

Johann Wolfgang Goethe.

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THE clock struck twelve one August noon, a hundred and thirty years ago, when an infant, black and almost lifeless, was laid beside its pale young mother, on a bed in one corner of a "low, heavy-beamed room in the beautiful, busy old town of Frankfort-on-the-Main." The kind-hearted grandmother bent over him in despairing agony, while friendly hands tried to wake to life the almost silent heart. As the young eye opened at last—*Rüth'n er lebt!* He lives! said the old lady, smiling through her tears.

A hundred and thirty years have gone, since the old clock chimed the boy's birthnoon—when first those young eyes opened, and still the world says he lives! The dear old grandmother's words will echo through all the August noons through all the lands the sun ever shines on.

They named the child Johann Wolfgang Goethe, after his gentle, genial old grandfather Texton, whose feet the boy so early delighted to follow, as in dressing gown and slippers, he moved among his garden paths, weeding and watering his dearly-loved flowers. Eighty-two years did Goethe's eyes look out upon the world. Forty-seven years since, they closed upon its glories, and many great men still declare him, the "most splendid specimen of cultivated intellect ever manifested to the world." His words have given the German literature a world-wide value, and the wings of our highest, sweetest American song are tipped and veined with his golden thought.

And we all, traveling that thought's imperial realm, bear away with us the golden dust tracked from his far journeying.

Goethe's father, Johann Wolfgang Goethe, was a "cold, stern, formal, pedantic man, of vigorous mind and rigid will, strongly built, above the middle height." After studying jurisprudence, and graduating at the university, he traveled through Europe, and returned to Frankfort with a great taste for art and many beautiful pictures of the scenes he had so delighted in. He became imperial councillor in Frankfort, and married in August, 1748, Catharina Elizabeth Texton, daughter of the chief magistrate of Frankfort.

He was thirty-eight, and she only seventeen.

The next August, little Wolfgang was born.

The young mother was a joyous-hearted and affectionate girl, one of the loveliest pictures in all German literature. She was the favorite of "friends and servants, poets and princes," and dearly loved by all children. "I and my Wolfgang," she would say, "have always held closely together; that is because we were both young, and not so wide apart from one another as Wolfgang and his father." Her letters are full of soul and heart, many of them written to persons of rank. She made all Goethe's home-life charming, and pleased all with her grave, hearty, and dignified manner. Goethe

early loved everything beautiful—he never would play with any but pretty children. When at a neighbor's house one day, when he was only three years old, he suddenly began to cry and exclaim that "black child must go away. I can't bear him." He cried so loudly, he was carried home, where he was "slowly pacified." One little sister, Cornelia, grew up by his side; she was his little idol, he would sit for hours guarding her cradle, and be very angry if she was taken from his care. "The ground floor of his father's house consisted of a great hall, where the vehicles were housed. This floor opened in folding trap-doors for the passage of wine-casks into the cellar below. In one corner of the hall, there was a sort of lattice, opening, by an iron or wooden grating, into the street. This is called the *Gerämo*. There the crockery in daily use was kept, here the servants peeled their potatoes and cut their carrots and turnips, here the housewife sat with her knitting or sewing, giving an eye to what passed in the street, or an ear to a little neighborly gossip. This place was a favorite with the children. One fine afternoon, when the house was very quiet, little Goethe was here all alone, with nothing to do, looking out into the silent street and telegraphing to the young Ochsensteins who dwelt opposite, and he began to fling the crockery into the street, delighted with the smashing music which it made, and encouraged by the approbation of the brothers Ochsenstein, who chuckled at him from over the way. His mother came in and saw her plates and dishes flying about; she looked upon her broken household treasures with great horror, but at last "melted into girlish sympathy" as she hears the little fellow's shouts of laughter, and his young neighbors heartily laughing at him. This escapade was probably never repeated to the "stern and order-loving father." In one of Goethe's mother's letters, she writes: "Order and quiet are my principal characteristics, I have to do the most disagreeable always first, and I gulp down the devil without looking at him. When we are content and cheerful, we wish to see all people gratified and gay, and do all we can to make them so. I have it by God's grace," she wrote, when thirty-six years of age, "that no living soul ever went from me dissatisfied, of whatever rank, age, or sex. I love humankind—old and young feel it. I go without pretension through the world, and that pleases all the sons and daughters of earth."

