

THE

**SORROWS OF WERTER.**

FROM THE GERMAN OF

**BARON GOETHE.**

NEW TRANSLATION, REVISED AND COMPARED WITH  
ALL THE FORMER EDITIONS.

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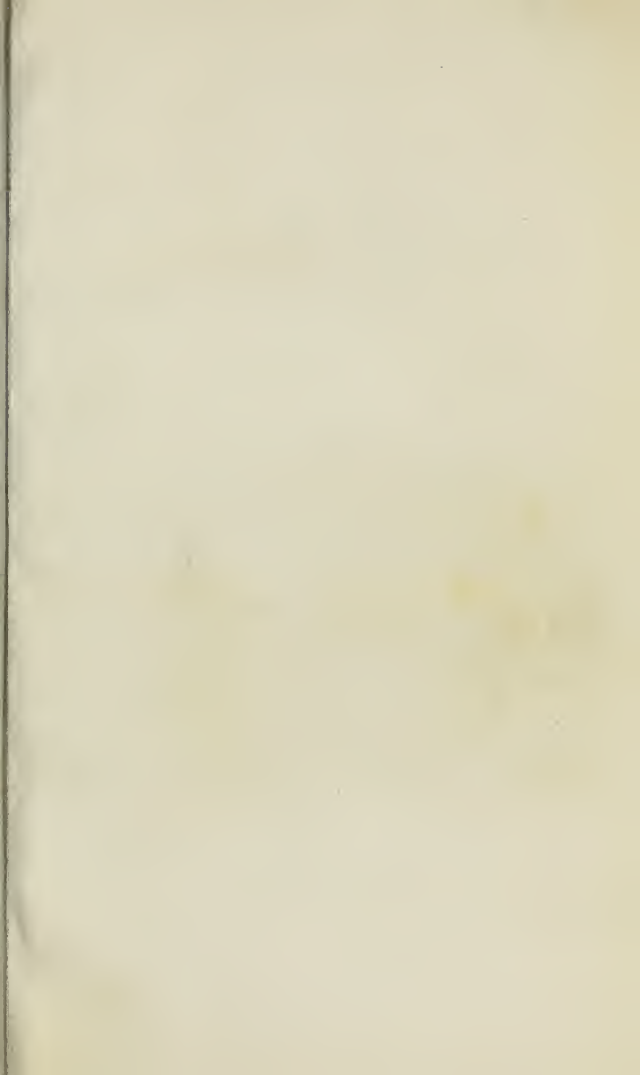








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FROM THE GERMAN.



*Thurston. Del.*

*Seaverport. Sculp.*

MACK, ANDRUS & CO

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## PREFACE.



FEW publications of the novel kind have enjoyed more celebrity than the one before us. It was originally translated from the German into French, and thence into English; since that it has been done from the German. There is occasionally a discordance between those rival productions, and many parts have been misconceived, or added to, by the ingenuity of the translators. The present edition has been printed with a view to combine not only the real force and sentiment of *Werter*, as they are given by Mr. *Goethe*, but as a more perfect model of the author's manner, which has been much perverted, and often misconceived.

It is evident that Mr. *Goethe* is much attached to the simple scene of domestic life and rural scenery, many of which are here drawn with the most interesting and masterly hand. He esteems the Vicar of Wakefield for this cause, though the characters of the heroes are drawn diametrically opposite. It has been objected to in this work that Mr. *Goethe* is the champion of suicide. The Reader will best judge

how far this is true or not. Certain it appears that Albert's arguments in reply to Werter on this head, are weak, compared to those of his antagonist: but it must be considered that it is the history of Werter which is written, and that it was not the intention to convince him, by the force of Albert's arguments, of the gross absurdity and cowardice of that practice to which his irritable and romantic mind constantly tended. Werter was amiable, but he was weak; he had a strong mind in certain particulars; but it was in others little better than a lucid insanity. He loved where religion and prudence forbade his passion, and died in conformity to that erroneous reasoning which made him pursue Charlotte, when, in the first instance, he was informed she was devoted to another.

THE  
SORROWS OF WERTER.



LETTER I.

*May 4, 1770.*

NO longer do we behold each other: we are separated, and I feel pleased at it—To me it is a matter of astonishment, that I could tear myself from him who was the juvenile friend of my early days, who is even now my other self; he, whose internal composition is fashioned like my own. How inconsistently are we morally formed!—Seeking rest where it is not to be found.—Your goodness I know will overlook this opinion; but it seems to me that Destiny has inevitably placed my brightest prospects in the back ground, and turned into misery the most certain assurances of earthly bliss.—Oh! poor Leonora!\*—The soft and generous passion, which stole into her gentle bosom, cannot be alleged against me; when I made an avowal of my sense of her sister's perfections: but I am not certain of being altogether guiltless.—Is it not probable that I may have nurtured the passion she felt, by those testimonies of admiration and pleasure which I evinced at the little expressions of attention she displayed towards me.—Alas, how ready are we to place ideal terrors in our own footpath! But let me not cherish these reasonings!—No; but

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\* She was the first love of Werter, and died at Brunswick. Werter was so deeply wounded at her death, that he directly after withdrew to Wetzlar.

rather turn to another view, and abandoning the retrospect of what is past, and ceasing to grieve at the ills inseparable from this mortal existence, let me forget them all, and taste the present moments.—My friend advises this—and it is just—since the recollection of that which has given us pain, serves only to augment the anguish of the wretched past.

Please to inform my mother that her affairs shall be punctually attended to, and that I will soon send her information respecting them.—From a closer view of my aunt, I do not find her so unreasonable as report has spoken; she is possessed of violent passions, but has a friendly soul.—You know that my mother's estate has been for a long time in dispute; but my aunt is not deserving of blame; and has named the terms on which she is willing to surrender up—even more than was requested. You may inform her that this affair cannot wear any other than the most favourable aspect for her interest. Hence, my friend, I am decidedly of opinion that inattention and misconception are the sources of more strife with mankind than villany or deception; or what is equivalent, that the consequences of the former are more generally felt.

I am perfectly comfortable here—Placed in this earthly elysium, I taste that sanative balm of a wounded soul, that serene solitude so endearing to the unhappy!—My heart swells with the spring, and my frame is full of energy. The trees feel the genial embrace of nature—the air is filled with her purest perfumes—the winged choir salute the dawn, and at evening Philomel warbles forth her monody to the departing light!—How much to me are the town and country at variance! The former is full of insipidity, but in the environs of the latter abound the luxuriant beauties of nature!—The neat and tasteful garden of the late Marquis of Mobley is situated on one of the hills which enrich these rural scenes; and at a first view one may be assured, that

the manner in which it is laid out, is the work not of the mere gardener, but of one whose mind has been superior to the common rules of horticulture. Here is erected a tomb, shaded by an arbour, but now little visited, and going to decay. On this spot have I shed some tears to the memory of its deceased possessor.—It was formerly his favourite retreat—I have copied him, and made it mine; I hope to be his successor; and I have applied for that purpose to the gardener, whose civilities I mean to engage by a suitable behaviour.—

## LETTER II.

May 10.

MY mind, like the unruffled spring morning, is now all calmness and serenity; and hence the sweets of my solitude are increased. It is now, in scenes congenial to a soul constructed like mine, that I begin to exist.—In the pleasures of this umbrageous retreat, I rather *live* than *act*; for all my former studies and pastimes lie neglected and unthought of.—The pencil has become torpid; but yet I am a better painter than before—When the misty vapours sparkle in watery drops on the leafy boughs; and the deep shade of the thick foliage only emits a few faint streams of light and heat from the meridian fire, it is my delight to saunter beneath the arched shelter; then the tall grass forms my couch, and stretched out on the bank of the rippling streamlet, I contemplate the great varieties of nature—her innumerable productions, and the myriads of insect beings who live in and exist upon them. How little did I once value those things—they now excite all my attention; they boldly declare to me that a celestial arm has placed us in existence, and that an immortal omniscience upholds the world!—At night, when darkness closes these beauties to my view, I paint on my imagination all that I have admired—all

the wonderful works of nature, and my tongue bursts forth into the ejaculations of gratitude and piety!—for the recollections they engender, like the portrait of an adored mistress, pregnant with the sweetest heartsprings of joy! My friend!—I ardently wish that my powers of utterance could equal the force of my imagination—and that my paper could exhibit the extent of the feelings within,—alas! words are but insignificant representatives of such sublime conceptions, the magnitude of which confound and overwhelm the soul!—

### LETTER III.

*May 12.*

ALL that surrounds me is a celestial Eden—and either influenced by some invisible agent of enchantment, or my soul is alive to the most pleasing emotions. I sit, irresistibly attracted by the side of a clear spring which gurgles from a rocky bed, placed about twenty steps down in a cave at the foot of the hill. An old ivied wall encloses it—tall pines form its canopy—invigorating zephyrs fan it—Murmurs steal from its bosom—the tenants of the leafy sprays tune their symphonies to its falls—what a collection of causes to inspire the soul with the most elevated sensations!—Every day I spend an hour in this sequestered spot, to which the lasses from the city repair to fill their water vessels—an innocent and useful occupation, once the delight and custom of the daughters of monarchs.—This idea leads my fancy back to the customs of remote ages, when I think I see our ancestors, directed by the invisible operation of benign spirits, entering into compacts, and forming alliances by the fountain side;—here too I survey the weary pilgrim, faint with the heat of summer, reclining on the verdant bank, or bathing in the pure refreshing stream. Surely, my friend, every one must have similar sentiments and feelings



to mine; or he can never have tasted the reviving beverage of a pellucid fountain, after the thirst which parches in a tedious summer's walk.

## LETTER IV.

May 13.

YOU propose to send me books!—No, my dear friend; I acknowledge with gratitude your kind intention; and as earnestly must desire you to decline it; so many causes have agitated and influenced my mind, that I am now only covetous of liberty, and the unshackled possession of my inward cogitation—of melancholy melting strains, such as I find in women.—Frequently have I strove to soothe the violence of my raging phrensies—to curb the furious burstings of my bosom;—you have often witnessed these laudable attempts to subdue the sudden transitions of my nature—you have seen me alternately dejected, and bounding with rapture; at this moment sunk in softest sorrow—in the next agitated with storms!—As the ailing infant claims indulgence, so does this heart;—yet I blush to acknowledge that which the world would deservedly censure as a weakness; for he is certainly entitled to contempt who suffers his passions to lord it over his reason!

## LETTER V.

May 15.

I BEGIN to be respected by the people about here, and beloved by all the infant race but at first they seemed rudely shy, and doubted if my conversation was not a mask to some unfair purpose;—I, however, saw no derogation in endeavouring to win their smiles, and hence confirmed one of those remarks which have several times occurred to me, that the *great* have too much predilection for keeping the *little* at a distance, as if there resulted a contagious taint from too near an approximation.—Is

not this a trait of hollow pride?—How inconsistent is it to see the noble at one moment making free with the plebeian, at another treating him with sarcasm and contempt.—We cannot, it is true, be all equal in this present state; but much, very much in error is that man whose dignity and delights are founded on the distance at which he keeps his neighbour—the principle resembles that of a coward, who avoids his enemy from the fear of meeting him.

In visiting my fountain one day, I saw a young woman on the last step, who had filled her pail, and was waiting for one of her companions to help her up with it.—I directly descended, and said, “Let me, my dear, assist you!”—With cheeks that blushed as deeply as her lips, she modestly replied, “O dear, no, Sir,”—but I, regardless of her dissent, raised the pail to her head—her smile said more than the longest speech, and I was more than repaid for the little aid I had given.

## LETTER VI.

*May 17.*

I HAVE already made a great many acquaintances, but none with whom I form a society.—The people of the place are very much attached to me, but why I cannot tell:—they are desirous of sharing in my walks, and hence I feel sorry when we are forced to separate.—In reply to your question, respecting the sort of people I meet with here, I can only say, that they are of the same kind which every other place produces.—The work of nature in this respect is extremely uniform; all the difference originates in circumstances. By far the larger mass of mankind are compelled to toil through the longest part of their lives for a poor pittance, and what remains unoccupied, seems so tedious, that they with as great industry dispose of it another way—this is the lot of mortals!—Yet do not think that I am out

## SORROWS OF WERTER.

of humour with my newly acquired companions.— No! Let the haughty think that I am *letting myself down*; while in reality I am *rising above them*, by becoming a guest at the cheerful table, where a sincere welcome and innocent mirth preside, or by taking a walk, a dance, or joining in their festive sport, when it suits my humour: sometimes indeed it abridges the pleasure I should otherwise feel, when I am compelled to avoid them, that they may be less conscious of their inferior endowments;— then follows the dear remembrance of my deceased friend (Leonora,) the friend of my younger years—the friend whom I have known only to weep for— How bitter is the thought! Every thing flourished while she lived; but, alas! now she is cut down, and confined to the silent grave, while I am left.— The world is to me a desert—but hold—enough of this!

A few days back the accomplished Mr. B——, and I fell into company. He is a young man, possessed of a pleasing countenance, and has recently quitted the college of Upsal; he is learned without ostentation, and I am certain cannot be ignorant of his advantage over many with whom he is familiar; yet I think his genius is not so great as his intense study. Directly he knew that I was acquainted with the Greek, and an admirer of the pencil, he came to see me: these acquirements are looked upon as miracles in this uninformed place.—As our conversation expanded, he displayed his whole stock of erudition, with the authors whom he had studied. He said he had read the first part of Saltzer's Theory, and had by him a MS. of Heynes on the Study of Antiquities:—for these reasons the time he staid passed on very agreeably.

Here is also another excellent character, whose company I have obtained: He is a steward to the prince, and of a mind sufficiently liberal and elevated to demand the esteem of every one. His

eldest daughter (Charlotte) is considered as an excellent girl. He has nine children, and report speaks highly of the innocent scene when he is surrounded by his sportive cherubs.—He has pressed me to visit him, and I do not intend that his kindness shall be lost upon me.—He dwells about a league and a half off, in a neat country box, a present from the prince on the decease of his beloved lady, that his melancholy might be diverted by a change of residence. Here also I have encountered several empty characters, who form a disgusting contrast to those I have enumerated:—some have thrust themselves into my private retirement, and others have been as nauseating by overstrained ceremony and unsought-for offers of service.

## LETTER VII.

*May 22.*

HUMAN existence is said to be a dream, and I accord with the opinion, if I take a survey of the narrow limits by which the busy mind of man is bounded; if I consider that he exerts all his energies to obtain support, as the means of prolonging his miserable life, that his wishes to be better informed terminate in a blind submission, and that his greatest enjoyment is to decorate the sides of his prison with fanciful images and delusive landscapes, notwithstanding the boundary he is chained to is so close to his sight: these are reflections, my friend, which check my impulse!—I commence a deeper train of thought, and probe the breast—and what do I obtain?—Still shadows which are imaginary—mere idle superstitions, mere empty fancies, but nothing of certainty, of stability, and of truth.—All is a chaos; but I float down the current of folly, which bears the rest of the world along, and this adds to the number of doting idiots—It seems to be agreed among the learned that children are not guided by motives; but they cannot admit, though to me it ap

pears a self-evident fact, that *full-grown* infants, as well as when they were in childhood, pass on through their existence, alike uninformed of their origin and destination, and without any concerted rule of conduct, except the prospect of reward, or the fear of punishment; or they are influenced, like them, by the operation of a tart or a rod.—It is easy to foresee what my friend will urge in answer, and I am willing to admit that those mortals taste the most pure enjoyment who, like children, never think of the future, but are satisfied at the present moment with a feast and a toy; who cry for what they want, and as soon as they have got it, cry for more—Happy souls who are gratified with trifles!—But some are curved, because the natural bent of their minds is indulged with paltry authorities and high-sounding titles! who hold themselves to be *deities* among *mortals*,—the lords of the universe!—He, however, who knows the real value of all sublunary things, who feels his own insignificance, appreciates the folly of all this, and observes with an appropriate greatness of soul that the wealthy, whose aim is to make the present world *their paradise*, and the indigent, whose daily employment is to toil for the wants of life, are alike interested in endeavouring to obtain a longer view of that scene, under which they are so differently supported.—Yet he may rest in peace, happy in possessing the title of a *man*, who although his circle is contracted here, is sensible he enjoys in mind the consoling assurance of liberty, which, when his imprisonment is the most oppressive, furnishes him with a key that can unlock the gate of his dungeon.

## LETTER VIII.

May 26.

YOU have heard me say that certain places are more pleasant to me than others. I mean the retreats of solitude; that I like to wander among such

scenes, and adapt them to my particular inclination. There is a cottage here which quite coincides with my wishes, and is situated about a league from the city, in the district of Walheim, on the ascent of a most luxuriant hill, which commands a prospect of the whole adjacent country. There is also a good old landlady, of an eccentric disposition, to whom I must be indebted for my liquors, and coffee, and tea. What, however, gives my eye a great pleasure is, two lime-trees, fronting the church, whose wide-spreading branches yield a charming shade to a neat grass-plot, round which several rural hovels are erected. At my request, the good-natured ancient dame sends me a chair and a table, and thus, in this reflecting retreat, I can sip coffee, and peruse my Homer. I was conducted by chance to this spot, which had been quite neglected till I saw it in one of my afternoon rambles. It was a delightful day—the rustics were in a field at labour, and no one but a little boy, about four years old, was there; he was nursing an infant in its sixth month, clasping the little angel to his bosom, and forming a seat for it on his lap: and though his sharp sloey eyes ran over all the green, he did not once attempt to alter his position, lest he might awaken his infant charge. Attracted by this scene of innocent attention, I took a seat on a plough directly opposite; and, full of the most pleasing ideas, drew out my pencil and sketched this impressive picture of brotherly tenderness. To give it a rustic effect, I threw in the view of a distant hedge, a barn-door, and a few implements of agriculture; I worked at it for an hour, and then found that my sketches had formed a picture of strong character, and masterly arrangement, though I had exerted no fancy in forming it. Before this, I had formed a resolution to adhere only to nature, that simple, inexhaustible mistress, who is ever presenting the painter and the poet with something new, and can best augment the esteem of

their productions. To lay down rules for these are as inefficacious as those which regulate society ; for, though an artist, it may be concluded, will never disgrace his canvass by any very bad or offensive production, any more than the man who is kept in check by the force of laws and the bias of education, will commit any flagrant act against the community or his neighbour ; yet, however strong the argument in support of rules, they are the things which distort and injure the pure unadulterated traits of nature's countenance. You may perhaps urge that rules lop off excrescences and remove deformities—yet are they still the fetters of genius, and the destroyers of those masterly touches which the faults they may correct are by no means an adequate compensation for. In a comparison between genius and love, let us suppose, my friend, that a young man, whose mind is attracted by a blooming female, devotes his whole thoughts to the lovely object, pays her every respect, employs all his energies, and urges all his rhetoric, to convince her that she is the sole object of his affection. After this a philosopher enters—one whose character is highly esteemed, and who reasons thus:—Believe me, my young friend, love is a passion which has its source in nature, but yet it must be kept under by proper restrictions. The time of your sojournment in this mortal state should be usefully employed, and only your idle hours be occupied in courting your mistress. Take care also, that your presents be according to what you can afford, and those only at certain intervals. Were the young man capable of embracing this wise counsel, his understanding would be universally commended, but his love would evaporate to a mere vapour!—the fetters which are thus imposed upon the lover equally apply to the painter ; he may design mathematically, but he will have no sublimity. Genius is a current, the waters of which would inevitably break down its banks, and astonish the beholder,

were it not for the obstructions of some narrow-minded artists, who guard the shores, and repel the swelling exuberance; behind these they have built seats and raised gardens; yet, depressed by the superiority of others, they are indebted to moats and dams for the defence of their *regular* productions, and thus they preserve themselves from *destruction* by shutting out merit.

## LETTER IX.

May 27.

LURED by the fancy I was in for imagery and delineation, I quite lost sight of the narrative I intended to proceed with.—I remained seated upon the plough, enveloped with those picturesque ideas with which I had filled my epistle. In the evening, a young woman with a small hand-basket came to look after the children, who remained in much the same posture.—“You are a good boy, Philip,” she cried out, as she approached.—Seeing that her eye had caught mine, I arose and asked if these charming infants were her’s?—she answered with an affirmative nod; and then drawing out a cake for the elder, she took the babe into her arms, clasped it to her bosom, and kissed it with all the fondness of a mother.—“This little one, Sir,” said she, “I was obliged to trust to the care of his brother, while I went to town with my other son to buy some bread, sugar, and this pipkin to boil the little one’s supper in; for my eldest rogue cracked the other yesterday, while contending with Philip about some pudding that was left in it.”—This led me to inquire who the eldest son was, and just as she was saying that he was driving a few geese home over the common, he came in sight, skipping along, and bearing in his hand a hazel stick for his brother.—In conversation I soon learned that she was the daughter of the village schoolmaster, and that her husband, on the death of his uncle, had set off for



Holland to recover an estate; adding, as his letters respecting that property were never answered, he suspects all is not fair, and has therefore thought it necessary to undertake the journey, since which I have not heard from him. I felt uncomfortable at parting from this worthy woman, and gave to each of the children a halfpenny to buy a cake, after which we separated.—Believe me, my friend, I know of nothing which can more contribute to lull the disquiet mind to rest, than the view of a being so contented and unassuming; who serenely glides round the limited circle of her sphere; who makes the present moment happy, and disregards the past and the future. Night succeeds day without exciting her interest, and the autumnal leaves convey no other idea to her mind than the approximation of winter.

Since the above, I have frequently repaired to the same spot, and have been quite intimate with the little folks—I give them a lump of sugar when I am taking coffee, and at night they partake of my whey and bread and butter. Every Sunday I present each with a creutzer, and if I should be at my devotion when they come, the hostess has orders to bestow their gratuity; thus I have obtained a high place in their opinion, and am the master of all their little secrets and wishes! their simplicity is at all times interesting, but more so when they mix with their playmates.—Their attentive parent at first was uneasy lest they should intrude; but I overruled this, and not without some persuasion, at length induced her to let them enjoy themselves with me in their own way, apart from all restraint.

## LETTER X.

*May 30.*

THE opinions which I formerly gave on painting are equally applicable to poetry, in which the chief requisites are a knowledge of the beautiful, clothed

in an appropriate verbal dress. A subject has offered itself to me this day which would make excellent materials for an eclogue; but why are descriptive or pastoral pieces to be told only in rhyme? Are the wonders of nature to be confined solely to verse and measure?

From the manner in which I have begun this letter, you may, perhaps, be induced to expect some sublime effusion—but you will be disappointed; for all these lively thoughts have their origin in a mere rustic: but, according to my usual custom, I will endeavour, in my imperfect manner, to display the cause of them, which you, as is your general custom, will denominate too highly coloured—and all a tale of the village of Walheim!—A few inhabitants of that place had made a party to drink coffee, under the umbrageous lime-trees, but not being partial to the company, I absented myself, by making a handsome excuse. The same plough, which had before been a subject of my pencil, had received a fracture, and a lad, who resided near the spot, was busily employed in repairing it. There was something in his manner which induced me to enter into conversation with him, and it was not long before he yielded me his confidence; and informed me of his situation in life, which was that of a servant, in the employ of a widowed mistress, of whom he spoke with heartfelt eulogium; indeed, I could easily perceive that his service was almost a perfect freedom. He signified that she was past the meridian of life, and had been indifferently treated by her husband, whence she had resolved never to enter the holy state again. While he spoke, his lips breathed such a purity of intention, such a sincerity of desire to remunerate her for the conjugal misery she had been condemned to endure, that it would require a large scope of energetic language to paint the zeal of his genuine good-will; but the sublimity of poetry could alone do justice to the man-

ner, the looks, which gave energy to every word. To describe the latter is impossible—my friend can more readily conceive than portray that which surpasses my ability.

While he avowed his passion for the good widow, he evinced a considerable share of anxiety for her reputation; endeavouring to do away any impression I might have conceived to her disadvantage, by expatiating in the artless strains of true fondness (the recollection is still delightful to me) upon her perfections, and by assuring me that though her youth was no more, her charms were not diminished. He seemed animated by such a sincere love as I had never before witnessed; certainly it was the produce of a virtuous bosom. Perhaps my friend may laugh at me, when I confess how much I was delighted with such a rare instance of disinterestedness and fidelity. Indeed, so deeply warmed was I with his simple confessions, that sometimes I feel as if his love had been transplanted into my own breast. I mean soon to see this extraordinary female—yet it might be more prudent to avoid her. What he describes with so much animation, may be charmless and uninspiring to me. Though I have imbibed her admirer's *ideas*, I may not see with his *eyes*—then will all the *beauties of fancy* fade away; and all the satisfaction I now feel will cease to afford me enjoyment.

## LETTER XI.

May 30.

YOU ask me “why I do not continue to write?”—You might, if you had been shrewd, have answered that question yourself, by supposing that I was at ease—or had found another, a dearer friend—that I had become intimate with—one whom I scarcely know.

To enter into a minute detail of all the little events by which I became acquainted with the most

enchanting of women, would be an irksome labour—It is sufficient that I am blessed—happy in the extreme—and therefore much too elevated for a mere historian. She is a celestial, a divinity!—but these are titles every lover bestows on his mistress—She is a masterpiece,—but whence that superiority arises, nor how much I am enraptured with it, I can neither describe nor relate. O what simplicity, united with the most lucid comprehension—what affability with animation—what spirits—mildness—but I think every phrase too weak to convey an adequate idea of such excellence—At a future time I may—no, let me seize the present, since I may never enjoy a second opportunity—In fact, from the moment I began to write, I have been several times on the point of throwing away my pen, and flying to meet her—I was resolved this morning to stay at home, and yet I have been continually looking through the window to see if the sun had risen.

