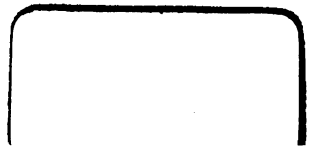

GERMAN LOVE.

FROM THE PAPERS OF AN ALIEN.

TRANSLATED,

WITH THE SANCTION OF THE AUTHOR,

By SUSANNA WINKWORTH.

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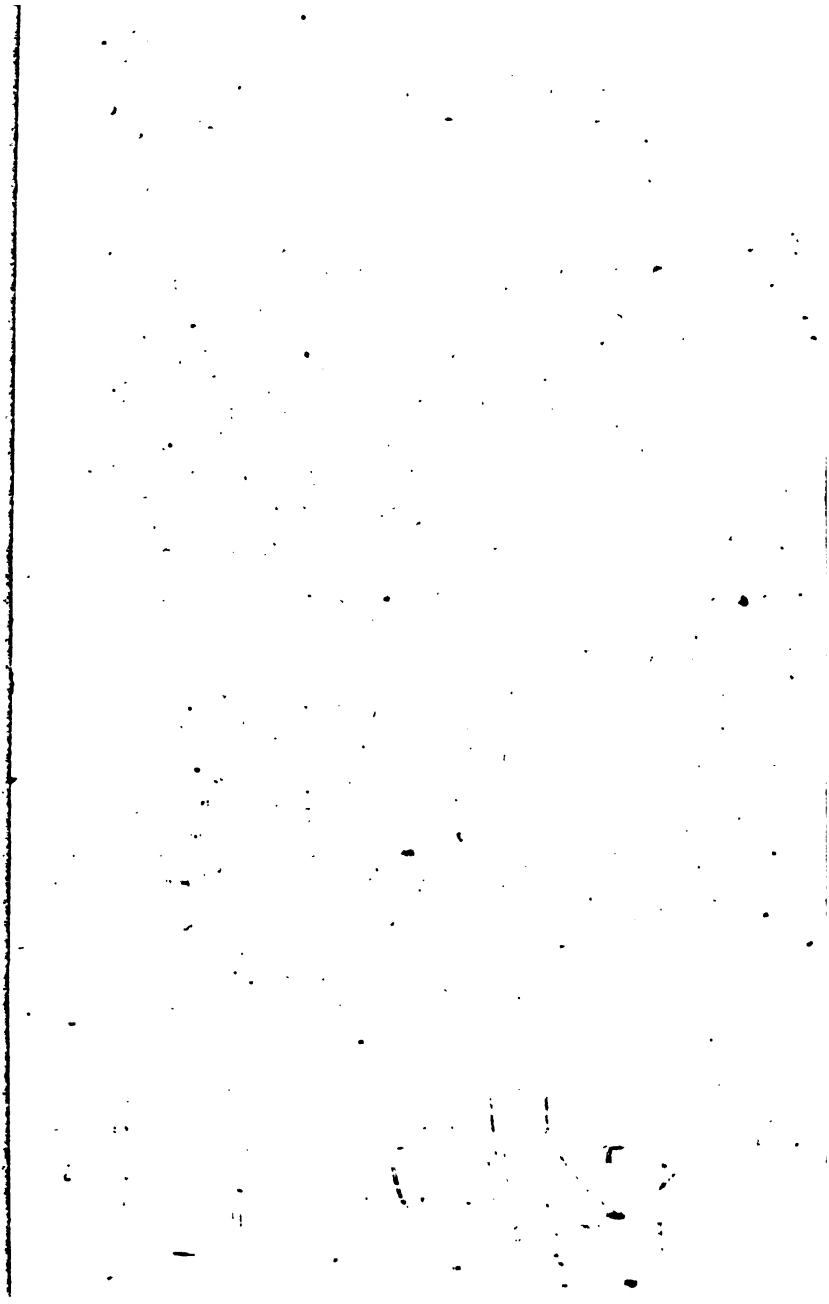
Friedrich Max Müller



GERMAN LOVE.

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FIRST MEMORY.

CHILDHOOD has its mysteries and its wonders; but who can describe them? who can interpret them? We have all passed through that silent enchanted forest—we have each once in our lives opened our eyes in perplexity of happiness, and the fair reality of life has overflowed our souls. Then we knew not where we were, nor what we were—then the whole world was ours, and we belonged to the whole world. That was an eternal life—without beginning and without end—without a break, without a

pang. Our hearts were bright as the sky in spring, fresh as the fragrance of the violet, quiet and holy as a Sunday morning.

And what disturbs this peace of God in the child? How can this unconscious and innocent existence ever come to an end? What drives us forth from this paradise of union and communion, and leaves us suddenly desolate and alone in this dark world?

Say not, with solemn brow, that it is sin! Can the child already sin? Say, rather, that we do not know, and that we must submit. Is it sin which turns the bud into a flower, and the flower into fruit, and the fruit into dust? Is it sin which turns the caterpillar into a chrysalis, and the chrysalis into a butterfly, and the butterfly into dust? And is it sin, then, which turns the child into a youth, and the youth into an old man, and the old man—into dust? And what is dust? Say, rather, that we do not know, and that we must submit.

Yet it is so sweet to look back in thought to the spring-time of life, to gaze into our inner depths, to remember! Yes, even in the sultry summer, the mournful autumn, and the cold winter of life, there comes now and then a spring-day, and the heart says, "I, too, feel as though it were spring."

Such a day it is to-day, and so I lay me down upon the soft moss in the fragrant forest, and stretch my weary limbs, and gaze upwards through the green leaves into the infinite blue, and think:—How was it with me in my childhood?

All seems forgotten—and the earliest pages of memory are like an old family Bible; the opening leaves are quite faded; somewhat torn, too, and soiled. Only when we turn on, and come to the chapters that tell how Adam and Eve were driven out of Paradise, then all begins to be clear and legible. Ah! if we could but find the title-page, with the place where it was

printed, and the date! But that is irrecoverably lost, and instead of it we only find a fair copy of writing. It is the register of our baptism, and there it stands, when we were born, and who were our parents and sponsors; so that we may not regard ourselves as editions *sine loco et anno.*

Yes, but to return to the beginning—would there were no beginning! for with that beginning all thought and remembrance come to a stand. And when we thus dream ourselves back into childhood, and from childhood back into infinity, it is as though this wicked beginning of ours kept retreating farther and farther, and our thoughts toiled after it, yet were never able to reach it; just as a child seeks the place where the blue sky touches the earth, and runs on and on, and the sky keeps running before him, and yet keeps resting upon the earth—but the child grows weary, and never gets there.

Well, but when once for all we were

there—there, nay here—as at any rate this beginning had taken place—after all, what do we know about it? Our memory shakes itself like a spaniel, who plunges up out of the waves with the water running into his eyes, and dripping from his coat—and strange enough he looks.

I believe, however, that I can still remember seeing the stars for the first time. They may have seen me many a time before; but one evening it seemed to me chilly, although I was lying in my mother's lap, and I shivered and turned cold, or I was frightened,—or, in short, something happened to me that made my little *Me* more than usually conscious of itself. Then my mother pointed to the bright stars, and I wondered and thought, "What pretty things mother has made!" And then I turned warm again, and most likely fell asleep.

And next I remember, how I once was lying in the grass, and everything around

me waved, and nodded, and hummed, and whirred. And there came a whole swarm of little many-footed, winged beings, who seated themselves on my forehead and eyes, and said, "Good morning!" But then my eyes began to smart, and I called my mother, and she said, "Poor little fellow, how the gnats have stung him!" And then I could not open my eyes, nor see the blue sky any more. But my mother had a bunch of fresh violets in her hand, and it seemed to me as though a dark-blue, sweet spicy perfume went through my head; and even now, when I see the first violets of spring, I recall that time, and feel as though I must shut my eyes, that the old dark-blue sky of those days might again arch above my soul.

Yes; and next I remember how another new world opened before me, more lovely than the starry sky or the scent of violets. It was one Easter Sunday morning, when my mother woke me early.

Before the window stood our old church. It was not beautiful, but it had a high roof and a lofty tower, and on the tower a gilt cross, and looked much older and greyer than the other houses. One day I wanted to know who lived there, and looked in through the iron grating in the door. And behold! it was all empty inside, and cold and dreary—not one creature in the whole house—and from that day I always shuddered when I went past the door. Now, on this Easter Sunday it had rained early in the morning, and afterwards the sun had risen in all his glory, and straight before me glittered the old church, with its grey slate roof and lofty windows and tower with a golden cross, in quite wondrous brilliancy. All at once the light that streamed through the high windows began to move and seem alive. It was much too bright for me to look inside; but even when I shut my dazzled eyes, the light still pierced through the closed lids into my soul, and

all within me seemed full of brightness and fragrance, and singing and ringing. At that moment it was as though a new life began in me — as though I had become another being; — and when I asked my mother what it was, she said they were singing an Easter hymn in the church. What joyful, holy lay it was that that day rang through my soul, I have never since been able to make out. No doubt it was one of those old church melodies that from time to time burst forth from the rugged soul of our Luther. I have never heard it since. But even now, when I listen to an adagio of Beethoven, or a psalm of Marcello, or a chorus of Handel, — nay, often when in the Scottish Highlands or the Tyrol I hear a simple national song, it is as though the lofty windows of the old church lighted up once more, and the tones of its organ pierced through my soul, and a new world was opening — fairer than starry skies or the perfume of violets.

This is what I remember of my earliest childhood;—and mingling with these shadows floats the vision of a loving mother's face, sometimes, too, of my father's mild, grave countenance — of gardens, too, and vine-arbours, and green soft turf, and an old, venerable picture-book—and that is all that I can still decipher on the first faded pages of memory.

But after this it grows brighter and plainer. Persons and names stand forth. There are not only father and mother, but brothers and sisters, and friends and teachers—and a whole host of *Strangers*. Ah, yes, touching those *Strangers*—how much stands written in the book of memory!

SECOND MEMORY.

Not far from our house, and opposite to the old church with the gilt cross, stood a great building, still greater than the church, and with many towers. These, too, looked quite old and grey; but instead of a gilt cross, eagles of stone sat upon their pinnacles, and a great blue and white banner waved on the topmost turret, just above a lofty gateway, to which a long flight of steps led up, where on either side two mounted soldiers kept guard. This house had many windows, and behind the windows could be seen red silk curtains, with golden fringe and tassels; and all round the court-yard stood the old lime-trees, which in summer shaded the grey stone wall with

their green foliage, and strewed the turf with their fragrant, white blossoms. At those windows, too, I had often looked up; and in the evening, when the lime-blossoms gave out their scent, and the windows were lighted up, I saw many figures waving to and fro, like shadows, and music sounded down to me from above, and carriages drove up to the gate, from which ladies and gentlemen descended and hastened up the steps. They all looked so beautiful and good, and the gentlemen had stars on their breasts, and the ladies had fresh flowers in their hair—and I often thought: —why do not I go in, too?

But one day my father took me by the hand, and said: "We are going to the Palace. But you must behave like a very good boy when the Princess speaks to you, and you must kiss her hand."

I might be some six years old, and rejoiced as one only can rejoice when one is six years old. I had already cherished

many secret imaginings about the shadows that I had seen at the lighted windows in the evening, and had heard much at home of all the good that was done by the Prince and Princess; how they were so gracious, and brought help and comfort to the poor and sick; and how they had been chosen by God's grace to protect the good and punish the wicked. And so I had long ago pictured out to myself what everything must be like in the Palace, and the Prince and Princess were already old acquaintance of mine, whom I knew as well as my nut-crackers and my leaden soldiers.

My heart beat fast as I went up the high flight of steps with my father, and while he was in the act of telling me that I must call the Princess "your Highness," and the Prince "your Serene Highness," the folding-doors flew open, and I saw before me the figure of a tall lady with clear and glowing eyes. She seemed to come straight towards me and hold out her hand to me.

There was an expression in her countenance which was perfectly familiar to me—I thought I had known it long—and a half-repressed smile flew over her face. I could refrain myself no longer, and while my father was still standing at the door and—I knew not why—bowing low, my heart leaped into my throat, and I ran up to the beautiful lady, threw my arms round her neck, and kissed her like my mother. And the tall, beautiful lady looked pleased at it, and stroked my hair and smiled. But my father seized me by the hand and drew me back, saying, that I was a very naughty boy indeed, and he would never bring me there again. Then my head turned quite dizzy, and the blood rushed into my cheeks, for I felt that my father was unjust to me. And I looked up to the Princess for her to defend me, but her face was grave though gentle. And then I looked round at the gentlemen and ladies who were in the room, and

thought that they would take my part. But as I looked at them, I saw that they were all laughing. Then the tears started into my eyes, and I rushed out at the door, down the steps, past the lime-trees in the court-yard, and never stopped till I got home and threw myself into my mother's arms, sobbing and weeping.

"What is the matter?" she asked.

"Oh, mother!" I cried, "I went to see the Princess, and she was such a kind, pretty lady,—just like you, darling mother, that I could not help throwing my arms round her neck and kissing her."

"Nay," said my mother, "you should not have done so, for they are strangers and grand people."

"And what are strangers?" said I. "May I not love every one who looks at me in such a kind, loving way?"

"You may love them, my child," replied my mother, "but you must not show it."

"Is it something wrong, then," I asked, "when I love people? Why may I not show it?"

"Well, there is reason in what the child says, after all," said she; "but you must do as your father bids you; and when you are older you will understand why you may not throw your arms round the neck of every pretty lady who looks at you kindly."

That was a sorrowful day. My father came home, and stuck to it that I had been very ill-behaved. At night my mother put me to bed, and I said my prayers, but I could not go to sleep, for wondering who were these "*Strangers*" whom I must not love.