What a beautiful motto for all of us—of how few of us can it be said. Again she writes: "I never bemoan any one. I always seek out the good that is in them, and leave what is bad to Him who made mankind and knows how to round off the angles."

This was Goethe's mother, who used to pass off his early poetical manuscripts as exercises, when his critical father might disapprove his verse-making. She would tell Wolfgang and his little sister many stories evenings. "Air, fire, earth, and water, she represented under the forms of princesses, and to all natural phenomena she gave a meaning." When she, as she says, thought of paths which led from star to star, and that we one day should inhabit the stars, and of the great

spirits we should meet there, she went on each evening with some new improvisations. There I sat, she says, and there Wolfgang held me with his large dark eyes, and when one of his favorites was not according to his fancy, I saw the angry veins swell on his temples, I saw him repress his tears; when I turned the story as he liked, then he was all fire and flame, and one could see his little heart beat underneath his dress."

His grandmother would find out in the daytime little Goethe's ideas as to how the story should turn out, and repeat them secretly to the mother, and in the evening, Goethe's mother continued her story, to Goethe's delight and astonishment, as he saw with glowing eyes the fulfilment of his own conceptions, and listened with enthusiastic applause.

When Goethe was a little over four years, his grandmother surprised him and his little sister on Christmas eve, with a puppet show, which, Goethe says, "created a new world in the house." In *Wilhelm Meister*, we can see how greatly the puppet show was prized, and how vividly it impressed Goethe's young imagination.

Says Goethe, "I inherit my frame and the steady guidance of my life from my father, from my dear little mother my happy disposition and love of story-telling." He also says he gets his "devotion to the fair sex from his great-grandfather, and his love of finery and gewgaws from a great-grandmother."

The city of Frankfort-on-the-Main has, perhaps, more beautiful promenades than any other city in the world. Little Goethe never tired of its picturesque streets, the river, the bridge, the city walls, the old houses with the storks looking down from their overhanging gables. He gazed reverently on the "spots hallowed by the presence of greatness, the hall in which emperors had been crowned, and the site of the castle once occupied by Charlemagne."

Besides these charms without, Goethe tells us his father had adorned his house with some beautiful Italian views. Here, he says, "I saw daily the Piazza del Popolo, the Coliseum, as well as the interior of St. Peter's." These views of Rome, these classic pictures, were always linked with his German thoughts, and gave him an early love and longing for Italy. His usually taciturn father took delight in occasionally and vividly describing these Italian scenes, and giving the boy some of his delightful memories of beautiful Italy.

His father was a "rigid disciplinarian," and early taught him the classics and modern languages. Before he was eight years old, Goethe wrote in German, French, Italian, Latin, and Greek, as his published exercises testify. His exercises and moral reflections in Latin and German, written in his sixth, seventh, and eighth years, are preserved in the Frankfort library. He says he learned Italian in this way: "My father taught my sister Italian in the same room where I had to learn Cellarius by heart. As I was soon ready with my task and obliged to keep my place, I listened over my books and mastered Italian, which struck me as a pleasing variety of Latin, very quickly."

When Goethe was nearly six years old, the

great Lisbon earthquake spread consternation over Europe. When the boy heard of a "magnificent city suddenly smitten, churches, houses, towers falling with a crash, the bursting land vomiting flame and smoke, and sixty thousand souls perishing in an instant, it shook his faith in a divine Providence." Coming home from church one day, after hearing the minister trying to justify God's goodness in the terrible calamity, his father asked him what impression the sermon had made upon his mind? "Why," said he, "it may be a much simpler matter than the clergyman thinks. God knows very well that an immortal soul can receive no injury from a mortal accident." What an answer for a boy of six to give! A wonderful solution to a puzzling doubt.

