

thing, Eckermann's simple, earnest, sympathetic, enthusiastic nature wins our hearts at once; and the reverence and the reality of his homage for the sage whom he delighted to honour become contagious. With all our impatience of Goethe's tremendous egoism, with all our disgust for the heartless and selfish lover of Frederica and Lili, we still cannot help seeing, through Eckermann's eyes, how that great, calm, philosophic intellect, full of insight into human life and human affairs—that genial, many-sided nature, mellowed and matured by the experiences and successes, as well as the losses of life—must have exercised a most powerful magnetic influence over the sympathetic and revering souls who formed his little court at Weimar. It was not possible, perhaps, for an egoist like Goethe to resist the temptation of posing a little in the midst of such a worshipful company, ever ready with their homage and their incense for his shrine, but still we feel that Eckermann has preserved for us very much of the *real* Goethe, and the real Goethe at his best! We see him in a hundred pleasant lights—in the peaceful home from which the strange and painful figure of Christine Vulpius has for ever disappeared, and where, instead, we have the graceful and lively Ottilie (his daughter-in-law), Fraülein Ulrica, and little Walter and Wolfgang, with occasional glimpses of 'young Goethe,' one of the many ordinary sons of extraordinary fathers. We see Goethe in his 'blue frockcoat with shoes,' conversing with his acolytes in gracious tones, or sitting at table, *en famille*, 'helping to all the dishes, carving the roast fowls with great dexterity, and not forgetting between whiles to fill the glasses.' We see him in his black evening-dress, decorated with the gleaming star which Eckermann tells us 'became him so well,' moving about with his grand air among his distinguished guests, listening with emotion to good music, talk-

ing in French to 'pretty youthful foreigners,' and seeming, like a well-bred host, to 'prefer listening and hearing his guests talk to talking himself.' Or we find him, in the privacy of quiet evening hours, reclining in his 'wooden arm chair,' in his white flannel dressing-gown, discussing poetry, old and new, analysing and criticising his own productions, or indulging in the reminiscences of his own past career, and of the life that now lay behind him, which fell so naturally from the lips of the old philosopher and poet.

And as Eckermann was a poet, too, there is an idyllic freshness of atmosphere about his records of the conversations which never ceases to charm. In turning over the pages in which the great poet and his single-hearted friend still live for us, we never seem to tire, but read, and read again, with new beauties ever opening for our admiration. We seem to grow familiar with the sunny fields and woodland glades that lie around quiet Weimar, around which the two great poets of Germany have woven the classic charm which a greater poet still has thrown round the quietest of little English towns. We walk with Goethe in his gardens near the park; look across the meadows to the Ilm, winding silently along beneath the rich foliage of the park that crowns the farther bank; we walk up the broad gravel path to the 'garden house,' now deserted, in which he used to study and work; sit down and feel the spring sunshine, soft and warm, through the natural arbour of over-arching trees, which Goethe had planted, forty years before, with his own hand, and where in hot summer days he 'liked to sit after dinner; and often over the meadows and the whole park such stillness reigns that the ancients would say, "Pan sleeps!"' We sit, with Eckermann, in the carriage beside the living Goethe, in 'his brown surtout and blue cloth cap, with his light gray cloak laid over his knees—his countenance brown and healthy as the fresh