Thou poor human heart! thus are thy leaves blighted even in the spring, and thy plumage torn from thy wings! When the rosy dawn of life opens the secret calyx of the soul, it is filled with the perfume of love. We are taught to stand, and

walk, and speak, and read; but no one teaches us to love. That belongs to us as our life does; nay, we are told that it is the deepest ground of our existence. As the heavenly bodies mutually attract and incline towards each other, and are held together by the eternal law of gravitation, so do heavenly souls lean towards and attract one another, and are held together by the eternal law of love. A flower cannot unfold itself without sunshine, and a human being cannot live without love. Would not the child's heart verily break with anguish when the first icy blast of this foreign world passes over him, but that the warm sunbeams of love shine upon him from the eyes of mother and father—like a mild reflexion of God's light and God's love? And the yearning that they awaken in the child is the purest and deepest kind of love. That is the love which embraces the whole world, which kindles whenever two

frank human eyes shine upon it, which shouts for joy whenever it hears a human voice. That is the ancient, immeasurable love,—a deep well which no plummet has fathomed,—a fountain of inexhaustible abundance. He who knows it knows, too, that there is no measure in love, no more or less, but that he who loves cannot but love with all his heart, and soul, and mind, and strength.

But, alas! how little is left to us of this love, ere we have travelled but half-way on our life's journey! The very child is taught that there are *Strangers*, and ceases to be a child. The well of love is covered, and ere a few years have passed, it is quite choked up with sand. Our eyes no longer light up as we meet, but gravely and wearily we walk past each other along the noisy streets. We barely salute each other, for we know how keenly it cuts into the soul when a greeting is not returned, and what pain it gives to part

from those whom we have once greeted, and whose hand we have pressed in our own. The wings of our soul lose nearly all their plumage, the petals of the flower are nearly all blighted and shrivelled up,—and of the inexhaustible well of love there are only a few drops left to cool our parched tongue, that we may not utterly perish of thirst. These drops, too, we still call love. But it is no longer the pure, full, gladsome love of the child. It is love with dread and pain—a burning glow, a flaming passion —love that consumes itself, like the rain-drops on hot sand—love that craves, not love that gives itself away—love that asks, "Wilt thou be mine?" not love that says, "I must be thine"—love grown selfish, desperate! And this is the love which poets sing, and which youths and maidens believe in—a fire that flickers up and down, but does not warm, and leaves nothing but smoke and ashes behind. We have each once in our lives believed that

these rockets were sunbeams of eternal love; but the brighter their light the blacker is the night that follows them.

And then, when all around grows dark, when we feel ourselves utterly desolate, when all men pass by us on the right hand and on the left, and do not know us, then sometimes a long-forgotten feeling rises up in our breast, and we know not what it is, for it is neither love nor friendship. "Dost thou not know me?" we could fain cry to each one who passes by us coldly as a stranger. Then we feel how that man is nearer to man than brother to brother, father to son, friend to friend. And an ancient sacred saying rings through our souls, that *Strangers* are our *Neighbours*. And why, then, must we pass by them in silence? We know not, and we must submit. Try, when two railway trains roar past each other on their iron paths, and you catch a well-known eye ready to greet you—try to stretch out your hand

and clasp your friend's as he flies past you —try it, and you will perhaps understand why here on earth we must pass by our fellow-man in silence.

An ancient sage has said: "I saw the fragments of a wreck swim past me on the sea. Only a few meet and keep for a time together. Then comes a storm, and drives them asunder to the east and to the west, and they never meet again in this world. So, too, is it with men, but the great shipwreck no eye has seen."

THIRD MEMORY.

THE clouds on childhood's sky do not last long, but after a brief, hot shower of tears vanish away. Thus I was soon again at the Palace, and the Princess gave me her hand which I might kiss, and then she brought her children, the young Princes and Princesses, and we played together as if we had known each other for years. Those were happy days, when, after school was over—for by this time I went to school—I was allowed to go to the Palace to play. There we had everything that heart could desire. Playthings, such as my mother had shown me in the shop-windows, and told me they were so dear that poor people could live a whole week on the

money that they cost, I found at the Palace; and if I begged the Princess, she allowed me to take them home with me and show them to my mother, or sometimes even to keep them for my own. Beautiful picture-books, such as I had seen when I went with my father to the bookseller's, but which were only for very good children indeed, I was suffered to have in my own hands as long as I liked, and to turn over their leaves for hours together; and all that belonged to the young Princes was mine too. At least, so I believed; for I was not only allowed to take home with me what I liked, but often gave the toys away again to other children. In short, I was a young communist in the full sense of the word. But one day, I recollect how the Princess had a golden serpent that coiled itself round her arm as if it were alive, and she gave it us to play with. When I went home, I coiled the snake round my arm, and thought I would give my mother a good fright with

it. But on the way, I met a woman who saw my golden serpent, and begged me to show it to her; and then she said, if she might keep it, she could get her husband out of prison. On this, I naturally did not hesitate a moment, but ran on and left the woman alone with the bracelet. The next day there was a great stir, and the poor woman was taken up to the Palace weeping, and the servants said she had stolen the bracelet from me. But on this, I was very angry, and told with holy indignation how I had given the bracelet to her, and did not wish to have it back again. What further happened I do not know, but remember that after that I always showed the Princess everything that I took home with me.

But it was a long time before my notions of *meum* and *tuum* developed themselves distinctly, and even at a late period they were apt to get confused, just as it was long before I could tell the difference

between blue and red. The last time that I remember being laughed at about it was one day when my mother had given me money to buy apples with; she gave me a *groschen*, but the apples cost only a *sechser*,* and when I gave the woman the coin, she said, with a troubled voice, or so it seemed to me, that she had sold nothing yet all day, and could not give me change. She wanted me to buy a whole *groschen's* worth; but it occurred to me that I had a *sechser* piece in my pocket, and, quite delighted that I had solved the knotty problem, I gave it to the woman, saying:—"Now you can give me the *sechser* in change." But she understood me so little as to return me the *groschen* and keep the *sechser*.

Now, in the period when I went almost every day to play with the young Princes at the Palace, and later to learn French with them, another shape rises up before

* A half-groschen piece.

me in memory. It was the eldest daughter of the Prince,—the Princess Maria. Her mother had died soon after her birth, and the Prince had afterwards married again. When I saw her for the first time I do not know. Her image looms out slowly and gradually from the twilight of memory—at first a mere airy shadow, but growing clearer and more full of meaning, drawing nearer and nearer towards me, till at last it stands before my soul, like the moon when, on a stormy night, she suddenly casts her veil of clouds behind her. She was always ill, and suffering, and silent; and I have never seen her otherwise than stretched upon her couch, on which she was brought by two bearers into our nursery, and when she was tired, carried out again. There she lay, in her full white dress, with her hands usually folded together; and her face was so pale, and yet so mild and fair, and her eyes were so deep and unfathomable, that I often stood before her lost in thought,

debating within myself, as I gazed upon her, whether she, too, was to be counted among the „*strangers*." And often as I thus stood, she would lay her hand upon my head, and then it was as though something thrilled through my whole frame, and I could not move or speak,—but could only keep gazing into those deep, unfathomable eyes. She did not say much to us; but her eyes followed our games, and, however great a noise and disturbance we made, she never complained, but only pressed her hands upon her white forehead, and shut her eyes as if she were asleep. On some days, however, she said she was better, and sat upright upon her couch; and then it was as though the flush of dawn rested on her face,—and she talked with us, and told us wonderful stories. How old she might be at that time I do not know; she was like a child, because she was so helpless; and yet she was so grave and quiet, that she could no longer have been a child.

When the servants spoke to her, they involuntarily lowered their voices. They called her "that angel;" and I never heard any trait of her but what was kind and good. Often when I saw her lying thus helpless and silent, and remembered that she would never in all her life be able to walk, and that she would never have either work or pleasures, but be carried to and fro upon her couch, till she was laid in her everlasting bed, I asked myself why she had been sent into this world, when she might have slumbered so sweetly in the bosom of the angels, and they would have borne her on their soft wings through the air, as I had seen them doing in many a picture of the saints? And then I felt as though I must take from her a part of her pain, that she might not suffer alone, but we with her. But I could not say all this to her, for I was not properly conscious of it myself. I only felt something; it was not as if I must throw my arms

round her neck,—no one might do that, for it would have hurt her. But I felt as if I could have prayed for her, from the very bottom of my heart, that she might be released from her sufferings.

One warm day in spring she was, as usual, carried into our play-room. She looked extremely pale, but her eyes seemed deeper and more lustrous than ever; and she sat up on her couch, and called us to her.

"It is my birth-day to-day," she said; "and I have been confirmed this morning. Now it is very likely," she continued, looking at her father with a smile, "that God may soon call me to Himself, though I would willingly remain a good long time with you yet. But when I go away from you, I wish that none of you should quite forget me; and so I have brought a ring for each of you, which you must wear upon the forefinger now, and as you grow bigger, change it to the next, till it will only

fit your little finger; but there you must wear it all your lives long."

With these words, she took five rings which she had on her fingers, and drew them off one by one, and looked so sad and yet so loving, that I had to shut my eyes tightly to keep in the tears. She gave the first ring to her eldest brother, and kissed him; and then the second and third to the two little Princesses; and the fourth to her youngest brother,—kissing each of them as she gave them their rings. I stood by with my eyes fixed on her white hand, and saw that she had still one ring left on her finger; but she leant back and seemed exhausted. At this moment my eye met hers,—and a child's eyes speak so loud that, no doubt, she saw what was passing within me. I would much rather not have had her last ring, but I felt that I was a stranger,—that I did not belong to her,—that she did not love me as she loved her brothers and sisters; and a sharp pain

shot through my breast, as if a vein had burst, or a nerve had been cut,—and I did not know which way to look to hide my distress.

Then she raised herself up and laid her hand on my forehead, and looked into my eyes so searchingly, that I felt there was not a thought in me that she did not read. Slowly she drew off the last ring from her finger, and gave it to me, saying:—

"I had intended to take this one with me when I went away from you; but it is better that you should wear it, to remind you of me when I am gone. Read the words which are written on it:—'As GOD WILL.' You have a wild heart, and a soft one. May it be tamed by life, but not hardened!" Then she kissed me, as she had done her brothers, and put the ring on my finger.

I can hardly describe what was passing within me as she spoke. I was by this time no longer a mere child, and the gentle

beauty of the suffering angel had not been without its charm for my young heart. I loved her as a boy can love,—and boys do love with a tenderness and truth and purity, which few preserve in youth and manhood. But I thought that she was one of the "*strangers*" whom if I loved, I must not say so. The solemn words which she had uttered I scarcely heard; I only felt that her soul was as near to mine as two human souls could be. The bitterness was all gone from my heart. I was no longer alone,—not a "*stranger*,"—not divided from her by a chasm—but beside her —with her and in her. Then it struck me that it was a sacrifice to her to give me the ring, and that she would rather have taken it with her into the grave; a feeling rose up in my heart that overpowered all other feelings, and I said, with a trembling voice: "If you would give me the ring, you must keep it; for what is yours, is mine." She looked at

me for a moment, surprised and thoughtful. Then she replaced the ring on her finger, and again kissing my forehead, said in a soft voice: "You know not what you say. Learn to understand yourself, and you will be happy, and make many others happy also."

FOURTH MEMORY.

THERE are certain years in the life of each of us, in which we advance as though we were walking along a straight, dusty, monotonous avenue of poplars, without noticing where we were, and which leave no possession behind to memory, but the mournful sense that we have travelled farther on our course, and grown older. So long as the stream of life flows on calmly, it remains the same, and only the landscape on either side appears to change. But then come the cataracts of life, and these abide for ever in remembrance. Even when we have left them far behind, and are drawing nearer and nearer to the calm ocean of eternity, we still seem to hear their rush and roar from afar; nay, we feel that what vital

force is now left to us, and is impelling us onward, still derives its impetus and sustenance from those torrents.

My school-days were over, and the first honey-moons of my college life were over, and many a bright day-dream was over; but one thing was left to me—faith in God and in men. Life was, indeed, otherwise than I had pictured it to myself in my little brain; but, on the other hand, all things had received a more sacred significance, and just that which was unintelligible and painful in life had become to me an evidence of the ever-present hand of God in all things human. "Nothing, however small, can befall thee, but as God wills it." Such was the brief philosophy of life that I had collected on my way.

And now I came back to my little native city to spend an autumn vacation. What a joy there is in returning! None have explained the fact, but the seeing over again, the finding again, the recollecting,

is the secret of nearly all our pleasures and enjoyments. What we see, or hear, or taste for the first time, may be beautiful, or grand, or sweet, but it is too new,—it takes us by surprise; there is no tranquillity as yet in our pleasure, and the effort of enjoyment is greater than the enjoyment itself. But after many years to hear once more an old piece of music, of which we thought we had forgotten every note, and yet each one, as it comes, greets us like an old acquaintance—or to stand once more before the Madonna Sistina, in Dresden, and let all the feelings rise up again, which the infinite glance of that heavenly child had awakened in us year by year,—or even to smell again a flower, or taste a dish of which we have never thought since our school-days, gives us a delight so intense, that we know not whether we are rejoicing more over the present impression or the old association. And now let us be returning, after long

years of absence, to the place where we were born: our spirit swims unconsciously in a sea of memories, whose dancing waves waft it, as in a dream, along the shores of long past times. The clock in the steeple strikes—we fancy ourselves too late for school, and then recover from the start, and are glad that the fright is over. A dog runs across the street,—it is the very same that we have often gone so far out of our way to avoid. Here sits the old apple-woman at her stall, whose apples used to lead us into temptation; and even now, in spite of all the dust upon them, we cannot help believing that they must taste better than any other apples in the world. There a house has been pulled down, and a new one built—that was where our old music-master lived: he is dead; but, oh! how pleasant it was when we used to stand here on summer evenings, under the window, and listen while the worthy creature, after the day's lessons were

over, played to himself for recreation, and as he extemporised, let off, like an engine in the rush of sounds, all the superfluous steam that had collected during the day. And here, in this little shady walk — which used to seem so much wider — here it was that, one night as I was going home late, I met the pretty daughter of our next-door neighbour. Up to that day, I had never dared to speak to or look at her; but we boys in the school talked about her often enough, and called her "the pretty girl;" and if I only saw her from a distance coming along the street, I was in such a state of bliss, that I could not even dream of approaching her. Yes, and here, in this avenue leading to the churchyard, I met her one evening, and she took my arm, though we had never spoken to each other before, saying, she would walk home with me. I believe I never spoke a word the whole way, and most likely she did not either; but I was

so happy, that even now, after all these years, when I think of it, I wish that time could come over again, and I could once more walk home in silent bliss with "the pretty girl."