In his tenth year, he was startled by the "sound of the warder's trumpet from the chief tower of Frankfort. The troops were approaching; it was the beginning of the Seven Years' War in 1759. Boys gathered in the streets and women hurried to the windows to see the long line of French troops and hear the rolling drums. "The whole city was a camp. In Goethe's house the king's lieutenant, Count de Thorane, was quartered. These troops were at war with Frederic, whom Goethe and his father worshiped. The old councillor hated this king's lieutenant," though a man of taste and munificence. "Around him gathered artists and celebrities," and little Wolfgang soon learned to love and admire the man. The marching and parading, the music, the café, and the theater, which the French brought with them, interrupted Goethe's studies. His grandfather, the magistrate, gave him a free admission to the theater, which he visited every day. Visiting the theater, and talking with a young French boy, one of the company, made him soon quite familiar with the French language. This young companion, Derontes, took him, greatly to his delight, behind the scenes; he longed so much to see how "all these fascinating representations were gotten up." He went often into the green-room and into the dressing-room of the actors and actresses, now only ten years of age. He wrote then his first play, which Derontes so mercilessly criticised, and keenly mortified the young author, with his high-sounding talk about the "sovereignty of French taste." The French soon left Frankfort, but this knowledge he had acquired of the ways of actors and actresses, he made good use of afterward, when, in his forty-ninth year, he published *Wilhelm Meister*. The hero of *Wilhelm Meister* is a stage-struck youth, who falls in love with an actress; and we are told by Goethe that he spent more time upon this than upon any other work. In the second part, in the first four or five chapters, there are beautiful pictures of the holy family. Mignon is an exquisitely poetical creation—the "successive artistic touches" heighten to the end the mysterious interest hanging around her as charming as her song,

"Knowest thou the land where the citron apples bloom,
And golden oranges in leafy gloom?"

Mr. Carlyle tells us, in *Wilhelm Meister* there are hints or disquisitions on almost every

point in life or literature. Sir Walter Scott copied Tenella, "in *Peveril of the Peak*, from Mignon, and Byron's harper, in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, has much in common with the harper of Goethe." For the next four years, from ten to fourteen, Goethe studied English, Hebrew, drawing, music, dancing, riding, mechanics, and natural philosophy. He also gained knowledge from every possible source. He talked with the mechanics altering the house, with the artists employed by the count; he frequented often the quaint old Jews' quarter in Frankfort, the Judengasse. He learned their language, manners, accent, appearance, and customs, went to their ceremonies and schools, admired their cleverness and geniality, and the bright smiles of the pretty Jewish maidens. He watched the jewelers making "bouquets of jewels," the old lame man making his baskets. He learned the process of many a handicraft, and helped at it. He was a great favorite with many an artisan, and from every field of humanity he gathered flowers to bloom thereafter in the garden of his song. His fondness for rhyming and story-telling made him a favorite with all classes. At a little supper party with some not very select companions, when Goethe was in his fifteenth year, he met the fair, sweet maiden, Gretchen, whose portrait, forty years after, he placed so beautifully on the canvas, and surrounded with such a "bewitching atmosphere of song"—the wonderful Marguerite of his immortal *Faust*. He saw her at fifteen. At fifty-six, his picture of her is fresh with its never-forgotten early bloom.

