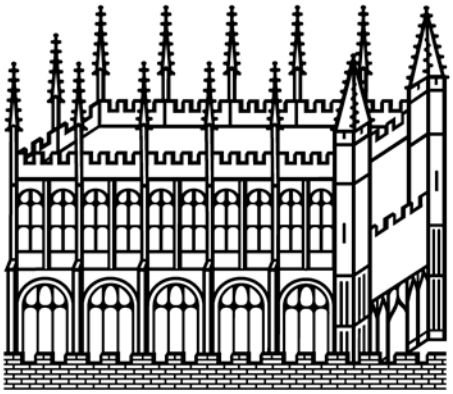

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WILHELM MEISTER'S

APPRENTICESHIP.

PRINTED BY OLIVER & BOYD.

WILHELM MEISTER'S APPRENTICESHIP.

A NOVEL.

FROM THE GERMAN OF

GOETHE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

EDINBURGH;
PUBLISHED BY
OLIVER & BOYD, TWEEDDALE-COURT;
AND
G. & W. B. WHITTAKER, LONDON.
1824.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

WHETHER it be that the quantity of genius among ourselves and the French, and the number of works more lasting than brass produced by it, have of late been so considerable as to make us independent of additional supplies; or that, in our ancient aristocracy of intellect, we disdain to be assisted by the Germans, whom, by a species of second sight, we have discovered, before knowing any thing about them, to be a tumid, dreaming, extravagant, insane, race of mortals; certain it is, that hitherto our literary intercourse with that nation has been very slight and precarious. After a brief period of not too judicious cordiality, the acquaintance on our part was altogether dropped; nor, in the few years since we partially resumed it, have our feelings of affection or esteem been materially increased. Our translators are unfortunate in their selection or execution, or the public is taste-

less and absurd in its demands; for, with scarcely more than one or two exceptions, the best works of Germany have lain neglected, or worse than neglected, and the Germans are yet utterly unknown to us. Kotzebue still lives in our minds as the representative of a nation that despises him; Schiller is chiefly known to us by the monstrous production of his boyhood; and Klopstock by a hacked and mangled image of his *Messias*, in which a beautiful poem is distorted into a theosophic rhapsody, and the brother of Virgil and Racine ranks little higher than the author of Meditations among the Tombs.

But of all these people there is none that has been more unjustly dealt with than Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. For half a century the admiration, we might almost say the idol of his countrymen, to us he is still a stranger. His name, long echoed and re-echoed through reviews and magazines, has become familiar to our ears: but it is a sound and nothing more; it excites no definite idea in almost any mind. To such as know him by the faint and garbled version of his *Werter*, Goethe figures as a sort of poetic Heraclitus; some woebegone hypochondriac, whose eyes are overflowing with perpetual tears, whose

long life has been spent in melting into ecstasy at the sight of waterfalls, and clouds, and the moral sublime, or dissolving into hysterical wailings over hapless love-stories and the miseries of human life. They are not aware that Goethe smiles at this performance of his youth; or that the German Werter, with all his faults, is a very different person from his English namesake; that his Sorrows are in the original recorded in a tone of strength and sarcastic emphasis, of which the other offers no vestige, and intermingled with touches of powerful thought, glimpses of a philosophy deep as it is bitter, which our sagacious translator has seen proper wholly to omit. Others again, who have fallen in with Retsch's *Outlines* and the extracts from *Faust*, consider Goethe as a wild mystic, a dealer in demonology and osteology, who draws attention by the aid of skeletons and evil spirits, whose excellence it is to be extravagant, whose chief aim it is to do what no one but himself has tried. The tyro in German may tell us that the charm of *Faust* is altogether unconnected with its preternatural import; that the work delineates the fate of human enthusiasm struggling against doubts and errors from within, against scepticism, contempt,

and selfishness from without; and that the witchcraft and magic, intended merely as a shadowy frame for so complex and mysterious a picture of the moral world and the human soul, are introduced for the purpose not so much of being trembled at as laughed at. The voice of the tyro is not listened to; our indolence takes part with our ignorance; *Faust* continues to be called a monster; and Goethe is regarded as a man of "some genius," which he has perverted to produce all manner of misfashioned prodigies; things false, abortive, formless, Gorgons, and Hydras, and Chimæras dire.

Now, it must no doubt be granted, that so long as our invaluable constitution is preserved in its pristine purity, the British nation may exist in a state of comparative prosperity with very inadequate ideas of Goethe: but, at the same time, the present arrangement is an evil in its kind; slight, it is true, and easy to be borne, yet still more easy to be remedied, and which therefore ought to have been remedied ere now. Minds like Goethe's are the common property of all nations; and, for many reasons, all should have correct impressions of them.

It is partly with the view of doing something to

supply this want, that *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* is now presented to the English public. Written in its Author's forty-fifth year, embracing hints or disquisitions on almost every leading point in life and literature, it affords us a more distinct view of his matured genius, his manner of thought, and favourite subjects, than any of his other works. Nor is it Goethe alone whom it pourtrays; the prevailing taste of Germany is likewise indicated by it. Since the year 1795, when it first appeared at Berlin, numerous editions of *Meister* have been printed: critics of all ranks, and some of them dissenting widely from its doctrines, have loaded it with encomiums; its songs and poems are familiar to every German ear; the people read it, and speak of it, with an admiration approaching in many cases to enthusiasm.

That it will be equally successful in England, I am far indeed from anticipating. Apart from the above considerations, from the curiosity, intelligent or idle, which it may awaken, the number of admiring, or even approving judges it will find can scarcely fail of being very limited. To the great mass of readers, who read to drive away the tedium of mental vacancy, employing the crude phantas-

magoria of a modern novel, as their grandfathers employed tobacco and diluted brandy, *Wilhelm Meister* will appear beyond endurance weary, flat, stale, and unprofitable. Those in particular, who take delight in "King Cambyses' vein," and open *Meister* with the thought of *Werter* in their minds, will soon pause in utter dismay, and their paroxysm of dismay will pass by degrees into unspeakable contempt. Of romance interest there is next to none in *Meister*; the characters are samples to judge of, rather than persons to love or hate; the incidents are contrived for other objects than moving or affrighting us; the hero is a milksop, whom, with all his gifts, it takes an effort to avoid despising. The author himself, far from "doing it in a passion," wears a face of the most still indifference throughout the whole affair; often it is even wrinkled by a slight sardonic grin. For the friends of the sublime, then, for those who cannot do without heroical sentiments, and 'moving accidents by flood and field,' there is nothing here that can be of any service.

Nor among readers of a far higher character, can it be expected that many will take the praiseworthy pains of Germans, reverential of their fa-

vourite author, and anxious to hunt out his most elusive charms. Few among us will disturb themselves about the allegories and typical allusions of the work ; will stop to inquire whether it includes a remote emblem of human culture, or includes no such matter ; whether this is a light airy sketch of the development of man in all his endowments and faculties, gradually proceeding from the first rude exhibitions of puppets and mountebanks, through the perfection of poetic and dramatic art, up to the unfolding of the principle of religion, and the greatest of all arts, the art of life,—or is nothing more than a bungled piece of patch-work, presenting in the shape of a novel much that should have been suppressed entirely, or at least given out by way of lecture. Whether the characters do or do not represent distinct classes of men, including various stages of human nature, from the gay material vivacity of Philina to the severe moral grandeur of the Uncle and the splendid accomplishment of Lothario, will to most of us be of small importance : and the everlasting disquisitions about plays and players, and politeness and activity, and art and nature, will weary many a mind that knows not and heeds not whether they are

true or false. Yet every man's judgment is, in this free country, a lamp to himself: whoever is displeased will censure; and many, it is to be feared, will insist on judging *Meister* by the common rule, and what is worse, condemning it, let Schlegel bawl as loudly as he pleases. "To judge," says he, "of this book,—new and peculiar as it is, and only to be understood and learned from itself,—by our common notion of the novel, a notion pieced together and produced out of custom and belief, out of accidental and arbitrary requisitions,—is as if a child should grasp at the moon and stars, and insist on packing them into its box." * Unhappily, the most of us have boxes; and some of them are very small!

Yet, independently of these its more recondite and dubious qualities, there are beauties in *Meister*, which cannot but secure it some degree of favour at the hands of many. The philosophical discussions it contains; its keen glances into life and art; the minute and skilful delineation of men; the lively genuine exhibition of the scenes they move in; the occasional touches of eloquence and tenderness, and even

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* *Charakteristik des Meister.*

of poetry, the very essence of poetry; the quantity of thought and knowledge embodied in a style so rich in general felicities, of which, at least, the new and sometimes exquisitely happy metaphors have been preserved,—cannot wholly escape an observing reader, even on the most cursory perusal. To those who have formed for themselves a picture of the world, who have drawn out, from the thousand variable circumstances of their being, a philosophy of life, it will be interesting and instructive to see how man and his concerns are represented in the first of European minds: to those who have penetrated to the limits of their own conceptions, and wrestled with thoughts and feelings too high for them, it will be pleasing and profitable to see the horizon of their certainties widened, or at least separated with a firmer line from the impalpable obscure which surrounds it on every side. Such persons I can fearlessly invite to study *Meister*. Across the disfigurement of a translation, they will not fail to discern indubitable traces of the greatest genius in our times. And the longer they study, they are likely to discern them the more distinctly. New charms will successively arise to view; and of the many apparent blemishes, while a few super-

ficial ones will be confirmed, the greater and more important part will vanish, or even change from dark to bright. For, if I mistake not, it is with *Meister* as with every work of real and abiding excellence, the first glance is the least favourable. A picture of Raphael, a Greek statue, a play of Sophocles or Shakspeare, appears insignificant to the unpractised eye; and not till after long and patient and intense examination, do we begin to descry the earnest features of that beauty, which has its foundation in the deepest nature of man, and will continue to be pleasing through all ages.

If this appear excessive praise, as applied in any sense to *Meister*, the curious sceptic is desired to read and weigh the whole performance, with all its references, relations, purposes; and to pronounce his verdict after he has clearly seized and appreciated them all. Or if a more faint conviction will suffice, let him turn to the picture of Wilhelm's states of mind in the end of the first Book, and the beginning of the second; the eulogies of commerce and poesy, which follow; the description of Hamlet; the character of histrionic life in Serlo and Aurelia; that of sedate and lofty manhood in the Uncle and Lothario. But, above all, let him turn

to the history of Mignon. This mysterious child, at first neglected by the reader, gradually forced on his attention, at length overpowers him with an emotion more deep and thrilling than any poet since the days of Shakspeare has succeeded in producing. The daughter of enthusiasm, rapture, passion, and despair, she is of the earth, but not earthly. When she glides before us through the light mazes of her fairy dance, or twangs her cithern to the notes of her homesick verses, or whirls her tambourine and hurries round us like an antique Mænad, we could almost fancy her a spirit; so pure is she, so full of fervour, so disengaged from the clay of this world. And when all the fearful particulars of her story are at length laid together, and we behold in connected order the image of her hapless existence, there is, in those dim recollections, those feelings so simple, so impassioned and unspeakable, consuming the closely-shrouded, woe-struck, yet etherial spirit of the poor creature, something which searches into the inmost recesses of the soul. It is not tears which her fate calls forth; but a feeling far too deep for tears. The very fire of heaven seems miserably quenched among the obstructions of this earth. Her little

heart, so noble and so helpless, perishes before the smallest of its many beauties is unfolded; and all its loves, and thoughts, and longings, do but add another pang to death, and sink to silence utter and eternal. It is as if the gloomy porch of Dis, and his pale kingdoms, were realized and set before us, and we heard the ineffectual wail of infants reverberating from within their prison-walls forever.

Continuò auditæ voces, vagitus et ingens,
Infantumque animæ flentes in limine primo:
Quos dulcis vitæ exsortes, et ab ubere raptos,
Abstulit atra dies, et funere mersit acerbo.

The history of Mignon runs like a thread of gold through the tissue of the narrative, connecting with the heart much that were else addressed only to the head. Philosophy and eloquence might have done the rest; but this is poetry in the highest meaning of the word. It must be for the power of producing such creations and emotions, that Goethe is by many of his countrymen ranked at the side of Homer and Shakspeare, as one of the only three men of genius that have ever lived.

But my business here is not to judge of *Meister* or its Author, it is only to prepare others for judging it; and for this purpose the most that I

had room to say is said. All I ask in the name of this illustrious foreigner is, that the court which tries him be pure, and the jury instructed in the cause; that the work be not condemned for wanting what it was not meant to have, and by persons nowise called to pass sentence on it.

Respecting my own humble share in the adventure, it is scarcely necessary to say any thing. Fidelity is all the merit I have aimed at: to convey the Author's sentiments, as he himself expressed them; to follow the original, in all the variations of its style, has been my constant endeavour. In many points, both literary and moral, I could have wished devoutly that he had not written as he has done; but to alter any thing was not in my commission. The literary and moral persuasions of a man like Goethe are objects of a rational curiosity; and the duty of a translator is simple and distinct. Accordingly, except a few phrases and sentences, not in all amounting to a page, which I have dropped as evidently unfit for the English taste, I have studied to present the work exactly as it stands in German. That my success has been indifferent I already know too well. In rendering the ideas of Goethe, often so subtle, so capricious-

ly expressive, the meaning was not always easy to seize, or to convey with adequate effect. There were thin tints of style, shades of ridicule or tenderness, or solemnity, resting over large spaces, and so slight as almost to be evanescent: some of these I may have failed to see; to many of them I could do no justice. Nor, even in plainer matters, can I pride myself in having always imitated his colloquial familiarity without falling into sentences bald and rugged, into idioms harsh or foreign; or in having copied the flowing oratory of other passages, without at times exaggerating or defacing the swelling cadences and phrases of my original. But what work, from the translating of a German novel to the writing of an epic, was ever as the workman wished and meant it? This version of *Meister*, with whatever faults it may have, I honestly present to my countrymen: if, while it makes any portion of them more familiar with the richest, most gifted of living minds, it increase their knowledge, or even afford them a transient amusement, they will excuse its errors, and I shall be far more than paid for all my labour.

WILHELM MEISTER.

CHAPTER I.

The play was late in breaking up: old Barbara went more than once to the window, and listened for the sound of carriages. She was waiting for Mariana, her pretty mistress, who had that night, in the afterpiece, been acting the part of a young officer, to the no small delight of the public. Barbara's impatience was greater than it used to be, when she had nothing but a frugal supper to present: on this occasion, Mariana was to be surprised with a packet, which Norberg, a young and wealthy merchant, had sent by the post, to show, that, in absence, he still thought of his love.

As an old servant, as confidant, counsellor, manager, and housekeeper, Barbara assumed the privilege of opening seals; and this evening she had been the less able to restrain her curiosity, as the

favour of the open-handed gallant was more a matter of anxiety with herself than with her mistress. On breaking up the packet, she had found, with unfeigned satisfaction, that it held a piece of fine muslin and some ribbons of the newest fashion for Mariana; with a quantity of calico, two or three neck-kerchiefs, and a moderate rouleau of money for herself. Her esteem for the absent Norberg was of course unbounded: she meditated only how she might best present him to the mind of Mariana, best bring to her recollection what she owed him, and what he had a right to expect from her fidelity and thankfulness.

The muslin, with the ribbons, half unrolled, to set it off by their colours, lay like a Christmas present on the small table; the position of the lights increased the glitter of the gift; all was in order, when the old woman heard Mariana's step on the stair, and hastened to meet her. But what was her disappointment, when the little female officer, without deigning to regard her caresses, rushed past her with unusual speed and agitation; threw her hat and sword upon the table, and walked hastily up and down, bestowing not a look on the lights or any portion of the apparatus!

"What ails thee, my darling?" exclaimed the astonished Barbara; "for Heaven's sake, what is the matter? Look here, my pretty child! See what a present! And who could have sent it but thy kindest of friends? Norberg has given thee the

muslin to make a night-gown of: he will soon be here himself; he seems to be fonder and more generous than ever."

Barbara went to the table, that she might exhibit the memorials with which Norberg had likewise honoured *her*, when Mariana, turning away from the presents, exclaimed with vehemence, "Off! Off! Not a word of all this to-night! I have yielded to thee; thou hast willed it; be it so! When Norberg comes, I am his, am thine, am any one's; make of me what thou pleasest: but till then I will be my own; and, if thou hadst a thousand tongues, thou shouldst never talk me from my purpose. All, all that *is* my own will I give up to him who loves me; whom I love. No sour faces! I will abandon myself to this affection, as if it were to last for ever."

The old damsel had abundance of objections and serious considerations to allege; in the progress of the dialogue, she was growing bitter and keen, when Mariana sprang at her, and seized her by the breast. The old damsel laughed aloud. "I must have a care," she cried, "that you don't get into pantaloons again, if I mean to be sure of my life. Come, doff you! The girl will beg my pardon for the foolish things the boy is doing to me. Off with the frock! Off with them all! The dress beseems you not; it is dangerous for you, I observe; the epaulets make you too bold."

Thus speaking, she had laid hands upon her

mistress: Mariana pushed her off, exclaiming, "Not so fast! I expect a visit to-night."

"Visit!" rejoined Barbara; "you surely do not look for Meister, the young, soft-hearted, callow merchant's son?" "Just for him," replied Mariana.

"Generosity appears to be growing your ruling passion," said the old woman with a grin; "you connect yourself with minors and moneyless people, as if they were the chosen of the earth. Doubtless it is charming to be worshipped as a benefactress."

"Jeer as thou pleasest. I love him! I love him! With what rapture do I now, for the first time, speak the word! *This* is the passion which I have mimicked so often, when I knew not what it meant. Yes! I will throw myself about his neck; I will clasp him as if I could hold him for ever. I will shew him all my love; will enjoy all his in its whole extent."

"Moderate yourself," said the old dame coolly; "moderate yourself! A single word will interrupt your rapture: Norberg is coming! Coming in a fortnight! Here is the letter that arrived with the packet."

"And, though the morrow were to rob me of my friend, I would conceal it from myself and him. A fortnight! An age! Within a fortnight what may not happen, what may not alter!"

Here Wilhelm entered. We need not say how

fast she flew to meet him; with what rapture he clasped the red uniform, and pressed the beautiful wearer of it to his bosom. It is not for us to describe the blessedness of two lovers. Old Barbara went grumbling away; we shall retire with her, and leave the happy two alone.

CHAPTER II.

When Wilhelm saluted his mother, next morning, she informed him that his father was very greatly discontented with him, and meant to forbid him these daily visits to the playhouse. "Though I myself often go with pleasure to the theatre," she continued, "I could almost detest it entirely, when I think that our fireside-peace is broken by your excessive passion for that amusement. Your father is ever repeating: What is the use of it? How can any one waste his time so?"

"He has already told me this," said Wilhelm; "and perhaps I answered him too hastily; but, for Heaven's sake, mother, is nothing then of use but what immediately puts money in our purse; but what procures us some property that we can lay our hands on? Had we not, for instance, room enough in the old house; and was it indispensable to build a new one? Does not my father every year expend a large part of his profit in ornamenting his chambers? Are these silk carpets, this English furniture, likewise of no use? Might we not content ourselves with worse? For my own part, I confess, these striped walls, these hundred times repeated flowers, and knots, and baskets, and figures, produce a really disagreeable effect upon me. At

the best, they but remind me of the front curtain of our theatre. But what a different thing it is to sit and look at that! There, if you must wait for a while, you are always sure that it will rise at last, and disclose to you a thousand curious objects to entertain, to instruct, and to exalt you."

"But you go to excess with it," said the mother: "your father wishes to be entertained in the evenings as well as you; besides, he thinks it dissipates your attention; and when he grows ill-humoured on the subject, it is I that must bear the blame. How often have I been upbraided with that miserable puppet-show, which I was unlucky enough to provide for you at Christmas, twelve years ago! It was the first thing that put these plays into your head."

"O do not blame the poor puppets; do not repent of your love and motherly care! It was the only happy hour I had enjoyed in the new empty house. I never can forget that hour; I see it still before me; I recollect how surprised I was, when, after we had got our customary presents, you made us seat ourselves before the door that leads to the other room. The door opened; but not as formerly, to let us pass and repass; the entrance was occupied by an unexpected show. Within it rose a porch, concealed by a mysterious curtain. All of us were standing at a distance; our eagerness to see what glittering or jingling article lay hid behind the

half-transparent veil, was mounting higher and higher, when you bade each of us sit down upon his stool and wait with patience.

" At length all of us were seated and silent: a whistle gave the signal; the curtain rolled aloft, and shewed us the interior of the Temple, painted in deep red colours. The high-priest Samuel appeared with Jonathan, and their strange alternating voices seemed to me the most striking thing on earth. Shortly after entered Saul, overwhelmed with confusion at the impertinence of that heavy-limbed warrior, who had defied him and all his people. But how glad was I when the little dapper son of Jesse, with his crook and shepherd's pouch, and sling, came hopping forth and said: 'Dread king and sovereign lord! let no one's heart sink down because of this; if your Majesty will grant me leave, I will go out to battle with this blustering giant.' Here ended the first act; leaving the spectators more curious than ever to see what farther would happen, each praying that the music might soon be done. At last the curtain rose again. David devoted the flesh of the monster to the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field; the Philistine scorned and bullied him, stamped mightily with both his feet, and at length fell like a mass of clay, affording a splendid termination to the piece. And then the virgins sang: 'Saul hath slain his thousands, but David his ten thousands!' The giant's head was borne before his

little victor, who received the King's beautiful daughter to wife. Yet withal, I remember, I was vexed at the dwarfish stature of this lucky prince; for the great Goliath and the small David had both been formed, according to the common notion, with a due regard to their figures and proportions. I pray you, mother, tell me what is now become of those puppets? I promised to shew them to a friend, whom I was lately entertaining with a history of all this child's work."

"I can easily conceive," said the mother, "how these things should stick so firmly in your mind: I well remember what an interest you took in them; how you stole the little book from me, and learned the whole piece by heart. I first noticed it one evening when you had made a Goliath and a David of wax; you set them both to declaim against each other, and at length gave a deadly stab to the giant, fixing his shapeless head, stuck upon a large pin with a wax handle, in little David's hand. I then felt so glad within my heart at your fine recitation and good memory, that I resolved to give you up the whole wooden troop to your own disposal. I did not then foresee that it would cause me so many heavy hours."

"Do not repent of it," said Wilhelm; "this little sport has often made us happy." So saying, he got the keys; made haste to find the puppets; and for a moment was transported back into those times, when they almost seemed to him alive, when he

felt as if he himself could give them life by the cunning of his voice and the movements of his hands. He took them to his room, and locked them up with care.

CHAPTER III.

If the first love is indeed, as I hear it everywhere maintained to be, the most delicious feeling which the heart of man, before it or after, can experience, then our hero must be reckoned doubly happy, as permitted to enjoy the pleasure of this chosen period in all its fulness. Few men are so peculiarly favoured; by far the greater part are led by the feelings of their youth into nothing but a school of hardship, where, after a stinted and chequered season of enjoyment, they are at length constrained to renounce their dearest wishes, and to learn for ever to dispense with what once hovered before them as the highest happiness of existence.

Wilhelm's passion for that charming girl now soared aloft on the wings of imagination: after a short acquaintance he had gained her affections; he found himself in possession of a being, whom with all his heart he not only loved, but honoured: for she had first appeared before him in the flattering light of theatric pomp, and his passion for the stage combined itself with his earliest love for woman. His youth allowed him to enjoy rich pleasures, which the activity of his fancy exalted and maintained. The situation of his mistress, too,

gave a turn to her conduct, which greatly enlivened his emotions. The fear, lest her lover might, before the time, detect the real state in which she stood, diffused over all her conduct an interesting tinge of anxiety and bashfulness; her attachment to the youth was deep; her inquietude itself appeared but to augment her tenderness; she was the loveliest of creatures while beside him.

When the first tumult of joy had passed, and our friend began to look back upon his life and its concerns, every thing appeared new to him; his duties seemed holier, his inclinations keener, his knowledge clearer, his talents stronger, his purposes more decided. Accordingly he soon fell upon a plan to avoid the reproaches of his father, to still the cares of his mother, and at the same time to enjoy Mariana's love without disturbance. Through the day he punctually transacted his business, commonly forbore attending the theatre, strove to be entertaining at table in the evening; and when all were asleep, he glided softly out into the garden, and hastened, wrapt up in his mantle, with all the feelings of Leander in his bosom, to meet his mistress without delay.

"What is this you bring?" inquired Mariana, as he entered one evening, with a bundle, which Barbara, in hopes it might turn out to be some valuable present, fixed her eyes upon with great attention. "You will never guess," said Wilhelm.

Great was the surprise of Mariana, great the

scorn of Barbara, when the napkin being loosened gave to view a perplexed multitude of span-long puppets. Mariana laughed aloud, as Wilhelm set himself to disentangle the confusion of the wires, and shew her each figure by itself. Barbara glided sulkily out of the room.

A very little thing will entertain two lovers; and accordingly our friends, this evening, were as happy as they wished to be. The little troop was mustered; each figure was minutely examined, and laughed at, in its turn. King Saul, with his golden crown and his black velvet robe, Mariana did not like; he looked, she said, too stiff and pedantic. She was far better pleased with Jonathan, his sleek chin, his turban, his cloak of red and yellow. She soon got the art of turning him deftly on his wire; she made him bow, and repeat declarations of love. On the other hand, she refused to give the least attention to the prophet Samuel, though Wilhelm commended the pontifical breastplate, and told her that the taffeta of the cassock had been taken from a gown of his own grandmother's. David she thought too small, Goliath was too large; she held by Jonathan. She grew to manage him so featly, and at last to extend her caresses from the puppet to its owner, that, on this occasion, as on others, a silly sport became the introduction to happy hours.

Their soft, sweet dreams were broken in upon, by a noise which arose on the street. Mariana

called for the old dame, who, as usual, was occupied in furbishing the changeful materials of the playhouse wardrobe for the service of the piece next to be acted. Barbara said, the disturbance arose from a set of jolly companions, who were just then sallying out of the Italian Tavern, hard by, where they had been busy discussing fresh oysters, a cargo of which had just arrived, and by no means sparing their champaign.

" Pity," Mariana said, " that we did not think of it in time; we might have had some entertainment to ourselves."

" It is not yet too late," said Wilhelm, giving Barbara a louis d'or: " get us what we want; then come and take a share with us."

The old dame made speedy work; ere long a trimly-covered table, with a neat collation, stood before the lovers. They made Barbara sit with them; they ate and drank, and enjoyed themselves.

On such occasions, there is never want of enough to say. Mariana soon took up little Jonathan again, and the old dame turned the conversation upon Wilhelm's favourite topic. " You were once telling us," she said, " about the first exhibition of a puppet-show on Christmas-eve: I remember you were interrupted, just as the ballet was going to begin. We have now the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with the honourable company, by whom those wonderful effects were brought about."

"Oh yes!" cried Mariana, "do tell us how it all went on, and how you felt then."

"It is a fine emotion, Mariana," said the youth, "when we bethink ourselves of old times, and old harmless errors; especially if this is at a period when we have happily gained some elevation, from which we can look around us, and survey the path we have left behind. It is so pleasant to think, with composure and satisfaction, of many obstacles, which often with painful feelings we may have regarded as invincible; pleasant to compare what we now are, with what we then were struggling to become. But I am happy above others in this matter, that I speak to you about the past, at a moment when I can also look forth into the blooming country, which we are yet to wander through, together, hand in hand."

"But how was it with the ballet?" said Barbara. "I fear it did not quite go off as it should have done."

"I assure you," said Wilhelm, "it went off quite well. And certainly the strange capers of these Moors and Mooresses, these shepherds and shepherdesses, these dwarfs and dwarfesses, will never altogether leave my recollection, while I live. When the curtain dropped, and the door closed, our little party skipped away, frolicking as if they had been tipsy, to their beds; for myself, however, I remember that I could not go to sleep; still wanting to have something told me

on the subject, I continued putting questions to every one, and would hardly let the maid away who had brought me up to bed.

" Next morning, alas! the magic apparatus had altogether vanished; the mysterious veil was carried off, the door permitted us again to go and come through it without obstruction; the manifold adventures of the evening had passed away, and left no trace behind. My brothers and sisters were running up and down with their playthings; I alone kept gliding to and fro; it seemed to me impossible that two bare door-posts could be all that now remained, where the night before so much enchantment had displayed itself. Alas! the man that seeks a lost love can hardly be unhappier than I then thought myself."

A rapturous look, which he cast on Mariana, convinced her that he was not much afraid of ever having a misfortune such as this to strive with.

CHAPTER IV.

"My sole wish now," continued Wilhelm, "was to witness a second exhibition of the piece. For this purpose I had recourse, by constant entreaties, to my mother; and she attempted in a favourable hour to persuade my father. Her labour, however, was in vain. My father's principle was, that none but enjoyments of rare occurrence were adequately prized; that neither young nor old could set a proper value on pleasures, which they tasted every day.

"We might have waited long, perhaps till Christmas returned, had not the contriver and secret director of the spectacle himself felt a pleasure in repeating the display of it; partly incited, I suppose, by the wish to produce a bran-new Harlequin expressly prepared for the after-piece.

"A young officer of the artillery, a person of great gifts in all sorts of mechanical contrivance, had served my father in many essential particulars during the building of the house; for which, having been handsomely rewarded, he felt desirous of expressing his thankfulness to the family of his patron, and so made us young ones a present of this complete theatre, which, in hours of leisure, he had already carved and painted and strung together. It was this young man, who, with the

help of a servant, had himself managed the puppets, disguising his voice to pronounce their various speeches. He had no great difficulty in persuading my father, who granted, out of complaisance to a friend, what he had denied from conviction to his children. In short, our theatre was again set up, some little ones of the neighbourhood were invited, and the piece was again represented.

" If I had formerly experienced the delights of surprise and astonishment, I enjoyed on this second occasion the pleasure of examining and scrutinizing. *How* all this happened was my present concern. That the puppets themselves did not speak I had already decided; that of themselves they did not move I also conjectured: but then how came it all to be so pretty, and to look just as if they both spoke and moved of themselves; and where were the lights, and the people that managed the deception? These enigmas perplexed me the more, as I wished at once to be among the enchanters and the enchanted, at once to have a secret hand in the play, and to enjoy, as a looker-on, the pleasure of illusion.

" The piece being finished, preparations were making for the farce; the spectators had risen, and were all busy talking together. I squeezed myself closer to the door, and heard, by the rattling within, that the people were packing up some articles. I lifted the lowest screen, and poked in

my head between the posts. As our mother noticed it, she drew me back; but I had seen well enough, that here friends and foes, Saul and Goliath, and whatever else their names might be, were lying quietly down together in a drawer; and thus my half-contented curiosity received a fresh excitement. To my great surprise, moreover, I had noticed the lieutenant very diligently occupied in the interior of the shrine. Henceforth, Jack-pudding, however he might clatter with his heels, could not any longer entertain me. I sank into deep meditation, my discovery at once made me more satisfied, and less so than before. After a little, it first struck me that I yet comprehended nothing; and here I was right; for the connexion of the parts with each other was entirely unknown to me, and every thing depends on that.

CHAPTER V.

"In well adjusted and regulated houses," continued Wilhelm, "children have a feeling not unlike what I conceive rats and mice to have; they keep a sharp eye on all crevices and holes, where they may come at any forbidden dainty; they enjoy it also with a fearful, stolen satisfaction, which forms no small part of the happiness of childhood.

"More than any other of the young ones, I was in the habit of looking out attentively to see if I could notice any cupboard left open, or key standing in its lock. The more reverence I bore in my heart for those closed doors, on the outside of which I had to pass by for weeks and months, catching only a furtive glance when our mother now and then opened the consecrated place to take something from it,—the quicker was I to make use of any opportunities which the forgetfulness of our housekeepers at times afforded me.

"Among all the doors, that of the store-room was, of course, the one I watched most narrowly. Few of the joyful anticipations in life can equal the feeling which I used to have, when my mother happened to call me, that I might help her to carry out any thing, after which I might pick up a few

dried plums, either with her kind permission, or by help of my own dexterity. The accumulated treasures of this chamber took hold of my imagination by their magnitude; the very fragrance exhaled by so multifarious a collection of sweet-smelling spices produced such a craving effect on me, that I never failed, when passing near, to linger for a little, and regale myself at least on the unbolted atmosphere. At length, one Sunday morning, my mother, being hurried by the ringing of the church-bells, forgot to take this precious key with her on shutting the door, and went away, leaving all the house in a deep sabbath stillness. No sooner had I marked this oversight, than gliding softly once or twice to and from the place, I at last approached very gingerly, opened the door, and felt myself, after a single step, in immediate contact with these manifold and long-wished-for means of happiness. I glanced over glasses, chests and bags, and drawers and boxes, with a quick and doubtful eye, considering what I ought to choose and take; turned finally to my dear withered plums, provided myself also with a few dried apples, and completed the forage with an orange-chip. I was quietly retreating with my plunder, when some little chests, lying piled over one another, caught my attention; the more so, as I noticed a wire, with hooks at the end of it, sticking through the joint of the lid in one of them. Full

of eager hopes, I opened this singular package; and judge of my emotions, when I found my glad world of heroes all sleeping safe within! I meant to pick out the topmost, and, having examined them, to pull up those below; but in this attempt, the wires got very soon entangled, and I fell into a fright and flutter, more particularly as the cook just then began making some stir in the kitchen, which lay close by; so that I had nothing for it but to squeeze the whole together, the best way I could, and to shut the chest, having stolen from it nothing but a little written book, which happened to be lying above, and contained the whole drama of Goliath and David. With this booty I made good my retreat into the garret.

"Henceforth all my stolen hours of solitude were devoted to perusing the play, to learning it by heart, and picturing in thought how glorious it would be could I but get the figures, to make them move along with it. In idea, I myself became David and Goliath by turns. In every corner of the court-yard, of the stables, of the garden, under all kinds of circumstances, I laboured to stamp the whole piece upon my mind; laid hold of all the characters, and learned their speeches by heart, most commonly, however, taking up the parts of the chief personages, and allowing all the rest to move along with them, but as satellites, across my memory. Thus day and night the heroic words of David,

wherewith he challenged the braggart giant, Goliath of Gath, kept their place in my thoughts. I often muttered them to myself, while no one gave heed to me, except my father, who, frequently observing some such detached exclamation, would in secret praise the excellent memory of his boy, that had retained so much from only two recitations.

" By this means, growing always bolder, I one evening repeated almost the entire piece before my mother, whilst I was busied in fashioning some bits of wax into players. She observed it, questioned me hard, and I confessed.

" By good fortune, this detection happened at a time, when the lieutenant had himself been expressing a wish to initiate me in the mysteries of the art. My mother forthwith gave him notice of these unexpected talents; and he now contrived to make my parents offer him a couple of chambers in the top story, which commonly stood empty, that he might accommodate the spectators in the one, while the other held his actors, the proscenium again filling up the opening of the door. My father had allowed his friend to arrange all this; himself, in the mean time, seeming only to look at the transaction, as it were, through his fingers; for his maxim was, that children should not be allowed to see the kindness which is felt towards them, lest their pretensions come to ex-

tend too widely. He was of opinion, that, in the enjoyments of the young, one should assume a serious air; often interrupting the course of their festivities, to prevent their satisfaction from degenerating into excess and presumption.

CHAPTER VI.

" The lieutenant now set up his theatre, and managed all the rest. During the week I readily observed, that he often came into the house at unusual hours, and I soon guessed the cause. My eagerness increased immensely; for I well understood, that till Sunday-evening I could have no share in what was going on. At last the wished-for day arrived. At five in the evening, my conductor came and took me up with him. Quivering with joy, I entered, and descried, on both sides of the frame-work, the puppets all hanging in order as they were to advance to view; I considered them narrowly; and mounted on the step, which raised them above the scene, and allowed me to hover aloft over all that little world. Not without reverence did I look down between the pieces of board, and recollect what a glorious effect the whole would produce, and feel into what mighty secrets I was now admitted. We made a trial, which succeeded well.

" Next day, a party of children were invited: we performed rarely, except that once, in the fire of action, I let poor Jonathan fall, and was obliged to reach down with my hand and pick him up again; an accident which sadly marred the il-

lusion, produced a peal of laughter, and vexed me unspeakably. My father, however, seemed to relish this misfortune not a little. Prudently shrouding up the contentment he felt at the expertness of his little boy, after the piece was finished, he dwelt on the mistakes we had committed, saying it would all have been very pretty, had not this or that gone wrong with us.

" I was vexed to the heart at these things, and sad for all the evening. By next morning, however, I had quite slept off my sorrow; and was blessed in the persuasion that, but for this one fault, I had played delightfully. The spectators also flattered me with their unanimous approval; they all maintained, that though the lieutenant, in regard to the coarse and the fine voices, had done great things, yet his declamation was in general too stiff and affected; whereas the new aspirant spoke his Jonathan and David with exquisite grace. My mother in particular commended the gallant tone, in which I had challenged Goliath and acted the modest victor before the king.

" From this time, to my extreme delight, the theatre continued open; and as the spring advanced, so that fires could be dispensed with, I passed all my hours of recreation lying in the garret, and making the puppets caper and play together. Often I invited up my comrades, or my brothers and sisters; but when they would not come, I staid by myself not the less. My imagin-

ation brooded over that tiny world, which soon afterwards acquired another form.

" Scarcely had I once or twice exhibited the first piece, for which my scenery and actors had been formed and decorated, till it ceased to give me any pleasure. On the other hand, among some books of my grandfather's, I had happened to fall in with the *German Theatre*, and a few translations of Italian operas; in which works I soon got very deeply immersed, on each occasion first reckoning up the characters, and then, without farther ceremony, proceeding to exhibit the piece. King Saul, with his black velvet cloak, was therefore now obliged to personate Darius or Cato, or some other pagan hero; in which cases, it may be observed, the plays were never wholly represented, for most part, only the fifth acts, where the cutting and stabbing lay.

" It was natural that the operas, with their manifold adventures and vicissitudes, should attract me more than any thing beside. In these compositions, I found stormy seas; gods descending in chariots of cloud; and, what most of all delighted me, abundance of thunder and lightning. I did my best with pasteboard, paint, and paper: I could make night very prettily; my lightning was fearful to behold; only my thunder did not always prosper, which however was of less importance. In operas, moreover, I found frequent

opportunities of introducing my David and Goliath, persons whom the regular drama would hardly admit. Daily I felt more attachment for the hampered spot where I enjoyed so many pleasures; and, I must confess, the fragrance which the puppets had acquired from the store-room added not a little to my satisfaction.

" The decorations of my theatre were now in a tolerable state of completeness. I had always had the knack of drawing with compasses, and clipping pasteboard, and colouring figures; and here it served me in good stead. But the more sorry was I, on the other hand, when, as frequently happened, my stock of actors would not suffice for representing great affairs.

" My sisters, dressing and undressing their dolls, awoke in me the project of furnishing my heroes by and by with garments, which might also be put off and on. Accordingly, I slit the scraps of cloth from off their bodies; tacked the fragments together as well as possible; saved a particle of money to buy new ribbons and lace; begged many a rag of taffeta; and so formed, by degrees, a full theatrical wardrobe, in which hoop-petticoats for the ladies were especially remembered.

" My troop was now fairly provided with dresses for the most important piece, and you might have expected that henceforth one exhibition would follow close upon the heels of another:

but it happened with me, as it often happens with children; they embrace wide plans, make mighty preparations, then a few trials, and the whole undertaking is abandoned. I was guilty of this fault. My greatest pleasure lay in the inventive part, and the employment of my fancy. This or that piece inspired me with interest for a few scenes of it, and immediately I set about providing new apparel suitable for the occasion. In such fluctuating operations, many parts of the primary dresses of my heroes had fallen into disorder, or totally gone out of sight; so that now the first great piece could no longer be exhibited. I surrendered myself to my imagination; I rehearsed and prepared for ever; built a thousand castles in the air, and saw not that I was at the same time undermining the foundations of these little edifices."