And thus one recollection rises up after another, till the waves meet over our head, and a long sigh escapes our breast, which reminds us that we have forgotten to breathe for thinking. And then the whole dream-world vanishes at once, like apparitions at cock-crowing.

As I next came past the old Palace with its lime-trees, and saw the sentries on their horses and the long flight of steps, what a host of memories rose up within me, and how was all changed here! For many years I had not been in the Palace. The Princess was dead, the Prince had withdrawn from the government, and retired to Italy. His eldest son, with whom I had grown up, was now Regent. The circle around him consisted of young noblemen

and officers whose conversation suited his taste, and whose society had soon alienated him from the playmates of his childhood. Other circumstances, too, had contributed to loosen the bonds of our youthful friendship. Like every other young man who perceives for the first time the deficiencies in the life of the German people, and the crimes of the German governments, I had soon caught up certain phrases of the liberal party, and these sounded at Court pretty much like indecorous expressions in a respectable clergyman's family. In short, for many years I had not walked up those steps. And yet there dwelt in the Palace one being whose name I almost daily named, and the remembrance of whom was unceasingly present to me. I had long accustomed myself to the idea that I should never see her again in this life; nay, she had gradually become for me a creature of the imagination, of which I knew that it

did not and could not exist in reality. She had become my guardian angel, my other Self, to whom I talked, instead of talking to myself. How she had come to be so, I could not explain to myself; for, indeed, I scarcely knew her; but just as the eye sometimes transforms the clouds into figures, so I felt that my fancy had called up with its spell this bright vision in the heavens of my childhood, and from the barely-indicated outlines of reality filled up a finished picture of the imagination. All my thinking had involuntarily come to be a dialogue with her; and whatever was good in me, all my aspirations, all my beliefs,—nay, my whole better Self,—belonged to her, I ascribed to her—they came from her lips, the lips of my guardian angel.

I had only been a few days in my father's house when I received a note one morning. It was written in English, and came from the Princess Maria:—

"DEAR FRIEND,

"I hear you are with us for a short time. We have not met for many years, and if it is agreeable to you, I should like to see an old friend again. You will find me alone this afternoon in the Swiss Cottage.

"Yours sincerely,

"MARIA."

I immediately wrote back, also in English, that I should have the pleasure of waiting on her in the afternoon.

The Swiss Cottage formed one wing of the Palace, that jutted out into the garden, and could be entered without passing through the court-yard. It was five o'clock when I walked up the garden and reached the Cottage. I battled down my feelings, and prepared myself for a formal interview. I tried to persuade my guardian angel to be silent by proving to him that this lady had nothing whatever to do with him. Yet I felt thoroughly ill at ease, and not even

my guardian angel would inspire me with a morsel of courage. At last I made a bold resolve, repeated to myself mechanically some stock phrases about the masquerade of life, and knocked at the door, which stood half-open.

There was no one in the room but a lady whom I did not know, and who likewise addressed me in English, saying that the Princess would be with me directly. Then she went away, and I was left alone, and had time to look around me.

The walls of the room were panelled with oak, and all round it ran a trellis-work, covered by a thick, broad-leaved ivy, that surrounded the whole apartment. The tables and chairs were of oak and richly carved. The floor was of inlaid wood. It made a singular impression on me, to see how much there was in the room that was familiar to me. Many things I recognised as having come from our old play-room in the Palace; but others, especially the pic-

tures, were new; and yet they were the same pictures that I had in my room at the University. There, over the pianoforte, hung the portraits of Beethoven, Handel, and Mendelssohn; just the same that I had chosen for myself. In one corner, I saw the Venus of Milo, which I had always regarded as the most beautiful statue of antiquity. Here, on the table, lay volumes of Dante and Shakespeare, Tauler's Sermons, the "Theologia Germanica," Rückert's Poems, Tennyson and Burns, Carlyle's "Past and Present,"—the very books that were lying in my room, and every one of which I had had in my hand within a few days. I began to fall into a reverie, but I shook my thoughts off again, and was standing before the portrait of the deceased Princess, when the door opened, and two bearers, the same whom I had so often seen as a child, carried the Princess on her couch into the room.

What a vision! She did not speak, and

her countenance was calm as a lake, till the bearers had left the room. Then she turned her eyes towards me,—the old deep, unfathomable eyes—her face grew brighter every instant, and at length her whole countenance smiled out, as she said:

"We are old friends—I think we have not changed—I cannot say 'You;' and if I am not to say 'Thou,' we must talk English. Do you understand me?"

I was not prepared for such a reception, yet I saw that there was no masquerade here;—here was a soul that yearned to find a soul—this was a greeting as when two friends, in spite of their disguises, in spite of their black masks, recognise each other by the eye alone. I took the hand which she held out to me and said: "When one talks with angels, one cannot say 'You.'"

And yet how strange is the power of the forms and usages of life! how difficult it is even with the most kindred souls to speak the language of nature! The con-

versation halted, and we both felt the embarrassment of the moment. I broke the silence by saying just what was passing in my mind: "People are accustomed from their childhood up to live in a cage, till, even if they are in the open air, they do not venture to move their wings, and fear every moment to knock against something, if they want to take flight."

"Yes," she replied, "and it is quite right, and cannot be otherwise. No doubt we often wish that we could live like the birds, who fly in the woods and perch beside each other on the branches, and sing together without an introduction. But, my friend, among the birds, too, there are owls and hawks, and it is well that we can pass by them in the world as if we did not know them. Yes, it is in life, perhaps, as in poetry; and as the true poet knows how to say the most beautiful and true things, while restricted as to form, so ought we to know how to preserve our freedom of

thought and feeling, in spite of the fetters of society."

I could not help quoting from Platen:

"Denn was an allen Orten
Als ewig sich erweist,
Das ist in gebundenen Worten,
Ein ungebundener Geist."*

"Yes," she replied, with a bright and somewhat arch smile, "but I have a peculiar privilege, from my illness and my solitude. I often pity girls and young men, because there can be no friendship and mutual confidence between them but what they, or their relations for them, are thinking of love, or what is so called. They lose much by it. The girls know not what slumbers in their souls and might be awakened by the earnest conversation of a noble-minded man; and the young

* For what hath ever proved itself
Immortal everywhere,
Is in harmonious measured words,
The spirit free as air.

men would regain so many knightly virtues, if women could be the distant spectators of the inward combats of their spirits. But it cannot be, because '*love*' always mixes itself up with the affair, or what is so called, — the quick beating of the heart —the stormy billows of hope—the delight in a pretty face—the sweet sensitiveness —perhaps, also, prudent calculation—in short, just everything which disturbs that deep ocean-calm, which is, perhaps, the true image of pure human love."

She suddenly stopped, and an expression of pain passed over her face.

"I must not talk any more to-day," she said, "my physician has forbidden me. I should like to hear one of Mendelssohn's 'Songs without Words'— the Duet. My young friend used to be able to play it years ago. Did you not?"

I could not reply, for, as she ceased speaking and folded her hands together, as of old, I saw on her hand a ring—she

wore it on her little finger,—it was the same which she had given to me, and I to her. My thoughts were too many for words, and I sat down to the piano and played. When I had finished, I turned round, looked at her, and said: "If one could but speak thus in music, without words."

"One can," she said; "I have understood it all; but for to-day I cannot bear any more, for I grow weaker day by day. Well, we must get accustomed to each other, and a poor sick recluse may, I think, reckon on indulgence. We shall meet to-morrow afternoon, at the same hour; shall we not?"

I took her hand, and would have kissed it; but she held mine fast, pressed it, and said, "That will do; good-bye."

FIFTH MEMORY.

WHAT were my thoughts and feelings as I went home, it would be hard to describe. Once for all, the soul will not suffer itself to be fully translated into words; and there are "Thoughts without Words," which every man plays to himself in the moments of his highest joy and sharpest sorrow. I felt neither joy nor sorrow—I felt nothing but unspeakable astonishment. The thoughts darted across my mind like falling stars, which fain would fly from heaven to earth, but all go out in darkness ere they reach their goal. As one sometimes says to oneself in dreams, "I am dreaming," so I said to myself, "I live; it is she." And then again I tried to be calm and reasonable, and said to

myself: "She is a very sweet creature; she has really an extraordinary mind!"—began, too, to pity her; and then I pictured to myself the pleasant afternoons that I should spend with her during my holidays. But no—no, this was not the truth of it; in very deed, she was all that I had sought for, imagined, hoped, believed. Here was, at last, a human soul transparent and fresh as a spring morning. At the first glance I had seen all that she was, and that in her lay—we had known and greeted each other. And my guardian angel within? . . . He answered me no more, he was gone; and I felt that there was only one spot upon earth where I could find him again!

Now a fair and happy season began; for I spent every afternoon with her; and we soon felt that we were really old acquaintance, and that it would have been impossible to call each other anything but "Thou." It was as though we had always lived together, for not a chord of feeling did she

strike but it had already echoed in my soul; and not a thought did I express but what she responded to it with a friendly nod, as much as to say, "I have thought it too." I had once heard the greatest composer of our age extemporise with his sister upon the pianoforte, and could scarcely conceive how two human beings could so understand each other, so feel with each other, as to give free course to their ideas, and yet never by a single note to interrupt the harmony of their playing. Now I learnt to understand it. Yes, now too, for the first time, I found that my own mind was not so poor and empty as it had always seemed to me; and it was as though nothing but the sun had been wanting to waken into life all its germs and blossoms. And yet what a mournful spring-time it was that dawned upon my soul and hers! We forget in May that the roses will fade so soon;—but with us each evening warned us that one leaf after another was falling

to the ground. She felt it sooner than I, and gave utterance to it without its appearing to cause her pain, and our conversations became, day by day, more earnest and solemn.

"I did not think," she said one evening, as I was just leaving her, "that I should live to be so old. When I gave you my ring the day I was confirmed, I thought I should soon have to take leave of you all. And now I have lived so many years and enjoyed so many fair and pleasant things—of course, suffered much too, but that one forgets—and now, when I feel that my departure is near, every hour, every minute, becomes so precious to me. Good night. You must not come too late to-morrow."

One day when I entered her room I found an Italian painter with her. She was talking Italian with him; and though he was evidently one who followed his profession rather as a trade than as an art, yet her manner towards him was so kind, so

unpretending, nay, even so deferential, that one instantly perceived in her that true nobility of birth, nobility of soul. When the painter was gone, she said to me: "Now I will show you a picture that will give you pleasure. The original is in the Louvre at Paris. I read a description of it, and have made this Italian copy it for me." She showed me the picture, and waited to hear what I should say. It was the portrait of a man of middle age, dressed in an old German costume. The expression was dreamy and resigned, and, at the same time, so true to nature, that one could not doubt but that the original was once a living man. The general tone of the picture was, in the foreground, dark and brown in hue; but in the background there was a landscape, and on the horizon gleamed the first streak of approaching dawn. I could discover nothing in the picture, and yet it produced a feeling of satisfaction, and one's eyes could have rested

on it for hours. "I see nothing beyond a real human countenance," said I; "and yet not even a Raphael could have invented such an one."

"No," she replied. "Now I will tell you why I wished to have the picture. I read that no one could recognise the artist, and no one knew whom the portrait represented, but that it was probably a philosopher of the Middle Ages. Now, I wanted just such a picture for my gallery; for, as you are aware, no one knows who was the author of the 'Theologia Germanica,' and, of course, we have no picture of him. So I wished to try if this picture of an unknown person, by an unknown hand, would fit our German theologian; and if you have nothing against it, we will hang it up here between 'The Albigenses,' and 'The Diet of Worms,' and call it 'The German Theologian.'"

"Good," said I; "only it is rather too powerful and manly for the Frankfort Doctor."

"Perhaps so," she replied; "but, at all events, for a suffering and dying life like mine, there is much comfort and strength to be drawn from his book. I owe much to him, for it was he who first brought to my knowledge the true mystery of Christian doctrine in all its simplicity. I felt that I was free to believe the old teacher, whoever he might be, or not. His doctrine had no external authority over me; and yet it took hold of me with such power, that I felt as though I now knew for the first time what revelation meant. And it is just this which, for so many minds, bars the entrance into true Christianity—that its doctrines are brought to us as a revelation, before the revelation has come to pass in ourselves. This had often caused me too much disquiet. Not that I ever doubted of the truth and divinity of our religion; but I felt as though I had no right to a faith that had been given to me by others, and as if that did not truly belong to me, which I

had simply been taught and received as a child, without understanding it. After all, no one can believe for us, any more than they can live and die for us."

"It is certain," I replied, "that the true cause of many a hot and sore conflict is, that the teaching of Christ, instead of slowly and irresistibly winning our hearts, as it did those of the Apostles and first Christians, meets us, from our earliest childhood upwards, as the incontrovertible law of a mighty Church, demanding from us an unconditional subjection, which is called faith. Sooner or later doubts arise in the mind of every one who has power to think for himself and reverence for the truth; and then, just when we are in the right way to conquer a faith for ourselves, start up the spectres of doubt and unbelief, and disturb the peaceful unfolding of the new life."

"I was reading lately," she interrupted—"in an English book, that truth makes the revelation, not revelation the

truth. And this precisely expresses what I experienced in reading the 'Theologia Germanica.' I read the book, and I felt the power of its truth so overwhelming, that I could not but yield. The truth was laid open to me, or rather I was laid open to myself, and I felt for the first time what it means—to believe. The truth belonged to me, it had long slumbered within me; but it was the word of the unknown teacher which penetrated my soul like a sunbeam, enlightened my inward eye, and brought out in perfect clearness before my mind what had hitherto been mere dim presentiments. And when I had once felt *how* the human soul can believe, I resolved to read the Gospels as if they, too, had been written by an unknown man. I banished as much as I could the recollection that they had been miraculously dictated by the Holy Ghost to the Apostles, confirmed by Councils, recognised by the Church as the supreme authority for the only saving

faith;—and then, for the first time, I came to understand what Christian faith and Christian revelation are.

