and bind himself by a contract on reasonable terms. With regard to these they were soon agreed: for Serlo had before made offers, with which Wilhelm and his comrades had good reason to be satisfied. The whole of that unlucky company, wherewith we have had so long to occupy ourselves, was now at once received; and except perhaps Laertes, not a member of it shewed the smallest thankfulness to Wilhelm. As they had entreated without confidence, so they accepted without gratitude. Most of them preferred ascribing their appointment to the influence of Philina, and directed their thanks to her. Meanwhile the contracts had been written out; and were now a-signing. At the moment when our friend was subscribing his assumed designation, by some inexplicable concatenation of ideas, there arose before his mind's eye the image of that green in the forest, where he lay wounded in Philina's lap. The lovely Amazon came riding on her gray palfrey from the bushes of the wood; she approached him, and dismounted. Her humane anxiety made her come and go; at length she stood before him. The white surtout fell down from her shoulders; her countenance, her form, began to glance in radiance, and she vanished from his sight. He wrote his name mechanically only, not knowing

what he did ; and felt not, till after he had signed, that Mignon was standing at his side, was holding by his arm, and had softly tried to stop him and pull back his hand.

CHAPTER IV.

ONE of the conditions, under which our friend had gone upon the stage, was not acceded to by Serlo without some limitations. Wilhelm had required that Hamlet should be played entire and unmutated; the other had agreed to this strange stipulation, in so far as it was *possible*. On this point they had many a contest; for as to what was possible or not possible, and what parts of the piece could be omitted without mutilating it, the two were of very different opinions.

Wilhelm was still in that happy season, when one cannot understand how, in the woman whom he loves, in the writer whom he honours, any thing should be defective. The feeling they excite in us is so entire, so accordant with itself, that we cannot help attributing the same perfect harmony to the objects themselves. Serlo again was willing to discriminate, perhaps too willing: his acute understanding could usually perceive in any work of art nothing but a more or less imperfect whole. He thought, that as pieces usually stood, there was little reason to be chary about meddling with them; that of course Shakspeare, and parti-

cularly Hamlet, would need to suffer much curtailment.

But when Serlo talked of separating the wheat from the chaff, Wilhelm would not hear of it. "It is not chaff and wheat together," said he: "it is a trunk with boughs, twigs, leaves, buds, blossoms, and fruit. Is not the one with the others, and by means of them?" To which Serlo would reply, that people did not bring a whole tree upon the table; that the artist was required to present his guests with silver apples in platters of silver. They exhausted their invention in similitudes; and their opinions seemed still farther to diverge.

Our friend was on the borders of despair when, on one occasion, after much debating, Serlo counselled him to take the simple plan; to make a brief resolution, to grasp his pen, to peruse the tragedy; dashing out whatever would not answer, compressing several personages into one: and if he was not skilled in such proceedings, or had not heart enough for going through with them, he might leave the task to him, the Manager, who would engage to make short work with it.

"That is not our bargain," answered Wilhelm. "How can you, with all your taste, shew so much levity?"

"My friend," cried Serlo; "you yourself will ere long feel it and shew it. I know too well how shocking such a mode of treating works is: per-

haps it never was allowed on any theatre till now. But where indeed was ever one so slighted as ours? Authors force us on this wretched clipping system, and the public tolerates it. How many pieces have we, pray, which do not overstep the measure of our numbers, of our decorations and theatrical machinery, of the proper time, of the fit alternation of dialogue and the physical strength of the actor? And yet we are to play, and play, and constantly give novelties. Then ought we not to profit by our privilege, since we accomplish just as much by mutilated works as by entire ones? It is the public itself that grants the privilege. Few Germans, perhaps few men of any modern nation, have a proper sense of an aesthetic whole: they praise and blame by passages; they are charmed by passages: and who has greater reason to rejoice at this than actors, since the stage is ever but a patched and piecework matter?"

"Is!" cried Wilhelm; "but *must* it ever be so? Must every thing that is continue? Convince me not that you are right: for no power on earth should force me to abide by any contract which I had concluded with the grossest misconceptions."

Serlo gave a merry turn to the business; and persuaded Wilhelm to review once more the many conversations they had had together about Hamlet; and himself to invent some means of properly reforming the piece.

After a few days, which he had spent alone,

our friend returned with a cheerful look. "I am much mistaken," cried he, "if I have not now discovered how the whole is to be managed: nay, I am convinced that Shakspeare himself would have arranged it so, had not his mind been too exclusively directed to the ruling interest, and perhaps misled by the novels, which furnished him with his materials."

"Let us hear," said Serlo, placing himself with an air of solemnity upon the sofa, "I will listen calmly; but judge with rigour."

"I am not afraid of you," said Wilhelm; "only hear me. In the composition of this play, after the most accurate investigation and the most mature reflection, I distinguish two classes of objects. The first are the grand internal relations of the persons and events, the powerful effects which arise from the characters and proceedings of the main figures: these, I hold, are individually excellent; and the order in which they are presented cannot be improved. No kind of interference must be suffered to destroy them, or even essentially to change their form. These are the things which stamp themselves deep into the soul; which all men long to see, which no one dares to meddle with. Accordingly, I understand, they have almost wholly been retained in all our German theatres. But our countrymen have erred, in my opinion, with regard to the second class of objects, which may be observed in this tragedy;

I allude to the external relations of the persons, whereby they are brought from place to place, or combined in various ways by certain accidental incidents. These they have looked upon as very unimportant; have spoken of them only in passing, or left them out entirely. Now indeed, it must be owned, these threads are slack and slender; yet they run through the entire piece, and bind together much that otherwise would fall asunder, and does actually fall asunder, when you cut them off, and imagine you have done enough and more, if you have left the ends hanging.

“ Among these external relations I include the disturbances in Norway, the war with young Fortinbras, the embassy to his uncle, the settling of that feud, the march of young Fortinbras to Poland, and his coming back at the end; of the same sort are Horatio's return from Wittenberg, Hamlet's wish to go thither, the journey of Laertes to France, his return, the despatch of Hamlet into England, his capture by pirates, the death of the two courtiers by the letter which they carried. All these circumstances and events would be very fit for expanding and lengthening a novel; but here they injure exceedingly the unity of the piece, particularly as the hero has no plan, and are in consequence entirely out of place.”

“ For once in the right !” cried Serlo.

“Do not interrupt me,” answered Wilhelm; “perhaps you will not always think me right. These errors are like temporary props of an edifice; they must not be removed till we have built a firm wall in their stead. My project therefore is, not at all to change those first-mentioned grand situations, or at least as much as possible to spare them, both collectively and individually; but with respect to these external, single, dissipated, and dissipating motives, to cast them all at once away, and substitute a solitary one instead of them.”

“And this?” inquired Serlo, springing up from his recumbent posture.

“It lies in the piece itself,” answered Wilhelm, “only I employ it rightly. There are disturbances in Norway. You shall hear my plan, and try it.

“After the death of Hamlet the father, the Norwegians, lately conquered, grow unruly. The viceroy of that country sends his son, Horatio, an old school-friend of Hamlet’s, and distinguished above every other for his bravery and prudence, to Denmark, to press forward the equipment of the fleet, which, under the new luxurious King, proceeds but slowly. Horatio has known the former king, having fought in his battles, having even stood in favour with him; a circumstance by which the first ghost-scene will be nothing injured. The new sovereign gives Horatio audience, and sends Laertes into Norway with intelligence, that

the fleet will soon arrive, whilst Horatio is commissioned to accelerate the preparation of it; and the Queen, on the other hand, will not consent that Hamlet, as he wishes, should go to sea along with him."

"Heaven be praised!" cried Serlo; "we shall now get rid of Wittenberg and the college, which was always a sorry piece of business. I think your idea extremely good: for except these two distant objects, Norway and the fleet, the spectator will not be required to *fancy* any thing: the rest he will *see*; the rest takes place before him; whereas his imagination, on the other plan, was hunted over all the world."

"You easily perceive," said Wilhelm, "how I shall contrive to keep the other parts together. When Hamlet tells Horatio of his uncle's crime, Horatio counsels him to go to Norway in his company, to secure the affections of the army, and return in warlike force. Hamlet also is becoming dangerous to the King and Queen; they find no readier method of deliverance than to send him in the fleet, with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to be spies upon him; and as Laertes in the mean time comes from France, they determine that this youth, exasperated even to murder, shall go after him. Unfavourable winds detain the fleet; Hamlet returns: for his wandering through the church-yard perhaps some lucky motive may be thought of; his meeting with Laertes in Ophelia's grave is

a grand moment, which we must not part with. After this, the King resolves that it is better to get quit of Hamlet on the spot: the festival of his departure, the pretended reconciliation with Laertes are now solemnized; on which occasion knightly sports are held, and Laertes fights with Hamlet. Without the four corpses, I cannot end the piece; not one of them can possibly be left. The right of popular election now again comes in force, and Hamlet gives his dying voice for Horatio."

"Quick! quick!" said Serlo; "sit down and work the piece: your plan has my entire approbation; only do not let your zeal for it evaporate."

CHAPTER V.

WILHELM had already been for some time busied with translating Hamlet; making use, as he laboured, of Wieland's spirited performance, by means of which he had at first become acquainted with Shakspeare. What in Wieland's work had been omitted he replaced; and he had at length procured himself a complete version, at the very time when Serlo and he finally agreed about the way of treating it. He now began, according to his plan, to cut out and to insert, to separate and to unite, to alter and often to restore; for satisfied as he was with his own conception, it still appeared to him as if in executing it, he were but spoiling the original.

So soon as all was finished, he read his work to Serlo and the rest. They declared themselves exceedingly contented with it; Serlo, in particular, made many flattering observations.

"You have felt very justly," said he, among other things, "that some external circumstances must accompany this piece; but that they must be simpler than those which the great poet has employed. What takes place without the theatre,

what the spectator does not see, but must imagine for himself, is like a background, in front of which the acting figures move. Your large and simple prospect of the fleet and Norway will very much improve the piece: if this were altogether taken from it, we should have but a family-scene remaining; and the great idea, that here a kingly house by internal crimes and incongruities goes down to ruin, would not be presented with its proper dignity. But if the former background were left standing, so manifold, so fluctuating and confused, it would hurt the impression of the figures."

Wilhelm again took Shakspeare's part; alleging that he wrote for islanders, for Englishmen, who generally in the distance were accustomed to see little else than ships and voyages, the coasts of France and privateers; and thus what perplexed and distracted others, was to them quite natural.

Serlo assented; and both of them were of opinion, that as the piece was now to be produced upon the German stage, this more serious and simple background was the best adapted for the German mind.

The parts had been distributed before: Serlo undertook Polonius; Aurelia undertook Ophelia; Laertes was already designated by his name; a young, thickset, jolly new-comer was to be Horatio: the King and the Ghost alone occasioned some perplexity. For both of these there was no one but Old Boisterous remaining. Serlo proposed to make the Pedant King; but against this our friend

protested in the strongest terms. They could resolve on nothing.

Wilhelm also had allowed both Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to continue in his piece. "Why not compress them into one?" said Serlo. "This abbreviation will not cost you much."

"Heaven keep me from all such curtailments!" answered Wilhelm, "they destroy at once the sense and the effect. What these two persons are and do, it is impossible to represent by one. In such small matters we discover Shakspeare's greatness. These soft approaches, this smirking and bowing, this assenting, wheedling, flattering, this whisking agility, this wagging of the tail, this allness and emptiness, this legal knavery, this ineptitude and insipidity—how can they be expressed by a single man? There ought to be at least a dozen of these people, if they could be had: for it is only in society that they are any thing; they are society itself; and Shakspeare showed no little wisdom and discernment in bringing in a pair of them. Besides, I need them as a couple that may be contrasted with the single, noble, excellent Horatio."

"I understand you," answered Serlo, "and we can arrange it. One of them we shall hand over to Elmira, Old Boisterous' eldest daughter: it will all be right, if they look well enough, and I will deck and trim the puppets so that it shall be a pleasure to behold them."

Philina was rejoicing not a little, that she had to

act the Duchess in the small subordinate play. "I will shew quite naturally," cried she, "how one weds a second without loss of time, when one has loved the first immensely. I hope to gain the loudest plaudits, and every man shall wish he were the third."

Aurelia gave a frown at this : her spleen against Philina was increasing every day.

"'Tis a pity, I declare," said Serlo, "that we have no ballet ; else I would make you dance me a *pas de deux* with your first, and another with your second husband : the Harper himself might be lulled to sleep by the measure ; and your bits of feet and ancles would look so pretty, tripping to and fro upon the side stage."

"Of my ancles you do not know much," replied she snappishly ; "and as to my bits of feet," cried she, hastily reaching below the table, pulling off her slippers, and holding them together out to Serlo ; "here are the cases of them, and I give you leave to find me nicer ones."

"It were a serious task," said he, looking at the elegant half-shoes. "In truth, one does not often meet with any thing so dainty."

They were of Parisian workmanship ; Philina had obtained them as a present from the Countess, a lady whose foot was celebrated for its beauty.

"A charming thing !" cried Serlo ; "my heart leaps at the sight of them."

"What gallant throbs !" replied Philina,

“ There is nothing in the world beyond a pair of slippers,” said he ; “ of such pretty manufacture, in their proper time and place, when —— ”

Philina took her slippers from his hands, crying, “ You have squeezed them all ! They are far too wide for me ! ” She played with them, and rubbed the soles of them together. “ How hot it is ! ” cried she, clapping the sole upon her cheek, then again rubbing, and holding it to Serlo. He was innocent enough to stretch out his hand to feel the warmth. “ Clip ! clap ! ” cried she, giving him a smart rap over the knuckles with the heel, that he screamed and drew-back his hand ; “ I will teach you how to use my slippers better.”

“ And I will teach you also how to use old folk like children,” cried the other ; then sprang up, seized her, and plundered many a kiss, every one of which she artfully contested with a shew of serious reluctance. In this romping, her long hair got loose, and floated round the group ; the chair overset ; and Aurelia, inwardly indignant at such rioting, arose in great vexation.

CHAPTER VI.

THOUGH in this remoulding of Hamlet many characters had been cut off, a sufficient number of them still remained; a number which the company was scarcely adequate to meet.

“If this is the way of it,” said Serlo, “our prompter himself must issue from his den, and mount the stage, and become a personage like one of us.”

“In his own station,” answered Wilhelm, “I have frequently admired him.”

“I do not think,” said Serlo, “that there is on earth a more perfect artist of his kind. No spectator ever hears him; we upon the stage catch every syllable. He has formed in himself, as it were, a peculiar set of vocal organs for this purpose; he is like a Genius that whispers intelligibly to us in the hour of need. He feels, as if by instinct, what portion of his task an actor is completely master of; and anticipates from afar where his memory will fail him. I have known cases, in which I myself had scarcely read my part, he said it over to me word for word, and I played

happily. Yet he has some peculiarities, which would make another in his place quite useless. For example, he takes such an interest in the pieces, that in giving any moving passage, he does not indeed declaim it, but he reads it with all pomp and pathos. By this ill habit, he has non-plussed me on more than one occasion."

"As with another of his singularities," observed Aurelia, "he once left me sticking fast in a very dangerous passage."

"How could this happen with the man's attentiveness?" said Wilhelm.

"He is so affected," said Aurelia, "by certain passages, that he weeps warm tears, and for a few moments loses all reflection; and it is not properly passages such as we should call affecting that produce this impression on him; but, if I express myself clearly, the *beautiful* passages, those out of which the pure spirit of the poet looks forth, as it were, through open sparkling eyes; passages which others at the most rejoice over, and which many thousands overlook entirely."

"And with a soul so tender, why does he never venture on the stage?"

"A hoarse voice," said Serlo, "and a stiff carriage exclude him from it; as his melancholic temper excludes him from society. What trouble have I taken, and in vain, to make myself familiar with him! But he is a charming reader; such another I have never heard; no one can observe

like him the narrow limit between declamation and graceful recital."

"The very man!" exclaimed our friend, "the very man! What a fortunate discovery! We have now the proper hand for delivering the passage of *The rugged Pyrrhus*."

"One requires your eagerness," said Serlo, "before one can employ every object, in the use which it was meant for."

"In truth," said Wilhelm, "I was very much afraid we should be forced to leave this passage out; the omission would have lamed the whole play."

"Well! That is what I cannot understand," observed Aurelia.

"I hope you will ere long be of my opinion," answered Wilhelm. "Shakspeare has introduced these travelling players with a double purpose. The person who recites the death of Priam with such feeling, in the *first* place, makes a deep impression on the Prince himself; he sharpens the conscience of the wavering youth: and, accordingly, this scene becomes a prelude to that other, where, in the *second* place, the little play produces such effect upon the King. Hamlet feels himself reproved and put to shame by the player, who feels so deep a sympathy in foreign and fictitious woes; and the thought of making an experiment upon the conscience of his stepfather is in consequence suggested to him. What a royal mono-

logue is that which ends the second act! How charming it will be to speak it!

“ 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 own 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 persuade our man to come upon the stage,” observed Aurelia.

“ We must lead him to it by degrees,” said Serlo. “ At the rehearsal, he may read the passage ; we shall tell him that an actor whom we are expecting is to play it ; and so, by and by, we shall lead him nearer to the point.”

Having agreed on this affair, the conversation next turned upon the Ghost. Wilhelm could not bring himself to give the part of the living King to the Pedant, that so Old Boisterous might play the Ghost : he was of opinion that they ought to wait a while ; because some other actors had announced themselves, and among these it was probable that they would find a fitter man.

We can easily conceive, then, how astonished

Wilhelm must have been, when returning home that evening, he found a billet lying on his table, sealed with singular figures, and containing what follows :

“ Strange youth ! we know, thou art in great perplexity. For thy Hamlet thou canst scarce find men enough, to say nothing about Ghosts. Thy zeal deserves a miracle : miracles we cannot work ; but somewhat marvellous shall happen. If thou have faith, the Ghost shall arise at the proper hour ! Be of courage and keep firm ! This needs no answer ; thy determination will be known to us.”

With this curious sheet he hastened back to Serlo, who read it and re-read it, and at last declared with a thoughtful look, that it seemed a matter of some moment ; that they must consider well and seriously whether they could risk it. They talked the subject over at some length ; Aurelia was silent, only smiling now and then ; and a few days after, when speaking of the incident again, she gave our friend, not obscurely, to understand, that she held it all for a joke of Serlo's. She desired him to cast away anxiety, and to expect the Ghost with patience.

Serlo for most part was in excellent humour : the actors that were going to leave him took all possible pains to play well, that their absence might be properly regretted ; and this, combined

with the newfangled zeal of the others, gave promise of the best results.

His intercourse with Wilhelm had not failed to exert some influence upon him. He began to speak more about art: for, after all, he was a German; and Germans like to give themselves account of what they do. Wilhelm wrote down many of their conversations; which, as our narrative must not be so often interrupted here, we shall communicate to such of our readers as feel an interest in dramaturgic matters, by some other opportunity.

In particular, one evening, the Manager was very merry in speaking of the part of Polonius, and how he meant to take it up. "I engage," said he, "on this occasion, to present a very meritorious person in his best aspect. The repose and security of this old gentleman, his emptiness and his significance, his exterior gracefulness and interior meanness, his frankness and sycophancy, his sincere roguery and deceitful truth, I will introduce with all due elegance in their fit proportions. This respectable, gray-haired, enduring, time-serving half-knave, I will represent in the most courtly style: the occasional roughness and coarseness of our author's strokes will further me here. I will speak like a book, when I am prepared beforehand; and like an ass, when I utter the overflowings of my heart. I will be insipid and absurd enough to chime in with every one; and acute

enough never to observe when people make a mock of me. I have seldom taken up a part with so much zeal and roguishness."

"Could I but hope as much from mine!" exclaimed Aurelia. "I have neither youth nor softness enough to be at home in this character. One thing alone I am too sure of; the feeling that turns Ophelia's brain, I shall not want."

"We must not take the matter up so strictly," said our friend. "For my share, I am certain, that the wish to act the character of Hamlet has led me exceedingly astray throughout my study of the piece. And now the more I look into the part, the more clearly do I see, that in my whole form and physiognomy, there is not one feature such as Shakspeare meant for Hamlet. When I consider with what nicety the various circumstances are adapted to each other, I can scarcely hope to produce even a tolerable effect."

"You are entering on your new career with becoming conscientiousness," said Serlo. "The actor fits himself to his part as he can, and the part to him as it must. But how has Shakspeare drawn his Hamlet? Is he then so utterly unlike you?"

"In the first place," answered Wilhelm, "he is fair-haired."

"This I call farfetched," observed Aurelia. "How do you infer it?"

"As a Dane, as a Northman, he is fair-haired and blue-eyed by descent."

“ And you think Shakspeare had this in view ?”

“ I do not find it specially expressed ; but, by comparison of passages, I think it incontestable. The fencing tires him ; the sweat is running from his brow ; and the Queen remarks : *He's fat and scant of breath.* Can you conceive him to be otherwise than plump and fair-haired ? Brown-complexioned people, in their youth, are seldom plump. And does not his wavering melancholy, his soft lamenting, his irresolute activity, accord with such a figure ? From a dark-haired young man, you would look for more decision and impetuosity.”

“ You are spoiling my imagination,” cried Aurelia : “ Away with your fat Hamlets ! Do not set your well-fed Prince before us ! Give us rather any succedaneum that will move us, will delight us. The intention of the author is of less importance to us than our own enjoyment, and we need a charm that is adapted for us.”

CHAPTER VII.

ONE evening a dispute arose among our friends about the novel and the drama, and which of them deserved the preference. Serlo said it was a fruitless and misunderstood debate; both might be superior in their kinds, only each must keep within the limits proper to it.

“About their limits and their kinds,” said Wilhelm, “I confess myself not altogether clear.”

“Who is so?” said the other; “and yet perhaps it were worth while to come a little closer to the business.”

They conversed together long upon the matter; and in fine, the following was nearly the result of their discussion:

“In the novel as well as in the drama, it is human nature and human action that we see. The difference between these sorts of fiction lies not merely in their outward form; not merely in the circumstance that the personages of the one are made to speak, while those of the other have commonly their history narrated. Unfortunately many dramas are but novels, which proceed by dialogue;

and it would not be impossible to write a drama in the shape of letters.

“ But in the novel, it is chiefly *sentiments* and *events* that are exhibited ; in the drama, it is *characters* and *deeds*: The novel must go slowly forward ; and the sentiments of the hero, by some means or another, must restrain the tendency of the whole to unfold itself and to conclude. The drama on the other hand must hasten, and the character of the hero must press forward to the end ; it does not restrain, but is restrained. The novel hero must be suffering, at least he must not in a high degree be active ; in the dramatic one, we look for activity and deeds. Grandison, Clarissa, Pamela, The Vicar of Wakefield, Tom Jones himself, are, if not suffering, at least retarding personages ; and the incidents are all in some sort modelled by their sentiments. In the drama the hero models nothing by himself ; all things withstand him, and he clears and casts away the hindrances from off his path, or else sinks under them.”

Our friends were also of opinion, that in the novel some degree of scope may be allowed to Chance ; but that it must always be led and guided by the sentiments of the personages ; on the other hand, that Fate, which, by means of outward unconnected circumstances, carries forward men, without their own concurrence, to an unforeseen catastrophe, can have place only in the drama ; that

Chance may produce pathetic situations, but never tragic ones; Fate on the other hand ought always to be terrible; and is in the highest sense tragic, when it brings into a ruinous concatenation the guilty man, and the guiltless that was unconcerned with him.

These considerations led them back to the play of Hamlet, and the peculiarities of its composition. The hero in this case, it was observed, is endowed more properly with sentiments than with a character; it is events alone that push him on; and accordingly the piece has in some measure the expansion of a novel. But as it is Fate that draws the plan; as the story issues from a deed of terror, and the hero is continually driven forward to a deed of terror, the work is tragic in the highest sense, and admits of no other than a tragic end.

They were now to study and peruse the piece in common; to commence what are called the book-rehearsals. These Wilhelm had looked forward to as to a festival. Having formerly collated all the parts, no obstacle on this side could oppose him. The whole of the actors were acquainted with the piece; he endeavoured to impress their minds with the importance of these book-rehearsals. "As you require," said he, "of every musical performer that, in some degree, he shall be able to play from the book; so every actor, every educated man, should train himself to recite from the book, to catch im-

mediately the character of any drama, any poem, any tale he may be reading, and exhibit it with grace and readiness. No committing of the piece to memory will be of service, if the actor have not in the first place penetrated into the sense and spirit of his author; the mere letter will avail him nothing."