During this recital, Mariana had called up, and put in action all her courtesy for Wilhelm, that she might conceal her sleepiness. Diverting as the matter seemed on one side, it was too simple for her taste, and her lover's view of it too serious. She softly pressed her foot on his, however, and gave him all visible signs of attention and approval. She drank out of his glass: Wilhelm was convinced that no word of his history had fallen to the ground. After a short pause, he said: "It is now your turn, Mariana, to

tell me what were your first childish joys. Till now, we have always been too busy with the present to trouble ourselves, on either side, about our previous way of life. Let me hear, Mariana, under what circumstances you were reared, what are the first lively impressions which you still remember?"

These questions would have very much embarrassed Mariana, had not Barbara made haste to help her. "Think you," said the cunning old woman, "we have been so mindful of what happened to us long ago, that we have merry things like these to talk about; and though we had, that we could give them such an air in talking of them?"

"As if they needed it!" cried Wilhelm. "I love this soft, good, amiable creature so much, that I regret every instant of my life which has not been spent beside her. Allow me, at least in fancy, to have a share in thy by-gone life: tell me every thing; I will tell every thing to thee! If possible we will deceive ourselves, and win back those days that have been lost to love."

"If you require it so eagerly," replied the old dame, "we can easily content you. Only, in the first place, let us hear how your taste for the theatre gradually reached a head; how you practised, how you improved so happily, that now you can pass for a superior actor. No doubt, you must have met with droll adventures in your progress. It is not worth while to go to bed now; I have

still one flask in reserve; and who knows whether we shall soon all sit together so quiet and cheery again?"

Mariana cast a mournful look upon her, which Wilhelm not observing, proceeded with his narrative.

CHAPTER VII.

"THE recreations of youth, as my companions began to increase in number, interfered with this solitary, still enjoyment. I was by turns a hunter, a soldier, a knight, as our games required me; and constantly I had this small advantage above the rest, that I was qualified to furnish them suitably with the necessary equipments. The swords, for example, were generally of my manufacture; I gilded and decorated the scabbards; and a secret instinct allowed me not to stop, till our militia was accoutred according to the antique model. Helmets, with plumes of paper, were got ready, shields, even coats of mail, were provided; undertakings in which such of the servants as had aught of the tailor in them, and the semstresses of the house, broke many a needle.

"A part of my comrades I had now got well equipt; by degrees, the rest were likewise furbished up, though on a thriftier plan; and so a very seemly corps at length was mustered. We marched about the court-yards and gardens; smote fearfully upon each other's shields and heads: many flaws of discord rose among us, but none that lasted.

" This diversion greatly entertained my fellows; but scarcely had it been twice or thrice repeated, till it ceased to content me. The aspect of so many harnessed figures naturally stimulated in my mind those ideas of chivalry, which, for some time, since I had commenced the reading of old romances, were filling my imagination.

" Koppen's translation of *Jerusalem Delivered* at length fell into my hands, and gave these wandering thoughts a settled direction. The whole poem, it is true, I could not read; but there were pieces of it which I learned by heart, and the images expressed in these hovered round me. Particularly was I captivated with Clorinda, and all her deeds and bearing. The masculine womanhood, the peaceful completeness of her being, had a greater influence upon my mind, just beginning to unfold itself, than the factitious charms of Armida, though the garden of that enchantress was by no means an object of my contempt.

" But a hundred and a hundred times, while walking in the evenings on the balcony which stretches along the front of the house, and looking over the neighbourhood, as the quivering splendour streamed up at the horizon from the departed sun, and the stars came forth, and night pressed forward from every cleft and hollow, and the small shrill tone of the cricket tinkled through the solemn stillness,—a hundred and a hundred times

have I repeated to myself the history of the mournful duel between Tancred and Clorinda.

" However strongly I inclined by nature to the party of the Christians, I could not help declaring for the Paynim heroine with all my heart, when she engaged to set on fire the great tower of the besiegers. And when Tancred in the darkness met the supposed knight, and the strife began between them under that veil of gloom, and the two battled fiercely, I could never pronounce the words,

> But now the sure and fated hour is nigh,
> Clorinda's course is ended, she must die!

without tears rushing into my eyes, which flowed plentifully, when the hapless lover, plunging his sword into her breast, opened the departing warrior's helmet, recognised the lady of his heart, and, shuddering, brought water to baptize her.

" How did my heart run over, when Tancred struck with his sword that tree in the enchanted wood; when blood flowed from the gash, and a voice sounded in his ears, that now again he was wounding Clorinda; that destiny had marked him out ever unwittingly to injure what he loved beyond all else!

" The recital took such hold of my imagination, that the passages I had read of the poem began dimly, in my mind, to conglomerate into

a whole; wherewith I was so taken that I could not but propose to have it some way represented. I meant to have Tancred and Rinaldo acted; and for this purpose two coats of mail, which I had before manufactured, seemed expressly adapted. The one formed of dark-grey paper with scales was to serve for the solemn Tancred; the other, of silver and gilt paper, for the magnificent Rinaldo. In the vivacity of my anticipations, I told the whole project to my comrades, who felt quite charmed with it, only could not well comprehend how so glorious a thing could be exhibited, and, above all, exhibited by them.

"Such scruples I easily set aside. Without hesitation, I took upon me in idea the management of two rooms in the house of a neighbouring playmate; not calculating that his venerable aunt would never give them up; or considering how a theatre could be made of them, whereof I had no settled notion, except that it was to be fixed on beams, to have side-scenes made of parted folding screens, and on the floor a large piece of cloth. From what quarter these materials and furnishings were to come, I had not determined.

"So far as concerned the forest, we fell upon a good expedient. We betook ourselves to an old servant of one of our families, who was now become a woodman, with many entreaties that he would get us a few young firs and birches; which actually arrived more speedily than we had reason

to expect. But, in the next place, great was our embarrassment as to how the piece should be got up before the trees were withered. Now was the time for prudent counsel! We had no house, no scenery, no curtains; the folding screens were all we had.

"In this forlorn condition we again applied to the lieutenant, giving him a copious description of all the glorious things we meant to do. Little as he understood us, he was very helpful; he piled all the tables he could get in the house or neighbourhood, one above the other, in a little room; to these he fixed our folding screens; and made a back-view with green curtains, sticking up our trees along with it.

"At length the appointed evening came; the candles were lit, the maids and children were sitting in their places, the piece was to go forward, the whole corps of heroes was equipped and dressed,—when each for the first time discovered that he knew not what he was to say. In the heat of invention, being quite immersed in present difficulties, I had forgotten the necessity of each understanding what and where he was to speak; nor, in the midst of our bustling preparations, had it once occurred to the rest; each believing he could easily enact a hero, easily so speak and bear himself, as became the personage into whose world I had transplanted him. They all stood wonderstruck, asking: What was to come first? I

alone, having previously got ready Tancred's part, entered *solus* on the scene, and began reciting some verses of the epic. But as the passage soon changed into narrative, and I while speaking was at once transformed into a third party, and the bold Godfredo when his turn came would not venture forth, I was at last obliged to take leave of my spectators under peals of laughter,—a disaster which cut me to the heart. Thus had our undertaking proved abortive; but the company still kept their places, still wishing to see something. All of us were dressed; I screwed my courage up, and determined, foul or fair, to give them David and Goliath. Some of my companions had before this helped me to exhibit the puppet-play; all of them had often seen it: we shared the characters among us; each promised to do his best; and one small grinning urchin painted a black beard upon his chin, and undertook, if any lacuna should occur, to fill it up with drollery as Harlequin,—an arrangement to which, as contradicting the solemnity of the piece, I did not consent without extreme reluctance; and I vowed within myself, that, if once delivered out of this perplexity, I would think long and well before risking the exhibition of another piece."

CHAPTER VIII.

MARIANA, overpowered with sleep, leaned upon her lover, who clasped her close to him, and proceeded in his narrative, while the old damsel prudently sipped up the remainder of the wine.

"The embarrassment," he said, "into which, along with my companions, I had fallen, by attempting to act a play that did not anywhere exist, was soon forgotten. My passion for representing each romance I read, each story that was told me, would not yield before the most unmanageable materials. I felt convinced that whatever gave delight in narrative must produce a far deeper impression when exhibited: I wanted to have every thing before my eyes, every thing brought forth upon the stage. At school, when the elements of general history were related to us, I carefully marked the passages where any person had been slain or poisoned in a singular way; and my imagination, glancing rapidly along the exposition and intrigue, hastened to the interesting fifth act. Indeed I actually began to write some pieces from the end backwards; without, however, in any of them reaching the beginning.

"At the same time, partly by inclination, partly by the counsel of my good friends, who had

caught the fancy of acting plays, I read a whole wilderness of theatrical productions, as chance put them into my hands. I was still in those happy years, when all things please us, when number and variety yield us abundant satisfaction. Unfortunately, too, my taste was corrupted by another circumstance. Any piece delighted me especially, in which I could hope to give delight; there were few which I did not peruse in this agreeable delusion; and my lively conceptive power enabling me to transfer myself into all the characters, seduced me to believe that I might likewise represent them all. Hence, in the distribution of the parts, I commonly selected such as did not fit me; and always more than one part, if I could by any means accomplish more.

" In their games, children can make all things out of any: a staff becomes a musket, a splinter of wood a sword, any bunch of cloth a puppet, any crevice a chamber. Upon this principle was our private theatre got up. Totally unacquainted with the measure of our strength, we undertook all; we stuck at no *qui pro quo*, and felt convinced that every one would take us for what we gave ourselves out to be. Now, however, our affairs went on so soberly and smoothly, that I have not even a curious insipidity to tell you of. We first played all the few pieces, in which only males are requisite; next we travestied some of ourselves; and at last took our sisters into the con-

cern along with us. In one or two houses, our amusement was looked upon as profitable, and company invited to see it. Nor did our lieutenant of artillery now turn his back upon us. He showed us how we ought to make our exits and our entrances; how we should declaim, and with what attitudes and gestures. Yet generally he earned small thanks for his toil: we conceived ourselves to be much deeper in the secrets of theatrical art than he himself was.

"We very soon began to grow tired of tragedy: for all of us believed, as we had often heard, that it was easier to write or represent a tragedy than to attain proficiency in comedy. In our first attempts, accordingly, we had felt as if exactly in our element: dignity of rank, elevation of character, we studied to approach by stiffness and affectation, and imagined that we succeeded rarely: but our happiness was not complete, except we might rave outright, might stamp with our feet, and cast ourselves upon the ground, full of fury and despair.

"Boys and girls had not long carried on these amusements in concert, till nature began to take her course, and our society branched itself off into sundry little love-associations, as generally more than one sort of comedy is acted in the playhouse. Behind the scenes, each happy pair pressed hands in the most tender style; they floated in blessedness, appearing to one another quite ideal persons,

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when so transformed and decorated; whilst, on the other hand, unlucky rivals consumed themselves with envy, and out of malice and spite worked every species of mischief.

"Our amusements, though undertaken without judgment, and carried on without instruction, were not without their use to us. We trained our memories and persons; we acquired more dexterity in speech and gesture, than is usually met with at so early an age. But for me in particular, this time was in truth an epoch; my mind turned all its faculties exclusively to the theatre, and my highest happiness was in reading, in writing, or in acting plays.

"Meanwhile the labours of my regular teachers continued; I had been set apart for the mercantile life, and placed under the guidance of our neighbour in the counting-house; yet my spirit at this very time recoiled more forcibly than ever from all that was to bind me to a low profession. It was to the stage that I aimed at consecrating all my powers; on the stage that I meant to seek all my happiness and satisfaction.

"I recollect a poem, which must be among my papers, where the Muse of tragic art and another female form, by which I personified Commerce, were made to strive very bravely for my most important self. The idea is common, and I recollect not that the verses were of any worth; but you shall see it, for the sake of the fear, the

abhorrence, the love, and passion which reign in it. How repulsively did I paint the old housewife with the distaff in her girdle, the bunch of keys by her side, the spectacles on her nose; ever toiling, ever restless, quarrelsome and penurious, pitiful and dissatisfied! How feelingly did I describe the condition of that poor man who must cringe beneath her rod, and earn his slavish day's-wage by the sweat of his brow!

"And how differently advanced the other! What an apparition for the overclouded mind! Formed as a queen, in her thoughts and looks she announced herself the child of freedom. The feeling of her own worth gave her dignity without pride: her apparel became her, it veiled her form without constraining it; and the rich folds repeated, like a thousand-voiced echo, the graceful movements of the goddess. What a contrast! How easy for me to decide! Nor had I forgotten the more peculiar characteristics of my Muse. Crowns and daggers, chains and masks, as my predecessors had delivered them, were here produced once more. The contention was keen; the speeches of both were palpably enough contrasted, for at fourteen years of age one usually paints the black lines and the white pretty near each other. The old lady spoke as beseemed a person that would pick up a pin from her path; the other, like one that could give away kingdoms. The warning threats of the housewife were disregarded: I

turned my back upon her promised riches; disinherited and naked, I gave myself up to the Muse; she threw her golden veil over me, and called me hers.

"Could I have thought, my dearest," he exclaimed, pressing Mariana close to him, "that another and a more lovely goddess would come to encourage me in my purpose, to travel with me on my journey, the poem might have had a finer turn, a far more interesting end. Yet, it is no poetry, it is truth and life that I feel in thy arms; let us prize the sweet happiness and consciously enjoy it."

The pressure of his arms, the emotion of his elevated voice, awoke Mariana, who hastened by caresses to conceal her embarrassment; for no word of the last part of his story had reached her. It is to be wished that, in future, our hero, when recounting his favourite histories, may find more attentive hearers.

CHAPTER IX.

Thus Wilhelm passed his nights in the enjoyment of confiding love; his days in the expectation of new happy hours. When desire and hope had first attracted him to Mariana, he already felt as if inspired with new life; felt as if he were beginning to be another man: he was now united to her; the contentment of his wishes had become a delicious habitude. His heart strove to ennoble the object of his passion; his spirit to exalt with it the young creature whom he loved. In the shortest absence, thoughts of her arose within him. If she had once been necessary to him, she was now grown indispensable, now that he was bound to her by all the ties of nature. His pure soul felt that she was the half, more than the half of himself. He was grateful and devoted without limit.

Mariana, too, succeeded in deceiving herself for a season; she shared with him the feeling of his liveliest blessedness. Alas! if the cold hand of self-reproach had not often come across her heart! She was not secure from it even in Wilhelm's bosom, even under the wings of his love. And when she was again left alone, again left to sink from the clouds, to which passion had exalted her,

into the consciousness of her real condition, then she was indeed to be pitied. So long as she had lived among degrading perplexities, disguising from herself her real situation, or rather never thinking of it, frivolity had helped her through; the incidents she was exposed to had come upon her each by itself; satisfaction and vexation had cancelled one another; humiliation had been compensated by vanity; want by frequent, though momentary, superfluity; she could plead necessity and custom as a law or an excuse; and hitherto all painful emotions from hour to hour, and from day to day, had by these means been shaken off. But now, for some instants, the poor girl had felt herself transported to a better world; aloft as it were, in the midst of light and joy, she had looked down upon the abject desert of her life, had felt what a miserable creature is the woman, who inspiring desire, does not also inspire reverence and love; she regretted and repented, but found herself outwardly or inwardly no better for regret. She had nothing which she could accomplish or resolve upon. Looking into herself and searching, all was waste and void within her soul; her heart had no place of strength or refuge. But the more sorrowful her state was, the more vehemently did her feelings cling to the man whom she loved; her passion for him even waxed stronger daily, as the danger of losing him came daily nearer.

Wilhelm, on the other hand, soared serenely

happy in higher regions; to him also a new world had been disclosed, but a world rich in the most glorious prospects. Scarcely had the first excess of joy subsided, when all that had long been gliding dimly through his soul stood up in bright distinctness before it. She is thine! She has given herself away to thee! She, the loved, the wished-for, the adored, has given herself away to thee in trust and faith; she shall not find thee ungrateful for the gift. Standing or walking he talked to himself; his heart constantly overflowed; with a copiousness of splendid words, he uttered to himself the loftiest emotions. He imagined that he understood the visible beckoning of Fate reaching out its hand by Mariana to save him from the stagnant, weary, drudging life out of which he had so often wished for deliverance. To leave his father's house and people now appeared a light matter. He was young, and had not tried the world; his eagerness to range over its expanses, seeking fortune and contentment, was stimulated by his love. His vocation to the theatre was now clear to him; the high goal, which he saw raised before him, seemed nearer whilst he was advancing to it with Mariana's hand in his; and in his comfortable prudence, he beheld in himself the embryo of a great actor; the future founder of that national theatre, for which he heard so much and various sighing on every side. All that till now had slumbered, in the most secret corners of his soul, at length awoke.

He painted for himself a picture of his manifold ideas, in the colours of love, upon a canvass of cloud: the figures of it, indeed, ran sadly into one another; yet the whole had an air but the more brilliant on that account.

CHAPTER X.

He was now in his chamber at home, ransacking his papers, making ready for departure. Whatever savoured of his previous employment he threw aside, meaning at his entrance upon life to be free even from recollections that could pain him. Works of taste alone, poets and critics, were as acknowledged friends placed among the chosen few. Heretofore he had given little heed to the critical authors; his desire for instruction now revived, when, again looking through his books, he found the theoretical part of them lying generally still uncut. In the full persuasion that such works were absolutely necessary, he had bought a number of them; but with the best disposition in the world, he had not reached midway in any.

The more steadfastly, on the other hand, he had dwelt upon examples; and in every kind that was known to him had made attempts himself.

Werner entered the room, and, seeing his friend busied with the well-known sheets, he exclaimed: "Again among your papers! And without intending, I dare swear, to finish any one of them! You look them through and through once or twice, then throw them by, and begin something new."

" To finish is not the scholar's care ; it is enough if he improves himself by practice."

" But also completes according to his best ability."

" And still the question might be asked: Is there not good hope of a youth, who, on commencing some unsuitable affair, soon discovers its unsuitableness, and discontinues his exertions, not choosing to spend toil and time on what can never be of any value?"

" I know well enough it was never your concern to bring aught to a conclusion ; you have always sickened on it ere it came half-way. When you were the director of our puppet-show, for instance, how many times were fresh clothes got ready for the dwarfish troop, fresh decorations furbished up ! Now this tragedy was to be played, now that; and, at the very best, you gave us some fifth act, where all was going topsy-turvy, and people cutting one another's throats."

" If you talk of those times, whose blame really was it that we ripped off from our puppets the clothes that fitted them, and were fast stitched to their bodies, and laid out money for a large and useless wardrobe? Was it not yours, my good friend, who had always some fragment of ribbon to traffick with ; and skill, at the same time, to stimulate my taste, and turn it to your profit?"

Werner laughed, and continued : " I still recollect with pleasure how I used to extract gain from

your theatrical campaigns, as army-contractors do from war. When you mustered for the Deliverance of Jerusalem, I for my part made a pretty thing of profit, like the Venetians in the corresponding case. I know of nothing in the world more rational, than to turn the folly of others to our own advantage."

"Perhaps it were a nobler satisfaction to cure men of their follies."

"From the little I know of men, this might seem a vain endeavour. But something towards it is always done, when any individual man grows wise and rich; and generally this happens at the cost of others."

"Well, here is *The Youth at the Parting of the Ways*; it has just come into my hand," said Wilhelm, drawing out a bunch of papers from the rest: "this at least is finished, whatever else it may be."

"Away with it! To the fire with it!" cried Werner. "The invention is not worthy of the smallest praise: that affair has plagued me enough already, and drawn upon yourself your father's wrath. The verses may be altogether beautiful; but the meaning of them is fundamentally false. I still recollect your Commerce personified; a shrivelled wretched-looking sybil she was. I suppose you picked up the image of her from some miserable huckster's shop. At that time, you had no true idea at all of trade; whilst I could not think of any man, whose spirit was, or needed to

be more enlarged, than the spirit of a genuine merchant. What a thing is it to see the order which prevails throughout his business! By means of this, he can at any time survey the general whole, without needing to perplex himself in the details. What advantages does he derive from the system of book-keeping by double entry! It is among the finest inventions of the human mind: every prudent master of a house should introduce it into his economy."

"Pardon me," said Wilhelm, smiling, "you begin by the form, as if it were the matter; you traders commonly, in your additions and balancings, forget what is the proper net result of life."

"My good friend, you do not see how form and matter are in this case one; how neither can exist without the other. Order and arrangement increase the desire to save and get. A man embarrassed in his circumstances, and conducting them imprudently, likes best to continue in the dark; he will not gladly reckon up the debtor-entries he is charged with. But, on the other hand, there is nothing to a prudent manager more pleasant, than daily to set before himself the sums of his growing fortune. Even a mischance, if it surprise and vex, will not affright him; for he knows at once what gains he has acquired to cast into the other scale. I am convinced, my friend, that if you once had a proper taste for our employments, you would

grant that many faculties of the mind are called into full and vigorous play by them."

"Possibly this journey I am thinking of may bring me to other thoughts."

"O certainly! Believe me, you want but to look upon some great scene of activity, to make you ours for ever; and when you come again, you will joyfully enroll yourself among that class of men, whose art it is to draw towards themselves a portion of the money and materials of enjoyment, which circulate in their appointed courses through the world. Cast a look on the natural and artificial productions of all the regions of the earth; consider how they have become, one here, another there, articles of necessity for men! How pleasant and how intellectual a task is it to calculate, at any moment, what is most required, and yet is wanting or hard to find; to procure for each easily and soon what he demands; to lay in your stock prudently beforehand, and then to enjoy the profit of every pulse in that mighty circulation! This, it appears to me, is what no man that has a head can attend to without pleasure."

Wilhelm seemed to acquiesce, and Werner continued: "Do but visit one or two great trading towns, one or two seaports, and see if you can withstand the impression. When you observe how many men are busied; whence so many things have come, and whither they are going, you will

feel as if you too could gladly mingle in the business. You will then see the smallest piece of ware in its connexion with the whole mercantile concern; and for that very reason, you will reckon nothing paltry, because every thing augments the circulation by which you yourself are supported."

Werner had formed his solid understanding in constant intercourse with Wilhelm; he was thus accustomed to think also of *his* profession, of *his* employments, with elevation of soul: and he firmly believed that he did so, with more justice than his otherwise more gifted and valued friend; who, as it seemed to him, had placed his dearest hopes and directed all the force of his mind upon the most imaginary objects in the world. Many a time he thought, this false enthusiasm would infallibly be got the better of, and so excellent a soul be brought back to the right path. So hoping in the present instance, he continued: "The great ones of the world have taken this earth of ours to themselves; they live in the midst of splendour and superfluity. The smallest nook of the land is already a possession, none may touch it or meddle with it; offices and civic callings bring in little profit: where then will you find more honest acquisitions, juster conquests, than those of trade? If the princes of this world hold the rivers, the highways, the havens in their power, and take a heavy tribute from every thing that passes through them, may not we embrace with joy the opportunity of lifting

tax and toll, by *our* activity, on those commodities which the real or imaginary wants of men have rendered indispensable? I can promise you, if you would rightly apply your poetic view, my goddess might be represented as an invincible victorious queen, and boldly opposed to yours. It is true, she bears the olive rather than the sword; dagger, or chain she knows not; but she too gives crowns to her favourites, which, without offence to yours be it said, are of true gold from the furnace and the mine, and glance with genuine pearls, which she brings up from the depths of the ocean, by the hands of her unwearied servants."

This sally somewhat nettled Wilhelm; but he concealed his sentiments, remembering that Werner used to listen with composure to *his* apostrophes. Besides, he had fairness enough to be pleased at seeing each man think the best of his own peculiar craft; provided only *his*, of which he was so passionately fond, were likewise left in peace.

"And for you," exclaimed Werner, "who take so warm an interest in human concerns, what a sight will it be to behold the fortune, which accompanies bold undertakings, distributed to men before your eyes! What is more spirit-stirring, than the aspect of a ship arriving from a lucky voyage, or soon returning with a rich capture? Not alone the relatives, the acquaintances, and those that share with the adventurers, but every unconcerned spectator also is excited, when he sees the

joy with which the long-imprisoned shipman springs on land, before his keel has wholly reached it, feeling that he is free once more, and now can trust what he has rescued from the false sea to the firm and faithful earth. It is not, my friend, in figures of arithmetic alone that gain presents itself before us: fortune is the goddess of breathing men; to feel her favours truly, we must live and be men, who toil with their living minds and bodies, and enjoy with them also."

CHAPTER XI.

It is now time that we should know something more of Wilhelm's father and of Werner's; two men of very different modes of thinking, but whose opinions so far coincided, that both regarded commerce as the noblest calling, and both were peculiarly attentive to every advantage which any kind of speculation might produce to them. Old Meister, when his father died, had turned into money a valuable collection of pictures, drawings, copperplates, and antiquities; he had entirely rebuilt and furnished his house in the newest style, and turned his other property to profit in all possible ways. A considerable portion of it he had embarked in trade, under the direction of the elder Werner,—a man noted as an active merchant, whose speculations were commonly favoured by fortune. But nothing was so much desired by Meister, as to confer upon his son those qualities of which himself was destitute, and to leave his children advantages which he reckoned it of the highest importance to possess. Withal he felt a peculiar inclination for magnificence, for whatever catches the eye and possesses at the same time real worth and durability. In his house, he would have all things solid and massive;

his stores must be copious and rich, all his plate must be heavy, the furniture of his table must be costly. On the other hand, his guests were seldom invited; for every dinner was a festival, which, both for its expense and for its inconvenience, could not often be repeated. The economy of his house went on at a settled uniform rate, and every thing that moved or had a place in it was just what yielded no one any real enjoyment.

The elder Werner, in his dark and hampered house, led quite another sort of life. The business of the day, in his narrow counting-room, at his ancient desk, once done, Werner liked to eat well, and if possible to drink better. Nor could he fully enjoy good things in solitude; with his family he must always see at table, his friends and any stranger that had the slightest connexion with his house. His chairs were of unknown age and antic fashion, but he daily invited some to sit on them. The dainty victuals arrested the attention of his guests, and none remarked that they were served up in common ware. His cellar held no great stock of wine, but the emptied niches were usually filled by more of a superior sort.

So lived these two fathers, often meeting to take counsel about their common concerns. On the day we are speaking of, it had been determined to send Wilhelm out from home, for the despatch of some commercial affairs.

"Let him look about him in the world," said old Meister, "and at the same time carry on our business in distant parts. One cannot do a young man any greater kindness, than to initiate him early in the future business of his life. Your son returned so happily from his first expedition, and transacted his affairs so cleverly, that I am very curious to see how mine will do: *his* experience I fear will cost him dearer."

Old Meister had a high notion of his son's faculties and capabilities; he said this in the hope that his friend would contradict him, and hold up to view the admirable gifts of the youth. Here, however, he deceived himself: old Werner, who, in practical concerns, would trust no man but such as he had proved, answered placidly: "One must try all things; we can send him on the same journey, we shall give him a paper of directions to conduct him. There are sundry debts to be gathered in, old connexions are to be renewed, new ones to be made. He may likewise help the speculation I was lately talking of; for without punctual intelligence gathered on the spot, there is little to be done in it."

"He must prepare," said Meister, "and set forth as soon as possible. Where shall we get a horse for him to suit this business?"

"We shall not seek far. The shopkeeper in H——, who owes us somewhat, but is withal a

good man, has offered me a horse instead of payment. My son knows it, and tells me it is a serviceable beast."

"He may fetch it himself; let him go with the diligence; the day after to-morrow he is back again betimes; we have his saddle-bags and letters made ready in the meantime; he can set out on Monday morning."

Wilhelm was sent for, and informed of their determination. Who so glad as he, now seeing the means of executing his purpose put into his hands, the opportunity made ready for him, without cooperation of his own! So intense was his love, so full was his conviction of the perfect rectitude of his intention to escape from the pressure of his actual mode of life, and follow a new and nobler career, that his conscience did not in the least rebel; no anxiety rose within him; he even reckoned the deception he was meditating holy. He felt certain, that in the long run, parents and relations would praise and bless him for this resolution; he acknowledged in these concurring circumstances the signal of a guiding fate.

How slowly the time passed with him till night, till the hour when he should again see his Mariana! He sat in his chamber, and revolved the plan of his journey, as a conjurer, or a cunning thief in durance often draws out his feet from the fast-locked irons to cherish in himself the conviction

that his deliverance is possible, nay, nearer than short-sighted turnkeys believe.

At last the appointed hour struck; he went out, shook off all anxiety, and hastened through the silent streets. In the middle of the great square, he raised his hands to the sky, feeling as if all was behind him and below him; he had freed himself from all. One moment he figured himself as in the arms of his beloved, the next as glancing with her in the splendours of the stage; he soared aloft in a world of hopes, only now and then the call of some watchmen brought to his recollection that he was still wandering on the vulgar earth.

Mariana came to the stair to meet him; and how beautiful, how lovely! She received him in the new white *negligée*; he thought he had never seen her so charming. Thus did she handsel the gift of her absent lover in the arms of a present one; with true passion, she lavished on her darling the whole treasure of those caresses, which nature suggested, or art had taught: need we ask if he was happy, if he was blessed?

He disclosed to her what had passed, and shewed her, in general terms, his plan and his wishes. He would try, he said, to find a residence, then come back for her; he hoped she would not refuse him her hand. The poor girl was silent; she concealed her tears, and pressed her friend against her bosom. Wilhelm, though interpreting her silence

in the most favourable manner, could have wished for a distinct reply; and still more, when at last he inquired of her in the tenderest and most delicate terms, if he might not think himself a father. But to this she answered only with a sigh, with a kiss.

CHAPTER XII.

NEXT morning, Mariana awoke only to new despondency; she felt herself very solitary, she wished not to see the light of day, but staid in bed, and wept. Old Barbara sat down by her, and tried to persuade and console her; but it was not in her power so soon to heal the wounded heart. The moment was now at hand, to which the poor girl had been looking forward as to the last of her life. Who could be placed in a more painful situation! The man she loved was departing; a disagreeable lover was threatening to come; and the most fearful mischiefs were to be anticipated, if the two, as might easily happen, should meet together.

"Calm yourself, my dear," said the old woman, "do not spoil your pretty eyes with crying. Is it then so terrible a thing to have two lovers? And though you can bestow your love but on the one, yet be thankful to the other, who, caring for you as he does, certainly deserves to be named your friend."

"My poor Wilhelm," said the other all in tears, "had warning that a separation was at hand. A dream discovered to him what we strove so

much to hide. He was sleeping calmy at my side; on a sudden I heard him muttering some unintelligible sounds; I grew frightened, and awoke him. Ah! with what love and tenderness and warmth did he clasp me! 'O Mariana!' cried he, 'what a horrid fate have you freed me from; how shall I thank you for deliverance from such torment! I dreamed that I was far from you in an unknown country, but your figure hovered before me; I saw you on a beautiful hill, the sunshine was glancing over it all, how charming did you look! But it had not lasted long till I observed your image sinking down, sinking, sinking; I stretched out my arms towards you; they could not reach you through the distance. Your image still kept gliding down, it approached a great sea that lay far extended at the foot of the hill, a marsh rather than a sea. All at once a man gave you his hand, and seemed meaning to conduct you upwards, but he led you sidewards, and appeared to draw you after him. I cried out; as I could not reach you, I hoped to warn you. If I tried to walk, the ground seemed to hold me fast; if I could walk, the water hindered me; and even my cries were smothered in my breast.' So said the poor youth, while recovering from his terror, and reckoning himself happy to dissipate a frightful dream by the most delicious reality."

Barbara made every effort to reduce, by her prose, the poetry of her friend to the domain of

common life; employing in the present case the ingenious craft which so oft succeeds with bird-catchers, when they imitate with a whistle the tones of those luckless creatures, which they soon hope to see by dozens safely lodged in their nets. She praised Wilhelm; she expatiated on his figure, his eyes, his love. The poor girl heard her with a gratified heart; then arose, let herself be dressed, and appeared calmer. "My child, my darling," continued the old woman in a cozening tone, "I will not trouble you, or injure you; I cannot think of tearing from you your dearest happiness. Could you mistake my intention? Have you forgotten, that on all occasions I have cared for you more than for myself? Tell me only what you wish; we shall soon see how it may be brought about."

"What can I wish?" said Mariana, "I am miserable, miserable for my life; I love him, and he loves me; yet I see that I must part with him, and know not how I shall survive it. Norberg comes, to whom we owe our whole subsistence, whom we cannot live without. Wilhelm is straitened in his fortune; he can do nothing for me."

"Yes, unfortunately, he is of those lovers who bring nothing but their hearts; and these people too have the highest pretensions of any."

"No jesting! The unhappy youth thinks of leaving his home, of going upon the stage, of offering me his hand."

"Of empty hands we have already four."

"I have no choice," continued Mariana; "do you decide for me! Cast me away to this side or to that; mark only one thing: I think I carry in my bosom a pledge that ought to unite me with him still more closely. Consider and determine: whom shall I forsake? whom shall I follow?"

After a short silence, Barbara exclaimed:— "Strange, that youth should still be for extremes! To my view nothing would be easier than for us to combine both the profit and enjoyment. Do you love the one, let the other pay for it: all we have to mind is being sharp enough to keep the two from meeting."

"Do as you please; I can imagine nothing, but I will follow."

"We have this advantage; we can humour the Manager's caprice, and pride about the morals of his troop. Both lovers are accustomed already to go secretly and cunningly to work. For hours and opportunity I will take thought; only henceforth you must play the part that I prescribe to you. Who knows what circumstances may arise to help us. If Norberg would arrive even now, when Wilhelm is away! Who can hinder you from thinking of the one in the arms of the other? I wish you a son, and good fortune with him; he will have a rich father."

These projects lightened Mariana's despondency only for a very short time. She could not

bring her situation into harmony with her feelings, with her convictions; she would fain have forgotten the painful relations in which she stood, and a thousand little circumstances forced them back every moment to her recollection.

CHAPTER XIII.

In the mean time, Wilhelm had completed the small preliminary journey. His merchant being from home, he delivered the letter of introduction to the mistress of the house. But neither did this lady give him much furtherance in his purposes; she was in a violent passion, and her whole economy was in confusion.

He had not waited long till she disclosed to him (what in truth could not be kept a secret), that her stepdaughter had run off with a player; a person who had parted lately from a small strolling company, and had staid in the place, and commenced teaching French. The father, distracted with grief and vexation, had run to the Amt to have the fugitives pursued. She blamed her daughter bitterly, and vilified the lover, till she left no tolerable quality with either: she deplored at great length the shame thus brought upon the family; embarrassing our hero not a little, who here felt his own private scheme beforehand, judged and punished in the spirit of prophecy as it were by this frenzied sibyl. Still stronger and deeper was the interest he took in the sorrows

of the father, who now returned from the Amt, and with fixed sorrow, in broken sentences, gave an account of the errand to his wife; and strove to hide the embarrassment and distraction of his mind, while, after looking at the letter, he directed that the horse it spoke of should be given to Wilhelm.

Our friend thought it best to mount his steed immediately, and quit a house, where in its present state he could not possibly be comfortable; but the honest man would not allow the son of one to whom he had so many obligations to depart without tasting of his hospitality, without remaining at least a night beneath his roof.

Wilhelm assisted at a melancholy supper, wore out a restless night, and hastened to get rid of these people, who without knowing it had, by their narratives and condolences, been constantly wounding him to the quick.

In a musing mood, he was riding slowly along, when all at once he observed a number of armed men coming through the fields. By their long white frocks with enormous cuffs, their shapeless hats and clumsy muskets, by their unpretending gait and contented bearing of the body, he recognised in these people a detachment of provincial militia. They halted beneath an old oak; set down their fire-arms; and placed themselves at their ease upon the sward to smoke a pipe of tobacco. Wilhelm lingered near them, and entered

into conversation with a young man who came up on horseback. The history of the two runaways, which he already knew too well, was again detailed to him; and that with comments not particularly flattering, either to the young pair themselves or to the parents. He learned also that the military were come hither to take the loving couple into custody, who already had been seized and detained in a neighbouring village. After some time, accordingly, a cart was seen advancing to the place, encircled with a city-guard more ludicrous than appalling. An amorphous Town-clerk rode forth, and made his compliments to the Actuarius (for such was the young man whom Wilhelm had been speaking to), on the border of their several districts, with great conscientiousness and wonderful grimaces; as perhaps the ghost and the conjuror do, when they meet, the one within the circle and the other out of it, in their dismal midnight operations.

But the chief attention of the lookers-on was directed to the cart; they could not behold, without compassion, the poor misguided creatures, who were sitting upon bundles of straw, looking tenderly at one another, and scarcely seeming to observe the bystanders. Accident had forced their conductors to bring them from the last village in that unseemly style; the old chaise, which had previously transported the lady, having there broken down. On that occurrence she had

begged for permission to sit beside her friend; whom, in the conviction that his crime was of a capital sort, the rustic bailiffs had brought along so far in irons. These irons certainly contributed to give the tender group a more interesting appearance, particularly as the young man moved and bore himself with great dignity, while he kissed more than once the hands of his fair companion.

"We are unfortunate," she cried to the bystanders; "but not so guilty as we seem. It is thus that savage men reward true love; and parents, who entirely neglect the happiness of their children, tear them with fury from the arms of joy, when it has found them after many weary days."

The spectators were expressing their sympathy in various ways, when the officers of law having finished their ceremonial, the cart went on, and Wilhelm, who took a deep interest in the fate of the lovers, hastened forward by a footpath to get some acquaintance with the Amtmann before the procession should arrive. But scarcely had he reached the Amthaus, where all was in motion, and ready to receive the fugitives, when his new friend, the Actuarius, laid hold of him, and giving him a circumstantial detail of the whole proceedings, and then launching out into a comprehensive eulogy of his own horse, which he had

got last night by barter, put a stop to every other sort of conversation.

The luckless pair, in the meantime, had been set down behind at the garden, which communicated by a little door with the Amthaus, and thus brought in unobserved. The Actuarius, for this mild and handsome treatment, accepted of a just encomium from Wilhelm; though in truth his sole object had been to mortify the crowd collected in front of the Amthaus, by denying them the satisfaction of looking at a neighbour in disgrace.

The Amtmann, who had no particular taste for such extraordinary occurrences, being wont on these occasions to commit frequent errors, and with the best intentions to be often paid with sour admonitions from the higher powers, went with heavy steps into his office-room, where the Actuarius with Wilhelm and a few respectable citizens followed him.

The lady was first produced; she advanced without pertness, calm and self-possessed. The manner of her dress, the way in which she bore herself shewed that she was a person not without value in her own eyes. She accordingly began, without any questions being put, to speak not unskilfully about her situation.

The Actuarius bade her be silent, and held his pen over the folded sheet. The Amtmann gather-

ed up his resolution, looked at his assistant, cleared his throat by two or three hems, and asked the poor girl what was her name, and how old she was.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said she, "but it seems very strange to me that you ask my name and age; seeing you know very well what my name is, and that I am just of the age of your oldest son. What you do want to know of me, and need to know, I will tell freely without circumlocution.

"Since my father's second marriage my situation in his house has not been of the most enviable sort. Oftener than once I have had it in my power to make a suitable marriage, had not my stepmother, dreading the expense of my portion, taken care to thwart all such proposals. At length I grew acquainted with the young Melina; I felt constrained to love him; and as both of us foresaw the obstacles that stood in the way of our regular union, we determined to go forth together, and seek in the wide world the happiness which was denied us at home. I took nothing with me that was not my own; we did not run away like thieves and robbers, and my lover does not merit to be hauled about in this way with chains and handcuffs. The Prince is just, and will not sanction such severity. If we are liable to punishment, it is not punishment of this kind."

The old Amtmann hereupon fell into double

and treble confusion. Sounds of the most gracious eulogies were already humming through his brain; and the girl's voluble speech had entirely confounded the plan of his protocol. The mischief increased, when to repeated official questions she refused giving any answer, but constantly referred to what she had already said.

"I am no criminal," she said. "They have brought me hither on bundles of straw to put me to shame; but there is a higher court that will bring us back to honour."

The Actuarius, in the meantime, had kept writing down her words: he whispered the Amtmann, "just to go on; a formal protocol might be made out by and by."

The senior then again took heart; and began, with his heavy words, in dry prescribed formulas, to seek information about the sweet secrets of love.

The red mounted into Wilhelm's cheeks, and those of the pretty criminal likewise glowed with the charming tinge of modesty. She was silent, she stammered, till at last her embarrassment itself seemed to exalt her courage.