"It is a wonder for which we may be thankful," said I, "that the theologians have not robbed us ere now of all religion; and they will do so yet, if believing men do not come forward in earnest, and say: 'Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther.' Every church must have its ministering servants; but there has never yet been a religion in the world which its priests, whether they be Brahmans or Schamans, Bonzes or Lamas, Pharisees or Scribes, have not corrupted and undermined. There they are, quarrelling and disputing in a language which is unintelligible to nine-tenths of their flock, and instead of suffering the Gospel to fill them with its spirit, and breathing that spirit again into their hearers, they string together long chains of proof, showing how the Gospels must be true, because they were written by in-

spired men. But this is a mere makeshift for their own unbelief. For how can they know that these men were inspired in a miraculous manner, without ascribing to themselves a far more miraculous inspiration? Hence their next step is to extend the gift of inspiration to the Fathers of the Church; nay, it is even attributed to those who form the majorities in the Councils; and then, as the question still recurs—how do *we* know that among fifty bishops, twenty-six were inspired, and twenty-four not inspired? they are forced, finally, to take the last desperate leap, and affirm that, through the laying on of hands, inspiration and infallibility reside in the heads of the Church up to the present day, and thus to render superfluous all personal conviction, all self-surrender, all beholding with the eye of faith. Yet, notwithstanding all these links in the chain, the first question still comes back upon them in its original simplicity:—How can B know

that A is inspired, unless B is as much or more inspired than A? For it presupposes more to know that A is inspired than to be inspired one's self."

"I have never put it to myself so clearly," she said; "but I have often felt how difficult it must be to know if a person have love, since there are no signs of love that may not be counterfeited. And then I have thought that no one could know it but he who knows what it is to love, and that even he will only believe in the love of another, in so far as he believes in the truth and genuineness of his own love. And as it is with the gift of love, may it not be also with the gift of the Holy Ghost? Those upon whom the Spirit descends hear a sound from heaven, as of a rushing, mighty wind, and see the cloven tongues as of fire. But the others are shocked and confounded, or mock and say: 'These men are full of new wine.' Yet, as I told you, I owe it to the 'Theologia Germanica' that I learnt

to believe in my belief; and what confirmed my faith the most was what would appear to many as a want, namely, that the old Master never thinks of proving his propositions logically, but scatters them forth like the sower by the way-side, in the hope that some seed will fall upon good ground and bear fruit a thousandfold. So, likewise, our Divine Master never sought to prove His doctrines, for the full consciousness of truth despises the formulæ of demonstration."

"Yes," I broke in—for I could not help thinking of the wonderful concatenation of proof in Spinoza's Ethics—"and thus the scrupulous exactness with which Spinoza conducts his demonstrations always gives me the impression that this acute thinker was not able, after all, to believe in his own teachings with his whole heart, and just on that very account felt the necessity of fastening every mesh of his net with such care. However," I continued, "I must confess that I do not share your boundless ad-

miration for the author of the 'Theologia Germanica,' although I have to thank him for many a fruitful suggestion. But he is wanting in the human and poetic elements, and, in general, in warmth of feeling and reverence for reality. The whole mystical philosophy of the fourteenth century was admirable as a preparation, but it reached the true solution of its problem only in that blessed and courageous return to practical life which we find in the teachings of Luther. Once in his life a man must recognise his own nothingness; he must feel that in himself he is nought, that his being, his origin, his eternal life, have their root in something superhuman and incomprehensible. This is the return to God, which, indeed, is never fully accomplished on earth, but yet leaves behind in the spirit a divine yearning after its true home, that nevermore ceases. But man can never undo the act of creation. Although created out of nothing, that is to say, only by and out of God, he cannot of

his own power reduce himself back into his original nothingness; and the self-annihilation of which even Tauler so often speaks, is scarcely better than the *nirvána*, or dissolving of the human soul, taught by the Buddhists. So, for instance, Tauler says: 'That if for great reverence and love towards the Supreme Being he could become non-existent, he would willingly fall before His Majesty into the lowest abyss.' But this annihilation of the creature was not the will of the Creator, for He created it. 'God makes Himself Man,' says Augustine; 'Man does not make himself God.' And thus the mystical philosophy should be as a fiery ordeal, by passing through which the human spirit is attempered and steeled, not dissolved away in vapour, like boiling water in a cauldron. He who has perceived the nothingness of Self ought still to recognise this Self as a reflexion of that which is truly Divine. The 'Theologia Germanica' says:—

"'That which hath flowed forth from the Perfect is no true Substance, and hath no Substance except in the Perfect, but is an accident, or a brightness, or a visible appearance, which is no Substance, and hath no Substance except in the fire whence the brightness flowed forth, such as the sun or a candle.'

"But that which has flowed out from God, be it only as the shining of the flame, has a Divine reality in itself; and we might almost say, what were the flame without brightness, or the sun without light, or the Creator without a creature? But these are questions of which we may truly say:—

"'Whatsoever man or creature desireth to dive into or understand the secret counsel and will of God, so that he would fain know wherefore God doeth this, or doeth not that, and the like, desireth the same as Adam and the devil.'

"Therefore let it be enough for us to feel ourselves to be a reflexion of the

Divine Being, and to 'behold His glory until we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory.' Let none extinguish or hide under a bushel the Divine light that shines within him, but let him suffer it to stream forth, that it may give light and warmth to all around; and then shall he feel a living fire in every vein, and receive a Divine consecration for life's battle. Even the most trifling duties will remind us of God; what is earthly will become heavenly, what is temporal eternal, and our whole life will be a life in God. God is not eternal rest, He is eternal life; and Angelus Silesius forgets this when he says, 'God is without Will:'—

"'Wir beten: Es geschehʼ mein Herr und Gott dein Wille,
Und sieh, Er hat nicht Willʼ, er ist ein ewige Stille.'"*

* "We pray: O God, Thy will be done as seems Thee best,
And lo! He hath no Will, He is Eternal Rest."

She heard me calmly, but after a few moments' thought, replied: "Your faith is that of the healthy and strong; but there are also life-weary souls that long for rest and slumber,—who feel themselves so utterly alone, that even when they fall asleep in God, they will miss the whole world as little as the world will miss them. To such it is a foretaste of the rest in God, when they can already here on earth utterly lose themselves in Him; and they can do so, because they have no ties that bind them to this world, and no desires agitate their heart but the desire for rest:

"'Ruh' ist das höchste Gut, und wäre Gott nicht Ruh',
Ich schlösse vor ihm selbst mein' Augen beide zu.'*

"But, apart from this, you are unjust to our German theologian. He does, indeed,

* "Rest is the highest Good, and were not God true Rest,
Against His Face I'd close the Windows of my Breast."

teach the nothingness of the mere outward life, but he would not have it annihilated. Read the twenty-eighth chapter aloud to me."

I took the book and read, while she shut her eyes and listened:—

"Now when this union truly cometh to pass, and becometh established, the inward man standeth henceforward immoveable in this union; and God suffereth the outward man to be moved hither and thither, from this to that, of such things as are necessary and right. So that the outward man saith in sincerity: 'I have no will to be or not to be, to live or to die, to know or not to know, to do or to leave undone, and the like; but I am ready for all that is to be, or ought to be, and obedient thereunto, whether I have to do or to suffer.' And thus the outward man hath no Wherefore or purpose, but only to do his part to further the Eternal Will. For it is perceived of a truth, that the inward man shall stand

immoveable, and that it is needful for the outward man to be moved. And if the inward man have any Wherefore in the actions of the outward man, he saith only that such things must be and ought to be, as are ordained by the Eternal Will. And where God Himself dwelleth in the man, it is thus; as we plainly see in Christ. Moreover, where there is this union, which is the offspring of a Divine light, and dwelleth in its beams, there is no spiritual pride, or irreverent spirit, but boundless humility, and a lowly, broken heart: also an honest, blameless walk, justice, peace, content, and all that is of virtue, must needs be there. Where they are not, there is no right union, as we have said. For, just as neither this thing nor that can bring about or further this union, so there is nothing which hath power to frustrate or hinder it, save the man himself with his self-will, that doeth him this great wrong. Of this be well assured."

"That is enough," she said; "and now, I think we understand each other. In another passage our unknown friend says still more distinctly, that no man can stand immoveable before death, and that the 'man who is made a partaker of the Divine nature' is like a hand unto God, doing nothing of himself but what God wills, or like a house in which God dwelleth. And 'a man who is possessed with God's Spirit' feels it, indeed, to be so, though he does not speak of it, but keeps his life in God as a mystery of love. I often feel like that silver poplar before my window. This evening it is quite still—not a leaf stirs. But even when the morning breeze makes every leaf dance and quiver, the trunk with its massive branches remains still and immoveable; and when the autumn comes, all the leaves that have trembled in the wind will fall to the earth and wither away; but the tree itself will await a new spring."

She had learnt to live so wholly in this

world of thought, that I did not wish to disturb her in it. Nay, it had not been without difficulty that I had broken through the magic circle of similar ideas; and I hardly knew whether she had not chosen the better part, that could not be taken from her, while we were careful and troubled about many things.

Thus every evening brought its new conversation, and each, as it came, opened to me a fresh vista into this unfathomable soul. She had no secrets from me; when she talked it was simply thinking and feeling aloud, and what she uttered must have dwelt within her for years, for she scattered forth her thoughts as carelessly as the child who has filled his lap with flowers showers them down on the lawn. I could not, on my side, lay bare my soul before her as she did hers to me, and the sense of this oppressed and tormented me. And yet how few there are who, amidst this continual lying which society

imposes upon us under the names of custom, good manners, consideration, prudence, practical wisdom, and which turn our whole life into a masquerade—how few are there who can, even if they wish it, become once more perfectly true to themselves! Nay, not even love itself may speak its own tongue, and keep its own silence, but is forced to learn the diction of the poets, and rave, and sigh, and toy, instead of frankly greeting, and gazing, and giving itself away. I should have liked to have confessed it to her, and said, "You do not know me," but I could not find the right words in which to be quite truthful. But as I was leaving her one evening, I gave her a volume of Arnold's "Poems," which I had received a short time before, and begged her to read one, called "The Buried Life." This was my confession, and then I knelt beside her couch, and said, "Good night."

"Good night," she replied, and laid her hand on my head, and the old thrill ran

through my whole frame, and the dreams of my childhood fluttered up within me, and I could not move; but gazed into her deep, unfathomable eyes, till the peace of her soul had overshadowed mine. Then I arose and went home in silence, and dreamed that night of a silvery poplar round which the wind was roaring, but not a leaf stirred among its branches!

THE BURIED LIFE.

Light flows our war of mocking words, and yet,
Behold, with tears my eyes are wet.
I feel a nameless sadness o'er me roll.
Yes, yes, we know that we can jest,
We know, we know that we can smile;
But there's a something in this breast
To which thy light words bring no rest,
And thy gay smiles no anodyne.
Give me thy hand, and hush awhile,
And turn those limpid eyes on mine,
And let me read there, love, thy inmost soul.
Alas! is even Love too weak
To unlock the heart, and let it speak?
Are even lovers powerless to reveal
To one another what, indeed, they feel?

I knew the mass of men conceal'd
Their thoughts, for fear that, if reveal'd,
They would by other men be met
With blank indifference, or with blame reproved:
I knew they lived and moved
Trick'd in disguises, alien to the rest
Of men, and alien to themselves—and yet
The same heart beats in every human breast.
  But we, my love—does a like spell benumb
Our hearts—our voices?—must we, too, be dumb?
  Ah, well for us, if even we,
Even for a moment, can yet free
Our heart, and have our lips unchain'd;
For that which seals them hath been deep ordain'd.
  Fate, which foresaw
How frivolous a baby man would be,
By what distractions he would be possess'd,
How he would pour himself in every strife,
And well-nigh change his own indentity,
That it might keep from his capricious play
His genuine self, and force him to obey,
Even in his own despite, his being's law,
Bade through the deep recesses of our breast
The unregarded River of our Life
Pursue with undiscernable flow its way;
And that we should not see
The buried stream, and seem to be
Eddying about in blind uncertainty,
Though driving on with it eternally.
  But often, in the world's most crowded streets,

But often, in the din of strife,
There rises an unspeakable desire
After the knowledge of our Buried Life,—
A thirst to spend our fire and restless force
In tracking out our true, original course,—
A longing to inquire
Into the mystery of this heart that beats
So wild, so deep in us,—to know
Whence our thoughts come and where they go.
And many a man in his own breast then delves,
But deep enough, alas! none ever mines:
And we have been on many thousand lines,
And we have shown on each talent and power,
But hardly have we, for one little hour,
Been on our own line, have we been ourselves;
Hardly had skill to utter one of all
The nameless feelings that course through our breast,
But they course on for ever unexpress'd.
And long we try in vain to speak and act
Our hidden self, and what we say and do
Is eloquent, is well—but 'tis not true:
And then we will no more be rack'd
With inward striving, and demand
Of all the thousand nothings of the hour
Their stupefying power;
Ah! yes, and they benumb us at our call;
Yet still, from time to time, vague and forlorn,
From the soul's subterranean depth upborne,
As from an infinitely distant land,
Come airs, and floating echoes, and convey

A melancholy into all our day.
Only—but this is rare—
When a beloved hand is laid in ours,
When, jaded with the rush and glare
Of the interminable hours,
Our eyes can in another's eyes read clear,
When our world-deafen'd ear
Is by the tones of a loved voice caress'd,—
A bolt is shot back somewhere in our breast,
And a lost pulse of feeling stirs again:
The eye sinks inward, and the heart lies plain,
And what we mean, we say, and what we would, we know;
A man becomes aware of his life's flow,
And hears its winding murmur, and he sees
The meadows where it glides, the sun, the breeze.
And there arrives a lull in the hot race
Wherein he doth for ever chase
That flying and elusive shadow, Rest.
An air of coolness plays upon his face,
And an unwonted calm pervades his breast.
And then he thinks he knows
The Hills where his life rose,
And the Sea where it goes———

SIXTH MEMORY.