He gives in his autobiography this account of her first impression upon his boyish mind at the little supper party: "At a repeated call for more wine, instead of the servant, appeared a maiden of uncommon and, seen in her position, incredible beauty. The servant girl, she said, after a smiling salute, is ill, and has gone to bed. Can I get you anything? We want wine said one of them; if you would fetch us a couple of bottles, it would be very kind of you. Pray do, Gretchen, said another, it's only a step. Why not? she replied, and took a couple of empty bottles from the table and hurried out. Her figure, seen from behind, was still more elegant. The cap sat so nicely upon the little head, which a slender throat charmingly connected with the neck and shoulders. Everything about her seemed exquisite, and one could follow the whole figure more calmly when the attention was no longer enchained by the calm true eyes and the lovely mouth. The maiden returned with the wine, drank to their healths, and took her leave. But thereafter," says Goethe, "her form haunted me go where I would. It was the first fixed impression a feminine existence had made upon me."

Goethe was after that very frequently thrown with her, but she treated him as a child, and never permitted the slightest familiarity. Says Goethe, "through the aspect of this maiden, through my inclination to her, was a new world of the good and beautiful opened to me." One night, after a sight-seeing day, "Goethe with a merry party were all sitting together, when the clock suddenly struck twelve, and Goethe

found that he had forgotten the door-key, with which he had hitherto been able to evade 'paternal knowledge of his late hours.' Gretchen proposed that they should all remain together, and pass the night in conversation. At last most of the company, tired out, fell asleep, some leaning upon the table. Goethe and Gretchen sat by the window, talking in low tones. Fatigue conquered her too, and she fell asleep, and her head drooped upon his shoulder. With tender pride he supported that delicious burden till, like the rest, he gave way and slept."

It was broad day when he awoke. Gretchen was standing before the window, arranging her cap. She smiled on him more amiably than ever before, and tenderly pressed his hand as he departed. But some of those joyous companions, unknown to Goethe, were guilty of forgeries of documents, and Gretchen and Goethe, or his friend, were involved, though falsely, in the accusation. Wolfgang had to undergo a severe investigation, but was proved perfectly innocent, and Gretchen "said in her deposition concerning him: I will not deny that I have often seen him, and seen him with pleasure, but I merely treated him as a child, and my affection for him was that of a sister."

Goethe was then in his fifteenth year, and was very angry at this. He resolved never more to mention her name. He threw himself into study, especially of philosophy. He went often to wander among the mountains and fill his mind with lovely images. To please his father, he diligently applied himself to jurisprudence.

He was not sad long, though, as he says, the image of Gretchen hovered before him very often, and it may be traced in many of his beautiful creations, and in the *Clischer* or *Egmont*, besides in the heroine of *Faust*.

His lively young friends almost worshiped him, forgetting all his offense of manner in the irresistible fascination of his nature, "his overflowing liveliness, his genuine interest in every individuality, however opposite to his own."

Goethe was glad to leave Frankfort, where everything reminded him of Gretchen. In 1765 Goethe, aged sixteen, went to Leipsic to begin his college life. Not long thereafter, he fell in love with the daughter of the lady with whom he boarded.

This charming daughter, who had often helped cook the dinner, would bring in the wine. This daughter was the Anna Katherina, called by Goethe, in his autobiography, Anchen and Annette. Her portrait, still extant, is very pleasing. She was nineteen, lively and loving. Goethe says she was young, pretty, gay, and lovable, deserving to be set up in the shrine of a heart as a little saint, the object of all that adoration which it is often pleasant to offer than to receive. They saw each other at dinner and evening, when her brother played on the piano and Goethe accompanied him by playing on the flute, and in private theatricals Goethe and Annette always played the lovers.

They loved each other, but Goethe, sure of her love, teased her with trifles and plagued her into quarrels, until her love was washed

away in tears.* Too late he tried by fondness to regain it, but in vain.

From this romance sprang the oldest of Goethe's surviving dramatic works—one entire play in pastoral, a poetic representation of these lovers' quarrels, his earliest personal experience in his song.