"Be assured," she cried, "that I should have strength enough to confess the truth, though it made against myself: and shall I now hesitate and stammer, when it does me honour? Yes, from the moment when I first felt certain of his love and faith, I looked upon him as my husband; I freely gave him all that love requires, and that a

heart once convinced cannot long refuse. Now do with me what you please. If I hesitated for a moment to confess, it was owing to fear alone lest the admission might prove hurtful to my lover."

On hearing this confession, Wilhelm formed a high opinion of the young woman's feelings, while her judges marked her as an impudent strumpet; and the townsfolk present thanked God that, in their families, no such scandal had occurred, or at least been brought to light.

Wilhelm transported his Mariana into this conjuncture, answering at the bar; he put still finer words in her mouth, making her uprightness yet more affecting, her confession still nobler. The most violent desire to help the two lovers took possession of him. Nor did he conceal this feeling; but signified in private to the wavering Amtmann, that it were better to end the business, all being clear as possible, and requiring no farther investigation.

This was so far of service that the young woman was allowed to retire; though, in her stead, the lover was brought in, his fetters having previously been taken off him at the door. This person seemed a little more concerned about his fate. His answers were more careful; and if he showed less heroic generosity, he recommended himself by the precision and distinctness of his expressions.

When this audience also was finished, and found to agree in all points with the former, except that,

from regard for his mistress, Melina stubbornly denied what had already been confessed by herself, the young woman was again brought forward; and a scene took place between the two, which made the heart of our friend entirely their own.

What usually occurs nowhere but in romances and plays, he saw here in a paltry court-room before his eyes; the contest of reciprocal magnanimity, the strength of love in misfortune.

"Is it then true," said he internally, "that timorous affection which conceals itself from the eye of the sun and of men, not daring to taste of enjoyment save in remote solitude and deep secrecy, yet, if torn rudely by some cruel chance into light, will shew itself more courageous, strong, and resolute, than any of our loud and ostentatious passions?"

To his comfort, the business after that soon came to a conclusion. The lovers were detained in tolerable quarters: had it been possible, he would that very evening have brought back the young lady to her parents. For he firmly determined to act as an intercessor in this case, and to forward a happy and lawful union between the lovers.

He begged permission of the Amtmann to speak in private with Melina, a request which was granted without difficulty.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE conversation of these new acquaintances very soon grew confidential and lively. When Wilhelm told the downcast youth of his connexion with the lady's parents, and offered to mediate in the affair, shewing at the same time the strongest expectation of success, a light was shed across the dreary and anxious mind of the prisoner; he felt himself already free, already reconciled with the parents of his bride; and now began to speak about his future occupation and support.

"On this point," said our friend, "you cannot long be in a strait; for you seem to me directed, not more by your circumstances than by nature, to make your fortune in the noble profession you have chosen. A pleasing figure, a sonorous voice, a feeling heart! Could an actor be better furnished? If I can serve you with a few introductions, it will give me the greatest pleasure."

"I thank you with all my heart," replied the other; "but I hardly shall be able to make use of them; for it is my purpose, if possible, not to return to the stage."

"Here you are certainly to blame," said Wilhelm, after a pause, during which he had partly recovered

out of his astonishment; for it had never once entered his head, but that the player, the moment his young wife and he were out of durance, would repair to some theatre. It seemed to him as natural and as necessary as for the frog to seek pools of water. He had not doubted of it for a moment; and he now heard the contrary with boundless surprise.

"Yes," replied Melina, "I have it in view not to reappear upon the stage; but rather to take up some civil calling, be it what it will, so that I can but obtain one."

"This is a strange resolution, which I cannot give my approbation to. Without especial reasons, it can never be advisable to change the mode of life we have begun with; and, besides, I know of no condition that presents so much allurement, so many charming prospects, as the condition of an actor."

"It is easy to see that you have never been one," said the other.

"Alas! sir," answered Wilhelm, "how seldom is any man contented with the station where he happens to be placed! He is ever coveting that of his neighbour, from which the neighbour in his turn is longing to be free."

"Yet still there is a difference," said Melina, "between bad and worse. Experience, not impatience, makes me determine as you see. Is there in the world any creature whose morsel of bread is attended with such vexation, uncertainty, and toil?

It were almost as good to take the staff and wallet, and beg from door to door. What things to be endured from the envy of rivals, from the partiality of managers, from the ever-altering caprices of the public! In truth, one would need to have a hide like a bear's, that is led about in a chain along with apes and dogs of knowledge, and cudgelled into dancing at the sound of a bagpipe before the populace and children."

Wilhelm thought a thousand things, which he would not vex the worthy man by uttering. He merely, therefore, led the conversation round them at a distance. His friend explained himself the more candidly and circumstantially on that account. "Is not the manager obliged," said he, "to fall down at the feet of every little Stadtrath, that he may get permission, for a month between the fairs, to cause another groschen or two to circulate in the place? Ours, on the whole a worthy man, I have often pitied; though at other times he gave me cause enough for discontentment. A good actor drains him by extortion; of the bad he cannot rid himself; and, should he try to make his income at all equal to his outlay, the public immediately takes umbrage, the house stands empty; and, not to go to wreck entirely, he must continue acting in the midst of sorrow and vexation. No, no, sir! Since you are so good as undertake to help me, have the kindness, I entreat you, to plead with the parents of my bride; let them get me a little post of clerk

or collector, and I shall think myself well dealt with."

After exchanging a few words more, Wilhelm went away with the promise to visit the parents early in the morning, and see what could be done. Scarcely was he by himself, when he gave utterance to his thoughts in these exclamations: "Unhappy Melina! not in thy condition, but in thyself lies the mean impediment over which thou canst not gain the mastery. What mortal in the world, if without an inward calling he take up a trade, an art, or any mode of life, will not feel his situation miserable? But he, who is born with capacities for any undertaking, finds in executing this the fairest portion of his being. Nothing upon earth, without its difficulties! It is the secret impulse within; it is the love and the delight we feel, that help us to conquer obstacles, to clear out new paths, and to overleap the bounds of that narrow circle in which others poorly toil. For *thee* the stage is but a few boards; the parts assigned thee are but what a task is to a school-boy. The spectators thou regardest as on work-days they regard each other. For thee then it may be well to wish thyself behind a desk, over ruled ledgers, collecting tolls, and picking out reversions. Thou feelest not the co-operating, co-inspiring whole, which the mind alone can invent, comprehend, and complete; thou feelest not that in man there lives a spark of purer fire, which, when it is not fed, when it is not fanned, gets covered by the

ashes of indifference and daily wants; yet not till late, perhaps never, can be altogether quenched. Thou feelest in thy soul no strength to fan this spark into a flame, no riches in thy heart to feed it when aroused. Hunger drives thee on, inconveniences withstand thee; and it is hidden from thee, that, in every human condition, foes lie in wait for us, invincible except by cheerfulness and equanimity. Thou dost well to wish thyself within the limits of a common station; for what station that required soul and resolution couldst thou rightly fill! Give a soldier, a statesman, a divine thy sentiments, and as justly will he fret himself about the miseries of *his* condition. Nay, have there not been men, so totally forsaken by all feeling of existence, that they have held the life and nature of mortals as a nothing, a painful, short and tarnished gleam of being? Did the forms of active men rise up living in thy soul; were thy breast warmed by a sympathetic fire; did the vocation which proceeds from within diffuse itself over all thy frame; were the tones of thy voice, the words of thy mouth, delightful to hear; didst thou feel thy own being sufficient for thyself,—then wouldst thou doubtless seek place and opportunity likewise to feel it in others."

Amid such words and thoughts, our friend undressed himself, and went to bed, with feelings of the deepest satisfaction. A whole romance of what he now hoped to do, instead of the

worthless occupations which should have filled the approaching day, arose within his mind; pleasant fantasies softly conducted him into the kingdom of sleep, and then gave him up to their sisters, sweet dreams, who received him with open arms, and encircled his reposing head with the images of heaven.

Early in the morning he was awake again, and thinking of the business that lay before him. He revisited the house of the forsaken family, where his presence caused no small surprise. He introduced his proposal in the most prudent manner, and soon found both more and fewer difficulties than he had anticipated. For one thing, the evil was already *done;* and though people of a singularly strict and harsh temper are wont to set themselves forcibly against the past, and thus to increase the evil that cannot now be remedied; yet, on the other hand, what is actually done exerts a resistless effect upon most minds; an event which lately appeared impossible takes its place, so soon as it has really occurred, with what occurs daily. It was accordingly soon settled, that Herr Melina was to wed the daughter; who, however, in return, because of her misconduct, was to take no marriage portion with her, and to promise that she would leave her aunt's legacy, for a few years more, at an easy interest, in her father's hands. But the second point, touching a civil provision for Melina, was attended with greater difficulties. They liked not

to have the luckless pair continually living in their sight; they would not have a present object ever calling to their minds the connexion of a mean vagabond with so respectable a family, a family which could number even a Superintendent among its relatives; nay, it was not to be looked for, that the government would trust him with a charge. Both parents were alike inflexible in this matter; and Wilhelm, who pleaded very hard, unwilling that a man whom he contemned should return to the stage, and convinced that he deserved not such a happiness, could not, with all his rhetoric, produce the slenderest impression. Had he known the secret springs of the business, he would have spared himself the labour of attempting to persuade. The father would gladly have kept his daughter near him, but he hated the young man, because his wife herself had cast an eye upon him; while the latter could not bear to have, in her stepdaughter, a happy rival constantly before her eyes. So Melina, with his young wife, who already manifested no dislike to go and see the world, and be seen of it, was obliged, against his will, to set forth in a few days, and seek some place in any acting company where he could find one.

CHAPTER XV.

HAPPY season of youth! Happy times of the first wish of love! A man is then like a child that can for hours delight itself with an echo, can support alone the charges of conversation, and be well contented with its entertainment, if the unseen interlocutor will but repeat the concluding syllables of the words addressed to it.

So was it with Wilhelm in the earlier and still more in the later period of his passion for Mariana: he transferred the whole wealth of his own emotions to her, and looked upon himself as a beggar that lived upon her alms; and as a landscape is more delightful, nay, is delightful only, when it is enlightened by the sun, so likewise in his eyes were all things beautified and glorified which lay round her or related to her.

Often would he stand in the theatre behind the scenes, to which he had obtained the freedom of access from the manager. In such cases, it is true, the perspective magic was away; but the far mightier sorcery of love then first began to act. For hours he could stand by the sooty light-frame, inhaling the vapour of tallow lamps, looking out at his mistress; and when she returned and cast a

kindly glance upon him, he could feel himself lost in ecstasy, and though close upon laths and bare spars, he seemed transported into paradise. The stuffed bunches of wool denominated lambs, the water-falls of tin, the paper roses, and the one-sided huts of straw, awoke in him fair poetic visions of an old pastoral world. Nay, the very dancing girls, ugly as they were when seen at hand, did not always inspire him with disgust: they trod the same floor with Mariana. So true is it, that love, which alone can give their full charm to rose-bowers, myrtle-groves, and moonshine, can also communicate, even to shavings of wood and paper clippings, the aspect of animated nature. It is so strong a spice, that tasteless, or even nauseous soups, are by it rendered palatable.

So potent a spice was certainly required to render tolerable, nay at last agreeable, the state in which he usually found her chamber, not to say herself.

Brought up in a substantial burgher's house, cleanliness and order were the element in which he breathed; and inheriting as he did a portion of his father's taste for finery, it had always been his care, in boyhood, to furbish up his chamber, which he regarded as his little kingdom, in the stateliest fashion. His bed-curtains were drawn together in large massy folds, and fastened with tassels, as they are usually seen in thrones: he had got himself a carpet for the middle of his chamber, and a

finer one for his table; his books and apparatus he had, almost instinctively, arranged in such a manner, that a Dutch painter might have imitated them for groups in his still-life scenes. He had a white cap, which he wore straight up like a turban; and the sleeves of his night-gown he had caused to be cut short, in the mode of the Orientals. By way of reason for this, he pretended, that long wide sleeves encumbered him in writing. When, at night, the boy was quite alone, and no longer dreaded any interruption, he usually wore a silk sash tied round his body, and often, it is said, he would fix in his girdle a sword, which he had appropriated from an old armoury, and thus repeat and declaim his tragic parts; nay, in the same trim he would kneel down and say his evening prayer.

In those times, how happy did he think the players, whom he saw possessed of so many splendid garments, trappings, and arms; and in the constant practice of a lofty demeanour, the spirit of which seemed to hold up a mirror of whatever, in the opinions, relations and passions of men, was stateliest and most magnificent. Of a piece with this, thought Wilhelm, is also the player's domestic life; a series of dignified transactions and employments, whereof their appearance on the stage is but the outmost portion; like as a mass of silver, long simmering about in the purifying furnace, at length gleams with a bright and beautiful tinge

in the eye of the refiner, and shews him, at the same time, that the metal now is cleansed of all foreign mixture.

Great, accordingly, was his surprise at first, when he found himself beside his mistress, and looked down, through the cloud that environed him, on tables, stools, and floor. The wrecks of a transient, light and false decoration lay, like the glittering coat of a skinned fish, dispersed in wild disorder. The implements of personal cleanliness, combs, soap, towels, with the traces of their use, were not concealed. Music, portions of plays and pairs of shoes, washes and Italian flowers, pincushions, hair-skewers, rouge-pots and ribbons, books and straw-hats; no article despised the neighbourhood of another; all were united by a common element, powder and dust. Yet as Wilhelm scarcely noticed in her presence aught except herself; nay, as all that had belonged to her, that she had touched, was dear to him, he came at last to feel, in this chaotic housekeeping, a charm which the proud pomp of his own habitation never had communicated. When, on this hand, he lifted aside her boddice, to get at the harpsichord; on that, threw her gown upon the bed, that he might find a seat; when she herself, with careless freedom, did not seek to hide from him many a natural office, which, out of respect for the presence of a second person, is usually concealed; he felt as if by all this he was coming nearer to her every

moment, as if the communion betwixt them was fastening by invisible ties.

It was not so easy to reconcile with his previous ideas the behaviour of the other players whom, on his first visits, he often met with in her house. Ever busied in being idle, they seemed to think least of all on their employment and object; the poetic worth of a piece they were never heard to speak of, or to judge of, right or wrong; their continual question was simply: How much will it *bring?* Is it a stock-piece? How long will it run? How often think you it may be played? and other inquiries and observations of the same description. Then commonly they broke out against the manager, that he was stinted with his salaries, and especially unjust to this one or to that; then against the public, how seldom it recompensed the right man with its approval, how the German theatre was daily improving, how the player was ever growing more honoured, and never could be honoured enough. Then they would descant largely about wine-gardens and coffeehouses; how much debt one of their comrades had contracted, and must suffer a deduction from his wages on account of; about the disproportion of their weekly salaries; about the cabals of some rival company: on which occasions, they would pass again to the great and merited attention which the public now bestowed upon them; not forgetting the importance of

the theatre to the improvement of the nation and the world.

All this, which had already given Wilhelm many a restless hour, came again into his memory, as he walked his horse slowly homewards, and contemplated the various occurrences in which he had so lately been engaged. The commotion produced by a girl's elopement, not only in a decent family, but in a whole town, he had seen with his own eyes; the scenes upon the highway and in the Amthaus, the views entertained by Melina, and whatever else he had witnessed, again arose before him, and brought his keen forecasting mind into a sort of anxious disquietude; which no longer to endure, he struck the spurs into his horse, and hastened towards home.

By this expedient, however, he but ran to meet new vexations. Werner, his friend and future brother-in-law, was waiting for him, to begin a serious, important, unexpected conversation.

Werner was one of those tried sedate persons, with fixed principles and habits, whom we usually denominate cold characters, because on emergencies they do not burst forth quickly or very visibly. Accordingly his intercourse with Wilhelm was a perpetual contest; which, however, only served to knit their mutual affection the more firmly; for, notwithstanding their very opposite modes of thinking, each found his account in communicating with the other.

Werner was very well contented with himself, that he could now and then lay a bridle on the exalted but commonly extravagant spirit of his friend; and Wilhelm often felt a glorious triumph, when the staid and thinking Werner could be hurried on with him in warm ebullience. Thus each exercised himself upon the other; they had been accustomed to see each other daily; and you would have said, their eagerness to meet and talk together had even been augmented by the inability of each to understand the other. At bottom, however, being both good-hearted men, they were both travelling together towards one goal; and they could never understand how it was that neither of the two could bring the other over to his own persuasion.

For some time, Werner had observed, that Wilhelm's visits had been rarer; that in his favourite discussions he was brief and absent-minded; that he no longer abandoned himself to the vivid depicting of singular conceptions; tokens by which, in truth, a mind getting rest and contentment in the presence of a friend, is most clearly indicated. The considerate and punctual Werner first sought for the root of the evil in his own conduct; till some rumours of the neighbourhood set him on the proper trace, and some unguarded proceedings on the part of Wilhelm brought him nearer to the certainty. He began his investigation; and ere long discovered, that for some time Wilhelm had been openly visiting an actress, had often spoken with

her at the theatre, and accompanied her home. On discovering the nightly visits of his friend, Werner's anxiety increased to a painful extent; for he heard that Mariana was a most seductive girl, who probably was draining the youth of his money, while, at the same time, she herself was supported by another and a very worthless lover.

Having pushed his suspicions as near certainty as possible, he had resolved to make a sharp attack on Wilhelm: he was now in full readiness with all his preparations, when his friend returned, discontented and unsettled, from his journey.

That very evening, Werner laid the whole of what he knew before him, first calmly, then with the emphatic earnestness of a well-meaning friendship. He left no point of the subject undiscussed; and made Wilhelm taste abundance of those bitter things, which men at ease are accustomed, with virtuous spite, to dispense so liberally to men in love. Yet, as might have been expected, he accomplished little. Wilhelm answered with interior commotion, though with great confidence: "You know not the girl! Appearances, perhaps, are not to her advantage; but I am certain of her faithfulness and virtue, as of my love."

Werner maintained his accusations, and offered to bring proofs and witnesses. Wilhelm waived these offers; and parted with his friend, out of humour and unhinged; like a man in whose jaw some unskilful dentist has been seizing a diseased

yet fast-rooted tooth, and tugging at it harshly to no purpose.

It exceedingly dissatisfied Wilhelm to see the fair image of Mariana overclouded and almost deformed in his soul, first by the capricious fancies of his journey, and then by the unfriendliness of Werner. He adopted the surest means of restoring it to complete brilliancy and beauty, by setting out at night, and hastening to his wonted destination. She received him with extreme joy: on entering the town, he had ridden past her window; she had been expecting his company; and it is easy to conceive that all scruples were soon driven from his heart. Nay, her tenderness again opened up the whole stores of his confidence; and he told her how deeply the public, how deeply his friend, had sinned against her.

Much lively talking led them at length to speak about the earliest period of their acquaintance; the recollection of which forms always one of the most delightful topics between two lovers. The first steps that introduce us to the enchanted garden of love are so full of pleasure, the first prospects so charming, that every one is willing to recall them to his memory. Each party seeks a preference above the other; each has loved sooner, more devotedly; and each, in this contest, would rather be conquered than conquer.

Wilhelm repeated to his mistress, what he had

so often told her before, how she soon abstracted his attention from the play, and fixed it on herself; how her form, her acting, her voice inspired him; how at last he went only on the nights when *she* was to appear; how, in fine, having ventured behind the scenes, he had often stood by her unheeded: and he spoke with rapture of the happy evening when he found an opportunity to do her some civility, and lead her into conversation.

Mariana, on the other hand, would not allow that she had failed so long to notice him; she declared that she had seen him in the public walk, and for proof she described the clothes which he wore on that occasion; she affirmed that even then he pleased her before all others, and made her long for his acquaintance.

How gladly did Wilhelm credit all this! How gladly did he catch at the persuasion, that when he used to approach her, she had felt herself drawn towards him by some resistless influence; that she had gone with him between the side-scenes, on purpose to see him more closely, and get acquainted with him; and that, in fine, when his backwardness and modesty were not to be conquered, she had herself afforded him an opportunity, and as it were, compelled him to hand her a glass of lemonade!

In this affectionate contest, which they pursued

through all the little circumstances of their brief romance, the hours passed rapidly away; and Wilhelm left his mistress, with his heart at peace, and firmly determined on proceeding forthwith to the execution of his project.

CHAPTER XVI.

The necessary preparations for his journey his father and mother had attended to; some little matters, that were yet wanting to his equipage, delayed his departure for a few days. Wilhelm took advantage of this opportunity to write to Mariana, meaning thus to bring to a decision the proposal, about which she had hitherto avoided speaking with him. The letter was as follows:

"Under the kind veil of night, which has often overshadowed us together, I sit and think, and write to thee; all that I meditate and do is solely on thy account. O Mariana! with me, the happiest of men, it is as with a bridegroom who stands in the festive chamber, dreaming of the new universe that is to be unfolded to him, and by means of him, and, while the holy ceremonies are proceeding, transports himself in longing thought before the mysterious curtains, from which the loveliness of love whispers out to him.

"I have constrained myself not to see thee for a few days; the sacrifice was easy, when united with the hope of such a recompense, of being always with thee, of remaining ever thine! Need I

repeat what I desire? I must; for it seems as if yet thou hadst never understood me.

"How often, in the low tones of true love, which, though wishing to gain all, dares speak but little, have I sought in thy heart for the desire of a perpetual union. Thou hast understood me, doubtless; for in thy own heart the same wish must have arisen; thou *didst* comprehend me, in that kiss, in the intoxicating peace of that happy evening. Thy silence testified to me thy modest honour; and how did it increase my love! Another woman would have had recourse to artifice, that she might ripen by superfluous sunshine the purpose of her lover's heart, might elicit a proposal, and secure a firm promise. Mariana, on the contrary, drew back; she repelled the half-opened confidence of him she loved, and sought to conceal her approving feelings by apparent indifference. But I have understood thee! What a miserable creature must I be, if I did not by these tokens recognise the pure and generous love that cares not for itself, but for its object! Confide in me, and fear nothing. We belong to one another; and neither of us leaves aught or forsakes aught, if we live for one another.

"Take it, then, this hand! Solemnly I offer this unnecessary pledge! All the joys of love we have already felt; but there is a new blessedness in the firm thought of duration. Ask not how;

care not. Fate takes care of love, and the more certainly, that love is easy to provide for.

" My heart has long ago forsaken my paternal home; it is with thee, as my spirit hovers on the stage. O my darling! to what other man has it been given to unite all his wishes, as it is to me? No sleep falls upon my eyes; like the redness of an everlasting dawn, thy love and thy happiness still glow around me.

" Scarcely can I hold myself from springing up, from rushing forth to thee, and forcing thy consent, and, with the first light of to-morrow, pressing forward into the world for the mark I aim at. But no! I will restrain myself; I will not act like a thoughtless fool; will do nothing rashly; my plan is laid, and I will execute it calmly.

" I am acquainted with the Manager Serlo; my journey leads me directly to the place where he is. For above a year he has frequently been wishing that his people had a touch of my vivacity, and my delight in theatrical affairs; I shall doubtless be very kindly received. Into your company I cannot enter, for more than one reason. Serlo's theatre, moreover, is at such a distance from this, that I may there begin my undertaking without any apprehension of discovery. With him I shall thus at once find a tolerable maintenance; I shall look about me in the public, get acquainted with the company, and then come back for thee.

" Mariana, thou seest what I can force myself to do, that I may certainly obtain thee. For such a period not to see thee; for such a period to know thee in the wide world! I dare not view it closely. But yet if I recal to memory thy love, which assures me of all; if thou shalt not disdain my prayer, and give me, ere we part, thy hand, before the priest; I may then depart in peace. It is but a form between us, yet a form so touching; the blessing of Heaven to the blessing of the earth. Close by thy house, in the Ritterschaftliche chapel, the ceremony will be soon and secretly performed.

" For the beginning I have gold enough; we will share it between us; it will suffice for both; and before that is finished, Heaven will send us more.

" No, my darling, I am not downcast about the issue. What is begun with so much cheerfulness must reach a happy end. I have never doubted that a man may force his way through the world, if he really is in earnest about it; and I feel strength enough within me to provide a liberal support for two, and many more. The world, we are often told, is unthankful; I have never yet discovered that it was unthankful, if one knew how, in the proper way, to do it service. My whole soul burns at the idea, that *I* shall at length step forth and speak to the hearts of men something they have long been yearning to hear. How many thousand times has a feeling of disgust

passed through me, alive as I am to the nobleness of the stage, when I have seen the poorest creatures fancying they could speak a word of power to the hearts of the people. The tone of a man's voice singing treble sounds far pleasanter and purer to my ear: it is incredible how these blockheads, in their coarse ineptitude, deform things beautiful and venerable.

" The theatre has often been at variance with the pulpit; they ought not, I think, to quarrel. How much is it to be wished, that in both the celebration of nature and of God were intrusted to none but men of noble minds! These are no dreams, my darling! As I have felt in thy heart that thou couldst love, I seize the dazzling thought, and say—no, I will not say, but I will hope and trust—that we two shall yet appear to men as a pair of chosen spirits, to unlock their hearts, to touch the recesses of their nature, and prepare for them celestial joys, as surely as the joys I have tasted with thee deserved to be named celestial, since they drew us from ourselves and exalted us above ourselves.

" I cannot end. I have already said too much; and know whether I have yet said all, all that concerns *thy* interests; for to express the agitations of the vortex that whirls round within myself is beyond the power of words.

" Yet take this sheet, my love! I have again read it over; I observe it ought to have begun more

cautiously; but it contains in it all that thou hast need to know; enough to prepare thee for the hour when I shall return with the lightness of love to thy bosom. I seem to myself like a prisoner, that is secretly filing his irons asunder. I bid good night to my soundly-sleeping parents. Farewell, my beloved! farewell! For this time I conclude; my eyelids have more than once dropt together: it is now deep in the night."

CHAPTER XVII.

It seemed as if the day would never end, while Wilhelm, with the letter beautifully folded in his pocket, longed to meet with Mariana. The darkness had scarcely come on, when, contrary to custom, he glided forth to her house. His plan was to announce himself for the night; then to quit his mistress for a short time, leaving the letter with her ere he went away; and, returning at a late hour, to obtain her reply, her consent, or to force it from her by the power of his caresses. He flew into her arms, and pressed her in rapture to his bosom. The vehemence of his emotions prevented him at first from noticing that, on this occasion, she did not receive him with her wonted heartiness; yet she could not long conceal her painful situation, but imputed it to slight indisposition. She complained of a headache, and would not by any means consent to his proposal of coming back that night. Suspecting nothing wrong, he ceased to urge her; but felt that this was not the moment for delivering his letter. He retained it, therefore; and as several of her movements and observations courteously compelled him to take his leave, in the tumult of unsatiable love he

snatched up one of her neck-kerchiefs, squeezed it into his pocket, and forced himself away from her lips and her door. He returned home, but could not rest there; he again dressed himself, and went out into the open air.

After walking up and down several streets, he was accosted by a stranger inquiring for a certain inn. Wilhelm offered to conduct him to the house. In the way, his new acquaintance asked about the names of the streets, the owners of various extensive edifices, then about some police-regulations of the town; so that by the time they reached the door of the inn, they had fallen into quite an interesting conversation. The stranger compelled his guide to enter, and drink a glass of punch with him. Ere long he had told his name and place of abode, as well as the business that had brought him hither; and he seemed to expect a like confidence from Wilhelm. Our friend, without any hesitation, mentioned his name and the place where he lived.

"Are you not a grandson of the old Meister, who possessed that beautiful collection of pictures and statues?" inquired the stranger.

"Yes, I am so. I was ten years old when my grandfather died; and it grieved me very much to see these fine things sold."

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

"You know of it, then?"

"O yes; I saw that treasure ere it left your house. Your grandfather was not merely a collector, he had a thorough knowledge of art. In his younger happy years, he had been in Italy; and had brought back with him such treasures as could not now be got for any price. He possessed some exquisite pictures by the best masters. When you looked through his drawings, you would scarcely have believed your eyes. Among his marbles were some invaluable fragments; his series of bronzes was instructive and well chosen; he had also collected medals, in considerable quantity, relating to history and art; his few gems deserved the greatest praise. In addition to all which, the whole was tastefully arranged, although the rooms and hall of the old house had not been symmetrically built."

"You may conceive," said Wilhelm, "what we young ones lost, when all these articles were taken down and sent away. It was the first mournful period of my life. I cannot tell you how empty the chambers looked, as we saw those objects vanishing one by one, which had amused us from our earliest years, and which we considered equally unalterable with the house or the town itself."

"If I mistake not, your father put the capital produced by the sale into some neighbour's stock, with whom he commenced a sort of partnership in trade."

"Quite right; and their joint speculations have

prospered in their hands. Within the last twelve years, they have greatly increased their fortunes, and are now the more vehemently bent on gaining. Old Werner also has a son, who suits that sort of occupation much better than I."

"I am sorry the place should have lost such an ornament to it as your grandfather's cabinet was. I saw it but a short time prior to the sale; and, I may say, I was myself the cause of its being then disposed of. A rich nobleman, a great amateur, but one who, in such important transactions, does not trust to his own solitary judgment, had sent me hither, and requested my advice. For six days I examined the collection; on the seventh, I advised my friend to pay down the required sum without delay. You were then a lively boy, oft running about me; you explained to me the subjects of the pictures; and in general, I recollect, could give me a very good account of the whole cabinet."

"I remember such a person; but I should not have recognised him in you."

"It is a good while ago, and we all change more or less. You had, if I mistake not, a favourite piece among them, to which you were ever calling my attention."

"O! yes; it represented the history of that king's son dying of a secret love for his father's bride."

"It was not, certainly, the best picture; badly

grouped, of no superiority in colouring, and executed altogether with great mannerism."

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

"Your grandfather seemed to have thought otherwise. The greater part of his collection consisted of excellent pieces; in which, represent what they might, one constantly admired the talent of the master. This picture of yours had accordingly been hung in the outermost room,—a proof that he valued it slightly."

"It was in that room where we young ones used to play, and where the piece you mention made on me a deep impression; which not even your criticism, greatly as I honour it, could obliterate, if we stood before the picture at this moment. What a melancholy object is a youth that must shut up within himself the sweet impulse, the fairest inheritance which nature has given us, and conceal in his own bosom the fire which should warm and animate himself and others, so that his vitals are wasted away by unutterable pains! I feel a pity for the ill-fated man that would consecrate himself to another, when the heart of that other has already found a worthy object of true and pure affection."

"Such feelings are, however, very foreign to the principles by which a lover of art examines the works of great painters; and most probably you,

too, had the cabinet continued in your family, would have by and by acquired a relish for the works themselves; and have learned to see in the performances of art something more than yourself and your individual inclinations."

"In truth, the sale of that cabinet grieved me very much at the time; and often since I have thought of it with regret; but, when I consider that it was a necessary means of awakening a taste in me, of developing a talent, which will operate far more powerfully on my history than ever those lifeless pictures could have done, I easily content myself, and honour destiny, which knows how to bring about what is best for me, and what is best for every one."

"It gives me pain to hear this word destiny in the mouth of a young person, just at the age when men are commonly accustomed to ascribe their own violent inclinations to the will of higher natures."

"Do you then believe in no destiny? No power that rules over us, and directs all for our ultimate advantage?"

"The question is not now of my belief; nor is this the place to explain how I may have attempted to form for myself some not impossible conception of things, which are incomprehensible to all of us: the question here is: What mode of viewing them will profit us the most? The fabric of our life is formed of necessity and chance; the reason of man takes its station between them, and may

rule them both: it treats the necessary as the ground-work of its being; the accidental it can direct, and guide, and employ for its own purposes; and only while this principle of reason stands firm and inexpugnable, does man deserve to be named the god of this lower world. But woe to him, who, from his youth, has used himself to search in necessity for something of arbitrary will; to ascribe to chance a sort of reason, which it is a matter of religion to obey! Is conduct like this aught else than to renounce one's understanding, and give unrestricted scope to one's inclinations? We think it is a kind of piety to move along without consideration; to let accidents that please us determine our conduct; and, finally, to bestow on the result of such a vacillating life the name of providential guidance."

"Was it never your case that some little circumstance induced you to strike into a certain path, where some accidental occurrence ere long met you, and a series of unexpected incidents at length brought you to some point which you yourself had scarcely once contemplated? Should not lessons of this kind teach us obedience to destiny, confidence in some such guide?"

"With opinions like these, no woman could maintain her virtue, no man could keep the money in his purse; for occasions enough are occurring to get rid of both. He alone is worthy of respect, who knows what is of use to himself and others, and

who labours to control his self-will. Each man has his own fortune in his hands; as the artist has a piece of rude matter, which he is to fashion to a certain shape. But the art of living rightly is like all arts: the capacity alone is born with us; it must be learned, and practised with incessant care."

These discussions our two speculators carried on between them to considerable length; at last they parted, without seeming to have wrought any special conviction in each other, but engaging to meet at an appointed place next day.

Wilhelm walked up and down the streets for a time; he heard a sound of clarionets, hunting-horns, and bassoons; it swelled his bosom with delightful feelings. It was some travelling showmen that produced this pleasant music. He spoke with them: for a piece of coin they followed him to Mariana's house. The space in front of the door was adorned with lofty trees; under them he placed his artists; and himself resting on a bench at some distance, he surrendered his mind without restraint to the hovering tones, which floated round him, in the cool mellow night. Stretched out beneath the kind stars, he felt his existence like a golden dream. "She, too, hears these flutes," said he within his heart; "she feels whose remembrance, whose love of her it is that makes the night full of music. In distance even we are united by these melodies; as in every separation, by the ethereal accordance of love. Ah! two hearts

that love each other are as two magnetic needles; whatever moves the one must move the other with it; for it is one power that works in both, one principle that pervades them. Can I in her arms conceive the possibility of parting from her? And yet I am soon to be far from her; to seek out a sanctuary for our love, and then to have her ever with me.

"How oft, when absent from her, and lost in thoughts about her, happening to touch a book, a piece of dress or aught else, have I thought I felt her hand, so entirely was I invested with her presence! And to recollect those moments which shunned the light of day and the eye of the cold spectator; which to enjoy the gods might determine to forsake the painless condition of their pure blessedness! To recollect them? As if by memory we could renew the tumultuous thrilling of that cup of joy, which encircles our senses with celestial bonds, and lifts them beyond all earthly hindrances. And her form"——He lost himself in thoughts of her; his rest passed away into longing; he leaned against a tree, and cooled his warm cheek on its bark; and the winds of the night wafted speedily aside the breath, which proceeded in sighs from his pure and impassioned bosom. He groped for the neck-kerchief he had taken from her; but it was forgotten, it lay in his other clothes. His frame quivered with emotion.

The music ceased, and he felt as if fallen from

the element in which his thoughts had hitherto been soaring. His restlessness increased, as his feelings were no longer nourished and assuaged by the melody. He sat down upon her threshold, and felt more at peace. He kissed the brass knocker of her door; he kissed the threshold over which her feet went out and in, and warmed it by the fire of his breast. He again sat still for a moment, and figured her behind her curtains in the white night-gown, with the red ribbon round her head, in sweet repose; he almost fancied that he was himself so near her, she must needs be dreaming of him. His thoughts were beautiful, like the spirits of the twilight; rest and desire alternated within him; love ran with a quivering hand, in a thousand moods, over all the chords of his soul: it was as if the spheres stood mute above him, suspending their eternal song to watch the low melodies of his heart.

Had he then had about him the master-key with which he used to open Mariana's door, he could not have restrained himself from penetrating into the sanctuary of love. Yet he went away slowly; he slanted half-dreaming in beneath the trees, set himself for home, and constantly turned round again; at last with an effort, he constrained himself, and actually departed. At the corner of the street, looking back yet once, he imagined that he saw Mariana's door open, and a dark figure issue from it. He was too distant for seeing clearly;

and, before he could exert himself and look sharply, the appearance was already lost in the night; yet afar off he thought he saw it again gliding past a white house. He stood and strained his eyes; but, ere he could arouse himself and follow the phantom, it had vanished. Whither should he pursue it? What street had the man taken, if it were a man?

A nightly traveller, when at some turn of his path, he has seen the country for an instant illuminated by a flash of lightning, will, with dazzled eyes, next moment, seek in vain for the preceding forms and the connexion of his road: so was it in the eyes and the heart of Wilhelm. And as a spirit of midnight, which awakens unutterable terror, is, in the succeeding moments of composure, regarded as a child of imagination; and the fearful vision leaves doubts without end behind it in the soul: so likewise was Wilhelm in extreme disquietude, as, leaning on the corner-stone of the street, he heeded not the clear grey of the morning, and the crowing of the cocks; till the early trades began to stir, and drove him home.

On his way, he had almost effaced the unexpected delusion from his mind by the most sufficient reasons, yet the fine harmonious feelings of the night, on which he now looked back as if they too had been a vision, were also gone. To soothe his heart, and put the last seal on his returning belief, he took the neck-kerchief from the pocket of the

dress he had been last wearing. The rustling of a letter which fell out of it took the kerchief away from his lips; he lifted and read:

"As I love thee, little fool, what ailed thee last night? This evening I will come again. I can easily suppose that thou art sick of staying here so long: but have patience; at the fair I will return for thee. And observe, never more put me on that abominable black-green-brown jacket; thou lookest in it like the witch of Endor. Did I not send the white nightgown that I might have a snowy little lambkin in my arms? Send thy letters always by the ancient sibyl; the Devil himself has selected her as Iris."

WILHELM MEISTER'S

APPRENTICESHIP.

BOOK II.

WILHELM MEISTER.

CHAPTER I.

WHOEVER strives in our sight with vehement force to reach an object, be it one that we praise or that we blame, may count on exciting an interest in our minds; but when once the matter is decided, we turn our eyes away from him; whatever once lies finished and done, can no longer at all fix our attention, especially if we at first prophesied an evil issue to the undertaking.

Therefore we shall not try to entertain our readers with any circumstantial account of the grief and desperation into which the ill-fated Wilhelm was cast, when he saw his hopes so unexpectedly and instantaneously ruined. On the contrary, we shall even pass over several years, and again take up our friend, where we hope to find him in some sort of activity and comfort. First, however, we must shortly set forth a few matters necessary for maintaining the connexion of our narrative.

The pestilence, or a malignant fever, rages with

more fierceness, and speedier effect, if the frame which it attacks was before healthy and full of vigour; and in like manner, when a luckless, unlooked-for fate overtook the wretched Wilhelm, his whole being in a moment was laid waste. As when by chance, in the preparation of some artificial fireworks, any part of the composition kindles before its time, and the skilfully bored and loaded barrels,—which, arranged, and burning after a settled plan, would have painted in the air a magnificently varying series of flaming images,—now hissing and roaring, promiscuously explode with a confused and dangerous crash; so, in our hero's case, did happiness and hope, pleasure and joys, realities and dreams, clash together with destructive tumult, all at once in his bosom. In such desolate moments, the friend that has hastened to deliverance stands fixed in astonishment; and for him who suffers, it is a benefit that sense forsakes him.

Days of pain unmixed, ever-returning, and purposely renewed, succeeded next; still even these are to be regarded as a grace from nature. In such hours Wilhelm had not yet quite lost his mistress; his pains were indefatigable struggles, still to hold fast the happiness that was gliding from his soul; again to luxuriate in thought on the possibility of it; to procure a brief after-life for his joys that had departed for ever. Thus one may look upon a body, as not utterly dead, while the putrefaction lasts; while the forces that in vain

seek to work by their old appointment, still labour in dissevering the particles of that frame which they once animated; and not till all is disunited and inert, till we see the whole mouldered down into indifferent dust, not till then does there rise in us the mournful vacant sentiment of death,—death, not to be recalled save by the breath of Him that lives for ever.

In a temper so new, so entire, so full of love, there was much to tear asunder, to desolate, to kill; and even the healing force of youth gave nourishment and violence to the power of sorrow. The stroke had extended to the roots of his whole existence. Werner, by necessity his confidant, attacked the hated passion itself with fire and sword, resolutely zealous to search into the monster's inmost life. The opportunity was lucky, the evidence at hand, and many were the histories and narratives with which he backed it out. With such unrelenting vehemence did he make his advances, leaving his friend not even the respite of the smallest momentary self-deception, but treading down every lurking-place, in which he might have saved himself from desperation, that Nature, not inclined to let her darling perish utterly, visited him with sickness, to make an outlet for him on the other side.