I have yielded to the impulse I could not resist,—have been to visit her,—and have, it is true, my friend, just returned; therefore, while I take breakfast, I will proceed with my letter.—I saw her with her charming little brothers and sisters—beheld her—delightful spectacle!—but methinks you will be no wiser when I have finished than when I commenced, if I proceed in this disjointed manner—I must repress this inclination to rhapsody, and speak on the subject with greater regularity—Let me, therefore, entreat your attention to the following.

I have before written you an account of my intimacy with the steward of the prince, and the general invitation he gave to his little empire, a term not ill adapted to his present seclusion.—From one cause or another, my intended visit remained at last so long unpaid, that I probably should have relinquished the idea of ever carrying it into effect, had not mere accident presented to me a sight of the treasure which this sequestered spot contained.—

In compliance with the wish of some of the young town's people I agreed to make one with them at a rural fete, and a young lady was to accompany me as my partner, who possessed some beauty, and was passingly agreeable.—We settled it to take my partner and a relation of hers in a coach, and in our way we were to call for Charlotte, who was to favour the company with her presence at the ball.—As we proceeded through the avenue in face of the steward's house, my partner informed me that in the person of Charlotte I should behold a very fine and interesting girl, and she promised to introduce me; "Let me only caution you," said the relative, "to beware of her fascinating powers!"—"Why so?" retorted I briskly. "Because," answered my partner, "she is firmly engaged to a deserving young gentleman, whose father being recently dead, he is gone to arrange his affairs, and endeavour to obtain a place at court!" I heard all this with indifference; I had not yet forgotten the excellence of Leonora, and since her death I had never seen the woman who could interest my bosom.—The sun had descended behind the mountains by the time we had arrived at the house; the air became very warm, and thick leaden clouds overspreading the horizon, indicated a storm was approaching. The ladies foresaw that the threatening atmosphere would put a stop to the ball, and were anxiously concerned lest their gratification should be put off.—With an air of philosophic inspection I endeavoured to dissipate their fears, by assuring them that I could venture to predict it would be only a passing cloud, and would soon blow over.—I had alighted, when a servant came and begged we would wait a moment for her mistress—I then crossed the court of this tranquil abode, and went up a few steps to the hall, in which were six lovely children, (the eldest eleven, and the youngest about two years of age) playing about a young lady, of a middling

height, but of a form the most exquisite that can be conceived, dressed in white, ornamented with pale pink ribbons. She was supplying the little cherubs with bread and butter from a loaf she held in her hand, which she distributed in pieces adapted to their size, and that with the most winning and affectionate grace.—Their innocent hands were alternately holden up for the piece as it was cut off. each crying on receiving it, "Thank you, thank you!" they then ran across the court to have a look at the ladies and the carriage which was to take their Charlotte away.—The latter, on seeing me wait, in the sweetest manner apologized for the delay; "Indeed, Sir," said she, "I am sorry you have had the trouble to alight, and that the ladies should be detained, but in my eagerness to be dressed in time, I quite overlooked some indispensable household concerns, and these little ones lose half their relish for supper unless I cut it for them."—I made a reply, but I cannot tell what it was—her voice, her address, and her expression, had so ravished me.—I was in this stupor of delight and astonishment, when she ran into an adjoining apartment to get her fan and gloves. The little ones took advantage of her absence to steal a look at me, and to whisper to each other; upon which I approached the youngest, whose face was full of the most lively expression; he was about to run from me just as Charlotte returned, who said to him, "Come, my Louis, you surely are not afraid of your cousin?" This removed all his fears, and he shook my hand with a smack, which I returned with a kiss—I then conducted her to the coach, repeating as we went, "Cousin! why so? Am I to consider myself worthy the honour of being your relation?" With an arch smile she replied, "You must know, Sir, that I have several cousins, and it would hurt me to think that you were the least estimable among them."—As she took her leave, she directed the eldest girl,

Sophia, to be attentive to her brothers and sisters, and when her father came home, not to let him be alone; she then gave a charge to the other little ones to mind as much what their sister Sophia said to them, as if she herself were there, which they all promised to do, except a sprightly little girl, about six years old, who gloomingly replied, "Ah! but sister Sophia and sister Charlotte are not the same; we love sister Charlotte the best!"—While this was passing, the two eldest boys had mounted the footboard behind the coach, and I succeeded with Charlotte in obtaining permission for them to retain their places to the end of the forest, if they would behave quietly and keep themselves safe from harm: we, however, had hardly taken our seats, and some mutual civilities had passed between the ladies, when Charlotte bid the coachman to stop, and in a sweet manner entreated her brothers not to go any farther: they instantly complied, and she extended her hand for them to take a parting kiss: the eldest pressed it with all the sensibility of a lad of fifteen, and the younger one displayed all the expression consonant with his years. After enjoining them to carry her love to the rest, the coach drove on.—Charlotte was now asked by the lady, the relation of my partner, how she approved of the book which she had last lent her?—to which the former replied, that she thought no better of it than the one she before sent her, and therefore she should return it without delay.—

On inquiring the title, I was surprised to hear that it was 'The Castle of Otranto.'—In every thing that Charlotte said, I traced a profound judgment and acuteness—each word was appropriate, and every look penetrating;—an extraordinary lustre, I remarked, overspread her fine features when I accorded with her opinion.—"When I was younger, romances were all my taste," said Charlotte—"then my chief delight on a Sunday afternoon was

to withdraw to the most lonely chamber, and indulge in the perusal of one of the wonderful stories; in a short time, however, this appetite for the *unnatural* was clogged, and the *domestic scene* took place of the other. Here I was alive to the misfortunes or happiness in which the heroine was placed, and never shall I be weary of such works as Sir Charles Grandison and Clarissa Harlowe. My leisure for reading is now so much abridged, that I have no wish to penetrate into other scenes than those to which I am accustomed. The writer, who copy nature have my preference, for they present those domestic endearments, and affectionate displays, which are the pictures I every day see in my own family."

The incontrovertibility of every sentence she uttered charmed me, and I could scarcely repress the violence of my emotions;—my bosom burnt with ardency, and I tremble lest the flame should consume me. She next proceeded to criticise on other works, and among the rest the Vicar of Wakefield; but here, as before, she displayed such accuracy and discernment, that I could not refrain from exhibiting my testimony of approbation in a manner that must have been noticed; but my mind was abstracted from every other object in the coach; while it only saw and dwelt upon her, she directed her conversation to the ladies, one of whom, my partner's relative, directed several significant regards at me, by which I could plainly read her suspicions, though I was then too deeply engaged to take any notice of them.

The next subject introduced was dancing: which Charlette approved of as a favourite amusement, notwithstanding it was condemned by many;—were her temper ruffled by any vexatious incident, she had only to repair to her pianno-forte, and play over a few country dances, and the internal harmony was directly restored. Gracious powers, how



did my eyes dwell upon her lips as she spoke!—Such was the melody of her voice, that the words were almost lost in the sweetness of her modulation—her piercing eyes and elegant demeanour absorbed all my powers of admiration.—At length the coach arrived at our destination, and alighting in a paroxysm of rapture, I entered the assembly-room, and was in the middle of it, surrounded by all the company, before I was conscious that I had advanced a foot;—the partners of Charlotte and the other lady were waiting at the door ready to receive them; and I, after their example, now conducted my partner to a seat in the assembly. The ball opened with minuets, and I danced with several ladies successively, in the course of which it occurred to me, that the most awkward and unhand-some were the least willing to retire. Charlotte and her partner afterward engaged in country dances; and O! my friend, how animated did I feel when it came to my turn to perform the figure with her—O! that you could but see her dance! She is a mistress of that grace and agility so requisite for the accomplishment—her form is light and elegant—her motion elastic and uniform!

I would have solicited her hand for the succeeding dance, had she not assured me in the most affable manner that she was engaged, but that she was at liberty for the third; at the same time frankly informing me that the allemande was her favourite dance. “It is the custom here (she observed) for each couple to dance an allemande; it is however what my partner is not accustomed to; he therefore is desirous of being excused, and I know the lady whom you dance with is not partial to it. Your manner of dancing has convinced me that you can perform this kind of amusement; let us therefore ask this indulgence of each other’s partner.” In this way it was agreed to, and while

we were together Charlotte's partner undertook the care of mine.

Having commenced, for a time our arms were mutually infolded!—Then it was that all the graces of motion and gayety were exhibited at every turn; but when the rest of the dancers should have kept pace with the change of time, and have whirled each other round a spherical velocity, they created some confusion by the inequality of their motions. We, however, avoided these awkward performers, by keeping on one side till they had passed, and then resuming our situations with another couple, and Charlotte's late partner and mine. Dancing thus in that perfection which I loved, I felt myself elevated to a more than mortal delight—I pressed in my arms the most lovely of womankind,—we glided round the room with the velocity of lightning, and I saw, I thought of no other object—Shall I avow the rest, my friend?—It was at that time that I formed the determination never to permit the fair one, whom I esteemed and meant to make my wife, to dance an allemande with any other man than myself;—and I here declare—but you certainly understand what I would say.

Exhausted for want of breath, we now took several walks round the room to recover our fatigue, and then Charlotte sat down. I brought the only oranges remaining from the sideboard, at which they were making negus, and offered the timely refreshment to Charlotte; but she politely presented them to a lady next her, who made free with the larger part of them. Ah! how much did I envy this person, though a female, the favour she had received from so fair a hand!

In the third country-dance we were the second couple; and while I was making the figure with my partner, and catching at every turn a view of those animated looks and aerial motions, which showed

now much her heart was in the amusement, she was observed by an elderly lady, whose agreeable manners had before attracted my notice, who, smilingly, twice raised her finger at Charlotte; and in a tone of strong emphasis pronounced the name of Albert.

“Albert!” exclaimed I, “and who, pray, is Albert?”—Just as Charlotte was about to gratify my curiosity, we separated in forming hands six round, and I observed, as she was opposite to me, that her countenance looked suddenly dejected:—I repeated the question as soon as we had joined hands again, and she replied, “It is wrong to conceal the truth!—Albert is a worthy young gentleman, to whom my hand is engaged.” It now occurred to me that this was the person of whom the ladies had told me in the coach—but it was then indifferent to me—because I had not seen Charlotte; now, at her mentioning of his name, the imbittering remembrance revived. It overwhelmed all my pleasure, it confused me so much that I lost sight of the figure, and I disconcerted the company by my mistakes; till the easy address of Charlotte conducted us to our proper stations.

In the very zenith of hilarity, the dance was suddenly closed by a tremendous glare of lightning, the threatening indication of which had before been observed in the sky, and which I had explained to the ladies was only the transient lowerings of excessive heat. The noise of the instruments was overpowered by the rolling thunder, and such was the fear of three ladies, that they departed with their partners; a general interruption ensued, and the music ceased to play. The sudden change from diversion to terror, is sure to heighten the effect of the latter; for then it is that the mind, which is widely expanded by pleasure, becomes hastily contracted by unexpected calamity, and its susceptibility to the influence of opposite passions is rapidly increased. It was natural therefore that the storm

and the ladies' terrors should augment together—one lady, more courageous than the rest, sat with her back to the window, and with her fingers endeavoured to stop out the noise of the thunder, as if that would render her secure while the lightning flashed into the room—a second knelt down to utter an extempore prayer, and hiding her face in the former's lap: a third clung fast to the other two, and wept most audibly. Some were for going home, and others so frightened, that they threw themselves into the arms of their partners, who were revelling with delight on those lips which were breathing out piteous ejaculations to heaven. The swains who were less gallant, sat down to the enjoyment of their bottle and pipes, till at length the mistress of the house conducted that part of the company, who had still some reason left, to an apartment where the window-shutters being closed, the lightning was almost wholly excluded. Scarcely had we entered when Charlotte arranged the chairs in a circle, and begging us to be seated, proposed to amuse ourselves by playing at some innocent sport, which was received in a very stiff manner by some, while others were delighted with a game at forfeits: the game fixed on was called *Numbering*, and which was explained to us in this manner by Charlotte: "I shall proceed round," said she, "from right to left—while you count one after the other progressively as quick as possible; that is, the first person calls one, the next two, the next three, and so on; and if any one hesitate or say a wrong number, the party shall receive a box on the ear." It was very amusing to see her arms extended, as she moved round the circle, while the numbers one, two, three, &c. were pronounced by each one with a rapidity that kept pace as she increased hers, till some one made an error, and was honoured with the punishment before mentioned—a laugh entitled the party to another box, and thus she augmented

the difficulty by making her revolutions yet more rapid. I received two boxes for my blunders, and what gave me infinite pleasure, I thought she made mine harder than the rest. The laughter which at intervals tended to increase the difficulty of the play, at length terminated the game, long before we had counted as far as a thousand. The storm had now nearly spent its force, and the company were forming themselves into little parties; but mine was only that of Charlotte, whom I attended into the ball-room;—as we went along, she remarked, “That the little punishment she had awarded with so much liberality to some of the company, were only meant to divert their attention from their fears; but that, as to herself, while she affected to be courageous, she was in as much terror as the rest; yet it had served the purpose of keeping up their spirits and her own.” We placed ourselves at the window—the distant thunder still rolled faintly awful, while a mild rain descended, and perfumed the atmosphere with balmy odours. Charlotte now reclined her head upon her lovely arm, and with an eye of expression that ran over all the adjacent country, which then was lifted up towards heaven, and lastly fixed fully on me, I saw her shed a tear! She then placed her hand lightly upon mine, and in a voice of ecstasy exclaimed, “O Klopstock.”\* My heart was in raptures at the name—a crowd of sensations burst into my bosom—My recollection reverted to the divine poem of this author, and my love was all ardency for one whose taste was in such unison with mine. I repeated her expression—“O Klopstock!” The words died on my lips, for my spirits were sinking;—reposing on her soft hand, I pressed it with a kiss of sympathy and fervour; and while my eyes beheld hers suffused with the tears of sensibility, I said, “Immortal Klopstock! O

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\* The author of a beautiful German poem, called the Messiah!

that thou couldst read thine apotheosis in the countenance of this celestial maid!—or hear thy name, so frequently uttered with irreverence, sounding from her mellifluous voice:—Ah, where are the lips like hers which should be suffered to pronounce it!”

## LETTER XII.

*June 19.*

I BROKE off in my last, but in what part I know not!—Alas, my friend, I have forgot what I was before treating of. All I can now remember is, that, after reaching home, I went to bed about four o'clock in the morning, and had my friend been there, to have done away the necessity of writing, I believe I should have sat up talking till breakfast.—Have I informed you of what passed in our return from the assembly?—If I have omitted this, it will bear repetition—but you will excuse me at present, as another time will answer the purpose of that friendship, which love has not yet effaced.—The morning was delightful, the storm had cleared away every mist—nature seemed to revive with a livelier gayety, and the crystal drops softly fell from the pending branches.—Our companions had all sunk into the arms of sleep, when Charlotte asked if I was not also desirous of some repose, entreating me that her presence might not be a restraint upon me.—“Ah!” replied I, while I looked with rapture on her angelic countenance, “where thou art I cannot sleep—It would be impossible to shut my eyes while thine were open.” The soft blush of modesty was diffused over her cheeks, which in a moment after resumed their pristine bloom, and we continued in conversation till the coach reached her home, when, upon the door being softly opened by one of the domestics, she eagerly inquired, and was as satisfactorily assured, that the family were all in bed, and well. At taking leave, I promised not to make it

long before I saw her again, and you will easily believe that I did not forfeit my word. From that day I have ceased to regard the stars and the flight of time!—The universe is a blank when she is not by—but with her it is a paradise!—Adieu, my friend, I can no longer withhold from seeing her

## LETTER XIII.

*June 21.*

I NOW positively think that the days in store for the blessed cannot pass more delectably than mine—whatever may prove the future hours of my life, I must acknowledge that I enjoy at present the most perfect serenity. I am now quite settled at the village of Walheim, at a distance of about three miles from Charlotte; and surely in this recluse abode never was a happy man more blessed!—In fixing casually upon this spot for the indulgence of solitude, could I have imagined that it cherished such an invaluable jewel? Often have I strayed by that rural residence, unconscious that it contained her who was one day to constitute my highest delight—frequently have I looked at it from the mountain summit—frequently from the meadow on the opposite side of the river; it sometimes occurs to me, that man, in his idle pursuits, overlooks the native riches of his own country, and sets out widely in search of more interesting novelties; but these soon cease to engage his attention; and as they weaken, he again sighs for the pleasures he left behind, till he finally sinks into his former habits, and sits down without caring any farther in what manner the rest of the world is engaged. I felt an attraction to this spot the first time that I beheld it—to its charming scenery, its rich woody prospects, its mountainous and rocky heights. I wish that you could but view them!—Yet I was not then interested, and quitted them with the same listlessness as before. Methinks that space and futurity are synonymous—an awful

gloom hovers over that which is unexplored, and in which the mind that contemplates is bewildered in obscurity—we are delighted with the images which fancy forms; we pursue them with anxiety, till the mask is thrown off, and then the illusion no longer charms. Similar to this is the traveller, who has for a long time been separated from his cot, his wife, and his little ones: with joy he returns to his homely dwelling, and tastes more comforts in the result of domestic duties than all he had met with in his distant journeys.

I am quite happy in my recess—I rise with the sun—I gather my own peace, which I shell as I sit and read Homer.—Then I put them into the pot, cover them with the lid, stir them if they boil, and then in my own fancy paint the lovers of Penelope, slaying their cattle and dressing them.—How sweet are the sensations which arise from a review of the patriarchal life; and surely I may safely assert that such a mode of living is mine:—all the uncontaminated and simple delights of the rustic are mine; who sits down to partake of the cabbage which his hand has planted, and while he relishes his wholesome viands, praises its sweetness, thinks on the fine morning when he set it, the calm evening when he watered it, and the daily pleasure he received in seeing it grow, and come to perfection.

#### LETTER XIV.

*June 29.*

THE day before yesterday the doctor of the town paid a visit to the steward.—I was at that time at high romps on the floor with the children, tickling and playing with them, and a fine noise we made. The doctor is the very emblem of formality and precision, always adjusting his ruffles while speaking, and pulling out his plaited frill when he has done; of course he thought my behaviour was extremely opposite to the dignity of a man.—His look suffi-



ciently indicated this; but it was not in the power of his frown, or his pompous declamation, to interrupt my rebuilding the card-houses which the little folks had knocked down. Since this, the physical gentleman has told every one that the steward's children were rude enough before, but that now Werter would be the entire ruin of them.—Yes, my friend, children are my delight, and next to Charlotte I doat on them.—If in their infant minds I discern the germ of those virtues and abilities which at a future period are to be their directors—if in the fearless I anticipate firmness and constancy—and in the volatile that vacancy and good-nature which will blunt the stings of fate, and level the rugged inequalities they will meet in their journey through life—I am then forcibly reminded of the divine words of our great Master, “Except ye be like one of these little ones.” Yet, my friend, is it not a common practice to overawe children, and terrify those who may prove models for ourselves?—We rule them while under our control like slaves, and prohibit them the indulgence of their innocent gratifications, while we unlimitedly indulge our own.—Who has installed us with this exclusive prerogative? Can it be derived from a greater age and experience? If in the pages of holy writ, of such is said to be the kingdom of heaven; yet they are not as such esteemed upon earth.—They are the same we once *were*, and such as those to come must be!—No more, my friend, now, lest I exhaust your patience, and bewilder myself.

## LETTER XV.

*July 1.*

AN esteemed old lady in the town, just been given over by her physician, has expressed a wish that Charlotte should be present with her in her last moments.—Obedient to the pious duty, she is gone, and few I believe are more capable of pouring

the balm of consolation into the wounded bosom;—at least I can speak experimentally.—We went last week to the Vicar of S——, who lives in a hamlet among the mountains, about three miles off.—We were accompanied by Sophia, his sister.—We arrived about four in the afternoon; and on our going through the yard, which is shaded by some walnut-trees, we beheld the venerable old pastor seated on a bench before his door.—Spurning his decrepitude and his stick, he rose at the sight of Charlotte to meet her, but she sprang forward to prevent him; and having made him retake his seat, placed herself at his side.—The tender of her father's best respects being made, she took a little chubby fellow, the old gentleman's favourite, and began to kiss him.—How much, my friend, would you have been gratified, could you have been a spectator of the kind attention she paid to the ancient vicar, speaking with an elevation of voice equal to his deafness; and, to encourage him, introducing in her discourse the sudden decease of several young and hearty persons in the very prime of life; then extolling the sanative properties of the Carelstadt baths, and commending the resolution he had taken of visiting them the following summer; to all which she joined her congratulations upon seeing him so visibly altered for the better, since the last time she called at the village. During this, I directed my conversation to his lady, who is several years younger than her husband.—The old gentleman was full of vivacity, and hearing me praise the beauty of the two walnut-trees, whose umbrageous foliage formed such a canopy over our heads, he began garrulously to enlarge upon their history. “I cannot now,” said he, “tell how the first came here, as some say it was set by a clergyman—others by his successor—but the second, in yonder corner, counts the same number of years as my wife, and will be just fifty years old in next October: Her father planted it in the morning, and at

night she was brought into the world: he held the living before me, and always felt a great fondness for this tree, and indeed his partiality has extended to myself. Under this identical tree, sitting on a log of wood, and knitting, did I, on entering this yard, first behold my wife, and that is now seven-and-twenty years ago."—Charlotte here inquired for the vicar's daughter, and was informed that she was gone with a Mr. Smith into the meadows to see the hay-making; after which the vicar renewed the thread of his discourse, and informed us in what manner he had won the good-will of the old vicar and his daughter, and how he obtained his curacy, and at last filled his place.—He had just finished these particulars, when Mr. Smith returned with his daughter; at entering, he saluted Charlotte in a very friendly manner. The young lady is a lively and genteel brunette, one with whom a sensible man might spend his life comfortably in the country.—Mr. Smith, who I soon saw was devoted to her, possesses a pleasant person, but is of a reserved disposition, which was evident in the several fruitless attempts Charlotte made to induce him to join our conversation.—This rather displeased me, as I was confident that a want of affability, and not a deficiency of talent, was the cause of his silence; it was not long ere this opinion was confirmed in a walk we took with Frederica, the vicar's daughter.—I had entered into a friendly conversation with her, which had such a gloomy effect on the naturally dark countenance of her lover, that Charlotte pulled me by the sleeve to take notice of it.—It wounds me excessively when I see men in this manner become the torments of each other; wasting away, in the days of their sunshine, the bud of youth, and the height of enjoyment, by idle jealousies, and other errors, which they often see too late to correct.—At supper, the causes of human happiness and misery being the subject of conversation, I availed myself of the

opportunity to censure the passion of ill-humour.—“There is a common opinion,” said I, “among mankind, that if the days of happiness or misery were counted, the latter would be the most numerous; but this I consider as an unwarranted conclusion.—Could we partake of the bounty which Providence so liberally bestows on all of us, with a suitable meekness and gratitude, the reflection would smoothen our rough passage through life, and lighten the load of those evils which all, more or less, must bear.” “Well, but one cannot always control one’s disposition,” said the vicar’s lady,—“much depends upon the constitution; for if the body be ill, the mind cannot be well.” “Then, madam, let us view it in this light,” rejoined I, “and see if by treating it as a malady, there is no remedy to be found.” “That is more to the purpose,” replied Charlotte; “and to effect this, the means will depend greatly upon our own exertions;—for instance, when any thing arises to interrupt my serenity, I take a turn in the garden, and chant some pretty air, by which means my tranquillity is soon recovered.” “This,” said I, “is precisely that which I mean; ill-humour and sloth may be compared together;—the former is an inactive quality, and mankind are naturally indolent; but this malign propensity once vanquished, we hastily move forward, and find a secret pleasure in being actively engaged.”—Frederica did not let a word escape her; and Mr. Smith opposed me, by remarking that we were not able to command our temper, and that our own power was still weaker over our feelings; whence I was induced to reply, that every one earnestly desired to be rid of the unpleasant habit in question, that no one knew the extent of his own strength till it was called into exertion, and that the sick are under the care of a physician, and willingly endure the most severe privations and nauseous drugs to be cured of their malady.