Serlo declared, that he would overlook all subsequent rehearsals, the last rehearsal itself, if justice were but done to these rehearsals from the book. "For commonly," said he, "there is nothing more amusing than to hear an actor speak of study: it is as if freemasons were to talk of building."

The rehearsal passed according to their wishes; and we may assert, that the fame and favour which our company acquired afterwards, had their foundation in these few but well-spent hours.

"You did right, my friend," said Serlo, when they were alone, "in speaking to our fellow-labourers so earnestly; and yet I am afraid that they will scarce fulfil your wishes."

"How so?" asked Wilhelm.

"I have noticed," answered Serlo, "that as easily as you may set in motion the imaginations of men, gladly as they listen to your tales and fictions, it is yet very rarely that you find among them any touch of an imagination you can call productive. In actors this remark is strikingly exemplified.

Any one of them is well content to undertake a beautiful, praiseworthy, brilliant part; and seldom will any one of them do more than self-complacently transport himself into his hero's place, without in the smallest troubling his head, whether other people view him so or not. But to seize with vivacity what the author's feeling was in writing; what portion of your individual qualities you must cast off, in order to do justice to a part; how by your own conviction that you are become another man, you may carry with you the convictions of the audience; how by the inward truth of your conceptive power, you can change these boards into a temple, this pasteboard into woods; to seize and execute all this is given to very few. That internal strength of soul, by which alone deception can be brought about; that lying truth, without which nothing will affect us rightly, have by most men never even been imagined.

“ Let us not then press too hard for spirit and feeling in our friends! The surest way is first coolly to instruct them in the sense and letter of the piece; if possible to open up their understandings. Whoever has the talent will then, of his own accord, eagerly adopt the spirited feeling and manner of expression; and those who have it not, will at least be prevented from acting or reciting altogether falsely. And among actors,

as indeed in all cases, there is no worse arrangement than for any one to make pretensions to the spirit of a thing, while the sense and letter of it are not ready and clear to him."

CHAPTER VIII.

COMING to the first stage-rehearsal very early, Wilhelm found himself alone upon the boards. The appearance of the place surprised him, and awoke the strangest recollections. A forest and village-scene stood exactly represented as he once had seen it in the theatre of his native town. On that occasion also, a rehearsal was proceeding; and it was the morning when Mariana first confessed her love to him, and promised him a happy interview. The peasants' cottages resembled one another on the two stages, as they did in nature; the true morning sun, beaming through a half-closed window-shutter, fell upon a part of a bench ill joined to a cottage door; but unhappily it did not now enlighten Mariana's waist and bosom. He sat down, reflecting on this strange coincidence: he almost thought that perhaps on this very spot he would soon see her again. And alas! the truth was nothing more, than that an afterpiece to which this scene belonged was at that time very often played upon the German stage.

Out of these meditations he was roused by the other actors; along with whom two amateurs, frequenters of the wardrobe and the stage, came

in, and saluted Wilhelm with a show of great enthusiasm. One of these was in some degree attached to Frau Melina : but the other was entirely a pure friend of art ; and both were of the kind, which a good company should always wish to have about it. It was difficult to say whether their love for the stage or their knowledge of it was the greater. They loved it too much to know it perfectly ; they knew it well enough to prize the good, and to discard the bad. But their inclination being so powerful, they could tolerate the mediocre ; and the lordly joy, which they experienced from the foretaste and the aftertaste of excellence, surpassed expression. The mechanical department gave them pleasure, the intellectual charmed them ; and so strong was their susceptibility, that even a discontinuous rehearsal afforded them a species of illusion. Deficiencies appeared in their eyes to fade away in distance ; the successful touched them like an object near at hand. In a word, they were judges such as every artist wishes in his own department. Their favourite movement was from the side-scenes to the pit, and from the pit to the side-scenes ; their happiest place was in the wardrobe ; their busiest employment was in trying to improve the dress, position, recitation, gesture of the actor ; their liveliest conversation was on the effect produced by him ; their most constant effort was to keep him accurate ; active and attentive, to do him service or

kindness, and without squandering, to procure for the company a series of enjoyments. The two had obtained the exclusive privilege of being present on the stage, at rehearsals as well as exhibitions. In regard to Hamlet, they had not in all points agreed with Wilhelm; here and there he had yielded; but for most part he had stood by his opinion; and, upon the whole, these discussions had been very useful in the forming of his taste. He shewed both gentlemen how much he valued them; and they again predicted nothing less, from these combined endeavours, than a new epoch for the German theatre.

The presence of these persons was of great service during the rehearsals. In particular they laboured to convince our players that, throughout the whole of their preparations, the posture and action, as they were intended ultimately to appear, should always be combined with the words, and thus the whole be mechanically united by habit. In rehearsing a tragedy especially, they said, no common movement with the hands should be allowed: a tragic actor, that took snuff in the rehearsal, always frightened them; for, in all probability, on coming to the same passage in the exhibition he would miss his pinch. Nay, on the same principles, they maintained that no one should rehearse in boots, if his part were to be played in shoes. But nothing, they declared, afflicted them so much as when the women, in

rehearsing, stuck their hands into the folds of their gowns.

By the persuasion of our friends, another very good effect was brought about; the actors all began to learn the use of arms. Since military parts occurred so often, it was said, could any thing look more absurd than men without the smallest particle of discipline, trolling about the stage in captains' and majors' uniforms.

Wilhelm and Laertes were the first who subjected themselves to the tuition of a subaltern officer: they continued their practising of fence with the greatest zeal.

Such toil did our two amateurs take upon them for improving a company, which had so fortunately come together. They were thus providing for the future satisfaction of the public, while the public was usually laughing at their taste. People did not know what gratitude they owed our friends; particularly for performing one service, the service of frequently impressing on the actor the fundamental point, that it was his duty to speak so loud as to be heard. In this simple matter, they experienced more opposition and repugnance than they had at first anticipated. Most part maintained that they were heard well enough already; some laid the blame upon the building; others said, one could not yell and bellow, when one had to speak naturally, secretly or tenderly.

Our two friends having an immeasurable stock

of patience, tried every means of undoing this delusion, of getting round this obstinate self-will. They spared neither arguments nor flatteries ; and at last they reached their object, being aided not a little by the good example of Wilhelm. By him, they were requested to sit down in the remotest corners of the house ; and every time they did not hear him perfectly, to rap on the bench with a key. He articulated well, spoke out in a measured manner, raised his tones gradually, and did not overcry himself in the keenest passages. The rapping of the key was heard less and less every new rehearsal : by and by the rest submitted to the same operation ; and at last it seemed rational to hope, that the piece would be heard by every one in all the nooks of the house.

From this example, we may see how desirous people are to reach their object in their own way ; what need there often is of enforcing on them truths which are self-evident ; and how difficult it may be to reduce the man, who aims at effecting something, to admit the primary conditions under which alone his enterprise is possible.

CHAPTER IX.

THE necessary preparations for scenery and dresses, and whatever else was requisite, were now proceeding. In regard to certain scenes and passages, our friend had whims of his own, which Serlo humoured, partly in consideration of their bargain, partly from conviction, and because he hoped by these civilities to gain Wilhelm, and to lead him according to his own purposes, the more implicitly in time to come.

Thus, for example, the King and Queen were, at the first audience, to appear sitting on the throne, with the courtiers at the sides, and Hamlet standing undistinguished in the crowd. "Hamlet," said he, "must keep himself in quietness; his sable dress will point him out sufficiently. He should rather shun remark than seek it. Not till the audience is ended, and the King speaks with him as with a son, should he advance, and allow the scene to take its course."

A formidable obstacle still remained, in regard to the two pictures, which Hamlet so passionately refers to in the scene with his mother. "We ought," said Wilhelm, "to have both of them visible, at full length, in the bottom of the chamber

near the main door; and the former King must be clad in armour, like the Ghost, and hang at the side where it enters. I could wish that the figure held its right hand in a commanding attitude; were somewhat turned away; and as it were, looked over its shoulder, that so it might perfectly resemble the Ghost at the moment when this issues from the door. It will produce a great effect, when at this instant Hamlet looks upon the Ghost, and the Queen upon the picture. The stepfather may be painted in royal ornaments, but not so striking."

There were several other points of this sort, about which we shall perhaps have elsewhere opportunity to speak.

"Are you then inexorably bent on Hamlet's dying at the end?" inquired Serlo.

"How can I keep him alive?" said Wilhelm, "when the whole piece is pressing him to death? We have already talked at large on that matter."

"But the public wishes him to live."

"I will shew the public any other complaisance; but for this, I cannot. We often wish that some gallant useful man, who is dying of a chronical disease, might yet live longer. The family weep, and conjure the physician, but he cannot stay him; and no more than this physician can withstand the necessity of nature, can we give law to an acknowledged necessity of art. It is a false compliance with the multitude, to raise in them emo-

tions which they *wish*, when these are not emotions which they *ought*, to feel."

"Whoever pays the cash," said Serlo, "may require the ware according to his liking."

"Doubtless, in some degree," replied our friend; "but a great public should be revered, not used as children are, when pedlars wish to hook the money from them. By presenting excellence before the people, you should gradually excite in them a taste and feeling for the excellent; and they will pay their money down with double satisfaction, when reason itself has nothing to object against this outlay. The public you may flatter, as you do a well-beloved child, to better, to enlighten it; not as you do a pampered child of quality, to perpetuate the error which you profit from."

In this manner, various other topics were discussed relating to the question: what might still be altered in the piece, and what must of necessity remain unchanged? We shall not enter farther on those points at present; but perhaps, at some future time, we may submit this altered Hamlet itself to such of our readers as feel any interest in the subject.

CHAPTER X.

THE main rehearsal was at length concluded; it had lasted very long. Serlo and Wilhelm still found much to care for: notwithstanding all the time, which had already been consumed in preparation, some highly necessary matters had been left to the very last moment.

Thus, the pictures of the kings, for instance, were not ready; and the scene between Hamlet and his Mother, from which so powerful an effect was looked for, had a very helpless aspect, as the business stood; for neither Ghost nor painted image of him was at present forthcoming. Serlo made a jest of this perplexity: "We should be in a pretty scrape," said he, "if the Ghost were to decline appearing, and the guard had nothing else to fight with but the air, and our prompter were obliged to speak the spirit's part from the side-scenes."

"We will not scare away our secret friend by unbelief," said Wilhelm: "doubtless at the proper season he will come, and astonish us as much as the spectators."

"Well, certainly," said Serlo, "I shall be a happy man to-morrow night, when once this piece

is fairly acted. It costs us more arrangement than I dreamed of."

"But none of you," exclaimed Philina, "will be happier than I, little as my part disturbs me. For to hear a single subject talked about forever and forever, when after all there is nothing to come out of it, beyond an exhibition that will be forgotten like so many hundred others, is a task for which I have not patience. In Heaven's name, not so many *pros* and *cons*! The guests, whom you have entertained, have always something to object against the dinner; nay, if you could hear them talk of it at home, they cannot understand how it was possible to undergo so sad a business."

"Let me turn your illustration to my own advantage," answered Wilhelm. "Consider how much must be done by art and nature, by traffickers and tradesmen, ere an entertainment can be given. How many years the stag must wander in the forest, the fish in the river or the sea, before they can deserve to grace our table! And what cares and consultations with her cooks and servants has the lady of the house submitted to! Observe with what indifference the people swallow the production of the distant vintager, the seaman and the vintner, as if it were a thing of course. And ought these men to cease from labouring, providing, and preparing; ought the master of the house to cease from purchasing and laying up the fruit of their

exertions, because at last the enjoyment it affords is transitory ? But no enjoyment can be transitory ; the impression which it leaves is permanent ; and what is done with diligence and effort, communicates to the spectator a hidden force, of which we cannot say how far its influence may reach."

" 'Tis all one to me," replied Philina ; " only here again I must observe that you men are constantly at variance with yourselves. With all this conscientious horror at curtailing Shakspeare, you have missed the finest thought there was in Hamlet !"

" The finest ?" cried our friend.

" Certainly the finest," said Philina ; " the Prince himself takes pleasure in it."

" And it is ?" inquired Serlo.

" If you had on a wig," replied Philina, " I would pluck it very coolly off you ; for I think you need to have your understanding opened."

The rest began to think what she could mean ; the conversation paused. The party arose ; it was now grown late ; they seemed about to separate. While they were standing in this undetermined mood, Philina all at once struck up a song, with a very graceful, pleasing tune. The subject was the praise of Night ; the words at least were delicate and pretty ; but we are afraid our readers would not care to hear it.

She made a little courtesy on concluding, and Serlo gave a loud : " Bravo !" She scuttled off, and

left the room with a tee-hee of laughter. They heard her singing and skipping as she went down stairs.

Serlo passed into another room ; Wilhelm bade Aurelia good night ; but she continued looking at him for a few moments, and said :

“ How I dislike that woman ! Dislike her from my heart, and to her very slightest qualities ! These brown eyelashes, with her fair hair, which our brother thinks so charming, I cannot bear to look upon ; and that scar upon her brow has something in it so repulsive, so low and base, that I could recoil ten paces every time I meet her. She was lately telling as a joke, that her father, when she was a child, threw a plate at her head, of which this is the mark. It is well that she is marked in the eyes and brow, that those about her may be on their guard.”

Wilhelm made no answer, and Aurelia went on, apparently with greater spleen :

“ It is next to impossible to speak a friendly or a civil word to her, so deeply do I hate her with all her wheedling. Would that we were rid of her ! And you too, my friend, have a certain complaisance to the creature, a way of acting towards her, that grieves me to the very soul ; an attention which borders on respect ; which, by Heaven ! she does not merit.”

“ Whatever she may be,” replied our friend,

“ I owe her thanks. Her upbringing is to blame : to her natural character I would do justice.”

“ Character !” exclaimed Aurelia ; and do you think that such a creature has a character ? O you men ! It is so like you ! These are the women you deserve !”

“ My friend, can you suspect me ?” answered Wilhelm. “ I will give account of every minute I have spent beside her.”

“ Come, come,” replied Aurelia ; “ it is late, we will not quarrel. All like each, and each like all ! Good night, my friend ! Good night, my sparkling bird of Paradise !”

Wilhelm asked how he had earned this title.

“ Another time,” cried she ; “ another time. They say it has no feet, but hovers in the air and lives on ether. That, however, is a story, a poetic fiction. Good night ! Dream sweetly if you are in luck !”

She proceeded to her room ; and he, being left alone, made haste to his.

Half angrily he walked along his chamber to and fro. The jesting but decided tone of Aurelia had hurt him : he felt deeply how unjust she was. Could he treat Philina with unkindness or ill nature ? She had done no evil to him : but for any love to her, he could proudly and confidently take his conscience to witness that it was not so.

On the point of beginning to undress, he was

going forward to his bed to draw aside the curtains, when, not without extreme astonishment, he saw a pair of women's slippers lying on the floor before it. One of them was resting on its sole, the other on its edge. They were Philina's slippers; he recognised them but too well. He thought he noticed some disorder in the curtains; nay it seemed as if they moved. He stood and looked with unaverted eyes.

A new impulse, which he took for anger, cut his breath: after a short pause he recovered, and cried, in a firm tone:

"Come out, Philina? What do you mean by this? Where is your sense, your modesty? Are we to be the speech of the house to-morrow?"

Nothing stirred.

"I do not jest," continued he; "these pranks are little to my taste."

No sound! No motion!

Irritated and determined, he at last went forward to the bed, and tore the curtains asunder. "Arise," said he; "if I am not to give you up my room to-night."

With great surprise, he found his bed unoccupied; the sheets and pillows in the sleekest rest. He looked around; he searched, and searched, but found no traces of the rogue. Behind the bed, the stove, the drawers, there was nothing to be seen: he sought with great and greater diligence;

a spiteful looker-on might have believed that he was seeking in the hope of finding.

All thought of sleep was gone. He put the slippers on his table; went past it up and down; oft paused before it; and a wicked sprite that watched him has asserted, that our friend employed himself for several hours about these dainty little shoes; that he viewed them with a certain interest; that he handled them and played with them: and it was not till towards morning that he threw himself on bed, without undressing, where he fell asleep amid a world of curious fantasies.

He was still slumbering, when Serlo entered hastily: "Where are you?" cried he; "still in bed? Impossible! I want you in the theatre; we have a thousand things to do."

CHAPTER XI.

THE forenoon and the afternoon fled rapidly away. The playhouse was already full; our friend made haste to dress. It was not with the joy, which it had given him when he first essayed it, that he now put on the garb of Hamlet: he but attired himself that he might be in readiness. On joining the women in the stage-room, they unanimously cried that nothing sat upon him rightly; the fine feather stood awry; the buckle of his belt did not fit: they began to slit, to sew, and piece together. The music started: Philina still objected somewhat to his ruff; Aurelia had much to say against his mantle. "Leave me alone, good people," cried he, "this negligence will make me more like Hamlet." The women would not let him go, but continued trimming him. The music ceased; the acting was begun. He looked at himself in the glass; pressed his hat closer down upon his face, and retouched the painting of his cheeks.

At this instant, somebody came rushing in and cried: "The Ghost! The Ghost!"

Wilhelm had not once had time all day to think about the Ghost, and whether it would come or

not. His anxiety on that head was at length removed, and now some strange assistant was to be expected. The stage-manager came in, inquiring after various matters: Wilhelm had not time to ask about the Ghost; he hastened to present himself before the throne, where King and Queen, surrounded with their court, were already glancing in all the splendours of royalty, and waiting till the scene in front of them should be concluded. He caught the last words of Horatio, who was speaking of the Ghost in extreme confusion, and seemed to have almost forgot his part.

The intermediate curtain went aloft, and Hamlet saw the crowded house before him. Horatio having spoken his address, and been dismissed by the King, pressed through to Hamlet; and, as if presenting himself to the Prince, he said: "The Devil is in harness; he has put us all in fright."

In the meanwhile two men of large stature, in white cloaks and capuches, were observed standing in the side-scenes. Our friend, in the distraction, embarrassment, and hurry of the moment, had failed in the first soliloquy; at least such was his own opinion, though loud plaudits had attended his exit. Accordingly he made his next entrance in no pleasant mood, with the dreary wintry feeling of dramatic condemnation. Yet he girded up his mind; and spoke that appropriate passage on the "rouse and wassel," the "heavy-headed revel" of the Danes, with suitable indifference; he

had, like the audience, in thinking of it, quite forgot the Ghost ; and he started in real terror, when Horatio cried out : “ Look, my lord, it comes ! ” He whirled violently round ; and the tall noble figure, the low inaudible tread, the light movement in the heavy-looking armour, made such an impression on him, that he stood as if transformed to stone, and could utter only in a half-voice his : “ Angels and ministers of grace defend us ! ” He glared at the form ; drew a deep breathing once or twice, and pronounced his address to the Ghost in a manner so confused, so broken, so constrained, that the highest art could not have hit the mark so well.

His translation of this passage now stood him in good stead. He had kept very close to the original ; in which the arrangement of the words appeared to him expressive of a mind confounded, terrified, and seized with horror.

“ 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 com'st in such a questionable shape,
That I will speak to thee ; I'll call thee Hamlet,
King, father, royal Dane : O answer me ! ”

A deep effect was visible in the audience. The Ghost beckoned, the Prince followed him amid the loudest plaudits.

The scene changed ; and when the two had re-ap-

peared, the Ghost on a sudden stopped, and turned round ; by which means Hamlet came to be a little too close upon it. With a longing curiosity he looked in at the lowered vizor, but except two deep lying eyes, and a well-formed nose, he could discern nothing. Gazing timidly, he stood before the Ghost ; but when the first tones issued from the helmet, and a somewhat hoarse yet deep and penetrating voice pronounced the words : " I am thy father's spirit," Wilhelm, shuddering, started back some paces, and the audience shuddered with him. Each imagined that he knew the voice ; Wilhelm thought he noticed in it some resemblance with his father's. These strange emotions and remembrances ; the curiosity he felt about discovering his secret friend, the anxiety about offending him, even the theatric impropriety of coming too near him in the present situation, all this affected Wilhelm with powerful and conflicting impulses. During the long speech of the Ghost, he changed his place so frequently ; he seemed so unsettled and perplexed, so attentive and so absent-minded, that his acting caused a universal admiration, as the Spirit caused a universal horror. The latter spoke with a feeling of melancholy anger rather than of sorrow ; but of an anger spiritual, slow, and inexhaustible. It was the mistemper of a noble soul, that is severed from all earthly things, and yet devoted to unbounded woe. At last he vanished ; but in a curious man-

ner ; for a thin, gray, transparent gauze arose from the place of descent like a vapour, spread itself over him, and sank along with him.

Hamlet's friends now entered, and swore upon the sword. Old Truepenny, in the mean time, was so busy under ground, that wherever they might take their station, he was sure to call out right beneath them : " Swear ! " and they started, as if the soil had taken fire below them, and hastened to another spot. On each of these occasions, too, a little flame pierced through at the place where they were standing. The whole produced on the spectators a profound impression.

After this, the piece proceeded calmly on its course : nothing failed, all prospered ; the audience manifested their contentment, and the actors seemed to rise in heart and spirits every scene.

CHAPTER XII.

THE curtain fell ; and rapturous applauses sounded out of every corner of the house. The four princely corpses sprang aloft and embraced each other. Polonius and Ophelia likewise issued from their graves, and listened with extreme satisfaction, as Horatio, who had stepped before the curtain to announce the following piece, was welcomed with the most thundering plaudits. The people would not hear of any other play, but violently required the repetition of the present.

“ We have won,” cried Serlo : “ and so not another reasonable word this night ! Every thing depends upon the first impression : we should never take it ill of any actor that, on occasion of his first appearance, he is provident and even self-willed.”

The box-keeper came and delivered him a heavy sum. “ We have made a good beginning,” cried the Manager, “ and prejudice itself will now be on our side. But where is the supper that you promised us ? To-night we may be allowed to relish it a little.”

It had been agreed that all the party were to stay together in their stage-dresses, and enjoy a

little feast among themselves. Wilhelm had engaged to have the place in readiness, and Frau Melina to provide the victuals.

A room, which commonly was occupied by scene-painters, had accordingly been polished up as well as possible; our friends had hung it round with little decorations; and so decked and trimmed it, that it looked half like a garden, half like a colonnade. On entering it, the company were dazzled with the glitter of a multitude of lights, which, across the vapours of the sweetest and most copious perfumes, spread a stately splendour over a well-decorated and well-furnished table. These preparations were hailed with joyful interjections by the party: all took their places with a certain genuine dignity; it seemed as if some royal family had met together in the Kingdom of the Shades. Wilhelm sat between Aurelia and the Frau Melina; Serlo between Philina and Elmira; nobody was discontented with himself or with his place.

Our two theatric amateurs, who had from the first been present, now increased the pleasure of the meeting. While the exhibition was proceeding, they had several times stepped round and come upon the stage, expressing, in the warmest terms, the delight which themselves and the audience felt. They now descended to particulars; and each was richly rewarded for his efforts.

With boundless animation, the company extolled man after man and passage after passage. To the

prompter, who had modestly sat down at the bottom of the table, they gave a liberal commendation for his *rugged Pyrrhus*; the fencing of Hamlet and Laertes was beyond all praise; Ophelia's mourning had been inexpressibly exalted and affecting; of Polonius they would not trust themselves to speak.

Every individual present heard himself commended through the rest and by them; nor was the absent Ghost defrauded of his share of praise and admiration. He had played the part, it was asserted, with a very happy voice, and in a lofty style; but what surprised them most was the information which he seemed to have about their own affairs. He entirely resembled the painted figure, as if he had sat to the painter of it; and the two amateurs described, in glowing language, how awful it had looked when the spirit entered near the picture, and stepped across before his own image. Truth and error, they declared, had been commingled in the strangest manner; they had felt as if the Queen really did not see the Ghost. And Frau Melina was especially commended, because on this occasion she had gazed upwards at the picture, while Hamlet was pointing downwards at the Spectre.

Inquiries were now set on foot about the entrance of that apparition. The stage-manager informed his friends that a back-door, usually blocked up by decorations, had that evening, as the

Gothic hall was occupied, been opened ; that two large figures in white cloaks and hoods, one of whom was not to be distinguished from the other, had entered by this passage ; and by the same, it was likely, they had issued when the third act was concluded.

Serlo praised the Ghost for one merit ; that he had not whined and lamented like a tailor ; but to animate his son, had introduced a passage at the end, which more beseemed so great a hero. Wilhelm had retained it in his memory ; he promised to insert it in his manuscript.