EARLY the next morning I heard a knock at my door, and in walked my old doctor, the Hofrath. He was the friend, the body-and-soul-curer of all in our little town. Two generations had grown up under his eye; the children whom he had brought into the world had become in their turn fathers and mothers, and he regarded them all as his children. He himself was unmarried, but even in his old age he was still a powerful and handsome man. I never remember him other than as he now stood before me, with his bright blue eyes gleaming forth from under their bushy eyebrows, and his thick white locks still retaining all their youthful luxuriance, crisp and glossy. Nor

can I ever forget his shoes, with their silver buckles; his white silk stockings; his brown coat, that always looked new, and yet seemed always the old one; and his gold-headed stick was the same that I had many a time, as a child, seen standing at my bedside, when he felt my pulse and prescribed me medicine. I had often been ill, but my faith in this man always restored me to health again. I had never the slightest doubt that he could make me well; and when my mother said she must send for the Hofrath to make me well again, it was just the same to me as if she had said she must send for the tailor, that he might set my torn trousers to rights. I had only to take the physic, and I felt that I must get well.

"How are you, my dear boy?" he said, as he entered my room; "you do not look quite well; you mustn't study too hard. But I have no time to gossip to-day; I have only come to tell you that

you must not go to the Princess Maria any more. I have been with her the whole night, and it is your fault. So mind, if you have any regard for her life, you are not to go near her again. As soon as she can bear it, she must leave town, and go into the country. The best thing you can do is, to take a tour for a short time. So now, good morning, and be a good boy."

With these words he shook my hand, looked kindly into my eyes, as if to exact a promise of obedience, and then went on to visit others of his sick children.

I was so utterly taken by surprise, that another should have thus instantly penetrated the secrets of my heart,—nay, that he should know what I myself did not know, that I did not begin to think till long after he had left me. And then it began to seethe within me, as water that has long stood beside the fire without stirring, suddenly boils up, and bubbles and swells, and hisses and roars, till it runs over.

Not see her again ?—I live only when I am with her. I will be quite calm; I will not say a word to her; I will only stand by the window while she slumbers and dreams.—But not see her again? not even take leave of her? Why, she does not even know—she cannot know—that I am in love with her. And I am not in love with her. I wish for nothing; I hope for nothing; my heart never beats more calmly than when I am with her.—But I must feel her presence,—I must breathe her spirit,—I must go to her! And she is expecting me. And has fate brought us together without a purpose? Am I not meant to be her consolation? is she not meant to be my rest? Life is no mere game of chance. It does not impel two souls to each other, as the sirocco of the desert sweeps together in its whirlwind two grains of sand, only to sunder them apart. If some friendly fate has brought another soul to us, we should hold it fast, for it is

meant for us; and no power can tear it from us, if we have courage to live, and combat, and die for it. She could not but despise me, if I were to forsake her love at the first mutterings of the thunder, as we leave the shade of a tree under which we have dreamt away hours of happiness.

And then all turned suddenly still within me, and I only heard the words "her love;" and they rang out again and again from every corner of my heart like an echo, and I was terrified at myself. "Her love," —what had I done to deserve it? She scarcely knew me; and if she ever could love me, should I not have to confess to her that I did not deserve the love of an angel? Every thought, every hope that fluttered up in my soul, fell back again like a bird that tries to rise into the blue sky, and sees not the wires that shut him in on every side. And yet—why all this blessedness

so near and so unattainable? Cannot God work miracles? Does He not work miracles every morning? How often has He heard my prayer, when it rose up to Him in perfect trust, and would not let Him go till He had sent comfort and help to His weary child? It is no earthly gift for which we are beseeching Him—it is only that two human souls, which have found and recognised each other, may fulfil their short earthly pilgrimage together, hand in hand, and eye to eye; that I may be a support to her under her sufferings,—that she may be my consolation or my sweet care till we reach the goal.

And if a late spring-tide should yet be in store for her in this life, if her afflictions should be removed—Oh! what blissful pictures unfolded themselves before my eyes! The castle of her deceased mother in the Tyrol belonged to her,—there, among the green hills, in the fresh mountain air, surrounded by a hardy,

uncorrupted peasantry, far away from the turmoil of the world,—from its cares and struggles—with none to envy, none to judge—in what delicious tranquillity might we look forward to the autumn of life, and "vanish in silence, like the glow of evening." Then I saw the dark blue lake, with the gleam of its rippling waters, and the bright shadow of the far-off glaciers on its bosom; I heard the tinkling of the sheep-bells, and the *jogel* of the herdsmen; I saw the chamois-hunters, with their alpenstocks, moving along the mountain-side; and old and young gathering together in the evening on the village-green; and everywhere I saw her, like an angel of peace, scattering blessings as she passed, and I was her companion and her friend.

"Fool!" I exclaimed, "fool that I am! is my heart still so wild and so soft? Be a man; think who you are, and how far removed from her. She is friendly,—it gives her pleasure to see her soul mirrored

in another; but that very childlike familiarity of hers, and perfect ease of manner, show clearly enough that there is no deeper feeling towards you in her heart. Have you not, many a time, on a clear summer night, when wandering alone through the beech-wood, seen how the moon has shed her silvery light over every bough and leaf, and how it has even lighted up the dark turbid water of the fish-pool, and made a bright mirror of itself in each tiny drop? Even so she looks down on this dark night of life, and so may her soft light be mirrored in your heart; but hope not for a warmer glance."

In a moment her image rose, as if living, before my eyes; she stood before me, not as a memory, but as a vision, and for the first time I became conscious how beautiful she was. It was not the beauty of form or colour that dazzles us at the first sight of a lovely maiden, and then passes away as quickly as the blossoms of spring. It was

rather the harmony of her whole being, the truthfulness of every gesture, the spiritual expression of her countenance, the perfect interpenetration of body and soul, which gives him who beholds it such exquisite pleasure. Though Nature may have been lavish in her gift of beauty, it does not satisfy us unless it be assimilated with the whole being; unless its possessor have, as it were, earned and conquered it. Nay, we are rather offended by it, as we feel offended when we see an actress moving on the stage in royal robes, and remark at every step how little her attire befits her, how little it belongs to her. Grace is true beauty, and grace is the spiritualizing of all that is gross, corporeal, and earthly; it is that presence of the spirit which converts even ugliness into beauty. The longer I gazed on the vision before me, the more I saw the noble beauty of every outline of her form, and the depth of soul that lay in all she did or

looked. Oh, what blessedness was so close at hand!—and was it all only that I might be shown the highest pinnacle of earthly happiness, and then be cast down for ever on the flat, sandy waste of life? Oh, that I had never dreamt what treasures this earth conceals! But once to love, and then for ever to be alone! Once to believe, and then for ever to despair! Once to see the light, and then for ever to be blind! This is a torture compared to which all human racks are nothing.

Thus did the wild-hunt of thought and passion sweep fiercely on through my brain, till at last all became still, and the whirlwind of feeling slowly grew calmer and sank into silence. We call this silence and exhaustion after-thought; but we should rather call it after-sight—we leave the turbid waters of thought time to settle and crystallize of themselves, according to eternal laws; we watch the process like an observing chemist, and

when the elements have assumed their form, we are often astonished that they and we are so wholly other than we expected.

The first word that escaped my lips, when I awoke from my gazing lethargy, was, "I must go;" and that very instant I sat down and wrote to the Hofrath, to say that I had set out on a fortnight's tour, and left everything in his hands. A pretext for my journey was soon found for my parents, and before evening I was on my way to the Tyrol.

SEVENTH MEMORY.

Arm in arm with a friend to wander through the valleys and over the mountains of the Tyrol, is to drink in fresh life and power of enjoyment at every step But to travel the same paths alone with one's own thoughts, is lost time, lost labour! What avail to me the green hills and shadowy glens, the blue lakes and mighty waterfalls? Instead of my gazing on them, they gaze on me, and wonder at the sad human face; and my heart quivers under the iron grasp of the thought that I have found no one in the whole world who would rather be with me than with any one else. With such thoughts I awoke each morning, and, like a song that haunts one, they followed me

all the day long. And when, at evening, I reached my inn and sat down wearied, and the people in the room surveyed me, wondering at the solitary traveller, such thoughts often drove me out again into the darkness, where none could see that I was alone; and not till far on in the night did I steal back and creep quietly up to my own room, and throw myself on my hot couch, where Schubert's song, "Dort wo du nicht bist, dort ist das Glück," kept echoing through my heart until I fell asleep. At length the sight of the travellers whom I continually met, rejoicing in the magnificence of Nature with songs and laughter, became so intolerable, that I slept by day, and continued my journey on clear moonlight nights. Then there was at least one feeling that distracted my thoughts, and changed their current at times—and that was fear. For let any one try what it is the whole night through to climb the mountains, uncertain of the path; where the

eye, unnaturally excited, perceives distant shapes, whose outlines it cannot master; where the ear, morbidly acute, catches sounds, without knowing whence they come; where the foot suddenly stumbles over a root breaking through the rock, or slips on a path wetted by the spray of a waterfall; and, withal, to bear a dreary waste within, where there is no memory at which he can warm his heart, no hope to which he can cling—let any one try what this is, and not his frame alone, but his very soul, will shiver in the cold and awful night. The earliest terror of the human heart springs from the sense of being forsaken of God; but life drives it from our thoughts, and men, who are created in the image of God, console us in our loneliness. But when the consolation of their love fails us in turn, then we feel what it is to be forsaken by God and man, and Nature with her speechless eyes, is rather a terror than a comfort to us. Nay, even when we

plant our feet on the solid rocks, they seem to tremble like the sand of the sea, from which, long ago, they slowly rose; and when the eye longs for light, and the moon rises behind the fir-trees, and throws the shadows of their points, black and sharp, against the white wall of rock across the valley, it is like the dead finger of a clock that was long ago wound up, and will some day cease to strike. Not even among the stars, or in the wide canopy of heaven — nowhere is there a refuge and stay for the trembling, desolate, forsaken soul!

One thought alone can at times bring comfort:—it is the tranquillity, the order, the all-besetting presence of Nature. Here, where the waterfall has covered the grey stones on either side with dark green moss, the eye suddenly falls upon a blue forget-me-not in the cool shadow. It is one of a million sisters that are at this moment blooming beside every brook, on every meadow, and that have been blooming ever

since the first morning of creation scattered the whole wealth of Inexhaustible Power over the earth. Every line in its leaves, every stamen in its calyx, every filament of its root, is numbered, and no power on earth can make them more or fewer. When we aid our feeble vision, and with more than human powers look deeper into the mysteries of Nature,—when the microscope discloses to us the noiseless workshops of the seed, the bud, and the blossom, we recognise afresh in their minutest cells and tissues the same constant recurrence of Nature's forms, and in their slenderest filaments the eternal immutability of her plans. Could we penetrate still deeper, we should everywhere meet the same world of forms, and, as in a hall of mirrors, our eye would lose itself in the endless repetition. Such an infinite world lies hidden in these tiny flowers! And if we lift up our eyes to the heavens, the spectacle of eternal order greets us anew, as moons circle around their

planets, planets around their suns, and suns around new solar centres; and even the remote nebula opens into a new universe of beauty before the eye sharpened by the aids of science. And then reflect how those majestic constellations revolve in their orbits, that the seasons may come round in due course, and the seed of this little forget-me-not may be awakened into life, its cells open, its petals press forth from their buds, and its blossoms deck the carpet of the meadows. And then consider the beetle that cradles itself in the blue cup of the flower, whose awakening into life, whose enjoyment of existence, whose living breath is a thousand times more wonderful than the tissues of the flowers, or the dead mechanism of the heavenly bodies,—feel that thou, too, art a part of the eternal web of the universe, and thou mayest draw comfort from the infinity of creatures that revolve, that live, that fade away with thee.

But if this All—with its minutest and its mightiest creatures, with its wisdom and its power, with the miracle of its existence, and the existence of its miracles, be the work of a Being from Whom thy spirit does not shrink back in terror, before Whom thou canst fall down in the sense of thy weakness and nothingness, and by Whom thou art raised again in the sense of His love and compassion—dost thou truly feel that there lives within thee something more infinite and eternal than the cells of the flowers, the spheres of the planets, or the breath of the insect—dost thou perceive in thyself, as in a mirror, the reflexion of the Eternal Light that shineth all around thee—dost thou feel within thee, and beneath thee, and over thee, the Ever-present Reality, in which thy semblance is turned to being, thy restlessness to repose, thy loneliness to universal communion—then wilt thou know to Whom thou art crying in life's dark night: "Cre-

ator and Father, Thy will be done; as in heaven so on earth; as on earth, so also in me."

Then all around thee and within thee will grow light, the cold mists of the early dawn will vanish, and a new warmth will stream through shivering Nature. Thou hast found a Hand which thou wilt never let go again, which will hold thee up when the mountains shake, and the moon and the stars are darkened,—wherever thou art, thou art with Him, and He with thee. He is the Ever-near, and His is the world, with its flowers and thorns; His is man, with his joys and sorrows. "Nothing, however small, can befall thee, but as God wills it."

With such thoughts I pursued my onward course. Sometimes I was comforted, sometimes I was sad; for even when we have found rest and peace in the innermost depths of the soul, it is still hard to abide within this holy solitude. Nay, many forget

it, after they have once found it, and often scarce know the way that leads back to it again.