During this, perceiving the old gentleman was anxiously endeavouring to make out the purport of our conversation, I raised my voice, and directed myself to him in this manner: "Notwithstanding the denunciation of the pulpit has been levied against every kind of fault, I believe there yet exists one which has been passed unnoticed—I mean ill-humour."—"Oh, oh!" said the vicar, "that is a subject for the city preachers, but the peasantry would be at a loss to understand what I meant;—though indeed a hint just now and then would not be mistimed here, if it were only for the benefit of my wife and the steward." The old gentleman's dry remark produced a general burst of laughter, in which he joined till it brought on a fit of coughing, that put a stop to our discourse for the moment.—As soon as its violence had abated, Mr. Smith recommenced the subject.—"Sir," said he, "I think it is proceeding to an unwarrantable length to call ill-humour a fault." "I think not," I replied, "for that which injures our own happiness, and that of others, deserves no better title. It is surely a reflection sufficiently painful that we are incapable of rendering each other mutually happy; but we augment the misfortune, if we place obstacles in the way of that little enjoyment which it is within our power to convey.—The man who fosters a churlish rancorous temper in his breast; who conceals its weight, and does not let it interrupt the quiet of his neighbour, is conscious within himself of inability; and hence arises that peevishness which unites with envy, and which the weakness of vanity encourages. To see others happy, and know that we have in no wise been instrumental to it, is a painful reflection." Charlotte could not pass unnoticed the emphasis which I threw into this last speech, and she looked at me with a smile; but it produced a tear in the eye of Frederica, which induced me to say farther, "I wish that no one may ever taste of the cup of

pleasure, who employs the power he possesses over a tender heart, for the purpose of destroying that true satisfaction which it is formed by nature to participate in!—It is not the value or number of presents—it is not an attention the most unremitting—that can counterbalance the harmony and serenity of mind which are a prey to the shocks of malice and cruelty.”—The remembrance of past occurrences now rushing upon me, my heart was overcharged, and my eyes were suffused with tears.—“Daily,” added I, “ought each of us to interrogate ourselves, and ask, What can I do to render my friend happier?”—We may endeavour not only to let others enjoy their happiness uninterruptedly, but we possess the means of improving it by participation:—In the storms of passion that harass the soul, and when keen pangs rend the heart, we cannot administer even a transient relief and when the miserable sufferer, fatally attacked by some dire disease, sees his untimely grave prepared by your hand—and stretched out pale and exhausted, turns his dim eyes towards heaven—while the cold dews of death lie on his visage—then, like a culprit, self-condemned, will you stand before him.—Sensible of your error, when it is too late, you have no power to relieve, but keenly feel that all you can give or do is wholly vain to restore health, or bestow one glimpse of comfort on the departing spirit!”

These words had no sooner fallen from my lips, than they brought to mind a similar scene to which I had once been a witness—It drew tears from my eyes, which I concealed with my handkerchief; and suddenly leaving the room, I did not reflect what I was about till Charlotte made me recollect myself, by calling me back, and asking me to return home. Ah! with what kindness did she chide me as we walked forward, displaying in the most affectionate manner the bad effects of that warm fervour and anxiety which agitate me when interested in an ar-

gument: in the same tender way did she request me to abate that zeal which must eventually weaken my frame, and bring on a premature close of existence Dear Charlotte!—for thy sake I will regard myself—yes, I will live for thee!

## LETTER XVI.

*July 6.*

CHARLOTTE remains with her indisposed WERTER; indeed her presence, wherever she visits, is sure to alleviate pain and introduce pleasure.—I heard that she intended to take a walk with her little sisters, so I joined her, and we went together about four miles.—In coming back, we stopped at the fountain which I have before spoken of with so much partiality, and which now of course is greater than before.—While Charlotte was seated on the wall, and we all stood before her, the solitary hours I had formerly spent there, when my mind was unbiassed, arose to memory, and inwardly I exclaimed, “From that time till now, thou dear fountain, has thy reviving stream, once the spring of many a delight, been disregarded.”—I was standing in a deep reverie, with my eyes fixed on the spot, when I perceived one of the children coming up the steps with a cup of water.—My looks here caught those of Charlotte, and my bosom beat with the most glowing sensations.—As the little one approached, another of her sisters, named Marianne, was going to take it, but she withdrew her hand, and in the most fond accent said, “No;—let sister Charlotte have the first drink!”—Pleased at her manner, I snatched up the child, and gave her a close and earnest kiss; but she began to cry—Charlotte said my manner was too rough, and I expressed my chagrin; while she, leading her little sister by the hand down the steps of the fountain, bid her wash her face, and then all would be well again.”—The child was as eager to obey her as could be, and rubbed her cheeks hear-

tily with her little hands, till the kiss was quite washed away, and there was no danger of a beard growing in its place. Although Charlotte assured her that she had washed enough, she still continued to rub on, believing that so much labour could not be lost.—Be assured, my friend, that at no time have I paid more attention to the holy rites of baptism; and when the child and Charlotte had ascended, I could hardly withhold myself from prostrating at the feet of the latter, and worshipping her as the angelic emblem of purity.

Conversing in the evening with a gentleman esteemed for his knowledge, I related the circumstance; but common sense and modern understanding are too often at variance; and such was my opinion of him.—He blamed the thoughtless conduct of Charlotte, and affirmed that it was wrong to encourage the whims and weaknesses of a child—“follies that could not too soon be eradicated.”—I understand that this gentleman, not many days ago, became himself a father, and probably at that time was arranging a new system for the education of children; I therefore silently passed over his pedantic whimsies, satisfied in my own mind that, if the indulgence of our own little, and often absurd, fancies contributes so essentially to our happiness, we should show the same toleration to the sportiveness of the infant world.

## LETTER XVII

*July 8.*

WHY am I so simple, so anxious, and desirous to get but one glance! How childish am I!—We have been at Walheim, whither the ladies arrived in a coach, and then alighted to walk in the garden;—there I fancied that the beautiful sparkling eyes of Charlotte—but I am again wandering—I will speak, therefore, to the point, though I am almost asleep.—After the ladies had re-entered their carriage, young



Welst, Selfstradt, Andran, and myself, stood conversing with them at the windows—The gentlemen were in high spirits: but though the eyes of Charlotte wandered from one to another—though I stood immoveable, and looked on no other object than herself—yet they did not once fix on me;—I was bidding her in my heart a thousand, thousand adieus, while she withheld from me even the pleasure of a single regard.—The carriage drove off, and my eyes pursued it full of tears;—I saw her look back out of the window;—that look, alas! for whom was it designed?—could it be for me?—O what uncertainty! but suspense is not devoid of comfort: perhaps it might be for me!—Good night!—I am sensible of my own irresolution!

## LETTER XVIII. .

July 10.

WHEN Charlotte's name is mentioned in company, you cannot conceive, my friend, how silly I look, and more particularly so, if any one asks me what I think of her! Think of her!—what a cold, frigid expression. Of what materials must he be made who only approves of her, and is dead to the fascination of such bewitching perfections!—In what manner do I *fancy* her!—In a similar sense, a few days ago, I was asked by a person if I *fancied* Ossian's poems!

## LETTER XIX.

July 11.

THE sick lady whom Charlotte went to see in town, still continues alarmingly ill, in consequence of which I am deprived of the pleasure of her company: hence she has my daily orisons for her speedy convalescence.—Charlotte favoured me with a visit to-day, and communicated to me a very singular occurrence. This sick lady's husband is such a parsimonious unprincipled being, that he has scarcely

allowed his wife a possible maintenance since they were married: this has rendered her miserable, finding her economy unable to keep equal with her narrow allowance.—As soon as the physician assured her that all farther medicine was ineffectual, she desired her husband to be sent for, and addressed him thus, as he stood by her bed at the side of Charlotte: “I am anxious to disclose a circumstance, which, if it remain unnoticed, may hereafter create uneasiness.—During thirty years I have acted with the utmost frugality;—but, notwithstanding all my economy, I have been under the necessity of defrauding you.—The weekly allowance when we first married was but very small—our family increased, but you still continued it the same;—and in the times of our heaviest expense no increase has ever taken place.—To all this I have conformed without a murmur; but the deficiency I have been compelled to pay out of the weekly produce of the dairy.—When I am gone, it would not have been suspected that I had taken any of the money designed for other purposes; but my conduct was the result of compulsion, not of extravagance. Had I buried the secret with me in the grave, your future housekeeper might have been placed in an awkward predicament, and you might have maintained that your deceased wife had subsisted her family on that narrow weekly pittance you have uniformly allowed.”

The severe and pointed reprobation of Charlotte on this avaricious disposition, which had made the poor gentlewoman “Rob Peter to pay Paul,” was not forgotten. “The starving stipend of this wretch,” said she, “was perhaps supposed to be increased by the industry of the wife, who augmented it like the wonderful increase of the widow’s pitcher.”

## LETTER XX.

*July 13.*

No! I cannot err!—her eyes too palpably declare the interest I have in her bosom!—there is no delusion—for the delicious idea is responded from my own heart—I will venture to declare the fond hope of being beloved!—Loved by her!—Oh, how this thought elevates my soul;—Yes, my friend, it does: and I can venture nothing in telling what you will easily understand.—The high distinction of her affection makes me look upon myself as self-ennobled! Do I talk arrogantly?—Rather it is the self-conviction of truth!—Is there one existing who can supersede me in her love?—Ah, at the sound of Albert's name—when it falls from her lips with respect and emotion, I feel like an aspiring commander, who is degraded—one who is divested of his honours—suspended from command, and compelled to surrender his sword.

## LETTER XXI.

*July 16.*

WHEN I accidentally happen to touch her hand, how my heart flutters and my blood boils.—Do our feet meet under the table? I hastily withdraw them; but soon a certain impulse compels me to replace them, and then what strange emotions ensue!—She makes me her friend and confidant;—sweet innocence!—she intrusts me with the secrets of her approaching nuptials, and conceives not the pangs she plants in my bosom. When in earnest talk with me, she rests her hand upon mine, and draws her chair so near that I imbibe her fragrant breath—heavenly powers!—then the rapid lightning is not more electrical.—Dare I ever abuse this bosom of virtuous innocence! Ah, you can read my heart, my friend;—not its corruption, but its weakness alarms me: for frailty is a species of corruption!—But her person to me is

sacred; it is her company only that I sigh for—that source of devotional pleasure! She touches one simple beautiful air upon the harpsichord with a delicacy and expression peculiar to herself—the gloom of sadness is dissipated when she commences it, and the magic charm, which music is said to possess in curing the mania of melancholy, is realized.—In the moments when the desponding soul meditates its own destruction—in that moment does this melting air restore its serenity—dissipate the misty horror—and change the drooping visage of despair into the smiles of cheerfulness!

## LETTER XXII.

*July 18.*

HOW insignificant is the possession of the universe, if the heart be dead to the delights of love! It is an unilluminated magic lantern; but the lamp once lighted, the figures play on the whitened wall! We are pleased with the fleeting shadows;—and such are the effects of love; they present us only with visionary images, and, like children, we are delighted.

I shall not see Charlotte to-day; some company I did not expect have rendered it impossible—but to make amends for this privation, I sent my servant with a message to her, that I might at least enjoy the pleasure of seeing some one who had been in her presence.—How anxiously did I wait for his return, and so pleased was I with the answer he brought back, that I could scarcely suppress the emotions of my love before him.

The Bologna stone, it is said, has the property of imbibing the rays of the sun, when exposed to it. with such a degree of tenuity, that it emits light for some time after it is placed in the dark. The answer I received had the same effect on me: it reflected the radiance of those eyes which had enabled her to guide the pen, and the whiteness of

that hand which had written it, and therefore to me it was equally dear and interesting; I would not have parted with it for the wealth of Cræsus.—You cannot suppress a smile, but, believe me, nothing can be truly called illusive which renders us happy.

## LETTER XXIII.

July 19.

WHEN I awoke this morning, I opened my case-ment, and, as I tranquilly looked at the rising sun, I exclaimed, "To-day I shall see her!"—Yes, I shall behold her!—This idea will occupy my mind through all this day; in that delightful anticipation is united every other desire!

## LETTER XXIV.

July 20.

I DO not approve your advice respecting my accompanying the ambassador to ——. I understand he is a morose supercilious character, and to such I cannot yield submission.—My mother, you inform me, seems to wish that I were engaged in some active employment;—I cannot repress a smile at this idea, I who am never idle—who busy myself in even shelling peas and beans. The world is full of wo, and I account him a mere idiot, who, in compliance with the will of the world, labours to acquire those riches which he does not need to augment his happiness.

## LETTER XXV.

\* July 24.

I MUST inform you with some regret, in answer to the anxiety you express respecting my progress in drawing, that I have lately been very negligent. Not long ago I undertook an historical piece, but I cannot work at it: indeed, it appears to me, that I can do nothing apart from nature.—It is her that

I study ; she is my model in all her different forms :— yet, in the present state of my mind, I possess none of that assiduity and attention which are so absolutely necessary for delineating her minor beauties with true effect :—all my attempts are abortive ; my outlines are incorrect, and the colours all swim as I look at them !—if this humour do not remove, I will try something in relief, with clay or wax.—Three attempts have I made to take Charlotte's picture, and as many times has my pencil blushed for me ; formerly my likenesses were held in great estimation ; but this unaccountable incapacity gives me a great deal of chagrin.—However, that I might not altogether fail, I have made her profile in shade, and for the present that must content me.

## LETTER XXVI.

*July 26.*

RELY upon it, my dear Charlotte, that all your requests shall be most punctually executed. The more you command, the greater will be my happiness—and the last commission shall always be performed with the most alacrity.—One thing, however, I wish you would attend to—write your letters without sanding them ; for, to-day, in my eagerness to press the writing to my lips, the sand grated between my teeth.

## LETTER XXVII.

*July 27.*

CONTINUALLY do I resolve not to see her so frequently ; but the resolves of lovers are no sooner made than broken.—Ah, my friend, promising and performing are two things essentially different ; and how easy is the one to the other !—Daily do I suffer myself to be tempted away, and yet when I return at night, I as constantly say that I will not go to-morrow ;—the morrow arrives, and with it some charm that bends my footsteps to her abode.—Do not

imagine, however, that these *charms* are merely ideal.—If when we part, she says, “Will you not come again to-morrow?” could I be insensible to such a request? or if she gives me some order to execute, can I omit returning with an answer in person?—At another time, the weather is fine, and the walk to Walheim is good for exercise;—at Walheim I am but half a league from her house, and how could I stop short, when so near, or return without seeing her?—It would be impossible!

I remember that my grandmother used to tell us a long story about a loadstone mountain, the attraction of which was so great, that when any vessel came within a certain distance, the nails flew from the planks up the mountain, and the crew perished in the unfastened wreck. The application will be easily made by my friend; but were the universe one loadstone, its attraction would be inferior to that of my Charlotte!

## LETTER XXVIII.

July 30.

AT length Albert is come, and Werter must depart!—If he were the most excellent of men, the most ennobled of human kind, and myself in all things his inferior, I yet could not endure to behold him in the enjoyment of such matchless charms and perfections.—Ah! I have seen this happy destined bridegroom, and find him accomplished and irreproachable, one who is formed to make himself esteemed.—Happily, I was not by at their first interview; it would have been too much for this poor heart;—nay, he has been sufficiently guarded not to give her one embrace in my presence. May heaven reward him for this! I cannot but esteem him for the affection he bears this angel, to whom I am certainly indebted for the kind respect he treats me with.—The ladies possess great address in keeping up a good understanding between rivals; and, though it

does not always succeed, it is worth making the attempt for; since, if it do, they are sure to be the greatest gainers.

It is impossible to refuse this Albert my esteem.—His even unruffled mind forms a striking contrast to the impetuosity of mine, yet he is not deficient in tenderness, and seems fully sensible of the invaluable treasure of his Charlotte.—I have not observed him display the least ill-humour, a fault to which you know I bear a great antipathy.—He considers me as endued with taste and discernment; nor does he find his conquest and his passion less flattering, because I make no secret of my partiality for the person and conversation of Charlotte.—In their private moments perhaps he may sometimes play off a few trivial jealousies; but whether it be so or not, I am certain, that, were I placed in the same situation as he is, I could not evince the same undisturbed disposition.—What pangs do thy votaries, love, endure!—Whatever may be the future situation of Albert, all the delights I enjoyed in the company of Charlotte are now no more!—Shall I call this folly or infatuation?—It matters not what you call it, since I, alas! am doomed to be sensible of it.—Before Albert arrived, I knew all that I know at this moment; and was then informed that I could have no pretensions to her hand—nor did I ever hint at such an intention; for whatever passion I have displayed was the mere effect of her resistless perfections; yet, now, I stand like an idiot, overwhelmed with astonishment, to find that the real proprietor of the jewel has taken into his own protection that treasure which never was mine. I am vexed with myself, and deplore my weakness; but I should feel a greater contempt for the grave cold reasoner, who would argue me into submission, and preach fortitude because it is not to be remedied—I despise such wordy empty philosophers!—Yesterday, after



taking a long ramble in the woods, I returned to Charlotte's house, and found her sitting in the bower at the end of the garden, conversing with Albert.—Like a child, I played a thousand little extravagancies to conceal what I felt within.—To-day when I met her, she said, “Do not, for heaven's sake, Werter, act again as you did last night:—your violent emotions are quite terrifying!”—Between ourselves, my friend, I have lately taken to observe Albert's movements, and, as often as he is compelled to be away, I take the advantage of his absence to enjoy her company in the manner I wish, that is, alone.

## LETTER XXIX.

*August 8.*

BELIEVE me, my friend, when I spurned the cold reasoners who would advise me to be reconciled to such an event, it did not occur to me that you would be included in that number: yet, I admit you have written the truth; and to which I shall only oppose this one objection:—When two extreme plans are proposed, both are generally rejected. Just as various as the features of our countenances are the lines of our opinion and conduct; and, this admitted, I shall allow the truth of your inferences, and endeavour by taking a middle path, to evade them.

You say that either I have hopes of possessing Charlotte, or that I have not. What results from this?—In the first, I ought to pursue my object with increased avidity, and leave no means unessayed to promote my wishes.—In the second, you bid me assume the character of manliness, and reject an unfortunate attachment, the end of which is destruction.—Such is the advice you wisely give, but, my friend, how much easier is the theory than the practice!

Suppose a languishing wretch, sinking under a

wasting disease, and whose constitution is daily exhausting;—would you encourage this man to terminate his miseries by a dagger or poison?—Does not the same malady which weakens his frame, deprive him also of that fortitude which such a daring act requires?—This simile perhaps you may answer by another, and ask me, whether any one would not rather endure the amputation of a limb than risk the loss of life by delaying the operation?—It may be right; and, indeed, my friend, there have been times in which I have resolved to tear myself from the danger, could I any where have found an asylum!

P. S. Looking accidentally at my memorandum book, which has lately been much neglected, I find that I have been very attentive to the minutest circumstances.—It is singular, that I should be so precise in every particular, and yet act so childishly.—In the mean time, while I remain perfectly the same in my intellects, there exists not a hope of my recovery.

### LETTER XXX.

*August 10.*

WERE I capable of acting rationally, I might now enjoy the happiest life a mortal can lead; so many agreeable circumstances combine to this end; but, alas! I feel that happiness must be seated in the mind, and not in externals.—To be accounted a member of one of the most amiable of families—to be regarded by the father as a son—by his children as a brother—and by Charlotte, and the virtuous good Albert, who salutes me as a friend, and holds me dearer to him than every thing, except Charlotte;—some would think I must be blessed.—When we walk together, and mutually converse upon the perfections of Charlotte. I regret that you cannot overhear us.—Nothing, it appears to me, can be more unusual and farcical than this intimacy

between us, and yet it possesses an indescribable something which softens me into tears.—Whenever he speaks of the amiable and respectable mother of Charlotte—when he enlarges upon her dying moments, and that tender scene in which she bequeathed to her daughter the future management of her children and family;—when he portrays the change of character Charlotte assumed for that occasion;—her domestic economy, her maternal as well as sisterly love to the children—her punctual discharge of these active duties, without the least diminution of her natural and enchanting vivacity! while he relates these things, I walk by his side, pick up the flowers in our path, carefully unite them into a nosegay, which I toss into the first rivulet we come to, and then steadfastly regard it, unconscious of what I am doing, till it sinks. I do not remember if I told you that Albert has settled here. Being much esteemed at court, he has obtained a lucrative post there; and, indeed, I have seldom seen one better gifted with that punctuality and correctness so indispensable in business.

## LETTER XXXI.

*August 12.*

THERE certainly cannot be a better character than Albert;—the conversation we had together yesterday was very remarkable, and it is worth your hearing. Having a fancy to spend a few days in the mountains, whence I now write to you, I went previously to bid him farewell.—As I walked up and down his room, I perceived his pistols, and begged him to lend them to me during my journey.—He readily assented, adding only, that I must take the trouble of loading them, as with him they were hung up more for ornament than use. While I handled one of them, he proceeded, “I had once very near paid dearly for being prepared against danger; since which period, I have never kept my

pistols charged.”—I desired him to explain how the accident happened. “Being (said he) at a friend’s house in the country for a short time, I always slept soundly, though my pistols were unloaded. It happened, however, that one rainy afternoon, as I was sitting idle, it unaccountably occurred to me, that the house might be broken open and plundered that night; that the pistols might prevent it; and that—but you know how indolence will sit and imagine things:—The result was, that I gave them to my servant to clean and load; and he, thoughtless and playful, presented one at the maid, to frighten her.—God knows how it happened, but one of the pistols went off with the rammer in it, which struck the girl’s right hand, and tore off her thumb.—The accident, it will be easily conceived, occasioned a great deal of distress as well as expense, for I had the surgeon’s bill to pay.—Since that period, I have always kept my pistols uncharged.—But, indeed, how futile is all human foresight!—We can neither anticipate, nor avert the dangers which lurk round us!”—Every thing in Albert pleases me, except his *indeeds*; but, you know, every rule has its exception. He is so particular in being correct, and such his love of veracity, that if he have advanced any thing in argument that may admit of a question, or be too vague or undefined, he always qualifies and softens what he has said with so many palliatives, that at the conclusion he appears to have said nothing at all.—Albert following his general practice, was deeply involved in commenting upon this subject, while I, no longer attending to him, but wandering in reveries, unconsciously placed the mouth of the pistol against my forehead. “What are you at?” exclaimed Albert, canting the pistol on one side, and snatching it forcibly from my hand, “Why, it is not loaded!” I replied. “Admit it is not,” he replied vehemently; “what is the use of an action

which must have been directed by some motive!—To me, the man who would shoot himself, appears as the worst of lunatics—the bare idea only makes me tremble!” “Where is the man,” I retorted, “who dare unhesitatingly affirm that such an action is mad or wise, right or wrong?—To what does your hasty exclamation allude?—Have you fully weighed the secret cause for such an action, whence it sprang, and the necessity which made it irresistible? Had you investigated these sources, probably your decision would have been less prompt.” “Some actions you will surely allow,” said Albert, “are in their very nature criminal, whatever be the motive from which they are committed.”—I gave an unmeaning assent, and proceeded: “Other exceptions, my good friend, may be here brought forward.—Robbery is confessedly a heinous crime, but the wretch who is forced into it by extreme want, who lessens the store of the affluent to save his family and himself from perishing—is he not rather an object of pity than punishment?—Who shall be the first to throw a stone at the husband, who in the natural ebullition of just resentment, sacrifices the dishonoured wife and her base paramour?—Would any one denominate her as infamous, who has been the credulous victim of some unprincipled seducer?—Even our own laws, rigid and unfeeling as they are, listen to mercy, and remit the punishment.” “Such examples, however, (replied Albert) do not in the least apply to the present case.—If a man be swayed by rash and violent impulses, and be incapable of reflecting, he is to be classed with the drunkard and the maniac.”—“O ye moralizers (I exclaimed with a smile of contempt) with what ease and apathy do you decide—while you talk of rashness, inebriation, and lunacy, you remain tranquil and unmoved, despise the inebriated—avoid the insane—and, like the priest and the Pharisee, you pass by on the other side, and are grateful to God

that you are not such a one—I have myself been more than once injured by liquor, and at such times have committed the most foolish excesses, which I feel no shame to confess.—It has been a lesson to me; when any man exhibits superior abilities, or performs any remarkable act of heroism, the world considers him either as drunken or out of his senses:—Indeed, even these weak notions obtain in private life; for what is said of the youth who is very generous and daring?—that he is besotted or mad.—Think of this, ye sages, ye philosophers, and blush!”—“These are the extravagancies of romance,” said Albert; “you always exceed the mark, and now wander very wide from the truth, when you compare great actions with suicide, which has always been looked upon as a weakness.—To sustain a life of wretchedness with fortitude is a task much harder to perform than to end misfortune by the stroke of death.”

Tired of a conversation which disgusted me by its trite and unmeaning sentiments, whilst I was uttering the feelings of my inmost soul, I was upon the point of abruptly discontinuing it; however, I soon checked my impetuosity, recollecting that I had lately often heard this contemptible argument urged, without its making the least impression on me.—But I observed farther, and with energy, “while you denominate suicide a weakness, do not be prejudiced by mere sound. Let us imagine that a nation, groaning under a cruel and despotic tyranny, was to resist, and finally to throw off its chains—is this victory to be called a weakness?—Suppose a house in flames, and the desperate owner exerts his strength in removing burthens which before he could not move—or that a man, infuriated by revenge and injury, attacks and drives away half a dozen of his enemies—are these men to be called *weak*?—It follows, therefore, my friend, that if resistance be a proof of fortitude, how can that which

is the greatest degree of all possible resistance be denominated a weakness?" Albert regarded me steadfastly for a moment, and then rejoined, "With submission, I must acknowledge that all the instances you have enumerated are irrelative to the subject before us." "Very probably," I replied; "for it is not the first time I have been accused of incongruity in my method of combining things. But let us endeavour to place the object in another point of view, and investigate the situation of that man who is determined no longer to bear the load of existence—that burthen of which all are so tenacious.—Let us make his feelings our own, without which we cannot discuss the argument fairly. Human nature (I proceeded) is bounded by certain confines—that is, it can endure pleasure, wo, and pain, but to a certain extent; beyond which, it ceases to be injured, and becomes insensible.—We have nothing to do with the strength or weakness of a man, but whether he can overstep these limits, when mental or bodily evils overwhelm him.—Nothing to me can be more absurd than to bestow the appellation of coward on that man who puts an end to his existence, unless it be to call him one who dies of a malignant fever." "Mere hypothesis—all paradox!"—exclaimed Albert! "Less so than you imagine," I rejoined; "you will admit that a disease is properly called fatal, when nature is so morbidly attacked, and her powers so far sunken, that what remains is inadequate to continue either animation or circulation—this argument will adapt itself to the soul, and let us investigate the impressions and the ideas which act upon it, till at last an irresistible passion obtains the dominion, weakens the powers it once possessed, and entirely subdues it;—in vain does the man of strong sense and a collected temper see the unhappy situation of the forlorn being, in such abject circumstances;—without effect he gives him counsel, and resembles a

man in perfect health, who sits by the bed of his dying friend, unable to impart to him the smallest portion of his own vigour."