Amid the pleasures of the entertainment, it had not been noticed that the children and the Harper were away. Ere long they made their entrance, and were blithely welcomed by the company. They came in together, very strangely decked : Felix was beating a triangle, Mignon a tambourine ; the old man had his large harp hung round his neck, and was playing on it whilst he carried it before him. They marched round and round the table, and sang a multitude of songs. Eatables were handed to them ; and the guests believed they could not do a greater kindness to the children, than by giving them as much sweet wine as they chose to drink. For the company themselves had not by any means neglected a stock of savoury flasks, presented by the two amateurs, which had arrived this evening in baskets. The children tripped about and sang ; Mignon in particular

was frolicsome beyond what any one had ever seen her. She beat the tambourine with the greatest liveliness and grace: now, with her finger pressed against the parchment, she hummed across it quickly to and fro; now rattled on it with her knuckles, now with the back of her hand; nay sometimes, with alternating rhythm, she struck it first against her knee and then against her head; and anon twirling it in her hand, she made the shells jingle by themselves; and thus, from the simplest instrument, elicited a great variety of tones. After she and Felix had long rioted about, they sat down upon an elbow-chair which was standing empty at the table, exactly opposite to Wilhelm.

“Keep out of the chair!” cried Serlo: “it is waiting for the Ghost, I think; and when he comes, it will be worse for you.”

“I do not fear him,” answered Mignon: “if he comes we can rise. He is my uncle, and will not harm me.” To those who did not know that her reputed father had been named the Great Devil, this speech was unintelligible.

The party looked at one another; they were more and more confirmed in their suspicion that the Manager was in the secret of the Ghost. They talked and tiddled, and the girls from time to time cast timid glances at the door.

The children, seated in the great chair, scarcely reached above the table more, or had a larger look,

than puppets in their box : they actually at length commenced a little drama in the style of Punch. The croaking screeching tone of these people Mignon imitated very well ; and Felix and she began to knock their heads together, and against the edges of the table, in a way that nothing else but wooden puppets could endure. Mignon, in particular, grew frantic with gayety ; the company, much as they had laughed at her at first, were in fine obliged to curb her. But persuasion was of small avail ; for she now sprang up, and raved and shook her tambourine, and capered round the table. With her hair flying out behind her, with her head thrown back, and her limbs as it were cast into the air, she seemed like one of those antique Mænades, whose wild and all but impossible positions still strike us with astonishment when seen on classic monuments.

Incited by the talents and the uproar of the children, each endeavoured to contribute something to the entertainment of the night. The girls sung several *canons* ; Laertes whistled in the manner of a nightingale ; and the Pedant gave a symphony, *pianissimo* upon the Jew's-harp. Meanwhile the youths and damsels, who sat near each other, had begun a great variety of games ; in which, as the hands often crossed and met, some pairs were favoured with a transient squeeze, the emblem of a hopeful kindness. Madam Melina in particular seemed scarcely to conceal a decided

tenderness for Wilhelm. It was late; and Aurelia, perhaps the only one retaining self-possession in the party, now stood up, and signified that it was time to go.

By way of termination, Serlo gave a firework, or what resembled one; for he could imitate the sound of crackers, rockets, and firewheels, with his mouth, in a style of nearly inconceivable correctness. You had only to shut your eyes, and the deception was complete. In the mean time, they had all arisen; the men gave their arms to the females to escort them home. Wilhelm was walking last with Aurelia. The stage-manager met him on the stair, and said to him: "Here is the veil which the Ghost vanished in: it was hanging fixed to the place where he sank; we found it this moment." "A curious relique!" said our friend, and took it with him.

At this instant his left arm was laid hold of, and he felt a smart twinge of pain in it. Mignon had hid herself in the place; she had seized him and bit his arm. She rushed past him, down the stair, and disappeared.

On reaching the open air, almost all of them observed that they had drunk too liberally. They glided asunder without taking leave.

The instant Wilhelm gained his room, he stripped, and extinguishing his candle, hastened into bed. Sleep was overpowering him without delay, when a noise, that seemed to issue from be-

hind the stove, aroused him. In the eye of his heated fancy, the image of the harnessed King was hovering near him: he sat up that he might address the Spectre; but he felt himself encircled with soft arms, and his mouth was shut with kisses, which he had not force to push away.

CHAPTER XIII.

NEXT morning, Wilhelm started up with an unpleasant feeling, and found himself alone. His head was still dim with the tumult, which he had not yet entirely slept off; and the recollection of his nightly visitant disquieted his mind. His first suspicion lighted on Philina; but, on second thoughts, he conceived that it could not have been she. He sprang out of bed, and, while putting on his clothes, he noticed that the door, which commonly he used to bolt, was now ajar; though whether he had shut it on the previous night or not, he could not recollect.

But what surprised him most, was the Spirit's veil, which he found lying on his bed. Having brought it up with him, he had most probably thrown it there himself. It was a gray gauze; on the hem of it he noticed an inscription broidered in dark letters. He unfolded it, and read the words: "FOR THE FIRST AND THE LAST TIME! FLY, YOUTH! FLY!" He was struck with it, and knew not what to think or say.

At this moment Mignon entered with his breakfast. The aspect of the child astonished Wilhelm, we may almost say affrighted him. She appeared

to have grown taller over night: she entered with a stately, noble air; and looked him in the face so earnestly, that he could not endure her glances. She did not touch him, as at other times, when, for morning salutation, she would press his hand, or kiss his cheek, his lips, his arm, or shoulder: but having put his things in order, she retired in silence.

The appointed time of a first rehearsal now arrived: our friends assembled, all of them entirely out of tune from yesternight's debauch. Wilhelm roused himself as much as possible, that he might not at the very outset violate the principles of diligence, which he had preached so lately with such emphasis. His practice in the matter helped him through: for practice and habit must, in every art, fill up the voids, which genius and temper in their fluctuations will so often leave.

But in the present case, our friends had special reason to admit the truth of the remark, that no one should begin with a festivity any situation that is meant to last, particularly that is meant to be a trade, a mode of living. Festivities are fit for what is happily concluded: at the commencement, they but waste the force and zeal which should inspire us in the struggle, and support us through a long-continued labour. Of all festivities the marriage festival appears the most unsuitable: calmness, humility, and silent hope, befit no ceremony more than this.

So passed the day, which to Wilhelm seemed the most insipid he had ever spent. Instead of their accustomed conversation in the evening, the company began to yawn: the interest of Hamlet was exhausted; they rather felt it disagreeable than otherwise that the piece was to be given again next night. Wilhelm shewed the veil which the Royal Dane had left; it was to be inferred from this, that he would not come again. Serlo was of that opinion; he appeared to be deep in the secrets of the Ghost; but, on the other hand, the inscription, "Fly, youth! Fly!" seemed inconsistent with the rest. How could Serlo be in league with any one, whose aim it was to take away the finest actor of his troop?

It had now become a matter of necessity to confer on Boisterous the Ghost's part, and on the Pendant that of the King. Both declared that they had studied these sufficiently: nor was it wonderful; for, in such a number of rehearsals, and so copious a treatment of the subject, all of them had grown familiar with it; each could have exchanged his part with any other. Yet they rehearsed a little here and there, and prepared the new adventurers as fully as the hurry would admit. When the company was breaking up at a pretty late hour, Philina softly whispered Wilhelm as she passed: "I must have my slippers back: thou wilt not bolt the door?" These words excited some perplexity in Wilhelm, when he reached his chamber:

they strengthened the suspicion that Philina was the secret visitant: and we ourselves are forced to coincide with this idea; particularly as the causes, which awakened in our friend another and a stranger supposition, cannot be disclosed. He kept walking up and down his chamber, in no quiet frame: his door was actually not yet bolted.

On a sudden, Mignon rushed into the room; laid hold of him, and cried: "Master! save the house! It is on fire!" Wilhelm sprang through the door; and a strong smoke came rushing down upon him from the upper story. On the street he heard the cry of fire; and the Harper, with his instrument in his hand, came down stairs breathless through the smoke. Aurelia hurried out of her chamber, and threw little Felix into Wilhelm's arms.

"Save the child!" cried she; "and we will mind the rest."

Wilhelm did not look upon the danger as so great; his first thought was to penetrate to the source of the fire, and try to stifle it before it reached a head. He gave Felix to the Harper; commanding him to hasten down the stone stair, which led across a little garden-vault out into the garden, and to wait with the children in the open air. Mignon took a light to shew the way. He begged Aurelia to secure her things there also. He himself pierced upwards through the smoke; but it was in vain that he exposed himself to such

a danger. The flame appeared to issue from a neighbouring house; it had already caught the wooden floor and stair: some others, who had hastened to his help, were suffering like himself from fire and vapour. Yet he kept inciting them; he called for water; he conjured them to dispute every inch with the flame; and promised to abide by them to the last. At this instant Mignon came springing up, and cried: "Master! save thy Felix! The old man is mad! He is killing him." Scarcely knowing what he did, Wilhelm darted down the stair, and Mignon followed close behind him.

On the last steps, which led into the garden-vault, he paused with horror. Some heaps of fire-wood branches, and large masses of straw, which had been stowed in the place, were burning with a clear flame; Felix was lying on the ground and screaming; the Harper stood aside holding down his head, and leaned against the wall. "Unhappy creature! what is this?" said Wilhelm. The old man spoke not; Mignon lifted Felix and carried him with difficulty to the garden; while Wilhelm strove to pull the fire asunder and extinguish it; but only by his efforts made the flame more violent. At last he too was forced to fly into the garden, with his hair and his eyelashes burnt; tearing the Harper with him through the conflagration. who, with singed beard, unwillingly accompanied him.

Wilhelm hastened instantly to seek the children. He found them on the threshold of a summer-house at some distance: Mignon was trying every effort to pacify her comrade. Wilhelm took him on his knee; he questioned him, felt him; but could obtain no satisfactory account from either him or Mignon.

Meanwhile the fire had fiercely seized on several houses; it was now enlightening all the neighbourhood. Wilhelm looked at the child in the red glare of the flames; he could find no wound, no blood, no hurt of any kind. He groped over all the little creature's body; but it gave no sign of pain; on the contrary, it by degrees grew calm, and began to wonder at the blazing houses, and express its pleasure at the spectacle of beams and rafters burning, like a grand illumination, so beautifully and so regularly.

Wilhelm thought not of the clothes or goods he might have lost; he felt deeply how inestimable to him was this pair of human beings, who had just escaped so great a danger. He pressed little Felix to his heart with a new emotion; Mignon too he was about to clasp with joyful tenderness, but she softly avoided this; she took him by the hand and held it fast.

“Master,” said she,—(till the present evening she had hardly ever named him master; at first she used to name him, sir, and afterwards to call

him father)—“ Master! we have escaped an awful danger; thy Felix was on the point of death.”

By many inquiries, Wilhelm learned from her at last, that when they came into the vault, the Harper tore the light from her hand, and set on fire the straw. That he then put Felix down; laid his hands with strange gestures on the head of the child, and drew a knife as if he meant to sacrifice him. That she sprang forward and snatched it from him; that she screamed, and some one from the house, who was carrying something down into the garden, came to her help, but must have gone away in the confusion, and left the old man and the child alone.

Two or even three houses were now flaming in a general blaze. Owing to the conflagration in the vault, no person had been able to take shelter in the garden. Wilhelm was distressed about his friends, and in a less degree about his property. Not venturing to quit the children, he was forced to sit and see the mischief spreading more and more.

In this anxious state, he passed some hours. Felix had fallen asleep upon his bosom; Mignon was lying at his side, and holding fast his hand. The efforts of the people finally subdued the fire. The burnt houses sank, with successive crashes, into heaps; the morning was advancing; the children awoke and complained of bitter cold; even Wilhelm in his light dress could scarcely brook the

chillness of the falling dew. He took the young ones to the rubbish of the prostrate building; where, among the ashes and the embers, they found a very grateful warmth.

The opening day collected, by degrees, the various individuals of the party. All of them had got away unhurt, no one had lost much. Wilhelm's trunk was saved among the rest.

Towards ten o'clock, Serlo called them to rehearse their Hamlet, at least some scenes of the piece, in which fresh players were to act. He had some debates to manage on this point with the municipal authorities. The clergy required, that after such a visitation of Providence, the playhouse should be shut for some time; and Serlo on the other hand maintained, that both for the purpose of repairing the damage he had suffered, and of exhilarating the depressed and terrified spirits of the people, nothing could be more in place than the exhibition of some interesting piece. His opinion in the end prevailed; and the house was full. The actors played with singular fire, with more of a passionate freedom than at first. The feelings of the audience had been heightened by the horrors of the previous night, and their appetite for entertainment had been sharpened by the tedium of a wasted and dissipated day; every one had more than usual susceptibility for what was strange and moving. Most of them were new spectators, invited by the fame of the piece; they could not compare

the present with the preceding evening. Boisterous played altogether in the style of the unknown Ghost ; the Pedant too had accurately seized the manner of his predecessor ; nor was his own woful aspect without its use to him ; for it seemed as if, in spite of his purple cloak and his ermine collar, Hamlet were fully justified in calling him a “ king of shreds and patches.”

Few have ever reached the throne by a path more singular than his had been. But although the rest, and especially Philina, made sport of his preferment, he himself signified that the Count, a consummate judge, had at the first glance predicted this and much more of him. Philina on the other hand recommended lowliness of mind to him ; saying, she would now and then powder the sleeves of his coat, that he might remember that unhappy night in the Castle, and wear his crown with meekness.

CHAPTER XIV.

OUR friends had sought out other lodgings, on the spur of the moment, and were by this means much dispersed. Wilhelm had conceived a liking for the garden-house, where he had spent the night of the conflagration: he easily obtained the key, and settled himself there. But Aurelia being greatly hampered in her new abode, he was forced to retain little Felix with him. Mignon, indeed, would not part with the boy.

He had placed the children in a neat chamber on the upper floor: he himself was in the lower parlour. The young ones were asleep at this time: Wilhelm could not sleep.

Adjoining the lovely garden, which the full moon had just risen to illuminate, the black ruins of the fire were visible, and here and there a streak of vapour was still mounting from them. The air was soft, the night extremely beautiful. Philina, in issuing from the theatre, had jogged him with her elbow, and whispered something to him, which he did not understand. He felt perplexed and out of humour: he knew not what he should expect or do. For a day or two Philina had avoided him: it was not till to-night that she had given him any second signal. Unhappily the doors, that he was

not to bolt, were now consumed ; the slippers had evaporated into smoke. How the girl would gain admission to the garden, if her aim was such, he knew not. He wished she might not come ; and yet he longed to have an explanation with her.

But what lay heavier at his heart than this, was the fate of the Harper, whom, since the fire, no one had seen. Wilhelm was afraid that, in clearing off the rubbish, they would find him buried under it. Our friend had carefully concealed the suspicion which he entertained, that it was the Harper who had fired the house. The old man had been first seen, as he rushed from the burning and smoking floor ; and his desperation in the vault appeared a natural consequence of such a deed. Yet, from the inquiry which the magistrates had instituted touching the affair, it seemed likely that the fire had not originated in the house where Wilhelm lived, but had accidentally been kindled in the third from that, and had crept along, beneath the roofs, before it burst into activity.

Seated in a grove, our friend was meditating all these things, when he heard a low footfall in a neighbouring walk. By the melancholy song which arose along with it, he recognised the Harper. He caught the words of the song without difficulty : it turned on the consolations of a miserable man, conscious of being on the borders of insanity. Unhappily our friend forgot the whole of it, except the last verse :

Wheresoe'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.

So singing, he had reached the garden-door, which led into an unfrequented street. Finding it bolted, he was making an attempt to climb the railing, when Wilhelm held him back, and addressed some kindly words to him. The old man begged to have the door unlocked, declaring that he would and must escape. Wilhelm represented to him, that he might indeed escape from the garden, but could not from the town ; shewing, at the same time, what suspicions he must needs incur by such a step. But it was in vain: the old man held by his opinion. Our friend however, would not yield ; and at last he brought him, half by force, into the garden-house, in which he locked himself along with him. The two carried on a strange conversation ; which, however, not to vex our readers with repeating unconnected thoughts and dolorous emotions, we had rather pass in silence than detail at large.

CHAPTER XV.

UNDETERMINED what to do with this unhappy man, who displayed such indubitable symptoms of madness, Wilhelm would have been in great perplexity, had not Laertes come that very morning, and delivered him from his uncertainty. Laertes, as usual, rambling everywhere about the town, had happened, in some coffeehouse, to meet with a man who, a short time ago, had suffered under violent attacks of melancholy. This person, it appeared, had been intrusted to the care of some country clergyman, who made it his peculiar business to attend to people in such situations. In the present instance, as in many others, his treatment had succeeded: he was still in town; and the friends of the patient were shewing him the greatest honour.

Wilhelm hastened to find out this person: he disclosed the case to him, and agreed with him about the terms. The Harper was to be brought over to him, under certain pretexts. The separation deeply pained our friend; so used was he to see the man beside him, and to hear his spirited and touching strains. The hope of soon beholding him recovered, served, in some degree, to mode-

rate this feeling. The old man's harp had been destroyed in the burning of the house: they purchased him another, and gave it him when he departed.

Mignon's little wardrobe had in like manner been consumed. As Wilhelm was about providing her with new apparel, Aurelia proposed that now at last they should dress her as a girl.

"No! no! not at all!" cried Mignon; and insisted with such earnestness upon the matter, that they let her have her way.

The company had not much leisure for reflection: the exhibitions followed close on one another.

Wilhelm often mingled with the audience, to ascertain their feelings; but he seldom heard a criticism of the kind he wished: more frequently the observations, which he listened to, distressed or angered him. Thus, for instance, shortly after Hamlet had been acted for the first time, a youth was telling, with considerable animation, how happy he had been that evening in the playhouse. Wilhelm hearkened; and was scandalized to learn that his neighbour had, on that occasion, in contempt of those behind him, kept his hat on, stubbornly refusing to remove it till the piece was done; to which heroical transaction he still looked back with great contentment.

Another gentleman declared that Wilhelm played Laertes very well; but that the actor who

had undertaken Hamlet did not seem too happy in *his* part. This permutation was not quite unnatural; for Wilhelm and Laertes did resemble one another, though in a very distant manner.

A third critic warmly praised his acting, particularly in the scene with his mother; only he regretted much, that in this fiery moment a white strap had peered out from below the Prince's waistcoat, whereby the illusion had been greatly marred.

Meanwhile, in the interior of the company, a multitude of alterations were occurring. Philina, since the evening subsequent to that on which the fire happened, had not given our friend the smallest sign of closer intimacy. She had, as it seemed on purpose, hired a remote lodging; she associated with Elmira, and came seldomer to Serlo, an arrangement very gratifying to Aurelia. Serlo continued still to like her; and often visited her quarters, particularly when he hoped to find Elmira there. One evening he took Wilhelm with him. At their entrance, both of them were much surprised to see Philina, in the inner room, sitting in close contact with a young officer. He wore a red uniform with white pantaloons; but his face being turned away, they could not see it. Philina came into the outer room to meet her visitors, and shut the door behind her. "You surprise me in the middle of a very strange adventure," cried she.

"It does not seem so strange," said Serlo: "but

let us see this handsome, young and enviable gallant. You have us in such training, that we dare not shew a spark of jealousy, however it may be."

"I must leave you to suspicion for a time," replied Philina, in a jesting tone; "yet I can assure you, that the gallant is a lady of my friends, who wishes to remain a few days undiscovered. You shall know her history in due season; nay, perhaps you shall even behold the beautiful spinster in person; and then most probably I shall have need of all my prudence and discretion, for it seems too likely that your new acquaintance will drive your old friend out of favour."

Wilhelm stood as if transformed to stone. At the first glance, the red uniform had reminded him of Mariana: the figure too was hers, the fair hair was hers; only the present individual seemed to be a little taller.

"For Heaven's sake," cried he, "let us know something more about your friend; let us see this lady in disguise! We are now partakers of your secret: we will promise, we will swear; only let us see the lady!"

"What a fire he is in!" cried Philina: "but be cool, be calm; for to-day there will nothing come of it."

"Let us only know her name!" cried Wilhelm.

"It were a fine secret, then," replied Philina.

"At least her first name!"

"If you can guess it, be it so. Three guesses

I will give you ; not a fourth. You might lead me through the whole calendar."

" Well !" said Wilhelm, " Cecilia then ?"

" None of your Cecílias !"

" Henrietta ?"

" Not at all ! Be upon your guard, I pray you ; else your curiosity will have to sleep unsatisfied."

Wilhelm paused and shivered : he tried to speak, but the sound died away within him. " Mariana ?" stammered he at last, " Mariana !"

" Bravo !" cried Philina. " Hit to a hairsbreadth !" said she, whirling round upon her heel, as she was wont on such occasions.

Wilhelm could not utter a word ; and Serlo, not observing his emotion, urged Philina more and more to let them in.

Conceive the astonishment of both, when Wilhelm, suddenly and vehemently interrupting their raillery, threw himself at Philina's feet, and with an air and tone of the deepest passion begged and conjured her : " Let me see the stranger," cried he ; " she is mine ; she is my Mariana ! She, for whom I have longed all the days of my life ; she, who is still more to me than all the women in this world ! Go in to her at least, and tell her that I am here ; that the man is here who linked to her his earliest love, and all the happiness of his youth. Say that he will justify himself, although he left her so unkindly ; he will pray for pardon of her ; and will grant her pardon, whatsoever things she

may have done against him ; he will even make no pretensions farther, if he might but see her, if he might but see that she is living, and in happiness."

Philina shook her head, and said : " Speak low ! Do not betray us ! If the lady is indeed your friend, her feelings must be spared ; for she does not in the least suspect that you are here. Quite a different sort of business brings her hither : and you know well enough, that one had rather see a spectre than a former lover, at an inconvenient time. I will ask her, and prepare her ; we will then consider what is farther to be done. Tomorrow I shall write you a note, saying when you are to come, or whether you may come at all. Obey me punctually ; for I protest that, without her own and my consent, no eye shall see this lovely creature. I shall keep my doors better bolted ; and with axe and crow you surely will not visit me."

Our friend conjured her, Serlo begged of her ; but all in vain : they were obliged to yield, and leave the chamber and the house.

With what feelings Wilhelm passed the night is easy to conceive. How slowly the hours of the day flowed on, while he sat expecting a message from Philina, may also be imagined. Unhappily he had to play that evening : such mental pain he never had endured before. The moment when his part was done, he hastened to Philina's house,

without inquiring whether he had got her leave or not. He found her doors bolted : and the people of the house informed him, that Mademoiselle had set out early in the morning, in company with a young officer; that she had talked about returning shortly ; but they had not believed her, she having paid her debts and taken every thing along with her.

This intelligence drove Wilhelm almost frantic. He hastened to Laertes, that he might take measures for pursuing her, and, cost what it would, for attaining certainty regarding her attendant. Laertes, however, represented to him the imprudence of such passion and credulity. " I dare wager, after all," said he, " that it is no one else but Friedrich. The boy is of a high family, I know ; he is madly in love with Philina ; it is likely he has cozened from his friends a fresh supply of money, so that he can once more live with her a while in peace."

These considerations, though they did not quite convince our friend, sufficed to make him waver. Laertes shewed him how improbable the story was, with which Philina had amused them ; reminded him how well the stranger's hair and figure answered Friedrich ; that with the start of him by twelve hours, they could not easily be overtaken ; and what was more than all, that Serlo could not do without him at the theatre.

By so many reasons, Wilhelm was at last per-

suaded to postpone the execution of his project. That night Laertes got an active man, to whom they gave the charge of following the runaways. It was a steady person, who had frequently officiated as courier and guide to travelling parties, and at present was without employment. They gave him money, they informed him of the whole affair; instructing him to seek and overtake the fugitives, to keep them in his eye, and instantly to send intelligence to Wilhelm, where and how he found them. That very hour he mounted horse, pursuing this ambiguous pair; by which exertions Wilhelm was in some degree at least composed.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE departure of Philina did not make a deep sensation either in the theatre or in the public. She never was in earnest with any thing: the women universally detested her; the men rather wished to see her tête-à-tête than on the boards. Thus her fine, and for the stage even happy, talents were of no avail to her. The other members of the company took greater labour on them to supply her place: the Frau Melina, in particular, was much distinguished by her diligence and zeal. She noted down, as formerly, the principles of Wilhelm; she guided herself according to his theory and his example; there was of late a something in her nature that rendered her more interesting. She soon acquired an accurate mode of playing; she attained the natural tone of conversation altogether, that of keen emotion she attained in some degree. She contrived, moreover, to adapt herself to Serlo's humours; she took pains in singing for his pleasure, and succeeded in that matter moderately well.