Weeks had passed, and not a syllable from her had found its way to me. "Perhaps she is dead, and lying in silent rest;" that was another thought that rose to my lips, and returned again and again, as often as I put it from me. It was, indeed, not unlikely; for the Hofrath had told me that she was suffering from a heart-complaint, and every morning, when he went to pay his daily visit, he prepared himself to find her no longer in life. And now—if she should have left this world when I had never taken leave of her, never told her, if only at the last moment, how I loved her—how could I ever forgive myself? Must I not follow after her till I found her again in another life, till I had heard from herself, that she loved me, that she forgave me? Oh, how does man trifle with life! how does he put off from day to day the noblest deed

that he can do, the sweetest joy that he can taste, without bethinking him that each day may be the last, and that lost time is lost eternity! Then every word that the Hofrath had said the last time I saw him rushed to my remembrance, and I saw that I had resolved on my sudden departure only to show him my strength—that it would have been harder still to confess my weakness and stay. Now it became clear to me that there was but one duty for me to perform—to return to her instantly, and to endure what Heaven might send. But just as I had traced the plan of my journey home, the Hofrath's words occurred to me: "As soon as it is possible she must leave town, and be taken into the country." Besides, she had told me herself that she usually spent part of the summer at her castle. Perhaps she was there now, actually close to me—in a day I could be with her. The thought was no sooner conceived than acted on. I started at

day-break, and before night I was standing at the castle-gate.

The evening was clear and still. The mountain peaks were shining in the bright gold of evening, while their lower slopes were suffused with a rosy blue. From the valley rose a grey mist, which suddenly grew bright when it reached a higher region, and then floated like a sea of clouds into the heavens. And all this gorgeous play of colours was reflected in the smooth bosom of the dark lake, on whose shores the mountains seemed to ascend and descend, so that the line which severed the reality from the reflexion was only indicated by the tops of the trees, the pinnacles of the church-tower, and the smoke rising from the houses. But my eyes were fixed on one point alone, namely, the old castle, where a presentiment told me that I should find her once more. Not a light was to be seen at the windows, not a footstep disturbed the evening still-

ness. Had my presentiment deceived me?

I passed slowly through the outer gate, and up the steps, till I found myself in the inner court of the castle. Here I saw a sentry pacing up and down, and hastened to him to inquire who was in the castle. "The Princess is here, with her suite," was his short reply, and in a moment I stood at the great door, and had pulled the bell. Not till then did it strike me what I had done! No one knew me—I could not and dared not say who I was. I had been wandering about in the mountains for weeks, and looked like a beggar. What should I say? for whom should I ask?

But there was no time for deliberation; the door opened, and a porter in the princely livery stood before me, surveying me with astonishment. I inquired whether the English lady, who I knew never left the Princess, was in the castle, and receiving an answer in the affirmative, I requested

ink and paper, and wrote to her, saying that I had called to inquire after the health of the Princess.

The porter called a lackey, who carried the note up-stairs. I heard every step as he went through the long corridors, and with every moment of expectation my position grew more intolerable. On the walls hung old family portraits of the princely family, knights in full armour, ladies in antique costumes, and in the midst there was a lady in the white robes of a nun, with a red cross on her breast. In former times I had often looked on these pictures, and it had never occurred to me how in their breast, too, human hearts had once beat. But now it seemed to me as though I could read whole volumes in their features, and as though they all said to me, "We, too, have once lived, we, too, have once suffered." Beneath this iron mail such secrets lay once concealed as there were now in my own breast. That

white vesture and that red cross are living tokens that there, too, the battle was once fought that is now raging in my own heart. And then it seemed as though they all looked down on me with pity; and then, again, a haughty pride rested on their features, as though they would have said, "Thou art not one of us!" The place grew more and more ghostlike, when suddenly a light footstep startled me from my dreams; the English lady came down the staircase, and asked me to walk into one of the saloons. I fixed on her a searching glance, to see if she had any idea of the true state of the case. But her features were perfectly unmoved, and without allowing herself to betray the slightest expression of either interest or surprise, she said, in measured tones, that the Princess was much better to-day, and would like to see me in half-an-hour.

As a good swimmer, who has ventured far out to sea, and does not think

of his return till his arms are already beginning to grow weary, who then hastily cleaves the waves, hardly daring to look towards the far-distant shore,—who feels with every stroke that his strength is giving way, and yet will not confess it to himself till, exhausted and becramped, he scarcely retains the consciousness of his position—when, lo! suddenly his foot stands on solid land, and his arm clasps a rock on the shore,—so was it with me! A new world of reality opened around me, and all I had suffered was a dream! There are but a few such moments in a lifetime: there are thousands who have never known their bliss. But the mother who holds her child for the first time in her arms—the father whose only son returns covered with glory from the perils of war—the poet hailed with acclamation by his own people—the youth who feels the pressure of his hand returned with a yet warmer pressure by his beloved

—they know what it means for a dream to be turned into reality.

The half-hour was over, and a servant appeared and conducted me through a long suite of apartments, opened a door, and in the faint light of evening I perceived a white form, and above it a lofty window looking towards the lake and the yet-gleaming peaks of snow.

"How oddly people come across each other!" were the first tones that greeted my ear from her clear, bell-like voice, and each word as it fell was like a cool rain-drop after a hot summer's day.

"How oddly people come across each other, and how oddly they lose each other!" I replied, and felt, as I clasped her hand, that we were once more beside each other, and together.

"But it is people's own fault when they lose each other," she continued; and her voice, which always seemed to accompany her words like music, passed involuntarily into a minor key.

"Yes, it is, indeed," I replied; "but first tell me, are you well? and may I talk to you?"

"My dear friend," she said, smiling, "I am always ill, as you know; and when I say that I feel well, I only do it to please my old Hofrath, who is firmly persuaded that ever since I was a year old, my whole life has been owing to his care and skill. I gave him a great fright before I left town, for one night my heart suddenly left off beating, and I felt such a strange sensation of dread, that I thought it would never begin to beat again. But that is over, and why should we speak of it? One thing only has disquieted me. I had always thought that I should some day close my eyes in perfect calm, but now I feel that my complaint will disturb and embitter even the moment of my departure from life." She laid her hand upon her heart, and went on. "But tell me, where have you been? and why have I heard

nothing from you all this long time? Our old friend gave me so many reasons for your sudden journey, that I was forced to tell him at last I did not believe him; and then he gave me the most incredible reason of all—now guess what?"——

"It may sound incredible," said I, interrupting her, that she might not speak the word; "and yet, perhaps, it was only too true. But that, too, is over, and why should we speak of it?"

"But no, my friend," said she; "why should that be over? I told the Hofrath, when he gave me his last reason, that I could neither understand him nor you. I am a poor, sick, forsaken creature, and my whole earthly existence is but a slow dying. So, if Heaven has sent me a few hearts that understand me, or, as the Hofrath calls it, love me, why should this disturb their peace or mine? I had just been reading in my favourite poet, old Wordsworth, when the Hofrath made his confes-

sion to me, and I said to him: 'My dear Hofrath, we have so many ideas and so few words, that we are obliged to stow away a great many ideas in each word. Now, if any one who does not know us, were to hear that our young friend loved me, or I him, he might imagine that it was as Romeo loved Juliet, or Juliet Romeo, and then you would be quite right in saying that this ought not to be. But you love me, too, my old friend, do you not? and I love you, and have loved you for many a year, and perhaps have never yet confessed it to you, but am, nevertheless, neither in despair, nor even unhappy. Nay, my dear Hofrath, I will tell you still more. I believe you have an unhappy attachment to me, and are jealous of our young friend. Do not you come every morning to see how I am, even when you know that I am quite well? Do not you bring me the best flowers from your garden? Have you not made me give you my picture? and, perhaps, I

ought not to betray you—but did you not come into my room last Sunday, when you thought I was asleep? I was asleep too, really; at least, I could not have stirred. But I saw you sit for a long time at my bedside, with your eyes fixed upon me, and I felt their gaze like sunbeams playing over my face. At last your eyes grew weary, and I felt great tears fall from them. Then you buried your face in your hands and sobbed aloud, 'Maria! Maria!' Ah! my dear Hofrath, our young friend has never done so, and yet you have sent him away.' As I said this, half in jest and half in earnest, as I always speak, I saw that I had hurt the old man. He turned quite silent, and looked as shame-faced as a child. Then I took up the volume of Wordsworth, which I had just been reading, and said, 'Here is another old man whom I love, and love with my whole heart, who understands me, and I understand him, though I have never seen him, and shall

never see him, as it always is on earth. Now I will read you a poem of his, and you shall see how one can love, and how love is a silent blessing that the lover lays on the head of the beloved, and then goes on his way in sweet sadness.' Then I read him Wordsworth's 'Highland Girl;' and now, my friend, move the lamp nearer, and read me the poem again, for it refreshes me as often as I hear it—a spirit of peace breathes through it, like the still, infinite evening glow that is spreading its loving arms in blessing over the innocent breast of those snowy mountains yonder."

As the slow, calm tones of her voice rang through my soul, it, too, grew hushed and solemn at last—the storm was over, and her image floated like the silvery reflexion of the moon over the gently rippled waves of my love—that mighty ocean that streams through the hearts of all men, and which each calls his own, while it is, in truth, a beat of the pulse that sends its

quickening vibrations through all humanity. I would rather have been silent, like the scene that lay spread out before us, growing stiller and darker every moment, but she gave me the book, and I read:—

TO A HIGHLAND GIRL.

Sweet Highland Girl, a very shower
Of beauty is thy earthly dower!
Twice seven consenting years have shed
Their utmost bounty on thy head:
And these grey rocks, this household lawn,
These trees, a veil just half withdrawn;
This fall of water, that doth make
A murmur near the silent lake;
This little bay, a quiet road
That holds in shelter thy abode;
In truth together, do ye seem
Like something fashioned in a dream;
Such forms as from their covert peep
When earthly cares are laid asleep!
Yet dream and vision as thou art,
I bless thee with a human heart:
God shield thee to thy latest years!
I neither know thee nor thy peers;
And yet my eyes are filled with tears.

With earnest feeling I shall pray
For thee when I am far away:
For never saw I mien, or face,
In which more plainly I could trace
Benignity and home-bred sense
Ripening in perfect innocence.
Here scattered like a random seed,
Remote from men, thou dost not need
The embarrassed look of shy distress,
And maidenly shamefacedness:
Thou wear'st upon thy forehead clear
The freedom of a mountaineer.
A face with gladness overspread!
Soft smiles, by human kindness bred!
And seemliness complete, that sways
Thy courtesies, about thee plays;
With no restraint, but such as springs
From quick and eager visitings
Of thoughts, that lie beyond the reach
Of thy few words of English speech:
A bondage sweetly brooked, a strife
That gives thy gestures grace and life!
So have I, not unmoved in mind,
Seen birds of tempest-loving kind
Thus beating up against the wind.

What hand but would a garland cull
For thee, who art so beautiful?
O happy pleasure! here to dwell
Beside thee in some heathy dell;

Adopt your homely ways and dress,
A shepherd, thou a shepherdess!
But I could frame a wish for thee
More like a grave reality:
Thou art to me but as a wave
Of the wild sea, and I would have
Some claim upon thee, if I could,
Though but of common neighbourhood.
What joy to hear thee, and to see!
Thy elder brother I would be,
Thy father, anything to thee!

Now thanks to Heaven! that of its grace
Hath led me to this lonely place.
Joy have I had; and going hence
I bear away my recompense.
In spots like these it is we prize
Our memory, feel that she hath eyes:
Then, why should I be loth to stir?
I feel this place was made for her;
To give new pleasure like the past,
Continued long as life shall last.
Nor am I loth, though pleased at heart,
Sweet Highland Girl! from thee to part;
For I, methinks, till I grow old,
As fair before me shall behold,
As I do now, the cabin small,
The lake, the bay, the waterfall;
And thee, the spirit of them all!

I had ended, and the poem had been to

me like a draught of cool spring-water, such as I had often in my journey drunk in pearly freshness from the cup of some large green leaf.

The silence was broken by her soft voice, as the first tone of the organ wakens us from our prayerful musings, and she said: "Thus would I have you love me, and thus the old Hofrath loves me too; and thus, in one way or other, we ought all to love and believe in each other. But the world, though I know little of it, seems not to understand this love and trust, and men have made a miserable place of this earth, where we might have dwelt so happily.

"It must have been otherwise in old times, else how could Homer have created the lovely, healthy, delicate character of a Nausicaa? Nausicaa loves Ulysses at first sight, and says so on the spot to her companions: 'Oh, that such a man were called my husband, and that it pleased him to

abide here!' Yet she is ashamed to be seen together with him in the city, and tells him frankly that if she were to bring home with her such a stately, handsome stranger, the people would say she had been to fetch a husband. How simple and natural is all this! And when she hears that he wishes to return to his own land, to his wife and child, no lament escapes her; she vanishes from our sight, and we feel that she will long carry the image of the stately, handsome stranger in her heart, with silent, joyful admiration. Why is it that our poets know nothing of this love, this glad confessing, and this calm parting? A modern poet would have made of Nausicaa a feminine Werther But this is because love is to us no longer anything but a prologue to the comedy or tragedy of marriage. Is there really no other love left now-a-days? Is the fountain of this pure happiness quite dried up? Is love

no longer known as a refreshing spring, but only as an intoxicating draught?"

Her words reminded me of the English poet, who in like manner complains:—

"From Heaven if this belief be sent,
If such be Nature's holy plan,
Have I not reason to lament
What man has made of man?"