Growing ill soon after, he went home, having learned but little in law, disappointing his father, but his mother and sister welcomed his pale face with warmest sympathy. He had seriously offended the professor of jurisprudence, by drawing caricatures of the big-wigs in his book during lecture hours, and absenting himself occasionally to partake of "some delicious fritters, which came hot from the pan precisely at the hour of lecture." He remained home a year, and at twenty went to Strasburg, to renew his studies of jurisprudence. "A more magnificent youth, perhaps, never entered the Strasburg gates. Long before celebrity had fixed all eyes upon him, he was listened to as an Apollo, and once when he entered a dining-room, people laid down their knives and forks to stare at the beautiful youth. His features were large and liberally cut, with the fine sweeping lines of Greek art. His brow was lofty and massive, and from beneath shone large, lustrous, brown eyes of marvelous beauty, their pupils seeming of almost unexampled size. His slightly aquiline nose was large and well cut, the mouth full, with short, arched upper lip, very sensitive and very expressive. The chin and jaw were boldly proportioned, and the head rested on a handsome and muscular neck. He was above the middle size, not really tall, yet his presence was so imposing he had the aspect of a tall man, and is usually so described. His frame was strong and muscular, excelling in all active sports. He was almost a barometer in sensitiveness to atmospheric influences." Goethe learned enough of law to pass an examination, and fell in love with the daughter of a dancing master, who was herself already engaged—her sister, who was not engaged, falling in love with him. "This affair only ended in a little sentiment."

At this time Werder, already famous and five years older than Goethe, became his friend. His friendship expanded the horizon of Goethe's mind, awakened in him a profounder sense of the grand poetry of the Hebrew Scriptures, and inspired him to read and to love Shakespeare, Homer, and Ossian. Goethe translated Ossian's *Selma*, and afterward "incorporated it in his *Werther*." Upon the broad and lofty gallery "of the beautiful Strasburg Cathedral these two friends often met to salute the setting sun with brimming goblets of Rhine wine." The calm, wide landscape stretched on before them, and they pointed out the spots endeared to each. "One spot has the deepest interest for us—Lesenheim, the home of Frederika"—the loveliest of all Goethe's loves. We cannot read her beautiful story without loving her ourselves, and forever after wondering how Goethe could have helped wearing the jewel of her love forever on his heart.

* He had recently destroyed many of his poems with which he was dissatisfied, and in his uncomfortable moods would show his ill-nature by teasing Annette.

At Lesenheim, five leagues from Strasburg, lived a Protestant clergyman, with whom and whose family Goethe was made acquainted by a fellow-student. One of the daughters, Frederika, was a bright girl of sixteen, who, when Goethe first saw her "wore the national costume, with its short, white, full skirt and furbelow, not concealing the neatest of ankles, a tight bodice, and black taffeta apron. Her straw hat hung on her arm, and the beautiful braids of her fair hair drooped on a delicate white neck. Merry blue eyes and a piquant little nose completed her attractions. Goethe tells us that her neck seemed almost too delicate for the cluster of fair hair on the elegant little head. Frederika was one of the sweetest, simplest figures in the whole panorama of Goethe's life.

In the open air, she sang for him her Alsatian and Swiss song :

"I come from a forest as dark as the night,
And, believe me, I love thee, my only delight.
Ei ja ei ja ei ja ei ei ei ja ja."

He saw her again in November, returning to Strasburg her accepted lover.

The beautiful poems inspired by Frederika are called the little Lesenheim Song-books, and many are scattered through his works.

Every shade and transition of love, from its early dawn till its fading, may be traced in them. The two lovers rode, and sang, and sailed, and walked, attended parties, and made neighborly calls together. Goethe wrote several songs to well-known melodies for Frederika. But Goethe "wounded this most beautiful, noble heart to its very depths." After all—sharing so many pleasures with her—after all, he could not resolve to marry her. In 1771 he left the university, with his doctor's degree, and "tore himself away from the bond and the attachment."