A violent fever, with its train of consequences, medicines, overstraining and exhaustion; besides the unwearied attentions of his family, the love of

his brothers and sisters, which first becomes truly sensible in times of distress and want, were so many fresh occupations to his mind, and thus formed a kind of painful entertainment. It was not till he grew better, in other words, till his strength was exhausted, that Wilhelm first looked down with horror into the gloomy abyss of a barren misery, as one looks down into the hollow crater of an extinguished volcano.

He now bitterly reproached himself, that after so great a loss he could yet enjoy one painless, restful, indifferent moment. He despised his own heart, and longed for the balm of tears and lamentation.

To awaken these again within him, he would recall to memory the scenes of his by-gone happiness. He would paint them to his fancy in the liveliest colours, transport himself again into the days when they were real; and when standing on the highest elevation he could reach, when the sunshine of past times again seemed to animate his limbs and heave his bosom, he would look back into the fearful chasm, would feast his eye on its dismembering depth, then plunge down into its horrors, and thus force from nature the bitterest pains. With such repeated cruelty did he tear himself in pieces; for youth, which is so rich in undeveloped force, knows not what it squanders, when to the anguish which a loss occasions, it adds so many sorrows of its own production, as if it

meant then first to give the right value to what is gone for ever. He likewise felt so convinced that his present loss was the sole, the first, the last which he ever could experience in life, that he turned away from every consolation which aimed at shewing that his sorrows might be less than endless.

CHAPTER II.

Accustomed in this way to torment himself, he now also attacked what still remained to him, what next to love, and along with it, had given him the highest joys and hopes, his talent as a poet and actor, with spiteful criticisms on every side. In his labours he could see nothing but a shallow imitation of prescribed forms, without intrinsic worth; he looked on them as stiff school-exercises, destitute of any spark of nature, truth, or inspiration. His poems now appeared nothing more than a monotonous arrangement of syllables, in which the most trite emotions and thoughts were dragged along and kept together by a miserable rhyme. And thus did he also deprive himself of every expectation, every pleasure, which, on this quarter at least, might have aided the recovery of his peace.

With his theatric talent it fared no better. He blamed himself for not having sooner detected the vanity, on which alone this pretension had been founded. His figure, his gait, his movements, his mode of declamation were severally taxed; he decisively renounced every species of advantage or

merit, that might have raised him above the common run of men, and so doing he increased his mute despair to the highest pitch. For, if it is hard to give up a woman's love, no less painful is the task to part from the fellowship of the muses, to declare ourselves for ever undeserving to be of their community; and to forego the fairest and most immediate kind of approbation, what is openly bestowed on our person, our voice, and our demeanour.

Thus then our friend had long ago entirely resigned himself, and set about devoting his powers with the greatest zeal to the business of trade. To the surprise of friends, and to the great contentment of his father, no one was now more diligent than Wilhelm, on the exchange or in the counting-house, in the sale-room or the warehouses; correspondence and calculations, all that was intrusted to his charge, he attended to and managed with the greatest diligence and zeal. Not in truth with that warm diligence, which to the busy man is its own reward, when he follows with constancy and order the employment he was born for; but with the silent diligence of duty, which has the best principle for its foundation, which is nourished by conviction, and rewarded by conscience; yet, which oft, even when the clearest testimony of our minds is crowning it with approbation, can scarcely repress a struggling sigh.

In this manner he had lived for a time, assidu-

ously busied, and at last persuaded that his former hard trial had been ordained by fate for the best. He felt glad at having thus been timefully, though somewhat harshly warned about the proper path of life; while many are constrained to expiate more heavily, and at a later age, the misconceptions into which their youthful inexperience has betrayed them. For, each man commonly defends himself, as long as possible, from casting out the idols which he worships in his soul; from acknowledging a master error, and admitting any truth which brings him to despair.

Determined as he was to abandon his dearest projects, some time was still necessary to convince him fully of his misfortune. At last, however, he had so completely succeeded by irrefragable reasons in annihilating every hope of love, of poetical performance, or stage-representation, that he took courage to obliterate entirely all the traces of his folly, all that could in any way remind him of it. For this purpose he had lit a fire in his chamber one cool evening, and brought out a little chest of reliques, among which were multitudes of small articles, that, in memorable moments, he had begged or stolen from Mariana. Each withered flower brought to his mind the time when it bloomed fresh among her hair; each little note the happy hour to which it had invited him; each ribbon-knot the lovely resting-place of his head, her beautiful bosom. So occupied, was it not to be expect-

ed that each emotion, which he thought long since quite dead, should again begin to move? Was it not to be expected that the passion, over which, when separated from his mistress, he had gained the victory, should, in the presence of these memorials, again gather strength? We first observe how dreary and disagreeable an overclouded day is, when a single sunbeam pierces through, and offers to us the exhilarating splendour of a serene hour.

Accordingly, it was not without disturbance that he saw these reliques, long preserved as sacred, fade away from before him in smoke and flame. Sometimes he shuddered and hesitated in his task; he had still a pearl necklace and a flowered neckkerchief in his hands, when he resolved to quicken the decaying fire with the poetical attempts of his youth.

Till now he had carefully laid up whatever had proceeded from his pen, since the earliest unfolding of his mind. His papers yet lay tied up in a bundle at the bottom of the chest, where he had packed them, purposing to take them with him in his elopement. How altogether different were his feelings now in opening them, and his feelings then in tying them together!

If we happen, under certain circumstances, to have written and sealed and despatched a letter to a friend; which, however, does not find him, but is brought back to us, and we open it at the distance of some considerable time, a singular emotion is

produced in us, on breaking up our own seal, and conversing with our altered self as with a third person. A similar and deep feeling seized our friend, as he now opened this packet, and threw the scattered leaves into the fire; which was flaming fiercely with its offerings, when Werner entered, expressed his wonder at the blaze, and asked what was the matter.

"I am now giving proof," said Wilhelm, "that I am serious in abandoning a trade for which I was not born." And with these words, he cast the second packet likewise into the fire. Werner made a motion to prevent him, but the business was already done.

"I cannot see how thou shouldst bring thyself to such extremities," said Werner. "Why must these labours, because they are not excellent, be annihilated?"

"Because either a poem is excellent, or it should not be allowed to exist. Because each man, who has no gift for producing first-rate works, should entirely abstain from the pursuit of art, and seriously guard himself against every deception on that subject. For it must be owned, that in all men there is a certain vague desire to imitate whatever is presented to them; and such desires do not prove at all, that we possess the force within us necessary for succeeding in these enterprises. Look at boys, how, whenever any rope-dancers have been visiting the town, they go scrambling up and down, and

balancing on all the planks and beams within their reach, till some other charm calls them off to other sports, for which perhaps they are as little suited. Hast thou never marked it in the circle of our friends? No sooner does a dilettante introduce himself to notice, than numbers of them set themselves to learn playing on his instrument. How many wander back and forward on this bootless way! Happy they, who soon detect the chasm that lies between their wishes and their powers!"

Werner contradicted this opinion; their discussion became lively, and Wilhelm could not without emotion employ against his friend the arguments with which he had already so frequently tormented himself. Werner maintained that it was not reasonable wholly to relinquish a pursuit for which a man had some propensity and talent, merely because he never could succeed in it to full perfection. There were many vacant hours, he said, which might be filled up by it; and then by and by some result might be produced, which would yield a certain satisfaction to himself and others.

Wilhelm, who in this matter was of quite a different opinion, here interrupted him, and said with great vivacity:

"How immensely, my dear friend, do you err in believing that a work, the first presentation of which is to fill the whole soul, can be produced in broken hours scraped together from other extraneous employment. No, the poet must live wholly

for himself, wholly in the objects that delight him. Heaven has furnished him internally with precious gifts; he carries in his bosom a treasure that is ever of itself increasing; he must also live with this treasure, undisturbed from without, in that still blessedness which the rich seek in vain to purchase with their accumulated stores. Look at men, how they struggle after happiness and satisfaction! Their wishes, their toil, their gold are ever hunting restlessly; and after what? After that which the poet has received from nature; the right enjoyment of the world; the feeling of himself in others; the harmonious conjunction of many things that will seldom exist together.

"What is it that keeps men in continual discontent and agitation? It is, that they cannot make realities correspond with their conceptions, that enjoyment steals away from among their hands, that the wished-for comes too late, and nothing reached and acquired produces on the heart the effect, which their longing for it at a distance led them to anticipate. Now, fate has exalted the poet above all this, as if he were a god. He views the conflicting tumult of the passions; sees families and kingdoms raging in aimless commotion; sees those inexplicable enigmas of misunderstanding, which frequently a single monosyllable would suffice to explain, occasioning convulsions unutterably baleful. He has a fellow-feeling of the mournful and the joyful in the fate of all human beings. When the

man of the world is devoting his days to wasting melancholy, for some deep disappointment; or in the ebullience of joy, is going out to meet his happy destiny, the lightly-moved and all-conceiving spirit of the poet, steps forth, like the sun from night to day, and with soft transitions tunes his harp to joy or woe. From his heart, its native soil, springs up the lovely flower of wisdom; and if others, while waking dream, and are pained with fantastic delusions from their every sense, he passes the dream of life like one awake, and the strangest of incidents is to him a part both of the past and of the future. And thus the poet is at once a teacher, a prophet, a friend of gods and men. How! thou wouldst have him to descend from his height to some paltry occupation? He who is fashioned like the bird to hover round the world, to nestle on the lofty summits, to feed on buds and fruits, exchanging gaily one bough for another, *he* ought also to work at the plough like an ox; like a dog to train himself to the harness and draught; or perhaps, tied up in a chain, to guard a farm-yard by his barking?"

Werner, it may well be supposed, had listened with the greatest surprise. "All true," he rejoined, "if men were but made like birds, and though they neither spun nor weaved, could yet spend peaceful days in perpetual enjoyment. If at the approach of winter, they could as easily betake themselves to distant regions, could retire before scarcity, and fortify themselves against frost."

" Poets have lived so," exclaimed Wilhelm, " in times when true nobleness was better reverenced; and so should they ever live. Sufficiently provided for within, they had need of little from without; the gift of communicating lofty emotions and glorious images to men, in melodies and words that charmed the ear, and fixed themselves inseparably on whatever objects they referred to, of old enraptured the world, and served the gifted as a rich inheritance. At the courts of kings, at the tables of the great, beneath the windows of the fair, the sound of them was heard, while the ear and the soul were shut for all beside; and men felt, as we do when delight comes over us, and we stop with rapture if among the dingles we are crossing the voice of the nightingale starts out touching and strong. They found a home in every habitation of the world, and the lowliness of their condition but exalted them the more. The hero listened to their songs; and the conqueror of the earth did reverence to a poet, for he felt that without poets, his own wild and vast existence would pass away like a whirlwind, and be forgotten forever. The lover wished that he could feel his longings and his joys so variedly and so harmoniously as the poet's inspired lips had skill to shew them forth; and even the rich man could not of himself discern such costliness in his idol grandeurs, as when they were presented to him shining in the splendour of the poet's spirit, sen-

sible to all worth, and exalting all. Nay, if thou wilt have it, who but the poet was it that first formed gods for us; that exalted us to them, and brought them down to us."

"My friend," said Werner, after some reflection, "it has often grieved me, that thou shouldst strive by force to banish from thy soul what thou feelest so vividly. I am greatly mistaken, if it were not better for thee, in some degree to yield to these propensities, than to waste thyself by the contradictions of so hard a piece of self-denial, and with the enjoyment of this one guiltless pleasure to renounce the enjoyment of all others."

"Shall I confess it," said the other, "and wilt thou not laugh at me if I acknowledge, that these ideas pursue me constantly; that let me fly them as I will, when I explore my heart, I find all my early wishes yet rooted there, firmly, nay, more firmly than ever? Yet what now remains for me wretched that I am? Ah! whoever should have told me that the arms of my spirit, with which I was grasping at infinity, and hoping with certainty to clasp something great and glorious, would so soon be crushed and smote in pieces; whoever should have told me this, would have brought me to despair. And yet now when judgment has been passed against me; now when *she*, that was to be as my divinity to guide me to my wishes, is gone for ever, what remains but that I yield up my soul to the bitterest woes? O my brother! I will not deceive you: in

my secret purposes, she was as the hook on which the ladder of my hopes was fixed: See! With daring aim the mounting adventurer hovers in the air; the iron breaks, and he lies broken and dismembered on the earth. No, there is no hope, no comfort for me more! I will not," he cried out, springing to his feet, "leave a single fragment of these wretched papers from the flames." He then seized one or two packets of them, tore them up, and threw them into the fire. Werner endeavoured to restrain him, but in vain. "Let me alone," cried Wilhelm, "what should these miserable leaves do here? To me they give neither pleasant recollections, nor pleasant hopes. Shall they remain behind to vex me to the end of my life? Shall they perhaps one day serve the world for a jest, instead of awakening sympathy and horror? Woe to me! my doom is woe! Now I comprehend the wailings of the poets, of the wretched whom necessity has rendered wise. How long did I look upon myself as invulnerable and invincible; and, alas! I am now made to see that a deep and early sorrow can never heal, can never pass away; I feel that I shall take it with me to my grave. No! not a day of my life shall escape this anguish, which at last must crush me down; and *her* image too shall stay with me, shall live and die with me, the image of the worthless—O my friend! if I must speak the feeling of my heart—the perhaps not altogether worthless! Her situation, the crookedness of her destiny, have

a thousand times excused her in my mind. I have been too cruel; you steeled me in your own cold unrelenting harshness; you held my wavering senses captive, and hindered me from doing for myself and her what I owed to both. Who knows to what a state I may have brought her; my conscience by degrees presents to me, in all its heaviness, in what helplessness, in what despair I may have left her. Was it not possible that she might clear herself? Was it not possible? How many misconceptions throw the world into perplexity; how many circumstances may extort forgiveness for the greatest fault? Often do I figure her as sitting by herself in silence, leaning on her elbows. "This," she says, "is the faith, the love he swore to me! With this hard stroke to end the delicious life which made us one!" He broke out into a stream of tears, while he threw himself down with his face upon the table, and wetted the remaining papers with his weeping.

Werner stood beside him in the deepest perplexity. He had not anticipated this fierce ebullition of feeling. More than once he had tried to interrupt his friend, more than once to lead the conversation elsewhere, but in vain; the current was too strong for him. It remained that long-suffering friendship should again take up her office. Werner allowed the first shock of sorrow to pass over, while by his silent presence he testified a pure and honest sympathy. And thus they both remained that evening; Wilhelm sunk in

the dull feeling of old sorrows; and the other terrified at this new out-breaking of a passion, which he thought his prudent counsels and keen persuasion had long since mastered and destroyed.

CHAPTER III.

After such relapses, Wilhelm usually applied himself to business and activity with augmented ardour; and he found it the best means to escape the labyrinth into which he had again been tempted to enter. His attractive way of treating strangers, the ease with which he carried on a correspondence in any living language, more and more increased the hopes of his father and his trading friends; and comforted them in their sorrow for his sickness, the origin of which had not been known, and for the pause which had thus interrupted their plan. They determined a second time on Wilhelm's setting out to travel; and we now find him on horseback, with his saddle-bags behind him, exhilarated by the motion and the free air, approaching the mountains, where he had some affairs to settle.

He winded slowly on his path, through dales and over hills, with a feeling of the greatest satisfaction. Overhanging cliffs, roaring brooks, moss-grown rocky walls, deep precipices, he here saw for the first time; yet his earliest dreams of youth had wandered among such regions. In these scenes, he felt his age renewed; all the sorrows he had

undergone were obliterated from his soul; with unbroken cheerfulness he repeated to himself passages of various poems, particularly of the *Pastor Fido*, which, in these solitary places, flocked in crowds into his mind. He also recollected many pieces of his own songs, and recited them with a peculiar contentment. He peopled the world, which lay before him, with all the forms of the past; and each step into the future was to him full of augury of important operations and remarkable events.

Several men, who came behind him in succession, and saluted him as they passed by to continue their hasty way into the mountains, by steep footpaths, sometimes interrupted his thoughts without attracting his attention to themselves. At last a communicative traveller joined him, and explained the reason of this general pilgrimage.

"At Hochdorf," he said, "there is a play to be acted to-night, and the whole neighbourhood is gathering to see it."

"How!" cried Wilhelm. "In these solitary hills, among these impenetrable forests, has theatric art sought out a place, and built herself a temple? And I am journeying to her festivities!"

"You will wonder more," said the other, "when you learn by whom the piece is to be played. There is in the place a large manufactory which employs many people. The proprietor, who lives, so to speak, remote from all human

society, can find no better means of entertaining his workmen during winter, than allowing them to act plays. He suffers no cards among them; and wishes also to withdraw them from all coarse rustic practices. Thus they pass the long evenings; and to-day, being the old gentleman's birth-day, they are giving a particular festival in honour of him."

Wilhelm came to Hochdorf, where he was to pass the night; and alighted at the manufactory, the proprietor of which stood as a debtor in his list.

When he gave his name, the old man cried in a glad surprise: "Aye, sir, are you the son of that worthy man to whom I owe so many thanks; so long have owed money? Your good father has had so much patience with me, that I should be a knave if I did not pay you speedily and cheerfully. You come at the proper time to see that I am fully in earnest about it."

He then called out his wife, who seemed no less delighted than himself to see the youth: she declared that he was very like his father; and lamented that, having such a multitude of guests already in the house, she could not lodge him for the night.

The account was clear, and quickly settled; Wilhelm put the roll of gold into his pocket, and wished that all his other business might go on so smoothly. At last the play-hour came: they now waited nothing but the coming of the Head Forester,

who at length also arrived; entered with a few hunters, and was received with the greatest reverence.

The company was then led into the playhouse, formed out of a barn that lay close upon the garden. Without any extraordinary taste, both seats and stage were yet decked out in a cheerful and pretty way. One of the painters employed in the manufactory had formerly worked as an understrapper at the Prince's theatre; he had now represented woods and streets, and chambers, somewhat rudely it is true, yet so as to be recognised for such. The piece itself they had borrowed from a strolling company, and shaped it aright according to their own ideas. As it was, it did not fail to yield some entertainment. The plot of two lovers wishing to carry off a girl from her guardian, and mutually from one another, produced a great variety of interesting situations. Being the first play which our friend had witnessed for so long a time, it suggested several reflections to him. It was full of action, but without any true delineation of character. It pleased and delighted. Such are always the beginnings of the scenic art. The rude man is contented, if he see but something going on; the man of more refinement must be made to feel; the man entirely refined desires to reflect.

The players he would willingly have helped here and there; for a very little would have made them greatly better.

His silent meditations were somewhat broken in upon by the tobacco-smoke, which now began to rise in great and greater copiousness. Soon after the commencement of the piece, the Head Forester had lit his pipe; by and by, others took the same liberty. The large dogs, too, which followed these gentlemen, introduced themselves in no pleasant style. At first they had been bolted out; but soon finding the back-door passage, they entered on the stage; ran against the actors; and at last, jumping over the orchestra, joined their masters, who had taken up the front seats in the pit.

For afterpiece an opera was given. A portrait, representing the old gentleman in his bridegroom dress, stood upon an altar, hung with garlands. All the players paid their reverence to it in the most submissive postures. The youngest child came forward dressed in white, and made a speech in verse; by which the whole family, and even the Head Forester himself, whom it brought in mind of his own children, were melted into tears. So ended the piece; and Wilhelm could not help stepping on the stage, to have a closer view of the actresses, to praise them for their good performance, and give them a little counsel for the future.

The remaining business, which our friend in the following days had to transact in various quarters of the hill-country, was not all so pleasant, or so easy to conclude with satisfaction. Many of his

creditors entreated for delay, many were uncourteous, many lied. In conformity with his instructions, he had some of them to sue at law; he was thus obliged to seek out advocates, and give instructions to them, to appear before judges, and to go through many other sorry duties of the same sort.

His case was hardly bettered, when people chanced to incline shewing some attentions to him. He found very few that could any way instruct him; few with whom he could hope to establish a useful commercial correspondence. Unhappily, moreover, the weather now grew rainy, and travelling on horseback in this district came to be attended with insufferable difficulties. He therefore thanked his stars on again getting near the level country; and at the foot of the mountains, looking out into a fertile and beautiful plain, intersected by a smooth-flowing river, and seeing a cheerful little town lying on its banks all glittering in the sunshine, he resolved, though without any special business in the place, to pass a day or two there, that he might refresh both himself and his horse, which the bad roads had considerably injured.

CHAPTER IV.

On alighting at an inn, upon the market-place, he found matters going on very joyously, at least very stirringly. A great company of rope-dancers, leapers, and jugglers, having a Strong Man along with them, had just arrived with their wives and children; and while preparing for a grand exhibition, they kept up a perpetual racket. They first quarrelled with the landlord; then with one another; and if their contention was intolerable, the expressions of their satisfaction were infinitely more so. Undetermined whether he should go or stay, he was standing in the door, looking at some workmen who had just begun to erect a stage in the middle of the square.

A girl, with roses and other flowers for sale, coming by, held out her basket to him, and he purchased a beautiful nosegay; which, like one that had a taste for these things, he tied up in a different fashion, and was looking at it with a satisfied air, when the window of another inn on the opposite side of the square flew up, and a handsome young lady looked out from it. Notwithstanding the distance, he observed that her

face was animated by a pleasant cheerfulness: her fair hair fell carelessly streaming about her neck; she seemed to be looking at the stranger. In a short time afterwards, a boy with a white jacket, and a barber's apron on, came out from the door of her house, towards Wilhelm; saluted him, and said: "The lady at the window bids me ask if you will not favour her with a share of your beautiful flowers."—"They are all at her service," answered Wilhelm, giving the nosegay to this nimble messenger, and making a bow to the fair one, which she returned with a friendly courtesy, and then withdrew from the window.

Amused with this small adventure, he was going up stairs to his chamber, when a young creature sprang against him, and attracted his attention. A short silk waistcoat with slashed Spanish sleeves, tight trowsers with puffs, looked very pretty on the child. Its long black hair was curled, and wound in locks and plaits about the head. He looked at the figure with astonishment, and could not determine whether to take it for a boy or a girl. However, he decided for the latter; and as the child ran by, he took her up in his arms; bade her good-day; and asked her to whom she belonged, though he easily perceived that she must be a member of the vaulting and dancing company lately arrived. She viewed him with a dark sharp side-look, as she pushed herself out of his arms, and ran into the kitchen without making any answer.

On coming up stairs, he found in the large parlour two men practising the small sword, or seeming rather to make trial which was the better fencer. One of them plainly enough belonged to the vaulting company, the other had a somewhat less savage aspect. Wilhelm looked at them, and had reason to admire them both; and as the black-bearded, sturdy contender soon afterwards forsook the place of action, the other with extreme complaisance offered Wilhelm the rapier.

"If you want to take a scholar under your inspection," said our friend, "I am well content to risk a few passes with you."

Accordingly they fought together; and although the stranger greatly over-matched his new competitor, he politely kept declaring that it all depended upon practice; in fact Wilhelm, inferior as he was, had made it evident that he had got his first instructions from a good, solid, thoroughpaced German fencing-master.

Their entertainment was disturbed by the uproar with which the party-coloured brotherhood issued from the inn, to make proclamation of the show, and awaken a desire to see their art, throughout the town. Preceded by a drum, the manager advanced on horseback; he was followed by a female dancer mounted on a corresponding hack, and holding a child before her, all bedizened with ribbons and spangles. Next came the remainder of the troop on foot; some of them carrying chil-

dren on their shoulders in dangerous postures, yet smoothly and lightly; among these the young, dark, black-haired figure again attracted Wilhelm's notice.

Pickleherring ran gaily up and down the crowding multitude, distributing his hand-bills with much practical fun; here smacking the lips of a girl, there breeching a boy, and awakening generally among the people an invincible desire to know more of him.

On the painted flags, the manifold science of the company was visibly delineated; particularly of a Monsieur Narciss and the Demoiselle Landrinette; both of whom, being main characters, had prudently kept back from the procession, thereby to acquire a more dignified consideration, and excite a greater curiosity.

During the procession, Wilhelm's fair neighbour had again appeared at the window; and he did not fail to inquire about her at his new companion. This person, whom, for the present, we shall call Laertes, offered to take Wilhelm over and introduce him. "I and the lady," said he, laughing, "are two fragments of an acting company that made shipwreck here a short while ago. The pleasantness of the place has induced us to stay in it, and consume our little stock of cash in peace, while one of our friends is out seeking some situation for himself and us."

Laertes immediately accompanied his new ac-

quaintance to Philina's door; where he left him for a moment, and ran to a shop hard by for a few sweatmeats. "I am sure you will thank me," said he on returning, "for procuring you so pleasant an acquaintance."

The lady came out from her room in a pair of tight little slippers with high heels, to give them welcome. She had thrown a black mantle over her, above a white negligee, not indeed superstitiously clean, but which, for that very reason, gave her a more frank and domestic air. Her short dress did not hide a pair of the prettiest feet and ancles in the world.

"You are welcome," she cried to Wilhelm, "and I thank you for your charming flowers." She led him into her chamber with the one hand, pressing the nosegay to her breast with the other. Being all seated, and got into a pleasant train of general talk, to which she had the art of giving a delightful turn, Laertes threw a handful of gingerbread nuts into her lap, and she immediately began to eat them.

"Look what a child this young gallant is!" she said: "he wants to persuade you that I am fond of such confectionery; and it is himself that cannot live without licking his lips over something of the kind."

"Let us confess," replied Laertes, "that, in this point, as in others, you and I go hand in hand. For example," he continued, "the weather is de-

lightful to-day: what if we should take a drive into the country, and eat our dinner at the Mill?"

"With all my heart," said Philina; "we must give our new acquaintance some diversion."

Laertes sprang out, for he never walked; and Wilhelm motioned to return for a minute to his lodgings, to have his hair put in order; for at present it was all dishevelled with riding. "You can do it here!" she said; then called her little servant, and constrained Wilhelm in the politest manner to lay off his coat, to throw her powder-mantle over him, and to have his head dressed in her presence. "We must lose no time," said she: "who knows how short a while we may all be together?"

The boy, out of sulkiness and ill-nature more than want of skill, went on but indifferently with his task; he pulled the hair with his implements, and seemed as if he would not soon be done. Philina more than once reproved him for his blunders, and at last sharply packed him off, and chased him to the door. She then undertook the business herself, and frizzled Wilhelm's locks with great dexterity and grace; though she too appeared to be in no exceeding haste, but found always this and that to improve and put to rights; while at the same time she could not help touching his knees with hers, and holding her nosegay and bosom so near his lips that he was strongly tempted more than once to imprint a kiss on it.

When Wilhelm had cleaned his brow with a little powder-knife, she said to him: "Put it in your pocket, and think of me when you see it." It was a pretty knife; the haft, of inlaid steel, had these friendly words wrought on it, *Think of me.* Wilhelm put it up, and thanked her, begging permission at the same time to make her a little present in return.

At last they were in readiness. Laertes had brought round the coach, and they commenced a very gay excursion. To every beggar, Philina threw out money from the window, giving along with it a merry and friendly word.

Scarcely had they reached the Mill, and ordered dinner, when a strain of music struck up before the house. It was some miners singing various pretty songs, and accompanying their clear and shrill voices with a cithern and triangle. In a short while the gathering crowd had formed a ring about them; and our company nodded approbation to them from the windows. Observing this attention, they expanded their circle, and seemed making preparation for their grandest piece. After some pause, a miner stepped forward with a mattock in his hand; and while the others played a serious tune, he set himself to represent the action of digging.

Ere long a peasant came from among the crowd, and by pantomimic threats let the former know that he must cease and remove. Our company

were greatly surprised at this; they did not discover that the peasant was a miner in disguise; till he opened his mouth, and in a sort of recitative, rebuked the other for daring to meddle with his field. The latter did not lose his composure of mind, but began to inform the husbandman about his right to break ground there, giving him withal some primary conceptions of mineralogy. The peasant not being master of his foreign terminology, asked all manner of silly questions; whereat the spectators, as themselves more knowing, set up many a hearty laugh. The miner endeavoured to instruct him; and shewed him the advantage which, in the long run, would reach even him, if the deep-lying treasures of the land were dug out from their secret beds. The peasant, who at first had threatened his instructor with blows, was gradually pacified, and they parted good friends at last; though it was the miner chiefly that got out of this contention with honour.

"In this little dialogue," said Wilhelm, when seated at table, "we have a lively proof how useful the theatre might be to all ranks; what advantage even the State might procure from it, if the occupations, trades, and undertakings of men were brought upon the stage; and presented on their praiseworthy side, in that point of view in which the State itself should honour and protect them. As matters stand, we exhibit only the ridiculous side of men; the comic poet is, as it

were, but a spiteful tax-gatherer, who keeps a watchful eye over the errors of his fellow-subjects, and seems gratified when he can fix any charge upon them. Might it not be a worthy and pleasing task for a statesman to survey the natural and reciprocal influence of all classes on each other, and to guide some poet, gifted with sufficient humour, in such labours as these? In this way, I am persuaded, many very entertaining, both agreeable and useful pieces, might be executed."

"So far," said Laertes, "as I, in wandering about the world, have been able to observe, statesmen are accustomed merely to forbid, to hinder, to refuse; but very rarely to invite, to further, to reward. They let all things go along, till some mischief happens; then they get into a rage, and lay about them."

"A truce with state and statesmen!" said Philina; "I cannot form a notion of statesmen except in periwigs; and a periwig, wear it who will, always gives my fingers a spasmodic motion: I could like to pluck it off the venerable gentleman, to skip up and down the room with it, and laugh at the bald-head."

So, with a few lively songs, which she could sing very beautifully, Philina cut short their conversation; and urged them to a quick return homewards, that they might arrive in time for seeing the performance of the rope-dancers in the evening. On the road back she continued her lavish generosity, in a style of gaiety reaching to

extravagance; for, at last, every coin belonging to herself or her companions being spent, she threw her straw-hat from the window to a girl, and her neck-kerchief to an old woman, who asked her for alms.

Philina invited both of her attendants to her own apartments; because, she said, the spectacle could be seen more conveniently from her windows than from theirs.

On arriving, they found the stage set up, and the background decked with suspended carpets. The swing-boards were already fastened, the slack-rope fixed to posts, the tight-rope bound over trestles. The square was moderately filled with people, and the windows with spectators of some quality.

Pickleherring, with a few insipidities, at which the lookers-on are generally kind enough to laugh, first prepared the meeting to attention and good-humour. Some children, whose bodies were made to exhibit the strangest contortions, awakened astonishment or horror; and Wilhelm could not, without the deepest sympathy, see the child he had at the first glance felt an interest in, go through her fantastic positions with considerable difficulty. But the merry tumblers soon changed the feeling into that of lively satisfaction, when they first singly, then in rows, and at last all together, vaulted up into the air, making somersets backwards and forwards. A loud clapping of hands

and a strong huzza echoed from the whole assembly.

The general attention was next directed to quite a different object. The children in succession had to mount the rope; the learners first, that by practising they might prolong the spectacle, and shew the difficulties of the art more clearly. Some men and full-grown women likewise exhibited their skill to moderate advantage; but still there was no Monsieur Narciss, no Demoiselle Landrinette.

At last this worthy pair came forth; they issued from a kind of tent with red spread curtains; and, by their agreeable forms and glittering decorations, fulfilled the hitherto increasing hopes of the spectators. He, a hearty knave, of middle stature, with black eyes and a strong head of hair; she, formed with not inferior symmetry—exhibited themselves successively upon the rope, with delicate movements, leaping, and singular postures. Her airy lightness; his audacity; the exactitude with which they both performed their feats of art, raised the universal satisfaction higher at every step and spring. The stateliness with which they bore themselves, the seeming attentions of the rest to them, gave them the appearance of king and queen of the whole troop, and all held them worthy of the rank.

The animation of the people extended itself to the spectators at the windows; the ladies looked incessantly at Narciss, the gentlemen at Landri-

nette. The populace hurraed, the more cultivated public could not keep from clapping of the hands; Pickleherring now could scarcely raise a laugh. A few, however, slunk away, when some members of the troop began to press through the crowd with their tin plates to collect money.

"They have made their purpose good, I imagine," said Wilhelm to Philina, who was leaning over the window beside him. "I admire the ingenuity with which they have turned to advantage even the meanest parts of their performance: out of the unskilfulness of their children, and exquisiteness of their chief actors, they have made up a whole which at first excited our attention, and then gave us very fine entertainment."

The people by degrees dispersed, and the square was again become empty, while Philina and Laertes were disputing about the forms and the skill of Narciss and Landrinette, and rallying each other on the subject at great length. Wilhelm noticed the wonderful child standing on the street near some other children at play; he shewed her to Philina, who, in her lively way, immediately called and beckoned to the little one, and, this not succeeding, tripped signing down stairs, and led her up by the hand.

"Here is the enigma," said she, as she brought her to the door. The child stood upon the threshold, as if she meant again to run off; laid the right hand on her breast, the left on her brow, and

bowed deeply. "Fear nothing, my little dear," said Wilhelm, rising and going towards her. She viewed him with a doubting look, and came a few steps nearer.

"What is thy name?" he asked. "They call me Mignon." "How many years old art thou?" "No one has counted them." "Who was thy father?" "The Great Devil is dead."

"Well! this is singular enough," said Philina. They asked her a few more questions; she gave her answers in a kind of broken German, and with a strangely solemn manner, every time laying her hands on her breast and brow, and bowing deeply.

Wilhelm could not satisfy himself with looking at her. His eyes and his heart were irresistibly attracted by the mysterious condition of this being. He reckoned her about twelve or thirteen years of age; her body was well formed, only her limbs gave promise of a stronger growth, or else announced a stunted one. Her countenance was not regular, but striking; her brow full of mystery; her nose extremely beautiful; her mouth, although it seemed too closely shut for one of her age, and though she often threw it to a side, had yet an air of frankness, and was very lovely. Her brownish complexion could scarcely be discerned through the paint. This form stamped itself deeply in Wilhelm's soul; he kept looking at her earnestly, and forgot the present scene in the multitude of his re-

flections. Philina waked him from his half-dream, by holding out the remainder of her sweetmeats to the child, and giving her a sign to go away. She made her little bow as formerly, and darted like lightning through the door.

As the time drew on when our new friends had to part for the evening, they planned a fresh excursion for the morrow. They purposed now to have their dinner at a neighbouring Jägerhaus. Before taking leave of Laertes, Wilhelm said many things in Philina's praise, to which the other made only brief and careless answers.

Next morning, having once more exercised themselves in fencing for an hour, they went over to Philina's lodging, towards which they had seen their expected coach passing by. But how surprised was Wilhelm, when the coach seemed altogether to have vanished; and how much more so, when Philina was not to be found at home! She had placed herself in the carriage, they were told, with a couple of strangers who had come that morning, and was gone with them. Wilhelm had been promising himself some pleasant entertainment from her company, and could not hide his irritation. Laertes, on the other hand, but laughed at it, and cried: "I love her for this: it looks so like herself! Let us, however, go directly to the Jägerhaus; be Philina where she pleases, we will not lose our promenade on her account."

As Wilhelm, while they walked, continued censuring the inconsistence of such conduct, Laertes said: "I cannot reckon it inconsistent so long as one keeps faithful to his character. If this Philina plans you any thing, or promises you any thing, she does it under the tacit condition that it shall be quite convenient for her to fulfil her plan, or keep her promise. She gives willingly; but you must ever hold yourself in readiness to return her gifts."

"That seems a singular character," said Wilhelm.

"Any thing but singular; only she is not a hypocrite. I like her on that account. Yes, I am her friend, because she represents the sex so truly, which I have so much cause to hate. To me she is another genuine Eve, the great mother of womankind; so are they all, only they will not all confess it."

With abundance of such talk, in which Laertes very vehemently exhibited his spleen against the fair sex, without, however, giving any cause for it, they arrived at the forest; into which Wilhelm entered in no joyful mood, the speeches of Laertes having again revived in him the memory of his relation to Mariana. Not far from a shady well, among some old and noble trees, they found Philina sitting by herself at a stone table. Seeing them she struck up a merry song; and, when Laertes asked for her companions, she cried

out: "I have already cozened them, I have already had my laugh at them, and sent them a-travelling as they deserved. By the way hither I had put to proof their liberality; and, finding that they were a couple of your close-fisted gentry, I immediately determined to have amends of them. On arriving at the inn they asked the waiter what was to be had. He, with his customary glibness of tongue, reckoned over all that could be found in the house, and more than could be found. I noticed their perplexity; they looked at one another, stammered, and inquired about the cost. 'What is the use of all this studying?' said I, 'the table is the lady's business, allow me to manage it.' I immediately began ordering a most unconscionable dinner; for which many necessary articles would require to be sent for from the neighbourhood. The waiter, of whom, by a wry mouth or two, I had made a confidant, at last helped me out; and so, by the image of a sumptuous feast, we tortured them to such a degree that they fairly determined on having a walk in the forest, from which I imagine we shall look with clear eyes if wee see them come again. I have laughed a quarter of an hour for my own hand; I will laugh forever when I think of the looks they had." At table Laertes told of similar adventures: they got into the track of recounting ludicrous stories, mistakes, and dextrous cheats.

A young man, of their acquaintance from the

town, came gliding through the wood with a book in his hand; he sat down by them, and began praising the beauty of the place. He directed their attention to the murmuring of the brook, to the waving of the boughs, to the chequered lights and shadows, and the music of the birds. Philina commenced a little song of the cuckoo, which did not seem at all to exhilarate the man of taste: he very soon made his compliments and went on.

"O! that I might never hear more of nature, and scenes of nature!" cried Philina so soon as he was gone: "there is nothing in the world more intolerable than to hear people reckon up the pleasures you enjoy. When the day is bright you go to walk, as to dance when you hear a tune played. But who would think a moment on the music or the weather? It is the dancer that interests us, not the violin; and to look upon a pair of bright black eyes is the life of a pair of blue ones. But what on earth have we to do with wells, and brooks, and old rotten lindens?" She was sitting opposite to Wilhelm; and, while speaking so, she looked into his eyes with a glance which he could not hinder from piercing at least to the very door of his heart.

"You are right," replied he, not without embarrassment, "man is ever the most interesting object to man, and perhaps should be the only one that interests. Whatever else surrounds us is but the element in which we live, or else the instru-

ment which we employ. The more we devote ourselves to such things, the more we attend to and feel concern in them, the weaker will our sense of our own dignity become, the weaker our feelings for society. Men who put a great value on gardens, buildings, clothes, ornaments, or any other sort of property, grow less social and pleasant; they lose sight of their brethren, whom very few can succeed in collecting about them and entertaining. Have you not observed it on the stage? A good actor makes us very soon forget the awkwardness and meanness of paltry decorations; but a splendid theatre is the very thing which first makes us truly feel the want of proper actors."

After dinner Philina sat down among the long overshaded grass, and commanded both her friends to fetch her flowers in great quantities. She wreathed a complete garland, and put it round her head: it made her look extremely charming. The flowers were still sufficient for another; this too she plaited, while both the young men sat beside her. When at last, amid infinite mirth and sportfulness, it was completed, she pressed it on Wilhelm's head with the greatest dignity, and shifted the posture of it more than once till it seemed to her properly adjusted. "And I, it appears, must go empty," said Laertes.

"Not by any means; you shall not have reason to complain," replied Philina, taking off the garland from her own head, and putting it on his.

"If we were rivals," said Laertes, "we might now dispute very warmly which of us stood higher in thy favour."

"And the more fools you," said she, while she bent herself towards him, and offered him her lips to kiss; and then immediately turned round, threw her arm about Wilhelm, and bestowed a kind salute on him also. "Which of them tastes best?" said she archly.

"Surprisingly!" exclaimed Laertes: "it seems as if nothing else had ever such a tang of wormwood in it."