By the accession of some other players, the company was rendered more complete: and while

Wilhelm and Serlo were busied each in his degree, the former insisting on the general tone and spirit of the whole, the latter faithfully elaborating the separate passages, a laudable ardour likewise inspired the actors, and the public took a lively interest in their concerns.

“ We are on the right path,” said Serlo once ; “ if we can continue thus, the public too will soon be on it. Men are easily astonished and misled by wild and barbarous exhibitions ; yet let aught rational and polished be submitted to them, in an interesting manner, and doubt not they will catch at it.

“ What constitutes the chief defect of the German theatre, what prevents both actor and spectator from obtaining proper views, is the vague and variegated nature of the objects it contains. You nowhere find a barrier, on which to prop your judgment. In my opinion, it is very far from being an advantage to us, that we have expanded our stage into as it were a boundless arena for the whole of nature : yet neither manager nor actor need attempt contracting it, until the taste of the nation shall itself mark out the proper circle. Every good society submits to certain conditions and restrictions ; so also must every good theatre. Certain manners, certain modes of speech, certain objects and fashions of proceeding, must altogether be excluded. You do not grow poorer by limiting your household expenditure.”

On these points, our friends were more or less accordant or at variance. The majority, with Wilhelm at their head, were for the English theatre; Serlo and a few others for the French.

It was also settled, that in vacant hours, of which unhappily an actor has too many, they should in company peruse the finest plays in both these languages; examining what parts of them seemed best and worthiest of imitation. They accordingly commenced with some French pieces. On these occasions, it was soon observed, Aurelia went away whenever they began to read. At first they supposed she had been sick: Wilhelm once questioned her about it.

“I would not assist at such a reading,” said she: “for how could I hear and judge, when my heart was torn in pieces? I hate the French language from the bottom of my soul.”

“How can you be hostile to a language,” cried our friend, “to which we Germans are indebted for the greater part of our accomplishments; to which we must become indebted still more deeply, if our natural qualities are ever to assume their proper form?”

“It is no prejudice!” replied Aurelia: “a painful impression, a hated recollection of my faithless friend, has robbed me of all enjoyment in this beautiful and cultivated tongue. How I hate it now, with my whole strength and heart! During the period of our kindest connexion, he wrote in

German, and what genuine, powerful, cordial German! It was not till he wanted to get quit of me, that he began seriously to write in French. I marked, I felt what he meant. What he would have blushed to utter in his mother tongue, he could by this means write with a quiet conscience. It is the language of reservations, equivocations, and lies: it is a *perfidious* language. Heaven be praised! I cannot find another word to express this *perfidie* of theirs in all its compass. Our poor *treulos*, the *faithless* of the English, are innocent as babes beside it. *Perfidie* means faithless with enjoyment, with insolence and malice. How enviable is the culture of a nation that can figure out so many shades of meaning by a single word! French is exactly the language of the world; worthy to become the universal language, that all may have it in their power to cheat, and cozen, and betray each other! His French letters were always smooth and pleasant while you read them. If you chose to believe it, they sounded warmly, even passionately: but if you examined narrowly, they were but phrases, accursed phrases! He has spoiled my feeling to the whole language, to French literature, even to the beautiful delicious expressions of noble souls which may be found in it. I shudder when a French word is spoken in my hearing."

In such terms, she could for hours continue to give utterance to her chagrin, interrupting or dis-

turbing every other kind of conversation. Sooner or later, Serlo used to put an end to such peevish lamentations, by some bitter sally: but, by this means, commonly the talk for the evening was destroyed.

In all the provinces of life, it is unhappily the case, that whatever is to be accomplished by a number of co-operating men and circumstances, cannot long continue perfect. Of an acting company as well as of a kingdom, of a circle of friends as well as of an army, you may commonly select the moment, when it may be said that all was standing on the highest pinnacle of harmony, perfection, contentment, and activity. But alterations will ere long occur: the individuals that compose the body often change; new members are added; the persons are no longer suited to the circumstances, or the circumstances to the persons; what was formerly united, quickly falls asunder. Thus it was with Serlo's company. For a time you might have called it as complete as any German company could ever boast of being. Most of the actors were occupying their proper places: all had enough to do, and all did it willingly. Their private personal condition was not bad; and each appeared to promise great things in his art, for each commenced with animation and alacrity. But it soon became apparent that a part of them were mere automats, who could not reach beyond what was attainable without the aid of feel-

ing. Nor was it long till grudgings and envyings arose among them, such as commonly obstruct every good arrangement, and easily distort and tear in pieces every thing, which reasonable and thinking men would wish to keep united.

The departure of Philina was not quite so insignificant as it had at first appeared. She had always skilfully contrived to entertain the Manager, and keep the others in good humour. She had endured Aurelia's violence with amazing patience, and her dearest task had been to flatter Wilhelm. Thus she was in some respects a bond of union for the whole: the loss of her was quickly felt.

Serlo could not live without some little passion of the love sort. Elmira was of late grown up, we might almost say grown beautiful: for some time she had been attracting his attention, and Philina, with her usual dexterity, had favoured this attachment so soon as she observed it. "We should train ourselves in time," she would say, "to the business of procuress; nothing else remains for us when we are old." Serlo and Elmira had by this means so approximated to each other, that, shortly after the departure of Philina, both were of a mind; and their small romance was rendered doubly interesting, as they had to hide it sedulously from the father; old Boisterous not understanding jokes of that description. Elmira's sister had been admitted to the secret: and Serlo was in consequence obliged to overlook a multitude

of things in both of them. One of their worst habits was an excessive love of junketting, nay if you will, an intolerable gluttony. In this respect they altogether differed from Philina, to whom it gave a new tint of loveliness, that she seemed as it were to live on air; eating very little; and for drink, merely skimming off the foam from a glass of champaign with all the grace imaginable.

Now, however, Serlo, if he meant to please his doxies, was obliged to join the breakfast with the dinner; and with this, by a substantial beverage, to connect the supper. But amid this gormandizing, Serlo entertained another plan, which he longed to have fulfilled. He imagined that he saw a kind of inclination between Wilhelm and Aurelia; and he anxiously wished that it might assume a serious shape. He hoped to cast the whole mechanical department of his theatrical economy on Wilhelm's shoulders; to find in him, as in the former brother, a faithful and industrious tool. Already he had, by degrees, shifted over to him most of the cares of management: Aurelia kept the strong-box; and Serlo once more lived as he had done of old, entirely according to his humour. Yet there was a circumstance which vexed him in secret, as it did his sister likewise.

The world has a particular way of acting towards public persons of acknowledged merit: it gradually begins to be indifferent to them; and to favour talents which are new, though far inferior;

it makes excessive requisitions of the former, and accepts of any thing with approbation from the latter.

Serlo and Aurelia had opportunity enough to meditate on this peculiarity. The strangers, especially the young and handsome ones, had drawn the whole attention and applause upon themselves; and Serlo and his sister, in spite of the most zealous efforts, had in general to make their exits without the welcome sound of clapping hands. It is true, some special causes were at work on this occasion. Aurelia's pride was palpable, and her contempt for the public was known to many. Serlo indeed flattered every individual; but his cutting jibes against the whole were often circulated and repeated. The new members again were not only strangers, unknown and wanting help, but some of them were likewise young and amiable; thus all of them found patrons.

Ere long, too, there arose internal discontents, and many bickerings among the actors. Scarcely had they noticed that our friend was acting as director, when most of them began to grow the more remiss, the more he strove to introduce a better order, greater accuracy, and chiefly to insist that every thing mechanical should be performed in the most strict and regular manner.

Thus, by and by, the whole concern, which actually for a time had nearly looked ideal, grew as vulgar in its attributes as any mere itinerating

theatre. And unhappily, just as **Wilhelm**, by his labour, diligence and vigorous efforts, had made himself acquainted with the requisitions of the art, and trained completely both his person and his habits to comply with them, he began to feel, in melancholy hours, that this craft deserved the necessary outlay of time and talents less than any other. The task was burdensome, the recompense was small. He would rather have engaged with any occupation in which, when the period of exertion is past, one can enjoy repose of mind, than with this, wherein, after undergoing much mechanical drudgery, the aim of one's activity cannot still be attained but by the strongest effort of thought and emotion. Besides, he had to listen to Aurelia's complaints about her brother's wastefulness; he had to misconceive the winks and nods of Serlo, trying from afar to lead him to a marriage with Aurelia. He had withal to hide his own secret sorrow, which pressed heavy on his heart, because of that ambiguous officer, whom he had sent in quest of. The messenger returned not, sent no tidings; and Wilhelm feared that his Mariana was lost to him a second time.

About this period, there occurred a public mourning, which obliged our friends to shut their theatre for several weeks. Wilhelm seized this opportunity to pay a visit to the Clergyman, with whom the Harper had been placed to board. He found him in a pleasant district; and the first

thing that he noticed in the parsonage, was the old man teaching a boy to play upon his instrument. The Harper shewed no little joy at sight of Wilhelm; he arose, held out his hand, and said: "You see that I am still good for something in the world: permit me to continue; for my hours are all distributed and full of business."

The Clergyman saluted Wilhelm very kindly; and told him that the Harper promised well, already giving hopes of a complete recovery

Their conversation naturally turned upon the various modes of treating the insane.

"Except physical derangements," observed the Clergyman, "which often place insuperable difficulties in the way, and in regard to which I follow the prescriptions of a wise physician, the means of curing madness seem to me extremely simple. They are the very means, by which you hinder sane persons from becoming mad. Awaken their activity; accustom them to order; bring them to perceive that they hold their being and their fate in common with many millions; that extraordinary talents, the highest happiness, the deepest misery, are but slight variations from the general destiny: in this way, no insanity will enter; or, if it has entered, will gradually disappear. I have portioned out the old man's hours; he gives lessons to some children on the harp; he labours in the garden; he is already much more cheerful. He wishes to enjoy the cabbages he plants; my son,

to whom in case of death he has bequeathed his harp, he is ardent to instruct, that the boy may be able to make use of his inheritance. I have said but little to him, as a clergyman, about his wild mysterious scruples; but a busy life brings on so many incidents, that ere long he must feel how true it is, that doubt of any kind can be removed by nothing but activity. I go softly to work; yet if I could get his beard and hood removed, I should reckon it a weighty point; for nothing more exposes us to madness, than distinguishing ourselves from others, and nothing more contributes to maintain our common sense, than living in the universal way with multitudes of men. Alas! how much there is in education, in our social constitutions, to prepare us and our children for insanity!"

Wilhelm staid some days with this intelligent divine; heard from him many curious narratives, not of the insane alone, but of persons such as commonly are reckoned wise and rational, although they have peculiarities which border on insanity.

The conversation became doubly animated on the entrance of the Doctor, with whom it was a custom to pay frequent visits to his friend the Clergyman, and to assist him in his labours of humanity. The physician was an oldish man, who, though in weak health, had spent many years in the practice of the noblest virtues. He was a strong advocate for country life, being himself

scarcely able to exist except in the open air. Withal he was extremely active and companionable. For several years, he had shewn a special inclination to make friends with all the country clergymen within his reach. Such of these as were employed in any useful occupation, he strove by every means to help; into others, who were still unsettled in their aims, he endeavoured to infuse a taste for some profitable species of exertion. Being at the same time in connexion with a multitude of noblemen, magistrates, judges, he had in the space of twenty years in secret accomplished much towards the advancement of many branches of husbandry; he had done his best to put in motion every project, that seemed capable of benefiting agriculture, animals and men; and thus had forwarded improvement in its truest sense. "For man," he used to say, "there is but one misfortune; when some idea lays hold of him, which exerts no influence upon active life, or still more, which withdraws him from it. At the present time," continued he on this occasion, "I have such a case before me; it concerns a rich and noble couple; and hitherto has baffled all my skill. The affair belongs in part to your department, worthy Pastor; and your friend here will forbear to mention it again.

"In the absence of a certain nobleman, some persons of the house, in a frolick not entirely commendable, disguised a young man in the master's clothes. The lady was to be imposed upon by this

deception ; and although it was described to me as nothing but a joke, I am very much afraid the purpose of it was to lead this noble and most amiable lady from the path of honour. Her husband, however, unexpectedly returns ; enters his chamber ; thinks he sees his spirit ; and from that time, falls into a melancholy temper, firmly believing that his death is near.

“ He has now abandoned himself to men who pamper him with religious ideas ; and I see not how he is to be prevented from going among the Herrnhuthers with his lady ; and as he has no children, from depriving his relations of the chief part of his fortune.”

“ With his lady ? ” cried our friend, in great agitation ; for this story had affrighted him extremely.

“ And alas ! ” replied the Doctor, who regarded Wilhelm’s exclamation only as the voice of common sympathy ; “ this lady is herself possessed with a deeper sorrow, which renders a removal from the world desirable to her also. The same young man was taking leave of her : she was not circumspect enough to hide a nascent inclination towards him ; the youth grew bolder, clasped her in his arms, and pressed a large portrait of her husband, which was set with diamonds, forcibly against her breast. She felt a sharp pain, which gradually went off, leaving first a little redness, then no trace at all. As a man, I am convinced

that she has nothing more with which she can reproach herself in this affair ; as a physician, I am certain that this pressure could not have the smallest ill effect. Yet she will not be persuaded that an induration is not taking place in the part ; and if you try to overcome her notion by the evidence of feeling, she maintains, that though the evil is away this moment, it will return the next. She conceives that the disease will end in cancer ; and thus her youth and loveliness be altogether lost to others and herself."

"Wretch that I am!" cried Wilhelm, striking his brow, and rushing from the company into the fields. He had never felt himself in such a miserable case before.

The clergyman and the physician were of course exceedingly astonished at this singular discovery. In the evening, all their skill was called for, when our friend returned, and, with a circumstantial disclosure of the whole occurrence, uttered the most violent accusations of himself. Both took interest in him ; both felt a real concern about his general condition, particularly as he painted it in the gloomy colours, which arose from the humour of the moment.

Next day the physician, without much entreaty, was prevailed on to accompany him in his return ; both that he might bear him company, and that he might, if possible, do something for Aurelia, whom

our friend had left in rather dangerous circumstances.

In fact, they found her worse than they expected. She was afflicted with a sort of intermittent fever, which could the less be mastered, as she purposely maintained and aggravated the attacks of it. The stranger was not introduced as a physician : he behaved with great courteousness and prudence. They conversed about her situation bodily and mental : her new friend related many anecdotes of persons who, in spite of lingering disorders, had attained a good old age ; adding, that in such cases, nothing could be more injurious than the intentional recalling of passionate and disagreeable emotions. In particular he stated, that for persons labouring under chronical and partly incurable distempers, he had always found it a very happy circumstance when they chanced to entertain and cherish in their minds true feelings of religion. This he signified in the most unobtrusive manner ; as it were historically ; promising Aurelia at the same time the reading of a very interesting manuscript, which he said he had received from the hands of an excellent lady of his friends, who was now deceased. " To me," he said, " it is of uncommon value ; and I shall trust you even with the original. Nothing but the title is in my hand-writing : I have called it, *Confessions of a Fair Saint.*"

Touching the medical and dietetic treatment of the racked and hapless patient, he also left his best

advice with Wilhelm. He then departed, promising to write; and if possible, to come again in person.

Meanwhile, in Wilhelm's absence, there had changes been preparing such as he was not aware of. During his directorship, our friend had managed all things with a certain liberality and freedom; looking chiefly at the main result. Whatever was required for dresses, decorations, and the like, he had usually provided in a plentiful and handsome style; and for securing the co-operation of his people, he had flattered their self-interest, since he could not reach them by nobler motives. In this he felt his conduct justified the more, as Serlo for his own part never aimed at being a strict economist; but liked to hear the beauty of his theatre commended; and was contented, if Aurelia, who conducted the domestic matters, on defraying all expences, signified that she was free from debt, and could besides afford the necessary sums for clearing off such scores as Serlo in the interim, by lavish kindness to his mistresses or otherwise, might have incurred.

Melina, who was charged with managing the wardrobe, had all the while been silently considering these things, with the cold and spiteful selfishness peculiar to him. On occasion of our friend's departure, and Aurelia's increasing sickness, he contrived to signify to Serlo, that more money might be raised and less expended; and con-

sequently something be laid up, or at least a merrier life be led. Serlo hearkened gladly to such allegations, and Melina risked the exhibition of his plan.

“ I will not say,” continued he, “ that any of your actors has at present too much salary ; they are meritorious people, they would find a welcome anywhere ; but for the income which they bring us in, they have too much. My project would be to set up an opera : and as to what concerns the play-house, I may be allowed to say it, you, sir, are the person for maintaining that establishment upon your single strength. Observe at present how your merits are neglected ; and justice is refused you, not because your fellow actors are excellent, but merely good.

“ Come out alone, as used to be the case ; endeavour to attract around you middling, I will even say inferior people, for a slender wage ; regale the public with mechanical displays, as you can do so cleverly ; apply your remaining means to the opera, which I am talking of : and you will quickly see, that with the same labour and expense, you give greater satisfaction, while you draw incomparably more money than at present.”

These observations were so flattering to Serlo, that they could not fail of making some impression on him. He readily admitted, that, loving music as he did, he had long wished for some arrangement such as this : though he could not but per-

ceive that the public taste would thus be still more widely led astray ; and that with such a mongrel theatre, not properly an opera, not properly a play-house, any residue of true feeling for regular and perfect works of art must shortly disappear.

Melina ridiculed in terms more plain than delicate our friend's pedantic notions in this matter, and his vain attempts to form the public mind, instead of being formed by it ; Serlo and he at last agreed with full conviction, that the sole concern was how to gather money, and grow rich, or live a joyous life ; and they scarce concealed their wish to be delivered from those persons who at present hindered them. Melina took occasion to lament Aurelia's weakly health, and the speedy end which it threatened ; thinking all the while directly the reverse. Serlo affected to regret that Wilhelm could not sing ; thus signifying that his presence was by no means indispensable. Melina then came forward with a whole catalogue of savings, which, he said, might be effected ; and Serlo saw in him his brother-in-law replaced threefold. Both of them distinctly felt that secrecy was necessary in the matter ; but this mutual obligation only joined them closer in their interests. They failed not to converse together privately, on every thing that happened ; to blame whatever Wilhelm or Aurelia undertook, and to elaborate their own project, and prepare it more and more for execution.

Silent as they both might be about their plan,

little as their words betrayed them, in their conduct they were not so politic as constantly to hide their purposes. Melina now opposed our friend in many points, that lay within the province of the latter; and Serlo, who had never acted smoothly to his sister, seemed to grow more bitter, the more her sickness deepened, the more her passionate and variable humours would have needed toleration.

About this period they took up the *Emilie Gallotti* of Lessing. The parts were very happily distributed and filled; within the narrow circle of this tragedy, the company found room for shewing all the complex riches of their acting. Serlo in the character of Marinelli was altogether in his place; Odoardo was very well exhibited; Madam Melina played the Mother with considerable skill; Elmira gained distinction as Emilie; Laertes made a stately Appiani; and Wilhelm had bestowed the study of some months upon the Prince's part. On this occasion, both internally and with Amelia and Serlo, he had often come upon this question: What is the distinction between a noble and a well-bred manner; and how far must the former be included in the latter, though the latter is not in the former?

Serlo, who himself in Marinelli had to act the courtier accurately, without caricature, afforded him some valuable thoughts on this. "A well-bred carriage," he would say, "is difficult to imitate; for in strictness it is negative; and it im-

plies a long-continued previous training. You are not required to exhibit in your manner any thing that specially betokens dignity; for, by this means, you are like to run into formality and haughtiness: you are rather to avoid whatever is undignified and vulgar. You are never to forget yourself; are to keep a constant watch upon yourself and others; to forgive nothing that is faulty in your own conduct, in that of others neither to forgive too little nor too much. Nothing must appear to touch you, nothing to agitate: you must never overhaste yourself, must ever keep yourself composed, retaining still an outward calmness, whatever storms may rage within. The noble character at certain moments may resign himself to his emotions; the well-bred never. The latter is like a man dressed out in fair and spotless clothes: he will not lean on any thing; every person will beware of rubbing on him. He distinguishes himself from others, yet he may not stand apart; for as in all arts, so in this, the hardest must at length be done with ease; the well-bred man of rank, in spite of every separation, always seems united with the people round him; he is never to be stiff, or uncomplying; he is always to appear the first, and never to insist on so appearing.

“It is clear, then, that to seem well-bred, a man must actually be so. It is also clear why women generally are more expert at taking up the air

of breeding than the other sex ; why courtiers and soldiers catch it more easily than other men."

Wilhelm now despaired of doing justice to his part ; but Serlo aided and encouraged him ; communicated the acutest observations on detached points ; and furnished him so well, that on the exhibition of the piece, the public reckoned him a very proper Prince.

Serlo had engaged to give him, when the play was over, such remarks as might occur upon his acting ; a disagreeable contention with Aurelia prevented any conversation of that kind. Aurelia had acted the character of Orsina, in a way that few have ever witnessed. She was well acquainted with the part ; and during the rehearsals she had treated it indifferently : but in the exhibition of the piece, she had opened as it were all the sluices of her personal sorrow ; and the character was represented, so as never poet in the first glow of invention could have figured it. A boundless applause rewarded her painful efforts ; but her friends, on visiting her when the play was finished, found her half fainting in her chair.

Serlo had already signified his anger at her overcharged acting, as he called it ; at this disclosure of her inmost heart before the public, to many individuals of which the history of her fatal passion was more or less completely known. He had spoken bitterly and fiercely ; grinding with his teeth and stamping with his feet, as was his cus-

tom when enraged. "Never mind her," cried he, when he saw her in the chair, surrounded by the rest; "she will go upon the stage stark-naked one of these days; and then the approbation will be perfect."

"Ungrateful, inhuman man!" exclaimed she; "soon shall I be carried naked to the place, where approbation or disapprobation can no longer reach our ears!" With these words she started up, and hastened to the door. The maid had not yet brought her mantle; the sedan was not in waiting; it had been raining lately; a cold, raw wind was blowing through the streets. They endeavoured to persuade her to remain, for she was very warm. But in vain: she purposely walked slow; she praised the coolness, seemed to inhale it with peculiar eagerness. Scarcely was she home, when she became so hoarse that she could hardly speak a word: she did not mention that there was a total stiffness in her neck and along her back. Shortly afterwards, a sort of palsy in the tongue came on, so that she pronounced one word instead of another. They put her to bed; by numerous and copious remedies, the evil changed its form, but was not mastered. The fever gathered strength; her case was dangerous.

Next morning she enjoyed a quiet hour. She sent for Wilhelm, and delivered him a letter. "This sheet," said she, "has long been waiting for the present moment. I feel that my end is

drawing nigh : promise me that you yourself will take this paper ; that by a word or two, you will avenge my sorrows on the faithless man. He is not void of feeling ; my death will pain him for a moment."

Wilhelm took the letter ; still endeavouring to console her, and to drive away the thought of death.

"No," said she, "do not deprive me of my nearest hope. I have waited for him long ; I will joyfully clasp him when he comes."

Shortly after this, the manuscript arrived, which the physician had engaged to send her. She called for Wilhelm ; made him read it to her. The effect, which it produced upon her, the reader will be better able to appreciate after looking at the following Book. The violent and stubborn temper of our poor Aurelia was mollified by hearing it. She took back the letter, and wrote another as it seemed in a meeker tone ; changing Wilhelm at the same time to console her friend, if he should be distressed about her death ; to assure him that she had forgiven him, and wished him every kind of happiness.

From this time, she was very quiet ; and appeared to occupy herself with but a few ideas, which she endeavoured to extract and appropriate from the manuscript, out of which she frequently made Wilhelm read to her. The decay of her strength was not perceptible : nor had Wilhelm been anti-

icipating the event, when one morning as he went to visit her he found that she was dead.

Entertaining the respect for her which he had done, and accustomed as he was to live in her society, the loss of her affected him with no common sorrow. She was the only person that had truly wished him well: the coldness of Serlo he had felt of late but too keenly. He hastened therefore to perform the service she had trusted to him; he wanted to be absent for a time.

On the other hand, this journey was exceedingly convenient for Melina; in the course of his extensive correspondence, he had lately entered upon terms with a male and a female singer, who, it was intended, should, by their performances in interludes, prepare the public for his future opera. The loss of Aurelia, and Wilhelm's absence, were to be supplied in this manner; and our friend was satisfied with any thing which could facilitate his setting out.

He had formed, within himself, a singular idea of the importance of his errand. The death of his unhappy friend had moved him deeply; and having seen her pass so early from the scene, he could not but be hostilely inclined against the man, who had abridged her life, and made that shortened term so full of wo.