This same year he wrote a play, *Götz von Berlichingen*, a dramatic version of the story of Götz of the Iron Hand.

Götz was written when Goethe was twenty-two, a rapid-stirring drama, in which the hero falls in and out of love with Maria. *Götz* was the "outburst of a new national literature, a new generation of genius." "It helped into being the most brilliant and universally successful development of literature ever known." It seems to have been the "sign-post" which directed Scott's genius to his hitherto untrodden way. This heroic drama, was "the German pioneer of all those *Marmions*, and *Ivanhoes*," "long since almost obliterating and superseding it. Till its advent, Germany for us, "lay silent in a rich chaos"—"a Memnon's head, quivering with sounds suppressed, which as yet no sun-touch had called forth." This clear, powerful, and picturesque drama excited the greatest enthusiasm. Meanwhile, Goethe wandered through the Rhine country, and fell in love with Charlotte Buff, who was then betrothed to Bestner, to whom she was afterward married. Near Lottie he lived away one splendid summer—a real German idyl—her light, erect figure, her pure, sound nature, breathing a serene atmosphere all around her. "He mastered this love as soon as he had got all the imaginative and mental sweetness possible out of it," and wove some of the incidents of this passion into a power-

ful novel called *The Sufferings of Werther*. This took the world by storm. Great men were charmed by it, and the "common people carried away with its eloquence and pathos." The same year he wrote one drama and projected two others, already revolving in his mind his *Faust*. Two love engagements, one with Anna Sibylla Munch, and the other with Anna Elizabeth Schonemann, immortalized in his works under the name of Lili, diversified the experiences of this period."

Lili was sixteen when he fell in love with her, and after a betrothal, relinquished her love at last, after going through much the same comedy of "love, rapture, wavering, and indifference to affection once attained" marking his other youthful passions. Goethe was now twenty-six; the fame acquired by *Werther*, brought Goethe under the notice of Charles Augustus, Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar, who, in 1775, invited the poet to spend a few weeks at his court. He went with the Duke to Saxe-Weimar, forming a friendship with him which lasted till death. On his thirtieth birthday the Duke created him a Privy-Councillor of Legations, at a salary of 1,200 thalers a year. His "principal duties seem to have been to superintend the artistic pleasures of the court." Here he found another love in the Baroness von Stein—the Frau von Stein, a wife and mother of seven children. She was thirty-three years of age and Goethe twenty-six, seven years younger. She was one of the most refined and fascinating high-born ladies in all the little court of Weimar. For ten years Goethe was entirely devoted to her, and saw and wrote her daily. When thirty-seven years of age, in 1786, he went to Italy to gratify his life-long yearning.

There he began *Meister*, and wrote *Iphigenie* and *Tasso*, besides other prose and poems. After nearly two years he returned, and soon after his relation with the Frau von Stein was broken off.

Early in July, 1788, when Goethe was walking in the park, a fresh, rosy, bright young girl, with round, full face, long hair, small nose, pouting lips, graceful figure, and pretty, dance-loving feet, came with many reverences, handed him a petition to exert his influence to procure a post for a young author, her brother, then living at Jena. From this began his acquaintance with Christiane Vulpius, lasting until her death, twenty-five years after. After the birth of her son, August von Goethe, she came to live at his house. Goethe always regarded this connection as a marriage, but the world blamed him for this defiance of its social laws. This half marriage will always stand in the way of a right appreciation of his character."

Eighteen years after their first intimacy they were legally married. For ten years thereafter Christiane was his honored and devoted wife. She inherited from her father habits of intemperance, developing occasionally in her later life, and causing some domestic sorrow, yet Goethe most sincerely mourned her loss. He "knelt at her bedside seizing her cold hands exclaiming: 'Thou wilt not forsake me! No—no, thou must not for-

sake me!" On the day of her death he wrote these lines:

"Der versuchst O Sonne vergebens,
Durch die düstern wolken zu scheinen!
Der ganze Gewinn meines Lebens,
Ist ihren Verlust zu beweinen."

