

air,' and hear the genial talk of birds and nature, poets and poetry, blending with the quick rattle of the wheels. We drive with them along the Erfurt road, or up the hill of the Ettersberg, breakfast with them on 'a turfy hillock, looking down upon Erfurt and Gotha, the Thuringian wood, and the mountains of Ilmensee, with the blue range of the Hartz bounding the horizon—doubly classic ground—and now, in the clear morning light of the autumn sun,' calling forth many a reminiscence from Goethe of the enchanted youth of 'a poet in his prime.' We stroll with them through the ducal hunting-lodge, the favourite resort where, as Goethe said, 'we have spent many a good day and wasted many a good day,' and stand with them under the great beech, beneath whose wide o'er-arching shade, he and the young Grand Duke, with their gay retinue, had spent merry summer evenings, and in which, 'fifty years ago,' they had cut their names, still to be traced, though confused and distorted by nature's erasing hand. Or we accompany them to Jena, visit Schiller's old abode, and the arbour with its old stone table, at which Schiller used to write, and where he and Goethe had 'exchanged many good and great words,' and drive along the winding Saale to Burgau, where we share the simple noontide meal, and watch the rafts on the river, and listen to the conversation on the habits of the cuckoo. Or we find ourselves 'assisting' at a quiet home scene, by the taper light in his study, 'where he sat opposite to me at his table, in his white flannel dressing-gown, mild as the impression of a well-spent day. We talked about things good and great; he set before me the noblest part of his own nature, and his mind kindled my own—the most perfect harmony existed between us. He extended his hand to me across the table, and I pressed it. I then took a full glass which stood by me, and which I drank to him without

uttering a word, my glances being directed into his eyes across the wine.'

It is no wonder that close contact with such an enthusiastic, single-hearted, sympathetic nature should have called forth all that was noblest and best and most loveable in Goethe, and that there was much that was noble and loveable in him in this tranquil evening of a fruitful life,—the *sturm-und-drang* period left far behind,—we cannot but admit. Eckermann, in modest recognition of the fact that any individual presentation of a nature so many-sided could be but a partial one, not only from the different aspects of the subject, but also from the limitations of the observer, tells us that the Goethe he has given us is '*his* Goethe,' and we must rejoice that we have 'Eckermann's Goethe' to give us such pleasant parting thoughts of a 'king of men' not always kingly.

But the personality of Eckermann himself is one which is by no means to be overlooked. His noble and sweet nature, his simplicity, his pure poetic enthusiasm shine through every page of his record. His early history he tells us himself, and never has the old story of the struggle of youthful genius with adverse fates been more simply and naïvely told. He was born on the border of the marsh and heath lands near Hambourg, in a one-roomed hut, with a loft above, reached by a ladder. The father was a pedlar, and the family lived on his small gains and the produce of their garden and cow, having only to buy 'corn for bread and flour for the kitchen.' The mother earned something by spinning wool and making caps for the good *hausfrauen* of the village. Little Eckermann, the youngest of the family, living alone with his elderly parents, herded his cow with other boys, on the broad meadows, gathered sedges for her litter from the banks which the Elbe overflowed in spring, brought dry wood from the neighbouring thickets to serve for firewood, gleaned