Notwithstanding the last mild words of the dying woman, he resolved that, on delivering his letter, he would pass a strict sentence on her faithless

friend: and not wishing to depend upon the temper of the moment, he studied an address, which in the course of preparation became more pathetic than was just. Having fully convinced himself of the good composition of his essay, he began committing it to memory, and at the same time making ready for departure. Mignon was present as he packed his articles; she asked him whether he intended travelling south or north; and learning that it was the latter, she replied: "Then I will wait here for thee." She begged of him the pearl necklace which had once been Mariana's. He could not refuse to gratify the dear little creature, and he gave it her: the neck-kerchief she had already. On the other hand, she put the veil of Hamlet's Ghost into his travelling bag, although he told her that it could not be of any service to him.

Melina took upon him the directorship; his wife engaged to keep a mother's eye upon the children, whom Wilhelm parted with unwillingly. Felix was very merry at the setting out, and when asked what pretty thing he wished to have brought back for him, he said: "Hark you! Bring me a papa!" Mignon seized the traveller's hand; then, standing on her tiptoes, she pressed a warm and cordial, though not a tender kiss, upon his lips, and cried: "Master! Forget us not, and come soon back."

And so we leave our friend, entering on his journey, amid a thousand different thoughts and feelings; and here subjoin, by way of close, a lit-

tle poem, which Mignon had recited once or twice with great expressiveness, and which the hurry of so many singular occurrences prevented us from inserting sooner :

O ask me not to speak, I pray thee !
It must not be reveal'd 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 forever closes,
My sorrows God alone can know.



WILHELM MEISTER'S

APPRENTICESHIP.



BOOK VI.



WILHELM MEISTER.

CONFESSIONS OF A FAIR SAINT.

TILL my eighth year, I was always a healthy child ; but of that period I can recollect no more, than of the day when I was born. About the beginning of my eighth year, I was seized with a hemorrhage ; and from that moment my soul became all feeling, all memory. The smallest circumstances of that accident are yet before my eyes, as if they had occurred but yesterday.

During the nine months, which I then spent patiently upon a sick-bed, it appears to me, the ground-work of my whole turn of thought was laid ; for the first means were then afforded to my spirit of developing itself in its own manner.

I suffered and I loved ; this was the peculiar form of my heart. In the most violent fits of coughing, in the depressing pains of fever, I lay quiet, like a snail drawn back within its house : the moment I obtained a respite, I wanted to enjoy something pleasant ; and as every other pleasure was denied me, I endeavoured to amuse

myself with the innocent delights of eye and ear. The people brought me dolls and picture books ; and whoever chose to sit beside my bed, was forced to tell me something.

From my mother I rejoiced to hear the Bible histories : and my father entertained me with natural curiosities. He had a very pretty cabinet ; from which he brought me first one drawer and then another, as occasion served ; shewing me the articles, and pointing out their properties. Dried plants and insects, with many kinds of anatomical preparations, such as human skin, bones, mummies, and the like, were in succession laid upon the sick-bed of the little one ; the birds and animals he killed in hunting were shewn to me before they passed into the kitchen : and that the Prince of the World might also have a voice in this assembly, my aunt related to me love adventures out of fairy tales. All was accepted, all took root. There were hours, in which I vividly conversed with the invisible Power : I can still repeat some verses, which I then dictated, and my mother wrote.

Frequently I told my father back again, what I had learned from him. I would scarce take any physic, without asking where the simples grew that it was made of, what look they had, what names they bore. Nor had the stories of my aunt alighted upon stony ground. I figured myself out in pretty clothes ; and met the most de-

lightful princes, who could find no peace or rest, till they discovered who the unknown Beauty was. One adventure of this kind with a charming little angel, dressed in white with golden wings, who warmly courted me, I dwelt upon so long, that my imagination painted out his form till it was almost visible.

After a year, I was pretty well restored to health; but nothing of the giddiness of childhood remained with me. I could not play with dolls; I longed for beings that were able to return my love. Dogs, cats, and birds, of which my father kept a great variety, afforded me delight: but what would I have given for such a creature as my aunt once told me of! It was a lamb, which a peasant girl took up and nourished in a wood; but in the guise of this pretty beast, an enchanted prince was hid; who at length appeared in his native shape, a lovely youth, and recompensed his benefactress by his hand. Such a lamb as this I would have given the world for.

But none was to be had; and as every thing about me went along quite naturally and commonly, I by degrees abandoned nearly all my hopes of such a precious treasure. Meanwhile I comforted myself by reading books, in which the strangest incidents were represented. Among them all, my favourite was the *Christian German Hercules*: that devout love history was altogether in my way. Whenever any thing befel his dear

Valiska, and cruel things befel her, he prayed before he hastened to her aid, and the prayers were standing there *verbatim*. My longing after the Invisible, which I had always dimly felt, was strengthened by such means: for, in short, it was ordained that God should also be my confidant.

As I grew older I continued reading, Heaven knows what, in a chaotic order. The *Roman Octavia* was the book I liked beyond all others. The persecutions of the first Christians, decorated with the charms of a romance, awoke the deepest interest in me.

But my mother now began to murmur at my constant reading; and to humour her, my father took away my books to-day, but gave them back to-morrow. She was wise enough to see that nothing could be done in this way; she next insisted merely that my Bible should be read with equal diligence. To this I was not disinclined: and I accordingly perused the sacred volume with a lively interest. Withal my mother was extremely careful that no books of a corruptive tendency should come into my hands: immodest writings I would, of my own accord, have cast away; for my princes and my princesses were all extremely virtuous.

To my mother, and my zeal for knowledge, it was owing that with all my love of books I also learned to cook; for much was to be seen in cookery. To cut up a hen, a pig, was quite a

feast for me. I used to bring the entrails to my father, and he talked with me about them, as if I had been a student of anatomy. With suppressed joy, he would often call me his misfashioned son.

My twelfth year was now behind me. I learned French, dancing, and drawing: I received the usual instructions in religion. In the latter, many thoughts and feelings were awakened; but nothing properly relating to my own condition. I liked to hear the people speak of God; I was proud that I could speak on these points better than my equals. I zealously read many books, which put me in a case to talk about religion; but it never once occurred to me to think how matters stood with *me*, whether *my* soul was formed according to these holy precepts, whether it was like a glass from which the everlasting sun could be reflected in its glancing. From the first, I had presupposed all this.

My French I learned with eagerness. My teacher was a clever man. He was not a vain empiric, not a dry grammarian: he had learning, he had seen the world. Instructing me in language, he satisfied my zeal for knowledge in a thousand ways. I loved him so much, that I used to wait his coming with a palpitating heart. Drawing was not hard for me: I would have made a greater progress, had my teacher been possessed of head and science; he had only hands and practice.

Dancing was at first my smallest entertainment:

my body was too sensitive for this, and I learned it only in the company of my sisters. But our dancing-master took a thought of gathering all his scholars, male and female, and giving them a ball. This event gave dancing quite another charm for me.

Amid a throng of boys and girls, the most remarkable were two sons of the Marshal of the Court. The youngest was of my age, the other two years older; they were children of such beauty, that, according to the universal voice; no one had seen their equals. For my part, scarcely had I noticed them, when I lost sight of all the other crowd. From that moment I began to dance with care, and to wish that I could dance with grace. How came it, on the other hand, that these two boys distinguished me from all the rest? No matter; ere an hour had passed, we had become the warmest friends; and our little entertainment did not end, till we had fixed upon the time and place where we were next to meet. What a joy for me! And how charmed was I next morning, when both of them inquired about my health, each in a gallant note, accompanied with a nose-gay! I have never since felt as I then did! Compliment was met by compliment; letter answered letter. The church and the public walks were grown a rendezvous; our young acquaintances, in all their little parties, now invited us together; while, at the same time, we were sly enough to

veil the business from our parents, so that they could see no more of it than we thought good.

Thus had I at once got a pair of lovers. I had yet decided upon neither; they both pleased me, and we did extremely well together. All at once, the eldest of the two fell very sick. I myself had frequently been sick; and thus I was enabled, by despatching to him many little dainties and delicacies suited for a sick person, to afford some solace to the sufferer. His parents thankfully acknowledged my attention: in compliance with the prayer of their beloved son, they invited me, with all my sisters, to their house, so soon as he had risen from his sick-bed. The tenderness, which he displayed on meeting me, was not the feeling of a child; from that day I gave the preference to him. He warned me to keep our secret from his brother; but the flame could no longer be concealed; and the jealousy of the younger completed our romance. He played us a thousand tricks; eager to annihilate our joys, he but increased the passion he was seeking to destroy.

At last, then, I had actually found the wished-for lamb; and this attachment acted on me like my sickness; it made me calm, and drew me back from noisy pleasures. I was solitary, I was moved; and thoughts of God again occurred to me. He was again my confidant, and I well remember with what tears I often prayed for this poor boy, who still continued sickly.

The more childishness there was in this adventure, the more did it contribute to the forming of my heart. Our French teacher had now turned us from translating, into daily writing him some letter of our own invention. I brought my little history to market, shrouded in the names of Phyllis and Damon. The old man soon saw through it ; and to render me communicative, praised my labour very much. I still waxed bolder ; came openly out with the affair, adhering even in the minute details to truth. I do not now remember what the passage was at which he took occasion to remark : “ How pretty, how natural it is ! But the good Phyllis had better have a care ; the thing may soon grow serious.”

It vexed me, that he did not look upon the matter as already serious ; and I asked him, with an air of pique, what he meant by serious. He did not force me to repeat the question ; he explained himself so clearly, that I scarce could hide my terror. Yet, as anger came along with it, as I took it ill that he should entertain such thoughts, I kept myself composed, I tried to justify my nymph ; and said with glowing cheeks : “ But, sir, Phyllis is an honourable girl.”

He was rogue enough to banter me about my honourable heroine. While we were speaking French, he played upon the word *honnête*, and hunted the honourableness of Phyllis over all its meanings. I felt the ridicule of this, and was ex-

tremely puzzled. He, not to frighten me, broke off; but afterwards he often led the conversation to such topics. Plays and little histories, which I was reading and translating with him, gave him frequent opportunity to shew how feeble a security our boasted virtue was against the rules of inclination. I no longer contradicted him; but I was in secret scandalized; and his remarks became a burden to me.

With my worthy Damon, too, I by degrees fell out of all connexion. The chicanery of the younger boy destroyed our intercourse. Soon after, both these blooming creatures died. I lamented sore; however, in a short time I forgot.

But Phyllis rapidly increased in stature; was altogether healthy, and began to see the world. The hereditary Prince now married; and a short time after, on his father's death, began his rule. Court and town were in the liveliest movement: my curiosity had copious nourishment. There were plays and balls, with all their usual accompaniments; and though my parents kept retired as much as possible, they were obliged to shew themselves at court, where I of course was introduced. Strangers were pouring in from every side; high company was in every house; even to us some cavaliers were recommended, others introduced; and at my uncle's, men of every nation might be met with.

My honest Mentor still continued, in a modest

and yet striking way, to warn me; and I to take it ill of him in secret. With regard to his assertion, that women under every circumstance were weak, I did not feel at all convinced; and here perhaps I was in the right, and my Mentor in the wrong; but he spoke so earnestly, that once I grew afraid he might be right, and said to him, with much vivacity: "Since the danger is so great, and the human heart so weak, I will pray to God that He may keep me."

This simple answer seemed to please him, for he praised my purpose; but on my side, it was any thing but seriously meant. It was in truth but an empty word; for my feelings towards the Invisible were almost totally extinguished. The hurry and the crowd with which I was surrounded dissipated my attention, and carried me along as in a powerful stream. These were the emptiest years of my life. All day long to speak of nothing, to have no solid thought; never to do any thing but revel: such was my employment. On my beloved books I never once bestowed a thought. The people whom I lived among had not the slightest tinge of literature or science: they were German courtiers; a class of men at that time altogether destitute of mental culture.

Such society, it may be thought, must naturally have led me to the brink of ruin. I lived away in mere corporeal cheerfulness; I never took myself to task, I never prayed, I never thought

about myself or God. Yet I look upon it as a providential guidance, that none of these many handsome, rich, and well-dressed men could take my fancy. They were rakes, and did not hide it; this scared me back: their speech was frequently adorned with double meanings; this offended me, and made me act with coldness towards them. Many times their improprieties surpassed belief; and I did not prevent myself from being rude.

Besides, my ancient counsellor had once in confidence contrived to tell me, that, with the greater part of these lewd fellows, health as well as virtue was in danger. I now shuddered at the sight of them; I was afraid, if one of them in any way approached too near me. I would not touch their cups or glasses, even the chairs they had been sitting on. Thus morally and physically I remained apart from them; all the compliments they paid me I haughtily accepted of, as incense that was due.

Among the strangers then resident among us, there was one young man peculiarly distinguished, whom in sport we used to call Narciss. He had gained a reputation in the diplomatic line; and among the various changes now occurring at our court, he was in hopes of meeting with some advantageous place. He soon became acquainted with my father: his acquirements and manners opened up for him the way to a select society of most accomplished men. My father often spoke in praise of

him : his figure, which was very handsome, would have been more pleasing, had it not been for a certain air of self-complacency, which breathed from all his carriage. I had seen him ; I thought well of him ; but we had never spoken.

At a great ball, where we chanced to be in company, I danced a minuet along with him ; but this too passed without results. The more violent dances, in compliance with my father's will, who felt anxieties about my health, I was accustomed to avoid : in the present case, when these came on, I retired to an adjoining room, and began to talk with certain of my friends, elderly ladies, who had set themselves to cards.

Narciss, who had jigged it for a while, at last came into the room in which I was ; and having got the better of a bleeding at the nose, that had overtaken him in dancing, he began to speak with me about a multitude of things. In half an hour, the talk had grown so interesting, that neither of us could endure to think of dancing any more. We were rallied by our friends for this ; but we did not let their bantering disturb us. Next evening, we re-commenced our conversation, and were very careful not to hurt our health.

The acquaintance then was made. Narciss was often with my sisters and myself ; and I now once more began to reckon over and consider what I knew, what I thought of, what I had felt, and what I could express myself about in conversa-

tion. My new friend had mingled in the best society; besides the department of history and politics, with every part of which he was familiar, he had gained extensive literary knowledge; there was nothing new that issued from the press, especially in France, that he was unacquainted with. He brought or sent me many a pleasant book; but this we kept as secret as forbidden love. Learned women had been made ridiculous, well-informed women were with difficulty tolerated; apparently, because it would have been uncourtly to put so many ill-informed gentlemen to shame. Even my father, much as he delighted in this new opportunity of cultivating my mind, expressly stipulated that our literary commerce should remain a secret.

Thus our intercourse continued almost for a year and day; and still I could not say that in any wise Narciss had ever shewn me aught of love or tenderness. He was always complaisant and kind; but manifested nothing like attachment: on the contrary, he even seemed to be in some degree affected by the charms of my youngest sister, who was then extremely beautiful. In sport, he gave her many little friendly names, out of foreign tongues; for he could speak two or three of these extremely well: and loved to mix their idiomatic phrases with his German. Such compliments she did not answer very liberally; she was entangled in a different noose; and being very sharp, while he was very sensitive, the two were often

quarrelling about trifles. With my mother and my aunt, he kept himself on very pleasant terms ; and thus by gradual advances, he was grown to be a member of the family.

Who knows how long we might have lived in this way, had a curious accident not altered our relations all at once. My sisters and I were invited to a certain house, to which we did not like to go. The company was too mixed ; and persons of the stupidest if not the rudest stamp were often to be met with there. Narciss, on this occasion, was invited also ; and on his account I felt inclined to go, for I was sure of finding one at least with whom I could converse as I desired. Even at table, we had many things to suffer ; for several of the gentlemen had drunk too much : and after rising from it, they insisted on a game at forfeits. It went along with great vivacity and tumult. Narciss had lost a forfeit : they ordered him, by way of penalty, to whisper something pleasant in the ear of every member of the company. It seems, he staid too long beside my neighbour, the lady of a Captain. The latter on a sudden struck him such a box with his fist, that the powder flew about my eyes and blinded me. When I had cleared my sight, and in some degree recovered from my terror, I saw that both of them had drawn their swords. Narciss was bleeding ; and the other, mad with wine and rage and jealousy, could scarcely be held back by all the company : I seized

Narciss, led him by the arm up stairs; and as I did not think my friend even here in safety from his frantic enemy, I shut the door and bolted it.

Neither of us looked upon the wound as serious; for a slight cut across the hand was all we saw. Soon, however, I perceived a stream of blood running down his back, and a deep wound appeared upon his head. I now began to be afraid. I hastened to the lobby, to get help; but I could see no person; every one had staid below to calm the raving captain. At last a daughter of the family came skipping up; her mirth annoyed me; she was like to die with laughing at the bedlam spectacle. I conjured her for the sake of Heaven to get a surgeon; and she, in her wild way, sprang down the stair to fetch me one herself.

Returning to my wounded friend, I bound my handkerchief about his hand; and a neck-kerchief, that was hanging on the door, about his head. He was still bleeding copiously: he now turned pale, and seemed as if he were about to faint. There was none at hand to aid me: I very freely put my arm around him; patted his cheek, and tried to cheer him up by little flatteries. It seemed to act upon him like a spiritual remedy; he kept his senses, but he sat as pale as death.

At last the active housewife entered: it is easy to conceive her terror when she saw my friend in this predicament, lying in my arms, and both of us bestreamed with blood. No one had supposed

that he was wounded; all imagined I had carried him away in safety.

Now smelling-bottles, wine, and every thing that could support and stimulate, were copiously produced. The surgeon also came; and I might easily have been dispensed with. Narciss, however, held me firmly by the hand; I would have staid without holding. During the dressing of his wounds, I continued wetting his lips with wine; I minded not though all the company were now about us. The surgeon having finished, his patient took a mute but tender leave of me, and was conducted home.

The mistress of the house now led me to her bed-room: she was forced to strip me altogether; and I must confess, that while they washed the blood from me, I saw with pleasure, for the first time, in a mirror, that I might be reckoned beautiful without the aid of dress. No portion of my clothes could be put on again; and as the people of the house were all either less or larger than myself, I was taken home in a strange disguise. My parents were, of course, astonished. They felt exceedingly indignant at my fright, at the wounds of their friend, at the captain's madness, at the whole occurrence. A very little would have made my father send a challenge to the captain, that he might avenge his friend without delay. He blamed the gentlemen that had been there, because they had not punished such a murderous attempt upon

the spot : for it was but too clear, that the captain, instantly on striking, had pulled out his sword and wounded the other from behind. The cut across the hand had not been given, until Narciss himself was grasping at his sword. I felt unspeakably affected and altered : or, how shall I express it? The passion which was sleeping at the deepest bottom of my heart, had at once broken loose, like a flame on getting air. And if joy and pleasure are well suited for the first producing and the silent nourishing of love, yet this passion, bold by nature, is most easily impelled by terror to decide and to declare itself. My mother gave some physic to her little flurried daughter, and made her go to bed. With the earliest morrow, my father hastened to Narciss, whom he found lying very sick of a wound fever.

He told me little of what passed between them ; but tried to quiet me about the probable results of this event. They were now considering whether an apology should be accepted of, whether the affair should go before a court of justice, and many other points of that description. I knew my father too well to doubt that he would be averse to see the matter end without a duel : but I held my peace ; for I had learned from him before, that women should not meddle in such things. For the rest, it did not strike me as if any thing had passed between the friends, in which my interests were specially concerned : but my father soon communi-

cated to my mother the purport of their farther conversation. Narciss, he said, appeared to be exceedingly affected at the help afforded by me; had embraced him, declared himself my debtor for ever, signified that he desired no happiness except what he could share with me, and concluded by entreating that he might presume to ask my hand. All this mamma repeated to me, but subjoined the safe reflection, that "as for what was said in the first agitation of mind in such a case, there was little trust to be placed in it." "Of course, none," I answered with affected coldness; though all the while I was feeling Heaven knows what and how.

Narciss continued sick for two months; owing to the wound in his right hand, he could not even write. Yet, in the mean time, he shewed me his regard by the most obliging courtesies. All these unusual attentions I combined with what my mother had disclosed to me; and constantly my head was full of fancies. The whole city talked of the occurrence. With me they spoke of it in a peculiar tone; they drew inferences which, greatly as I struggled to avoid them, touched me very close. What had formerly been habitude and trifling, was now grown seriousness and inclination. The anxiety in which I lived was the more violent, the more carefully I studied to conceal it from every one. The idea of losing him affrighted me; the possibility of any closer union made me tremble.

For a half-prudent girl, there is really something awful in the thought of marriage.

By such incessant agitations, I was once more led to recollect myself. The gaudy imagery of a thoughtless life, which used to hover day and night before my eyes, was at once blown away. My soul again began to wake: but the greatly interrupted intimacy with my Invisible Friend was not so easy to renew. We still continued at a frigid distance: it was again something; but little to the times of old.

A duel had been fought, and the captain been severely wounded, before I ever heard of it. The public feeling was in all senses strong on the side of my lover, who at length again appeared upon the scene. But first of all, he came with his head tied up and his arm in a sling, to visit us. How my heart beat while he was there! The whole family was present; general thanks and compliments were all that passed on either side; Narciss, however, found an opportunity to shew some secret tokens of his love to me, by which means my inquietude was but increased. After his recovery, he visited us throughout the winter on the former footing; and in spite of all the soft private marks of tenderness, which he contrived to give me, the whole affair remained unsettled, undiscussed.

In this manner was I kept in constant practice. I could not trust my thoughts to mortal; and from God I was too far removed. Him I had

quite forgot for four wild years : I now again began at times to think of him ; but our acquaintance was grown cool ; they were visits of mere ceremony which I paid him ; and as, besides, in paying them, I used to dress myself in fine apparel, to set before him self-complacently my virtue, honour, and superiorities to others, he did not seem to notice me or know me in that finery.

A courtier would have been exceedingly distressed, if the prince who held his fortune in his hands had treated him in this way : but for me, I did not sorrow at it. I had what I required, health and conveniences : if God should please to think of me, well ; if not, I reckoned I had done my duty.

This, in truth, I did not think at that period : yet it was the true figure of my soul. But, to change and purify my feelings, preparations were already made.

The spring came on : Narciss once visited me, unannounced, and at a time when I happened to be quite alone. He now appeared in the character of lover ; and asked me if I could bestow on him my heart, and when he should obtain some lucrative and honourable place, along with it my hand.

He had been received into our service : but at first they kept him back, and would not rapidly promote him, because they dreaded his ambition. Having some little fortune of his own, he was left with a slender salary.

Notwithstanding my regard for him, I knew that he was not a man to treat with altogether frankly. I drew up, therefore; and referred him to my father. About my father's mind he did not seem to doubt; but wanted previously to be at one with me, upon the spot: I at last said, yes; but stipulated as an indispensable condition that my parents should concur. He then spoke formally with both of them; they signified their satisfaction; mutual promises were given on the faith of his advancement, which it was expected would be speedy. Sisters and aunts were informed of this arrangement, and the strictest secrecy enjoined on them.

Thus from a lover I had got a bridegroom. The difference between the two soon shewed itself to be considerable. If any one could change the lovers of all honourable maidens into bridegrooms, it would be a kindness to our sex, even though marriage should not follow the connexion. The love between two persons does not lessen by the change, but it becomes more reasonable. Innumerable little follies, 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, no discreet young woman will disturb herself about her hair-dressing; and nothing is more natural than that he too should think solidly, and rather wish to form a housewife

for himself than a gaudy doll for others. And thus it is in every province of the business.

Should a young woman of this kind be fortunate enough to have a bridegroom who possesses understanding and acquirements, she learns from him more than universities and foreign lands can teach. She not only willingly receives instruction, when he offers it, but she endeavours to elicit more and more from him. Love makes much that was impossible possible. By degrees too that subjection, so necessary and so graceful for the female sex, begins: the bridegroom does not govern like the husband; he only asks; but his mistress seeks to notice what he wants, and to offer it before he asks it.

So did experience teach me what I would not for much have missed. I was happy; truly happy, as woman could be in the world; that is to say, for a while.

Amid these quiet joys, a summer passed away. Narciss gave not the slightest reason to complain of him; he daily grew more dear to me; my whole soul was his; this he well knew, and knew also how to prize it. Meanwhile, from seeming trifles, something rose, which by and by grew hurtful to our union.