"Through the dark clouds to shine,
O Sun, you strive in vain;
For to bewail her loss,
Is all my life's whole gain."

Or not so literal, but perhaps more musical:

"Through the dark clouds to shine,
Vainly you strive, O Sun;
While all my life's whole gain,
Bewails her presence gone."

One year before Goethe's marriage his beloved friend Schiller died, after one of the most enduring and beautiful of friendships in all literary annals, and lasting eleven years, during which Schiller had ennobled and stimulated Goethe to produce the grandest works of his life. During Schiller's illness Voss found Goethe pacing up and down in his garden, crying by himself. At his death Goethe wrote, "the half of my existence is gone from me."

"Everywhere great, Goethe is greatest in his songs and ballads. There is the perpetual freshness and bloom about them of new spring flowers. Even when they seem most trivial, they ring through us like snatches of music—some as simple as a child, or wild, grotesque, and unearthly; others are lofty, proud, defiant, like the words of a Titan heaping his scorn upon the gods."

The novel called *Elective Affinities*, is the monument of a lost love for Minnie Herzbel, the original of *Ottilie*. As a child, a pet of Goethe's, the fascination increased as she grew into womanhood, and Goethe was sixty. The story shows the fervor of his passion, and the strength with which he resisted it. Goethe says of it: "In it, as in a burial-urn, I have deposited, with deep emotion, many a sad experience."

Minnie was sent to school and absolute separation saved them both, but Goethe long carried the error in his heart. At sixty-two Goethe began his autobiography, translated for us by Parke Godwin. Three years before he lost his mother, when he was fifty-nine. She died in her seventy-eighth year "Her love for her son, and his for her, had been the glory and sustainment of her happy old age."

Had Goethe no poetic fame, as a man of science he deserves a high reputation. The father of botany, a great writer calls him. In his *Metamorphoses of Plants*, he advanced the theory, in his 41st year, that the entire plant, including fruits and flowers, is evolved from the leaf, or is a modification or transformation of it. Now all botanists pronounce him right, and now every scientific botanical work has its chapter on "Metamorphoses."

He also added to anatomical knowledge, by arriving at the cerebral structure of the skull, and discovering the intermaxillary bone, the center bone of the upper jaw in man, the existence of which, long so fiercely contested, he proved beyond a doubt. Goethe was the acknowledged primate of all German literary dioceses; sage as well as poet, the beautiful Park at Weimar was his creation, and he was thirty-seven years President of the Chambers.

He did better work and more of it than was ever done. Goethe's majestic and graceful intellect had freely unfolded in the sunshine of leisure, friendship, and appreciation at Weimar; his imagination was rekindled or invoked by his occasional wanderings, refreshing himself in the sublimities of Switzerland, or losing himself in the beauties of Italy. "Goethe was great in the greatness he had inspired; how many great minds he has roused, as if by the touch of his finger."

In his last days he was surrounded by a new generation, taught from their earliest breath to adore Goethe. His "way to the grave was softly carpeted with the mosses and flowers of love."

In his own words, "Whatever he undertook, he went at with such zeal as though that alone engaged all his activity, and as though he had never brought anything else to pass." A good rule for all of us.

He retained in old age all his sensibility unimpaired. In his seventy-fourth year he loved and was loved by Fraulein von Lewejou.

If his earlier loves were brief and changing, his friendships were loyal and lasting. His charities were munificent and constant. If his inconstant, forsaken loves, like dark spirits, dim the orb of his fame, the sunshine of his greatness, the grandeur of his soul, beams and blazes through all. Whatever his heart's weaknesses or waywardness, some of his words are the sweetest and purest ever penned or sung.