The inference to be drawn from this, Albert contended was much too wide.—I then quoted the story of the young woman, who lately drowned herself, and which he had forgotten, till I mentioned it.—“An innocent young creature,” said I, “so habituated to the narrow sphere of family concerns, and her weekly work, that her happiness never extended beyond taking a walk in the meadows on Sunday, and a dance at the holyday-fairs, while the other little leisure she had, was passed in talking with her acquaintance about the village news and tittle-tattle.—Presently her heart is inflated with new wishes, occasioned by the flatteries of the men; her former artless pleasures become insipid.—At length she accidentally meets with a youth, who begets in her bosom a mutual and a new affection; from which period, her delight is all centred in him; she loses sight of every other object in the world, and sees, hears, desires, and meditates, only on her lover.—Her heart, uninfluenced by the baleful charm of variety and frivolity, entertains no other hope than to be his—dreams of being his wedded wife, and doubts not of realizing that happiness—His promises, and ardent vows, constantly renewed, confirm her hopes, her love keeps pace with his fondness—her whole frame is an anticipation of pleasure—of rapture—and, overcome by the soft impulses, she extends her arms to embrace the dear treasure of her affections.—Ah! unhappy delusion!—her lover is faithless, perjured!—he forsakes her, and she is distracted!—Petrified!—overwhelmed! she stands senseless on the brink of that abyss of misery which extends around her:—darkness envelopes her—no gleam of hope cheers her—he is gone—gone for ever—he whose life was dearer to her than her own—and in



the midst of the universe, and surrounded by numberless admirers who would repair the injury she has sustained, she feels cut off from society, and deserted by the world!—Thus blinded and impelled by the keen goadings of grief and despair, she plunges into the merciless deep, and sinks to rise no more!—In this picture, Albert, is portrayed the history of many men; and let me ask, is it not a similar case to illness? Nature finding no way to escape, and sensible that her enfeebled energies were incapable of contending with the accumulating evil, her only refuge was death.—Shame on that man who can listen to this pitiable story, and then coldly exclaim, ‘A silly girl, why did not she wait till time had worn off the impression;—her despondency would soon have become lighter, and a worthier lover might have found the way to her heart!’—With equal propriety might it be said, such a simpleton died of a fever—if he would but have kept himself cool, and waited till his strength was quite renovated, all would have been well enough, and he might have been alive now!”

Albert would not still allow my comparison to be just, and therefore suggested many objections; and, among others, that I had advanced only the example of a simple uninformed girl. He could not conceive it possible that a man of education and mind, whose views were enlarged, and whose consolations were numerous in proportion, could commit an act of suicide. “My good friend,” said I, “though blessed with a most enlightened education and the soundest intellect, a man is but a man; and the reason he possesses, when opposed to the ebullition of passion, or, more properly, when the limits of human nature close in upon him, does not act at all, or with a very feeble effect.—Again—But let us cease at present, and resume the argument another time.”—I then abruptly took my leave and went out—Alas!—my heart was ready to burst, and we parted without

a perfect understanding on either side!—Ah! how rarely do men comprehend each other!

## LETTER XXXII.

*August 15.*

DOUBTLESS the charm which renders us essential to each other is a similarity of taste and sentiment.—Charlotte, I am certain, cannot see me depart without feeling some regret; and as to the children, they never let me go away on one day without asking me to be sure and come the next.—I visited them this evening that I might tune Charlotte's harpsichord; but scarcely had I set my foot within doors, when my intention was disappointed; for all the children came running to me, and entreated me to tell them a story.—Charlotte was willing that I should indulge them. Having, therefore, served out to them their supper-bread, which they accept from my hands as cheerfully as if it were distributed by Charlotte, I told them my very best tale of "Henry and Peter, or the Giant who was served by Dwarfs."—Practice, I can assure you, has considerably improved my fancy in this way; and the effect which such tales produce on the infant mind is astonishing.—If I insert an incident more than usual, in relating an old story, or omit to mention, or even alter, any one, the arch little rogues tell me "that it was not so the first time;" hence I now endeavour to be as exact in words and tone as possible; and indeed this trifling circumstance has convinced me that an author may injure his works by altering, and even amending, the successive editions. The first impression sinks the deepest, and with the credulous it can rarely be effaced; nay, he will be vainly employed who endeavours to eradicate it.

## LETTER XXXIII.

*August 18*

CAN it be possible that the same cause which first constituted man's highest enjoyment should afterward be productive of his misery?—The warm admiration of nature which formerly animated my breast, which flowed upon me in a torrent of rapture, and placed me in an ideal paradise, is now become an insupportable anguish, a demon which follows and goads me unremittingly.—Formerly I scaled the summit of the lofty rocks, and there contemplated the fine river which, to a trackless distance, meanders through this fertile plain.—Everything then flourished, grew, and expanded.—All around me was in activity.—The mountains were clothed to their highest points with tall and tufted trees, and the serpentine valleys were shaded by friendly woods.—The pensive stream stole its way through the trembling reeds, and reflected from its lucid bosom the light cloud which dwelt in the air, floating on the gentlest zephyrs.—I heard the feathered harmonists enlivening the woods with their carols.—The purple rays of the sun teemed with myriads of sportive animalculæ, and the busy hum of the grasshoppers at evening attracted my earnest notice. The arid rock nourished the moss, and the sands below were encrusted with thick broom.—The genial glow which animates all nature filled and warmed my heart; and I was lost in the glorious idea of infinity. Stupendous mountains reared their heads above me—rude fragments of rock and shagged precipices lay at my feet—cataracts dashed down by my side—impetuous rivers rolled through the plain—Echo repeated every sound from rock to rock, and cave to cave—in the bowels of the earth incalculable powers were in motion, and multiplying endlessly.—While the host of created existences, of innumerable kinds and shapes, dwell upon the earth,

or hover in the air, man sneaks into his little hut, and peeping out, bombastically exclaims, "Behold, I am the lord of this vast universe!"—Perishable creature!—every thing appears little to thee, for thou art littleness itself.—Cragged mountains—pathless wilds—the fathomless confines of immense oceans—are all upholden by the spirit of the Eternal, and every atom which he has called into existence is the specific object of his providential care! Oh, how often, while borne away by this train of thought, have I wished, as some bird of prey darted over my head through the liquid air, that I could mount upon its pinion, and traverse the immensity of space—there, transported to some blissful region, quench my thirst at the fountain of eternal joy—there partake, if but for a moment, with my contracted soul, of the beatitude of that immortal Omnipotent, "in whom we live, and move, and have our being!"

The bare recollection of these hours, my dear friend, is still dear to my heart; but when my vehement mind recalls those sensations which furnish me with the powers of description, then do I soar above myself, and feel my present misery with a double keenness.

The curtain descends—the scene is changed;—the beautiful prospect of eternal life is become a bottomless pit, yawning to engulf me.—How can we assert that any thing *does exist*, when all is transient?—When time in its rapid progress carries every thing with it, and our fleeting life, hurried down the torrent, is either overwhelmed by the waves or dashed to pieces against the rocks: Not a moment passes without a tendency hostile to my own preservation, and that of all I see; and, in turn, I am myself every moment a destroyer.—An innocent walk deprives thousands of unoffending insects of life: at one step the mazy habitation of the industrious ant is ruined, and a world in minia

ture is crushed into a chaotic mass.—Believe me, it is not the great and unexpected calamities of the world, the inundations which overwhelm whole villages, the earthquakes that entomb whole cities, which excite my feelings, and sensibly moves me: No!—the worm that gnaws me is that hidden destructive principle which operates in all the arcana of nature.—Her greatest works all contain within themselves the seeds of their own dissolution; every thing acts to its own destruction, and that of whatever is contiguous: Hence, while I am environed by earth and air, and all their secret active influences, I wander sorrowful and dejected, devoid of comfort; and the whole universe appears to me an insatiable monster, continually employed in devouring and regorging its aliment.

## LETTER XXXIV.

*August 21.*

WHEN an ominous dream awakens me in the morning, I stretch out my arms to enfold her, but she is not near me!—When a pleasing vision has placed her at my side in the meadows, and I have pressed her hand, imprinting on it a thousand kisses, I turn and look round for her in vain!—Alas, in my slumbers, I fondly think I touch her; and then, when I am wholly awake, my eyes run down with tears, and my heart beats with anguish. Then, bereaved of all comfort, I brood over the evils my imagination anticipates.

## LETTER XXXV.

*August 22.*

MY situation is really pitiable!—My energetic temper has degenerated into an irksome indolence, and I can neither enjoy idleness, nor relish employment. Thinking is odious, it only increases my malady; and, insensible to the charms of nature, books to me are tasteless and unentertaining. One

master-object sways my mind, and all, except that, forsake me. I wish frequently that I were a mechanic, that I might be employed from the time I arose at some useful work, and thus divert the gloomy ideas which intrude through the day. What an enviable man is Albert, busied over his files of papers and parchments! and how often do I say to myself, Ah! were I *in his situation* I should be happy. How!--*in his situation*—ah! then I should be happy; then would Charlotte——Hold! no farther at present!

I have several times taken up my pen to write to the minister for the place which you think I might, on application, obtain; indeed, from the kind advice, promises, and civilities I have received from him, I should be induced to flatter myself that my request would not be unsuccessful. I know he has several in his gift, the service of which is neither irksome nor laborious; but when, on a second consideration, the fable of the horse recurs to my mind, who had no sooner submitted to be bridled and saddled, than he regretted the loss of liberty, I am quite undetermined how to act. Again, my good friend, does not this desire of change arise from a restless errant disposition, which would equally haunt me in every situation while I am under the influence of love?

### LETTER XXXVI.

*August 28.*

WERE my disorder of a nature to be relieved, I should certainly find a cure with these excellent people. This day, my friend, gave me birth, and, early in the morning, Albert sent me a small parcel; having opened it, I saw one of the sleeve-knots, a pale pink ribbon, which Charlotte wore the first time I beheld her, and which I have several times requested her to give me as a mark of esteem. Albert likewise enclosed two volumes of Wetstein's

Homer, in 12mo. which is a more portable size than the Ernesti Edition, and were what I had often wished for. How kindly do they anticipate my wishes; how well do they understand these minor attentions of friendship, so much more endearing than the magnificent gifts of the great, which only humble the receiver. I pressed the ribbon to my lips a thousand times, and at every kiss brought into memory the blissful days which are for ever departed!—Ah me!—my hard fate—but I will not murmur at it. So do the sweetest blossoms of life flourish for a moment, and in the next decay—some are early cut off, and leave not a vestige behind: If a few set into fruit, how seldom does it come to perfection; and, even that little which does, is too often neglected, and suffered to perish. The variety of seasons, however, must be taken into the account, which are in fact as fluctuating as ourselves.

Adieu. The weather is incomparably fine. When in Charlotte's orchard, I frequently climb one of the trees, and select the finest pears for her, while she stands under, and receives them in her apron.

### LETTER XXXVII.

*August 30.*

WHAT a wretch am I—one who takes pleasure in deceiving himself, and playing the part of an idiot!—Why cherish this ardent and boundless passion!—All my prayers are addressed to Charlotte; my fancy hovers round her; all that surrounds me is regarded, only as it reminds me of her. When she is with me, then are my hours happy; but, often am I obliged from the state of my heart to sever myself from her, when I have been seated for a time by her side, contemplating her fine proportions and attitudes, and listening to the melodious accents of her voice; the gust of delight takes possession of me, my heart palpitates, my sight is confused, and I become insensible to what I am, or

whether I exist:—then, if she seem cold, if she deny me the melancholy consolation of bathing her hand with my tears, I am driven to the necessity of leaving her:—then do I stray about the meadows, or climb the steep rocks: I break through thickets, and wound myself with the thorns and brambles; and thus obtain some relief to my anguish by varying the scene. Sometimes, sinking with fatigue and thirst, I lie stretched like a corpse on the earth; sometimes, in the sequestered wood, when the pale moon, in the dead night, shines serenely on my head, I lean against a crooked tree to ease my weary feet, and overcome by the want of balmy rest, sleep till the radiant sun rises, and interrupts my repose. Ah, my friend, the deep dungeon, its chains, its straw, and even the rack, would be a pleasure to what I endure!—Adieu. The grave can alone terminate those pangs—that abode, where every misery is excluded.

### LETTER XXXVIII.

*Sept. 3.*

IT is decided—I will quit this place!—I thank you, my dear friend, for your good counsel, which has effected this resolution. I had determined to leave her this fortnight past, but now it is fixed. She is gone to town, to visit an intimate friend, and Albert—Albert accompanies her.—I must leave this place without delay.

### LETTER XXXIX.

*Sept. 10.*

AH, me! What a dreadful night have I passed!—Henceforward, surely I shall not shrink at any situation!—My friend, I shall never behold her more!—Alas! no more;—Oh! that I could hang on your neck, pour my full heart into your bosom, and receive back your sympathizing consolations!—I endeavour to calm my perturbed spirits, and pre-



serve some composure of mind, at least till the daylight, when I have ordered post horses, and hope to be far removed from this spot. Charlotte is now in her slumbers—unconscious that she will never behold me again!—I tore myself abruptly from her, and had that self-command not to betray a suspicion of my intention, during a conversation which continued two hours.—O heaven!—what illumination and intellect were in her discourse!

Albert had promised to meet Charlotte and me in the garden, directly after supper: I was standing upon the terrace, under the shady chesnut-trees, admiring, for the last time, the sun's beautiful descent below this delightful vale and rippling stream. Charlotte and I had often sauntered on the same spot, and viewed the same glorious object. I was particularly attached to this place, before I knew Charlotte; a secret sympathy seemed to bind me to it; and my predilection was farther increased, when I found in our earlier friendship, that she had selected this as her favourite promenade. The prospect from under these chesnut-trees is extensive; but I need not state this here, as I have before described to you the manner in which the lofty copses close it in at the end, and how the walk through the wood becomes gradually darker till it terminates in a recess, formed by a group of umbrageous trees, adapted for the indulgence of solitude and contemplation.—I still recollect the soothing melancholy which filled my heart on my first entrance into this pensive retreat: it was then the noon of day, and the sensation which came over my mind was certainly a secret presentiment that it would one day be to me a scene of delight and anguish.

Half an hour having been occupied in the opposite ideas of my departure and return, I heard them advancing on the terrace, and flew to meet them, at the same time trembling by taking Charlotte's hand

and kissing it.—As soon as we had arrived at the top of the terrace, the moon peeped her silver edge over the pinetops that skirted the distant mountains; and we continued in general conversation, till we came to the romantic recess at the end of the avenue. Charlotte first entered this beloved spot, and seated herself. Albert took his place on one side, and I on the other; but, such was the agitation of my bosom, that I could not long remain at ease; I arose, stood before her, and after taking several turns backwards and forwards, again resumed my seat, full of the most unquiet emotions.

Charlotte made us notice the heightened effect which the moon's light received at the end of the wood, from the darkness of the grove in which we were; the gloomy dignity of this mixed scene was in unison with the melancholy of my soul.—It was, my dear friend, sublimity impressive!—Charlotte, at length, broke the reverie in which we all seemed absorbed. “Whenever I walk by moonlight, I recall to memory those objects whom once I loved, and who are now no more!—Those introduce the thoughts of death and a world to come—Yes! (she proceeded in a tone of assurance and tenderness.) We shall have an existence hereafter—but in what form, Werter?—Shall we recognize each other?—What anticipations have you, and what is your opinion on this head?”

“Charlotte,” said I, holding out my hand to her, and the tears flowing from my eyes, “We shall, I trust, behold each other again, both in this and a future state!”—I could not proceed.—Ought she, my dear friend, to have proposed such a cruel question to me, at the moment when my heart was bursting with the thought of separation?

“Ah! (said Charlotte,) I wonder if those whom we have loved, and whose memory is still dear to us, are sensible in their blessed state of our regard, and the happy hours we once passed together?—

When I am seated in a calm evening in the midst of the little innocents my dear mother left behind, and they assemble round me as they did about her, I fancy that her sacred shade hovers over us; then do I raise my tearful eyes to heaven, and pray that she may behold me from her celestial abode, fulfilling the promise I made to her in her dying moments, to be a mother to her infants!—Repeatedly have I exclaimed ‘Most excellent of mothers, pardon my incapacity, if I am not to them all that you once were!’—Ah! if I am not all that she was, I strive to be all that I can: I see they are properly clothed and nourished; and, farther, that they are tenderly treated and carefully educated.—Oh! could she but be sensible of the harmony which reigns among us; how would she adore and bless that immortal parent to whom, with her last breath, she addressed such fervent prayers for our happiness!”—She spoke for some time longer on this theme, but my pen must fail in endeavouring to repeat her exalted sentiments—the energetic language of genius and piety cannot be conveyed by cold inanimate characters!

Albert here tenderly interrupted her. “My lovely Charlotte, (said he) you indulge too much in these sensibilities; it is true such recollections are pleasing, but they ought to be seldom touched upon.” “You cannot forget, Albert, (said she) the sweet evenings when we three used to sit at our little round table, in the absence of my father, and after the children were put to bed. You generally brought a book in your hand, but you seldom read any of it, so much preferable was the intelligent conversation of the enlightened woman to every other allurements. Oh, what a model she was of serenity and sensibility! of activity and mental arrangement!—Heaven can witness how often I have knelt, and earnestly prayed that I might bear some resemblance to her perfections!”

Throwing myself at her feet, I pressed her hand, and bathed it with my tears. "O Charlotte, Charlotte!" I exclaimed with energy, "the spirit of your mother, and the blessing of heaven, rest upon you!"—She took my hand, which, like hers, was wet with tears, and said, "had you but known her, Werter, she would not have been found undeserving even of *your* friendship!"—I stood motionless, overcome with a sense of the highest compliment I had ever received. She then proceeded: "This most excellent woman died in the flower of life; her youngest child had scarcely attained its sixth month—her illness soon terminated, but during that period, oh! what calmness and resignation she displayed!—Her principal anxiety arose from her children, and more particularly on account of the youngest. Feeling the indications of approaching dissolution, she bid me summon them to her;—they came and knelt round the bed of death, the less ones insensible of the loss they were to experience, and the elder ones sobbing with filial sorrow. She then extended her feeble hands towards heaven, and earnestly entreated the *great Parent* of all to be their *father*; having kissed them successively, she bid them retire, and addressed me: "Charlotte," said she, "be to them a mother!" I pressed her hand, in silent token of my assent. "I hope much from you, my child; even a mother's fondness and a mother's care! Your filial obedience, your affectionate and grateful tears, convince me that you already have a heart alive to the yearnings of maternal tenderness—extend it to your brothers and sisters; be as dutiful to your father as you have been to me, and be to him the emblem of a faithful wife, the solace and the sunshine of his sinking age!"—Here she inquired for her husband, but he had withdrawn to indulge more freely in the luxury of solitude and sorrow: he had anticipated the loss he was about to sustain, and his bursting heart was full of anguish. You, Albert,

were in the room at this time—she heard some one move, and, on being told who it was, desired you to come near her. Gazing on us for a few moments with a look of serenity and delight, she articulated, “You are formed for each other!—You will be happy together!”—Albert, with a tender embrace, interrupted her, and exclaimed, “Yes, my beloved Charlotte, we *are* and we *shall be* happy together!”—Even the stoical Albert was melted into softness by the affecting scene, and I was almost insensible with sorrow.

“Such was the woman, Werter, (she continued) who was to be snatched from her fond family!—Gracious heaven! must we thus be divided from those whom we most dearly love!—Ah! the children’s sobs still sound in my ears; they wept and lamented for a long time afterward, and innocently said that *black men* had carried away their dear mamma!”

Charlotte now rising from her seat, I was roused; yet I continued to sit, still holding her hand. “It is time to go, (said she) for it is late!”—While she said this, she motioned to withdraw her hand, but I held it more firmly. “We shall behold each other again!” I exclaimed; “we shall recognize each other hereafter, whatever be the form assigned us. I leave you—it is my own determination; but, if I thought I were *never* to behold you again, it would be more than my heart could bear. Adieu, Charlotte—Farewell, Albert!—Ah! we *shall* see each other again.” “O yes! to-morrow, to be sure!” said Charlotte, with a smile. That *to-morrow*, my dear friend, was a dagger to my soul!—Ah! me, how reluctantly she seemed to withdraw her hand!—They walked down the avenue, while I arose, and stood gazing after them by the light of the moon, till, in a phrensy of passion, I projected myself to the earth, and gave vent to the conflicts that rent my bosom—I then started up, and ran up the ter-

race, where, under the shade of the lime-trees, I could still discern her white gown moving towards the garden gate. My arms were instinctively extended after her, but in vain!—The angel in a moment after disappeared!

## LETTER XL.

October 20

I ARRIVED at this place yesterday evening, and, observant of my promise, write to you as early as possible. The minister is indisposed with the gout, and this, of course, will increase his native spleen and ill-humour. I perceive but too clearly that heaven has destined me to endure severe trials, but I will not despond, nor be discouraged. I must study to acquire some levity;—the very idea of this word, which has inadvertently escaped my pen, makes me smile—for I am convinced that a little of this *light quality* is all that I require to make me the most happy and easy of mortals!—But why should I mistrust the faculties and powers which nature has bestowed on me, to effect this purpose, while I perceive others of much weaker intellect and talent strutting about, in all the self-important pride of the peacock, with nothing to render them happy but their gaudy covering?—Almighty Providence, why among the blessings thou hast deigned to enrich me with, didst thou omit those of confidence and internal serenity!—I hear you whisper, “Patience, Werter, and all will soon be better: time can perform wonders, and all things are in a state of change!”—I will candidly confess, my friend, that you have decided rightly;—for, since that I have been obliged to mix with company, and have turned my attention to their schemes, their actions, and their conversations, I have become less dissatisfied with myself. As we naturally draw comparisons between ourselves and the objects which surround us, our happiness or misery is dependent

dissatisfied with myself. As we naturally draw comparisons between ourselves and the objects which surround us, our happiness or misery is dependent on and connected with these; hence nothing is more dangerous to the gloomy mind than solitude, which gives new wings to the restless fancy, and bids it wander among a world of visionary existences, compared to whom we hold ourselves as the most light and insignificant.—All things appear more important than they really are, and all men superior to ourselves, which is a natural operation of the mind. We admire in others those qualifications which we do not possess, and are always undervaluing our own worth:—thus we create the image of a perfect happy being—while, in fact, the whole is a creature of the imagination.

On the contrary, however, when in defiance of irresolution and disappointment we earnestly direct our efforts to one point, and never deviate from the course we proposed, it will be found that we have made greater progress, though continually on the traverse, than others with all the assistance of wind and tide; and that judgment which we form of ourselves, by a comparison with others, whether we keep on a line with, be ahead, or astern of them, will be found to be correct.

## LETTER XLI.

*Nov. 10.*

MY situation every day becomes more tolerable: My time is constantly occupied, so numerous are the actors who surround me, the various characters they play, and the amusing diversity of the scenes they exhibit.—I have formed an acquaintance with the Count of —, and he daily increases in my esteem. He possesses a sound understanding and keen penetration; yet these superior qualities have not rendered him reserved and morose; on the contrary, he displays much cheerfulness, mildness, and great sensibility. I first met him in consequence of

some business we had to adjust, and, we soon conceived a presentiment for each other: He spoke to me with a frankness and affability that demanded mine, and hence we laid aside all ceremony, and conversed on the most friendly terms. The unre-served confidence of such a mind as his, while it is highly gratifying, has a tendency to soften the pains which throb in a heart constituted like your friend's—you have long known its failings, and I am sure will draw a veil over them.

### LETTER XLII.

Nov. 11.

I IMAGINED it would be so—the minister and I are quite dissatisfied with each other: he is certainly the most punctilious blockhead existing, and as full of etiquette and formality as an old maid. Dissatisfied with himself, is it to be accounted singular that he should not be pleased with others?—I like to proceed in business with correctness and despatch, and when it is finished, to have done with it; but this is not his way. If I have made a draft of any papers, he will, on its being presented, give it me back, saying, “It may do—but revise it, however again; there is always some trifle to correct—you may think of a better phrase or a stronger word.” Away then flies all my forbearance, and I curse him and his precision. Not a conjunction, nor the most trifling mark must be omitted, and as to those transpositions which constitute my favourite style of composition, he detests them. Every sentence must be agreeable to the quaint form of office, or it will not do. You know my utter aversion to such barbarous rules, and can therefore the more easily imagine how much I suffer from such a particular character.