Narciss behaved to me as to a bride, and never dared to ask of me such favours as were yet forbidden us. But, about the boundaries of virtue and decorum, we were of very different opinions. I

meant to walk securely ; and so never granted him the smallest freedom, which the whole world might not have witnessed. He, used to dainties, thought this diet very strict. Here there was continual variance : he praised my modesty, and sought to undermine my resolution.

The *Serious* of my old French teacher now occurred to me ; as well as the defence which I had once suggested in regard to it.

With God I had again become a little more acquainted. He had given me a bridegroom whom I loved ; and for this I felt some thankfulness. Earthly love itself concentrated my soul, and put its powers in motion ; nor did it contradict my intercourse with God. I naturally complained to him of what alarmed me : but I did not perceive that I myself was wishing and desiring it. In my own eyes, I was strong ; I did not pray : ‘Lead us not into temptation !’ My thoughts were far beyond temptation. In this flimsy tinsel-work of virtue I came to God : he did not drive me back. On the smallest movement towards him, he left a soft impression in my soul ; and this impression caused me always to return.

Except Narciss, the world was altogether dead to me ; excepting him, there was nothing in it that had any charm. Even my love for dress was but the wish to please him : if I knew that he was not to see me, I could spend no care upon it. I liked to dance ; but if he was not beside me,

it seemed as if I could not bear the motion. At a brilliant festival, if he was not invited, I could neither take the trouble of providing new things, nor of putting on the old according to the mode. To me they were alike agreeable, or rather I might say, alike burdensome. I used to reckon such an evening very fairly spent, when I could join myself to any ancient card-party, though formerly I was without the smallest taste for such things; and if some old acquaintance came and rallied me about it, I would smile, perhaps for the first time all that night. So likewise it was with promenades, and every social entertainment that can be imagined :

Him had I chosen from all others,
His would I be and not another's ;
To me his love was all in all.

Thus I was often solitary in the midst of company ; and real solitude was generally acceptable to me. But my busy soul could neither sleep nor dream ; I felt and thought, and longed for the ability to speak about my feelings and my thoughts with God. From this were feelings of another sort unfolded ; but they did not contradict the former : my affection to Narciss accorded with the universal scheme of nature ; it nowhere hindered the performance of a duty. They did not contradict each other, yet they were immensely different. Narciss was the only living form which

hovered in my mind, and to which my love was all directed; but the other feeling was not directed towards any form, and yet it was unspeakably agreeable. I no longer have it, I no longer can impart it.

My lover, whom I used to trust with all my secrets, did not know of this. I soon discovered that he thought far otherwise: he often gave me writings, which opposed with light and heavy weapons all that can be called connexion with the Invisible. I used to read the books, because they came from him: but at the end, I knew no word of all that had been argued in them.

Nor in regard to sciences and knowledge was there any want of contradiction in our conduct. He did as all men do, he mocked at learned women; and yet he kept continually instructing me. He used to speak with me on all subjects, law excepted; and while constantly procuring books of every kind for me, he frequently repeated the uncertain precept, "That a lady ought to keep the knowledge she might have, more secret, than the Calvinist his creed in Catholic countries." And while I, by natural consequence, endeavoured not to shew myself more wise or learned than formerly before the world, Narciss himself was commonly the first who yielded to the vanity of speaking about me and my superiorities.

A nobleman of high repute, and at that time valued for his influence, his talents and accom-

plishments, was living at our Court with great applause. He bestowed especial notice on Narciss, whom he kept continually about him. They had once an argument about the virtue of women. Narciss repeated to me what had passed between them; I was not wanting with my observations; and my friend required of me a written essay on the subject. I could write French fluently enough; I had laid a good foundation with my teacher. My correspondence with Narciss was likewise carried on in French: except in French books, there was then no elegant instruction to be had. My essay pleased the Count; I was obliged to let him have some little songs, which I had lately been composing. In short, Narciss appeared to revel without stint in the renown of his beloved: and the story, to his great contentment, ended with a French epistle in heroic verse, which the Count transmitted to him on departing; in which their argument was mentioned, and my friend reminded of his happiness in being destined, after all his doubts and errors, to learn most certainly what virtue was, in the arms of a virtuous and charming wife.

He shewed this poem first of all to me, and then to almost every one; each thinking on the matter what he pleased. Thus did he act in several cases; every stranger, whom he valued, must be made acquainted in our house.

A noble family was staying for a season in the

place, to profit by the skill of our physician. In this house too, Narciss was looked on as a son: he introduced me there; we found among these worthy persons the most pleasant entertainment for the mind and heart. Even the common pastimes of society appeared less empty here than elsewhere. All knew how matters stood with us: they treated us, as circumstances would allow, and left the main relation unalluded to. I mention this one family; because, in the after period of my life, it had a powerful influence upon me.

Almost a year of our connexion had elapsed; and along with it, our spring was over. The summer came, and all grew drier and more earnest.

By several unexpected deaths, some offices were rendered vacant, which Narciss might make pretensions to. The instant was at hand, in which my whole destiny must be decided; and while Narciss and all our friends were making every effort to efface some impressions which obstructed him at Court, and to obtain for him the wished-for situation, I turned with my request to my Invisible Friend. I was received so kindly, that I gladly came again. I confessed without disguise my wish that Narciss might obtain the place: but my prayer was not importunate; and I did not require that it should happen for the sake of my petition.

The place was obtained by a far inferior com-

petitor. I was dreadfully troubled at this news; I hastened to my room, the door of which I locked behind me. The first fit of grief went off in a shower of tears; the next thought was, "Yet it was not by chance that it happened;" and instantly I formed the resolution to be well contented with it, seeing even this apparent evil would be **for my true advantage**. The **softest emotions** then pressed in upon me, and divided **all the clouds of sorrow**. I felt that, with help like this, there was nothing one might not endure. At dinner I appeared quite cheerful, to the great astonishment of all the house.

Narciss had less internal force than I, and I was called upon to comfort him. In his family, too, he had many crosses to encounter, some of which afflicted him considerably; and, such true confidence subsisting between us, he intrusted me with all. His negotiations for entering on foreign service were not more fortunate; the whole of this I deeply felt on his account and mine; the whole of it I ultimately carried to the place, where my petitions had already been so well received.

The softer these experiences were, the oftener did I endeavour to renew them; I hoped continually to meet with comfort, where I had so often met with it. Yet I did not always meet with it: I was as one that goes to warm him in the sunshine, while there is something standing in the way that makes a shadow. "What is this?" I

asked myself. I traced the matter zealously, and soon perceived that it all depended on the situation of my soul: if this was not turned in the straightest direction towards God, I still continued cold; I did not feel his counter-influence; I could obtain no answer. The second question was: "What hinders this direction?" Here I was in a wide field; I perplexed myself in an inquiry, which lasted nearly all the second year of my attachment to Narciss. I might have ended the investigation sooner; for it ~~was not~~ long till I had got upon the **proper** trace; but I would not confess it, and I sought a thousand outlets.

I very soon discovered that the straight direction of my soul was marred by foolish dissipations, and employment with unworthy things. The How and the Where were clear enough to me. Yet by what means could I help myself, or extricate my mind from the calls of a world where every thing was either cold indifference or hot insanity? Gladly would I have left things standing as they were, and lived from day to day, floating down with the stream, like other people whom I saw quite happy: but I durst not; my inmost feelings contradicted me too often. Yet if I determined to renounce society, and alter my relations to others, it was not in my power. I was hemmed in as by a ring drawn round me: certain connexions I could not dissolve; and, in the matter which lay nearest to my heart, fatalities accumulated and

oppressed me more and more. I often went to bed with tears; and, after a sleepless night, arose again with tears: I required some strong support; and God would not vouchsafe it me, while I was running with the cap and bells.

I proceeded now to estimate my doings, all and each; dancing and play were first put upon their trial. Never was there any thing spoken, thought, or written, for or against these practices, which I did not examine, talk of, read, weigh, reject, aggravate, and plague myself about. If I gave up these habits, I was certain that Narciss would be offended; for he was excessively afraid of the ridicule, which any look of straitlaced conscientiousness gives one in the eyes of the world. And doing what I now looked upon as folly, noxious folly, out of no taste of my own, but merely to gratify him, it all grew dreadfully irksome to me.

Without disagreeable prolixities and repetitions, it is not in my power to represent what pains I took, in trying so to counteract those occupations which distracted my attention and disturbed my peace of mind, that my heart, in spite of them, might still be open to the influences of the Invisible Being. But at last with pain I was compelled to feel, that in this way the quarrel could not be composed. For no sooner had I clothed myself in the garment of folly, than it came to be something more than a mask, that foolishness pierced and penetrated me through and through.

May I here overstep the province of a mere historical detail, and offer one or two remarks on what was then taking place within me? What could it be which so changed my tastes and feelings, that, in my twenty-second year, nay earlier, I lost all relish for the recreations with which people of that age are harmlessly delighted? Why were they not harmless for me? I may answer, Just because they were not harmless; because I was not, like others of my years, unacquainted with my soul. No! I knew from experiences, which had reached me unsought, that there are loftier emotions, which afford us a contentment such as it is vain to seek in the amusement of the world; and that in these higher joys there is also kept a secret treasure for strengthening the spirit in misfortune.

But the pleasures of society, the dissipations of youth, must needs have had a powerful charm for me, since it was not in my power to engage in them without participation, to act among them as if they were not there. How many things could I now do, if I liked, with entire coldness, which then dazzled and confounded me, nay threatened to obtain the mastery over me! Here there could no medium be observed; either those delicious amusements, or my nourishing and quickening internal emotions, must be given up.

But in my soul, the strife had, without my own consciousness, already been decided. Even if there

still was any thing within me that longed for earthly pleasures, I was now become unfitted for enjoying them. Much as a man might hanker after wine, all desire of drinking would forsake him, if he should be placed among full barrels in a cellar, where the foul air was like to suffocate him. Free air is more than wine: this I felt but too keenly; and from the first, it would have cost me little studying to prefer the good to the delightful, if the fear of losing the affection of Narciss had not restrained me. But at last, when after many thousand struggles, and thoughts continually renewed, I began to cast a steady eye upon the bond which held me to him, I discovered that it was but weak, that it might be torn asunder. I at once perceived it to be only as a glass bell, which shut me up in the exhausted airless space: One bold stroke to break the bell in pieces, and thou art delivered!

No sooner thought than tried. I drew off the mask, and on all occasions acted as my heart directed. Narciss I still cordially loved: but the thermometer, which formerly had stood in hot water, was now hanging in the natural air; it could rise no higher than the warmth of the atmosphere directed.

Unhappily it cooled very much. Narciss drew back, and began to assume a distant air: this was at his option; but my thermometer descended as he drew back. Our family observed this; questioned me, and seemed to be surprised. I ex-

plained to them with stout defiance, that heretofore I had made abundant sacrifices ; that I was ready, still farther and to the end of my life, to share all crosses that befell him ; but that I required full freedom in my conduct, that my doings and avoidings must depend upon my own conviction ; that indeed I would never bigotedly cleave to my own opinion, but on the other hand would willingly be reasoned with ; yet, as it concerned my own happiness, the decision must proceed from myself, and be liable to no manner of constraint. The greatest physician could not move me by his reasonings to take an article of food, which perhaps was altogether wholesome and agreeable to many, so soon as my experience had shewn that on all occasions it was noxious to me ; as I might produce coffee for an instance : and just as little, nay still less, would I have any sort of conduct which misled me, preached up and demonstrated upon me as morally profitable.

Having so long prepared myself in silence, these debates were rather pleasant than vexatious to me. I gave vent to my soul ; I felt the whole worth of my determination. I yielded not a hairsbreadth ; and those to whom I owed no filial respect were sharply handled and despatched. In the family I soon prevailed. My mother from her youth had entertained these sentiments, though in her they had never reached maturity ; for no necessity had pressed upon her, and exalted her courage to

achieve her purpose. She rejoiced in beholding her silent wishes fulfilled through me. My younger sisters seemed to join themselves with me; the second was attentive and quiet. Our aunt had the most to object. The arguments which she employed appeared to her irrefragable, and they were irrefragable, being altogether common-place. At last I was obliged to shew her, that she had no voice in the affair in any sense; and after this, she seldom signified that she persisted in her views. She was indeed the only person who observed this passage close at hand, without in some degree experiencing its influence. I do not calumniate her, when I say that she had no character, and the most limited ideas.

My father acted altogether in his own way. He spoke not much, but often, with me on the matter: his arguments were rational; and being *his* arguments, they could not be impugned. It was only the deep feeling of my right that gave me strength to dispute against him. But the scenes soon changed; I was forced to make appeal to his heart. Straited by his understanding, I came out with the most pathetic pleadings. I gave free course to my tongue and to my tears. I shewed him how much I loved Narciss; how much constraint I had for two years been enduring; how certain I was of being in the right; that I was ready to testify that certainty by the loss of my beloved bridegroom and prospective happiness; nay,

if it were necessary, by the loss of all that I possessed on earth ; that I would rather leave my native country, my parents, and my friends, and beg my bread in foreign lands, than act against these dictates of my conscience. He concealed his emotion ; he said nothing on the subject for a while, and at last he openly declared in my favour.

During all this time Narciss forbore to visit us ; and my father now gave up the weekly club, of which the former was a member. The business made a noise at court, and in the town. People talked about it, as is common in such cases, which the public takes a vehement interest in, because its sentence has usurped an influence on the resolutions of weak minds. I knew enough about the world to understand, that one's conduct is often censured by the very persons, who would have advised it had one consulted them : and independently of this, with my internal composure, I should have looked on all such transitory speculations just as if they had not been.

On the other hand, I hindered not myself from yielding to my inclination for Narciss. To me he had become invisible, and to him my feelings had not altered. I loved him tenderly ; as it were anew, and much more steadfastly than formerly. If he chose to leave my conscience undisturbed, then I was his : wanting this condition, I would have refused a kingdom with him. For several

months, I bore these feelings and these thoughts about with me; and finding, at last, that I was calm and strong enough to go peacefully and firmly to work, I wrote him a polite but not a tender note, inquiring why he never came to see me.

As I knew his manner of avoiding to explain himself in little matters, but of silently doing what seemed good to him, I purposely urged him in the present instance. I got a long, and as it seemed to me, a pitiful reply, in a vague style and unmeaning phrases, stating, that without a better place, he could not fix himself and offer me his hand; that I best knew how hardly it had fared with him hitherto; that as he was afraid lest a fruitless intercourse, so long continued, might prove hurtful to my reputation, I would give him leave to continue at his present distance; so soon as it was in his power to make me happy, he would look upon the word which he had given me as sacred.

I answered him upon the spot, that as our intercourse was known to all the world, it might perhaps be rather late to spare my reputation; for which, at any rate, my conscience and my innocence were the surest pledges: however, that I hereby freely gave him back his word, and hoped the change would prove a happy one for him. The same hour I received a short reply, which was, in all essential particulars, entirely synonymous with

the first. He adhered to his former statement, that so soon as he obtained a situation, he would ask me if I pleased to share his fortune with him.

This I interpreted as meaning simply nothing. I signified to my relations and acquaintances, that the affair was altogether settled; and it was so actually. Having, nine months afterwards, obtained the much-desired preferment, he offered me his hand; but under the condition, that as the wife of a man who must keep house like other people, I should alter my opinions. I returned him many thanks: and hastened with my heart and mind away from this transaction; as one hastens from the play-house when the curtain falls. And as he, a short time afterwards, had found a rich and advantageous match, a thing now easy for him; and as I now knew him to be happy, in the way he liked, my own tranquillity was quite complete.

I must not pass in silence the fact, that several times before he got a place, and after it, there were respectable proposals made to me; which, however, I declined without the smallest hesitation, much as my father and my mother could have wished for more compliance on my part.

At length, after a stormy March and April, the loveliest May weather seemed to be allotted me. With good health, I enjoyed an indescribable composure of mind: look around me as I pleased, my loss appeared a gain to me. Young and full of sensibility, I thought the universe a thousand times

more beautiful than formerly, when I required to have society and play, that in the fair garden tedium might not overtake me. And now, as I did not conceal my piety, I likewise took heart to own my love for the sciences and arts. I drew, painted, read; and found enow of people to support me: instead of the great world which I had left, or rather which had left me, a smaller one was formed about me, which was infinitely richer and more entertaining. I had a turn for social life; and I do not deny that, on giving up my old acquaintances, I trembled at the thought of solitude. I now found myself abundantly, perhaps excessively, indemnified. My acquaintances ere long were very numerous; not at home only, but likewise among people at a distance. My story had been noised abroad; and many persons felt a curiosity to see the woman who had valued God above her bridegroom. There was a certain pious tone to be observed at that time generally over Germany. In the families of several counts and princes, a care for the welfare of the soul had been awakened. Nor were there wanting noblemen who shewed a like attention; while in the inferior classes, sentiments of this kind were diffused on every side.

The noble family, whom I made mention of above, now drew me nearer to them. They had, in the meanwhile, gathered strength; several of their relations having settled in the town. These

estimable persons courted my familiarity, as I did theirs. They had high connexions; I became acquainted, in their house, with a great part of the princes, counts, and lords of the Empire. My sentiments were not concealed from any one; they might be honoured or be tolerated; I obtained my object; none attacked me.

There was yet another way, by which I was again led back into the world. About this period, a step-brother of my father, who till now had never visited the house except in passing, staid with us for a considerable time. He had left the service of his court, where he enjoyed great influence and honour, simply because all matters were not managed quite according to his mind. His intellect was just, his character was rigid. In these points he was very like my father; only the latter had withal a certain touch of softness, which enabled him with greater ease to yield a little in affairs, and though not to do, yet to permit, some things against his own conviction; and then to evaporate his anger at them, either in silence by himself, or in confidence amid his family. My uncle was a great deal younger; and his independence of spirit had been favoured by his outward circumstances. His mother had been very rich; and he still had large possessions to expect from her near and distant relatives: so he needed no foreign increase; whereas my father, with his

moderate fortune, was bound to his place by the consideration of his salary.

My uncle had become still more unbending from domestic sufferings. He had early lost an amiable wife and a hopeful son; and from that time, he appeared to wish to push away from him every thing that did not hang upon his individual will.

In our family, it was whispered now and then with some complacency, that probably he would not wed again, and so we-children might anticipate inheriting his fortune. I paid small regard to this: but the demeanour of the rest was not a little modified by their hopes. In his own imperturbable firmness of character, my uncle had grown into the habit of never contradicting any one in conversation. On the other hand, he listened with a friendly air to every one's opinion; and would himself elucidate and strengthen it by instances and reasons of his own. All who did not know him fancied that he thought as they did: for he was possessed of a preponderating intellect; and could transport himself into the mental state of any man, and imitate his manner of conceiving. With me he did not prosper quite so well: for here the question was about emotions, of which he had not any glimpse; and with whatever tolerance, and sympathy, and rationality, he spoke about my sentiments, it was palpable to me that

he had not the slightest notion of what formed the ground of all my conduct.

With all his secrecy, we by and by found out the aim of his unusual stay with us. He had, as we at length discovered, cast his eyes upon our youngest sister, with the view of giving her in marriage, and rendering her happy as he pleased: and certainly considering her personal and mental attractions, particularly when a handsome fortune was laid into the scale along with them, she might pretend to the first matches. His feelings towards me he likewise shewed us pantomimically, by procuring me a post of Canoness, the income of which I very soon began to draw.

My sister was not so contented with his care as I. She now disclosed to me a tender secret, which hitherto she very wisely had kept back; fearing, as in truth it happened, that I would by all means counsel her against connexion with a man who was not suited to her. I did my utmost, and succeeded. The purpose of my uncle was too serious and too distinct; the prospect for my sister, with her worldly views, was too delightful to be thwarted by a passion which her own understanding disapproved: she mustered force enough to give it up.

On her ceasing to resist the gentle guidance of my uncle, the foundation of his plan was quickly laid. She was appointed Maid of Honour at a neighbouring court, where he could commit her to

the oversight and the instructions of a lady, his friend, who presided there as Governess with great applause. I accompanied her to the place of her new abode. Both of us had reason to be satisfied with the reception which we met with : and frequently I could not help in secret smiling at the character, which now as Canoness, as young and pious Canoness, I was enacting in the world.

In earlier times, a situation such as this would have confused me dreadfully ; perhaps have turned my head : but now, in midst of all the splendours that surrounded me, I felt extremely cool. With great quietness, I let them frizzle me, and deck me out for hours ; and thought no more of it than that my place required me to wear that gala livery. In the thronged saloons, I spoke with all and each, though no shape or character among them made impression on me. On returning to my house, nearly all the feeling I brought back with me was that of tired limbs. Yet my understanding drew advantage from the multitude of persons whom I saw ; and I grew acquainted with some ladies, patterns of every virtue, of a noble and good demeanour ; particularly with the Governess, under whom my sister was to have the happiness of being formed.

At my return, however, the consequences of this journey, in regard to health, were found to be less favourable. With the greatest temperance, the strictest diet, I had not been as I used to be,

completely mistress of my time and strength. Food, motion, rising and going to sleep, dressing and visiting, had not depended, as at home, on my own conveniency and will. In the circle of social life, you cannot stop without a breach of courtesy : all that was needful I had willingly performed ; because I looked upon it as my duty, because I knew that it would soon be over, and because I felt myself completely healthy. Yet this unusual restless life must have affected me more strongly than I was aware of. Scarcely had I reached our house, and cheered my parents with a comfortable narrative, when a hemorrhage attacked me, which, although it was not dangerous or lasting, yet left a weakness after it perceptible for many a day.

Here, then, I had another lesson to repeat. I did it joyfully. Nothing bound me to the world ; and I was convinced that here the true good was never to be found : so I waited in the cheerfullest and meekest state ; and after having abdicated life, I was retained in it.

A new trial was awaiting me : my mother took a painful and oppressive ailment, which she had to bear five years, before she paid the debt of nature. All this time we were sharply proved. Often when her terror grew too strong, she would make us all be summoned in the night before her bed, that so at least she might be busied if not bettered by our presence. The load grew heavier, nay scarcely to be borne, when my father too be-

came unwell. From his youth, he frequently had violent headaches; which, however, at the longest never used to last beyond six and thirty hours. But now they were continual; and when they mounted to a high degree of pain, his moanings tore my very heart. It was in these tempestuous seasons, that I chiefly felt my bodily weakness; because it kept me from my holiest and dearest duties, or rendered the performance of them hard to an extreme degree.

It was now that I could try whether the path which I had chosen was the path of fantasy or truth; whether I had merely thought as others shewed me, or the object of my trust had a reality. To my unspeakable support, I always found the latter. The straight direction of my heart to God, the fellowship of the "Beloved Ones"* I had sought and found; and this was what made all things light to me. As a traveller in the dark, my soul, when all was pressing on me from without, hastened to the place of refuge, and never did it return empty.

In later times, some champions of religion, who seem to be animated more by zeal than feeling for it, have required of their brethren to produce examples of prayers actually heard; apparently, because they wished for seal and writing, that

* So in the original.—ED.

they might proceed against their adversaries diplomatically and juridically. How unknown must the true feeling of the matter be to these persons ! how few real experiences can they themselves have made !

I can say that I never returned empty, when in straits and oppression I called on God. This is saying infinitely much ; more I must not and cannot say. Important as each experience was at the critical moment for myself, the recital of them would be flat, improbable, and insignificant, were I to specify the separate cases. Happy was I, that a thousand little incidents in combination proved, as clearly as the drawing of my breath proved me to be living, that I was not without God in the world. He was near to me, I was before him. This is what, with a diligent avoidance of all theological systematic terms, I can with the greatest truth declare.

Much do I wish that in those times too I had been entirely without system. But which of us arrives early at the happiness of being conscious of his individual self in its own pure combination, without extraneous forms ? I was in earnest with religion. I timidly trusted in the judgments of others ; I entirely gave in to the Halleian system of conversion ; but my nature would by no means tally with it.

According to this scheme of doctrine, the alteration of the heart must begin with a deep terror

on account of sin ; the heart in this agony must recognise in a less or greater degree the punishment which it has merited, must get a foretaste of Hell, and so embitter the delight of sin. At last it feels a very palpable assurance of grace ; which, however, in its progress often fades away, and must again be sought with earnest prayer.

Of all this no jot occurred with me. When I sought God sincerely, he let himself be found of me, and did not reproach me about bygone things. On looking back, I saw well enough where I had been unworthy, where I still was so ; but the confession of my faults was altogether without terror. Not for a moment did the fear of Hell occur to me : nay, the very notion of a wicked Spirit, and a place of punishment and torment after death, could nowise gain admission to the circle of my thoughts. I looked upon the men, who lived without God, whose hearts were shut against the trust in and the love of the Invisible, as already so unhappy that a hell and external pains appeared to promise rather an alleviation than an aggravation of their misery. I had but to turn my eyes upon the persons in this world, who in their breasts gave scope to hateful feelings ; who hardened their hearts against the Good of whatever kind, and strove to force the Evil on themselves and others ; who shut their eyes by day, that so they might deny the shining of the sun : How unutterably wretched did these persons seem to me !