"As little wormwood," she replied, "as any gift that a man may enjoy without envy and without conceit. But now," cried she, "I should like to have an hour's dancing, and after that we must look to our vaulters."

Accordingly they went into the house, and there found music in readiness. Philina was a beautiful dancer, she animated both her companions. Nor was Wilhelm without skill; but he wanted careful practice, a defect which his two friends voluntarily took the charge of remedying.

In these amusements the time passed on insensibly; it was already late when they returned. The rope-dancers had commenced their operations. A multitude of people had again assembled in the square; and our friends, on alighting, were struck by the appearance of a tumult in the crowd, occasioned by a throng of men rushing towards the

door of the inn which Wilhelm had now turned his face to. He sprang forward to see what it was; and pressing through the people, he was struck with horror to observe the master of the rope-dancing company dragging poor Mignon by the hair out of the house, and unmercifully beating her little body with the handle of a whip.

Wilhelm darted on the man like lightning, and seized him by the collar. "Quit the child!" he cried in a furious tone, "or one of us shall never leave this spot;" and so speaking, he grasped the fellow by the throat with a force which only rage could have lent him. The showman, on the point of choking, let go the child, and endeavoured to defend himself against his new assailant. But some people, who had felt compassion for Mignon, yet had not dared to begin a quarrel for her, now laid hold of the rope-dancer, wrenched his whip away, and threatened him with great fierceness and abuse. Being now reduced to the weapons of his mouth, he began bullying and cursing horribly: the lazy worthless urchin, he said, would not do her duty; refused to perform the egg-dance, which he had promised to the public; he would beat her to death, and no one should hinder him. He tried to get loose, and seek the child, who had crept away among the crowd. Wilhelm held him back, and said sternly: "You shall neither see nor touch her, till you have explained before a magistrate where you stole her. I will pursue you to every

extremity, you shall not escape me." These words, which Wilhelm uttered in heat, without thought or purpose, out of some vague feeling, or, if you will, out of inspiration, soon brought the raging showman to composure. "What have I to do with the useless brat?" cried he. "Pay me what her clothes cost, and make of her what you please; we shall settle it to-night." And, being liberated, he made haste to resume his interrupted operations, and to calm the irritation of the public by some striking displays of his craft.

So soon as all was still again, Wilhelm commenced a search for Mignon, whom, however, he could nowhere find. Some said they had seen her on the street, others on the roofs of the adjoining houses; but, after seeking unsuccessfully in all quarters, he was forced to content himself, and wait to see if she would not again cast up of herself.

In the mean time, Narciss had come into the house, and Wilhelm set to question him about the birth-place and history of the child. Monsieur Narciss knew nothing about these things; for he had not long been in the company: but in return he recited, with much volubility and levity, various particulars of his own fortune. Upon Wilhelm's wishing him joy of the great approbation he had gained, Narciss expressed himself as if exceedingly indifferent on that point. "People laugh at us," he said, "and admire our feats of skill; but their

admiration does nothing for us. The master has to pay us, and may raise the funds where he pleases." He then took his leave, and was setting off in great haste.

At the question: Whither he was bent so fast? the dog gave a smile, and admitted that his figure and talents had acquired for him a more solid species of favour than the huzzaing of the multitude. He had been invited by some young ladies, who desired much to become acquainted with him, and he was afraid it would be midnight ere he could get through with all his visits. He proceeded with the greatest candour to detail his adventures; he would have given the names of his patronesses, their streets and houses, had not Wilhelm waived such indiscretion, and politely given him leave.

Laertes had meanwhile been entertaining Landrinette: he declared that she was fully worthy to be and to remain a woman.

Our friend next proceeded to his bargain with the showman for Mignon. Thirty crowns was the price set upon her; and for this sum the black-bearded hot Italian entirely surrendered all his claims: but of her history, or parentage, he would discover nothing; only that she had fallen into his hands at the death of his brother, who, by reason of his admirable skill, had usually been named the *Great Devil.*

Next morning was chiefly spent in searching for

the child. It was in vain that they rummaged every hole and corner of the house and neighbourhood: the child had vanished, and Wilhelm was afraid she might have leapt into some pool of water, or destroyed herself in some other way.

Philina's charms could not dissipate his inquietude; he passed a dreary thoughtful day. Nor at evening could the utmost efforts of the tumblers and dancers, exerting all their powers to gratify the public, divert the current of his thoughts, or clear away the clouds from his mind.

By the concourse of people flocking from all places round, the members had greatly increased on this occasion; the general approbation was like a snowball rolling itself into a monstrous size. The feat of leaping over swords, and through the cask with paper ends, made a great sensation. The Strong Man, too, produced a universal feeling of mingled astonishment and horror, when he laid his head and feet on a couple of separate stools, and then allowed some sturdy smiths to place a stithy on the unsupported part of his body, and hammer a horse-shoe till it was completely made by means of it.

The Hercules' Strength, as they called it, was a no less wonderful affair. A row of men stood up; then another row upon their shoulders; then women and young lads, supported in like manner on the second row; so that finally a living pyramid was formed, the peak being ornamented by a child,

placed on its head, and dressed out in the shape of a ball and weather-vane. Such a sight, never witnessed in those parts before, gave a worthy termination to the whole performance. Narciss and Landrinette were then borne in litters, on the shoulders of the rest, along the chief streets of the town, amid the triumphant shouts of the people. Ribbons, nosegays, silks, were thrown upon them; all pressed to get a sight of them. Each thought himself happy if he could behold them, and be honoured with a look of theirs.

"What actor, what author, nay what man of any class would not regard himself as on the summit of his wishes, could he, by a noble saying or a worthy action, produce so universal an impression? What a precious emotion would it give, if one could disseminate generous, exalted, manly feelings, with electric force and speed, and rouse assembled thousands into such rapture, as these people, by their bodily alertness, have done! If one could communicate to thronging multitudes a fellow-feeling in all that belongs to man, by the pourtraying of happiness and misery, of wisdom and folly, nay, of absurdity and silliness; could kindle and thrill their inmost souls, and set their stagnant nature into movement, free, vehement, and pure!" So said our friend; and as neither Laertes nor Philina shewed any disposition to take part in such a strain, he entertained himself with these darling speculations, walking up and down

the streets till late at night, and again pursuing, with all the force and vivacity of a liberated imagination, his old desire to have all that was good, and noble, and great, embodied and shewn forth by the theatric art.

CHAPTER V.

NEXT morning, the rope-dancers, not without much parade and bustle, having gone away, Mignon immediately appeared, and came into the parlour as Wilhelm and Laertes were busy fencing. "Where hast thou been hid?" said Wilhelm in a friendly tone. "Thou hast given us a great deal of anxiety." The child looked at him, and answered nothing. "Thou art ours now," cried Laertes, "we have bought thee." "For how much?" inquired the child quite coolly. "For a hundred ducats," said the other; "pay them again, and thou art free." "Is that very much?" she asked. "O yes! thou must now be a good child." "I will try," she said.

From that moment she observed strictly what services the waiter had to do for both her friends; and after next day, she would not any more let him enter the room. She persisted in doing every thing herself; and accordingly went through her duties, slowly indeed, and sometimes awkwardly, yet completely and with the greatest care.

She was frequently observed going to a basin of water, and washing her face with such diligence

and violence, that she almost wore the skin from her cheeks; till Laertes, by dint of questions and reproofs, learned that she was striving by all means to get the paint from her skin; and that, in her zealous endeavours towards this object, she had mistaken the redness produced by rubbing for the most obdurate dye. They set her right on this point, and she ceased her efforts; after which, having come again to her natural state, she exhibited a fine brown complexion, beautiful, though sparingly intermingled with red.

The siren charms of Philina, the mysterious presence of the child, produced more impression on our friend than he liked to confess; he passed several days in that strange society, endeavouring to elude self-reproaches by a diligent practice of fencing and dancing, accomplishments which he believed might not again be put within his reach so conveniently.

It was with great surprise, and not without a certain satisfaction, that he one day observed Herr Melina and his wife alight at the inn. After the first glad salutation, they inquired about "the lady-manager and the other actors;" and learned, with astonishment and terror, that the lady-manager had long since gone away, and her actors, to a very few, dispersed themselves about the country.

This couple, subsequently to their marriage, in which, as we know, our friend did his best to serve

them, had been travelling about in various quarters, seeking an engagement, without finding any; and had at last been directed to this little town by some persons who met them on their journey, and said there was a good theatre in the place.

Melina by no means pleased the lively Laertes, when introduced to him, any more than his wife did Philina. Both heartily wished to be rid of these new-comers; and Wilhelm could inspire them with no favourable feelings on the subject, though he more than once assured them that the Melinas were very worthy people.

Indeed, the previous merry life of our three adventurers was interfered with by this extension of their society, in more ways than one. Melina had taken up his quarters in the inn where Philina staid, and he very soon began a system of cheapening and higgling. He would have better lodging, more sumptuous diet, and readier attendance, for a smaller charge. In a short while, the landlord and waiter shewed very rueful looks; for whereas the others, to get pleasantly along, had expressed no discontent with any thing, and paid instantly, that they might avoid thinking longer of payment, Melina now insisted on regulating every meal, and investigating its contents beforehand, a species of service for which Philina named him, without scruple, a ruminating animal.

Yet more did the merry girl hate Melina's wife. Frau Melina was a young woman not without cul-

ture, but wofully defective in soul and spirit. She could declaim not badly, and kept declaiming constantly; but it was easy to observe, that her performances were little more than recitations of words. She laboured a few detached passages, but never could express the feeling of the whole. Withal, however, she was seldom disagreeable to any one, especially to men. On the contrary, people who enjoyed her acquaintance commonly ascribed to her a fine understanding; for she was what might be called a genuine Catholic in sentiment, agreeing with the views of all mortals. Any friend whose favour she had need of she could flatter with peculiar adroitness; could give in to his ideas so long as she could understand them; and, when they went beyond her own horizon, could hail with ecstasy such new and brilliant visions. She understood well when to speak and when to keep silence; and though her disposition was not spiteful, she could spy out with great expertness where another's weak side lay.

CHAPTER VI.

MELINA, in the mean time, had been making strict inquiry about the wrecks of the late theatrical establishment. The wardrobe, as well as decorations, had been pawned with some traders; and a notary had been empowered, under certain conditions, to dispose of them by sale, should purchasers occur. Melina wished to see this ware; and he took Wilhelm with him. No sooner was the room opened, than our friend felt, towards its contents, a kind of inclination, which he would not confess to himself. Sad as was the state of the blotched and tarnished decorations; little showy as the Turkish and Pagan garments, the old farce-coats for men and women, the couls for enchanters, priests, and Jews, might be, he was not able to exclude the feeling, that the happiest moments of his life had been spent in a similar magazine of frippery. Could Melina have seen into his heart, he would have urged him more pressingly to lay out a sum of money in liberating these scattered fragments, in furbishing them up, and again combining them into a beautiful whole. "What a happy man could I be," cried Melina, "had I but two hundred crowns, to get into my hands, for a beginning,

these fundamental necessaries of a theatre! How soon should I get up a little playhouse, that would draw contributions from the town and neighbourhood, and maintain us all!" Wilhelm was silent. They left these treasures of the stage to be again locked up, and both went away in a reflective mood.

Thenceforth Melina talked of nothing else but projects and plans for setting up a theatre, and gaining profit by it. He tried to interest Philina and Laertes in his schemes; and proposals were made to Wilhelm about advancing money, and taking them as his security. On this occasion, Wilhelm first clearly perceived that he was lingering too long here: he excused himself, and set about making preparations for departure.

In the mean time, Mignon's form and manner of existence was growing more attractive to him every day. In her whole system of proceedings, there was something very singular. She never walked up or down the stairs, but jumped. She would spring along by the railing, and before you were aware, would be sitting quietly above upon the landing. Wilhelm had observed, also, that she had a different sort of salutation for each individual. For himself, it had of late been with her arms crossed upon her breast. Often for the whole day she was mute. At times she answered various questions more freely, yet always strangely; so that you could not determine whether it was

caused by shrewd sense, or ignorance of the language; for she spoke in broken German, interlaced with French and Italian. In Wilhelm's service she was indefatigable, and up before the sun. On the other hand, she vanished early in the evening, went to sleep in a little room upon the bare floor, and could not by any means be induced to take a bed or even a straw-sack. He often found her washing herself. Her clothes, too, were kept scrupulously clean, though nearly all about her was quilted two or three plies thick. Wilhelm was moreover told, that she went every morning early to hear mass. He followed her on one occasion, and saw her kneeling down, with a rosary in a corner of the church, and praying devoutly. She did not observe him; and he returned home, forming many a conjecture about this appearance, yet unable to arrive at any probable conclusion.

A new application from Melina for a sum of money to redeem the often-mentioned stage-apparatus, caused Wilhelm to think more seriously than ever about setting off. He proposed writing to his people, who for a long time had heard no tidings of him, by the very earliest post. He accordingly commenced a letter to Werner; and had advanced a considerable way with the history of his adventures, in recounting which he had more than once unintentionally swerved a little from the truth, when, to his vexation and surprise, he ob-

served, upon the back of his sheet, some verses which he had been copying from his album for Madam Melina. Out of humour at this mistake, he tore the paper in pieces, and put off repeating his confession till the next post-day.

CHAPTER VII.

Our party was now again collected; and Philina, who always kept a sharp look-out on every horse or carriage that passed by, exclaimed, with great eagerness: "Our Pedant! Here comes our dearest Pedant! Who the deuce is it he has with him?" Speaking thus, she beckoned at the window, and the vehicle drew up.

A woeful-looking genius, whom, by his shabby coat of greyish brown, and his ill-conditioned lower garments, you must have taken for some unprosperous preceptor, of the sort that moulder in our universities, now descended from the carriage, and, taking off his hat to salute Philina, discovered an ill-powdered, but yet very stiff periwig, while Philina threw a hundred kisses of the hand towards him.

As Philina's chief enjoyment lay in loving one class of men, and being loved by them; so there was a second and hardly inferior satisfaction, wherewith she entertained herself as frequently as possible, and this consisted in hoodwinking and passing jokes upon the other class, whom at such moments she happened not to love;

all which she could accomplish in a very sprightly style.

Amid the flourish which she made in receiving this old friend, no attention was bestowed upon the rest who followed him. Yet among the party were an oldish man and two young girls, whom Wilhelm thought he knew. Accordingly it turned out, that he had often seen them all, some years ago, in a company then playing in his native town. The daughters had grown since that period; the old man was little altered. He commonly enacted those good-hearted boisterous old gentlemen, whom the German theatre is never without, and whom, in common life, one also frequently enough falls in with. For as it is the character of our countrymen to do good and cause it without pomp or circumstance, so they seldom consider that there is likewise a mode of doing what is right with grace and dignity; more frequently, indeed, they yield to the spirit of contradiction, and fall into the error of deforming their dearest virtue by a surly mode of putting it in practice.

Such parts our actor could play very well; and he played them so often and exclusively, that he had himself taken up the same turn of proceeding in his ordinary life.

On recognising him, Wilhelm was seized with a strong commotion: he recollected how often he had seen this man on the stage with his beloved Mariana: he still heard him scolding, still heard

the small soothing voice, with which in many characters she had to meet his rugged temper.

The first anxious question put to the strangers, Whether they had heard of any situation in their travels? was answered, alas! with No; and to complete the information, it was farther added, that all the companies they had fallen in with were not only supplied with actors, but many of them were afraid lest, on account of the approaching war, they should be forced to separate. Old Boisterous, with his daughters, moved by spleen and love of change, had given up an advantageous engagement; then meeting with the Pedant by the way, they had hired a carriage to come hither; where, as they found, good counsel was still dear, needful to have, and difficult to get.

The time while the rest were talking very keenly of their circumstances, Wilhelm spent in thought. He longed to speak in private with the old man; he wished and feared to hear of Mariana, and felt himself in the greatest disquietude.

The pretty looks of the stranger damsels could not call him from his dream; but a war of words, which now arose, awakened his attention. It was Friedrich, the fair-haired boy, that used to attend Philina, stubbornly refusing, on this occasion, to cover the table and bring up the dinner. "I engaged to serve you," he cried; "but not to wait on everybody." They fell into a hot contest.

Philina insisted that he should do his duty; and as he obstinately refused, she told him plainly he might go about his business.

"You think, perhaps, I cannot leave you?" cried he, sturdily; then went to pack up his bundle, and soon hastily quitted the house.

"Go, Mignon," said Philina, "and get us what we want: tell the waiter, and help him to attend us."

Mignon came before Wilhelm, and asked in her laconic way: "Shall I? May I?" to which Wilhelm answered: "Do all that the lady bids thee, child."

She accordingly took charge of every thing, and waited on the guests the whole evening, with the utmost carefulness. After dinner, Wilhelm proposed to have a walk with the old man alone. Succeeding in this, after many questions about his late wanderings, the conversation turned upon the former company, and Wilhelm hazarded a question touching Mariana.

"Do not speak to me of that despicable creature," cried the old man; "I have sworn to think of her no more." Terrified at this speech, Wilhelm felt still more embarrassed, as the old man proceeded to vituperate her fickleness and wantonness. Most gladly would our friend have broken off the conversation; but now it was impossible: he was obliged to undergo the whole tumultuous effusions of this strange old gentleman.

"I am ashamed," continued he, "that I felt such a friendship for her. Yet had you known the girl better, you would excuse me. She was so pretty, so natural and good, so pleasing, in every sense so tolerable, I could never have supposed that ingratitude and impudence were to prove the chief features of her character."

Wilhelm had nerved himself to hear the worst of her; when all at once he observed, with astonishment, that the old man's tones grew milder, his voice faltered, and he took out his handkerchief to dry the tears, which at last began to trickle down his cheeks.

"What is the matter with you?" cried Wilhelm. "What is it that suddenly so changes the current of your feelings? Conceal it not from me. I take a deeper interest in the fate of this girl than you suppose. Only tell me all."

"I have not much to say," replied the old man, again taking up his earnest angry tone. "I have suffered more from her than I shall ever forgive. She had always a kind of trust in me. I loved her as my own daughter; indeed, while my wife lived, I had formed a resolution to take the creature to my own house, and save her from the hands of that old crone, from whose guidance I boded no good. But my wife died, and the project went to nothing.

"About the end of our stay in your native town, it is not quite three years ago, I noticed a visible

sadness about her. I questioned her, but she evaded me. At last we set out on our journey. She travelled in the same coach with me; and I soon observed, what she herself did not long deny, that she was with child, and suffering the greatest terror, lest our manager might turn her off. In fact, in a short while he did make the discovery; immediately threw up her contract, which at any rate was only for six weeks; paid off her arrears; and in spite of all entreaties, left her behind, in the miserable inn of a little village.

"Devil take all wanton jilts!" cried the old man, with a splenetic tone, "and especially this one, that has spoiled me so many hours of my life! Why should I keep talking how I myself took charge of her, what I did for her, what I spent on her, how in absence I provided for her. I would rather throw my purse into the ditch, and spend my time in nursing mangy whelps, than ever more bestow the very smallest care on such a thing. Pshaw! At first I got letters of thanks, notice of places she was staying at; and, finally, no word at all, not even an acknowledgment for the money I had sent to pay the expences of her lying-in. Oh! the treachery and the fickleness of women are rightly matched, to get a comfortable living for themselves, and to give an honest fellow many heavy hours."

CHAPTER VIII.

WILHELM's feelings, on returning home after this conversation, may be easily conceived. All his old wounds had been torn up afresh; and the sentiment, that Mariana was not wholly unworthy of his love, had again been brought to life. The interest which the old man had shewn about her fate, the praises he gave her against his will, displayed her again in all her attractiveness. Nay, even the bitter accusations brought against her contained nothing that could lower her in Wilhelm's estimation; for he, as well as she, was guilty in all her aberrations. Nor did even her final silence seem greatly blameable; it rather inspired him with mournful thoughts. He saw her, as a frail, ill-succoured mother, wandering helplessly about the world; wandering perhaps with his own child. What he knew, and what he knew not, awoke in him the most painful emotions.

Mignon had been waiting for him; she lighted him up stairs. On setting down the light, she begged that he would allow her that evening to compliment him with a piece of her art. He would rather have declined this, particularly as he knew not what it was; but he had not the heart

to refuse any thing this kind creature wished. After a little while she again came in. She carried a little carpet below her arm, which she then spread out upon the floor. Wilhelm said she might proceed. She thereupon brought four candles, and placed one upon each corner of the carpet. A little basket of eggs, which she next carried in, made her purpose clearer. Carefully measuring her steps, she then walked to and fro on the carpet, spreading out the eggs in certain figures and positions; which done, she called in a man that was waiting in the house, and could play on the violin. He retired with his instrument into a corner; she tied a band about her eyes, gave a signal, and, like a piece of wheel-work set a-going, she began moving the same instant as the music, accompanying her beats and the notes of the tune with the strokes of a pair of castanets.

Lightly, nimbly, quickly, and with hairsbreadth accuracy, she carried on the dance. She skipped so sharply and surely along between the eggs, and trode so closely down beside them, that you would have thought every instant she must trample one of them in pieces, or kick the rest away in her rapid turns. By no means! She touched no one of them, though winding herself through their mazes with all kinds of steps, wide and narrow, nay even with leaps, and at last half kneeling.

Constant as the movement of a clock, she ran her course; and the strange music, at each repeti-

tion of the tune, gave a new impulse to the dance, re-commencing and again rushing off as at first. Wilhelm was quite led away by this singular spectacle; he forgot his cares; he followed every movement of the dear little creature, and felt surprised to see how finely her character unfolded itself as she proceeded in the dance.

Rigid, sharp, cold, vehement, and in soft postures, stately rather than attractive; such was the light in which it shewed her. At this moment, he experienced at once all the emotions he had ever felt for Mignon. He longed to incorporate this forsaken being with his own heart; to take her in his arms, and with a father's love to awake in her the joy of existence.

The dance being ended, she rolled the eggs together softly with her foot into a little heap, left none behind, harmed none; then placed herself beside it, taking the bandage from her eyes, and concluding her performance with a little bow.

Wilhelm thanked her for having executed, so prettily and unexpectedly, a dance he had long wished to see. He patted her; was sorry she had tired herself so much. He promised her a new suit of clothes; to which she vehemently replied: "Thy colour!" This, too, he promised her, though not well knowing what she meant by it. She then lifted up the eggs, took the carpet below her arm, asked if he wanted any thing farther, and skipped out at the door.

The musician being questioned, said, that for some time she had taken much trouble in often singing over the tune of this dance, the well-known fandango, to him, and training him till he could play it accurately. For his labour she had likewise offered him some money, which however he would not accept.

CHAPTER IX.

After a restless night, which our friend spent sometimes waking, sometimes oppressed with unpleasant dreams, seeing Mariana now in all her beauty, now in woful case, at one time with a child in her arm, then soon bereaved of it, the morning had scarcely dawned, when Mignon entered with a tailor. She brought some gray cloth and blue taffeta, signifying in her own way, that she wished to have a new jacket and sailors' trowsers, such as she had seen the boys of the town wearing, with blue cuffs and tyers.

Since the loss of Mariana, Wilhelm had laid aside all gay colours. He had used himself to gray, the garment of the shades; and only perhaps a sky-blue lining, or little collar of that dye, in some degree enlivened his sober garb. Mignon, eager to wear his colours, hurried on the tailor, who engaged to have his work soon ready.

The exercise in dancing and fencing, which our friend took this day with Laertes, did not prosper in their hands. Indeed it was soon interrupted by Melina, who came to shew them circumstantially how a little company was now of itself collected, sufficient to exhibit plays in abundance. He re-

newed the proposal that Wilhelm should advance a little money for setting them in motion; which, however, Wilhelm still declined.

Ere long Philina and the girls came in, racketting and laughing as usual. They had now devised a fresh excursion; for change of place and objects was a pleasure after which they always longed. To eat daily in a different spot was their highest wish. On this occasion they proposed a sail.

The boat in which they were to fall down the pleasant windings of the river had already been engaged by the Pedant. Philina urged them on: the party did not linger, and were soon on board.

"What shall we take to now?" said Philina, when all had placed themselves upon the benches.

"The readiest thing," replied Laertes, "were for us to extemporize a play. Let each take a part that suits his character, and we shall see how we get along."

"Excellent!" said Wilhelm. "In a society where there is no dissimulation, but where each without disguise pursues the bent of his own humour, elegance and satisfaction cannot long continue; and where dissimulation always reigns, they do not enter at all. It will not be amiss, then, that we take up dissimulation to begin with; and then, behind our masks, be as candid as we please."

"Yes," said Laertes, "it is on this account that one goes on so pleasantly with women; they never shew themselves in their natural form."

"That is to say," replied Madam Melina, "they are not so vain as men, who conceive themselves to be always amiable enough, just as nature has produced them."

In the meantime the river led them between pleasant groves and hills, between gardens and vineyards; and the young females, especially Madam Melina, expressed their rapture at the landscape. The latter even began to recite, in solemn style, a pretty poem of the descriptive sort, upon a similar scene of nature; but Philina interrupted her with the proposal of a law, that no one should presume to speak of any inanimate object. On the other hand, she zealously urged on their project of an extempore play. Old Boisterous was to be a half-pay officer; Laertes, a fencing-master taking his vacation; the Pedant, a Jew; she herself would act a Tyrolese; leaving to the rest to choose characters according to their several pleasures. They would suppose themselves to be a party of total strangers to each other, who had just met on board a merchant-ship.

She immediately began to play her part with the Jew; and a universal cheerfulness diffused itself among them.

They had not sailed far, when the skipper stopped in his course, asking permission of the company to take in a person standing on the shore, who had made a sign to him.

"That is just what we needed," cried Philina;

" a chance passenger was wanting to complete the travelling-party."

A good-looking man came on board; whom, by his dress and his dignified mien, you might have taken for a clergyman. He saluted the party, who thanked him in their own way, and soon made known to him the nature of their game. The stranger immediately engaged to play the part of a country parson; which, in fact, he accomplished in the adroitest manner to the admiration of all; now admonishing, now telling stories, shewing some weak points, yet never losing their respect.

In the meantime, every one who had made a false step in his part, or swerved from his character, had been obliged to forfeit a pledge; Philina had gathered them with the greatest care; and especially threatened the reverend gentleman with many kisses, though he himself had never been at fault. Melina, on the other hand, was completely fleeced; shirt-buttons, buckles, every moveable about his person was in Philina's hands. He was trying to enact an English traveller, and could not by any means get into the spirit of his part.

Meanwhile the time had passed away very pleasantly. Each had strained his fancy and his wit to the utmost, and each had garnished his part with agreeable and entertaining jests. Thus comfortably occupied, they reached the place where they meant to pass the day; and Wilhelm going out to walk with the clergyman, as both from his

appearance and late character he persisted in naming him, soon fell into an interesting conversation.

"I think this practice," said the stranger, "very useful among actors, and even in the company of friends and acquaintances. It is the best mode of drawing men out of themselves, and leading them, by a circuitous path, back into themselves again. It should be a custom with every troop of players to practise in this manner; and the public would assuredly be no loser, if every month an unwritten piece were brought forward; in which, of course, the players had prepared themselves by several rehearsals."

"One should not then," replied our friend, "consider an extempore piece as, strictly speaking, composed on the spur of the moment; but as a piece, of which the plan, action, and division of the scenes were given, the filling up of all this being left to the player."

"Quite right," said the stranger; "and, in regard to this very filling up, such a piece, were the players once trained to these performances, would profit greatly. Not in regard to the mere words, it is true; for by a careful selection of these, the studious writer may certainly adorn his work; but in regard to the gestures, looks, exclamations, and every thing of that nature; in short, to the mute and half-mute play of the dialogue, which seems by degrees fading away among

us altogether. There are indeed some players in Germany, whose bodies figure what they think and feel; who, by their silence, their delays, their looks, their slight graceful movements, can prepare the audience for a speech, and by a pleasant sort of pantomime, combine the pauses of the dialogue with the general whole; but such a practice as this, co-operating with a happy natural turn, and training it to compete with the author, is far from being so habitual as, for the comfort of play-going people, were to be desired."

"But will not a happy natural turn," said Wilhelm, "as the first and last requisite, of itself conduct the player like every other artist, nay perhaps every other man, to the lofty mark he aims at?"

"The first and the last, the beginning and the end it may well be; but, in the middle, many things will still be wanting to an artist, if instruction, and early instruction too, have not previously made that of him which he was meant to be: and perhaps for the man of genius it is worse in this respect than for the man possessed of only common capabilities; the one may much more easily be misinstructed, and be driven far more violently into false courses, than the other."

"But," said Wilhelm, "will not genius save itself not heal the wounds which itself has inflicted?"

"Only to a very small extent, and with great

difficulty," said the other, " or perhaps not at all. Let no one think that he can conquer the first impressions of his youth. If he has grown up in enviable freedom, surrounded with beautiful and noble objects, in constant intercourse with worthy men; if his masters have taught him what he needed first to know, for comprehending what remained more easily; if he has never learned any thing which he requires to unlearn; if his first operations have been so guided, that without altering any of his habits, he can more easily produce what is excellent in future; then such a one will lead a purer, more perfect and happier life, than another man who has wasted the force of his youth in opposition and error. A great deal is said and written about education; yet I meet with very few, who can comprehend and transfer to practice the simple yet vast idea, which includes within itself all others connected with the subject."

" That may well be true," said Wilhelm," for the generality of men are limited enough in their conceptions to suppose, that every other should be fashioned by education according to the pattern of themselves. Happy then are those whom fate takes charge of, and educates according to their several natures!"

" Fate," said the other smiling, " is an excellent, but most expensive schoolmaster. In all cases, I would rather trust to the reason of a hu-

man tutor. Fate, for whose wisdom I entertain all imaginable reverence, often finds in Chance, by which it works, an instrument not over manageable. At least the latter very seldom seems to execute precisely and correctly what the former had determined."

"You seem to express a very singular opinion," said Wilhelm.

"Not at all!" replied the other. "Most part of what happens in the world confirms my opinion. Do not many incidents at their commencement shew some mighty meaning, and generally terminate in something paltry?"

"You mean to jest."

"And as to what concerns the individual man," pursued the other, "is it not so with this likewise? Suppose Fate had appointed one to be a good player; and why should it not provide us with good players as well as other good things? Chance would conduct the youth into some puppet-show perhaps; where, at such an early age, he could not help taking interest in what was tasteless and despicable, reckoning insipidities endurable or even pleasing, and thus corrupting and misdirecting his primary impressions; impressions which can never be effaced, and whose influence, in spite of all our efforts, cling to us in some degree to the very last."

"What makes you think of puppet-shows?" said Wilhelm not without some consternation.

"It was an accidental instance; if it does not please you, we shall take another. Suppose Fate had appointed any one to be a great painter, and it pleased Chance that he should pass his youth in sooty huts, in barns and stables; do you think that such a man would ever be enabled to exalt himself to purity, to nobleness, to freedom of soul? The more keenly he may in his youth have seized on the impure, and tried in his own manner to ennoble it, the more powerfully in the remainder of his life will it be revenged on him; because while he was endeavouring to conquer it, his whole being has become inseparably combined with it. Whoever spends his early years in mean and pitiful society, though at an after period he may have the choice of better, will yet constantly look back with longing towards that which he enjoyed of old, and which has left its impression blended with the memory of all his young and unreturning pleasures."

From conversation of this sort, it is easy to imagine, the rest of the company had gradually withdrawn. Philina, in particular, had stept aside at the very outset. Wilhelm and his comrade now rejoined them by a cross-path. Philina brought out her forfeits, and they had to be redeemed in many different ways. During which business, the stranger, by the most ingenious devices, and by his frank participation in their sports, recommended himself much to all the party, and particularly

to the ladies; and thus, amid joking, singing, kissing, and railleries of all sorts, the hours passed away in the most pleasant manner.

CHAPTER X.

When our friends began to think of going home, they looked about them for their clergyman; but he had vanished, he was nowhere to be found.

"It is not polite in the man, who otherwise displayed good breeding," said Madam Melina, "to desert a company that welcomed him so kindly, without taking leave."

"I have all the time been thinking," said Laertes, "where I can have seen this singular man before. I fully intended to ask him about it ere we parted."

"I too had the very same feeling," said Wilhelm, "and certainly I should not have let him go, till he had told us something more about his circumstances. I am greatly mistaken if I have not ere now spoken with him somewhere."

"And you may in truth," said Philina, "be mistaken there. This person seems to have the air of an acquaintance, because he looks like a *man*, and not like Jack or Kit."

"What is this?" said Laertes. "Do not we too look like men?"

"I know what I am saying," cried Philina;

" and if you cannot understand me, never mind. In the end my words will be found to require no commentary."

Two coaches now drove up. All praised the attention of Laertes, who had ordered them. Phi lina, with Madam Melina, took her place opposite to Wilhelm; the rest bestowed themselves as best they could. Laertes rode back on Wilhelm's horse, which had likewise been brought out.

Philina was scarcely seated in the coach, when she began to sing some pretty songs, and gradually led the conversation to some stories, which she said might be successfully treated in the form of dramas. By this cunning turn, she very soon put her young friend into his finest humour: from the wealth of his living imaginative store, he forthwith constructed a complete play, with all its acts, scenes, characters, and plots. It was thought proper to insert a few catches and songs: they composed them; and Philina, who entered into every part of it, immediately fitted them with well-known tunes, and sang them on the spot.

It was one of her beautiful, most beautiful days; she had skill to enliven our friend with all manner of diverting wiles; he felt in spirits such as he had not for many a month enjoyed.

Since that shocking discovery had torn him from the side of Mariana, he had continued true to his vow to be on his guard against the encircling arms of woman, to avoid the faithless sex, to lock up

his inclinations, his sweet wishes in his own bosom. The conscientiousness, with which he had observed this vow, gave his whole nature a secret nourishment; and as his heart could not remain without affection, some loving sympathy had now become a want with him. He went along once more, as if environed by the first cloudy glories of youth; his eye fixed joyfully on every charming object, and never had his judgment of a lovely form been more favourable. How dangerous, in such a situation, this wild girl must have been to him, is but too easy to conceive.

Arrived at home, they found Wilhelm's chamber all ready to receive them; the chairs set right for a public reading; in midst of them the table, on which the punch-bowl was in due time to take its place.

The German chivalry-plays were new at this period, and had just excited the attention and the inclination of the public. Old Boisterous had brought one of this sort with him; the reading of it had already been determined on. They all sat down: Wilhelm took possession of the pamphlet, and began to read.

The harnessed knights, the ancient keeps, the true-heartedness, honesty, and downrightness, but especially the independence of the acting characters, were received with the greatest approbation. The reader did his utmost; and the audience gradually mounted into rapture. Between the

third and fourth act, the punch arrived in an ample bowl; and there being much fighting and drinking in the piece itself, nothing was more natural than that, on every such occurrence, the company should transport themselves into the situation of the heroes, should flourish and strike along with them, and drink long life to their favourites among the *dramatis personæ*.

Each individual of the party was inflamed with the most noble fire of national spirit. How it gratified this German company to be poetically entertained, according to their own character, on stuff of their own manufacture! In particular, the vaults and caverns, the ruined castles, the moss and hollow trees; but above all the nocturnal gipsy-scenes, and the Secret Tribunal, produced a quite incredible effect. Every actor now figured to himself how, ere long, in helm and harness; every actress how, with a monstrous spreading ruff, they would present their Germanships before the public. Each would appropriate to himself without delay some name taken from the piece, or from German history; and Madam Melina declared that the son or daughter, she was then expecting, should not be christened otherwise than by the name of Adelbert or of Mathilde.

Towards the fifth act the approbation became more impetuous and louder; and at last, when the hero actually trampled down his oppressor, and the tyrant met his doom, the ecstasy increased to

such a height, that all averred they had never passed such happy moments. Melina, whom the liquor had inspired, was the noisiest; and when the second bowl was empty, and midnight near, Laertes swore through thick and thin, that no living mortal was worthy ever more to put these glasses to his lips; and, so swearing, he pitched his own right over his head, through a window-pane, out into the street. The rest followed his example; and notwithstanding the protestations of the landlord, who came running in at the noise, the punch-bowl itself, never after this festivity to be polluted by unholy drink, was dashed into a thousand sherds. Philina, whose exhilaration was the least noticed, the other two girls by that time having laid themselves upon the sofa in no very elegant positions, maliciously encouraged her companions in their tumult. Madam Melina recited some spirit-stirring poems; and her husband, not too amiable in the uproar, began to cavil at the insufficient preparation of the punch, declaring that he could arrange an entertainment altogether in a different style; and at last becoming sulkier and louder as Laertes commanded silence, till the latter, without much consideration, threw the fragments of the punch-bowl about his head, and thereby not a little deepened the confusion.

Meanwhile the town-guard had arrived, and were demanding admission to the house. Wilhelm, much heated by his reading, though he had

drank but little, had enough to do with the landlord's help to content these people by money and good words; and afterwards to get the various members of his party sent home in that unseemly case. On coming back, overpowered with sleep and full of chagrin, he threw himself upon his bed without undressing; and nothing could exceed his disgust, when, opening his eyes next morning, he looked out with dull sight upon the devastations of the bygone day, and saw the uncleanness and the many bad effects of which that ingenious, lively, and well-intentioned poetical performance had been the cause.

CHAPTER XI.

After a short consideration he called the landlord, and bade him mark to his account both the damage and the regular charge. At the same time he learned, not without vexation, that his horse had been so hard ridden by Laertes last night, that, in all probability, it was foundered, as they term it, the farrier having little hope of its recovering.

A salute from Philina, which she threw him from her window, restored him in some degree to a more cheerful humour; he went forthwith into the nearest shop to buy her a little present, which, in return for the powder-knife, he still owed her; and it must be owned, that, in selecting his gift, he did not keep himself within the limits of proportional value. He not only purchased her a pair of ear-rings; but added likewise a hat and neck-kerchief, and some other little articles, which he had seen her lavishly throw from her on the first day of their acquaintance.

Madam Melina, happening to observe him as he was delivering his presents, took an opportunity before breakfast to rate him very earnestly about his inclination for this girl; at which he felt the

more astonished, the less he thought it merited. He swore solemnly, that he had never once entertained the slightest notion of attaching himself to such a person, whose whole manner of proceeding was well known to him: he excused himself as well as possible for his friendly and polite conduct towards her; yet did not by any means content Madam Melina, whose spite grew ever more determined, as she could not but observe that the flatteries by which she had acquired for herself a sort of partial regard from our friend, were not sufficient to defend this conquest from the attacks of a lively, younger, and more richly-gifted rival.

As they sat down to table, her husband joined them, likewise in a very fretful humour, which he was beginning to display on many little things, when the landlord entered to announce a player on the harp. "You will certainly," he said, "find pleasure in the music and the songs of this man: no one who hears him can forbear to admire him and bestow something on him."

"Let him go about his business," said Melina; "I am any thing but in a trim for hearing fiddlers, and we have singers constantly among ourselves disposed to gain a little by their talent." He accompanied these words with a sarcastic side-look at Philina: she understood his meaning; and immediately prepared to punish him, by taking up the cause of the Harper. Turning towards Wilhelm: "Shall we not hear the man?" said

she; "shall we do nothing to save ourselves from this miserable *ennui?*"

Melina was going to reply, and the strife would have grown keener, had not the person it related to at that moment entered. Wilhelm saluted him, and beckoned him to come near.

The figure of this singular guest set the whole party in astonishment; he had found a chair before any one took heart to ask him a question or make any observation. His bald crown was encircled by a few grey hairs; and a pair of large blue eyes looked out softly from beneath his long white eyebrows. To a nose of beautiful proportions, was subjoined a flowing hoary beard, which did not hide the fine shape and position of his lips; and a long dark-brown garment wrapped his thin body from the neck to the feet. He began to prelude on the harp, which he had placed before him.

The sweet tones which he drew from his instrument very soon inspirited the company.

"You can sing too, my good old man," said Philina.

"Give us something that shall entertain the spirit and the heart as well as the senses," said Wilhelm. "The instrument should but accompany the voice; for tunes and melodies without words and meaning seem to me like butterflies or finely-variegated birds, which hover round us in the air, which we could wish to catch and make

our own; whereas Song is like a blessed genius that exalts us towards heaven, and allures the better self in us to attend him."