My only consolation under this trouble is the agreeable intimacy I have formed with Count —, who very candidly told me, the other day, how weary he was of the tardiness and extreme caution



of the minister. "Persons of this humour," said he, "not only are a burthen to themselves, but to all those who have transactions with them. We have no remedy, but to suppose ourselves in the situation of a traveller who is compelled to go over a mountain to gain his proper road; if the mountain were not in his way, his path would be so much less short and fatiguing—but, since it is so, he must patiently travel over it!"

The old gentleman sees that I am a favourite with the Count, and this augments his dislike, which he displays at every opportunity when I am present, by endeavouring to depreciate him in my esteem: in return, I defend him, and that increases his displeasure. Yesterday, I was sensible that the same stroke he aimed at my friend, was meant to hit me.—He observed, that the Count might do very well for the common-place business of the world, that his style was tolerable, and he wrote fluently—but that he, like other *fine geniuses*, had no claim to solid knowledge!—The tone and manner in which this was delivered, and the look that he fixed on me, might be interpreted to mean—the allusion is meant for you.—But I passed it as a thing unworthy my notice—for to what purpose is argument with such stupid animals?—With respect to the Count, however, I replied with some warmth, "that his understanding and behaviour entitled him to the respect of every one; and that he was the only gentleman I had met with, who while he possessed talents so superior to the mass of mankind, yet retained an equal promptitude in the despatch of business." This was all algebra to him; and, to avoid giving him any farther opportunity of inveighing against a character so much better than his, and lest his absurdity should excite my resentment, I immediately withdrew.

You, my friend, I must consider as one of the authors of my present bondage. You employed

remonstrance and persuasion in favour of activity and I consented to wear the heavy chain. If the man who plants potatoes and carries them to market, be not more active and useful than I am, then may I tug ten years longer at the cursed oar to which I am lashed!—What irksomeness and insipidity abound in the circles of fashionable life—ambitious of rank and honours, how do they toil and watch for precedency!—and, in every thing they do, expose their grovelling selfish disposition; for example, we have a lady here, whose whole conversation in company is directed to impress them with the greatness of her family, and the value of her estates. A stranger to this silly character, would certainly conclude, on hearing her boasting, that she had at least some pretence to rank or property; but, to render the ridicule complete, she is nothing more than the daughter of a steward's clerk in the vicinity!—How strange is it, that any one should study to become despicable!

Daily do I perceive more clearly, my friend, the impropriety of making ourselves a standard to measure others, seeing that it is with the greatest difficulty I can repress the sallies of my own heated imagination, and calm the emotions of my bosom. I leave every one to pursue the path he has chosen, let me only be indulged with the same privilege.

I am principally disgusted with empty distinctions which subsist among fellow-citizens. I am perfectly sensible that an inequality of condition is indispensable among men; and that I am myself indebted to this system;—I only request that it may not be a bar to the small share of enjoyment which this world of unhappiness affords.

In one of my late trips, I became acquainted with the charming Miss B——, whose unaffected and engaging behaviour forms a lively contrast to the formality and stiffness of her neighbours. At our first meeting we enjoyed a mutually pleas... and unre

strained conversation, and when we parted, I entreated permission to wait upon her at her residence, which she complied with in such an engaging manner, that I am impatient till a proper opportunity shall enable me to accept her invitation. She is not a native of this place, but is at present with her aunt, whose pompous countenance disgusted me at the first view; however, for the young lady's sake, I showed her great respect, and frequently addressed myself to her. In about half an hour I had nearly penetrated into all that her niece has since told me; that her aunt, who is advanced in years, and possessed of a small income, with a less share of understanding, takes no other pleasure than that of relating her long and illustrious pedigree: under cover of her nobility of birth she stands entrenched, and her greatest amusement is to sit at her window, and look down with imperial contempt on the ignoble heads which pass under in the street. Formerly this old dame was accounted handsome; and, while in the flower of her spring, she coquetted with many a worthy youth who would have married her—this was her *golden age*!—When her beauty faded, she was reduced to accept of an old officer, and serve under her morose commander—this was her *brazen age*!—She is now a widow—and deserted; and, were it not for the affability of her agreeable niece, she would be altogether forsaken—the last may be called her *iron age*!

## LETTER XLIII.

Jan. 8, 1772

WHAT kind of characters are these?—their minds are perpetually occupied about forms; they can spend a whole year in insignificantly contriving how they may advance one chair's breadth nearer to the upper end of the table.—But such triflers are not idle; on the contrary, they add to their labours by bestowing on empty pursuits that time

which should be employed in more important concerns.—Last week a grand party was made to enjoy the diversions of the ice, in sledges; but, a childish dispute arising about precedency, it was instantly dissolved. What idiots—not to perceive that rank can never constitute true greatness!—He who fills the highest station is not always the principal actor—many a monarch is controlled by his minister, and many a minister by his secretary. In such uncertainty, who is to be called the grand mover?—Certainly it must be he who has the address and ability to bend the passions and power of others to the promotion of his own designs.

## LETTER XLIV.

*Jan. 20.*

THIS letter my dear Charlotte, is written in a humble cottage, to which I am indebted for protection during the continuance of a tremendous storm. All the time of my residence in the dreary town of D— among strangers—such they are indeed to the emotions of my heart—I have not been disposed to write to you; but no sooner had I entered this secluded hovel, against the little window of which the snow and hail were beating, than I felt restored to you and myself. Immediately I set foot within, your figure was present to my eyes, and your remembrance swelled my heart.—Ah, Charlotte! that sacred remembrance—those endearing recollections!—Gracious heaven—Oh, that the first moment when I beheld you could be restored!

Could you, my beloved Charlotte, but view me in that vortex by which I am surrounded, where all is dissipation, and to me vacuity!—Indifference fastens on me; my heart is unmoved—the tear of sympathy no longer drops from my eye, the moisture is dried up—I stand as it were steadfastly gaping at a raree-show, the great and small puppets of which dance before my eyes, while I say to

myself,—is not all this a mere optical deception?—These puppets divert me with their pranks; or, rather, I afford them a similar entertainment. If I take hold of my neighbour's hand, it feels like a composition of wood, and I withdraw mine terrified and disappointed. When night comes, I propose to enjoy the sunrise of the following morning—but I have no resolution to quit my bed. I wish in the morning to take a walk in the moonlight of evening—but something detains me in my chamber. I rise and go to bed, without a consciousness of what I do—and all the ideas which charm me at night and awaken me in the morning speedily vanish away.

There is, at least as far as I have seen, but one female here (a Miss B——) who is of the same order of beings with yourself. She is your counterpart, Charlotte, if any one can be said to resemble you. “Ah!” you will exclaim, “he has learned to make elegant compliments!”—Indeed the remark is true:—I have become lately extremely polite, not having it in my power to be more usefully employed. The ladies extol my wit, and allow that I am unequalled in the art of flattery—“and *falsehoods*”—you will add; for one is always the companion of the other. Let me, however, return to Miss B——. She is a girl of a lively sensibility and a superior understanding, both of which are expressed in her fine blue eyes. She finds her rank burthensome, since that neither gratifies nor creates one inclination. The vacuity of high life feeds her contempt of it; and hence we often indulge for hours together, in the pleasures of imagination, conversing upon the sweets of tranquillity and rural scenery. This leads us to think of you, my dear Charlotte, for you are not unknown to Miss B——, who respects you—but her esteem is voluntary, not exacted: she admires you, and always hears me dwell upon your name with pleasure.

Would that I could be at your side, in that fa-

yourite little room where the dear children used to frolic around us!—When they were too tiresome, I used to tell them a story—then they would surround me, and listen with such eagerness and attention!—

The sun has almost descended—his parting beams still glitter on the snow which covers the face of the country!—The storm is past, and I must return to my cell; adieu!—Is Albert with you?—What is he to you?—What a fool am I to ask such a question!

### LETTER XLV.

*Feb. 17.*

A SEPARATION must soon take place between our minister and I; for it is impossible we can agree much longer together. He is so dogmatic, his method of transacting business so absurd, that I cannot refrain from expostulating with him, and even following my own plans in opposition to his, which he, of course, reprobates as erroneous. He has hinted something about my refractoriness, in a letter he lately sent to court, and I have received a reprimand from the prime minister there—couched, indeed, in very gentle terms—but still it was a reprimand. I had determined to send in my resignation, but I received a private letter from the same person, which, while it humbled me in my own opinion, filled me with admiration of the profound, dignified, and exalted genius, by which it was dictated. It endeavoured to soothe my mental irritability by the most persuasive arguments; candidly expressed an approbation of my schemes, of their weight and influence; and condescended to approve of that ardency and impetuosity so natural to youth—but then, while he cautioned me not to extinguish this fire, he charged me to keep it within due bounds, that it might not prove injurious!—Again, then, I am at rest within myself, and taught to be

serene—at least for a week to come. Contentment and harmony of soul are great blessings, my dear friend, but unhappily, they are as transitory as they are precious!

## LETTER XLVI.

*Feb. 20.*

HEAVEN preserve you, my dear friend! and may you enjoy that happiness which it withholds from me!—Albert, I most cordially thank you for your deception. I expected to have been informed of the nuptial day, and intended on that day, (that day of bliss for thee!) to have taken down Charlotte's profile from the wall, and to have buried it with some other papers. You are now united, and her picture remains untouched—be it so!—Why should it not?—Has Charlotte no room left for me in her heart?—Yes! with thy permission, Albert, I may still hold a second place there.—I will—I must! If I thought she could forget me, I should become distracted!—Albert,—envied husband!—Oh, maddening sound!—may you be happy!—And you Charlotte, angelic creature, be the most blessed among women.

## LETTER XLVII.

*March 15.*

A SINGULAR occurrence has just happened, the consequence of which must be my removal; I have exhausted all my patience and forbearance; it is irremediable, and I am indebted to you, my friend, as the cause of all this:—for it was you who urged and teased me to accept a situation for which I am by no means qualified. You have now great reason to be satisfied as well as I; but, lest you may attribute this failure to the impetuosity of my disposition, I will enclose a plain and simple statement of the whole business

## LETTER XLVIII.

*March.*

I HAVE before repeatedly informed you, that Count — is very partial to me. Yesterday I dined with him; it was a day on which none but persons of rank were invited to meet at his house. The assembly was altogether out of my mind, and much less did I reflect, that we subalterns were to be excluded. After dinner, the Count and I went into the saloon, where we talked and paraded arm and arm. Colonel B. soon after came in, and joining us, the time passed insensibly on till the nobility came. Heaven can witness they were not in my mind, when entered the *Most Noble and Right Honourable* Lady R. accompanied by her husband and simple daughter, with her *short* waist and *flat* bosom. They passed by me with a look of contempt and hauteur that was evidently meant to let me read my distance. Filled with disgust at this empty class of beings, I was about to withdraw, and only waited to make my bow to the Count, who was detained with their unmeaning prattle, when the agreeable Miss B. entered. The remembrance of the pleasant conversation we had enjoyed together, induced me to alter my intention of going; so placing myself at the back of her chair, I spoke familiarly with her; I was some time, however, before I discovered that her manner was embarrassed, and that she did not reply with her usual affability: the novelty of the change excited my astonishment. "Heavens!" exclaimed I inwardly, "can *she* be like the rest! I should have quitted the room if my anxiety to ascertain the motive had not detained me. The remainder of the company were now arriving. —I saw the Baron F— enter with the same coat that he wore at the coronation of Francis I—, and the Chancellor and his old deaf lady, the Count I—, and others, decked out in their stiff antiquated



habits, made a ludicrous contrast to the airy fashions of the present day. I paid my respects to all those whom I recognized, and remarked that there was a very laconic distance in their answers; but I was most chagrined at Miss B.'s behaviour, which chiefly engaged my attention, so much so, that I did not observe that the ladies were all clustered together, whispering in a distant part of the room, and that the buz was general among the gentlemen, while Madam S. was warmly remonstrating with the Count on the same topic (this I have since been informed of by Miss B.) At length the Count drew me to the window, and very good humouredly said, "Such is the folly of etiquette, that some here are deeply hurt at your being in their *dignified* company. It would give me great uneasiness if ——" "I beg your Excellency's pardon," said I, "the impropriety of being present did not occur to me before; but I am sure your goodness will excuse this inattention. I was about to depart some little time back, but my evil genius chained me to the spot." I then bowed, took my leave, and received a friendly shake of his hand, which convinced me that the step he had submitted to was foreign to his heart. Having saluted these *honourables*, I threw myself into my chaise, and drove to an adjacent village, where, from the summit of a hill, I contemplated the setting sun, and read that beautiful passage in my Homer, which describes the hospitable reception of the King of Ithaca by the honest herdsmen. Well pleased with myself I returned, and, on entering the supper-room at night, found only a few persons there, who had turned up one corner of the table-cloth, and were playing with dice. The *good-natured* Adelheim immediately addressed me in a whisper, and said, "Your's was a very awkward predicament to be placed in. The Count, it is said, compelled you to withdraw from the assembly." "I value not the assembly," said

I, "I was happy to be away from *them!*"—"I am pleased to hear," said he, "that you view the affair with so much indifference; as for me, I am only concerned that it should so soon become the town-talk!" This made me think more seriously of it; and I directly conceived, that every one who looked at me as we sat at table, was inwardly ridiculing me in his heart, on account of what had passed. Hence my feelings were wounded deeply, for I can go no where without hearing myself pitied, while my triumphant enemies exclaim, "this is the proper treatment of those vain plebeian mortals, who affect to despise rank, and yet would elevate themselves to the most conspicuous stations!"—Oh! I could tear out my heart! Fortitude is certainly one of the most material parts of philosophy—for, though trifles may be jested with, when unproductive of any bad consequence, yet if they be seriously misrepresented, how is it possible to endure the sarcasms and mortifications these paltry slanderers may convey!

## LETTER XLIX.

*March 15.*

NOT a thing but conspires to vex me.—In walking out to-day I met Miss B. whom I joined, that I might explore the cause of her late coolness. "How could you, Werter," said she earnestly, "you who know my sentiments, so misinterpret my distress? as soon as I saw you in the room, I was unhappy on your account, and wished for an opportunity to reveal my fears, for I was well assured that the R——'s and some others would not endure your presence in the assembly. The Count was very much chagrined, but he dared not to disoblige them. Besides this, it is every where reported——" "How reported!" exclaimed I, at the same time endeavouring to stifle my deep vexation. "Ah!" said the amiable girl, and the tears stood in her eyes, "it has already made me very uncomfortable."

This involuntary tribute of affection and sympathy not only soothed my indignation, but revived my sinking spirits; so pleased was I, that I could scarcely refrain from prostrating myself at my fair defender's feet.—“Pray explain yourself,” I rejoined; and her tears flowed more abundantly. At length she became more calm, and having wiped them away, proceeded; “My aunt, Sir, whose frame of mind you well know, was present—Sacred powers! she looks upon the affair in a most heinous light; and yet is it not insufferable to hear her boast of her knowledge of life, of her equity, sense, and politeness! What lectures, Werter, did I endure last night and this morning, upon my acquaintance with you! I was compelled to hear you calumniated and undervalued, while I dared not utter a syllable in reply.”

Her words and manner were daggers to my heart. Amiable creature—she was unconscious that pity would have concealed what respect made her reveal. She also detailed all the misrepresentations which had been circulated on the occasion, and swollen by the whispers of malice. The pleasure that was felt in my pride being humbled, and the retribution I had received for that contempt of others with which I had been so frequently reproached. She spoke this with a feeling that did honour to her compassion, and stung me to the soul. Since this, I have been so enraged and desperate, that, could I have met with any one who dared to have made this event the subject of his ridicule, I should have sacrificed him to my *honourable* resentment. It would be a relief to devote such an object to my fury, and more than once have I seized my sword to give my full heart a vent for its sorrows!—It is said somewhere that there exists a spirited breed of horses, who will instinctively open a vein with their teeth, when they are so overheated on the course that they cannot

respire freely. Often am I tempted to do the same thing, and thus at once procure for myself an eternal remedy.

## LETTER L.

March 24.

I HAVE at length remitted a letter to court, requesting leave to resign, and I hope it will be accepted. I entreat your pardon for omitting to consult you on this event, but my continuance in this place is impossible. You I know would argue strongly against the measure: but were I to listen to your remonstrances, they would be all in vain. Pray break this news to my mother with the utmost tenderness and precaution. I, who am incapable of acting for myself, cannot be expected to render any service to others. Doubtlessly she will be deeply afflicted when she hears that I have stopped short in that career which might gradually have raised me from post to post till I became a privy counsellor or prime minister, instead of sinking into my original nothingness. Were you to argue unceasingly, and combine the most irrefragible reasons for my stay, they would be unavailing. I am determined—and that is my ultimatum. However, as I have no wish to keep you unacquainted with the place of my destination, I must tell you that the Prince of — is here: he has heard of my intention to resign, and being much pleased with my company, has kindly invited me to reside with him during the spring months at his country-seat. He has promised to leave my inclinations perfectly unbiassed, and as we agree on every subject but *one*,\* I shall venture to accompany him. Should I change my mind, you shall receive a letter to that effect.

\* Probably *suicide*.

## LETTER LI.

*April 19.*

THANKS, my friend, for your two consolatory letters. I did not mean to write to you till I had received my answer from court. I was extremely uneasy lest my mother should have interfered with the minister to prevent my dismissal; but it is all settled, for I have just now received it. To enumerate the reluctance with which it was obtained, or what the minister said in his letter to me on the subject, would at this juncture only renew your chagrin at the step that is past. The hereditary prince has presented me with a purse of twenty-five ducats, and enriched it with such friendly expressions, that I was almost affected to tears—of course his bounty will render unnecessary the loan which I requested my mother to send.

## LETTER LII.

*May 5.*

I SHALL be on my journey to-morrow; and as the spot of my nativity lies but six miles out of the high road, I intend to pay it a visit, in order to recal to memory the happy days of childhood. I shall proceed through the same gate under which I passed with my mother, when, after my father's death, she abandoned her enchanting retreat to become the inhabitant of your dreary town. Adieu, my dear friend, and expect in my next an account of my excursion.

## LETTER LIII.

*May 9.*

I HAVE performed the journey to my native soil with all the sanctity of a true pilgrim:—the retrospect of many an innocent scene of former years filled my heart with sensations stronger than I can express. As soon as I drew near the great elm

which lies a quarter of a league from the village on the side of S——, I alighted from the carriage, and directed the postillion to proceed gently on, that I might, like a contemplative pedestrian, enjoy more unrestrainedly all the pleasures of former occurrences. I halted under that same spacious elm which in childhood's day had been the limit and object of my walks. Ah! what vicissitudes have taken place since that period.—Then, happy in ignorance, I sighed for a world I knew nothing of, but which I depicted to myself as strewed with the most odoriferous flowers, and abounding in every enjoyment the heart of youth can desire. I have been ushered into that world, and have returned from it;—but what, my dear friend, have I brought back?—Nothing but the converse of those delightful scenes my fancy suggested—blighted hopes and ruined peace!—I have beheld those distant mountains, which have often excited in me the wish to travel. For hours together would I sit gazing on them, ardently longing to wander among the deep woods and valleys which present so variegated a picture in the back-ground; and when the play hour was over, and we were summoned to school or home, ah, how fondly did I linger on the favourite spot!

As I drew near the village, all the little gardens and summer-houses successively appeared to me like old acquaintances, whom I had not seen for many a day. I did not fancy the new ones, nor the alterations made since I went away; I entered the village through the gate, and once more felt myself, as it were, at home! It is too much, my dear friend, to relate minutely all the circumstances which excited my interest: nor indeed would they beget in your bosom those delightful remembrances of halcyon frolic which they did in mine. I meant to have taken a lodging in the market-place, close to our old tenement; but my intention was frustrated, for

I found that the school-room, where our good old governess had first planted in us the rudiments of learning, was converted into a chandlery shop. I could not forget the sorrows I had felt, and the tears I had shed, in that confinement. At every step some impressive object attracted my notice, nor was ever pilgrim in the holy-land more fond of the sacred relics, or more sincerely devoted to them.—Among the innumerable sensations I felt, I must select the following one:—One day, having followed the windings of a rivulet, which conducted to a farm that was once my favourite ramble, and where I and my schoolfellows had often diverted ourselves in making ducks and drakes on the water, or bathing, I was suddenly rendered uneasy by the recollection of the state I was in. I looked at the current as it approached and passed continually on; and hence I formed romantic ideas of the unknown countries it was going to visit, till my imagination was exhausted, and I was bewildered in the maze of immeasurable distance.

Similar to mine, my dear friend, were the notions of our good ancestors. So when Ulysses speaks of the boundless ocean and the unlimited earth, how much better adapted is his phrase to the common capacity of man than the pedantry of our academic youth of this age, who, with all the gravity of a philosopher, accounts himself a prodigy, because he has learned from his tutor that the universe is a round body.

Perceiving that the objects before me had engaged my attention, and that I was in a train to recollect past occurrences, which was not likely soon to terminate, I hastily resolved to return; and re-entered my carriage under a strong impression of past joys and boding sorrows.

For the present I remain with the prince at one of his hunting seats. His frankness and liberality are extreme, and with such a disposition I cannot

be otherwise than pleasantly circumstanced. There is, however, one foil in his character, his credulity. He always speaks of that which has only a book or mere report for its foundation, and offers his decisions, without investigation or experience; hence he views things in that same light in which they have been represented to him. I am not pleased with the motive which seems chiefly to attach him to me—he regards only my talents and external accomplishments; but my mind, my mental system, which is the spring of all that is excellent, of my happiness, my sensibility, of every thing which constitutes whatever I boast that is amiable, and which is solely mine—this is with him but a secondary object.—I, however, make no pretensions to superior knowledge.

#### LETTER LIV.

*May 25.*

IT was my intention to have concealed from you a scheme which I had projected, till it was executed; but the design having failed, the reason for withholding it any longer is done away. This was to offer my service in the army; and which was my chief inducement for accepting the prince's invitation. He is a General in the service of the Elector of —. I took an opportunity, in one of our friendly walks, to communicate my design to him; he disapproved of my plan, and hence, as my promotion must have depended upon his patronage, I have quietly acquiesced in the reasons he urged against it.

#### LETTER LV.

*June 11.*

MISERABLE and weary, I can no longer remain at this place!—What can I do here?—I call myself unhappy, and indeed, my friend, I mean so. The prince certainly treats me in all respects as his equal,



but our minds are dissimilar;—I cannot make him my bosom friend!—Though his understanding be good, it is made of common materials, and affords me that kind of pleasure only which I receive from a well-written volume. After a week more has elapsed, I shall quit this place, and commence a wandering life, as before. The best performances I have executed here are a few drawings. The prince possesses some taste for the fine arts, which would be more improved, were it not cramped by a fondness for technical jargon and narrow rules. Sometimes in the warmest glow of my fancy, when I am bestowing the most finished touches upon the works of art and nature, he will damp me with his unimportant pedantic criticisms, (upon which he highly esteems himself,) and then all my patience is quite exhausted!

## LETTER LVI.

*July 16.*

I CONSIDER myself, my friend, exactly in the situation of a traveller—a humble pilgrim—on his road through life;—and is not this the journey which the whole world are engaged in?

## LETTER LVII.

WHITHER am I going?—I will intrust you with it. Being compelled to abide here a fortnight longer, I intend after that to pay a visit to the mines of ——. But this will never take place—I only deceive myself;—the real fact is, that Charlotte only attracts me. Ah! how unsteady are all my resolutions; yet I am not the dupe of my heart;—I only listen to its dictates, and obey them.

Hh

## LETTER LVIII.

*July 29.*

No, no!—it is all ordered for the best!—What!—I be her husband?—Thou Omnipotent power, the source of my being, if thou hadst destined me to the enjoyment of such a blessing, the successive days of my life should have been one ceaseless hymn of thanksgiving!—But, lie still my heart!—rise not against the government of Providence!—O may these tears, those unavailing sighs, be forgiven!—Ah! had she been mine!—then would my happiness have been too great—to enfold in those arms the most perfect of her sex!—Albert!—how I shudder and feel convulsed, when I see her celestial form pressed to his bosom!

Shall I withhold the remark I was going to make?—Why should I?—I was about to observe, that she would have been more happy with me than Albert:—they were not formed for each other; they are paired, not matched. He is deficient in that soft sensibility which pervades her whole form and mind; he wants—in short, their hearts do not harmonize!—Believe me, my dear friend, how often have the feelings of Charlotte and myself risen as it were at the same mutual impulse, when I have been reading an interesting passage in some author!—How have we by looks, far more expressive than words, told each other all we thought and understood when the fictitious situation of a character has called forth our admiration!—Yet she is beloved by Albert!—he endeavours to make her happiness his chief study, and does not such affection deserve its reward?

An unseasonable visitor compels me to interrupt this letter;—I have therefore endeavoured to suppress all signs of agitation, and my mind is now a little more collected. My dearest friend, adieu!