Who could have formed a Hell to make their situation worse?

This mood of mind continued in me, without change, for half a score of years. It maintained itself through many trials; even at the moving death-bed of my beloved mother. I was frank enough on this occasion not to hide my comfortable frame of mind from certain pious but rigorously orthodox people; and I had to suffer many a friendly admonition on that score. They reckoned they were just in season, for explaining with what earnestness one ought to strive to lay a right foundation in the days of health and youth.

In earnestness I too determined not to fail. For the moment, I allowed myself to be convinced; and fain would I have grown for life, distressed and full of fears. But what was my surprise on finding absolutely that I could not. When I thought of God, I was cheerful and contented: even at the painful end of my dear mother, I did not shudder at the thought of death. Yet I learned many and far other things than my uncalled teachers thought of, in these solemn hours.

By degrees I grew to doubt the dictates of so many famous people, and retained my sentiments in silence. A certain lady of my friends, to whom I had at first disclosed too much, insisted still on interfering with my business. Of her too I was forced to rid myself; at last I firmly told her, that she might spare herself this labour, as I did not

need her counsel; that I knew my God, and would have no guide but him. She felt exceedingly offended; I believe she never quite forgave me.

This determination to withdraw from the advices and the influence of my friends, in spiritual matters, produced the consequence, that also in my temporal affairs I gained sufficient courage to obey my own persuasions. But for the assistance of my faithful invisible Leader, I could not have prospered here. I am still gratefully astonished at his wise and happy guidance. No one knew how matters stood with me; even I myself did not know.

The thing, the wicked and inexplicable thing, which separates us from the Being to whom we owe our life, and in whom all that deserves the name of life must find its nourishment; the thing which we call Sin I yet knew nothing of.

In my intercourse with my invisible Friend, I felt the sweetest enjoyment of all my powers. My desire of constantly enjoying this felicity was so predominant, that I abandoned without hesitation whatever marred our intercourse; and here experience was my surest teacher. But it was with me as with sick persons, who have no medicine, and try to help themselves by diet. Something is accomplished, but far from enough.

I could not always live in solitude; though in it I found the best preservative against the dissi-

pation of my thoughts. On returning to the tumult, the impression it produced upon me was the deeper for my previous loneliness. My most peculiar advantage lay in this, that love for quiet was my ruling passion, and that in the end I still drew back to it. I perceived, as in a kind of twilight, my weakness and my misery; and tried to save myself by avoiding danger and exposure.

For seven years I had used my dietetic scheme. I held myself not wicked, and I thought my state desirable. But for some peculiar circumstances and occurrences, I had remained in this position: it was by a curious path that I got farther. Contrary to the advice of all my friends, I entered on a new connexion. Their objections made me pause at first. I turned to my invisible Leader, and, as he permitted me, I went forward without fear.

A man of spirit, heart, and talents, had bought a property beside us. Among the strangers whom I grew acquainted with, were this person and his family. In our manners, domestic economy, and habits, we accorded well; and thus we soon approximated to each other.

Philo, as I propose to call him, was already middle-aged: in certain matters he was highly serviceable to my father, whose strength was now decaying. He soon became the friend of the family; and finding in me, as he was pleased to say, a person free alike from the extravagance and emptiness of the great world, and from the narrowness

and aridness of the still world in the country, he courted intimacy with me, and ere long we were in one another's confidence. To me he was very pleasing and useful.

Though I did not feel the smallest inclination or capacity for mingling in public business, or seeking any influence on it, yet I liked to hear about such matters, liked to know whatever happened far and near. Of worldly things, I loved to get a clear though unconcerned perception: feeling, sympathy, affection, I reserved for God, for my people, and my friends.

The latter were, if I may say so, jealous of Philo, in my new connexion with him. In more than one sense, they were right in warning me about it. I suffered much in secret; for even I could not consider their remonstrances as altogether empty or selfish. I had been accustomed, from of old, to give a reason for my views and conduct; but in this case my conviction would not follow. I prayed to God, that here as elsewhere he would warn, restrain, and guide me; and as my heart on this did not dissuade me, I went forward on my way with comfort.

Philo on the whole had a remote resemblance to Narciss; only a pious education had more enlivened and concentrated his feelings. He had less vanity, more character: and, in business, if Narciss was delicate, exact, persevering, indefatigable, the other was clear, sharp, quick, and capable

of working with incredible ease. By means of him, I learned the secret history of almost every noble personage with whose exterior I had grown acquainted in society. It was pleasant for me to behold the tumult, off my watch-tower, from afar. Philo could now hide nothing from me: he confided to me by degrees his own concerns both inward and outward. I was in fear because of him; for I foresaw certain circumstances and entanglements; and the mischief came more speedily than I had looked for. There were some confessions he had still kept back; and even at last he told me only what enabled me to guess the worst.

What an effect had this upon my heart! I attained experiences which to me were altogether new. With infinite sorrow I beheld an Agathon, who, being educated in the groves of Delphi, yet owed his school-fee, which he was now obliged to pay with its accumulated interest; and this Agathon was my especial friend. My sympathy was lively and complete; I suffered with him; both of us were in the strangest state.

After having long occupied myself with the temper of his mind, I at last turned round to contemplate my own. The thought: 'Thou art no better than he,' rose like a little cloud before me, and gradually expanded till it darkened all my soul.

I now not only thought myself no better than he; I felt this, and felt it as I should not wish to do again. Nor was it any transitory mood. For

more than a year, I was constrained to feel that, if an unseen hand had not restrained me, I might have become a Girard, a Cartouche, a Damians, or any wretch you can suppose. The tendencies to this I traced too clearly in my heart. Heavens! what a discovery!

If hitherto I never had been able, in the faintest degree, to recognise in myself the reality of sin by experience, its possibility was now become apparent to me by anticipation, in the most tremendous manner. And yet I knew not evil; I but feared it: I felt that I might be guilty, and could not accuse myself of being so.

Deeply as I was convinced that such a temperament of soul, as I now saw mine to be, could never be adapted for that union with the invisible Being, which I hoped for after death; I did not, in the smallest, fear that I should finally be separated from him. With all the wickedness, which I discovered in my heart, I still loved *Him*; I hated what I felt, nay, wished to hate it still more earnestly; my whole desire was to be delivered from this sickness, and this tendency to sickness; and I was persuaded that the great Physician would at length vouchsafe his help.

The sole question was: What medicine will cure this malady? The practice of virtue? This I could not for a moment think. For ten years, I had already practised more than mere virtue; and the horrors now first discovered had, all the while,

lain hidden at the bottom of my soul. Might they not have broken out with me, as they did with David when he looked on Bathsheba? Yet was not he a friend of God; and was not I assured in my inmost heart that God was my friend?

Was it then an unavoidable infirmity of human nature? Must we just content ourselves in feeling and acknowledging the sovereignty of inclination? And, with the best will, is there nothing left for us but to abhor the fault we have committed, and on the like occasion to commit it again?

From systems of morality I could obtain no comfort. Neither their severity, by which they try to bend our inclinations, nor their attractiveness, by which they try to place our inclinations on the side of virtue, gave me any satisfaction. The fundamental notions, which I had imbibed from intercourse with my invisible Friend, were of far higher value to me.

Once, while I was studying the songs composed by David after that tremendous fall, it struck me very much that he traced his indwelling corruption even in the substance out of which he had been shaped; yet that he wished to be freed from sin, and that he earnestly entreated for a pure heart.

But how was this to be attained? The answer from the Scripture I was well aware of: 'That the blood of Jesus cleanseth us from all sin' was a Bible truth which I had long known. But now for the first time, I observed that as yet I had

never understood this oft-repeated saying. The questions: What does it mean? How is it to be? were day and night working out their answers in me. At last I thought I saw as by a gleam of light, that what I sought was to be found in the incarnation of the everlasting Word, by whom all things, even we ourselves, were made. That the Eternal descended as an inhabitant to the depths in which we dwell, which he surveys and comprehends; that he passed through our lot from stage to stage, from conception and birth to the grave; that by this marvellous circuit he again mounted to those shining Heights, whither we too must rise in order to be happy: all this was revealed to me, as in a dawning remoteness.

Oh! Why must we, in speaking of such things, make use of figures, which can only indicate external situations! Where is there in his eyes aught high or deep, aught dark or clear? It is we only that have an Under and Above, a night and day. And even for this did he become like us, since otherwise we could have had no part in him.

But how shall we obtain a share in this priceless benefit? 'By faith,' the Scripture says. And what is faith? To consider the account of an event as true—what help can this afford me? I must be enabled to appropriate its effects, its consequences. This appropriating faith must be a state of mind peculiar, and to the natural man, unknown.

‘ Now, gracious Father, grant me faith ! ’ so prayed I once in the deepest heaviness of heart. I was leaning on a little table, where I sat ; my tear-stained countenance was hidden in my hands. I was now in the condition, in which we seldom are, but in which we are required to be, if God is to regard our prayers.

O that I could but paint what I felt then ! A sudden force drew my soul to the cross where Jesus once expired : it was a sudden force, a pull, I cannot name it otherwise, such as leads our soul to an absent loved one ; an approximation, which perhaps is far more real and true than we imagine. So did my soul approach the Son of Man, who died upon the cross ; and that instant did I know what faith was.

‘ This is faith ! ’ said I ; and started up as half affrighted. I now endeavoured to get certain of my feeling, of my view ; and shortly I became convinced that my spirit had acquired a power of soaring upwards, which was altogether new to it.

Words fail us in describing such emotions. I could most distinctly separate them from all fantasy : they were entirely without fantasy, without image ; yet they gave us just the certainty of their referring to some object, which our imagination gives us when it paints for us the features of an absent lover.

When the first rapture was over, I observed that my present state of soul had formerly been

known to me ; only I had never felt it in such strength ; I had never held it fast, never made it mine. I believe, indeed, that every human soul at intervals feels something of it. Doubtless it is this which teaches every mortal that there is a God.

With this power, which used to visit me from time to time, I had hitherto been well content : and had not, by a singular arrangement of events, that unexpected sorrow weighed upon me for a twelvemonth ; had not my own ability and strength on this occasion altogether lost its credit with me ; I perhaps might have been satisfied with this condition all my days.

But now, since that great moment, I had as it were got wings. I could mount aloft above what used to threaten me ; as the bird can fly singing and with ease across the fiercest stream, while the little dog stands anxiously baying on the bank.

My joy was indescribable ; and though I did not mention it to any one, my people soon observed an unaccustomed cheerfulness in me, and could not understand the reason of my joy. Had I but forever held my peace, and tried to nourish this serene temper in my soul ! Had I not allowed myself to be misled by circumstances, so as to reveal my secret ! Then might I again have saved myself a long and tedious circuit.

As in the previous ten years of my Christian course, this necessary force had not existed in my

soul, I had just been in the case of other worthy people; had helped myself by keeping my fancy always full of images, which had some reference to God: a practice so far truly useful; for noxious images and their baneful consequences are by that means kept away. Often too our spirit seizes one or other of these spiritual images, and mounts with it a little way upwards; like a young bird fluttering from twig to twig.

Images and impressions pointing towards God are presented to us by the institutions of the Church, by organs, bells, singing, and particularly by the preaching of our pastors. Of these I used to be unspeakably desirous: no weather, no bodily weakness could keep me back from church; the sound of the Sunday bells was the only thing that rendered me impatient on a sick-bed. Our head Court-chaplain, a gifted man, I heard with great delight: his colleagues too I liked; and I could pick the golden apple of the word from the common fruit, with which on earthen platters it was mingled. With public ordinances, all sorts of private exercises were combined; and these too but nourished fancy and a finer kind of sense. I was so accustomed to this track, I revered it so much, that even now no higher one occurred to me. For my soul has only feelers, and not eyes; it gropes but does not see: Ah! that it could get eyes and look!

On this occasion, therefore, I again went with a

longing mind to sermon : but alas, what happened ! I no longer found what I was wont to find. These preachers were blunting their teeth upon the shell, while I enjoyed the kernel. I soon grew weary of them ; and I had already been so spoiled, that I could not be content with the little they afforded me. I required images, I wanted impressions from without ; and reckoned it a pure spiritual desire that I felt.

Philo's parents had been in connexion with the Herrnhuther community : in his library were many writings of Count Zinzendorf's. He had spoken with me very candidly and clearly on the subject more than once ; inviting me to turn over one or two of these treatises, if it were but for the sake of studying a psychological phenomenon. I looked upon the Count, and those that followed him, as very heterodox : and so the Ebersdorf hymn-book, which my friend had pressed upon me, lay unread.

However, in my total destitution of external excitements for my soul, I opened up the hymn-book as it were by chance ; and found in it, to my astonishment, some songs which actually, though under a fantastic form, appeared to shadow what I felt. The originality and the simplicity of their expression drew me on. It seemed to be peculiar emotions expressed in a peculiar way ; no school technology suggested any notion of formality or common place. I was persuaded that these people

felt as I did : I was very happy to lay hold of here and there a stanza in their songs, to fix it in my memory, and carry it about with me for days.

Since the moment, when the truth had been revealed to me, some three months had in this way passed along. At last I came to the determination of disclosing every thing to Philo, and asking him to let me have those writings, about which I was now become immoderately curious. Accordingly I did so, notwithstanding there was something in my heart which earnestly dissuaded me.

I circumstantially related to him all the story ; and, as he was himself a leading person in it, and my narrative conveyed the sharpest reprimand on him, he felt surprised and moved to an extreme degree. He melted into tears. I rejoiced at this ; believing that in his mind also a full and fundamental change had taken place.

He provided me with all the writings that I could require ; and now I had excess of nourishment for my imagination. I made rapid progress in the Zinzendorfic mode of thought and speech. And be it not supposed that I am yet incapable of prizing the peculiar turn and manner of the Count. I willingly do justice to him ; he is no empty fantast ; he speaks of mighty truths, and mostly in a bold figurative style ; the people who despise him know not either how to value or discriminate his qualities.

At that time, I became exceedingly attached to

him. Had I been mistress of myself, I would certainly have left my friends and country, and gone to join him. We should infallibly have understood each other, and should hardly have agreed together long.

Thanks to my better genius that now kept me so confined by my domestic duties ! I reckoned it a distant journey if I visited the garden. The charge of my aged weakly father afforded me employment enough, and in hours of recreation I had Fancy to procure me pastime. The only mortal whom I saw was Philo : he was highly valued by my father ; but with me, his intimacy had been cooled a little by the late explanation. Its influence on him had not penetrated deep ; and as some attempts to talk in my dialect had not succeeded with him, he avoided touching on this subject ; and the more readily, as his extensive knowledge put it always in his power to introduce new topics in his conversation.

I was thus a Herrnhuth sister on my own footing. I had especially to hide this new turn of my temper and my inclinations from the head Court-chaplain ; whom, as my father confessor, I had much cause to honour ; and whose high merits, his extreme aversion to the Herrnhuth community did not diminish in my eyes even then. Unhappily this worthy person had to suffer many troubles on account of me and others.

Several years ago he had become acquainted

with an upright pious gentleman, residing in a distant quarter ; and had long continued in unbroken correspondence with him as with one who truly sought God. How painful was it to the spiritual leader, when this gentleman subsequently joined himself to the community of Herrnhuth, where he lived for a long while ! How delightful, on the other hand, when at length he quarrelled with the brethren ; determined to settle in our neighbourhood ; and seemed once more to yield himself completely to the guidance of his ancient friend !

The stranger was presented, as in triumph, by the upper Pastor to all the chosen lambs of his fold. To our house alone he was not introduced, because my father did not now see company. The gentleman obtained no little approbation : he combined the polish of the court with the winning manner of the Brethren ; and having also many fine qualities by nature, he soon became the favourite saint with all who knew him ; a result at which the chaplain was exceedingly contented. But, alas ! it was merely in externals that the gentleman had split with the community ; in his heart he was yet entirely a Herrnhuther. He was, in truth, concerned for the reality of the matter : but yet the gimcracks which the Count had stuck around it were at the same time quite adapted to his taste. Besides he had now become accustomed to this mode of speaking and conceiving ; and if he had to hide it carefully from his ancient friend,

it but became the more necessary for him, whenever he could get a knot of trusty persons round him, to come forth with his couplets, litanies, and little figures; in which, as might have been supposed, he met with great applause.

I knew nothing of the whole affair; and daudled forward in my separate path. For a long time, we continued mutually unknown.

At a leisure hour, I happened once to visit a lady who was sick. I found several acquaintances along with her; and soon perceived that my appearance had cut short their conversation. I affected not to notice any thing; but saw ere long, with great surprise, some Herrnhuth figures stuck upon the wall in elegant frames. Quickly comprehending what had passed before my entrance, I expressed my pleasure at the sight in a few suitable verses.

Conceive the wonder of my friends! We explained ourselves; instantly we were agreed, and in each other's confidence.

I henceforth often sought for opportunities of going out. Unhappily I found them only once in three or four weeks: yet I grew acquainted with our gentleman apostle, and by degrees with all the body. I visited their meetings, when I could: with my social disposition, it was quite delightful for me to communicate to others, and to hear from them, the feelings which till now I had conceived and harboured by myself.

But I was not so completely taken with my friends, as not to see that few of them could really feel the sense of those affecting words and emblems; and that from these they drew as little benefit, as formerly they did from the symbolic language of the Church. Yet, notwithstanding, I went on with them, not letting this disturb me. I thought I was not called to search and try the hearts of others; even although by long-continued guiltless exercisings, I had been prepared for something better. I had my share of profit from our meetings: in speaking, I insisted on attending to the sense and spirit, which, in things so delicate, is rather apt to be disguised by words than indicated by them; and for the rest I left, with silent toleration, each to act according to his own conviction.

These quiet times of secret social joy were shortly followed by storms of open bickering and contradiction; contentions which excited great commotion, I might almost say occasioned not a little scandal, in the Court and town. The period was now arrived when our Chaplain, that stout gainsayer of the Herrnhuth Brethren, must discover, to his deep, but I trust, sanctified humiliation, that his best and once most zealous hearers were now all leaning to the side of that Community. He was excessively provoked: in the first moments, he forgot all moderation; and could not, even if he had inclined it, afterwards retract. Violent debates took place; in which

most happily I was not mentioned ; both as I was but an accidental member of that hated body ; and as our zealous preacher could not want my father and my friend, in certain civic matters. With silent satisfaction, I continued neutral. It was irksome to me to converse about such feelings and objects, even with well-affected people, if they could not penetrate the deepest sense, and lingered merely on the surface. But to strive with adversaries, about things on which even friends could scarcely understand each other, seemed to me unprofitable, nay pernicious. For I could soon perceive that many amiable noblemen, who on this occurrence could not shut their hearts to enmity and hatred, had very soon passed over to injustice ; and, in order to defend an outward form, had almost sacrificed their most substantial duties.

Greatly as the worthy clergyman might, in the present case, be wrong ; much as others tried to irritate me at him, I could never hesitate to give him my sincere respect. I knew him well : I could candidly transport myself into his way of looking at these matters. I have never seen a man without his weaknesses ; only, in distinguished men they strike us more. We wish, and will at all rates have it, that persons privileged as they are should at the same time pay no tribute, no tax whatever. I honoured him as a superior man : and hoped to use the influence of my calm neu-

trality to bring about, if not a peace, at least a truce. I know not what my efforts might have done: but God concluded the affair more briefly, and took the Chaplain to Himself. On his coffin, all wept who lately had been striving with him about words. His uprightiness, his fear of God, no one had ever doubted.

I too was ere long forced to lay aside this Herrn-huth doll-work, which, by means of these contentions, now appeared before me in a rather different light. Our uncle had in silence executed his intentions with my sister. He offered her a young man of rank and fortune as a bridegroom; and showed, by a rich dowry, what might be expected of himself. My father joyfully consented: my sister was free and forewarned, she did not hesitate to change her state. The bridal was appointed at my uncle's castle: family and friends were all invited; and we came in the highest spirits.

For the first time in my life, the aspect of a house excited admiration in me. I had often heard of my uncle's taste, of his Italian architect, of his collections and his library; but, comparing this with what I had already seen, I had formed a very vague and fluctuating picture of it in my thoughts. Great, accordingly, was my surprise at the earnest and harmonious impression, which I felt on entering the house, and which every hall and chamber deepened. If elsewhere pomp and decoration had but

dissipated my attention, I felt here concentrated and drawn back upon myself. In like manner, the preparatives for these solemnities and festivals produced a silent pleasure, by their air of dignity and splendour; and to me it seemed as inconceivable, that one man could have invented and arranged the whole of this, as that more than one could have combined to labour in so high a spirit. Yet withal, the landlord and his people were entirely natural; not a trace of stiffness or of empty form was to be seen.

The wedding itself was managed in a striking way: an exquisite strain of vocal music came upon us by surprise; and the clergyman went through the ceremony with a singular solemnity. I was standing by Philo at the time; and instead of a congratulation, he whispered in my ear: "When I saw your sister give away her hand, I felt as if a stream of boiling water had been poured upon me." "Why so?" I inquired. "It is always the way with me," said he, "when I behold two people joined." I laughed at him; but I have often since had cause to recollect his words.

The revel of the party, among whom were many young people, looked particularly glittering and airy, as every thing around us was dignified and serious. The furniture, plate, table-ware, and table-ornaments, accorded with the general whole; and if in other houses, the furnisher and architect

seemed to have proceeded from the same school, it here appeared that both furnisher and butler had taken lessons from the architect.

We staid together several days; and our intelligent and gifted landlord had variedly provided for the entertainment of his guests. I did not in the present case repeat the melancholy proof, which has so often in my life been forced upon me, how unhappily a large mixed company are situated; when, altogether left to themselves, they must select the most general and vapid pastimes, that the blockheads of the party may not want amusement, however it may fare with those that are not such.

My uncle had arranged it altogether differently. Two or three Marshals, if I may call them so, had been appointed by him: one of them had charge of providing entertainment for the young. Dances, excursions, little games, were of his invention, and under his direction; and as young people take delight in being out of doors, and do not fear the influences of the air, the garden and the garden-hall had been assigned to them; while some additional pavilions and galleries had been erected and appended to the latter, formed of boards and canvass merely, but in such proportions, so elegant and noble, they reminded one of nothing else but stone and marble.

How rare is a festivity, in which the person who invites the guests feels also that it is his duty to

provide for their conveniences and wants of every kind !

Hunting and card parties, short promenades, opportunities for trustful private conversations, were afforded to the elder persons : and whoever wished to go earliest to bed was certain to be lodged the most remote from noise.

By this happy order, the space in which we lived appeared to be a little world ; and yet, considered narrowly, the castle was not large ; without an accurate knowledge of it, and without the spirit of its owner, it would have been impossible to keep so many people in it, and to quarter each according to his humour.

As the aspect of a well-formed person pleases us, so also does a fair establishment, by means of which the presence of a rational intelligent mind is made apparent to us. We feel a joy in entering even a cleanly house, though it may be tasteless in its structure and its decorations ; because it shews us the presence of a person cultivated in at least one sense. Doubly pleasing is it therefore, when, from a human dwelling, the spirit of a higher though merely sensual culture speaks to us.

All this was vividly impressed upon my observation at my uncle's castle. I had heard and read much of art ; Philo, too, was a lover of pictures, and had a fine collection ; I myself had often practised drawing : but I had been too deeply occupied with my emotions for tasting aught that did

not bear upon the one thing needful, which alone I was bent on carrying to perfection; and besides, such objects of art as I had seen appeared, like all other worldly objects, to distract my thoughts. But now for the first time, outward things had led me back upon myself: I now first perceived the difference between the natural charm of the nightingale's song, and that of a four-voice anthem pealed from the expressive organs of men.

I did not hide my joy at this discovery from my uncle; who, when all the rest were settled at their posts, was wont to come and talk with me in private. He spoke with great modesty of what he had produced and made his own; with great decision, of the views in which it had been gathered and arranged: and I could easily observe that he spoke with a forbearance towards me; seeming, in his usual way, to rate the excellence, of which he was himself possessed, below the excellence, which, in my opinion, was the best and properest.