"But how happy are the poets!" continued she; "their words awaken into consciousness the deepest feelings of a thousand speechless souls; and how often have their songs been made the confession of the sweetest secrets. Their heart beats in the breast of the poor and the rich, the happy sing, the sorrowful weep with them. But there is no poet whom I feel so thoroughly my own as Wordsworth. I know that many of my friends do not like him; they say he is no poet; but that is just what I love in him—that he eschews all the traditional poetic diction, all exaggeration, all

that we call poetical flights. But he is true—and what is not contained in this single word! He opens our eyes to the beauty that lies, like the daisy, beneath our feet; he calls all things by their true names; he never desires to surprise, to deceive, or to dazzle us; he covets no admiration for himself; he only wishes to show us how beautiful is everything that has not been perverted or blighted by the hand of man. Is not a drop of dew on a blade of grass more beautiful than a pearl set in gold? Is not a living spring that gurgles towards us, we know not whence, more beautiful than all the artificial fountains of Versailles? Is not his 'Highland Girl' lovelier, a more perfect expression of true beauty than Goethe's 'Helena,' or Byron's 'Haidee?' And then the homeliness of his language, and the purity of his thoughts! What a pity that we never had such a poet! Schiller might have been

our Wordsworth, if he had had more confidence in himself than in the old Greeks and Romans. Our Rückert comes the nearest to him, if he had not forsaken his poor fatherland, to seek his home and his pleasures in an Oriental rose-garden. Few poets have the courage to be wholly what they are. Wordsworth had it; and as we love to listen to great men, even when they are not great, but like other mortals are silently cherishing their thoughts within their own bosom, patiently awaiting the moment when a gleam from heaven shall open before them new vistas into the infinite, so do I love to listen to Wordsworth, even in the poems which contain nothing but what any one might have said. Great poets allow themselves repose; in Homer we may often read a hundred lines without coming upon a single beauty; and it is the same with Dante; while Pindar, whom you all admire so greatly, drives me to

despair with his ecstasies. What would I not give to be able to spend a summer at the Lakes, and to visit with Wordsworth all the places to which he has given names, to greet all the trees which he has rescued from the axe!—and but once to watch with him the distant sunset which he has described as Turner only could paint it!"

It was peculiar to her voice, that it never dropped at the end of her sentences, as with most people, but, on the contrary, rose, and always ended in a questioning seventh. She always spoke up, not down, to people. The melody of her sentences was as when a child says: "Is it not, father?" There was something beseeching in her tone, that made it almost impossible to contradict her.

"I, too, love Wordsworth as a poet," I replied, "and still more as a man; I often feel with his poetry as we do with a little hill that one climbs without effort,

yet from which we obtain a more lovely, complete, living view, than if we had made a toilsome and painful ascent of Mont Blanc. At first he often seemed to me commonplace, and I have many times laid down his poems, unable to comprehend how the noblest intellects of England in the present day could have conceived such an admiration for him. But it has become an article of my creed, that no poet in any language, who is recognised as such by his nation, or the intellectual aristocracy of his people, ought to be beyond our power of enjoyment. Admiration is an art which we must acquire. Many Germans say, 'Racine gives us no pleasure,' the English say, 'We do not understand Goethe,' the French say, 'Shakespeare is a clown.' And what does it amount to, after all? Nothing more than when a child says, that he likes a waltz better than one of Beethoven's symphonies. The art is to discover

and to understand *what* it is that each nation admires in its great men; and he who searches after beauty shall find it at last, and see that even the Persians were not quite mistaken in their Hafiz, nor the Hindoos in their Kalidasa. We cannot understand a great man all at once; it requires strength, courage, and perseverance to do so; and it is remarkable that what pleases us at first sight seldom keeps its hold on us for long."

"And yet," she broke in, "there is something that is common to all great poets, all true artists, all the heroes on earth, be they Persians or Hindoos, Heathens or Christians, Romans or Teutons. I know not what name to give it, but it is the element of infinity that seems to lie behind them—a far-reaching glance into the eternal—a power of rendering divine that which is meanest and most transitory. Goethe, the great Pagan, knows 'the sweet

peace that cometh from heaven.' And when he sings:

"'Ueber allen Gipfeln
Ist Ruh';
In allen Wipfeln
Spürest du
Kaum einen Hauch;
Die Vögelein schweigen im Walde.
Warte nur, balde
Ruhest du auch!'*

Does there not open above the lofty pine-tops a boundless space, a rest, such as earth cannot give? In Wordsworth this background is never wanting; and let the scorners say what they will, it is only that which is above the earthly, however closely veiled, that stirs and touches the human heart. Who has ever understood

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* "Under the tree-tops is quiet now!
In all the woodlands hearest thou
Not a sound!
The little birds are asleep in the trees;
Wait! wait! and soon, like these,
Sleepest thou!"

LONGFELLOW'S *Translation.*

earthly beauty better than Michael Angelo? but he has understood it, because it was to him a reflexion of more than earthly beauty. You know his sonnet:

"'La forza d' un bel volto al ciel mi sprona
(Ch' altro in terra non è che mi diletti).
E vivo ascendo tra gli spirti eletti;
Grazia ch' ad uom mortal raro si dona.
Si ben col suo Fatto l'opra consuona,
Ch' a lui mi levo per divin concetti;
E quivi informo i pensier tutti e i detti,
Ardendo, amando per gentil persona.
Onde, se mai da due begli occhi il guardo
Torcer non so, conosco in lor la luce,
Che mi mostra la via, ch' a Dio mi guide;
E se nel lume loro acceso io ardo,
Nel nobil foco mio dolce riluce
La gioia che nel cielo eterna ride.'" *

She was exhausted, and ceased speaking

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* "Rapt above earth by power of one fair face,
Hers in whose sway alone my heart delights,
I mingle with the blest on those pure heights
Where man, yet mortal, rarely finds a place.
With Him who made the work that work accords
So well, that by its help and through His grace

—how could I have broken this silence? When, after a sympathising interchange of thoughts, human hearts feel themselves satisfied and are silent, the old saying is that an angel flies through the room; and I felt as though I could hear the wings of the angel of peace and love softly rustling above our heads. While my gaze rested on her, it was as though the earthly garments of her soul were transfigured in the twilight of the summer's evening; and only her hand, which I held in mine, gave me the sense of her actual presence. Suddenly a bright ray of light fell upon her face; she felt it, opened her eyes,

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I raise my thoughts, inform my deeds and words,
Clasping her beauty in my soul's embrace.
Thus, if from two fair eyes mine cannot turn,
I feel how in their presence doth abide
Light which to God is both the way and guide;
And kindling at their lustre, if I burn,
My noble fire emits the joyful ray
That through the realms of glory shines for aye."

WORDSWORTH'S *Translation.*

and looked at me with an expression of astonishment. The startled gleam of her wondrous eyes, half hidden by their long lashes, was like a flash of lightning. I looked around, and then saw that the full moon had risen in all her glory between two hills opposite the castle, and was flooding lake and village with her tender smiles. Never had I seen Nature—never had I seen her beloved countenance so beautiful as at that moment—never had I felt such a holy calm overflow my whole soul. "Maria," I said, "in this moment of transfiguration, suffer me, even as I am, to confess all my love to you—now, when we are feeling so intensely the nearness of a more than earthly presence, let us unite our souls in a bond that nothing can sever. Whatever love may be, Maria, I love you; and Maria, I feel that you are mine, for I am yours."

I knelt before her, not daring to meet her eye. My lips touched her hand, and I kissed it. She drew it away—at first

hesitatingly, then hastily and decisively, and as I looked up, I saw a spasm of pain flit across her face. Still she did not speak; at last, however, she raised her voice with a deep sigh, and said:

"Enough for to-day. You have hurt me; but it was my fault. Shut the window—I feel a cold shiver, as though a strange, icy hand were touching me. Stay with me—no—you must go—farewell—good night—pray that the peace of God may abide with us! We shall see each other again—shall we not? To-morrow evening—I shall expect you."

Oh, how had all my heavenly peace fled in an instant! I saw that she was in great pain, and all that I could do was to call the English lady-in-waiting, and to steal back to the village in the darkness of night. Long did I pace to and fro by the shore of the lake, long did my eyes seek again and again the lighted window where I had even now been with her. At

length the last light in the castle was extinguished, the moon rose higher and higher, and every turret, every oriel, every decoration on the old walls, started into sight in the magic illumination. And here was I alone in the still night, and it was as though my brain refused its office; for not a thought could I follow out to its end, and I was conscious of nothing but that I was utterly alone on this earth—that there was no sister-soul for me. The earth was like a coffin, and the black heavens a pall, and I scarcely knew whether I lived or was long since dead. Then suddenly I looked up at the stars, with their twinkling eyes, moving so calmly on their way, and it seemed to me as though they were set there only to give light and comfort to man; and then I thought of two heavenly stars that had risen unhoped-for in the dark firmament of my heart, and a thanksgiving burst from my lips—a thanksgiving for the love of my Angell!

LAST MEMORY.

The sun had already risen above the mountains, and was shining in at my window when I awoke. Was that the same sun that had shone on us last evening with lingering gaze, like a parting friend, as though it would bless the union of our hearts, and then had set like a sunken hope? And now its rays streamed forth to me, like a child who, with beaming face, rushes into our room to wish us joy on some happy festival. Was I the same being who, only a few hours ago, had thrown himself upon his couch, broken in mind and body? And now I felt once more the old spirit and energy stirring within me—a reliance on God and myself,

that quickened and braced the soul like the fresh morning air.

What would become of man without sleep? We know not whither this nightly envoy will lead us; and when he closes our eyes at night, what pledge have we that he will open them again in the morning, and restore us to ourselves? It must have needed courage and faith for the first man to have thrown himself into the arms of this unknown friend; and if there had not been a sense of helplessness in our nature that impels us towards belief in all cases where we ought to believe, and constrains us to submission, I doubt if any man, in spite of all weariness, would ever have shut his eyes of his own free choice, and ventured into this unknown land of dreams. The sense of our weakness and weariness gives us trust in a higher power, and courage to surrender ourselves gladly to the beautiful ordering of the universe; and we feel our-

selves strengthened and refreshed as often as we have loosed, for however short a time, whether sleeping or waking, the fetters that bind our eternal Me to our earthly Self.

What had yesterday floated through my brain like the mists of evening, now suddenly became clear. We belonged to each other; of that I was sure; be it as brother and sister, be it as father and daughter, be it as bridegroom and bride, we must now and for ever remain united. The only question was to find the right name for that which in our stammering speech we call Love—

> "Thy elder brother would I be,
> Thy father—anything to thee!"

It was this *anything* for which a name had to be found; for the world, once for all, does not recognise anything nameless. Had she not herself told me that she loved me with that pure, all-embracing love from which all other love proceeds? Her alarm,

her displeasure, when I, too, confessed my whole love to her, were still incomprehensible to me, but could no longer shake my belief in our mutual affection. Why should we seek to comprehend all that passes in the heart of man, when everything in ourselves is so incomprehensible? Is it not ever the inexplicable that most captivates us, whether it be in mankind at large, or within our own breast? Persons whom we perfectly understand, whose motives lie clearly spread out before us like an anatomical preparation, leave us cold, like the characters in most of our novels; and nothing destroys our enjoyment of life and man more than this ethical rationalism, that is bent on explaining all things, and denies all miracles of the soul. In every human being there is something insoluble, whether we call it fate, or inspiration, or character; and he neither knows himself nor mankind, who believes that he can analyse the actions and intents of men, without finding this

constantly recurring residuum. Now, I took heart about everything of which I had despaired over-night, and at length not a cloud was left to dim the heavens of my future.

In this mood I went forth from the narrow house into the free, open air, when a messenger brought me a letter. It was from the Princess; that I saw from the clear, even handwriting. I opened it breathlessly—I hoped the fairest that man can hope. But how were all my visions dashed to the ground! The letter contained nothing more than a request not to come to her to-day, as she was expecting some visitors from the capital to arrive at the castle. Not one kindly word—not a syllable concerning her health! Nothing but a postscript at the end: "To-morrow the Hofrath comes—so the day after to-morrow."

Here were at once two days torn out of my book of life. Oh, that they could but have been quite torn out! but, no, they

hung over my head like the leaden roof of a prison. They must be lived through—I could not give them away in alms to a king or a beggar, who would fain have sat two days longer on his throne, or on his stone by the church-door. For a while I stood motionless, gazing into blank space; then I remembered my morning prayer, and how I had said to myself that there was no more heinous unbelief than despair—that the least and greatest events in life are parts of God's great plan, to which we must submit ourselves, hard as it may be. Like a horseman who sees a precipice close before him, I clutched the reins. "Let it be, because it must be," I exclaimed inwardly; "but God's earth is not the place for outcries and laments." Was it not bliss to hold in my hand these lines that she had written—was not the hope of seeing her again, in a short time, greater happiness than I had ever deserved? Only keep your head always above water,

say all good swimmers; but if you cannot, it is better to dive at once, than to let the water keep running in at your ears and throat. And if it is not easy for us in the smaller mischances of life to keep ever in mind the Divine Providence; and if we shrink, and perhaps rightly, from passing out of the common paths of life into the immediate presence of the Divine at every struggle with ourselves, yet we should ever feel life to be, if not a duty, at least an art. And where is an uglier sight than a child that flies into a rage, and at every disappointment or pain turns sulky, and pouts? Nothing is more beautiful than a child in whose tearful eyes the sunshine of joy and innocence is already shining again—like a flower that trembles under the pelting of an April shower, and then raising its head, sends forth its fragrance while the sun is yet drying the tear-drops on its cheek.

A good idea soon occurred to me, by which I might, in defiance of fate, still

spend these two days with her. I had often wished to make some record of the precious words that she had uttered to me, the many beautiful thoughts that she had confided to me; and thus these days were passed in the remembrance of delicious hours spent together, and the hope of fairer yet to come; and I was near her, and with her, and living in her; so that I even felt her spirit and her love closer to me than I had ever felt them when holding her hand clasped in mine.

How precious are those pages to me now!—how often have I read and re-read them!—not as though I had ever forgotten a word that she had uttered; but these pages were the witnesses of my happiness: something looks out at me from them like the eye of a friend, whose silence says more than any words. The remembrance of past happiness, the memory of past sorrow, the silent steeping of the spirit in the scenes of the far-distant past, where all that

now surrounds and fetters us disappears,—where the soul casts itself down like a mother on the grave of her child, who has slumbered for years below that green hillock,—where no hope, no wish, disturbs the hush of helpless submission;—this, indeed, we call sadness, but there lies a blessedness in this sadness known only to those who have loved much and sorrowed much. Ask a mother what she feels, when she binds around her daughter's head the veil that she wore as a bride, and thinks of the husband who is no longer by her side; ask the man what he feels, when the maiden whom he loved, and from whom the world parted him, sends back to him after her death the withered rose that he gave her when a youth;—they may both weep, but their tears are not tears of sorrow, nor yet of joy;—they are the tears of sacrifice with which man consecrates himself to God, and calmly sees his best-loved treasure pass away in faith in God's Love and Wisdom.