## LETTER LIX.

*August 4.*

AM not the only miserable who endures disappointment, whose prospects of happiness have vanished away. I have paid a visit to the worthy woman whose hut is under the shade of the lime trees. The eldest boy no sooner saw than he flew to meet me, and his extravagant joy brought out his mother. I was sorry to see her look so dejected, and asked her the reason.—“Alack! my good sir,” (said she,) as the tears chased each other down her pale cheeks, and interrupted her speaking, “our poor little Jackey is dead! Ah! he was the joy and delight of my heart—but he is gone!” This was her youngest child:—after a pause she again proceeded: “My husband, too, he has come back from Holland without any money. There he was seized with an ague and fever, and if it had not been for some kind and good-hearted persons who relieved him on the way, he must have begged his bread.” I was grieved at her hard situation, and gave some money to the little boy. She gratefully offered me a few apples, which I accepted, and with a heavy heart went away.

## LETTER LX.

*August 21.*

My ideas change with the velocity of lightning; at one moment a gleam of hope irradiates my gloomy spirits, a transient ray of comfort dawns upon me—in the next it is no more!—When thus deeply buried in reveries, I sometimes say to myself—“If Albert were to die, then—yes, Charlotte would be——” and, in this manner, I pursue the illusion till it conducts me to the brink of an abyss, when I recoil with such sudden terror, that, were I really in that dreadful situation, I should certainly perish. If I pass through the same gate, or walk on the same road, which first led me to Charlotte’s residence, my heart flutters

and beats, and I feel with bitter anguish the difference between what I *once was* and what I *now am*. Yes, all that I was formerly is vanished;—neither my feelings nor the pulsations of my heart are the same—the world to me appears with another aspect, and my delights have altered with it. Could the spirit of a departed prince return to visit the superb edifices which he had erected in his prosperous day, and bequeathed to his beloved son, and find them overthrown and demolished by his more powerful foe, would not his sensations be severe?—Similar to his are mine!

## LETTER LXI.

Sept. 3.

IT sometimes appears very inexplicable to me, that she can really love another! how she can presume to love another, while she holds an undivided dominion in this breast!—while she occupies and engrosses every avenue to it—while this mind thinks only of her, knows her alone, and excludes every other object in the universe.

## LETTER LXII.

Sept. 4.

IT is the time of harvest, and nature is dressed in gayety, while all within me is dark and gloomy as winter. When the yellow leaves of autumn fall as the tree shakes, then shall I be white-headed, and my hair will come off by handfuls. I no longer see with my wonted clearness; my hearing is indistinct, and all my senses are injured, *feeling* excepted, which remains more poignant than ever!—I wrote you in a recent letter\* an account of a rustic swain whom I met by accident when I first came to this place. I have been informed, that he has been discharged from his service; but what has

\* Letter X.

befallen him since I could not learn till yesterday, when, happening to meet him in the path which conducts to the next village, I addressed him with that frankness and earnestness which induced him to unbosom to me his sad story—I call it sad, and such will my friend deem it, I am sure, when he has perused it. Am I not to blame in making my friend a partner in whatever distresses me?—Why render him miserable, and thus subject myself to his commiseration or disapprobation?—I should not act thus, if it were not my destiny to render all who know me unhappy!

He did not seem inclined at first to speak, but, as if he had suddenly thrown aside his hesitation and doubt, he entered at large into his errors and misfortunes. My powers of imitation are inadequate to display the manner and accent which accompanied his words—uttered with that wild emotion and ardent disorder of the tender passion, by which he had lost his appetite and his rest, and had been rendered incapable of the transaction of business; at least such was the state of his mind, that he either forgot the thing he was desired to do, or did the contrary. His mistress loaded him with her censures and reproaches; but it was her melodious voice that he heard, and he was happy. He excused himself to me by saying, that his evil genius had haunted him, till he committed the act for which he had justly been dismissed. One day he followed his mistress into her chamber, or, more correctly, he was induced to enter, and, as she had hitherto always negatived his amorous suit, he was impelled imperceptibly to gain her consent by a more energetic method!—He declared that his designs had always been founded on honour, that marriage was his aim and end, and in the accomplishment of that object were united all his hopes of happiness. After I had pressed him more closely, he ceased to hesitate, and confessed that she had granted him some

liberties:—and then, fearful that he had said too much, justified all that she had done, and vowed that he still loved her with the same unabated affection. Such was the simple pathos he intermingled with his words, that no language can portray it; yet his image is still present with me. Could you behold him, your pity and pardon would follow;—I feel warmly interested in his fate—and am anxious to excite your commiseration for a stranger, while you are the dear friend of one whose similar lot no less demands your pity!

In re-perusing this letter, I perceive that I have commenced the youth's story, and have omitted to give you the sequel.

In the midst of the struggle between the young lover and the lady, her brother entered; such was the antipathy of the latter, that he was desirous of seeing him discharged from the employ of his sister, fearful that if she married again, and had children, his own would be superseded in the expected inheritance of her property. The misconduct he had witnessed, furnished him with a plausible pretext to turn the youth away; and the lady, influenced by the report which was in general circulation, could not consistently re-engage him in her service without staining her character, or suffering him to lead her to the altar. Since this I have been informed by the poor unfortunate, that she has taken another lad in his place, and that her brother's fears are as considerable as before, as it is currently rumoured that they are to be married. In such a case, the young man says the burthen of his life would be insupportable.

This love—this invincible passion, is no fiction of poetical fancy;—but is to be found with the poor and the ignorant in all its simple garb. Consider this story with an earnest attention to whom it relates. Since I began to write to you, I have felt more calm and collected: this may be perceived by

the increased length of my letter, which evidently shows that I am not so brief as I was. Again I request you to consider it with diligence, and trace in those lines the story of your unhappy Werter. Yes—I am—and shall ever be the same; but, when I compare the fortitude of this young lover with my own, I am compelled to acknowledge with grief that he is much my superior.

## LETTER LXIII.

Sept. 5.

CHARLOTTE wrote to her husband, after he had been absent a few days in the country, and commenced her epistle in this manner:—"My ever-dear love, return the earliest possible—a thousand good wishes await you!" Scarcely had she finished, when a friend arrived from Albert, and informed her that unavoidable business would delay Albert longer than he intended. This prevented the despatch of the letter, and thus in the evening it chanced to come into my hand, as it lay open. I read it with a smile of delight, and so fervent was the kiss of transport I bestowed on it, that Charlotte enquired the cause. "Ah!" I exclaimed, "how excellent is imaginary bliss!"—She read in my countenance the construction I had put upon her words, which had induced me to imagine they were addressed to myself!—She made no reply and looked frowningly—that look of displeasure locked up my tongue.

## LETTER LXIV.

Sept. 6.

I REGRET very much that I am compelled to cast off the blue coat which I wore the first time I danced with Charlotte: it was so threadbare, it was impossible to appear in it any longer; but, I have substituted another of the same colour and fashion in its place, with a waistcoat and breeches of buff.

The new coat, however, with me, has none of the merit of the original; in short, it is not the same; but in time it may be as much esteemed.

## LETTER LXV.

*Sept. 12.*

CHARLOTTE went to her husband, and was some time gone. To-day I paid her a visit, and had the inexpressible delight of pressing her hand to my lips. As she stood conversing with me, a canary bird, perched on the frame of the looking glass, flew upon her shoulder. "Ah! (said she) this is a new friend." She tenderly enticed it to come upon her finger, and then continued; "Do observe how fond it is of me—how its little wings flutter, and it pecks with its fine bill, directly give it victuals—Look Werter!—absolutely the fond thing is saluting me!"

The canary, on seeing the lips of Charlotte projected towards it, inserted his bill between them, and appeared to enjoy the sweetness of her fragrant breath!—She then held the bird to my face, and said, "Werter, it shall kiss you too?" and the little songster did as she desired. How delightful were the ideas which rushed through my bosom!—"Ah! Charlotte," said I, "our kisses can only yield the little thing an imperfect pleasure—it asks for a more solid gratification—it wants food."—She then took a morsel of bread, and the bird ate from her lips. I turned aside, unable to survey with calmness the canary and its mistress!—Ah, why does she so inconsiderately untranquillize my heart with such scenes?—She should not thus awaken its feelings when soothed to rest, nor excite the recollection of what is endeavoured to be forgotten!—But, has she not a right to act thus?—It is the result of that confidence she places in me—My looks show that I adore her, and she is conscious of all they speak!



## LETTER LXVI.

*Sept. 15.*

WHAT a severe mortification must the man of discernment endure, when he surveys the crowd of abject beings whom heaven permits to crawl upon the earth, regardless of whatever is interesting, or admirable!—You will recollect that I wrote to you respecting the walnut-trees at S—, beneath the shade of which I sat with Charlotte at the worthy old Vicar's. They were the pride, the beloved ornaments of the parsonage yard!—It was impossible to sit under their venerable broad shelter, without reverting to the good pastors who planted them! The schoolmaster has frequently, in the words of his grandfather, mentioned the name of the person who planted the most ancient of them. He would say, "This vicar bore a most amiable character, and under these trees his name must for ever have been spoken of with respect." The same schoolmaster came yesterday, with the tears standing in his eyes, and informed me, that they were cut down! "What!" I exclaimed, "cut down!—Would that I had been there, that I might in my fury have rooted out the ruffian murderer who dared to level the first stroke!—Such indifference is insufferable!—Had I possessed two such trees, and one of them had decayed only from mere old age, I should have worn mourning, in respect to its memory." It is, however, some consolation to me, that the whole village considers this levelling in a heinous light; and hence I hope the good peasants will withhold their presents from the Vicar's wife, and balance the account to her disadvantage—for it seems that the order came from her—the wife of the present incumbent. The worthy old man fortunately was levelled before his trees, and certain I am that only such a tall, ghastly, wrinkled, worn, hag as she is—

one, who being always indisposed, is never disposed to do well, who looks contemptuously on the world, because it returns her the same favour, an antiquated idiot, who pretends to be learned, is acquainted with all the canonical books, and gives her assistance in writing *A New Moral and Critical Reformation of the Christian Religion*, and treats Lavater's enthusiasm with the greatest scorn;—such a creature only, I repeat it, could have cut down these beautiful walnut-trees!—Never, never, my friend, shall I forget them, or forgive her!—And how do you think this stupid woman justifies her barbarous and wanton act; the yard was continually made damp and dirty by the fallen leaves, the thick branches obstructed the light, the children threw stones at the walnuts, and the rustling of trees affected her nerves, and deranged the profundity of her meditations, while she was estimating the exact scale of merit between Kennicott, Semler, and Michaelis. When I understood that all the parishioners were irritated at her egregious conduct, and more particularly the old standards, I demanded the reason of their tamely submitting to such a mark of disrespect; but their answer only went to say, “That when the Steward delivers his order, the poor peasant must obey.”

I am, however, in some measure consoled for this village loss by the following circumstance.—The Steward and the Vicar, who intended to turn this woman's folly to their mutual advantage, had privately agreed to divide the profit arising from the sale of the timber; but the Revenue Officer has frustrated all the scheme; for, having had private information of the business, he has seized the trees, and sold them to the highest bidder—Oh, that I were a powerful monarch, to punish the Vicar, the Wife, the Steward, and the Revenue Officer! but, had I been a prince, the felicity of Charlotte's com-

pany under the umbrageous shade of my much lamented walnut-trees would then have been unknown to Werter!

## LETTER LXVII.

*October 10.*

THE view only of her dark piercing eyes gives me an inexpressible delight. I am extremely sorry that Albert does not find that comfort in the wedded state which he expected—which I should have enjoyed, if—I break off the sentence, though I disapprove of the practice; because I cannot express myself in any other manner. Heavens! is it not already sufficiently explicit!

## LETTER LXVIII.

*October 12.*

HOMER has been superseded in my heart by the divine Ossian—Through what a world does this angelic bard carry me!—With him I wander over barren wastes and frightful wiles, surrounded by whirlwinds and hurricanes—trace by the feeble light of the moon, the shades of our noble ancestors—hear from the mountainous heights, intermingled with the roaring of waves and cataracts, their plaintive tones stealing from the cavernous recesses, while the pensive monody of some love-stricken maiden, who heaves her departing sighs over the moss-clothed grave of the warrior by whom she was adored, makes up the inarticulate concert. I trace this bard, with his silver locks, as he wanders in the valley, and explores the footsteps of his fathers!—Alas! no vestige remains but their tombs!—his thought then hangs on the silver moon, as her sinking beams play upon the rippling main; and the remembrance of deeds past and gone recur to the hero's mind—deeds of times, when he gloried in the approach of danger, and emulation nerved his whole frame, when the pale orb shone upon his

bark, laden with the spoils of his enemy, and illuminated his triumphant return. When I see depicted on his countenance a bosom full of wo—when I behold his heroic greatness sinking into the grave, and he exclaims, as he throws a glance at the cold sod which is to lie upon him, “Hither will the traveller, who is sensible of my worth, bend his weary step, and seek the soul-enlivening bard, the illustrious son of Fingal: his foot will tread upon my tomb, but his eyes shall never behold me!” At this time it is, my dear friend, that, like some renowned and chivalrous knight, I could instantly draw my sword, rescue my prince from a long irksome existence of languor and pain, and then finish by plunging the weapon into my own breast, that I might accompany the demi-god whom my hand had emancipated.

#### LETTER LXIX.

*October 19.*

ALAS! I feel in my bosom an indescribable fearful vacuity!—In the roving of amorous fancy, I sometimes think if I could but once, once only, clasp her to my breast, my every wish would be gratified.

#### LETTER LXX.

*October 26.*

THE opinion which I had formed, that the existence of any one individual is of no consequence to the world, I am now perfectly convinced is correct. A friend of Charlotte’s called just now to pay her a visit; of course, politeness induced me to retire to an adjoining apartment, where by way of pastime I took up a book: but not finding myself disposed to read, I sat down to address a few lines to my friend, by which he will appreciate the value of this present favour. While I am thus engaged, I can overhear their conversation;—their topics are the common wants of all places—one is about to be

married—a second is alarmingly ill—has a dreadful cough and repeated fainting—no hopes of getting better in this world.—“Mr. S—— lies dangerously ill!” said Charlotte. “So I hear,” replied her visitor; “ah! I fancy now that I am standing by their bedsides, and behold them struggling with the grim tyrant death, while the love of life prevails in all the agonies of pain and terror, and induces them to wish for a longer respite.” Thus these worthy young ladies talk of their dying friends with as much calmness and indifference, as if they were wholly strangers!—Ah me! when I survey the apartments I am now in, where Charlotte’s apparel is in one place—on this table are her trinkets—in another part is Albert’s papers, and all the articles so familiar to my recollection—nay, the same ink-stand I at present use—my mind reverts to the view in which I am considered by this family.—With them I am every thing—they esteem me, and court my conversation; and I without them should be unhappy;—yet, certain it is, were I to withdraw from their social circle, how long would they continue to regret that void in their life which my absence must occasion? How long!—Alas! but a moment! for such is the frailty of human nature, that the man, whose presence formed the highest enjoyment of others, who was embosomed in the breast of his dearest friend—even he must perish, and his memory be cancelled.

## LETTER LXXI.

*October 27.*

I COULD rend asunder this heart, I could dash my head against the wall, when I am disappointed in unbosoming myself to others; when I communicate my ideas and sensations to those who are incapable of a like sympathy. No one can transfuse into my mind that love, delight, ardency, or pleasure, which it does not naturally possess; nor can

I, though I am alive to all that is affectionate and impassioned, communicate to another that sensibility which his organization is incapable of receiving.

## LETTER LXXII.

*Evening.*

IN idea I am superabundantly supplied! Charlotte's dear lovely self banishes every other thought, and transforms all around me into a Paradise--What to me would be the world without her?—A chaotic nothing!

## LETTER LXXIII.

*October 30.*

A THOUSAND times have my arms been tempted to twine themselves round her celestial waist, and clasp her to my throbbing bosom! It is impossible to be tortured with the continual view of such charms, and be forbidden to touch them!—Touching is one of the earliest instincts of nature!--Hence the bantling stretches out its hand to grasp at the object which pleases its fancy; and, in this respect, I resemble it---Indeed a very child!

## LETTER LXXIV.

*Nov. 3.*

REPEATEDLY have I laid my head on the pillow, and prayed, as my eyes were closing in sleep, that they might never open again! The morning comes; I open them; again behold the dazzling sun; and return to my former wretchedness. Oh! that I were hypochondriac or filled with affectation!--Then might I ascribe my despondency to the operation of intemperate seasons, to disappointed pride, or the malice of a persecuting enemy;---and allege this insupportable weight of disquietude to some other cause than myself---Alas! I am too sensibly convinced that in this bosom originates all the unhappiness I feel; this bosom, which was once

the seat of peace and cheerfulness, but now the spring whence all my countless sorrows flow, can I be the same whose mind was formerly the nursery of every sensation that was gay and exhilarating?—Who at every turn he took into the country saw Paradise in each prospect, and whose bosom expanded with enthusiastic philanthropy?—But, ah, how changed!—This heart is callous to every softer sensation, dead to the pleasures of enjoyment,—my eyes can weep no more—the fountains of sensibility are dried up; my senses fail and decay, with the powers of my brain!—Afflicted beyond description, the only charm of life—that boundless busy imagination which transported me to worlds of my own creation, is lost—departed for ever! Insensibly I gaze upon the distant hills through my window—the rising sun dispels the yielding vapours, and illuminates the extensive country with his gladdening beams—the murmuring stream gently winds its way through the leafless willows—the exhaustless beauties of nature are on every side—she exhibits the most inimitable subjects for the scenic pencil—but they attract me not:—they leave me blind, insensate, inanimate. On my knees have I often besought heaven to melt my callosity of heart to tears, like as the farmer prays for the rain to moisten his thirsty fields. But I have learned that heaven does not grant showers or sunshine to the importunate intreater.—If these times, the loss of which I so deeply deplore, were blessed, it was owing to a temper that acquiesced in all the dispensations of the Great Parent, and received all his mercies with gratitude.

## LETTER LXXV.

Nov. 8.

CHARLOTTE has tenderly reproved me for my recent excesses; indeed, my dear friend, in order to drown care, I have for some time past made too free

with the bottle. "Pray," said she, "be more prudent—think of Charlotte!"—"Think of Charlotte!" exclaimed I, "how needless is this advice.—I am ever thinking of you, nay more than *thinking*—I see you incessantly before my eyes, you are always in my heart!—I was sitting this very morning on the spot where you rested yesterday."—I was proceeding, when she abruptly introduced another subject;—on which I conversed—playing like a pliant puppet just that part and action which this dear divine manager assigns me.

## LETTER LXXVI.

Nov. 15.

MY thanks are due to you, most excellent friend, for the interest you take in rendering my situation more comfortable, as well as for your kind counsel:—Let me intreat you to make yourself easy, and not take so much unnecessary trouble on my account!—Leave me to my miseries!—I am not yet so surrounded or so desponding, that I cannot endure them to the end.—You are sensible that I have the most awful reverence for your religion, which is particularly adapted to strengthen the weak and console the afflicted. But it is not to be expected that it will produce this effect equally on all.—Survey this vast Universe, and you will confess there are millions who never were acquainted with it, and that to as many, whether it be preached to them or not, it will be of no advantage.—Pray do not place a wrong construction on what I have written.—To me nothing is more displeasing than the idle discussions of subjects where our greatest knowledge is but blindness. What is the destiny assigned to man?—what more than to fill up the measure of his miseries, and drain the bitter cup of wo: and if the inevitable draft was nauseous to the Son of the Omnipotent, for what reason should I affect a sentiment I do not feel, and say



my cup is sweet? why start appalled at the dreadful crisis when the soul hovers between existence and annihilation; when dissolution similar to the glaring flash of lightning, shall illuminate the dark abyss of futurity; when all nature totters, and the universe vanishes away!--Behold the exclamation of a desponding being, who is persecuted hopelessly, and who sees no avenue to escape destruction--Shall I blush to use this expression, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" when he, who spreads out the heavens as it were a garment, uttered it in all the terrors of despair?

## LETTER LXXVII.

Nov. 21.

CHARLOTTE is not aware that she is preparing a poison which may eventually destroy us both. The fatal potion is presented by her own hand, and I swallow it in large quantities. Have those endearing looks she occasionally vouchsafes me--has that attention which listens to all the effusions I utter--that sympathy which beams in her expressive countenance--are these devoid of motive and meaning? Yesterday, as I bid her adieu, she held out her hand, and emphatically said, "Farewell, *dear Werter!*"--*Dear Werter!*--The sound reverberated through my whole frame! *Dear!* it was the first time I ever heard her apply the epithet to me.--The tender word will never, never be forgotten, a thousand times have I repeated it since, and last night, when I went to rest, I unconsciously exclaimed, "Good night, *dear Werter!*"--In a moment after I recollected myself, and smiled at my own absurdity!

## LETTER LXXVIII.

Nov. 22.

I FIND it impossible to pray that heaven would make her mine *soon*, though in fancy I think she is

mine *already*. Nor can I entreat that she may be mine *now*, at a time when she is in the possession of another!—My sorrow and moans are equally ineffectual and unanswered.—Would that I could divide myself from this weak heart!

## LETTER LXXIX.

Nov. 24.

MY sufferings have found their way to the bosom of Charlotte. This day I found her alone:—her looks gave me uneasiness, and I gazed upon her in silence; she fixed her eyes steadfastly on mine, yet though they were divested of that fire of genius, which had hitherto beamed in them, and the bolder traits of beauty had withdrawn from her face, there was an interesting nameless something left which spoke more fascinatingly;—which depicted the expression of compassion and soft concern. Why did some invisible power withhold me from kneeling at her feet; from pressing her to my heart, and repaying her tenderness with a thousand kisses?—While thus embarrassed and irresolute, she turned to her instrument, and in the sweetest accents of melody accompanied the soothing tones. Her lips never looked so enchantingly—they seemed to separate but to imbibe the mellifluous sounds, and return them with a double sweetness of vibration. My sensations were inexpressible!—my feelings were overpowered, and in a bending attitude, I just articulated the following solemn vow:—“Lips of ineffable delight, round which celestial beings hover, never will I dare to profane you!” The felicity I deny myself, I sigh to taste,—but, never!—an eternal partition divides us!—yet, my friend, were I suffered to dwell on those lips but for one transient moment, I would contentedly die and expiate my crime in the next!

## LETTER LXXX.

Nov. 26.

IT seems to me that mine is a peculiar destiny.—The rest of the world are happy, and I am the only one who is cursed.—Then in perusing the work of some ancient author, I find a passage that appears to allude to my own situation—“When will there be a cessation of these sorrows?—Where does there exist such another unfortunate?”

## LETTER LXXXI.

Nov. 30.

THE decree is past; my fate is resolved upon!—Every thing tends to augment my pangs, and point to my future destiny!

Not being able to relish my dinner to-day, I arose from table, and took a solitary walk by the river side. The country wore a gloomy and deserted appearance; a cold easterly wind blew from the mountains, and heavy thick clouds darkened the plain. As I walked on, I perceived a man at some distance clad in an old loose garment, apparently straying among the rocks in search of plants.—He turned round on hearing my footsteps, and displayed a most expressive countenance, in which was depicted the traits of a settled melancholy. His fine black hair hung in disorder over his shoulders. “What are you seeking for, friend?” said I;—he replied, with a deep sigh, “I am looking for flowers, but I cannot find even one.” “This is not the season for flowers,” I rejoined. “True,” said he, “but yet many flowers grow notwithstanding.—In my own garden there are roses and lilies—one sort was given me by my father,—they are to be found every where—yet, for a’l I have been two whole days looking for some, I cannot find any.—In the fields there are a great many flowers, yellow, blue, and red; and the centaury too, which grows in such

thick pretty clusters, but I cannot find any.”—  
“Suppose,” said I, “you had these flowers, what do you intend to do with them?” He smiled, and holding up his finger, with an air of suspicion, whispered,—“I will tell you, but let no one else know; I have promised to give my sweetheart a nosegay!” “That was right,” I replied. “Oh! she wants for nothing!” he answered—“for she is rich, very rich.”—“And yet (interrupted I) she is fond of your nosegays!” “Oh! (proceeded he) she has diamonds and a crown!”—I enquired her name, but he continued his story; “If the States General would but pay me my own, I should become quite a different man. Alas! there was a time when I was happy—happy as the day was long; but that time is past—gone—flown away!” As he said this, he raised his tearful eyes to heaven. “Then (said I) you own there *was* a time when you *were* happy!” “Oh! would that I had continued the same! (he exclaimed,) I was then happy—and so cheerful, and contented,—just like a fish in water!” An old woman came towards us, exclaiming, “Henry, Henry, what are you doing? I have been looking every where for you. Come, dinner is quite ready.” I asked her if the young man was her son; “Yes, alas! (she replied) he is my poor unhappy boy:—It is a grievous affliction, but heaven’s will be done!” “Has he been long in this condition?” enquired I. “For the last six months (she replied) he has been in the quiet state you see him now, and this is a great blessing! One whole year he was quite raving and chained down in a madhouse; he is now as harmless as can be, and all he talks about is kings and emperors. Ah! he was a dutiful son, and once helped to maintain me: he wrote the finest hand too—but all of a sudden he became low-spirited, was seized with a burning fever, became quite distracted, and is always now just as you see him. Oh, sir, if I were to tell you”—

I interrupted her by my anxiety to know when it was that he was so happy, very happy. "Ah, poor fellow, (said she, with a compassionating smile) that was the time he was so raving, and chained to the floor. That time he never ceases to sorrow for." Astonished and overcome at this scene, I put some money into her hand and departed.