The old man looked at Wilhelm; then aloft; then gave some trills upon his harp, and began his song. It contained a eulogy on minstrelsy; described the happiness of minstrels, and reminded men to honour them. He produced his song with so much life and truth, that it seemed as if he had composed it at the moment, for this special occasion. Wilhelm could scarcely refrain from clasping him in his arms; but the fear of awakening a peal of laughter detained him in his chair; for the rest were already in half-whispers, making sundry very shallow observations, and debating if the Harper was a Papist or a Jew.

On asking about the author of the song, the man gave no distinct reply; declaring only that he was rich in songs, and anxious that they should please. Most of the party were now merry and joyful; even Melina was grown frank in his way; and whilst they talked and joked together, the old man began to sing the praise of social life in the most sprightly style. He described the loveliness of unity and courtesy, in soft, soothing tones. Suddenly his music became cold, harsh and jarring, as he turned to deplore repulsive selfishness, short-sighted enmity, and baleful division; and every heart willingly threw off those galling fetters, while borne on the wings of a piercing melo-

dy, he launched forth in praise of peace-makers, and sang the happiness of souls that having parted meet again in love.

Scarcely had he ended, when Wilhelm cried to him: "Whoever thou art, that as a helping spirit comest to us, with a voice which blesses and revives, accept my reverence and my thanks! Feel that we all admire thee, and confide in us if thou wantest any thing."

The old man spoke not; he threw his fingers softly across the strings; then struck more sharply, and sang:

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

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

The singer turns him to his art,
A thrilling strain he raises;

Each warrior hears with glowing heart,
And on his loved one gazes.
The king, who liked his playing well,
Commands, for such a kindly spell,
A golden chain be given him.

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

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

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

When the Harper, on finishing his song, took up a glass of wine that stood poured out for him,

and, turning with a friendly mien to his entertainers, drank it off, a buzz of joyful approbation rose from all the party. They clapped hands, and wished him health from that glass, and strength to his aged limbs. He sang a few other ballads, exciting more and more hilarity among the company.

"Old man," said Philina, "dost thou know the tune, *The shepherd deck'd him for the dance?*" *

"O yes!" said he; "if you will sing the words, I shall not fail for my part of it."

Philina then stood up and held herself in readiness. The old man commenced the tune; and she sang a song which we cannot impart to our readers, because they might think it insipid, or perhaps undignified.

Meanwhile the company were growing merrier and merrier; they had already emptied several flasks of wine, and were now beginning to get very loud. But our friend having fresh in his remembrance the bad consequences of their late exhilaration, determined to break up the sitting; he slipped into the old man's hand a liberal remuneration for his trouble, the rest did something likewise; they gave him leave to go and take repose, promising themselves another entertainment from his skill in the evening.

When he had retired, our friend said to Philina:

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* *Der Schafer putzte sich zum Tanz*; a song of Goethe's.—Ed.

" In this favourite song of yours I certainly can find no merit either moral or poetical; yet if you were to bring forward any proper composition on the stage, with the same arch simplicity, the same propriety and gracefulness, I should engage that strong and universal approbation would be the result."

" Yes," said Philina, " it would be a charming thing indeed to warm one's self at ice."

" After all," said Wilhelm, " this old man might put many a player to the blush. Did you notice how correctly the dramatic part of his ballads was expressed? I maintain there was more living true representation in his singing, than in many of our starched characters upon the stage. You would take the acting of many plays for a narrative, and you might ascribe to these musical narratives a sensible presence."

" You are hardly just!" replied Laertes. " I pretend to no great skill either as a player or a singer; yet I know well enough, that, when music guides the movements of the body, at once affording to them animation and a scale to measure it; when declamation and expression are furnished me by the composer, I feel quite a different man from what I do, when in prose-dramas I have all this to create for myself; have both gesture and declamation to invent, and am perhaps disturbed in it too by the awkwardness of some partner in the dialogue."

" Thus much I know," said Melina, " the man

certainly may put us to the blush in one point, and that a main one. The strength of his talent is shewn by the profit he derives from it. Even us, who perhaps ere long shall be embarrassed where to get a meal, he persuades to share our pittance with him. He has skill enough to wile the money from our pockets with an old song; the money that we should have used to find ourselves employment. So pleasant an affair is it to squander the means which might procure subsistence to one's self and others."

This remark gave the conversation not the most delightful turn. Wilhelm, for whom the reproach was peculiarly intended, replied with some heat; and Melina, at no time over studious of delicacy and politeness, explained his grievances at last in words more plain than courteous. "It is now a fortnight," said he, "since we looked at the theatrical machinery and wardrobe which is lying pawned here; the whole might be redeemed for a very tolerable sum. You then gave me hopes that you would lend me so much; and hitherto I do not see that you have thought more of the matter, or come any nearer a determination. Had you then consented, we should ere now have been under way. Nor has your intention to leave the place been executed; nor has your money in the mean time been spared: at least there are people who have always skill to create opportunities for scattering it faster and faster away."

Such upbraidings, not altogether undeserved, touched Wilhelm to the quick. He replied with keenness, nay with anger; and, as the company arose to part, he took hold of the door, and gave them not obscurely to understand that he would no longer continue with such unfriendly and ungrateful people. He hastened down, in no kindly humour, and seated himself upon the stone-bench without the door of his inn; not observing that, first out of mirth, then out of spleen, he had drunk more wine than usual.

CHAPTER XII.

After a short time, which he passed sitting looking out before him, disquieted by many thoughts, Philina came singing and skipping along through the front door. She sat down by him; nay, we might almost say, on him, so close did she press herself towards him; she leant upon his shoulders, began playing with his hair, patted him, and gave him the best words in the world. She begged of him to stay with them, and not leave her alone in that company, or she must die of *ennui:* she could not live any longer in the same house with Melina, and had come over to lodge in the other inn for that very reason.

He tried in vain to satisfy her with denials; to make her understand that he neither could nor would remain any longer. She did not cease with her entreaties; nay, suddenly she threw her arm about his neck, and kissed him with the liveliest expression of fondness.

"Are you mad, Philina?" cried Wilhelm, endeavouring to disengage himself; "to make the open street the scene of such caresses, which I nowise merit! Let me go; I cannot and I will not stay."

"And I will hold thee fast," said she, "and kiss thee here on the open street, and kiss thee till thou promise what I want. I shall die of laughing," she continued; "by this familiarity the good people here must take me for thy wife of four weeks' standing; and husbands that witness this touching scene will commend me to their wives as a pattern of childlike simple tenderness."

Some persons were just then going by; she caressed him in the most graceful way; and he, to avoid giving scandal, was constrained to play the part of the patient husband. Then she made faces at the people, when their backs were turned; and, in the wildest humour, continued to commit all sorts of improprieties, till at last he was obliged to promise that he would not go that day, or the morrow, or the next day.

"You are a true clod!" said she, quitting him; "and I am but a fool to spend so much kindness on you." She arose with some vexation, and walked a few steps, then turned round laughing, and cried: "I believe it is just that, after all, which makes me so crazy about thee. I will but go and seek my knitting-needles and my stocking, that I may have something to do. Stay there, and let me find the stone man still upon the stone bench when I come back."

She cast a sparkling glance on him, and went into the house. He had no call to follow her;

on the contrary, her conduct had excited fresh aversion in him: yet he rose from the bench to go after her, not well knowing why.

He was just entering the door when Melina passed by, and spoke to him in a respectful tone, asking his pardon for the somewhat too harsh expressions he had used in their late discussion. "You will not take it ill of me," continued he, "if I appear perhaps too fretful in my present circumstances. The charge of providing for a wife, perhaps soon for a child, forbids me from day to day to live at peace, or spend my time, as you may do, in the enjoyment of pleasant feelings. Consider, I pray you; and, if possible, do put me in possession of that stage machinery that is lying here. I shall not be your debtor long, and I shall be obliged to you while I live."

Our friend, unwilling to be kept upon the threshold, over which an irresistible impulse was drawing him at that moment to Philina, answered, with an absent mind, eager to be gone, and surprised into a transient feeling of good-will: "If I can make you happy and contented by doing this, I will hesitate no longer. Go you and put every thing to rights. I shall be prepared this evening or to-morrow morning to pay the money." He then gave his hand to Melina in comfirmation of his promise, and was very glad to see him hastily proceed along the street; but, alas! his en-

trance, which he now thought sure, was a second time prohibited, and more disagreeably than at first.

A young man, with a bundle on his back, came walking fast along the street, and advanced to Wilhelm, who at once recognised him for Friedrich.

"Here am I again!" cried he, looking with his large blue eyes joyfully up and down, over all the windows of the house. "Where is Mamsell? Devil take me, if I can stroll about the world any longer without seeing her."

The landlord, joining them at this instant, replied that she was above; Friedrich with a few bounds was up stairs, and Wilhelm continued standing as if rooted to the threshold. At the first instant he was tempted to pluck the younker back; and drag him down by the hair; then all at once the spasm of a sharp jealousy stopped the current of his spirits and ideas; and, as he gradually recovered from this stupefaction, there came over him a splenetic fit of restlessness, a general discomfort, such as he had never felt in his life before.

He went up to his room, and found Mignon busy writing. For some time, the creature had been labouring with great diligence in writing every thing she knew by heart, giving always to her master and friend the papers to correct. She was indefatigable, and of good comprehension;

but still her letters were irregular, and her lines crooked; here, too, the body seemed to contradict the mind. In his usual moods, Wilhelm took no small pleasure in the child's attention; but, at the present moment, he regarded little what she showed him,—a piece of neglect which she felt the more acutely, as on this occasion she conceived her work had been accomplished with peculiar success.

Wilhelm's unrest drove him up and down the passages of the house, and finally again to the street-door. A rider was just prancing towards it, a man of good appearance, of middle age, and a brisk contented look. The landlord ran to meet him, holding out his hand as to an old acquaintance. "Aye, Herr Stallmeister," cried he, "have we the pleasure to see you again?"

"I am just going to bait with you," replied the stranger, "and then along to the Estate to get matters put in order as soon as possible. The Count is coming over to-morrow with his lady; they mean to stay a while to entertain the Prince von * * * in their best style: he intends to fix his head-quarters in this neighbourhood for some time."

"It is pity," said the landlord, "that you cannot stop with us: we have good company in the house." The ostler came running out, and took the horse from the Stallmeister, who continued

talking in the door with the landlord, and now and then giving a look at Wilhelm.

Our friend, observing that he formed the topic of their conversation, went away, and walked up and down the streets.

CHAPTER XIII.

In the restless vexation of his present humour, it came into his head to go and see the old Harper, hoping by his music to scare away the evil spirits that tormented him. On asking for the man he was directed to a mean public-house in a remote corner of the little town; and, having mounted up stairs there to the very garret, his ear caught the fine twanging of the harp coming from a little room before him. They were heart-moving, mournful tones, accompanied by a sad and dreary singing. Wilhelm glided to the door; and, as the good old man was performing a sort of voluntary, the few stanzas of which, sometimes chanted, sometimes in recitative, were repeated more than once, our friend succeeded, after listening for a while, in gathering nearly this:

Who never ate his bread in sorrow,
  Who never spent the darksome hours,
Weeping and watching for the morrow,
  He knows ye not, ye gloomy Powers.

To earth, this weary earth, ye bring us,
  To guilt ye let us heedless go,
Then leave repentance fierce to wring us:
  A moment's guilt, an age of woe!

The heart-sick plaintive sound of this lament pierced deep into the soul of the hearer. It seemed to him as if the old man were often stopped from proceeding by his tears; his harp would alone be heard for a time, till his voice again joined it in low broken tones. Wilhelm stood by the door; he was much moved; the mourning of this stranger had again opened the avenues of his heart; he could not resist the claim of sympathy, or restrain the tears which this woe-begone complaint at last called forth. All the pains that pressed upon his soul seemed now at once to loosen from their hold; he abandoned himself without reserve to the feelings of the moment. Pushing up the door, he stood before the Harper. The old man was sitting on a mean bed, the only seat, or article of furniture, which his miserable room afforded.

"What feelings hast thou not awakened in me, good old man!" exclaimed he. "All that was lying frozen at my heart thou hast melted and put in motion. Let me not disturb thee; but continue, in solacing thy own sorrows, to confer happiness upon a friend." The Harper was about to rise and say something; but Wilhelm hindered him, for he had noticed in the morning that the old man did not like to speak. He sat down by him on the straw bed.

The old man wiped his eyes, and asked, with a friendly smile, "How came you hither? I meant to wait upon you in the evening again."

"We are more quiet here," said Wilhelm. "Sing to me what thou pleasest, what accords with thy own mood of mind, only proceed as if I were not by. It seems to me, that to-day thou canst not fail to suit me. I think thee very happy that in solitude thou canst employ and entertain thyself so pleasantly; that, being every where a stranger, thou findest in thy own heart the most agreeable society."

The old man looked upon his strings, and, after touching them softly by way of prelude, he commenced and sang:

Who longs in solitude to live,
  Ah! soon his wish will gain;
Men hope and love, men get and give,
  And leave him to his pain.

Yes, leave me to my moan!
  When from my bed
  You all are fled,
I still am not alone.

The lover glides with a footstep light:
"If his love is waiting there?"
So glides to meet me, day and night,
  In solitude my care,
  In solitude my woe:
True solitude I then shall know
  When lying in my grave,
  When lying in my grave,
  And grief has let me go.

We might describe with great prolixity, and yet fail to express the charms of the singular conversation, which Wilhelm carried on with this wayfaring stranger. To every observation which our friend addressed to him, the old man, with the nicest accordance, answered in some melody, which awakened all the cognate emotions, and opened a wide field to the imagination.

Whoever has happened to assist at a meeting of certain devout people, who conceive that, in a state of separation from the Church, they can edify each other in a purer, more affecting, and more spiritual manner, may form to himself some conception of the present scene. He will recollect how the leader of the meeting would append to his words some verse of a song, that raised the soul, till as he wished she took wing; how another of the flock would ere long subjoin in a different tune some verse of a different song; and to this again a third would link some verse of a third song; by which means the kindred ideas of the songs to which the verses belonged were indeed suggested, yet each passage by its new combination became new and individualized, as if it had been first composed that moment; and thus, from a well-known circle of ideas, from well-known songs and sayings, there was formed, for that particular society in that particular time, an original whole, by means of which their minds were animated, strengthened, and refreshed. So likewise did the old man edify his

guest: by known and unknown songs and passages, he brought feelings near and distant, emotions sleeping and awake, pleasant and painful, into a circulation, from which, in Wilhelm's actual state, the best effects might be anticipated.

CHAPTER XIV.

Accordingly, in walking back, he began to think with greater earnestness than ever on his present situation: he had reached home with the firm purpose of altering it, when the landlord disclosed to him, by way of secret, that Mademoiselle Philina had made a conquest of the Count's Stallmeister; who, after executing his commission at his master's Estate, had returned in the greatest haste, and was even now partaking of a good supper with her up in her chamber.

At this very moment Melina came in with a notary: they went into Wilhelm's chamber together, where the latter, though with some hesitation, made his promise good; gave a draught of three hundred crowns to Melina, who, handing it to the lawyer, received in return a note acknowledging the sale of the whole theatrical apparatus, and engaging to deliver it next morning.

Scarcely had they parted, when Wilhelm heard a cry of horror rising from some quarter of the house. He caught the sound of a young voice, uttering menacing and furious tones, which were ever and anon choked up by immoderate weeping

and howling. He observed this frantic noise move hastily from above; go past his door, and down to the lower part of the house.

Curiosity enticing our friend to follow it, he found Friedrich in a species of delirium. The boy was weeping, grinding his teeth, stamping with his feet, threatening with clenched fists; he appeared beside himself from fury and vexation. Mignon was standing opposite him, looking on with astonishment. The landlord in some degree explained this phenomenon.

The boy, he said, being well received at his return by Philina, seemed quite merry and contented; he had kept singing and jumping about, till the time when Philina grew acquainted with the Stallmeister. Then, however, this half-grown younker had begun to shew his indignation, to slam the doors, and run up and down in the highest dudgeon. Philina had ordered him to wait at table that evening; upon which he had grown still sulkier and more indignant; till at last, carrying up a plate with a ragout, instead of setting it upon the table, he had thrown the whole between Mademoiselle and her guest, who were sitting moderately close together at the time; and the Stallmeister, after two or three hearty cuffs, had then kicked him out of the room. He, the landlord, had himself helped to clean both of them, and certainly their clothes had suffered much.

On hearing of the good effect of his revenge the

boy began to laugh aloud, whilst the tears were still running down his cheeks. He heartily rejoiced for a time, till the disgrace which he had suffered from the stronger party once more came into his head, and he began afresh to howl and threaten.

Wilhelm stood meditating, and ashamed at this spectacle. It reflected back to him his own feelings, in coarser and exaggerated features: he too was inflamed with a fierce jealousy; and, had not decency restrained him, he would willingly have satisfied his wild humour; with malicious spite, would have abused the object of his passion, and called out his rival: he could have crushed in pieces all the people round him; they seemed as if standing there but to vex him.

Laertes also had come in, and heard the story; he roguishly spurred on the irritated boy, who was now asserting with oaths that he would make the Stallmeister give him satisfaction; that he had never yet let any injury abide with him; that should the man refuse there were other ways of taking vengeance.

This was the very business for Laertes. He went up stairs with a solemn countenance to call out the Stallmeister in the boy's name.

"This is a pleasant thing," said the Stallmeister: "such a joke as this I had scarcely promised to myself to-night." They went down, and Philina followed them. "My son," said the Stallmeister to Friedrich, "thou art a brave lad, and I do not

hesitate to fight thee. Only as our years and strength are unequal, and the attempt a little dangerous on that account, I propose a pair of foils in preference to other weapons. We can rub the buttons of them with a piece of chalk; and, whoever marks upon the other's coat the first or the most thrusts, shall be held the victor, and be treated by the other with the best wine that can be had within the town."

Laertes decided that the proposition might be listened to: Friedrich obeyed him as his tutor. The foils were produced; Philina took a seat, went on with her knitting, and looked at the contending parties with the greatest peace of mind.

The Stallmeister, who could fence very prettily, was complaisant enough to spare his adversary, and to let a few chalk-scores be marked upon his coat; after which the two embraced, and wine was ordered. The Stallmeister took the liberty of asking Friedrich's parentage and history; and Friedrich told him a long story, which had often been repeated already, and which, at some other opportunity, we purpose communicating to our readers.

To Wilhelm, in the meantime, this contest completed the representation of his own state of mind. He could not but perceive that he would willingly have taken up a foil against the Stallmeister; a sword still more willingly, though evidently much his inferior in the science of defence. Yet he deigned not to cast one look on Philina; he was

on his guard against any word or movement that could possibly betray his feelings; and, after having once or twice done justice to the health of the duellists, he hastened to his own room, where a thousand painful thoughts came pressing round him.

He called to memory the time when his spirit, rich in hope and full of boundless aims, was raised aloft, and encircled with the liveliest enjoyments of every kind as with its proper element. He now clearly saw, that of late he had fallen into a broken wandering path, where, if he tasted, it was but in drops what he once quaffed in unrestricted measure. But he could not clearly see what insatiable want it was that nature had made the law of his being; and how this want had been only set on edge, half satisfied, and misdirected by the circumstances of his life.

It will not surprise us, therefore, that, in considering his situation, and labouring to extricate himself, he fell into the greatest perplexity. It was not enough, that, by his friendship for Laertes, his attachment to Philina, his concern for Mignon, he had been detained longer than was proper in a place and a society where he could cherish his darling inclination, content his wishes as it were by stealth, and without proposing any object, again pursue his early dreams. These ties he believed himself possessed of force enough to break asunder: had there been nothing more to hold him, he could have gone at once. But, only a few moments

ago, he had entered into money-transactions with Melina; he had seen that mysterious old man, the enigma of whose history he longed with unspeakable desire to clear. Yet of this too, after much balancing of reasons, he at length determined, or thought he had determined, that it should not keep him back. "I must go," he exclaimed; "I will go." He threw himself into a chair, and felt greatly moved. Mignon came in and asked, Whether she might help to undress him? Her manner was still and shy; it had grieved her deeply to be so abruptly dismissed by him before.

Nothing is more touching than the first disclosure of a love which has been nursed in silence, of a faith grown strong in secret, and which at last comes forth in the hour of need, and reveals itself to him who formerly has reckoned it of small account. The bud, which had been closed so long and firmly, was now ripe to burst its swathings, and Wilhelm's heart could never have been readier to welcome the impressions of affection.

She stood before him, and noticed his disquietude. "Master! she cried, "if thou art unhappy, what will become of Mignon?" "Dear little creature," said he, taking her hands, "thou too art part of my anxieties. I must go." She looked at his eyes, glistening with restrained tears; and knelt down with vehemence before him. He kept her hands; she laid her head upon his knees, and remained quite still. He played with her hair,

patted her, and spoke kindly to her. She continued motionless for a considerable time. At last he felt a sort of palpitating movement in her, which began very softly, and then by degrees with increasing violence diffused itself over all her frame. "What ails thee, Mignon?" cried he; "what ails thee?" She raised up her little head, looked at him, and all at once laid her hand upon her heart, with the countenance of one repressing the utterance of pain. He raised her up, and she fell upon his breast; he pressed her towards him, and kissed her. She replied not by any pressure of the hand, by any motion whatever. She held firmly against her heart; and all at once gave a cry, which was accompanied by spasmodic movements of the body. She started up, and immediately fell down before him, as if broken in every joint. It was an excruciating moment! "My child!" cried he, raising her up, and clasping her fast; "My child, what ails thee?" The palpitations continued, spreading from the heart over all the lax and powerless limbs; she was merely hanging in his arms. All at once she again became quite stiff, like one enduring the sharpest corporeal agony; and soon with a new vehemence all her frame once more became alive; and she threw herself about his neck, like a bent spring that is closing; while in her soul, as it were a strong rent took place, and at the same moment a stream of tears flowed from her shut eyes into his bosom. He held her fast. She wept, and no tongue can

express the force of these tears. Her long hair had loosened, and was hanging down before her; it seemed as if her whole being was melting incessantly into a brook of tears. Her rigid limbs were again become relaxed; her inmost soul was pouring itself forth; in the wild confusion of the moment, Wilhelm was afraid she would dissolve in his arms, and leave nothing there for him to grasp. He held her faster and faster. "My child!" cried he, "my child! Thou art indeed mine, if that word can comfort thee. Thou art mine! I will keep thee, I will never forsake thee!" Her tears continued flowing. At last she raised herself; a faint gladness shone upon her face. "My father!" cried she, "Thou wilt not forsake me? Wilt be my father? I am thy child!"

Softly, at this moment, the harp began to sound before the door; the old man brought his most affecting songs as an evening offering to our friend, who holding his child ever faster in his arms, enjoyed the most pure and undescribable felicity.

WILHELM MEISTER'S

APPRENTICESHIP.

BOOK III.

WILHELM MEISTER.

CHAPTER I.

Know'st thou the land where the lemon-trees bloom?
Where the gold-orange glows in the deep thicket's gloom?
Where a wind ever soft from the blue heaven blows,
And the groves are of laurel and myrtle and rose?
Know'st thou it?
Thither! O thither,
My dearest and kindest, with thee would I go.

Know'st thou the house, with its turretted walls,
Where the chambers are glancing, and vast are the halls?
Where the figures of marble look on me so mild,
As if thinking: "Why thus did they use thee, poor child?"
Know'st thou it?
Thither! O thither,
My guide and my guardian, with thee would I go.

Know'st thou the mountain, its cloud-covered arch,
Where the mules among mist o'er the wild torrent march?
In the clefts of it, dragons lie coil'd with their brood;
The rent crag rushes down, and above it the flood.
Know'st thou it?
Thither! O thither,
Our way leadeth: Father! O come let us go!

Next morning, on looking for Mignon about the house, Wilhelm did not find her; but was informed that she had gone out early with Melina, who had risen betimes to receive the wardrobe and other apparatus of his theatre.

After the space of some hours, Wilhelm heard the sound of music before his door. At first he thought it was the Harper come again to visit him; but he soon distinguished the tones of a cithern, and the voice which began to sing was Mignon's. Wilhelm opened the door; the child came in, and sang him the song we have just given above.

The music and general expression of it pleased our friend extremely, though he could not understand all the words. He made her once more repeat the stanzas and explain them; he wrote them down, and translated them into his native language. But the originality of its turns he could imitate only from afar; its childlike innocence of expression vanished from it in the process of reducing its broken phraseology to uniformity, and combining its disjointed parts. The charm of the tune, moreover, was entirely incomparable.

She began every verse in a stately and solemn manner, as if she wished to draw attention towards something wonderful, as if she had something weighty to communicate. In the third line, her tones became fainter and graver; the *Know'st thou it?* was uttered with a shew of mystery and eager circumspectness; her *Thither! O thither!* exhibited

a boundless longing; and the *Come let us go!* she modified at each repetition, so that now it appeared to entreat and implore, now to impel and persuade.

On finishing her song for the second time, she stood silent for a moment, looked keenly at Wilhelm, and asked him: "*Know'st* thou the land?" "It must mean Italy," said Wilhelm: "where didst thou get the little song?" "Italy!" said Mignon with an earnest air: "If thou go to Italy, take me along with thee; for I am too cold here." "Hast thou been there already, little dear?" said Wilhelm. But the child was silent, and nothing more could be got out of her.

Melina entered now; he looked at the cithern; was glad that she had rigged it up again so prettily. The instrument had been among Melina's stage-gear; Mignon had begged it of him in the morning; and then gone to the old Harper. On this occasion, she had shewn a talent she was not before suspected of possessing.

Melina had already got possession of his wardrobe, with all that pertained to it; some members of the town magistracy had promised him permission to act for a time in the place. He was now returning with a merry heart and a cheerful face. His nature seemed altogether changed; he was soft, courteous to every one, nay fond of obliging, and almost attractive. He was happy, he said, at now being able to afford employment to his friends,

who had hitherto lain idle and embarrassed; sorry, however, that at first he could not have it in his power to remunerate the excellent actors whom fortune had offered him, in a style corresponding to their talents and capacities; being under the necessity, before all other things, of discharging his debt to so generous a friend as Wilhelm had proved himself to be.

"I cannot describe," said he to Wilhelm, "the friendliness which you have shown, in helping me forward to the management of a theatre. When I found you here, I was in a very curious predicament. You recollect how strongly I displayed to you, on our first acquaintance, my aversion to the stage; and yet on being married, I was forced to look about for a place in some theatre, out of love to my wife, who promised to herself much joy and great applause, if so engaged. I could find none, at least no constant one; but in return I luckily fell in with some commercial men, who, in extraordinary cases, were enabled to employ a person that could handle his pen, that understood French, and was not without a little skill in ciphering. I got along pretty well in this way, for a time; I was tolerably paid; got many things which I had need of, and did not feel ashamed of my station. But the special commissions of my patrons came to an end; they could afford me no permanent establishment: and ever since my wife has continued urging me more eagerly to return to the stage; though at the

present time, her own situation is by no means the most favourable for exhibiting herself with honour in the eyes of the public. But now, I hope, the establishment, which by your kind help I have means of setting up, will prove a good beginning for me and mine; and I shall thank you for all my future happiness, let matters turn out as they will."

Wilhelm listened to him with contentment: the whole fraternity of players were likewise moderately satisfied with the declarations of the new manager; they secretly rejoiced that an offer of employment had occurred so soon; and were disposed to put up at first with a smaller wage; the more readily, that most of them regarded the present one, so unexpectedly placed within their reach, as a kind of supplement, on which a short while ago they could not count. Melina made haste to profit by this favourable temper; he endeavoured in a sly way to get a little talk with each in private; and ere long had, by various methods, so cockered them all, that they did not hesitate to strike a bargain with him, without loss of time; scarcely thinking of this new engagement, or reckoning themselves secure at worst of getting free again after six weeks' warning.

The terms were now to be reduced to proper form, and Melina was considering with what pieces he would first entice the public,when a courier riding up informed the Stallmeister, that his lord and lady

were at hand; on which the latter ordered out his horses.

In a short time after this, the coach with its masses of luggage rolled in; two servants sprang down from the coach-box before the inn; and Philina, according to her custom, foremost in the way of novelties, placed herself within the door.

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

"An actress, at your Excellence's service," was the answer; while the cheat with a most innocent air, and looks of great humility, courtsied, and kissed the lady's gown.

The Count, on seeing some other persons standing round, who also signified that they were players, inquired about the strength of their company, their last place of residence, their manager. "Had they but been Frenchmen," said he to his lady, "we might have treated the Prince with an unexpected enjoyment, and entertained him with his favourite pastime at our house."

"And could we not," said the Countess, "get these people, though unluckily they are but Germans, to exhibit with us at the Castle while the Prince stays there? Without doubt, they have some degree of skill. A large party can never be so well amused with any thing as with a theatre; besides the Baron would assist them."

So speaking they went up stairs; and Melina

presented himself above, as manager. "Call your folk together," said the Count, "and place them before me, that I may see what is in them. I must also have the list of pieces you profess to act."

Melina, with a low bow, hastened from the room, and soon returned with his actors. They advanced in promiscuous succession; some, out of too great anxiety to please, introduced themselves in a rather sorry style; the others, not much better, by assuming an air of unconcern. Philina shewed the deepest reverence to the Countess, who behaved with extreme graciousness and condescension; the Count, in the mean time, was mustering the rest. He questioned each about his special province of acting, and signified to Melina, that he must rigorously keep them to their several provinces; a precept which the manager received with the greatest devotion.

The Count then stated to each in particular what he ought especially to study, what about his figure or his postures ought to be amended; shewed them luminously in what points the Germans always failed; and displayed such extraordinary knowledge, that all stood in the deepest humility, scarcely daring to draw their breath, before so enlightened a critic and so right honourable a patron.

"What fellow is that in the corner?" said the Count, looking at a subject, who had not yet been presented to him, and who now approached; a

lean shambling figure, with a rusty coat, patched at the elbows, and a woful periwig covering his submissive head.

This person, whom, from the last Book, we know already as Philina's darling, had been wont to enact pedants, schoolmasters, and poets; generally undertaking parts, in which any cudgelling or ducking was to be endured. He had trained himself to certain crouching, ludicrous, timid bows; and his faltering, stammering speech befitted the characters he played, and created laughter in the audience; so that he was always looked on as a useful member of the company, being moreover very serviceable and obliging. He approached the Count in his own peculiar way; bent himself before him, and answered every question with the grimaces and gestures he was used to on the stage. The Count looked at him, for some time, with an air of attentive satisfaction, and studious observation; then turning to the Countess, "Child," said he, "consider this man well: I shall engage for it, he is a great actor, or may become so." The creature here, in the fulness of his heart, made an idiotic bow; the Count burst into laughing, and exclaimed: "He does it excellently well! I bet this fellow can act any thing he likes; it is pity that he has not been already used to something better."

So singular a prepossession was extremely galling to the rest; Melina alone felt no vexation, but com-

pletely coincided with the Count, and answered with a prostrate look: "Alas! it is too true; both he and others of us have long stood in need of such encouragement, and such a judge, as we now find in your Excellence."

"Is this the whole company?" inquired the Count.

"Some of them are absent," said the crafty Melina; "and at any rate, if we should meet with support, we could soon collect abundant numbers from the neighbourhood."

Philina in the meanwhile was saying to the Countess: "There is a very pretty young man above, who without doubt would shortly become a first-rate amateur."

"Why does not he appear?" said the Countess.

"I will bring him," cried Philina, hastening to the door.

She found our friend still occupied with Mignon; she persuaded him to come down. He followed her with some reluctance; yet curiosity impelled him: for hearing that the family were people of rank, he longed much to know more of them. On entering the room his eyes met those of the Countess, which were directed towards him. Philina led him to the lady, while the Count was busied with the rest. Wilhelm made his bow; and replied to several questions from the fair dame, not without confusion of mind. Her beauty and youth, her

graceful dignity and refined manner, made the most delightful impression on him; and the more so, as her words and looks were accompanied with a certain bashfulness, one might almost say, embarrassment. He was likewise introduced to the Count, who however took no special notice of him; but went to the window with his lady, and seemed to ask her about something. It was easy to observe that her opinion accorded strongly with his own; that she even tried to persuade him, and strengthen him in his intentions.

In a short while, he turned round to the company, and said: "I must not stay at present, but I will send a friend to you; and if you make reasonable proposals, and will take very great pains, I am not disinclined to let you play at the Castle."

All testified their joy at this; Philina in particular kissed the hands of the Countess with the greatest vivacity.

"Look you, little thing," said the lady, patting the cheeks of the light-minded girl, "look you, child, you shall come to me again; I will keep my promise; only you must dress better." Philina stated in excuse that she had little to lay out upon her wardrobe; and the Countess immediately ordered her waiting-maids to bring from the carriage a silk neck-kerchief, and an English hat, the articles easiest to come at, and give them to her new favourite. The Countess herself then decked Philina,

who continued very neatly to support by her looks and conduct, that saintlike, guiltless character she had assumed at first.

The Count took his lady's hand and led her down. She bowed to the whole company with a friendly air in passing by them; she turned round again towards Wilhelm, and said to him, with the most gracious mien: "We shall soon meet again."

These happy prospects enlivened the whole party: every one of them gave free course to his hopes, his wishes, his imaginations; spoke of the parts he would play, and the applause he would acquire. Melina was considering how he might still, by a few speedy exhibitions, gain a little money from the people of the town, before he left it; while others went into the kitchen, to order a better dinner than of late they had been used to.

CHAPTER II.

After a few days, the Baron came; and it was not without fear that Melina received him. The Count had spoken of him as a critic; and it might be dreaded, he would speedily detect the weakness of the little party, and see that it formed no efficient troop, there being scarcely a play which they could act in a suitable manner. But the manager, as well as all the members, were soon delivered from their cares, on finding that the Baron was a man who viewed the German stage with a most patriotic enthusiasm, to whom every player, and every company of players, was welcome and agreeable. He saluted them all with great solemnity; was happy to come upon a German theatre so unexpectedly, to get connected with it, and to introduce their native Muses to the mansion of his relative. He then pulled out from his pocket a bundle of stitched papers, in which Melina hoped to find the terms of their contract specified; but it proved something very different. It was a drama, which the Baron himself had composed, and wished to have played by them: he requested their attention while he read it. Willingly they formed a circle round him; charmed at being able

with so little trouble to secure the favour of a man so important; though judging by the thickness of the manuscript, it was clear that a very long rehearsal might be dreaded. Their apprehensions were not groundless; the piece was written in five acts, and that sort of acts which never have an end.

The hero was an excellent, virtuous, magnanimous, and at the same time misunderstood and persecuted man; this worthy person, after many trials, gained the victory at last over all his enemies; on whom, in consequence, the most rigorous poetic justice would have been exercised, had he not pardoned them on the spot.

While this piece was rehearsing, each of the auditors had leisure enough to think of himself, and to mount up quite softly from the humble prostration of mind, to which, a little while ago, he had felt disposed, into a comfortable state of contentment with his own gifts and advantages; and from this elevation, to discover the most pleasing prospects in the future. Such of them as found in the play no parts adapted for their own acting, internally pronounced it bad, and viewed the Baron as a miserable author; while the others, every time they noticed any passage which they hoped might procure them a little clapping of the hands, exalted it with the greatest praise, to the immeasurable satisfaction of the author.

The commercial part of their affair was soon completed. Melina made an advantageous bar-

gain with the Baron, and contrived to keep it secret from the rest.

Of our friend, Melina took occasion to declare in passing, that he seemed to be successfully qualifying himself for becoming a dramatic poet, and even to have some capacities for being an actor. The Baron introduced himself to Wilhelm as a colleague; and the latter by and by produced some little pieces, which, with a few other relics, had escaped by chance, on the day when he threw the greater part of his works into the flames. The Baron lauded both his pieces and delivery; he spoke of it as of a settled thing, that Wilhelm should come over to the Castle with the rest. For all, at his departure, he engaged to find the best reception, comfortable quarters, a good table, applauses and presents; and Melina farther gave the promise of a certain modicum of pocket-money to each.

It is easy to conceive how this visit raised the spirits of the party; instead of a low and harassing situation, they now at once saw honours and enjoyment before them. On the score of these great hopes they already made merry; and each thought it needless and stingy to retain a single groschen of money in his purse.

Meanwhile our friend was taking counsel with himself, about accompanying the troop to the Castle; and he found it, in more than one sense, advisable to do so. Melina was in hopes of paying off his debt, at least in part, by this engagement;

and Wilhelm, who had come from home to study men, was unwilling to let slip this opportunity of examining the great world, where he expected to obtain much insight into life, into himself, and the dramatic art. With all this, he durst not confess how greatly he wished again to be near the beautiful Countess. He rather sought to persuade himself in general of the mighty advantages, which a more intimate acquaintance with the world of rank and wealth would procure for him. He pursued his reflections on the Count, the Countess, the Baron; on the security, the grace and propriety of their demeanour; he exclaimed with rapture, when alone:

"Thrice happy are they to be esteemed, whom their birth of itself exalts above the lower stages of mankind; who do not need to traverse those perplexities, not even to skirt them, in which many worthy men so painfully consume the whole period of life. Far-extending and unerring must their vision be, on that higher station; easy each step of their progress in the world! From their very birth, they are placed as it were in a ship, which, in this voyage we have all to make, enables them to profit by the favourable winds, and to ride out the cross ones; while others, bare of help, must wear their strength away in swimming, can derive little profit from the favourable breeze, and in the storm must soon become exhausted and sink to the bottom. What convenience, what ease of movement

does a fortune, we are born to, confer upon us! How securely does a traffic flourish, which is founded on a solid capital, where the failure of one or of many enterprises does not of necessity reduce us to inaction! Who can better know the worth and worthlessness of earthly things, than he that has had within his choice the enjoyment of them from his youth upwards; and who can earlier guide his mind to the useful, the necessary, the true, than he that may convince himself of so many errors in an age, when his strength is yet fresh to begin a new career!"

Thus did our friend cry joy to all inhabitants of the upper regions; and not to them only, but to all that were permitted to approach their circle, and draw water from their wells. So he thanked his own happy stars that seemed preparing to grant this mighty blessing to himself.

Melina in the mean time was torturing his brains to get the company arranged according to their several provinces, and each of them appointed to produce his own peculiar effect. In compliance with the Count's injunctions, and his own persuasion, he made many efforts: but at last, when it came to the point of execution, he was forced to be content, if, in so small a troop, he found his people willing to adjust themselves to this or that part, as they best were able. When matters would admit of it, Laertes played the lover; Philina the lady's maid; the two young girls took up between

them the characters of the artless and tender *inamorate;* the boisterous old gentleman of the piece was sure to be the best acted. Melina himself thought he might come forth as chevalier; Madam Melina, to her no small sorrow, was obliged to satisfy herself with personating young wives, or even affectionate mothers; and as in the newer plays, a poet or pedant is rarely introduced, and still more rarely for the purpose of being laughed at, the well-known favourite of the Count was now usually transformed into the President or Minister; these being commonly set forth as knaves, and severely handled in the fifth act. Melina too, in the part of chamberlain or the like, introduced, with great satisfaction, the ineptities put into his hands by various honest Germans, according to use and wont, in many well accepted plays: he delighted in these characters, because he had an opportunity of decking himself out in a fashionable style, and was called upon to assume the airs of a courtier, which he conceived himself to possess in great perfection.

It was not long till they were joined by several actors from different quarters; who being received without very strict examination, were also retained without very burdensome conditions.

Wilhelm had been more than once assailed with persuasions from Melina to undertake an amateur part. This he declined; yet he interested and occupied himself about the general cause with great

alacrity, without our new manager's acknowledging his labours in the smallest. On the contrary, it seemed to be Melina's opinion, that with his office he had at the same time picked up all the necessary skill for carrying it on. In particular, the task of curtailment formed one of his most pleasing occupations; he would succeed in reducing any piece whatever down to the regular measure of time, without paying the slightest notice to proprieties or proportions, or any thing on earth, but his watch. He met with great encouragement; the public was very much delighted; the most knowing inhabitants of the burgh maintained, that the Prince's theatre itself was not so well conducted as their own.