But let us go back to memory, back to the living presence of the past!—The two days fled away so rapidly, that a thrill of joy shot through me as the happiness of our meeting drew nearer and nearer. I watched how on the first day the carriages and riders arrived from the city, and the castle was peopled with its joyous guests. Banners floated over its battlements, music resounded through its court-yards. In the evening the lake was covered with gay pleasure-boats, from which the song of deep-toned bass voices floated over the water; and I could not choose but listen, when I thought that she, too, was listening from her window to these strains. On the second day, the festivities were still kept up, and not till the afternoon did the guests prepare for departure. When, still later in the evening, I saw the Hofrath's carriage drive off alone towards the village, I could refrain myself no longer. I knew she was alone, I knew she was thinking of me—

was wishing that I was with her. And should I let another night pass over my head without, at least, pressing her hand? without saying to her that our separation was over, and that the morrow's dawn would wake us to new happiness? A light was still burning in her window, and why should she be solitary? why should I not, at least for a moment, feel her sweet presence? Already I stood at the castle-gate; I was about to ring the bell, when suddenly I stood still, and said to myself:—"No! no weakness. You would stand before her ashamed, like a thief in the night! To-morrow go boldly into her presence, like a hero returning from the fight, for whom she is even now wreathing the chaplet of love wherewith to crown his brow on the coming morn."

And the morrow came, and I was with her—really with her! Oh, do not speak of spirit, as if it could exist without body! The fulness of existence, of consciousness,

of joy,—these can only be where body and soul are one—an incorporate spirit, a spiritual body. There is no spirit without a body, except it be a spectre; there is no body without a spirit, except it be a corpse. Has the flower of the field no spirit? Does it not peep forth from its bud by virtue of a Divine volition, by virtue of a creative thought which sustains it, which gives it life and being? That is its spirit, only that it is dumb in the flower, while in man it reveals itself in words. Real life is ever at once bodily and spiritual;—real enjoyment is ever the enjoyment of body and soul;—real presence with those we love is always a presence both in body and in spirit; and the whole world of memories in which I had been living so happily for the last two days vanished away like a cloud, like a thing of nought, when I stood before her, and was really with her. I would fain have laid my hand on her brows, and eyes, and cheeks, to be assured, to know for certain, that it was

really she who was there,—not merely the picture that day and night had floated before my mind, but a being who, indeed, was not mine, and yet was to be and wished to be mine,—a being in whom I could believe as in my very self,—a being far from me, and yet closer to me than my own identity,—a being without whom my life would be no life, my very death no death, without whom my poor existence would have faded like a sigh into boundless space. As my eyes and thoughts sated themselves with her presence, I felt that now, in this moment, the full measure of my life's happiness was filled up, and a cold shudder ran through me, and I thought of death; yet he seemed no longer to have terrors; for *this* love, death could not destroy—only purify, ennoble, immortalise.

It was so sweet to be silent with her. In her countenance was mirrored all the depth of her soul; and as I gazed upon her, I already saw and heard all that lay hidden and

living within her. "You give me pain," she seemed to say, and yet would not say it. "Are we at last together? Be calm! Do not complain! Do not question me! Have no fears! You are welcome! Do not be angry with me!" All this her eyes seemed to say, and yet we neither of us dared to break the silence of our bliss by a single word.

"Have you received a letter from the Hofrath?" was her first question, and her voice shook at every word.

"No," I replied.

She was silent for a while, and then said: "Perhaps it is better that it happened so, and that I should tell you all myself. My friend, we see each other to-day for the last time. Let us part in peace, without complaint, without anger. I have done you a great wrong; that I feel. I have caught hold on your life, forgetting how a mere breath will often scatter to the earth the petals of a flower. I know the world so little. I never imagined that a poor sufferer, such

as I, could inspire you with any feeling deeper than compassion. I met you warmly and frankly, because I had known you so long—because your presence was a delight to me—why should I not say the whole truth—because I loved you. But the world does not understand this love, and will not tolerate it. The Hofrath has opened my eyes. The whole town is talking of us; my brother, the Regent, has written to the Prince, and he requires that I should never see you again. I repent bitterly that I should have brought this sorrow upon you. Tell me that you forgive me, and let us part friends."

Her eyes had filled with tears, and she closed them, that I might not see her weep.

"Maria," I replied, "for me there is only one life,—that is with you; but also only one will,—that is yours. Yes, I confess it, I love you with all the fervour of passion; but I feel that I am not worthy of you. You are far above me in rank, in

nobleness of mind, in purity,—and I can scarcely grasp the idea of ever calling you my wife. And yet there is no other way by which we may go through life together. Maria, you are perfectly free; I ask no sacrifice. The world is wide, and if you wish it so, we will never meet again. But if you love me—if you feel that you belong to me—oh, then, let us forget the world and its cold judgment. I will bear you in my arms to the altar, and, on my knees, swear to be yours in life and in death!"

"My friend," she replied, "we must never suffer ourselves to desire the impossible. Had it been God's will that such a bond should unite us in this life, would He have sent me these afflictions, that render me incapable of ever being more than a helpless child? Do not forget that what we call fate, circumstances, position in society, are, in truth, nothing else than the work of Providence. To rebel against them is to rebel against God; and if it

were not childish to do so, we might well call it criminal. We human beings have our appointed paths on earth, as surely as the stars have theirs in heaven. God has set them in the orbits in which they meet, and when it is right for them to part, they must part; their resistance would be in vain, or it would annihilate the whole order of the universe. We cannot understand why things are so, but we can have faith. Nay, I do not understand myself why my affection for you was wrong. No—wrong, I cannot, I will not call it. But it *cannot* be, it *ought not* to be. My friend, this is enough—we must acquiesce in humility and faith."

Notwithstanding the calmness with which she spoke, I could see how keenly she was suffering; and yet I held it wrong thus quickly to give up the battle for life. I controlled myself as much as I could, that no word of passion might increase her pain, and said:—

"If this be the last time that we are to meet in this life, let us see clearly to *whom* we are bringing this sacrifice. If our love violated any Divine law, I would, like you, submit in humility. To rebel against a higher Will would be to forget God. It may appear at times as though man could deceive God,—as though his small cunning could overreach the Divine wisdom. This is mere insanity, and he who begins this Titan warfare is crushed and annihilated. But what is it that stands in the way of our love? Nothing but the world's idle tongue. I reverence the laws of human society; I reverence them even when, as in our own day, they have grown artificial and perplexed. A sick body requires artificial medicines; and without the fetters, and prejudices, and conventionalities of society, which we ridicule, it would be impossible to hold men together now-a-days, and to attain the end for which we are placed together on this earth. We must sacrifice much to these

false gods; and, like the Athenians, we send every year a ship heavily laden with youths and maidens, as a tribute to that monster who rules the labyrinth of our modern society. There is no heart now that has not been broken,—there is no man of true feeling who has not been forced to clip the pinions of his love, before it would stay quietly within the cage of society. It must be so—it cannot be otherwise. You are ignorant of the world; but when I think only of my own friends, I could tell you whole volumes of tragedy.

"One loved a maiden, and his love was returned. But he was poor—she was rich. Parents and relations quarrelled and insulted each other, and two hearts were broken. Why? Because the world regards it as a misfortune that a lady should wear a dress spun from the wool of a plant in America, rather than from the fibres of a worm in China. Another loved a maiden, and his love was returned. But he was a

Protestant—she was a Catholic. Their mothers and priests sowed discord between them, and two hearts were broken. Why? Because, three centuries ago, Charles the Fifth, Francis the First, and Henry the Eighth, played a political game at chess. A third loved a maiden, and his love was returned. But he was noble—she was plebeian. The sisters were jealous and spiteful; and two hearts were broken. Why? Because a hundred years ago a soldier slew another who was threatening the king's life in battle. His sovereign rewarded him with titles and honour; and his great-grandson atones with his blighted life for the blood which he shed that day.

"The collectors of statistics say that each hour some heart is broken. I believe it. But why? In nearly all cases, because the world refuses to recognise any sort of love between persons who are not related by blood, except it be as man and wife. If two maidens love the same man, one must

fall a sacrifice. If two men love one maiden, one or both must be sacrificed. Why? Cannot one love a woman without wishing to marry her? Cannot one look at a maiden without wishing to call her one's own?

"You shut your eyes, and I feel I have said too much. The world has turned the holiest thing in life into the commonest. But, Maria, it is enough! Let us speak the world's language when we are in it, and must converse and act with it. But let us keep one sanctuary, where two hearts may speak the pure language of the heart, regardless of the anger of the world outside. Nay, the world itself respects those who take up this independent attitude, and honours a courageous resistance to the ordinary course of things, on the part of two noble hearts, conscious of their own rights. The scruples, and proprieties, and prejudices of society, are like parasitical plants; it is a beautiful sight to behold the green ivy decking the massive stone-

work with its thousand bright clinging festoons, but we must not suffer it to spread too luxuriantly, else its tendrils will penetrate into the framework of our building, and destroy the cement that binds us together. Be mine, Maria! obey the voice of your own heart! The word that is trembling on your lips will decide for ever your fate and mine,—your happiness and mine!"

I ceased. Her hand, which I held in mine, betrayed the quick beating of her heart. A storm of contending feelings was raging within her. Never had I seen the blue sky, that lay before me, so beautiful as at this moment, when the tempest was driving cloud after cloud across it.

"And why do you love me?" she whispered at last, as though she could not help trying to defer the moment of decision.

"Why? Maria! Ask the infant why it is born;—ask the flower why it blooms;—ask the sun why it shines. I love you,

because I must love you. But if I must give you a further reason, let the book beside you, that you prize so highly, speak for me. 'That which is best should be the dearest of all things to us; and, in our love of it, neither helpfulness nor unhelpfulness, advantage nor injury, gain nor loss, honour nor dishonour, praise nor blame, nor anything of the kind, should be regarded; but what is, in truth, the noblest and best of all things should be also the dearest of all things, and that for no other cause than that it is the noblest and best. Hereby may a man order his life within and without:—his outward life; for among the creatures, one is better than another, according as the Eternal Good manifesteth itself and worketh more in one than in another. Now, that creature in which the Eternal Good most manifesteth itself, shineth forth, worketh, is most known and loved, is the best; and that wherein the Eternal Good is least manifested is the least good of all creatures.

Therefore, when we have to do with the creatures, and hold converse with them, and take note of their diverse qualities, the best creatures must always be the dearest to us, and we must cleave to them, and unite ourselves to them.' . . . Maria, because you are the best creature that I know, therefore my heart turns toward you—therefore do I love you—therefore do we love each other. Say the word that is in your heart—say that you are mine! do not be false to the deepest voice of your heart! God has laid on you a life of suffering—He sends me to you to share it with you. Your sufferings shall be my sufferings, and we will bear them together, as a ship bears the heavy sails that are carrying it through the storms of life into its safe port at last."

She grew calmer and calmer. A slight flush played over her cheeks, like the quiet glow of evening. All at once she opened her eyes wide. The sun shone out for the last time with wondrous radiance.

"I am yours," she said; "God will have it so. Take me as I am; while I live I am yours; and may God join us hereafter in a fairer world, and reward you for your love!"

We lay heart to heart; my lips closed with a soft kiss the lips which had just pronounced the blessing of my life. Time stood still for us, the world around us had vanished! At last she heaved a deep sigh.

"May God forgive me this happiness!" she whispered. "Now leave me alone; I can bear it no longer. Farewell, till we meet again, my Friend, my Beloved, my Saviour!"

These were the last words that I heard from her. Yet, No!—I had gone home, and was lying upon my couch in anxious dreams. It was past midnight when the Hofrath entered my chamber. "Our angel is in heaven," he said; "this is the last greeting that she sends you." With these words he

gave me a letter. It contained the ring that she had given to me long ago, and I again to her, with the words, "As God Will." It was wrapped up in a worn piece of paper, on which she had at some time written the words that I had uttered when a boy: "What is yours is mine. Your Maria."

For hours we two sat together without uttering a word. It was a mental swoon, such as Heaven sends us when the burden of grief is too heavy to be borne. At last the old man arose, took my hand, and said, "We see each other to-day for the last time, for you must go hence, and my days are numbered. But one thing I must tell you—a secret which I have carried within me all my life long, and confessed to no one. I now long to confess it to some one. Listen to me. She who has now left us had a pure and lovely soul, a glorious mind, a deep, true heart. I knew a soul as fair as hers—still fairer. It was that of her

mother. I loved her mother, and her mother loved me. We were both poor; I was struggling with life, in order to win for myself and her an honourable position in the world, when the young Prince saw my betrothed and fell in love with her. He was my Prince; he loved her devotedly; he was ready to make every sacrifice for her, and to raise the poor orphan girl to his princely throne. I loved her so, that I sacrificed my happiness to my affection for her. I left my home, and wrote to her to release her from her engagement. I never saw her again till she lay upon her death-bed. She died at the birth of her daughter. Now you know why I have loved your Maria, and watched over her life from day to day. She was the only being that still linked my heart to this earth. Endure life as I have endured it. Lose not a day in idle mourning. Help your fellow-men wherever you have opportunity; love them, and thank God that it has been your lot on

earth to see, to know, to love—and to lose such a human heart as hers."

"As God will!" I answered, and we parted for life.

And days, and weeks, and months, and years have passed away,—my native land has become strange to me, and a strange land has become my home. But her love has been with me still, and as a tear falls into the ocean, so is my love for her lost in the living ocean of humanity, and interpenetrates and embraces millions—millions of those "*Strangers*" whom I have loved so from my childhood.

Only on still summer days such as this, when I am lying alone in the green forest on Nature's bosom, and know not whether there be other human beings beyond its circle, or whether I am alone on this earth, then does the past stir again in the churchyard of memory, and dead thoughts rise up

out of their graves; the full tide of love rushes back to my heart, and streams out towards that fair being who is gazing on me once more with her deep, unfathomable eyes;—and then it is as though my affection for the millions were swallowed up in my affection for the *One*—for my guardian angel—and my thoughts are dumb before the inscrutable mystery of the finite and the infinite Love!

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