“If we can conceive it possible,” he once observed, “that the Creator of the world himself assumed the form of his creature, and lived in that manner for a time upon the earth, this creature must appear to us of infinite perfection, because susceptible of such a combination with its Maker. Hence, in our idea of man there can be no inconsistency with our idea of God: and if we often feel a certain disagreement with Him and remoteness from Him, it is but the more on that account

our duty, not like advocates of the wicked Spirit, to keep our eyes continually upon the nakedness and weakness of our nature; but rather to seek out every property and beauty, by which our pretension to a similarity with the Divinity may be made good."

I smiled and answered: "Do not make me blush, dear uncle, by your complaisance in talking in my language! What you have to say is of such importance to me, that I wish to hear it in your own most peculiar style; and then what parts of it I cannot quite appropriate, I will endeavour to translate."

"I may continue," he replied, "in my own most peculiar way, without any alteration of my tone. Man's highest merit always is as much as possible to rule external circumstances, and as little as possible to let himself be ruled by them. Life lies before us, as a huge quarry lies before the architect: he deserves not the name of architect, except when, out of this fortuitous mass, he can combine, with the greatest economy, suitability and durability, some form, the pattern of which originated in his spirit. All things without us, nay I may add, all things on us, are mere elements: but deep within us, lies the creative force, which out of these can produce what they were meant to be; and which leaves us neither sleep nor rest, till in one way or another, without us or on us, this has been produced. You, my dear

niece, have, it may be, chosen the better part: you have striven to bring your moral being, your earnest lovely nature to accordance with itself and with the Highest: but neither ought we to be blamed, when we strive to get acquainted with the sentient man in all his comprehensiveness, and to bring about an active harmony among his powers."

By such discoursing, we in time grew more familiar; and I begged of him to speak with me as with himself, omitting every sort of condescension. "Do not think," replied my uncle, "that I flatter you, when I commend your mode of thinking and of acting. I reverence the individual who understands distinctly what he wishes; who unweariedly advances, who knows the means conducive to his object, and can seize and use them. How far his object may be great or little, may merit praise or censure, is the next consideration with me. Believe me, love, most part of all the misery and mischief, of all that is denominated evil, in the world, arises from the fact that men are too remiss to get a proper knowledge of their aims, and when they do know them to work intensely in attaining them. They seem to me like people who have taken up a notion, that they must and will erect a tower, and who yet expend on the foundation not more stones and labour than would be sufficient for a hut. If you, my friend, whose highest want it was to perfect and unfold your moral nature, had, instead of those bold and noble sacrifices, merely trimmed

between your duties to yourself and to your family, your bridegroom, or perhaps your husband, you must have lived in constant contradiction with your feelings, and never could have had a peaceful moment."

"You employ the word sacrifice," I answered here; "and I have often thought that to a higher purpose, as to a divinity, we offer up, by way of sacrifice, a thing of smaller value; feeling, like persons who should willingly and gladly bring a favourite lamb to the altar, for the health of a beloved father."

"Whatever it may be," said he, "reason or feeling that commands us to give up the one thing for the other, to choose the one before the other, decision and perseverance are, in my opinion, the most noble qualities of man. You cannot have the ware and the money both at once: and he who always hankers for the ware without having heart enough to give the money for it, is no better off than he who repents him of the purchase when the ware is in his hands. But I am far from blaming men on this account: it is not they who are to blame; it is the difficult entangled situation they are in; they know not how to guide themselves in its perplexities. Thus, for instance, you will on the average find fewer bad economists in the country than in towns, and fewer again in small towns than in great; and why? Man is intended for a limited condition; objects that are

simple, near, determinate, he comprehends, and he becomes accustomed to employ such means as are at hand : but on entering a wider field, he now knows neither what he would nor what he should ; and it amounts to quite the same, whether his attention is distracted by the multitude of objects, or is overpowered by their magnitude and dignity. It is always a misfortune for him, when he is induced to struggle after any thing, with which he cannot join himself by some regular exertion of his powers.

“ Certainly,” pursued he, “ without earnestness there is nothing to be done in life : yet among the people whom we name cultivated men, but little earnestness is to be found : in labours and employments, in arts, nay even in recreations, they proceed, if I may say so, with a sort of self-defence ; they live, as they read a heap of newspapers, only to be done with it ; they remind one of that young Englishman at Rome, who told, with a contented air, one evening in some company, that ‘ to-day he had despatched six churches and two galleries.’ They wish to know and learn a multitude of things, and exactly those with which they have the least concern ; and they never see that hunger is not stilled by snapping at the air. When I become acquainted with a man, my first inquiry is : With what does he employ himself, and how, and with what degree of perseve-

rance? The answer regulates the interest which I shall take in him for life."

"My dear uncle," I replied, "you are perhaps too rigorous; you perhaps withdraw your helping-hand from here and there a worthy man to whom you might be useful."

"Can it be imputed as a fault," said he, "to one who has so long and vainly laboured on them and about them? How much we have to suffer in our youth from men, who think they are inviting us to a delightful pleasure-party, when they undertake to introduce us to the Danaïdes or Sysiphus! Heaven be praised! I have rid myself of these people: if one of them unfortunately comes within my sphere, I instantly, in the politest manner, compliment him out again. It is from these people that you hear the bitterest complaints about the miserable course of things, the aridity of science, the levity of artists, the emptiness of poets, and much more of that sort. They do not recollect that they, and the many like them, are the very persons who would never read a book, which had been written just as they require it; that true poetry is alien to them; that even an excellent work of art can never gain their approbation save by means of prejudice. But let us now break off; for this is not the time to rail or to complain."

He directed my attention to the different pictures which were fixed upon the wall: my eye

dwelt on those whose look was beautiful or subject striking. This he permitted for a while; at last he said: "Bestow a little notice on the spirit which is manifested in these other works. Good minds delight to trace the finger of the Deity in nature: why not likewise pay some small regard to the hand of his imitator?" He then led my observation to some unobtrusive figures; endeavouring to make me understand, that it was the history of art alone which could give us an idea of the worth and dignity of any work of art; that we should know the weary steps of mere handicraft and mechanism, over which the man of talents has arisen in the course of centuries, before we can conceive how it is possible for the man of genius to move with airy freedom, on the pinnacle whose very aspect makes us giddy.

With this view, he had formed a beautiful series of works; and whilst he explained it, I could not help conceiving that I saw before me a similitude of moral culture. When I expressed my thought to him, he answered: "You are altogether in the right; and we see from this, that those do not act properly, who follow moral cultivation by itself exclusively. On the contrary, it will be found that he whose spirit strives for a development of this kind, has likewise every reason, at the same time, to improve his finer sentient powers, that so he may not run the risk of sinking from his moral height, by giving way to the enticements of a law-

less fancy, and degrading his moral nature by allowing it to take delight in tasteless baubles, if not in something worse."

I did not in the least suspect him of levelling at me; but I felt myself struck, when I thought how many insipidities had been among the songs that used to edify me; and how little favour the figures, which had joined themselves to my religious ideas, would have found in the eyes of my uncle.

Philo, in the mean time, had frequently been busied in the library: he now took me along with him. We admired the selection as well as the multitude of books. They had been collected on my uncle's general principle; there were none among them to be found but such as either lead us to correct knowledge, or teach us right arrangement; such as either give us fit materials, or further the concordance of our spirit.

In the course of my life, I had read very largely; in certain branches, there was scarce a work unknown to me: the more pleasant was it for me here, to speak about the general survey of the whole, and to observe deficiencies, where I had formerly seen nothing but a hampered confusion or a boundless expansion.

Here too we became acquainted with a very interesting, quiet man. He was a physician and a naturalist: he seemed rather one of the Penates than of the inmates. He shewed us the museum, which like the library was fixed in glass-cases to

the walls of the chamber, adorning and ennobling the space which it did not crowd. On this occasion, I recalled with joy the days of youth, and shewed my father many objects, which he formerly had laid upon the sick-bed of his little child, that had yet scarcely looked into the world. At the same time, the Physician, in our present and following conversations, did not scruple to avow how nearly he approximated to me in respect of my religious sentiments: he warmly praised my uncle for his tolerance, and his esteem of all that testified or forwarded the worth and unity of human nature; admitting also, that he called for a similar return from others, and was wont to shun and to condemn nothing else so heartily as individual darkness and narrowness of mind.

Since the nuptials of my sister, joy had sparkled in the eyes of our uncle: he often spoke with me of what he meant to do for her and for her children. He had several fine estates; he managed them himself, and hoped to leave them in the best condition to his nephews. Regarding the small estate, on which we were at present living, he appeared to entertain peculiar thoughts. "I will leave it to none," said he, "but to a person who can understand, and value and enjoy, what it contains, and who feels how loudly every man of wealth and quality, especially in Germany, is called on to exhibit something like a model to others."

Most part of his guests were now gone ; we too were making ready for departure, thinking we had seen the final scene of this solemnity ; when his attention in affording us some dignified enjoyment produced a new surprise. We had mentioned to him the delight which the chorus of voices, that suddenly commenced without accompaniment of any instrument, had given us, at my sister's marriage. We hinted, at the same time, how pleasant it would be were such a thing repeated ; but he seemed to pay no heed to us. The livelier, on this account, was our surprise, when he said one evening : " The music of the dance has died away ; our transitory, youthful friends have left us ; the happy pair themselves have a more serious look than they had some days ago : to part at such a time, when we perhaps shall never meet again, certainly never without changes, exalts us to a solemn mood, which I know not how to entertain more nobly than by the music that some of you were lately signifying a desire to have repeated."

The chorus, which had in the meanwhile gathered strength, and by secret practice more expertness, was accordingly made sing to us a series of four and of eight voiced melodies, which, if I may say so, gave a real foretaste of bliss. Till then, I had only known the pious mode of singing, as good souls practise it, frequently with hoarse pipes, imagining, like wild birds, that they are praising God, while they procure a pleasant feel-

ing to themselves. Or perhaps I had hearkened to the vain music of concerts, in which one is at best invited to admire the talent of the singer, and very seldom even to a transient feeling of enjoyment. Now, however, I was listening to music, which, as it originated in the deepest principles of the most accomplished human beings, was by suitable and practised organs in harmonious unity made again to address the deepest and best principles of man, and to impress him at that moment with a lively sense of his likeness to the Deity. They were all devotional songs, in the Latin language: they sat like jewels in the golden ring of a polished intellectual conversation; and without pretending to edify, they elevated me and made me happy in the most spiritual manner.

At our departure, he presented all of us with handsome gifts. To me he gave the cross of my order, more beautifully and artfully worked and enamelled than I had seen it before. It was hung upon a large brilliant, by which it was likewise fastened to the chain, and to which it gave the aspect of the noblest stone in the cabinet of some collector.

My sister with her husband went to their estates: the rest of us to our abodes; appearing to ourselves, so far as outward circumstances were concerned, to have returned to quite an every-day existence. We had been, as it were, dropped from a palace of the fairies down upon

the common earth; and were again obliged to help ourselves as best we could.

The singular experiences, which this new circle had afforded, left a fine impression on my mind. This, however, did not long continue in its first vivacity; although my uncle tried to nourish and renew it, by sending to me certain of his best and most pleasing works of art; changing them, from time to time, with others which I had not seen.

I had been so much accustomed to be busied with myself, in regulating the concerns of my heart and temper, and conversing on these matters with persons of a like mind, that I could not long study any work of art attentively without being turned by it back upon myself. I was used to look upon a picture or a copperplate merely as upon the letters of a book. Fine printing pleases well: but who would read a book for the beauty of its printing? In like manner, I required of each pictorial form that it should tell me something, should instruct, affect, improve me: and after all my uncle's letters to expound his works of art, say what he would, I continued in my former humour.

Yet not only my peculiar disposition, external incidents and changes in our family still farther drew me back from contemplations of that nature, nay for some time even from myself. I had to suffer and to do, more than my slender strength seemed fit for.

My maiden sister had till now been as a right

arm to me. Healthy, vigorous, unspeakably good-natured, she had managed all the housekeeping, I myself being busied with the personal nursing of our aged father. She was seized with a catarrh, which changed to a disorder in the lungs: in three weeks she was lying in her coffin. Her death inflicted wounds on me, the scars of which I am not yet willing to examine.

I was lying sick before they buried her: the old ailment in my breast appeared to be awakening; I coughed with violence, and was so hoarse, I could not speak beyond a whisper.

My married sister, out of fright and grief, was brought to bed before her time. Our old father thought himself at once about to lose his children and the hope of their posterity: his natural tears increased my sorrow; I prayed to God that he would give me back a sufferable state of health. I asked him but to spare my life until my father should be dead. I recovered; I was what I reckoned well; being able to discharge my duties, though with pain.

My sister was again with child. Many cares, which in such cases are committed to the mother, in the present instance fell to me. She was not altogether happy with her husband; this was to be hidden from our father: I was frequently made judge of their disputes; in which I could decide with greater safety, as my brother trusted in me, and the two were really worthy persons,

only each of them, instead of humouring, endeavoured to convince the other; and out of eagerness to live in constant harmony, they never could agree. I now learned to mingle seriously in worldly matters, and to practise what of old I had but sung.

My sister bore a son: the frailty of my father did not hinder him from travelling to her. The sight of the child exceedingly enlivened and cheered him; at the christening, contrary to his custom, he seemed as if inspired; nay I might say like a Genius with two faces. With the one he looked joyfully forward to those regions which he soon hoped to enter; with the other, to the new, hopeful, earthly life which had arisen in the boy that was descended from him. On our journey home, he never tired with talking to me of the child, its form, its health, and the wish that the endowments of this new denizen of earth might be cultivated rightly. His reflections on the subject lasted when we had arrived at home: it was not till some days afterwards, that I observed a kind of fever in him; which displayed itself, without shivering, in a sort of languid heat commencing after dinner. He did not yield, however; he went out as usual in the mornings, faithfully attending to the duties of his office, till at last continuous serious symptoms kept him in the house.

I never shall forget with what distinctness,

clearness, and repose of mind, he settled in the greatest order the concerns of his house, the arrangements of his funeral, as if these had been the business of some other person.

With a cheerfulness, which he never used to show, and which now mounted to a lively joy, he said to me: "Where is the fear of death which once I felt? Shall I shrink at departing? I have a gracious God; the grave awakes no terror in me; I have an eternal life."

To recal the circumstances of his death, which shortly followed, forms one of the most pleasing entertainments of my solitude: the visible workings of a higher Power in that solemn time, no one shall argue from my memory and my belief.

The death of my beloved father altogether changed my mode of life. From the strictest obedience, the narrowest confinement, I passed at once into the greatest freedom; I enjoyed it like a sort of food from which one has long abstained. Formerly I very seldom spent two hours from home; now I very seldom lived a day there. My friends, whom I had been allowed to visit but by hurried snatches, wished to have my company uninterruptedly, as I did to have theirs. I was often asked to dinner: at walks and pleasure jaunts I never failed. But when once the circle had been fairly run, I saw that the invaluable happiness of liberty consisted, not in doing what one pleases and what circum-

stances may invite to, but in being able, without hindrance or restraint, to do in the direct way what one regards as right and proper: and in this case, I was old enough to reach a precious truth, without having smarted for my ignorance.

One pleasure I could not deny myself: it was, as soon as might be, to renew and strengthen my connexion with the Hernhuth Brethren. I made haste accordingly to visit one of their establishments at no great distance: but here I by no means found what I had been anticipating. I was frank enough to signify my disappointment, which they tried to soften by alleging that the present settlement was nothing to a full and fitly organised community. This I did not take upon me to deny; yet in my thought, the genuine spirit of the matter should have been displayed in a small body as well as in a great one.

One of their Bishops who was present, a personal disciple of the Count, took considerable pains with me. He spoke English perfectly, and as I too understood a little of it, he reckoned this a token that we both belonged to one class: I however reckoned nothing of the kind; his conversation did not in the smallest satisfy me. He had been a cutler; was a native of Moravia: his mode of thought still savoured of the artisan. With Herr Von L *, who had been a Major in the French service, I got upon a better footing: yet I never could reduce myself to the submis-

siveness, which he displayed to his superiors; nay I felt as if you had given me a box on the ear, when I saw the Major's wife, and other women more or less like ladies, take the Bishop's hand and kiss it. Meanwhile a journey into Holland was proposed; which, however, doubtless for my good, did not take place.

About this time, my sister was delivered of a daughter; and now it was the turn of us women to exult, and to consider how the little creature should be bred like one of us. The husband, on the other hand, was not so satisfied, when in the following year another daughter saw the light: with his large estates, he wanted to have boys about him, who in future might assist him in his management.

My health was feeble; I kept myself in peace; and observing a quiet mode of life, I enjoyed a tolerable equability. I was not afraid of death; nay, I wished to die; yet I secretly perceived that God was granting time for me to prove my soul, and to advance still nearer to himself. In my many sleepless nights, especially, I have at times felt something which I cannot undertake to describe.

It was as if my soul were thinking separately from the body: she looked upon the body as a foreign substance, as we look upon a garment. She pictured with extreme vivacity events and times long past, and felt by means of this, events

that were to follow. Those times are all gone by ; what follows likewise will go by ; the body too will fall to pieces like a vesture ; but I, the well-known I, I am.

The thought is great, exalted, and consoling ; yet an excellent friend, with whom I every day became more intimate, instructed me to dwell on it as little as I could. This was the Physician whom I met with in my uncle's house, and who since then had accurately informed himself about the temper of my body and my spirit. He showed me how much these feelings, when we cherish them within us independently of outward objects, tend as it were to excavate us, and to undermine the whole foundation of our being. "To be active," he would say, "is the primary vocation of man ; all the intervals, in which he is obliged to rest, he should employ in gaining clearer knowledge of external things, for this will in its turn facilitate activity."

This friend was acquainted with my custom of looking on my body as an outward object ; he knew also that I pretty well understood my constitution, my disorder, and the medicines of use for it ; nay, that by continual sufferings of my own or other people, I had really grown a kind of half doctor : he now carried forward my attention from the human body, and the drugs which act upon it, to the kindred objects of creation : he led me up and down as in the Paradise of the first man ; only, if I may continue my comparison, al-

lowing me to trace in dim remoteness the Creator walking in the Garden in the cool of the evening.

How gladly did I now see God in nature, when I bore him with such certainty within my heart ! How interesting to me was his handiwork ; how thankful did I feel that he had pleased to quicken me with the breath of his mouth !

We again had hopes that my sister would present us with a boy : her husband waited anxiously for that event, but did not live to see it. He died in consequence of an unlucky fall from horseback ; and my sister followed him, soon after she had brought into the world a lovely boy. The four orphans they had left I could not look at but with sadness. So many healthy people had been called away before poor sickly me ; might I not also have to witness blights among these fair and hopeful blossoms ? I knew the world sufficiently to understand what dangers threaten the precarious breeding of a child, especially a child of rank ; and it seemed to me that since the period of my youth these dangers had increased. I felt that weakly as I was, I could not be of much, perhaps of any service to the little ones ; and I rejoiced the more on finding that my uncle, as indeed might have been looked for, had determined to devote his whole attention to the education of these amiable creatures. And this they doubtless merited in every sense : they were handsome : and with great

diversities, all promised to be well-conditioned, reasonable persons.

Since my worthy Doctor had suggested it, I loved to trace out family likenesses among our relatives and children. My father had carefully preserved the portraits of his ancestors, and got his own and those of his descendants drawn by tolerable masters; nor had my mother and her people been forgotten. We accurately knew the characters of all the family: and as we had frequently compared them with each other, we now endeavoured to discover in the children the same peculiarities outward or inward. My sister's eldest son, we thought, resembled his paternal grandfather, of whom there was a fine youthful picture in my uncle's collection: he had been a brave soldier; and in this point too the boy took after him, liking arms above all other things, and busying himself with them whenever he had opportunity. In paying me a visit this was constantly remarkable: my father had possessed a very pretty armoury; and the boy got neither peace nor rest till I had given him a pair of pistols and a fowling-piece out of it, and he had learned the proper way of using them. At the same time, in his conduct or his bearing, there was nothing which approached to rudeness: on the other hand, he was always meek and sensible.

The eldest daughter had attracted my especial

love ; of which perhaps the reason was that she resembled me, and of all the four held closest to me. But I may well admit that the more closely I observed her as she grew, the more she shamed me : I could not look on her without a sentiment of admiration, nay I may almost say, of reverence. You would scarce have seen a nobler form, a more peaceful spirit, an activity so equable and universal. No moment of her life was she unoccupied ; and every occupation in her hands grew dignified. All seemed indifferent to her, so that she could but accomplish what was proper in the place and time ; and in the same manner, she could patiently continue unemployed, when there was nothing to be done. This activity without the need of occupation I have never elsewhere met with. In particular her conduct to the suffering and destitute was from her earliest youth inimitable. For my part, I freely confess that I never had the gift to make myself a business of beneficence : I was not niggardly to the poor ; nay I often gave too largely for my means ; yet this was little more than buying myself off ; and a person needed to be made for me, if I was to bestow attention on him. Directly the reverse was the conduct of my niece. I never saw her give a poor man money ; whatever she obtained from me for this purpose, she failed not in the first place to change for some necessary article. Never did she seem more lovely in my eyes, than when rummaging my clothes-

presses: she was always sure to light on something which I did not wear and did not need: and to sew these old cast articles together, and put them on some ragged child, she thought her highest happiness.

Her sister's turn of mind appeared already different: she had much of her mother; she promised to be soon very elegant and beautiful, and she now bids fair to keep her promise. She is greatly taken up with her exterior; from her earliest years, she could deck herself and bear herself in a way that struck you. I still remember with what ecstasy, when quite a little creature, she beheld her figure in a mirror, after I had been obliged to bind on her some precious pearls, once my mother's, which she had by chance discovered near me.

In reflecting on these diverse inclinations, it was pleasant for me to consider how my property would, after my decease, be shared among them, and again called into use by them. I saw the fowling-pieces of my father once more travelling round the fields upon my nephew's shoulder, and birds once more falling out from his hunting-pouch: I saw my whole wardrobe issuing from the church at the Easter Confirmation, on the persons of tidy little girls; while the best pieces of it were employed to decorate some virtuous burgher maiden on her marriage day. In furnishing such children and poor little girls, Natalia had a singular de-

light; although, as I must here remark, she did not shew the smallest love, or if I may say it, smallest need of a dependence upon any visible or invisible Being, such as I had manifested in my youth so strongly.

When I farther thought that her younger sister, on that very day, would wear my jewels and my pearls at court, I could view with peace my possessions like my body given back to the elements.

The children waxed apace: to my comfort, they are healthy, handsome, clever creatures. That my uncle keeps them from me I endure without repining: when staying in the neighbourhood, or even in the town, they seldom see me.

A singular personage, regarded as a French clergyman, though no one rightly knows his history, has been intrusted with the oversight of all the children. He has them taught in various places; they are put to board now here now there.

At first I could perceive no plan whatever in this mode of education; till at last the Doctor told me that the Abbé had convinced my uncle, that in order to accomplish any thing by education, we must first become acquainted with the pupil's tendencies and wishes: that when these are ascertained, he ought to be transported to a situation where he may, as speedily as possible, content the former and attain the latter; and so if we have been mistaken, may still in time perceive his error; and at

last having found what suits him, may hold the faster by it, may the more diligently fashion himself according to it. I wish this strange experiment may prosper : with such excellent natures it perhaps is possible.

But there is one peculiarity in these instructors, which I never can approve of : they study to seclude the children from whatever might awaken them to an acquaintance with themselves and with the invisible, solè, faithful Friend. I often take it badly of my uncle that, on this account, he looks on me as dangerous for the little ones. Thus in practice there is no man tolerant ! Many assure us that they willingly leave each to take his way ; yet all of them endeavour to exclude from action every one that does not think as they do.

This removal of the children troubles me the more, the more I am convinced of the reality of my belief. How can it fail to have a heavenly origin, an actual object, when in practice it is so effectual ? Is it not by practice only that we prove our own existence ? Why then, by a like mode, may we not demonstrate to ourselves the influence of that Power who gives us all good things ?

That I am still advancing, never retrograding ; that my conduct is approximating more and more to the image I have formed of perfection ; that I every day feel more facility in doing what I reckon proper, even while the weakness of my body hinders me so much : can all this be accounted for

upon the principles of human nature, whose corruption I have seen so clearly? For me, at least, it cannot.

I scarce remember a command; to me there is nothing that assumes the aspect of a law; it is an impulse which leads me, and guides me always rightly. I freely follow my emotions, and know as little of constraint as of repentance. God be praised that I know to whom I owe this happiness, and that I cannot think of these advantages without humility! Never shall I run the risk of growing proud of my own ability and power, having seen so clearly what a monster might be formed and nursed in every human bosom, did not higher influence restrain us.

END OF VOL. II.