CHAPTER III.

At last the time arrived when the company had to prepare themselves for travelling, and to expect the coaches and other vehicles that were to carry them to the Count's mansion. Much altercation now took place about the mode of travelling, and who should sit with whom. The ordering and distribution of the whole was at length settled and concluded, with great labour, and alas! without effect. At the appointed hour, fewer coaches came than were expected; they had to accommodate themselves as the case would admit. The Baron, who followed shortly afterwards on horseback, assigned as the reason, that all was in motion at the Castle, not only because the Prince was to arrive a few days earlier than had been looked for, but also because an unexpected party of visitors were already come: the place, he said, was in great confusion; on this account perhaps they would not lodge so comfortably as had been intended; a change which grieved him exceedingly.

Our travellers packed themselves into the carriages the best way they could; and the weather being tolerable, and the Castle but a few leagues

distant, the heartiest of the troop preferred setting out on foot to waiting the return of the coaches. The caravan got under way with great jubilee; for the first time, without caring how the landlord's bill was to be paid. The Count's mansion arose like a palace of the fairies on their souls; they were the happiest and merriest mortals in the world. Each throughout the journey, in his own peculiar mode, kept fastening a continued chain of fortune, honour, and prosperity to that auspicious day.

A heavy rain, which fell unexpectedly, did not banish these delightful contemplations; though, as it incessantly continued with more and more violence, many of the party began to shew traces of uneasiness. The night came on; and no sight could be more welcome than the palace of the Count, which shone upon them from a hill at some distance, glancing with light in all its stories, so that they could reckon every window.

On approaching nearer, they found all the windows in the wings illuminated also. Each of the party thought within himself what chamber would be his; and most of them prudently determined to be satisfied with a room in the garret, or some of the adjoining buildings.

They were now proceeding through the village, past the inn. Wilhelm stopped the coach, in the mind to alight there; but the landlord protested, that it was not in his power to afford the least accommodation: his Lordship the Count, he said,

being visited by some unexpected guests, had immediately engaged the whole inn; every chamber in the house had been marked with chalk last night, specifying who was to lodge there. Our friend was accordingly obliged, against his will, to travel forward to the Castle, with the rest of the company.

In one of the side buildings, round the kitchen fire, they noticed several cooks running busily about; a sight which refreshed them not a little. Servants came jumping hastily with lights to the stair of the main building; and the hearts of the worthy pilgrims overflowed at the aspect of such honours. But how great was their surprise, when this cordial reception changed into a storm of curses. The servants abused the coachmen for driving thither; they must turn about, it was bawled out, and take their loading to the old Castle; there was no room here for such guests as these. To this unfriendly and unexpected dismissal, they joined all manner of jeering, and laughed aloud at each other for leaping out in the rain on so false an errand. It was still pouring; no star was visible in the sky; while our company were dragged along a rough jolting road, between two walls, into the old mansion which stood behind, inhabited by none since the present Count's father had built the new residence in front of it. The carriages drew up, partly in the court-yard, partly in a long arched gateway; and the posti-

lions, people hired from the village, unyoked their horses and rode off.

As nobody came forward to receive the travellers, they alighted from their places, they shouted, and searched. In vain! All continued dark and still. The wind swept through the lofty gate; the court and the old towers were lying gray and dreary, and so dim that their forms could scarcely be distinguished in the gloom. The people were all shuddering and freezing; the women were becoming frightened; the children began to cry; the general impatience was increasing every minute; so quick a revolution of fortune, for which no one of them had been at all prepared, entirely destroyed their equanimity.

Expecting every minute that some person would appear and unbolt the doors; mistaking at one time the pattering of rain, at another the rocking of the wind, for the much desired footstep of the Castle Bailiff, they continued downcast and inactive; it occurred to none of them to go into the new mansion, and there solicit help from charitable souls. They could not understand where their friend the Baron was lingering; they were in the most disconsolate condition.

At last some people actually arrived: by their voices, they were recognised as the pedestrians who had fallen behind the others on the journey. They intimated that the Baron had tumbled with his horse, and hurt his leg severely; and that on call-

ing at the Castle, they too had been sharply and roughly directed hither.

The whole company were in extreme perplexity; they guessed and speculated as to what should now be done; but they could fix on nothing. At length they noticed from afar a lantern advancing; they took fresh breath at the view of it; but their hopes of quick deliverance again evaporated, when the object approached, and came to be distinctly seen. A groom was lighting the well-known Stallmeister of the Castle towards them; this gentleman, on coming nearer, very anxiously inquired for Mademoiselle Philina. She had scarce stept forth from the crowd, when he very pressingly offered to conduct her to the new mansion, where a little place had been provided for her with the Countess' maids. She did not hesitate long about accepting his proposal; she caught his arm, and recommending her trunk to the care of the rest, was going to hasten off with him directly; but the others intercepted them, asking, entreating, conjuring the Stallmeister; till at last, to get away with his fair one, he promised every thing, assuring them that in a little while, the Castle should be opened, and they lodged in the most comfortable manner. In a few moments, they saw the glimmer of his lantern vanish; they long looked in vain for another gleam of light. At last, after much watching, scolding and reviling, it actually

appeared, and revived them with a touch of hope and consolation.

An ancient footman opened the door of the old edifice, into which they rushed with violence. Each of them now strove to have his trunk unfastened, and brought in beside him. Most of this luggage, like the persons of its owners, was thoroughly wetted. Having but a single light, the process of unpacking went on very slowly. In the dark passages they pushed against each other, they stumbled, they fell. They begged to have more lights, they begged to have some fuel. The monosyllabic footman, with much ado, consented to put down his own lantern; then went his way, and came not again.

They now began to investigate the edifice. The doors of all the rooms were open; large stoves, tapestry hangings, inlaid floors yet bore witness to its former pomp: but of other house-gear there was none to be seen; no table, chair, or mirror; nothing but a few monstrous empty bed-steads, stript of every ornament and every necessary. The wet trunks and knapsacks were adopted as seats; a part of the tired wanderers placed themselves upon the floor. Wilhelm had sat down upon some steps; Mignon lay upon his knees. The child was restless; and, when he asked what ailed her, she answered: "I am hungry." He himself had nothing that could still the craving of the child;

the rest of the party had consumed their whole provision; so he was obliged to leave the little traveller without refreshment. Through the whole adventure he had been inactive, silently immersed in thought. He was very sullen, and full of indignant regret that he had not kept by his first determination, and remained at the inn, though he should have slept in the garret.

The rest demeaned themselves in various ways. Some of them had got a heap of old wood collected within a vast gaping chimney in the hall; they set fire to the pile with great huzzaing. Unhappily, however, their hopes of warming and drying themselves by means of it, were mocked in the most frightful manner. The chimney it appeared was there for ornament alone, and was walled up above; so the smoke rushed quickly back, and at once filled the whole chamber. The dry wood rose crackling into flames; the flame was also driven back; the draught sweeping through the broken windows gave it a wavering direction. Terrified lest the Castle should catch fire, the unhappy guests had to tear the burning sticks asunder, to smother and trample them beneath their feet; the smoke increased; their case was rendered more intolerable than before; they were driven to the brink of desperation.

Wilhelm had retreated from the smoke into a distant chamber; to which Mignon soon followed him, leading in a well dressed servant, with a high

clear double-lighted lantern in his hand. He turned to Wilhelm, and holding out to him some fruits and confectionery on a beautiful porcelain plate: "The young lady up stairs," said he, "sends you this, with the request that you would join her party: she bids me tell you," added the lacquey, with a sort of grin, "that she is very well off yonder, and wishes to divide her enjoyments with her friends."

Wilhelm had not at all expected such a message; for, ever since the adventure on the stone bench, he had treated Philina with the most decided contempt: he was still so resolute to have no more concern with her, that he thought of sending back her dainty gifts untasted, when a supplicating look of Mignon's induced him to accept them. He returned his thanks in the name of the child. The invitation he entirely rejected. He desired the servant to exert himself a little for the stranger company, and made inquiry for the Baron. The latter, he was told, had gone to bed; but had already, as the lacquey understood, given orders to some other person to take charge of these unfortunate and ill lodged gentlemen.

The servant went away; leaving one of his lights, which Wilhelm, in the absence of a candlestick, contrived to fix upon the window casement; and now at least, in his meditations he could see the four walls of his chamber. Nor was it long till preparations were commenced for conducting our travellers to rest. Candles arrived by degrees, though

without snuffers; then a few chairs; an hour afterwards came bed-clothes; then pillows, all well steeped in rain. It was far past midnight when straw-beds and mattresses were produced, which, if sent at first, would have been extremely welcome.

In the interim also, somewhat to eat and drink had been brought in: it was enjoyed without much criticism, though it looked like a most disorderly collection of remains, and offered no very singular proof of the esteem in which our guests were held.

CHAPTER IV.

The disorders and mischievous tricks of some frolicksome companions still farther augmented the disquietudes and distresses of the night; these gay people woke each other, each played a thousand giddy pranks to plague his fellow. The next morning dawned amid loud complaints against their friend the Baron, for having so deceived them, for having given so very false a notion of the order and comfort that awaited their arrival. However, to their great surprise and consolation, at an early hour, the Count himself, attended by a few servants, made his entrance, and inquired about their circumstances. He appeared much vexed on discovering how badly they had fared: and the Baron, who came limping along, supported on the arm of a servant, bitterly accused the Steward for neglecting his commands on this occasion; shewing great anxiety to have that person punished for his disobedience.

The Count gave immediate orders that every thing should be arranged, in his presence, to the utmost possible convenience of the guests. While this was going on, some officers arrived, who forthwith scraped acquaintance with the actresses. The

Count assembled all the company before him, spoke to each by name, introduced a few jokes among his observations; so that every one was charmed at the gracious condescension of his Lordship. At last it came to Wilhelm's turn; he appeared with Mignon holding by his hand. Our friend excused himself, in the best terms he could, for the freedom he had taken; the Count, on the other hand, spoke as if the visit had been looked for.

A gentleman, who stood beside the Count, and who, although he wore no uniform, appeared to be an officer, conversed with Wilhelm; he was evidently not a common man. His large keen blue eyes, looking out from beneath a high brow; his light-coloured hair, thrown carelessly back; his middle stature; every thing about him shewed an active, firm, and well-regulated mode of being. His questions were lively; he seemed to be at home in all that he inquired about.

Wilhelm asked the Baron what this person was; but found that he had little good to say of him. "He held the rank of Major, was the special favourite of the Prince, managed his most secret affairs, was, in short, regarded as his right arm. Nay, there was reason to believe him the Prince's natural son. He had been on embassies in France, England, Italy; in all those places he had greatly distinguished himself; by which means he was grown conceited, imagining, among other

pretensions, that he thoroughly understood the literature of Germany, and allowing himself to vend all kinds of sorry jests upon it. He, the Baron, was in the habit of avoiding all intercourse with him; and Wilhelm would do well to imitate that conduct, for it somehow happened that no one could be near him without being punished for it. He was called Jarno; though nobody knew rightly what to make of such a name."

Wilhelm had nothing to urge against all this: he had felt a sort of inclination for the stranger, though he noticed in him something cold and repulsive.

The company being arranged and distributed throughout the Castle, Melina issued the strictest orders, that they should behave themselves with decency; the women live in a separate quarter; and each direct his whole attention to the study of dramatic art, and of the characters he had to play. He posted up written ordinances, consisting of many articles, upon all the doors. He settled the amount of fine, which should be levied upon each transgressor, and put into a common box.

This edict was but little heeded. Young officers went out and in; they jested not in the most modest fashion with the actresses; made game of the actors; and annihilated the whole system of police, before it had the smallest time to take root in the community. The people ran chasing one another through the rooms, they changed clothes, they

disguised themselves. Melina, attempting to be rigorous with a few at first, was exasperated by every sort of insolence; and when the Count soon after sent for him to come and view the place where his theatre was to be erected, matters grew worse and worse. The young gentry devised a thousand broad jokes; by the help of some actors, they became yet coarser; it seemed as if the old Castle had been altogether given up to an infuriate host; and the racket did not end till dinner.

Meanwhile the Count had led Melina over to a large hall, which, though belonging to the old Castle, communicated by a gallery with the new one: it seemed very well adapted for being changed into a little theatre. Here the sagacious lord of the mansion pointed out in person how he wanted every thing to be.

The labour now commenced in the greatest haste; the stage-apparatus was erected and furbished up; what decorations they had brought along with them and could employ, were set in order; and what was wanting, was prepared by some skilful workmen of the Count's. Wilhelm likewise put his hand to the business; he assisted in settling the perspective, in laying off the outlines of the scenery; he was very anxious that nothing should be executed clumsily. The Count, who frequently came in to inspect their progress, was highly satisfied; he shewed particularly how they should proceed in every case, displaying an un-

common knowledge of all the arts they were concerned with.

Next began the business of rehearsing in good earnest; and there would have been enough of space and leisure for this undertaking, had the actors not continually been interrupted by the presence of visiters. Some new guests were daily arriving, and each insisted on viewing the operations of the company.

CHAPTER V.

THE Baron had, for several days, been cheering Wilhelm with the hope of being formally presented to the Countess. "I have told this excellent lady," said he, "so much about the talent and fine sentiment displayed in your compositions, that she feels quite impatient to see you, and hear one or two of them read. Be prepared, therefore, to come over at a moment's notice; for, the first morning she is at leisure, you will certainly be called on." He then pointed out to him the afterpiece it would be proper to produce on that occasion; adding, that doubtless it would recommend him to no usual degree of favour. The lady, he declared, was extremely sorry that a guest like him had happened to arrive at a time of such confusion, when they could not entertain him in a style more suitable to his merits and their own wishes.

In consequence of this information, Wilhelm, with the most sedulous attention, set about preparing the piece, which was to usher him into the great world. "Hitherto," said he, "thou hast laboured in silence for thyself; applauded only by

a small circle of friends. Thou hast for a time despaired of thy abilities, and art yet full of anxious doubts whether even thy present path is the right one, and whether thy talent for the stage at all corresponds with thy inclination for it. In the hearing of such practised judges, in the closet where no illusion can take place, the attempt is far more hazardous than elsewhere; and yet I would not willingly recoil from the experiment; I could wish to add this pleasure to my former enjoyments, and if it might be, to give extension and stability to my hopes from the future."

He accordingly went through some pieces; read them with the keenest critical eye; made corrections here and there; recited them aloud, that he might be perfect in his tones and expression: and finally selected the work, which he was best acquainted with, and hoped to gain most honour by. He put it in his pocket, one morning, on being summoned to attend the Countess.

The Baron had assured him that there would be no one present, but the lady herself and a worthy female friend of hers. On entering the chamber, the Baroness von C * * * advanced with great friendliness to meet him; expressed her happiness at gaining his acquaintance; and introduced him to the Countess, who was then under the hands of her hair-dresser. The Countess received him with kind words and looks; but it vexed him to see Philina kneeling at her chair, and playing a thou-

sand fooleries. "The poor child," said the Baroness, "has just been singing to us. Finish the song you were in the midst of, we should not like to lose it."

Wilhelm listened to her quavering with great patience, being anxious for the friseur's departure before he should begin to read. They offered him a cup of chocolate, the Baroness herself handing him the biscuit. Yet, in spite of these civilities, he relished not his breakfast; he was longing too eagerly to lay before the lovely Countess some performance that might interest and gratify her. Philina too stood somewhat in his way; on former occasions, while listening to him, she had more than once been troublesome. He looked at the friseur with a painful feeling, hoping every moment that the tower of curls would be complete.

Meanwhile the Count came in, and began to talk of the fresh visiters he was expecting, of the day's occupations or amusements, and of various domestic matters that were started. On his retiring, some officers sent to ask permission of the Countess to pay their respects to her, as they had to leave the Castle before dinner. The footman having come to his post at the door, she permitted him to usher in the gentlemen.

The Baroness amid these interruptions gave herself some pains to entertain our friend, and shewed him much consideration; all which he accepted with becoming reverence, though not without a little

absence of mind. He often felt for the manuscript in his pocket; and hoped for his deliverance every instant. He was almost losing patience, when a man-milliner was introduced, and immediately began without mercy to open his papers, bags, and band-boxes; pressing all his various wares upon the ladies, with an importunity peculiar to that species of creature.

The company increased. The Baroness cast a look at Wilhelm, and then whispered with the Countess: he noticed this, but did not understand the purpose of it. The whole, however, became clear enough, when, after an hour of painful and fruitless endurance, he went away. He then found a beautiful portfolio of English manufacture in his pocket. The Baroness had dextrously put it there without his notice; and soon afterwards the Countess' little Black came out, and handed him an elegantly flowered waistcoat without very clearly saying whence it came.

CHAPTER VI.

This mingled feeling of vexation and gratitude spoiled the remainder of his day; till, towards evening, he once more found employment. Melina informed him that the Count had been speaking of a little prelude, which he wished to have produced, in honour of the Prince, on the day of his Highness' arrival. He meant to have the great qualities of this noble hero and philanthropist personified in the piece. These Virtue s were advance together, to recite his praises, and finally to encircle his bust with garlands of flowers and laurels; behind which a transparency might be inserted, representing the princely Hat, and his name illuminated on it. The Count, Melina said, had ordered him to take charge of getting ready the verses and other arrangements; and Wilhelm, he hoped, to whom it must be an easy matter, would stand by him on this occasion.

"How!" exclaimed our friend in a splenetic tone, "have we nothing but portraits, illuminated names, and allegorical figures, to shew in honour of a Prince, who, in my opinion, merits quite a different eulogy? How can it flatter any reason-

able man to see himself set up in effigy, and his name glimmering on oiled paper! I am very much afraid that your Allegories, particularly in the present state of the wardrobe, will furnish occasion for many ambiguities and jestings. If you mean, however, to compose the piece, or make it be composed, I can have nothing to object against it; only I desire to have no part or lot in the matter."

Melina excused himself; alleging this to be only a casual hint of his Lordship the Count, who for the rest had left the arrangement of the piece entirely in their own hands. "With all my heart," replied our friend, "will I contribute something to the pleasure of this noble family; my Muse has never had so pleasant an employment as to sing, though in broken numbers, the praises of a Prince who merits so much veneration. I will think about the matter; perhaps I may be able to contrive some way of bringing out our little troop, so as at least to product some effect."

From this moment, Wilhelm eagerly reflected on his undertaking. Before he went to sleep, he had got it all reduced to some degree of order; early next morning his plan was ready, the scenes laid out; a few of the most striking passages and songs were even versified and written down.

As soon as he was dressed, our friend made haste to wait upon the Baron, to submit the plan to his inspection, and take his advice upon certain points

connected with it. The Baron testified his approbation of it; but not without considerable surprise. For, on the previous evening, he had heard his Lordship talk of having ordered some quite different piece to be prepared and versified.

"To me it seems improbable," replied our friend, "that it could be his Lordship's wish to have the piece got ready, exactly as he gave it to Melina. If I am not mistaken, he intended merely to point out to us from a distance the path we were to follow. The amateur and critic shews the artist what is wanted; and then leaves to him the care of producing it by his own means."

"Not at all," replied the Baron: "his Lordship understands that the piece shall be composed according to that and no other plan, which he has himself prescribed. Yours has indeed a remote similarity with his idea; but, if we mean to accomplish our purpose, and get the Count diverted from his first thought, we shall need to employ the ladies in the matter. The Baroness especially contrives to execute such operations in the most masterly manner: the question is now, whether your plan shall so please her, that she will undertake the business; in that case it will certainly succeed."

"We need the assistance of the ladies," said our friend, "at any rate; for neither our company nor our wardrobe would suffice without them. I

have counted on some pretty children, that are running up and down the house, and belong to certain of the servants."

He then desired the Baron to communicate his plan to the ladies. The Baron soon returned with intelligence that they wished to speak with Wilhelm personally. That same evening, when the gentlemen sat down to play, which, owing to the arrival of a certain General, was expected to be deeper and keener than usual, the Countess and her friend, under the pretence of some indisposition, would retire to their chamber; where Wilhelm, being introduced by a secret stair, might submit his project without interruption. This sort of mystery, the Baron said, would give to the adventure a peculiar charm; in particular the Baroness was rejoicing like a child, in the prospect of their rendezvous; and the more so, because it was to be accomplished secretly and against the inclination of the Count.

Towards evening, at the appointed time, Wilhelm was sent for, and led in with caution. As the Baroness advanced to meet him in a small cabinet, the manner of their interview brought former happy scenes, for a moment, to his mind. She conducted him along to the Countess' chamber; and they now proceeded earnestly to question and investigate. He exhibited his plan with the utmost warmth and vivacity; so that his fair audi-

ence were quite decided in its favour. Our readers also will permit us to present a brief sketch of it here.

The piece was to open with a dance of children in some rural scene; their dance representing that particular game, wherein each has to wheel round and gain the other's place. This was to be followed by several variations of their play; till at last, in performing a dance of the repeating kind, they were all to sing a merry song. Here the old Harper with Mignon should enter, and by the curiosity which they excited, gather several country people round them; the Harper would sing various songs in praise of peace, repose, and joy; and Mignon would then dance the egg-dance.

In these innocent delights, they are disturbed by the sound of martial music; and the party are surprised by a troop of soldiers. The men stand on the defensive and are overcome; the girls fly and are taken. In the tumult all seems going to destruction, when a Person (about whose form and qualities the poet was not yet determined) enters, and by signifying that the General is near, restores composure. Whereupon the Hero's character is painted in the finest colours; security is promised in the midst of arms; violence and lawless disorder are now to be restrained. A universal festival is held in honour of the noble-minded Captain.

The Countess and her friend expressed great satisfaction with the plan; only they maintained

that there must of necessity be something of allegory introduced, to make it palatable to his Lordship. The Baron proposed that the leader of the soldiers should be represented as the Genius of Dissension and Violence; that Minerva should then advance to bind fetters on him, to give notice of the hero's approach, and celebrate his praise. The Baroness undertook the task of persuading the Count, that this plan was the one proposed by himself with a few alterations; at the same time expressly stipulating that, without fail, at the conclusion of the piece, the bust, the illuminated name, and the princely Hat, should be exhibited in due order; since otherwise her attempt was vain.

Wilhelm had already figured in his mind how delicately and how nobly he would have the praises of his hero celebrated in the mouth of Minerva; and it was not without a long struggle that he yielded in this point. Yet he felt himself delightfully constrained to yield. The beautiful eyes of the Countess, and her lovely demeanour, would easily have moved him to sin against his conscience as a poet; to abandon the finest and most interesting invention, the keenly wished-for unity of his composition, and all its most suitable details. His conscience as a burgher had a trial no less hard to undergo, when the ladies, in distributing the characters, pointedly insisted that he must undertake one himself.

Laertes had received for his allotment the part

of that violent war-god; Wilhelm was to represent the leader of the peasants, who had some very pretty and tender verses to recite. After long resistance he was forced to comply: he could find no excuse, when the Baroness protested that their stage was in all respects to be regarded as a private one, and that she herself would very gladly play on it, if they could find her a fit occasion. On receiving his consent, they parted with our friend on the kindest terms. The Baroness assured him that he was an incomparable man; she accompanied him to the little stair, and wished him good night with a squeeze of the hand.

CHAPTER VII.

THE interest in his undertakings, which the Countess and her friend expressed and felt so warmly, quickened Wilhelm's faculties and zeal: the plan of his piece, which the process of describing it had rendered more distinct, was now present in the most brilliant vividness before his mind. He spent the greater part of that night, and the whole of next morning, in the sedulous versification of the dialogue and songs.

He had proceeded a considerable way, when a message came requiring his attendance in the Castle; the noble company, who were then at breakfast, wished to speak with him. As he entered the parlour, the Baroness advanced to meet him; and, under the pretence of wishing him good morning, whispered cunningly: "Say nothing of your piece, but what you shall be asked."

"I hear," cried the Count to him, "that you are very busy working at my prelude, which I mean to present in honour of the Prince. I consent that you introduce a Minerva into it; and we are just thinking beforehand how the goddess shall be dressed, that we may not blunder in costume. For this purpose I am causing them to

fetch from the library all the books that contain any figures of her."

At the same instant, one or two servants entered the parlour with a huge basket full of books of every shape and appearance.

Montfaucon, the collections of antique statues, gems, and coins, all sorts of mythological writings were turned up, and their plates compared. But even this was not enough. The Count's faithful memory recalled to him all the Minervas to be found in frontispieces, vignettes, or anywhere else; and book after book was, in consequence, carried from the library, till finally the Count was sitting in a chaos of volumes. Unable at last to recollect any other figure of Minerva, he observed with a smile: "I durst bet, that now there is not a single Minerva in all the library; and perhaps it is the first time that a collection of books has been so totally deprived of the presence of its patron goddess."

The whole company were merry at this thought; Jarno particularly, who had all along been spurring on the Count to call for more and more books, laughed quite immoderately.

"Now," said the Count, turning to Wilhelm, "one chief point is: Which goddess do you mean? Minerva or Pallas? The goddess of war or of the arts?"

"Would it not be best, your Excellence," said Wilhelm, "if we were not clearly to express ourselves on this head; if, since the goddess plays a double part in the ancient mythology, we also exhibited her here in a double quality. She announces a warrior, but only to calm the tumults of the people; she celebrates a hero by exalting his humanity; she conquers violence, and restores peace and security."

The Baroness, afraid lest Wilhelm might betray himself, hastily pushed forward the Countess' tailor, to give his opinion how such an antique robe could best be got ready. This man, being frequently employed in making masquerade dresses, very easily contrived the business; and as Madam Melina, notwithstanding her advanced state of pregnancy, had undertaken to enact the celestial virgin, the tailor was directed to take her measure; and the Countess, though with some reluctance, selected from the wardrobe the clothes he was to cut up for that purpose.

The Baroness, in her dextrous way, again contrived to lead Wilhelm to a side, and let him know that she had been providing all the other necessaries. Shortly afterwards, she sent him the musician, who had charge of the Count's private band; and this professor set about composing what airs were wanted, or choosing from his actual stock such tunes as appeared suitable. From this

time, all went on according to the wishes of our friend: the Count made no more inquiries about the piece; being altogether occupied with the transparent decoration, destined to surprise the spectators at the conclusion of the play. His inventive genius, aided by the skill of his confectioner, produced in fact a very pretty article. In the course of his travels, the Count had witnessed the most splendid exhibitions of this sort; he had also brought home with him a number of copperplates and drawings, and could sketch such things with no small taste.

Meanwhile Wilhelm finished the play; gave every one his part, and began the study of his own. The musician also, having great skill in dancing, prepared the ballet; so that every thing proceeded as it ought.

Yet one unexpected obstacle occurred, which threatened to occasion an unpleasant gap in the performance. He had promised to himself a striking effect from Mignon's egg-dance; and was much surprised when the child, with her customary dryness of manner, refused to dance, saying she was now his, and would no more go upon the stage. He sought to move her by every sort of persuasion, and did not discontinue his attempt till she began weeping bitterly, fell at his feet, and cried out: "Dearest father! stay thou from the boards thyself!" Little heeding this caution, he

studied how to give some other turn to the scene that might be equally interesting.

Philina, whose appointment was to act one of the peasant girls, and in the concluding dance to give the single-voice part of the song, and lead the chorus, felt exceedingly delighted that it had been so ordered. In other respects, too, her present life was exactly to her mind; she had her separate chamber; was constantly beside the Countess, entertaining her with fooleries, and daily receiving some present for her pains. Among other things, a dress had been expressly made for her wearing in this prelude. And being of a light imitative nature, she quickly marked in the procedure of the ladies whatever would befit herself: she had of late grown all politeness and decorum. The attentions of the Stallmeister augmented rather than diminished; and, as the officers also paid zealous court to her, living in so genial an element, it came into her head for once in her life to play the prude, and in a quiet gradual way to take upon herself a certain dignity of manner to which she had not before aspired. Cool and sharp-sighted, as she was, eight days had not elapsed till she knew the weak side of every person in the house; so that, had she possessed the power of acting from any constant motive, she might very easily have made her fortune. But on this occasion, as on all others, she employed her advantages merely to divert

herself, to procure a bright to-day, and be impertinent, wherever she observed that impertinence was not attended with danger.

The parts were now committed to memory; a rehearsal of the piece was ordered; the Count purposed to be present at it; and his lady began to feel anxious about how he might receive it. The Baroness called Wilhelm to her privately: the nearer the hour approached, they all displayed the more perplexity; for the truth was, that of the Count's original idea nothing whatever had been introduced. Jarno, who joined them while consulting together, was admitted to the secret. He felt amused at the contrivance, and was heartily disposed to offer the ladies his good services in carrying it through. "It will go hard," said he, "if you cannot extricate yourselves without help from this affair; but, at all events, I will wait as a body of reserve." The Baroness then told them how she had on various occasions recited the whole piece to the Count, but only in fragments and without order; that consequently he was prepared for each individual passage, yet certainly possessed with the idea that the whole would coincide with his original conception. "I will sit by him," said she, "to-night at the rehearsal, and study to divert his attention. The confectioner I have engaged already to make the decoration as beautiful as possible, but as yet he has not quite completed it."

" I know of a Court," said Jarno, " where I wish we had a few such active and prudent friends as you. If your skill to-night will not suffice, give me a signal; I will take out the Count, and not let him in again till Minerva enter, and you have speedy aid to expect from the illumination. For a day or two, I have had something to report to him about his cousin, which for various reasons I have hitherto postponed. It will give his thoughts another turn, and that not the most delightful.

Business hindered the Count from being present when the play began; the Baroness amused him after his arrival; Jarno's help was not required. For, as the Count had abundance of employment in pointing out improvements, rectifying and arranging the detached parts, he entirely forgot the purport of the whole; and as at last Madam Melina advanced and spoke according to his heart, and the transparency did well, he seemed completely satisfied. It was not till the whole was finished, and his guests were sitting down to cards, that the difference appeared to strike him, and he began to think whether after all this piece was actually of his invention. At a signal from the Baroness, Jarno then came forward into action; the evening passed away; the intelligence of the Prince's approach was confirmed; the people rode out more than once to see his vanguard encamp-

ing in the neighbourhood; the house was full of noise and tumult; and our actors, not always served in the most handsome manner by unwilling servants, had to pass their time in practisings and expectations, at their quarters in the old mansion, without any one particularly taking thought about them.

CHAPTER VIII.

At length the Prince arrived, with all his generals, staff-officers, and suite accompanying him. These, and the multitude of people coming to visit or do business with him, made the Castle like a bee-hive on the point of swarming. All pressed forward to behold a man no less distinguished by his rank than by his great qualities; and all admired his urbanity and condescension; all were astonished at finding the hero and the leader of armies also the most accomplished and attractive courtier.

By the Count's orders, the inmates of the Castle were required to be all at their posts when the Prince arrived; not a player was allowed to show himself, that his Highness might have no anticipation of the spectacle prepared to welcome him. Accordingly, when at evening he was led into the lofty hall, glowing with light and adorned with tapestries of the previous century, he seemed not at all prepared to expect a play, and still less a prelude in honour of himself. Every thing went off as it should have done: at the conclusion of the show, the whole troop were called and presented individually to the Prince, who contrived

with the most pleasing and friendly air to put some question, or make some remark, to every one of them. Wilhelm, as author of the piece, was particularly noticed, and had his tribute of applause liberally paid him.

The prelude being fairly over, no one asked another word about it; in a few days, it was as if it never had existed, except that occasionally Jarno spoke of it to Wilhelm, judiciously praised it, adding however: "It is pity you should play with hollow nuts, for a stake of hollow nuts." This expression stuck in Wilhelm's mind for several days; he knew not how to explain it, or what to infer from it.

Meanwhile the company kept acting every night, as well as their capacities permitted; each doing his utmost to attract the attention of spectators. Undeserved applauses cheered them on: in their old Castle they fully believed, that the great assemblage was crowding thither solely on their account; that the multitude of strangers was allured by their exhibitions; that *they* were the centre round which, and by means of which, the whole was moving and revolving.

Wilhelm alone discovered to his sorrow, that directly the reverse of this was true. For although the Prince had waited out the first exhibitions, sitting on his chair, with the greatest conscientiousness, yet by degrees he grew remiss in his attendance, and seized every plausible occasion of withdrawing. And those very people whom Wilhelm

in conversation had found to be the best informed and most sensible, with Jarno at their head, were in use to spend but a few transitory moments in the hall of the theatre; sitting for the rest of their time in the antichamber, gaming, or seeming to employ themselves in business.

Amid all his persevering efforts, to want the wished and hoped-for approbation grieved Wilhelm very deeply. In the choice of plays, in transcribing the parts, in numerous rehearsals, and whatever farther could be done, he zealously co-operated with Melina, who, being in secret conscious of his own insufficiency, at length acknowledged and pursued these counsels. His own parts Wilhelm diligently studied; and executed with vivacity and feeling, and with all the propriety which the little training he had yet received would allow.

At the same time, the unwearied interest, which the Baron took in their performances, obliterated every doubt from the minds of the rest of the company: he assured them that their exhibitions were producing the deepest effect, especially while one of his own pieces had been representing; only he was grieved to say, the Prince shewed an exclusive inclination for the French theatre; while a part of his people, among whom Jarno was especially distinguished, gave a passionate preference to the monstrous productions of the English stage.

If in this way the art of our players was not adequately noticed and admired, their persons on

the other hand grew not entirely indifferent to all the gentlemen and all the ladies of the audience. We observed above, that from the very first our actresses had drawn upon them the attention of the young officers; in the sequel they were luckier, and made more important conquests. But omitting these, we shall merely observe, that Wilhelm every day appeared more interesting to the Countess, while in him too a silent inclination towards her was beginning to take root. Whenever he was on the stage, she could not turn away her eyes from him; and ere long, he seemed to play and to recite with his face towards her alone. To look upon each other was to them the sweetest satisfaction; to which their harmless souls yielded without reserve, without cherishing a bolder wish, or thinking about any consequence.

As two hostile outposts will sometimes peacefully and pleasantly converse together, across the river which divides them, not thinking of the war in which both their countries are engaged, so did the Countess exchange looks full of meaning with our friend, across the vast chasm of birth and rank, both believing for themselves that they might safely cherish their several emotions.

The Baroness, in the mean time, had selected Laertes, who, being a spirited and lively young man, pleased her very much; and who, woman-hater as he was, felt unwilling to refuse a passing adventure. He would actually on this occasion have

been fettered, against his will, by the courteous and attractive nature of the Baroness, had not the Baron done him accidentally a piece of good, or if you will, of bad service, by instructing him a little in the habits and temper of this lady.

Laertes happening once to celebrate her praises, and give her the preference to every other of her sex, the Baron with a grin replied: "I see how matters stand; our fair friend has got a fresh inmate for her stalls." This luckless comparison, which pointed too clearly to the dangerous caresses of a Circe, grieved poor Laertes to the heart; he could not listen to the Baron without spite and anger, as the latter continued without mercy:

"Every stranger thinks he is the first, whom this delightful manner has concerned: but he is grievously mistaken; for all of us, at one time or another, have been trotted round this course. Man, youth or boy, be who he like, each must devote himself to her service for a season, must hang about her, and toil and long to gain her favour."

To the happy man, just entering the garden of an enchantress, and welcomed by all the pleasures of an artificial spring, nothing can form a more unpleasant surprise, than if, while his ear is watching and drinking in the music of the nightingales, some transformed predecessor on a sudden grunts at his very feet.

After this discovery, Laertes felt heartily ashamed, that vanity should have again misled him to

think well even in the smallest degree of any woman whatsoever. He now forsook the Baroness entirely; kept by the Stallmeister, with whom he diligently fenced and hunted; conducting himself at rehearsals and representations as if these were but secondary matters.

The Count and his lady would often in the mornings send for some of the company to attend them; and all had continual cause to envy the undeserved good fortune of Philina. The Count kept his favourite, the Pedant, frequently for hours together, at his toilette. This genius had been dressed out by degrees; he was now equipt and furnished even to watch and snuff-box.

Many times, too, particularly after dinner, the whole company were called out before the noble guests; an honour which the artists regarded as the most flattering in the world; not observing, that on these very occasions the servants and huntsmen were ordered to bring in a multitude of hounds, and to lead strings of horses about the court of the Castle.

Wilhelm had been counselled to praise Racine the Prince's favourite, and thereby to attract some portion of his Highness' favour to himself. On one of these afternoons, being summoned with the rest, he found an opportunity to introduce this topic. The Prince asked him if he diligently read the great French dramatic writers; to which Wilhelm answered with a very eager "Yes." He did

not observe that his Highness, without waiting for the answer, was already on the point of turning round to some one else: he fixed upon him on the contrary, almost stepping in his way; and proceeded to declare, that he valued the French theatre very highly, and read the works of their great masters with delight; particularly he had learned with true joy that his Highness did complete justice to the great talents of Racine. "I can easily conceive," continued he, "how people of high breeding and exalted rank must value a poet, who has painted so excellently and so truly the circumstances of their lofty station. Corneille, if I may say so, has delineated great men; Racine men of eminent rank. In reading his plays, I can always figure to myself the poet as living at a splendid court, with a great king before his eyes, in constant intercourse with the most distinguished persons, and penetrating into the secrets of human nature, as it works concealed behind the gorgeous tapestry of palaces. When I study his Brittanicus, his Berenice, it seems as if I were transported in person to the court, were initiated into the great and the little, in the habitations of these earthly gods: through the fine and delicate organs of my author, I see kings whom a nation adores, courtiers whom thousands envy, in their natural forms, with their failings and their pains. The anecdote of Racine's dying of a broken heart, because Louis XIV. would no longer attend to him, and had shewn

him his dissatisfaction, is to me the key to all his works. It was impossible that a poet of his talents, whose life and death depended on the looks of a king, should not write such works as a king and a prince might applaud."

Jarno had stept near, and was listening with astonishment. The Prince, who had made no answer, and had only shewed his approbation by an assenting look, now turned aside; though Wilhelm, who did not know that it was contrary to etiquette to continue a discussion under such circumstances and exhaust a subject, would gladly have spoken more, and convinced the Prince that he had not read his favourite poet without sensibility and profit.

" Have you never," said Jarno, taking him aside, " read one of Shakspeare's plays ?"

" No," replied Wilhelm: " since the time when they became more known in Germany, I have myself grown unacquainted with the theatre; and I know not whether I should now rejoice that an old taste and occupation of my youth has been by chance renewed. In the mean time, all that I have heard of these plays has excited little wish to become acquainted with such extraordinary monsters, which appear to set probability and dignity alike at defiance."

" I would advise you," said the other, " to make a trial, notwithstanding: it can do one no harm to see what is extraordinary with his own eyes. I will

lend you a volume or two; and you cannot better spend your time, than by casting every thing aside, and retiring to the solitude of your old habitation, to look into the magic-lantern of that unknown world. It is sinful of you to waste your hours in dressing out these apes to look more human, and teaching dogs to dance. One thing only I require; you must not cavil at the form; the rest I can leave to your own good sense and feeling."

The horses were standing at the door; and Jarno mounted with some other cavaliers, to go and hunt. Wilhelm looked after him with sadness. He would fain have spoken much with this man, who, though in a harsh unfriendly way, gave him new ideas, ideas that he had need of.

Oftentimes a man when approaching some development of his powers, capacities, and conceptions, gets into a perplexity, from which a prudent friend might easily deliver him. He resembles a traveller, who, at but a short distance from the inn he is to rest at, falls into the water; were any one to catch him then, and pull him to the bank, with one good wetting it were over; whereas though he struggles out himself, it is often at the side where he tumbled in, and he has to make a wide and weary circuit before reaching his appointed object.

Wilhelm now began to have an inkling that things went forward in the world differently from what he had supposed. He now viewed close at

hand the solemn and imposing life of the great and distinguished; and wondered at the easy dignity which they contrived to give it. An army on its march, a princely hero at the head of it, such a multitude of co-operating warriors, such a multitude of crowding worshippers exalted his imagination. In this mood of mind, he received the promised books; and ere long, as may be easily supposed, the stream of that mighty genius laid hold of him, and led him down to a shoreless ocean, where he soon forgot and lost himself completely.

CHAPTER IX.