"Then you *were* happy," said I to myself, as I hastily remeasured my way back to the town, "*and just like a fish in water.*" "Gracious powers!" I exclaimed, "is such the destiny of mortals! Is man only happy before he is in the possession of reason, and when he has lost it? Poor maniac!—and yet I think thy condition is enviable. Not dreaming of disappointment, thou hast a way to gather flowers for thy goddess—in winter, thou art troubled because thou canst not find any, and unable to discern the cause of such barrenness; but, as for me, I saunter about without hope and without motive, and return as listless as I set out. It appears to thy erroneous imagination, that, were the States General to do thee justice, thou wouldst be a man of consequence; and it is a comfort to thee, that thou canst assign thy misfortunes to a power, foreign to thyself. Thou art ignorant, nor canst thou be made sensible, that thy wretchedness is generated in an inverted mind, a disordered brain, and that all the aid of earthly power is insufficient to relieve thee.

May they die forsaken by hope, who ridicule the sick man on his journey to distant springs, only to increase his malady, and render his death more painful; or who exult over the guilty soul, which, to shun the scourges of conscience, and procure some internal quiet, performs a pilgrimage to the Holy Land by way of penance! Every rugged path, each piercing thorn that lacerates his feet, and draws the vital fluid from the wound, is a drop of balsam to his mind, and every night of his hard

journey is an advance to consolation and pardon.—Ye pompous declaimers---ye who raise yourself on stilts to deliver flowery orations---will you venture to call this impulse an extravagance?---extravagance! Thou great power, who seest my tears, is not the misery apportioned to us sufficient, without the persecuting follies of those who would deprive us of all consolation, and destroy our trust in thy love and mercy? The invigorating vine, the balsamic plant, are the produce of thy benign hand:---Relief, and saving health, emanate from thee! Almighty Father! whom I know not---thou who once didst enliven this gloomy soul, why hast thou forsaken me!---Recall thy errant servant---whisper peace to his afflicted bosom—to that soul which thirsts after thee, and dreads thy awful silence! Where is the father who would reject his son, because he suddenly rushes into his presence—falls on his paternal bosom, and exclaims, “O my dear father, forgive me, if I have erred in shortning my journey, and returning to thee before the appointed time!—I have found the world every where the same—its labours and cares, its pleasures and rewards, were all alike indifferent to me.---In thy presence only is true unalloyed happiness: let me then enjoy the light of thy countenance, nor spurn, adorable father, the lost child who seeks thee!”

## LETTER LXXX.

*Dec. 1.*

O, MY friend, the unfortunate maniac of whom I spoke of in my last, (whose insanity is rather a subject of envy than pity) was a clerk to Charlotte's father. He conceived an unhappy attachment to her, which he long cherished and concealed in his bosom, before he dared avow it.---He was rejected, and the consequence having fallen upon his intellects, he is now such as I saw him yesterday. The brief information has sunk deeply into my mind.--

The circumstance was communicated to me by Albert, with all that common-place indifference with which you will read it.

## LETTER LXXXI.

Dec. 4.

INDEED, my dear friend, I can no longer endure this present state; it is insupportable! I was seated this day by the side of Charlotte, who was playing on her harpsichord, with indescribable taste and expression. Her little sister sat on my lap, dressing her doll.---The tears began to bedew my cheeks---till at length, in leaning over her, her wedding ring attracted my eyes, and they fell in profusion. She then immediately commenced that seraphic air which has so often charmed my ear and tranquillized this bosom.---It produced its wonted effect for a time; and then it served only to renew the memory of the happy days I once knew.---Sorrow! blighted hopes! Starting up, I traversed the room with hasty strides, and in an agitated manner I exclaimed, "For heaven's sake, cease to play that tune!"---Charlotte stopped, gazed steadfastly on me, and then with a smile that anguished my very soul, replied, "I fear you are very ill, Werter.---The food that once pleased you is now your aversion---Go, and endeavour, I entreat you, to be more composed." I tore myself from her presence---Heaven sees my pangs, and will, I trust, ere long, terminate them!

## LETTER LXXXII.

Dec. 6.

HER image incessantly haunts me!---Awake or sleeping, my fancy sees no other object!---When I close my eyes, this brain is impressed with the beauty of her dark lovely eyes.---Here---how shall I convey my meaning---In my slumbers her lovely image floats upon my imagination as on a sea, and

the airy form absorbs all my faculties!---What is man?---that self-exalted demi-god, whose energies sunk into weakness when he requires them.---Whether he swims in the stream of enjoyment, or stems the current of misery, he must one day be arrested in his progress; and, while he is filled with the hope of immortality, he is certain that he must soon return to his original cold existence.

*The Editor (Goëthe) to the Reader, with*

THE ADDITIONAL LETTERS.

IN order to give a more circumstantial and connected account of the close of Werter's life, I am compelled to suspend the chain of his correspondence by the following narrative, the particulars of which were furnished by the old Steward, Charlotte, Albert, his own servant, and the people with whom he resided.

Werter's unhappy passion for Charlotte had imperceptibly operated to weaken the harmony which at first existed between her and Albert. He loved his wife affectionately, but with moderation, and his first zeal had by degrees yielded to the attention requisite on business;---but, so little was he aware of any change in himself, that he was not in the least sensible of any difference between the days of courtship and marriage: but the particular attentions of Werter to his wife made him secretly unhappy; this conduct was an infringement of his rights, and an implied censure on his own indifference.---His dissatisfaction was farther increased by the accumulating weight of his employment, and the inconsiderable remuneration he received.—Werter's mind, preyed upon incessantly by sorrow, had lost all that fire and genius it had once possessed; it was no longer vivacious and perceptive, but in society appeared inanimate and joyless. The



marked alteration could not but produce its effect on the susceptible mind of Charlotte, which became grave and thoughtful—an effect attributed by Albert and Werter to different causes. The husband placed it to an increasing attachment for the lover, and the latter thought it arose from the deep concern she felt at the cold behaviour of Albert. A want of confidence between the two friends gradually took root, and rendered their interview irksome to each other. If Albert knew that Werter were in his wife's apartment he avoided entering, and Werter, sensible that he disapproved of his visits, and unable to tear himself wholly from the presence of Charlotte, at length embraced those opportunities of seeing her when he knew Albert was most occupied.

This *privacy* increased the severity and jealousy of Albert, till he could no longer refrain from rebuking her on the subject; urging, that were it for the sake of her character only, she ought to observe a less impassioned behaviour towards Werter, and forbid the frequency of his visits. It was at this juncture that Werter meditated the purpose of suicide, which had long been a favourite theme with him; particularly since his return to the neighbourhood of Charlotte. It was a fancy he had argued upon and justified in his own mind; but he was unwilling to perform the fatal act with precipitation or rashness;—he was resolved to act like a man who is the master of himself, who can inflict the blow with equal fortitude and serenity.

On the 8th of December he called as usual, to see Charlotte, and found her family in the greatest consternation. This had arisen from a melancholy incident on the preceding night; the murder of a poor peasant. At first Werter took no particular account of the circumstance, and, on entering the room where Charlotte and her father were, he heard her anxiously requesting him not to indulge his inclination of going abroad to inquire into the parti-

culars of the murder, when he was scarcely recovered from his late severe illness. Word was presently after brought that the corpse had been found at daybreak, facing the door of a house; that the murderer was not yet discovered, but very heavy suspicion had alighted on a young man who had formerly been in the service of the same widow as the deceased was, and which he had quitted with chagrin and disappointment. This report awakened the recollection of Werter, who started up, exclaiming, "Impossible! I must set out for Walheim instantly I can't delay a moment!" This intention he carried into effect immediately, persuaded of the strong probability that the young peasant, whom he had several times before spoken to, and been so pleased with, was the unhappy criminal. Arrived at the inn in Walheim, he found all the inhabitants of the place assembled, his ears were assailed by a loud clamour and shouting at a distance, which proceeded from a number of armed men, whose manner indicated that they had apprehended the murderer.—There was no longer any doubt in the mind of Werter. He directly recognised the youth who had avowed to him his ardent passion for the widow, and whom he had but a short time before met, wandering about with a countenance expressive of vindictive purposes and secret despair. "Unhappy youth!" said Werter, addressing the prisoner in a tone of pity; "what have you been guilty of?"—The prisoner gazed upon him vacantly, was silent for a few minutes, and then exclaimed, "No one shall possess her!—Never shall she be the wife of another!" The poor wretch was guarded to the inn, and Werter left the place immediately. The scene had such an effect upon his mind, already predisposed for the sombre and melancholy, that he found its sympathy excited in the highest degree; he felt an ardent inclination to extricate the love-sick lad from his awful situation. Criminal as he certainly

was, Werter altogether acquitted him of the crime, and having satisfied his own judgment on this head, he thought he could make his innocence as conspicuous at another bar.—On his return, he flew, almost breathless and exhausted, to the Steward's office, to plead the cause of the prisoner; there he unexpectedly met with Albert, whose presence at first quite deranged his purpose; he, however, after a time, recovered from his embarrassment, and began with great animation to espouse the cause of the young lover. He pleaded with great pathos and subtle argument in his favour, but the Steward expressed his disapprobation by shaking his head frequently, and at last closed his pleading by a severe censure for attempting the defence of a murderer. "To what effect would laws be enacted," said the Steward, "if mercy were in such cases to supersede justice? As a magistrate it is my duty to enforce the laws, and by the law he must stand or fall."

Unmoved by this discouragement, Werter repeated his entreaties, and went so far as to hint, that, if the lad could be indulged with a favourable moment to make his escape, he would willingly assist him. During the time this was passing, Albert had stood silent and attentive, but he now replied in answer to Werter, and on the side of the Steward; this so deeply wounded Werter, that he hurried out of the room abruptly, scarcely giving the old gentleman time to exclaim, "It is impossible—he cannot be saved!"

This sentence of death sunk deeply into his heart; and the impression it made is evident in the following letter, which was doubtless written on his return home, and was, after his decease, found among his manuscripts.

## LETTER LXXXIII.

UNHAPPY youth—thy fate is sealed!—thou art not to be pardoned!—Alas, it is evident that DESTRUCTION awaits us both!

It is plain that Werter was deeply affected by what had fallen from Albert before the Steward, and, indeed, imagined that his remarks had been chiefly pointed at himself; hence the supposed sarcasm which he thought they conveyed, increased his resolution to destroy himself; though, in fact, if he had but soberly reflected, he must have been convinced, that the sentiments of both these gentlemen were just, and such as had arisen from the nature of the crime. His doubts and struggles are conspicuous in the fragment of a letter, which was found, undated, with his other papers, and appears to have been intended for his friend.

## LETTER LXXXIV.

HER angelic presence, her soft looks, her anxiety for my welfare, have still the power to draw tears from my phrenzied moistless brain!—The poor lad sunk under the loss of his mistress—he could not bear that a rival should share her love!—Alas! the rigid Steward might have saved him, and justice would not have been outraged! It is only drawing the curtain, and passing to the other side—no more! Then whence these apprehensions, these terrors?—Because we know not what is behind the scene—because there is no more returning!—Where all is uncertainty, the soul is lost in conjecture, confusion, and dismay!

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DURING his secretaryship in the service of the Minister, he had endured too many mortifications to blot them from his memory. On the contrary,

whenever he spoke upon this subject, it was manifest that his pride was hurt, and he felt degraded: hence arose his disgust for public affairs and political transactions. From this time may be dated his contempt of the world, and the indulgence of those eccentric opinions and conceptions which occur in his letters, and which were augmented by that boundless passion which enervated all his remaining energies. Placed in an unvaried changeless situation—his hopeless interviews with the most amiable and lovely of women, whose inward peace he wounded—his agitation and struggles—and beholding his life glide away in nothingness—these united, were the monster that drove him to remove beyond the confines of this wretched world.

The letters which follow, found with several others after his decease, clearly indicate the language of a distempered brain.

## LETTER LXXXV.

*Dec. 12.*

I COMPARE my feelings to those which must have agitated the poor wretches who were formerly supposed to be possessed of devils.—Strange propensities and wild startings seize me—they are neither from pain nor passion; but a lurking vindictive rage which swells in my bosom, and almost obstructs my respiration. When thus attacked, I quit my bed in haste, and seek relief in wandering at midnight among the dreary dark scenes which this sterile season exhibits. I was compelled to take this step last night. I had heard that the river, and all the adjacent brooks, had overflowed their banks, and that the ground from Walheim to my favourite valley, was inundated. I set off for the latter at past eleven o'clock—the view was awful and dismal—the moon was veiled by a thick cloud, but still some of its scattered beams glittered on the foaming waves, as they burst over the meadows, and dashed against

the banks and hedges. The whole valley resembled an unquiet sea, agitated by a howling tempest;—the moon, now throwing off her dark mantle, shone resplendently, and presented more perfectly the picture of convulsed nature. Echo replied to echo, and redoubled the roarings of the winds and waves. I crept to the edge of the precipice, and wished—and shuddered.—I extended my arms—leaned over—sighed and remained absorbed in the delightful idea of burying all my woes and disquietudes in the watery abyss below me!—Why were my feet immoveably fixed to the spot? Why could I not embrace this termination of my miseries?—The reason, my dear friend, is evident—my hour is not yet come! Oh, how rapturously would I have thrown off this mortal coil to have incorporated with whirlwinds, to wing the clouds, and billow the deep,

I looked down with an eye of sorrow upon one dear little spot, where I once stood under a willow by the side of Charlotte; it was so hidden by the water, that only the tree could scarcely be distinguished. Then, my friend, the old places of resort occurred to me—the Steward's house, the contiguous meadows, the leafy recesses, our favourite walks, all perhaps laid waste and ruined by the torrent;—all the witnesses once of precious hours—the recollection of which brings madness to my heart. The sleeping prisoner, like me, in his dreams, again possesses all those blessings which in reality he is deprived of. I paused—but no self-reproach is mine—for I am not afraid—to die!—and this is what I ought.—All I resemble now is a weak tottering old woman, who picks up dry sticks by the hedge side, and asks for alms from door to door, to lengthen out an existence of wretchedness and penury

## LETTER LXXXVI.

MY mind yet remains unaccountably deranged. Have I one trait in my love for Charlotte that is not most chaste and holy?—Is not my passion that of a brother for his sister?—Did my heart ever conceive a wish that was dishonourable?—Oaths might attest this, but I need not resort to them. And now--- again a dream!---Surely they speak rationally who attribute the conflict of passions to external powers! ---The last night---my head trembles while I write--- even last night I folded her in these arms---I pressed her to my doating bosom, and on her dewy lips imprinted ardent kisses!---In her amorous eyes love sat luxuriously playing---mine twinkled with ecstasy. In recalling to memory these imaginary transports of bliss, am I guilty of a crime?---O Charlotte, Charlotte---my fate is sealed---my brain is too weak to sustain this perturbation, this inversion of all order ---I am distracted---for a whole week I have not been myself. Tears flow from my eyes---to me all places are the same, for they are all devoid of peace! ---I am in want of nothing, yet I desire more than this world can give. Alas, it were better far to quit this scene of misery without delay.

## LETTER LXXXVII.

YOUR advice meets with my thanks and approbation---I must depart---and as you judiciously remark, quit my present situation without delay. That part, however, which follows, I do not entirely approve of. You wish me to return to your neighbourhood; but I conceive that one of my romantic excursions would exhilarate my broken spirits, particularly as a hard frost may be expected, and its constant attendant---good roads. Your friendly proposal to come and fetch me, is highly gratifying to

my heart; but I must desire you to defer this intention till about a fortnight, and not commence your journey till you have received *another letter* from me. Fruit should continue on the tree till it be ripe, and in this respect a fortnight sooner or later makes a great alteration. Desire my mother not to forget me in her prayers, and be sure to inform her, that I am sincerely sorry for all the disquietudes I have unintentionally occasioned her. Unfortunate that I am!--it has long been my doom to inflict anguish on those whom I was most anxious to render happy. Adieu, my dearest friend, may you enjoy all the blessings to which your goodness entitles you. I need wish you no more---farewell!

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THIS letter was written on the Sunday preceding Christmas day, and on the same evening Werter went at dusk to the house of Charlotte, and found her alone. She was busily engaged, according to their annual custom, in preparing little presents for her brothers and sisters, which were to be distributed on Christmas eve. He entered into conversation upon the delights children found in these little diversions incident to the season, and the innocent mirth they occasioned. "Well," said Charlotte, endeavouring to conceal her inward agitation with a smile of tranquillity, "you shall have a present too, Werter, if you behave yourself well." He immediately asked, "What does my dear Charlotte call behaving myself well?"—She replied,—“Thursday being Christmas eve, my father and all the children will be here—and do you come too—I have a present for each—but remember not to come before Christmas eve!”

Werter started at the emphasis in uttering this sentence: he was about to reply, but Charlotte prevented him, by repeating in the same manner, “I entreat that you will not—there is no help for it—I earnestly request, I *claim* it as a mark of your friend-



ship and regard—for there are reasons, very weighty reasons”—then softening the tone of her voice to mildness, and putting on the most enchanting and persuasive look, she tenderly added,—the favour I solicit is for our mutual serenity and peace!—Ah, Werter—we must not indulge in this manner any longer. Be firm then—return to your former self—renounce this unhappy passion, this unfortunate attachment, that love which I cannot—dare not pity.”—The averted face of Werter convinced Charlotte that he was deeply agitated, and, taking him by the hand, she proceeded: “Werter, you must submit—nor childishly encourage a delusion ultimately big with destruction.—Am I not the wife of another?—Why then for a moment think of me?—Ah! I fear it is from that motive *only* Werter pursues this unavailing passion!” Werter here darted a frown of indignation and disappointment at her, and exclaimed—“This is not Charlotte’s *own* sentiment.”—He then traversed the room with a hurried step, and suddenly stopping, added, “No—it is the little opinion of the narrow sullen Albert!” Charlotte, in the most easy manner she could assume, assured him that he was prejudiced by the blindness of his passion; that the opinion she had given was *her own*—the opinion of her who esteemed him for his many amiable qualities—-who was alive to his interest, and rendered unhappy by his indulgence of an unjustifiable destructive affection. Again she addressed him, and urged that he should think of her only as a sincere friend. “Reflect,” said she, “on the loss which the world sustains when a man of such talent and genius withdraws himself from it. Overcome this gloomy tendency, rejoin the circles of gayety, and there select some object for your love, whose heart is deserving of yours, and whose hand is unfettered.—Commence the search earnestly, and success will soon convince you, that my counsels are good—-the experiment is worth the making, and if,

nothing result from it but the journey your mind will be diverted and occupied.---Women of worth, beauty, and accomplishments, are to be found every where, and such a one, I doubt not, you may easily find. Then return again to us, and share in that domestic felicity and harmony which arise from an interchange of pure and social intercourse." "This speech, my dear Charlotte," said Werter, with an ironical smile, "ought to be published for the benefit of all pedagogues and moralists. Indulge me but a short---short time longer, and then all will be well again---" "But remember, Werter, you are not to *see* me before Christmas eve." He was about to reply, but Albert unexpectedly came in.---They saluted each other with great coldness, and Werter in apparent embarrassment walked up and down the room. They talked upon indifferent topics, in which they had no interest, till Albert demanded of his wife, if she had attended to the execution of some trifling commissions which he had intrusted to her to do; upon her replying in the negative, he burst **into** such a train of galling reproach, that it cut Werter to the heart. He was anxious to go, but he wanted resolution, and in this unpleasant situation he remained till eight o'clock, a prey to his increasing acrimony and irritability of temper. When the cloth was laid by the servant, he took his leave, in consequence of the pointed formality with which Albert asked him to take supper.

Oppressed with melancholy, and moving with a measured step, Werter returned home, and taking the candle from his servant, retired, silently and alone, to his chamber. He was heard to weep and talk with great earnestness, and to pace hastily up and down his room. He afterward threw himself, undressed, on the bed, in which state his servant found him at eleven o'clock, who then ventured in, and was permitted to draw off his boots, but received a particular charge not to come in again till he rung for him.

On Monday morning, December the 21st, he wrote the following letter, which was found sealed in his bureau, after his death, and given to Charlotte. It is here presented in the unconnected manner in which it appears to have been originally written.

## LETTER LXXXVIII.

Dearest Charlotte,

THE scene closes---the fatal determination is taken, and death stands ready to strike!---I tell you this with composure and deliberation, apart from all the impulse of violent transport or disappointed passion! At the moment when these last sad lines will meet your weeping eyes, then O most lovely and amiable of women, will the inanimate form of him whose highest bliss in the last moments of his life was to see and converse with you, be deposited in the cold grave!---Ah, what a night has this convulsed bosom endured!---no---rather let me call it the happy night that leads to an endless day of peace, since it has banished all my irresolution, and fixed the period of my existence! I am resolved on death!---When I tore myself away from you yesterday, my senses, like the elements, were jarring and portentous: my heart was depressed---no hope, no beam of comfort irradiated this dark mind---but ice, cold ice, seemed to compose my wretched frame! With great efforts I reached home. Directly I entered my apartment, I fell on my knees to pray, and heaven, as a last favour, was pleased to grant me the consolation of shedding tears!---My distracted soul was hurried by a thousand fancies---a thousand projects rushed successively through my brain---then came the last---last one---often the subject of former contemplation, and now of unalterable decision---DEATH!!!---It is not despair, but the assurance that life for me contains nothing worthy of possessing. The cup of wo is full --the measure of my sufferings is complete

---I have therefore reached the gate of death, and that awful bourn must be passed for the happiness of---you, my dearest Charlotte!---Yes, for that must *one* of the *three* perish!--and shall Werter shrink from being the sacrifice?—O, thou soul of celestial goodness, how shall I dare to avow, that my racked mind, impelled by madness and jealousy, has more than once conceived the horrid infernal idea of murdering *your* husband!\* Abandoned as I am, justice demands that I should cease to exist!

Werter rung for his servant, about ten in the morning, and on his coming in told him, he was about to take a long journey in a few days, and therefore desired that his clothes might be put in order, his bills called in and discharged, some books be collected which he had lent, and two months allowance be advanced to all the poor people who received weekly assistance from him. Having breakfasted in his room, he ordered his horse and rode to the Steward's, who happened not to be at home. He then took a pensive walk in the garden, and seemed to brood over all the ideas which it would naturally suggest. No sooner were the children apprised of his visit than they broke in upon his solitude, and came skipping and dancing to tell him, that "when to-morrow, and to-morrow, and one day more was gone, their sister was to give them a Christmas gift a-piece!"—after which they began to describe to him all the nice things and mirth their little fancies had depicted on that festive occasion. "To-morrow," said Werter, "and to-morrow, and one day more!"—and he kissed all of them tenderly. The youngest boy, seeing him prepared to go, stopped him to whisper, that his eldest brother had written some very pretty lines upon the new year, and all friends were to have a copy—one for papa, one for Charlotte and Albert, and one for Mr. Werter too—to be presented early on New-year's day.

\* Werter perhaps imbibed this idea from the young man who was in love with his widow mistress, and murdered her servant, his rival.

This last intention overpowered his feelings—his fortitude forsook him, and giving each of the children a trifle, he mounted his horse, and, bidding them remember him kindly to their father, he rode off with a full heart!—He reached home about five o'clock, and directed his servant to keep up the fire, to place his books and linen at the bottom of the trunk, and lay his clothes over them. The following fragment appears to have been written the same evening.

Beloved,

YOU do not expect to see me!—you are certain that I shall not disobey you, nor see you before Christmas eve. Dear angel to-day or never!—On Christmas eve you will clasp this paper to your bosom, and lave it with your flowing tears!—It is decreed, Charlotte, and I feel relieved!—I am more collected since I have resolved upon death!

---

ABOUT six o'clock he repaired to Albert's, and found Charlotte at home, and alone: she would have been denied, had he not prevented it by coming too hastily into the room. She was exceedingly shocked at his visit, as she had assured her husband in a late conversation, that Werter would not call again till Christmas eve, in consequence of which Albert, regardless of the rain, set out on horseback to settle some business with a neighbouring steward. He had for a long time postponed this journey, which was too distant to prevent his returning the same night. This delay had deeply chagrined her, since it had arisen from a want of confidence in her conduct. Alone and full of serious meditations on past occurrences, she turned an eye of examination into her own conduct, and that of Albert, whose suspicions were now the cause of her wretchedness. In neither, however, could she find any just reason

for reproach—Werter came next into review, in whom she saw much to blame, but nothing to hate. From their earliest acquaintance she had felt a sympathetic attraction prevail in her bosom, and this preference, by repeated attentions, and a mutual susceptibility of mind, displayed in so long and familiar an intimacy, at length was indelibly imprinted on her heart!—Her over-charged feelings and tender sorrows had just found some alleviation in a shower of tears, when she heard Werter running up stairs, at the same time asking the question, if she were at home, without waiting for the answer. As soon as he entered, she said to him, in a confused and severe manner, “Werter, you have forfeited your word!” “I did not make any promise,” he replied. “Ah!” rejoined Charlotte, “for both our sakes, you should have obeyed my earnest request.” She now prudently despatched the servant to invite some of her friends to spend the evening, that they might not only be witnesses to what passed in conversation, but that Werter might be induced to retire the sooner, in consequence of seeing the ladies home. He had brought some books; which, with those he had before lent her, she turned into subjects of discourse, adding to these other indifferent topics, to amuse away the time till some of her party came. Presently, however, the servant returned with a variety of excuses, and this precaution was of no effect. Though embarrassed at the disappointment for a little while, the approbation of her own conscience and purity of heart soon re-inspired her with confidence, and made her look with an eye superior to the little jealousies of Albert. Hence she rejected her previous intention of ordering the maid to remain in the room, and turned to her harpsichord, at which she played a few of her favourite airs, till, finding her wonted serenity had returned, she sat down on the sofa by the side of Werter, and asked him, if he had selected any

thing to read to her. Upon his gravely replying in the negative, she said, "Open that drawer, Werter, and in it you will find your own translation of the Songs of Ossian, which I have not yet read, because I knew they would come with more sweetness from *your* lips; but for some time past you have been such an idler, that I was unwilling to ask you about them!"——

With a faint smile, he rose to fetch the manuscript; but he seemed violently agitated as he took it up. His eyes were suffused with tears, and his voice faltered, as he read. He proceeded till he came to that tender passage wherein Armin deploras the loss of his beloved daughter.