"Each soul has its own religion; must have it as his individual possession; let each see that he be true to it, which is far more efficacious than trying to accommodate himself to another's." This was his creed, and these lines, as well as I can render them, seem to express the same idea:

Within us is a universe unknown,
In whose strange realm all souls sincere,
Each for himself must one best being own,
And call him God, to honor and revere.

There are sixty printed volumes of Goethe's works, perhaps more, and more than forty English translations of *Faust*. It has also been translated into other languages. One of the last is a translation of *Faust* into Swedish, by Oscar Frederick, King of Sweden and Norway. Taylor's *Faust* is a "masterpiece of translation." Carlyle has translated his *Wilhelm Meister*, and Parke Godwin his autobiography. Goethe wrote elegies, epigrams, ballads, songs, odes, satires, novels, biographies, translations, essays, tragedies, and books of science, most of them with "peculiar and exquisite skill." His poems modulate through all the keys, his prose is the most graceful and transparent in German, but "Mephistophiles in *Faust*, is perhaps the most wonderful creation in all fiction. Unlike Milton's magnificent Satan, he is a true devil, without one mitigating feature, one compunction, one feeling, good or bad, the remorseless master of the perishing soul.

The meaning of *Faust* seems to be this: "In all the earth and all the air, there is nothing that can satisfy the wandering, yearning, passionate soul, which is a stranger in the world and a sojourner like its fathers; there is a struggle between the true and the false, and a desperate attempt to snatch some su-

preme flower of satisfaction out of universal chaos."

Goethe's eighty-first year found him still busy at *Faust*, and writing the preface to Carlyle's *Life of Schiller*, and deeply interested in an essay on the question of the unity of composition in the animal kingdom. Every morning in the autumn of 1830, he had a music lesson. This consisted in Felix (Mendelssohn) playing to him an hour pieces by all the great composers in chronological order, and then explaining what each had done to further the art. He would sit all the while in a dark corner, his old eyes flashing fire. Thackeray describes him as he saw him the next year, when he was only a boy of nineteen. He says Goethe was a very handsome old man, his eyes had an awful splendor, his voice was rich and sweet, his complexion very bright, clear and rosy; he was dressed in a long gray or drab redingote with a white neckcloth and a red ribbon in his button-hole. He kept his hands behind his back, as we see him in Bauch's statuette. His house was all over pictures, drawings, casts, statues, and medals.

Thackeray saw him once in his cloak with a red collar, going out in the sunshine to step in his chariot, caressing his little golden-haired granddaughter, over whose fair, sweet face the earth has long since closed too.

Jean Paul tells us that Goethe's house was a Pantheon full of pictures and statues, his face massive and animated, his eye a ball of light. That Goethe read to him one of his unpublished poems, and as the flames of his heart burst through the external crust of ice, his reading was like deep-toned thunder blended with whispering rain drops.

In November, of the same year, came Goethe's last crowning affliction. Tidings came from Rome that his only son, who had gone thither for his health, had died on the 28th of October. The effort to calm this great grief nearly cost him his life, bringing on a violent hemorrhage. He rallied, and once more began to finish his autobiography and continue his *Faust*. The year after the death of his wife, his son had married Ottilie von Pogwisch, a brilliant and lovely woman, who had brightened Goethe's home, and after her husband's death, she watched most tenderly over Goethe's last years.

"Sitting in his chair, holding her hand, at noon on the 22d of March, 1832, he passed away; his last audible words were, 'More light!' The final darkness grew apace, and he whose eternal longing had been for more light, gave a parting cry for it as he was passing under the shadow of death," dying like the Ajax of Homer:

"Give me the light of Heaven to see,
And Ajax asks no more."

Around the memory of Goethe breathes the perfume of all the world's flowers. Sweeter than all the sermons and psalms a hundred years between, come back to us the wonderful words, the truest ever said, "God knows very well that an immortal soul can suffer no injury from a mortal accident." These words from the noble boy Goethe, over whose head only six summers had shone, come back to us all to-day with celestial balm and benediction.