The connexion between the Baron and the actors had suffered various changes, since the arrival of the latter. At the commencement, it had been productive of great satisfaction to both parties. As the Baron for the first time in his life now saw one of those pieces, with which he had already graced a private theatre, put into the hands of real actors, and in the fair way for a decent exhibition, he shewed the benignest humour in the world. He was liberal in gifts; he bought little presents for the actresses from every millinery-hawker, and contrived to send over many an odd bottle of champaign to the actors. In return for all this, our company took every sort of trouble with his play; and Wilhelm spared no diligence in learning, with extreme correctness, the sublime speeches of that very eminent hero, whose part had fallen to his share.

But, in spite of all these kind reciprocities, some clouds by degrees arose between the players and their patron. The Baron's preference for certain actors became daily more observable; this of necessity chagrined the rest. He exalted his favourites quite exclusively; and thus, of course,

he introduced disunion and jealousy among the company. Melina, without skill to help himself in dubious junctures, felt his situation very vexing. The persons eulogized accepted of their praise, without being singularly thankful for it; while the neglected gentlemen shewed traces of their spleen by a thousand methods; and constantly found means to make it very disagreeable for their once much-honoured patron to appear among them. Their spite received no little nourishment from a certain poem, by an unknown author, which made a great sensation in the Castle. Previously to this, the Baron's intercourse with the company had given rise to many little strokes of merriment; several stories had been raised about him; certain little incidents, adorned with suitable additions, and presented in the proper light, had been talked of, and made the subject of much bantering and laughter. At last it began to be said, that a certain rivalry of trade was arising between him and some of the actors, who also looked upon themselves as writers. The poem we spoke of was founded upon this report; it ran as follows:

I poor devil, Lord Baron,
Must envy you that crest of arms,
The coach you ride in, coat you've on,
Your copses, ponds, and rackrent farms,
Your father's polish'd ashler house,
And all his hounds and hares and grouse.

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

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

Upon this poem, which various persons were possessed of, in copies scarcely legible, opinions were exceedingly divided. But who the author was no one could guess; and as some began to draw a spiteful mirth from it, our friend expressed himself against it very keenly.

"We Germans," he exclaimed, "deserve to have our Muses still continue in the low contempt, wherein they have languished so long; since we cannot value men of rank who take a share in our literature, no matter how. Birth, rank, and fortune, are nowise incompatible with genius and taste; as foreign nations, reckoning among their best minds a great number of noblemen, can fully testify. Hitherto indeed it has been rare in Ger-

many for men of high station to devote themselves to science; hitherto few famous names have become more famous by their love of art and learning; while many, on the other hand, have mounted out of darkness to distinction, and risen like unknown stars on the horizon. Yet this will not always be the case; and I greatly err, if the first classes of the nation are not even now in the way of also employing their advantages to earn the fairest laurels of the Muses, at no distant date. Nothing, therefore, grieves me more than to see the burgher jeering at the noble who can value literature; nay, even men of rank themselves, with inconsiderate caprice, maliciously scaring off their equal from a path where honour and contentment wait on all."

Apparently this latter observation pointed at the Count, of whom Wilhelm had heard that he liked the poem very much. In truth, this nobleman, accustomed to rally the Baron in his own peculiar way, was extremely glad of such an opportunity to plague his kinsman more effectually. As to who the writer of the squib might be, each formed his own hypothesis; and the Count, never willing that another should surpass him in acuteness, fell upon a thought, which, in a short time, he would have sworn to the truth of. The verses could be written, he believed, by no one but his Pedant, who was a very shrewd knave, and in whom, for a long while, he had noticed some

touches of poetic genius. By way of proper treat, he therefore caused the Pedant one morning to be sent for, and made him read the poem, in his own manner, in presence of the Countess, the Baroness, and Jarno; a service he was paid for by applauses, praises, and a present: and on the Count's inquiring if he had not still some other poems of an earlier time, he cunningly contrived to evade the question. Thus did the Pedant get invested with the reputation of a poet and a wit; and in the eyes of the Baron's friends, of a pasquinader and a bad-hearted man. From that period, play as he might, the Count applauded him with greater zeal than ever; so that the poor wight grew at last inflated till he nearly lost his senses, and began to meditate having a chamber in the Castle like Philina.

Had this project been fulfilled at once, a great mishap might have been spared him. As he was returning late one evening from the Castle, groping about in the dark narrow way, he was suddenly laid hold of, and kept on the spot by some persons, while some others rained a shower of blows upon him, and battered him so stoutly, that in a few seconds he was lying almost dead upon the place, and could not without difficulty crawl in to his companions. These, indignant as they seemed to be at such an outrage, felt their secret joy in the adventure; they could hardly keep from laughing, at seeing him so thoroughly curried,

and his new brown coat bedusted through and through, and bedaubed with white, as if he had had to do with millers.

The Count, who soon got notice of the business, broke into a boundless rage. He treated this act as the most heinous crime; called it an infringement of the Burgfried, or Peace of the Castle, and caused his judge to make the strictest inquisition touching it. The whited coat, it was imagined, would afford a leading proof. Every creature, that possibly could have the smallest trade with flour or powder in the Castle, was submitted to investigation; but in vain.

The Baron solemnly protested on his honour, that although this sort of jesting had considerably displeased him, and the conduct of his Lordship the Count had not been the friendliest, yet he had got over the affair; and with respect to the misfortune which had come upon the poet or pasquinader, or whatsoever his title might be, he knew absolutely nothing, and had not the most remote concern in it.

The operations of the strangers, and the general commotion of the house, soon effaced all recollection of the matter; and so, without redress, the unlucky favourite had to pay dear for the satisfaction of pluming himself, a short while, in feathers not his own.

Our troop, regularly acting every night, and on the whole very decently treated, now began to

make more clamorous demands, the better they were dealt with. Ere long their victuals, drink, attendance, lodging grew inadequate; and they called upon the Baron, their protector, to provide more liberally for them, and at last make good those promises of comfortable entertainment, which he had been giving them so long. Their complaints grew louder; and the efforts of our friend to still them, more and more abortive.

Meanwhile, excepting in rehearsals and hours of acting, Wilhelm scarcely ever came abroad. Shut up in one of the remotest chambers, to which Mignon and the Harper alone had free access, he lived and moved in the Shakspearean world, feeling or knowing nothing but the movements of his own mind.

We have heard of some Enchanter summoning by magic formulas a vast multitude of spiritual shapes into his cell. The conjurations are so powerful that the whole space of the apartment is quickly full; and the spirits crowding on to the verge of the little circle which they must not pass, around this, and above the master's head, keep increasing in number, and ever whirling in perpetual transformation. Every corner is crammed, every crevice is possessed. Embryos expand themselves, and giant forms contract into the size of nuts. Unhappily the Black-artist has forgot the word, with which he might command this flood of sprites again to ebb.

So sat Wilhelm in his privacy; with unknown movements, a thousand feelings and capacities awoke in him, of which he formerly had neither notion nor anticipation. Nothing could allure him from this state; he was vexed and restless if any one presumed to come to him, and talk of news or what was passing in the world.

Accordingly he scarce took notice of the circumstance, when told that a judicial sentence was about being executed in the Castle-yard; the flogging of a boy, who had incurred suspicions of nocturnal housebreaking, and who, as he wore a peruke-maker's coat, had most probably been one of the assaulters of the Pedant. The boy indeed, it seemed, denied most obstinately; so that they could not inflict a formal punishment, but meant to give him a slight memorial as a vagabond, and send him about his business; he having prowled about the neighbourhood for several days, lain at night in the mills, and at last clapped a ladder to the garden-wall, and mounted over by it.

Our friend saw nothing very strange in the transaction, and was dismissing it entirely, when Mignon came running in, and assured him that the criminal was Friedrich, who, since the rencounter with the Stallmeister, had vanished from the company, and not again been heard of.

Feeling an interest in the boy, Wilhelm hastily arose; he found, in the court-yard of the Castle, the preparations almost finished. The Count loved

solemnity on these occasions. The boy being now led out, our friend stept forward, and entreated for delay, as he knew the boy, and had various things to say which might perhaps throw light on the affair. He had difficulty in succeeding, notwithstanding all his statements; at length, however, he got leave to speak in private with the culprit. Friedrich averred, that concerning the assault in which the Pedant had been used so harshly, he knew nothing whatever. He had merely been lurking about; and had come in at night to see Philina, whose room he had discovered, and would certainly have reached, had he not been taken by the way.

For the credit of the company, Wilhelm felt desirous not to have the truth of his adventure published. He hastened to the Stallmeister; he begged him to shew favour, and with his intimate knowledge of men and things about the Castle, to find some means of quashing the affair, and dismissing the boy.

This whimsical gentleman, by Wilhelm's help, invented a little story; how the boy had belonged to the troop, had run away from it, but soon wished to get back and be received again into his place; how he had accordingly been trying in the night to come at certain of his well-wishers, and solicit their assistance. It was testified by others that his former behaviour had been good; the ladies put their hands to the work; and Friedrich was let go.

Wilhelm took him in; a third person in that strange family, which for some time he had looked on as his own. The old man and little Mignon received the returning wanderer kindly; and all the three combined to serve their friend and guardian with attention, and procure him all the pleasure in their power.

CHAPTER X.

PHILINA now succeeded in insinuating farther every day into the favour of the ladies. Whenever they were by themselves, she was wont to lead the conversation on the men whom they saw about the Castle; and our friend was not the last or least important that engaged them. The cunning girl was well aware that he had made a deep impression on the Countess; she therefore talked about him often, telling much that she knew or did not know; only taking care to speak of nothing that might be interpreted against him; eulogizing, on the contrary, his nobleness of mind, his generosity, and more than all, his modest and respectful conduct to the fair sex. To all inquiries made about him she replied with equal prudence; and the Baroness, when she observed the growing inclination of her amiable friend, was likewise very glad at the discovery. Her own intrigues with several men, especially of late with Jarno, had not remained hidden from the Countess, whose pure soul could not look upon such levities without disapprobation, and meek, though earnest censures.

In this way, both Philina and the Baroness were personally interested in establishing a closer intercourse between the Countess and our friend. Philina hoped, moreover, that there would occur some opportunity, when she might once more labour for herself, and, if possible, get back the favour of the young man she had lost.

One day his Lordship with his guests had ridden out to hunt, and their return was not expected till the morrow. On this, the Baroness devised a frolick, which was altogether in her way: for she loved disguises; and in order to surprise her friends, would suddenly appear among them as a peasant girl at one time, at another as a page, at another as a hunter's boy. By which means, she almost gave herself the air of a little fairy, that is present everywhere, and exactly in the place where it is least expected. Nothing could exceed this lady's joy, if, without being recognised, she could contrive to wait upon the company for some time as a servant, or mix among them anyhow, and then at last in some sportful way disclose herself.

Towards night, she sent for Wilhelm to her chamber; and, happening to have something else to do just then, she left Philina to receive him and prepare him.

He arrived, and found to his surprise, not the honourable lady, but the giddy actress in the room. She received him with a certain dignified openness of manner, which she had of late been

practising, and so constrained him likewise to be courteous.

At first she rallied him in general on the good fortune which pursued him everywhere, and which, as she could not but see, had led him hither, in the present case. Then she delicately set before him the treatment, with which of late he had afflicted her; she blamed and upbraided herself; confessed that she had but too well deserved such punishment; described with the greatest candour what she called her *former* situation; adding, that she would despise herself, if she were not capable of altering, and making herself worthy of his friendship.

Wilhelm was struck with this oration. He had too little knowlege of the world to understand that persons, quite unstable and incapable of all improvement, frequently accuse themselves in the bitterest manner, confessing and deploring their faults with extreme ingenuousness, though they possess not the smallest power within them to retire from that course, along which the irresistible tendency of their nature is dragging them forward. Accordingly, he could not find in his heart to behave inexorably to the graceful sinner; he entered into conversation, and learned from her the project of a singular disguisement, wherewith it was intended to surprise the Countess.

He found some room for hesitation here; nor

did he hide his scruples from Philina ; but the Baroness, entering at this moment, left him not an instant for reflection ; she hurried him away with her, declaring it was just the proper hour.

It was now grown dark. She took him to the Count's wardrobe ; made him change his own coat with his Lordship's silk night-gown ; and put the cap with red trimmings on his head. She then led him forward to the cabinet ; and bidding him sit down upon the large chair, and take a book, she lit the Argand's lamp, which stood before him, and shewed him what he was to do, and what kind of part he had to play.

They would inform the Countess, she said, of her husband's unexpected arrival, and that he was in very bad humour. The Countess would come in, walk up and down the room once or twice, then place herself beside the back of his chair, lay her arm upon his shoulder, and speak a few words. He was to play the cross husband as long and well as possible ; and when obliged to disclose himself, he must behave politely, handsomely, and gallantly.

Wilhelm was left sitting, restlessly enough, in this singular mask. The proposal had come upon him by surprise ; the execution of it got the start of the deliberation. The Baroness had vanished from the room, before he saw how dangerous the post was, which he had engaged to fill. He could not deny that the beauty, the youth, the gracefulness

of the Countess had made some impression on him; but his nature was entirely averse to all empty gallantry, and his principles forbade any thought of more serious enterprises; so that his perplexity at this moment was in truth extreme. The fear of displeasing the Countess, and that of pleasing her too well, were equally busy in his mind.

Every female charm, that had ever acted on him, now shewed itself again to his imagination. Mariana rose before him in her white morning-gown, and entreated his remembrance. Philina's loveliness, her beautiful hair, her insinuating blandishments had again become attractive by her late presence. Yet all this retired as if behind the veil of distance, when he figured to himself the noble blooming Countess, whose arm in a few minutes he would feel upon his neck, whose innocent caresses he was there to answer.

The strange mode, in which he was to be delivered out of this perplexity, he certainly did not anticipate. We may judge of his astonishment, nay his terror, when the door opened behind him; and at the first stolen look in the mirror, he quite clearly discerned the Count coming in with a light in his hand. His doubt what he should do, whether he should sit still or rise, should fly, confess, deny, or beg forgiveness, lasted but a few instants. The Count, who had remained motionless standing in the door, retired and shut it softly. At the

same moment, the Baroness sprang forward at the side-door, extinguished the lamp, tore Wilhelm from his chair, and hurried him with her into the closet. Instantly, he threw off the night-gown, and put it in its former place. The Baroness took his coat beneath her arm, and hastened with him through several rooms, passages, and partitions, into her chamber; where Wilhelm, so soon as she recovered breath, was informed that on her going to the Countess, and delivering the fictitious intelligence about her husband's arrival, the Countess had answered: "I know it already: what can have happened? I saw him riding in at the postern even now." On which the Baroness, in an excessive panic, had run to the Count's chamber to give warning.

"Unhappily you came too late!" said Wilhelm. "The Count was in the room before you, and saw me sitting."

"And recognised you?"

"That I know not. He was looking at me in the glass, as I at him; and before I could well determine whether it was he or a spirit, he drew back, and closed the door behind him."

The anxiety of the Baroness increased, when a servant came to call her, signifying that the Count was with his lady. She went with no light heart; and found the Count silent and thoughtful indeed, but milder and kinder in his words than usual. She knew not what to think of it. They spoke

about the incidents of the chase, and the causes of his quick return. The conversation soon ran out. The Count became taciturn; and it struck the Baroness particularly, when he asked for Wilhelm, and expressed a wish that he were sent for to come and read something.

Wilhelm, who had now dressed himself in the Baroness' chamber, and in some degree recovered his composure, obeyed the order, not without anxiety. The Count gave him a book; out of which he read an adventurous tale, very little at his ease. His voice had a certain inconstancy and quivering in it, which fortunately corresponded with the import of the story. The Count more than once gave kindly tokens of approval; and at last dismissed our friend, with praises of his exquisite manner of reading.

CHAPTER XI.

WILHELM had scarce read one or two of Shakspeare's plays, till their effect on him became so strong, that he could go no farther. His whole soul was in commotion. He sought an opportunity to speak with Jarno; to whom, on meeting with him, he expressed his boundless gratitude for such delicious entertainment.

"I clearly enough foresaw," said Jarno, "that you would not remain insensible to the charms of the most extraordinary and most admirable of all writers."

"Yes!" exclaimed our friend; "I cannot recollect that any book, any man, any incident of my life, has produced such important effects on me, as the precious works, to which by your kindness I have been directed. They seem as if they were performances of some celestial genius, descending among men, to make them, by the mildest instructions, acquainted with themselves. They are no fictions! You would think, while reading them, you stood before the unclosed awful Books of Fate, while the whirlwind of most impassioned life was howling hrough the leaves, and tossing them fiercely to and fro. The strength and tenderness,

the power and peacefulness of this man have so astonished and transported me, that I long vehemently for the time when I shall have it in my power to read farther."

"Bravo!" said Jarno, holding out his hand, and squeezing our friend's: "This is as it should be! And the consequences, which I hope for, will likewise surely follow."

"I wish," said Wilhelm, "I could but disclose to you all that is going on within me even now. All the anticipations, which I have ever had regarding man and his destiny, which have accompanied me from youth upwards, often unobserved by myself, I find developed and fulfilled in Shakspeare's writings. It seems as if he cleared up every one of our enigmas to us, though we cannot say: Here or there is the word of solution. His men appear like natural men, and yet they are not. These, the most mysterious and complex productions of creation, here act before us as if they were watches, whose dial-plates and cases were of crystal; which pointed out, according to their use, the course of the hours and minutes; while, at the same time, you could discern the combination of wheels and springs that turned them. The few glances I have cast over Shakspeare's world incite me, more than any thing beside, to quicken my footsteps forward into the actual world, to mingle in the flood of destinies that is suspended over it; and at length, if I shall prosper, to draw a few cups

from the great ocean of true nature, and to distribute them from off the stage among the thirsting people of my native land."

"I feel delighted with the temper of mind in which I now behold you," answered Jarno, laying his hand upon the shoulder of the excited youth; "renounce not the purpose of embarking in active life. Make haste to employ with alacrity the years that are granted you. If I can serve you, I will with all my heart. As yet, I have not asked you how you came into this troop, for which you certainly were neither born nor bred. So much I hope and see: you long to be out of it. I know nothing of your parentage, of your domestic circumstances; consider what you shall confide to me. Thus much only I can say: the times of war in which we live may produce quick turns of fortune; did you incline devoting your strength and talents to our service, not fearing labour, and if need is, danger, I might even now have an opportunity to put you in a situation which you would not afterwards be sorry to have filled for a time." Wilhelm could not sufficiently express his gratefulness; he was ready to impart to his friend and patron the whole history of his life.

In the course of this conversation, they had wandered far into the park, and at last come upon the highway that crossed it. Jarno stood silent for a moment, and then said: "Deliberate on my proposal, determine, give me your answer in a few

days, and then let me have the narrative you mean to trust me with. I assure you, it has all along to me seemed quite incomprehensible, how you ever could have any thing to do with such a class of people. I have often thought with vexation and spleen, how, in order to gain a paltry living, you must fix your heart on a wandering ballad-monger, and a silly mongrel, neither male nor female."

He had not yet concluded, when an officer on horseback came hastily along; a groom following him with a led horse. Jarno shouted a warm salutation to him. The officer sprang from his horse; Jarno and he embraced and talked together; while Wilhelm, confounded at the last expressions of his warlike friend, stood thoughtfully at a side. Jarno turned over some papers which the stranger had delivered to him; while the latter came to Wilhelm; held out his hand, and said with emphasis: "I find you in worthy company; follow the counsel of your friend; and by doing so, accomplish likewise the desire of an unknown man, who takes a genuine interest in you." So saying, he embraced Wilhelm, and pressed him cordially to his breast. At the same instant, Jarno advanced, and said to the stranger: "It is best that I ride on with you: by this means you may get the necessary orders, and set out again before night." Both then leaped into their saddles, and left our astonished friend to his own reflections.

Jarno's last words were still ringing in his ears.

It galled him to see the two human beings, that had most innocently won his affections, so grievously disparaged by a man whom he honoured so much. The strange embracing of the officer, whom he knew not, made but a slight impression on him; it occupied his curiosity and his imagination for a moment: but Jarno's speech had cut him to the heart; he was deeply hurt by it; and now, in his way homewards, he broke out into reproaches against himself, that he should for a single instant have mistaken or forgotten the unfeeling coldness of Jarno, which looked out from his very eyes, and spoke in all his gestures. "No!" exclaimed he, "Thou conceivest, dead-hearted worldling, that thou canst be a friend? All that thou hast power to offer me is not worth the sentiment which binds me to these forlorn beings. How fortunate, that I have in time discovered what I had to hope for from thee!"

Mignon came to meet him as he entered; he clasped her in his arms, exclaiming: "Nothing, nothing shall part us, thou good little creature! The seeming prudence of the world shall never cause me to forsake thee, or forget what I owe thee."

The child, whose warm caresses he had been accustomed to avoid, rejoiced with all her heart at this unlooked-for show of tenderness, and clung so fast to him, that he had some difficulty to get loose from her.

From this period, he kept a stricter eye on Jarno's conduct: many parts of it he did not think quite praiseworthy; nay several things came out, which totally displeased him. He had strong suspicions, for example, that the verses on the Baron, which the poor Pedant had so dearly paid for, were composed by Jarno. And as the latter, in Wilhelm's presence, had made sport of the adventure, our friend thought here was certainly a symptom of a most corrupted heart; for what could be more depraved than to treat a guiltless person, whose griefs one's self had occasioned, with jeering and mockery, instead of trying to satisfy or to indemnify him. In this matter, Wilhelm would himself willingly have brought about reparation; and ere long a very curious accident led him to obtain some traces of the persons concerned in that nocturnal outrage.

Hitherto his friends had contrived to keep him unacquainted with the fact, that some of the young officers were in the habit of passing whole nights, in merriment and jollity, with certain actors and actresses, in the lower hall of the old Castle. One morning, having risen early according to his custom, he happened to visit this chamber, and found the gallant gentlemen just in the act of performing rather a singular operation. They had mixed a bowl of water with a quantity of chalk, and were plastering this gruel with a brush upon their waistcoats and pantaloons, without stripping; thus

very expeditiously restoring the spotlessness of their apparel. On witnessing this piece of ingenuity, our friend was at once struck with the recollection of the poor Pedant's whited and bedusted coat: his suspicions gathered strength, when he learned that some relations of the Baron's were among the party.

To throw some light upon his doubts, he engaged the youths to breakfast with him. They were very lively, and told a multitude of pleasant stories. One of them especially, who for a time had been on the recruiting service, was loud in praising the craft and activity of his captain; who, it appeared, understood the art of alluring men of all kinds towards him, and overreaching every one by the deception proper for him. He circumstantially described, how several young people of good families and careful education had been cozened, by playing off to them a thousand promises of honour and preferment; and he heartily laughed at the simpletons, who felt so gratified, when first enlisted, at the thought of being esteemed and introduced to notice by so reputable, prudent, bold and munificent an officer.

Wilhelm blessed his better genius for having drawn him back in time from the abyss, to whose brink he had approached so near. Jarno he now looked upon as nothing better than a crimp; the embrace of the stranger officer was easily explained. He viewed the feelings and opinions of these

men with contempt and disgust; from that moment he carefully avoided coming into contact with any one that wore a uniform; and when he heard that the army was about to move its quarters, the news would have been extremely welcome to him, if he had not feared that immediately on its departure he himself must be banished from the neighbourhood of his lovely friend, perhaps forever.

CHAPTER XII.

MEANWHILE the Baroness had spent several days disquieted by anxious fears and unsatisfied curiosity. Since the late adventure, the Count's demeanour had been altogether an enigma to her. His manner was changed; none of his customary jokes were to be heard. His demands on the company and the servants had very much abated. Little pedantry or imperiousness was now to be discerned in him; he was silent and thoughtful; yet withal he seemed composed and placid; in short, he was quite another man. In choosing the books, which now and then he caused be read to him, those of a serious, often a religious cast were pitched upon; and the Baroness lived in perpetual fright lest, beneath this apparent serenity, a secret rancour might be lurking; a silent purpose to revenge the offence he had so accidentally discovered. She determined, therefore, to make Jarno her confidant; and this the more freely, as that gentleman and she already stood in a relation to each other, where it is not usual to be very cautious in keeping secrets. For some time Jarno had been her dearest friend; yet they had been dextrous enough to conceal their attachment and

joys from the noisy world in which they moved. To the Countess alone this new romance had not remained unknown; and very possibly the Baroness might wish to get her fair friend occupied with some similar engagement, and thus to escape the silent reproaches she had often to endure from that noble-minded woman.

Scarcely had the Baroness related the occurrence to her lover, when he cried out, laughing: "To a certainty, the old fool believes that he has seen his ghost! He dreads that the vision may betoken some misfortune, perhaps death, to him; and so he is become quite tame, as all half-men do, in thinking of that consummation which no one has escaped or will escape. Softly a little! As I hope he will live long enough, we may now train him at least, so that he shall not again give disturbance to his wife and household."

They accordingly, as soon as any opportunity occurred, began talking, in the presence of the Count, about warnings, visions, apparitions, and the like. Jarno played the sceptic, the Baroness likewise; and they carried it so far, that his Lordship at last took Jarno aside, reproved him for his freethinking, and produced his own experience to prove the possibility, nay actual occurrence, of such preternatural events. Jarno affected to be struck; to be in doubt; and finally to be convinced: but in private with his friend, he made himself so much the merrier at the credulous weakling, who

had thus been cured of his evil habits by a bugbear, but who, they admitted, still deserved some praise for expecting dire calamity, or death itself, with such composure.

" The natural result, which the present apparition might have had, would possibly have ruffled him !" exclaimed the Baroness, with her wonted vivacity ; to which, when anxiety was taken from her heart, she had instantly returned. Jarno was richly rewarded ; and the two contrived fresh projects for frightening the Count still farther ; and still farther exciting and confirming the affection of the Countess for Wilhelm.

With this intention, the whole story was related to the Countess. She, indeed, expressed her displeasure at such conduct ; but from that time she became more thoughtful, and in peaceful moments, seemed to be considering, pursuing, and painting out that scene which had been prepared for her.

The preparations, now going forward on every side, left no room for doubt that the armies were soon to move in advance, and the Prince at the same time to change his head-quarters. It was even said, that the Count intended leaving his Castle and returning to the city. Our players could therefore, without difficulty, calculate the aspect of their stars ; yet none of them, except Melina, took any measures in consequence : the rest strove only to catch as much enjoyment as

they could from the moment that was passing over them.

Wilhelm, in the meantime, was engaged with a peculiar task. The Countess had required from him a copy of his writings; and he looked on this request as the noblest recompense for his labours.

A young author, who has not yet seen himself in print, will, in such a case, apply no ordinary care to provide a clear and beautiful transcript of his works. It is like the golden age of authorship: he feels transported into those centuries, when the press had not inundated the world with so many useless writings, when none but excellent performances were copied, and kept by the noblest men; and he easily admits the illusion, that his own accurately ruled and measured manuscript may itself prove an excellent performance, worthy to be kept and valued by some future critic.

The Prince being shortly to depart, a great entertainment had been appointed in honour of him. Many ladies of the neighbourhood were invited; and the Countess had dressed herself betimes. On this occasion, she had taken a costlier suit than usual. Her head-dress, and the decorations of her hair, were more exquisite and studied: she wore all her jewels. The Baroness, too, had done her utmost to appear with becoming taste and splendour.

Philina, observing that both ladies, in expecta-

tion of their guests, felt the time rather tedious, proposed to send for Wilhelm, who was wishing to present his manuscript, now completed, and to read them some other little pieces. He came; and on his entrance, was astonished at the form and the graces of the Countess, which her decorations had but made more visible and striking. Being ordered by the ladies, he began to read; but with so much absence of mind, and so badly, that had not his audience been excessively indulgent, they would very soon have dismissed him.

Every time he looked at the Countess, it seemed to him as if a spark of electric fire were glancing before his eyes. In the end, he knew not where to find the breath he wanted for his reading. The Countess had always pleased him; but now it appeared as if he never had beheld a being so perfect and so lovely. A thousand thoughts flitted up and down his soul; what follows might be nearly their substance.

"How foolish is it in so many poets, and men of sentiment as they are called, to make war on pomp and decoration; requiring that women of all ranks should wear no dress but what is simple and conformable to nature. They rail at decoration, without once considering, that when we see a plain or positive ugly person clothed in a costly and gorgeous fashion, it is not the poor decoration which displeases us. I would assemble all the judges

in the world, and ask them here if they wished to see one of these folds, of these ribbons and laces, these braids, ringlets, and glancing stones, removed? Would they not dread disturbing the delightful impression that meets us here so naturally and spontaneously? Yes, naturally I will say! As Minerva sprang in complete armour from the head of Jove, so does this goddess seem to have stept forth with a light foot, in all her ornaments, from the bosom of some flower."

While reading, he turned his eyes upon her frequently, as if he wished to stamp this image on his soul forever; he more than once read wrong, yet without falling into confusion of mind; though, at other times, he used to feel the mistaking of a word or a letter as a painful deformity, which spoiled a whole recitation.

A false alarm of the arrival of the guests put an end to the reading; the Baroness went out; and the Countess, while about to shut her writing-desk, which was standing open, took up her casket, and put some other rings upon her finger. "We are soon to part," said she, keeping her eyes upon the casket: "accept a memorial of a true friend, who wishes nothing more earnestly, than that you may always prosper." She then took out a ring, which, underneath a crystal, bore a little plate of woven hair, beautifully set with diamonds. She held it out to Wilhelm, who, on taking it, knew

neither what to say nor do, but stood as if rooted to the ground. The Countess shut her desk, and sat down upon the sopha.

" And I must go empty ?" said Philina, kneeling down at the Countess' right hand. " Do but look at the man ; he carries such a store of words in his mouth, when no one wants to hear them ; and now he cannot stammer out the poorest syllable of thanks. Quick, sir ! Express your services by way of pantomime at least ; and if to-day you can invent nothing; then, for Heaven's sake, be my imitator."

Philina seized the right hand of the Countess, and kissed it warmly. Wilhelm sank upon his knee, laid hold of the left, and pressed it to his lips. The Countess seemed embarrassed, yet without displeasure.

" Ah !" cried Philina ; " so much splendour of attire I may have seen before ; but never one so fit to wear it. What bracelets, but also what a hand ! What a neck-dress, but also what a bosom !"

" Peace, little cozener !" said the Countess.

" Is this his Lordship then ?" said Philina, pointing to a rich medallion, which the Countess wore on her left side, by a particular chain.

" He is painted in his bridegroom dress," replied the Countess.

" Was he then so young ?" inquired Philina ;

" I know it is but a year or two since you were married."

" His youth must be placed to the artist's account," replied the lady.

" He is a handsome man," observed Philina. " But was there never," she continued, placing her hand upon the Countess' heart, " never any other image that found its way in secret hither?"

" Thou art very bold, Philina!" cried she; " I have spoiled thee. Let me never hear such another speech."

" If you are angry, then am I unhappy," said Philina, springing up, and hastening from the room.

Wilhelm still held that lovely hand in both of his. His eyes were fixed upon the bracelet-clasp; he noticed, with extreme surprise, that his initials were traced on it, in lines of brilliants.

" Have I then," he modestly inquired, " your own hair in this precious ring?"

" Yes," replied she in a faint voice; then suddenly collecting herself, she said, and pressed his hand: " Arise, and fare you well!"

" Here is my name," cried he, " by the most curious chance!" He pointed to the bracelet-clasp.

" How?" cried the Countess: " it is the cipher of a female friend!"

" They are the initials of my name. Forget me not. Your image is engraven on my heart,

and will never be effaced. Farewell! I must be gone."

He kissed her hand, and meant to rise; but as in dreams, some strange thing fades and changes into something stranger, and the succeeding wonder takes us by surprise; so, without knowing how it happened, he found the Countess in his arms; her lips were resting upon his, and their warm mutual kisses were yielding them that blessedness, which mortals sip from the topmost sparkling foam on the freshly poured cup of love.

Her head lay upon his shoulder; the disordered ringlets and ruffles were forgotten. She had thrown her arm around him; he clasped her with vivacity; and pressed her again and again to his breast. O that such a moment could but last forever! And wo to envious Fate that shortened even this brief moment to our friends!

How terrified was Wilhelm, how astounded did he start from his happy dream, when the Countess, with a shriek, on a sudden tore herself away, and hastily pressed her hand against her heart.

He stood confounded before her; she held the other hand upon her eyes, and, after a moment's pause, exclaimed: "Away! leave me! delay not!"

He continued standing.

"Leave me!" she cried; and taking off her hand from her eyes, she looked at him with an in-

describable expression of countenance; and added, in the most tender and affecting voice: "Fly, if you love me."

Wilhelm was out of the chamber, and again in his room, before he knew what he was doing.

Unhappy creatures! What singular warning of chance or of destiny tore them asunder?

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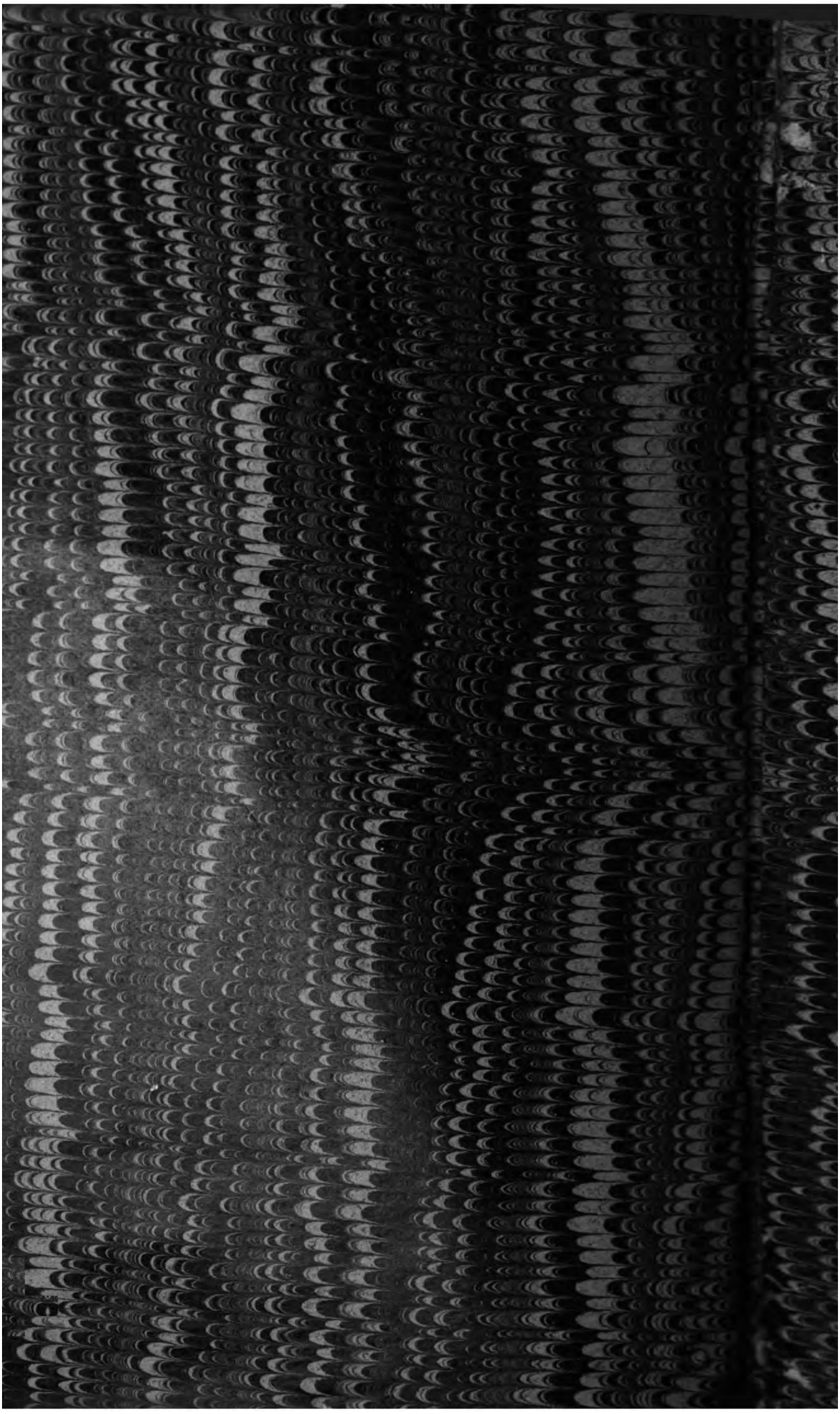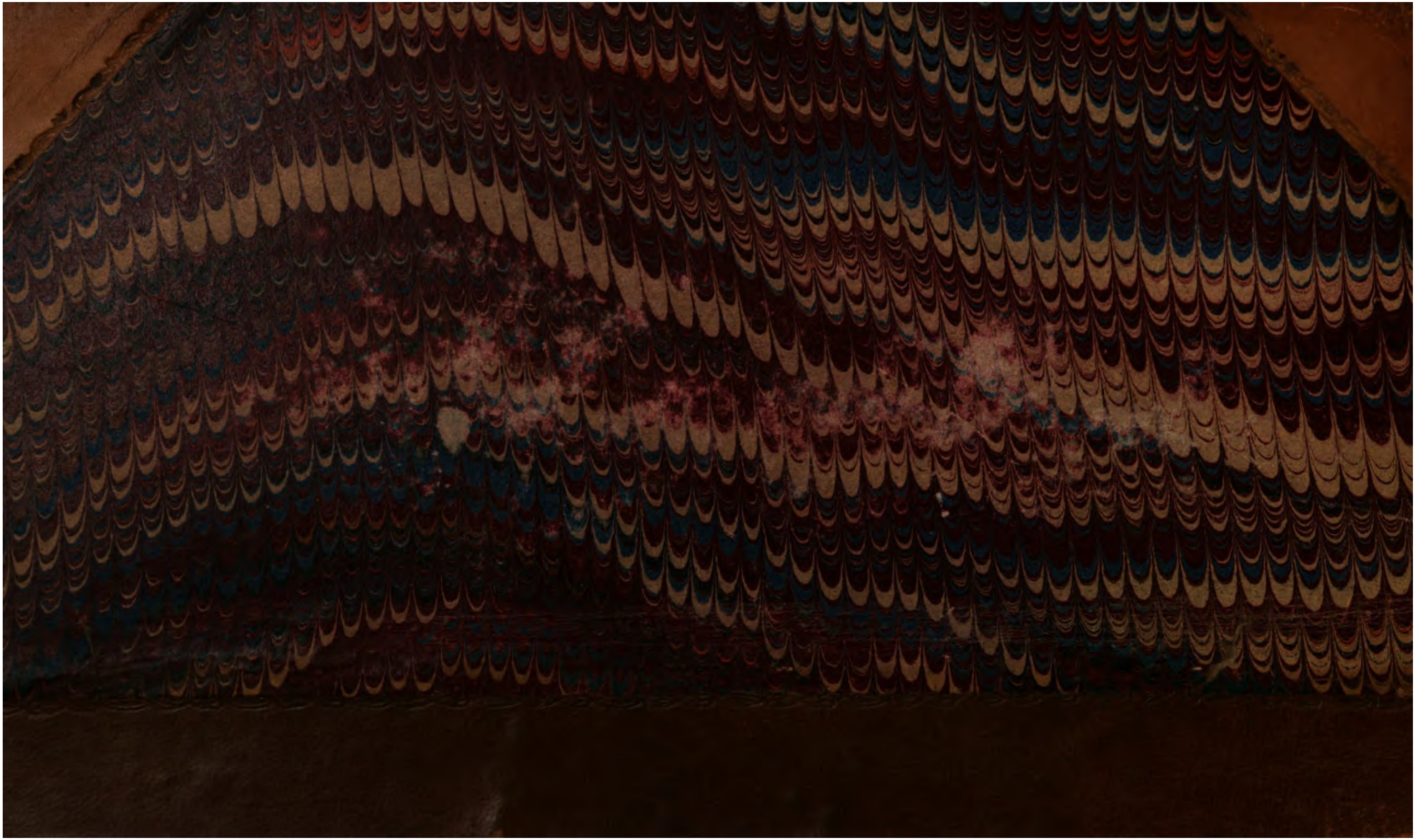
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