Alone on the briny-lav'd rock  
 My daughter exclaim'd in her wo;  
 For help and her father she call'd—  
 Her father no help could bestow.

By the moon, as I stood on the shore,  
 I faintly could trace her fine form;  
 My ears by her shrieks were appall'd—  
 Her shrieks that exceeded the storm.

Her voice, ere the dawning of day  
 Had ceas'd to declaim the sad tale,  
 It sunk into whispers like grass  
 That's wav'd on the rock by the gale.

She perish'd—exhausted by grief  
 She left thee, lone Armin, forlorn;  
 Thy prowess in war is no more,  
 Thy pride among women is gone!

When storms from the mountains arise,  
 And waves from the North billow high,  
 I sit by the surge, and I look  
 At the rock where she died, with a sigh!

Whene'er the moon sets, I behold  
 The shades of my children—alas!  
 They rise, but in part to my view  
 As in converse they mournfully pass.

“ In pity, my children, O speak !”  
 Unheeded, I see them depart :—  
 O Carmor, I've reason to weep,  
 For deep is the wo at my heart !

A flood of tears streamed from the eyes of Charlotte, and gave a partial relief to the oppression which the poem had excited. Werter threw down the paper, grasped her hand, and bedewed it with his tears. Charlotte supported herself on the other arm, and held her handkerchief to her eyes—their agitation was mutual and extreme. They traced the similitude of their own misfortune in this unhappy tale, and their feelings sprang from the same source. Werter's eyes were ardently riveted on her snowy arms—she trembled, and made an effort to leave the room ; but a tender sympathy detained her—till, relieved by a deep sigh and more tears, she desired him to continue the subject—Werter, though faint and sinking, took up the paper, and, in broken accents, proceeded :

Say, why dost thou wake me ? O gale !  
 It answers, “ with dew-drops I'm wet—  
 But the time of my fading draws nigh,  
 The blast when my leaves shall all set.”

The trav'ler shall come on the morrow,  
 He who knew me the bravest of men— .  
 In the meads he shall seek me in sorrow,  
 But never behold me again !

The pointed allusion of those words to the situation of Werter, rushed with all the electric rapidity



of lightning to the inmost recesses of his soul. In an agony of despair, he projected himself at the feet of Charlotte, and, seizing her hands, pressed them alternately to his eyes and forehead. Charlotte, for the first time, conceived the fatal project he gave such indications of:—the sorrow she felt almost deprived her of the use of reason: she affectionately folded her hands in his, pressed them to her bosom, and, while absorbed in the emotions of poignant sensibility, and gently inclining her head over him, her glowing cheek sank upon his. At this juncture of conflicting passion, they were insensible to every thing but mutual love. Werter enfolded her in his arms, strained her to his palpitating heart, and planted on her lips a thousand ardent kisses!—"Werter!" was all she exclaimed in a voice of tremor, and averted her face. Again she repeated "Werter!"—and with a feeble hand, she removed him from her; once more at liberty, she withdrew a few paces, and then with the majestic and imperious tone of virtue, she once more emphatically pronounced the name of "Werter!" Struck with the warning awful voice, he sank upon his knees, at a more respectful distance!—Agitated beyond expression, she tremblingly advanced to the door, and in the accents of pity, mingled with displeasure, she thus addressed him: "Werter, this is the last time we meet—never shall you behold me again!"—She then summoned every look into her countenance that is benign, tender, and affectionate, and, after gazing upon him for a moment, flew to her chamber, and locked the door. Werter remained on his knees, with his arms instinctively extended towards her, but he made no effort to detain her. For some time he continued on the floor, his head reclining on the sofa, till he was roused from his stupor by the servant coming to lay the cloth. During this, he traversed the room, impatient till the servant was gone, when he softly stole to the

door of Charlotte's chamber, and in a soft voice articulated, "Charlotte, Charlotte—one word more—only one—one last farewell!" He listened, he waited—but no answer was returned. Again he listened, urged this as a last favour; all was silent:—he then tore himself from the place, and in the piercing tone of despair ejaculated, "Charlotte, dear, dearest Charlotte, farewell!—farewell—for ever!"

He directed his tottering steps to the gate of the town, where the guard knew him, and let him pass. It was a dark stormy night, attended with much rain and snow. He reached his abode about eleven, and came in without his hat, which the servant prudently passed unnoticed:—he also perceived, in undressing him, that his clothes were wet and dirty. This hat was afterwards found on the pinnacle of a rock, branching from the declivity of a mountain, where it seemed beyond the practicability of man to have climbed in such a dark and stormy night without making a false step from the precipice, and being dashed to atoms. He went to bed, and enjoyed repose till late the next morning. When his servant brought in the breakfast, he was writing, in continuation of the former letter to Charlotte.

## LETTER LXXXIX.

### *Continuation.*

FOR the last, last time I open these eyes—Alas! to them the sun will never rise again—a thick impenetrable mist is spread before it!—No more will they be enchanted with thy angelic form—Yes! let nature put on mourning, for your friend and lover is on the verge of the awful abyss!—Death!—what is death?—---everlasting sleep!—---I feel the force of this sentiment: yet when I say this day is my last, I think I am in a dream. Ah! what means this

word *last*. To-day I stand upright, in all the pride of perfection ;---to-morrow, cold and motionless, I lie extended on the earth! What is this annihilation, of which we dream, but know nothing? I have seen many die: but so contracted is the boundary of our narrow intellects, that we have no definitive conception of either the commencement or termination of our existence!---At this moment, I am myself, or rather, dearest of women, *I am thine*!---In the *next*, cut off, lost to thee, perhaps, for ever!---But, no---no!---Charlotte, as we are sensible of our present existence, we cannot be annihilated!---This annihilation, this cessation of being, what is it?—To my mind it conveys no other idea than an empty sound!—Death!—to be interred in a deep, dark, cold grave! There was a time when I had a friend, the solace, the delight of my juvenile days—she died;—I followed her hearse—I stood by the side of the grave when the coffin was let down, and heard the creaking of the cords, as it rested on them. The first shovel-full of earth that was thrown on the coffin produced a hollow sound; the succeeding ones were heard more faintly, and at last the grave was filled up!—Then it was that I threw myself on the ground, my heart was breaking, severed, overwhelmed with sorrow!—But I was as insensible to what had happened, as ignorant of what was to happen!—Death!—grave!—Unintelligible words!

Forgive, forgive me, beloved Charlotte. Yesterday!—yesterday!—oh! that impassioned moment ought to have been the last of my life—for then I should have died in ecstasy, knowing that I am beloved by thee!---Loved by thee!---there did the delightful sense for the first time rush through and enflame my bosom!---My lips still glow with the sacred fire they received from thine!---the torrent of pleasure which then overflowed still sets into my heart!---Ah, but to offend—forgive, forgive, dear Charlotte! I thought I was dear to thee!---I read

it in that animated look which thou first viewed me with. I was sensible of it the first time thou didst gently press this hand!—Yet, when I was absent, or saw Albert at thy side, all my doubts and fears revived.

Hast thou forgotten the flowers I received from thee, when, at a crowded assembly, I could neither get to speak to thee, nor couldst thou give me thy hand?—I passed the half of that night in kneeling and adoring those pledges of affection—Their sweets have worn away by time, and are now effaced; but an endless eternity could not extinguish the flame which thy sweet lips kindled yesterday in my whole frame!—Thou lovest me!—I have embraced thee in these arms!—I have joined these enraptured lips to thine! Mine only art thou, O my Charlotte—mine for ever!

I know that Albert is thy husband!—What results?—that he is thine for this life only—and in this life it is holden criminal to love thee, to tear thee from him! This is my crime, and it shall be expiated.—It has afforded me a taste of pleasure, a balm of comfort, which has revived my soul. Henceforth, though I shall never more sip delight at that celestial spring, I call thee from this moment mine!—Yes, Charlotte, thou art mine!—I only go before thee to my father—to thy father, to pour out my sorrows at the foot of his celestial throne, and partake of his heavenly peace, till thou art ready to follow me—Then will I fly on seraphic pinions to welcome thee—then will I claim thee as my own, and in the presence of the Eternal be united to thee from everlasting to everlasting!—This is no dream of hope, no raving of fancy; my intellects at this awful crisis are collected and strong—they bid thee remember that *we shall live in a future state! that we shall recognise, we shall behold each other in a better world!*

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ABOUT eleven o'clock Werter inquired of his

servant if Albert had yet returned, and was answered in the affirmative, as he had seen him pass by on horseback. Werter then addressed the following note to Albert, and sent it, unsealed, by his servant:

“ Dear Albert,  
“ Pray lend me your pistols, I am going a long journey!—Adieu!

WERTER.”

The susceptible Charlotte passed that night in the greatest distress and agitation. A crowd of racking ideas filled her restless fancy! The ardour of Werter's passionate embraces had overcome every other barrier, and found their way to her heart!—All her former days of innocence and serenity were contrasted with the present, and were more and more alluring from comparison. She feared to encounter the frowns and reproaches of Albert, when he should have been informed of Werter's visit, and for the first time felt the necessity of reverting to the aid of falsehood, and the concealment of that ingenuous truth, which she had ever practised as a sacred duty. Her great delicacy and indecision in the affair increased her sense of the dilemma in which she stood; and yet she could neither resolve to hate the author, nor forbid him her presence. Languid and exhausted, she was but just dressed when her husband entered; his presence now, for the first time, afforded her no satisfaction, and she trembled lest he should remark that she had been weeping, and read in her pale countenance the want of sleep—apprehensions which, on her part, served to increase her difficulties. The eager manner in which she welcomed him on his return, was more expressive of alarm and embarrassment than real satisfaction. The difference was not to be concealed from the penetrating eye of Albert, who, after opening some

letters, significantly asked if there was any news, and who had visited her during his absence? She replied hesitatingly, that Werter had called yesterday, and staid about an hour. "He chooses his-time very aptly!" said Albert churlishly, and withdrew to his own room. Charlotte remained alone, in deep thought, for a quarter of an hour, during which a new train of ideas entered her mind.

She was treated coldly by the man whom she had always loved and esteemed; and when his former kindness, his generosity, and his unshaken love, passed in review before her, she felt the sting of ingratitude. Prompted by a secret impulse, she took her work in her hand, as was her usual custom, and followed to his room. Having entered, she mildly asked if he were in want of any thing; but Albert answered with a sullen negative, and began to write. She then sat down, and worked, while Albert occasionally rose, and walked up and down the room in great agitation, during which she embraced the opportunity of entering into conversation with him; but in vain; he answered with a disgustful brevity, and resumed his seat at the writing-table. Her situation was now rendered the more galling, by the efforts she made to conceal the distress she felt, and to restrain the tears which were ready to flow. An hour had passed away in this discordant manner when the arrival of Werter's servant perfected the misery of Charlotte. When Albert had perused the note, he turned to his wife, and coldly said, "Give him the pistols—I wish him a good journey!"—This order rushed like a thunderbolt through the agonized brain of Charlotte—she rose alarmed, and with an unwilling step went to the wall where the pistols were suspended, and took them down tremblingly. She then leisurely began to clean them from the dust, and would have made still greater delay, had not a significant look from Albert commanded her to deliver the fatal weapons to the ser-

vant, which she did, unable to utter a single word: she then folded up her work, and retired to her chamber, where she gave way to the most poignant grief and portentous forebodings. At times she felt a rising inclination to return, and throw herself at the feet of Albert, to divulge all that had happened the preceding evening, to acknowledge her errors, and her dreadful apprehensions: but these intentions were frustrated, by the conviction that such measures would rather have a prejudicial effect, and that Albert would on no account be induced to go to Werter. Soon after, dinner was served, and a friend of Charlotte's dropped in, whom she detained to support the conversation.

Werter was in raptures when his servant informed him that Charlotte had delivered the pistols with her own hands. He partook of some bread and wine, told his servant to get his dinner, and then sat down to write.

*In continuation.*

Dearest Charlotte,

YOUR hands have grasped these pistols, you have cleansed them from the dust, you have wiped them for me!—and I press them to my lips. It is plain that heaven approves of my design, since your hands have furnished me with the fatal instruments, those hands from which I have long earnestly wished to receive my fate!—But you trembled when you delivered them, and did not vouchsafe me one parting farewell! The moment is at hand which will for ever unite us inseparably, and can your heart be closed against me? O Charlotte, the tender impression no time can erase; and certain I am you cannot hate the man who in his last moments passionately adores you!

---

WERTER after dinner ordered his trunk to be

packed up; and, having destroyed some papers, he went out to discharge a few small debts in the neighbourhood—he returned soon after, and notwithstanding the rain, went out again to the Count's garden, and thence farther into the country; he returned at night, and once more resumed his pen.

### LETTER XC.

My Dear William,

FOR the last time I have taken a view of the gardens, the valleys, the mountains, and the sky.—Farewell!—entreat my dear mother to pardon me—be the support and comfort of her declining years, and heaven will reward your goodness!—All my affairs are arranged!—we only part to meet again in another and a happier world!

Forgive me, Albert, for having disturbed the domestic tranquillity of your family. I have planted the thorns of jealousy, and cancelled that mutual confidence which once subsisted between you and Charlotte! Accept my death as the remuneration—it will remove every obstacle to your happiness!—O, Albert, treat that angel with affection; and the benediction of heaven will be upon you both!”

---

He now inspected some other papers, some of which he destroyed, and others he sealed up and addressed to his friend. They were chiefly composed of undigested ideas, and the spontaneous effusions of a wandering mind. At ten he ordered the servant to make up the fire, and bring in a pint of wine; he was then dismissed, and retired to his bed, which, as well as those of the rest of the family, lay at a distant part of the house. He slept in his cloths, that he might be the more ready the next morning to attend his master, who had informed him that the post-horses would be ready at the door by six o'clock.



## LETTER XCI.

*Werter to Charlotte in continuation.*

*Past 11 o'clock.*

NOW is all around me hushed, and my soul is calm! Receive my thanks, merciful Father, for thy goodness in suffering my last moments to be collected and firm!

Through my window I catch a glimpse of the stars as the broken clouds are impetuously driven by the wind. Ye bodies celestial, ye will never fail—the eternal Creator supports both you and me. As I gazed on these luminaries, that most beautiful of all the constellations presented itself to my sight—it used to shine full on your door, when I parted with you in the evening:—how often have I stretched out my hands towards it, and invoked it as the witness of my felicity!—O Charlotte, where can I turn that I am not reminded of thy divine image?—On all sides it surrounds me!—And all the things which thy hand has pressed, I have, like a child, collected together, and consider each trifle as hallowed!

Charlotte, I return thee thy dear profile—and pray do not esteem it lightly, for I have lavished a thousand fond kisses on it, and addressed to it a thousand prayers!—I have written to your father to intreat that he will take care of my remains. At that angle of the church-yard which looks towards the meadows, are two lime trees—there let me lie—your father can procure this for his friend, and I am sure you will urge my request. Perhaps some *de vout* Christians may hereafter object to be interred near the corpse of such a one as I shall soon be—if so, then I must be buried in the high way, that the priest and the levite, when they pass my tomb may raise their sanctified looks to heaven. and be

thankful that they are not so---while the Samaritan will stop, and drop the tear of pity for my fate.

Charlotte, I now prepare the fatal instrument which thy hand presented; nor do I feel one terror! Have I not the satisfaction of perishing for *your* sake? Will not my sacrifice restore peace and tranquillity to the bosom I adore! Ah! it is reserved only to the few to shed their blood for the happiness of those who are dearer to them than existence.

Let me, Charlotte, be interred in the same dress I now have on:---it has been worn in thy presence, and therefore it is dear to me. I have requested this indulgence also of your father. My soul hovers over the grave! Do not suffer my pockets to be searched---in them is the knot of pink ribbon which you wore on your bosom the first time I saw you surrounded by the children! Sweet innocents, I see them all in fancy sporting around you---give them a thousand kisses for Werter's sake!---Ah! Charlotte, at that first moment my soul was attracted to thee---and never since have I been able to repel thy image from my heart!

The pistols are loaded!---all is still!---the clock strikes twelve!---Hark! I am summoned! Charlotte, my mind is firm!---Beloved, farewell!"

---

One of the neighbours saw the flash, and heard the report of the pistol; but, as it excited no farther alarm, he passed it unnoticed. At six in the morning, the servant, punctual to the hour appointed by his master, went into his room with a candle, and found him extended on the floor, and weltering in his blood; he raised him up, and spoke to him, but received no answer. Imagining he was not wholly dead, he ran to fetch a surgeon, and then went to Albert's.---Charlotte, on hearing the gate-bell ring, was seized with an ominous trepidation; and when the servant related the event, she fell senseless on the floor at her husband's feet. Albert immediately

hurried on his clothes, and flew to the fatal room; but, by the time he had arrived, the unfortunate youth was no more!--The surgeon, previous to his coming, had found a faint motion in the pulse, and had opened a vein; but all was ineffectual. The ball entered the temple, just above the eye, and pierced upwards through the brain. The blood which surrounded his chair makes it probable that he committed the fatal act as he sat at his writing-desk, and fell thence on the floor. He was dressed in a blue frock and buff waistcoat, and was booted. He had drank only one glass of wine, and on his bureau Emilia Galotti was lying open.

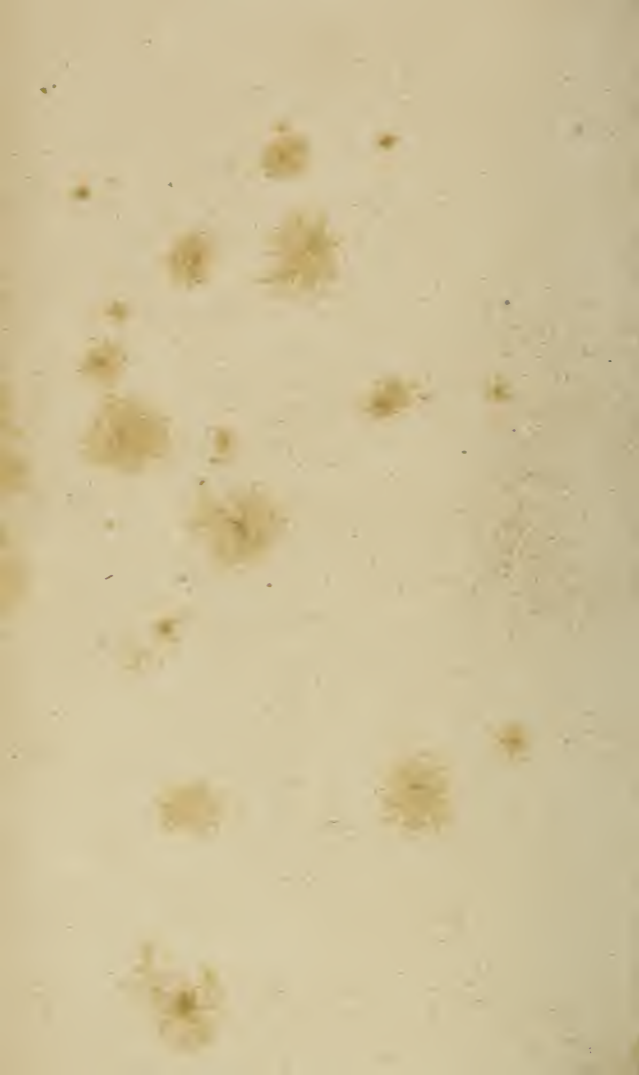
To depict the distress of Albert and Charlotte would be impossible. It may be better conceived than described!

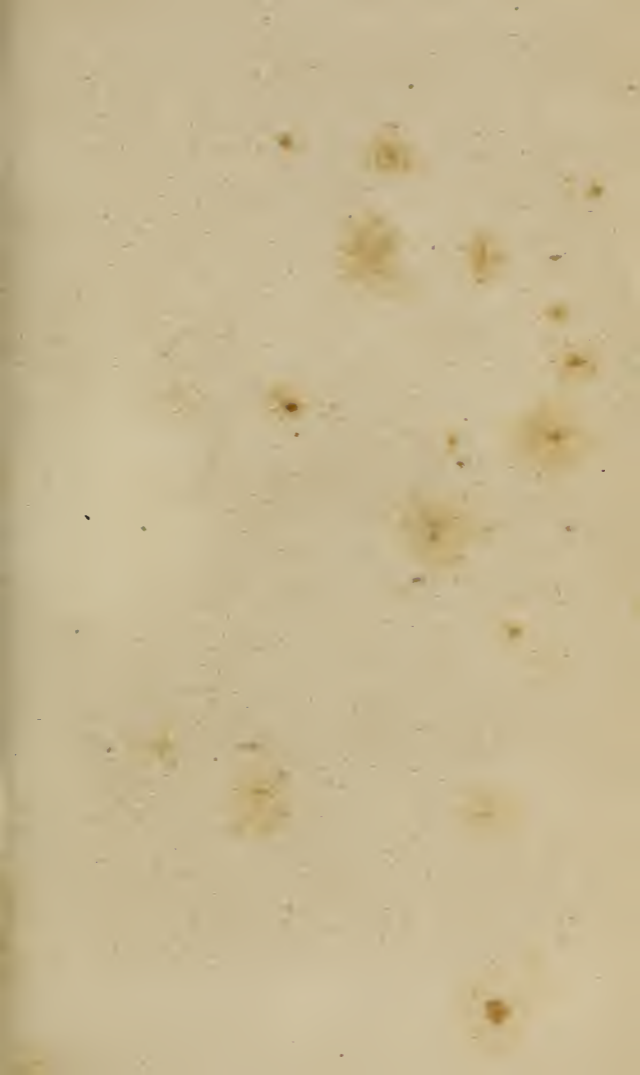
The old steward, on hearing of the event, hastened to the house, and wept over the body of his lamented friend. The children paid their tribute of sincere and affectionate sorrow. At night the funeral was conducted with silent solemnity, without parade, to the spot which Werter had himself chosen; no priest attended. The body was followed by the steward and his sons, who hallowed the memory of this esteemed man with unaffected sighs and tears.

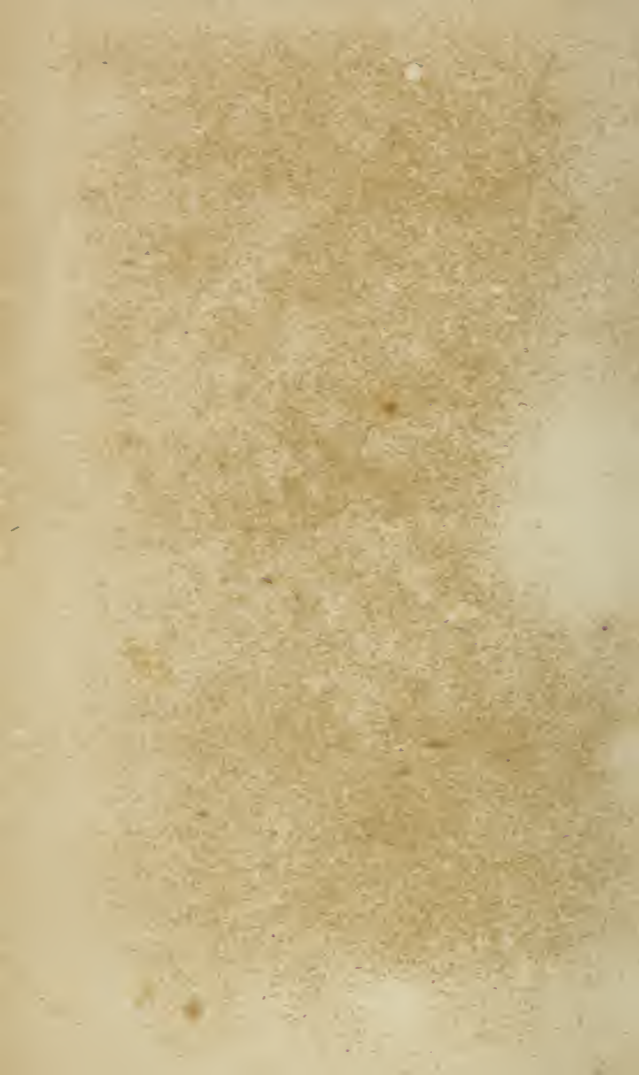
FINIS.



















Handwritten text, possibly a signature or name, written in cursive script. The text is oriented vertically and appears to read "John C. Smith".



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