

GOETHE'S RELATION TO WOMEN.

BY THE EDITOR.

[CONCLUSION.]

While convalescent in Frankfort from his Leipsic illness, Goethe became acquainted with Fräulein Susanna Catharina von Klettenberg, an old lady and a friend of his mother. She belonged to the Moravian church and took a great interest in religious mysticism which made a deep impression on Goethe without, however, converting him to pietism. Her personality is mirrored in the "Confessions of a Beautiful Soul" incorporated in his novel *Wilhelm Meister*. Goethe here made use of her letters explained and enlarged by personal conversation with her, and it is commonly assumed that as to facts and sometimes even in the letter of descriptions she is virtually to be considered as the author of this autobiography.

"The Confessions of a Beautiful Soul" is of an extraordinary interest and belongs to Goethe's most beautiful sketches of a pure and truly pious personality. In her childhood the author of these "Confessions" had been thrown upon herself by a severe disease which cut her off from the sports of childhood. "My soul became all feeling, all memory," says she, "I suffered and I loved: this was the peculiar structure of my heart. In the most violent fits of coughing, in the depressing pains of fever, I lay quiet, like a snail drawn back within its house: the moment I obtained a respite, I wanted to enjoy something pleasant; and, as every other pleasure was denied me, I endeavored to amuse myself with the innocent delights of eye and ear. The people brought me dolls and picture-books, and whoever would sit by my bed was obliged to tell me something."

She regained her health and tells of her studies, but her enjoyments lacked the giddiness of childhood. Only gradually she became fond of dancing, and for a while at this time her fancy was engaged by two brothers, but both died and faded from her memory. Later on she became acquainted with a young courtier

whom she calls Narcissus, and on one occasion when he was attacked and wounded by a quick tempered officer, she became engaged to him and cherished this young man with great tenderness. In the meantime her relation to God asserted itself at intervals. For a while she says (and these are her very words) "Our acquaintance had grown cool," and later on she continues: "With God I had again become a little more acquainted. He had given me a bridegroom whom I loved, and for this I felt some thankfulness. Earthly love itself concentrated my soul, and put its powers in motion; nor did it contradict my intercourse with God."

But Narcissus was a courtier and wanted a society woman for a wife, while she found social enjoyments more and more insipid. They disturbed her relations with God, so much so indeed that she felt estranged from him. She says: "I often went to bed with tears, and, after a sleepless night, arose again with tears: I required some strong support; and God would not vouchsafe it me while I was running with the cap and bells. . . . And doing what I now looked upon as folly, out of no taste of my own, but merely to gratify him, it all grew wofully irksome to me."

The lovers became cool and the engagement was broken off,—not that she no longer loved him. She says in this autobiography: "I loved him tenderly; as it were anew, and much more steadfastly then before."

Nevertheless he stood between herself and God and for the same reason she refused other suitable proposals. Her reputation did not suffer through the rupture with her fiancé. On the contrary the general interest in her grew considerably because she was regarded as "the woman who had valued God above her bridegroom." In passing over further particulars of the life of the "Beautiful Soul," we will quote her view of hell:

"Not for a moment did the fear of hell occur to me; nay, the very notion of a wicked spirit, and a place of punishment and torment after death, could nowise gain admission into the circle of my thoughts. I considered the men who lived without God, whose hearts were shut against the trust in and the love of the Invisible, as already so unhappy, that a hell and external pains appeared to promise rather an alleviation than an increase of their misery. I had but to look upon the persons, in this world, who in their breasts gave scope to hateful feelings; who hardened their hearts against the good of whatever kind, and strove to force the evil on themselves and others; who shut their eyes by day, that so they might

deny the shining of the sun. How unutterably wretched did these persons seem to me! Who could have devised a hell to make their situation worse?"

Finally through the influence of her uncle and a friendly counsellor whom she calls Philo she found composure of mind which she expresses thus:

"It was as if my soul were thinking separately from the body: the soul looked upon the body as a foreign substance, as we look



SUSANNA VON KLETTENBERG IN HER FORTY-FOURTH YEAR.

In the National Museum at Weimar.

upon a garment. The soul pictured with extreme vivacity events and times long past, and felt, by means of this, events that were to follow. Those times are all gone by; what follows likewise will go by; the body, too, will fall to pieces like a vesture; but I, the well-known I, I am."

She does not consider her life as a sacrifice but on the contrary as the attainment of an unspeakable joy. She says at the conclusion of her autobiography:

"I scarcely remember a commandment: to me there is nothing that assumes the aspect of law; it is an impulse that leads me, and guides me always aright. I freely follow my emotions, and know as little of constraint as of repentance. God be praised that I know to whom I am indebted for such happiness, and that I cannot think of it without humility! There is no danger I should ever



CHARLOTTE SOPHIE HENRIETTE BUFF.

Later on wife of Johann Christian Kestner. Redrawn from a pastel in the possession of Georg Kestner of Dresden.

become proud of what I myself can do or can forbear to do: I have seen too well what a monster might be formed and nursed in every human bosom, did not a higher influence restrain us."

The nobility of character of Fräulein von Klettenberg, of this "beautiful soul," contributed not a little to purify the young poet's mind, and her interest in mysticism caused him to study alchemy and to read the works of Theophrastus, Paracelsus, Agrippa von

Nettesheim and other occultists, the study of whose books proved helpful in the composition of *Faust*. We have evidence that this thoughtful and mystical lady had a real sense of humor, for when one of her friends, Fräulein von Wunderer, entered the Cronstätt Institute, Susanne had her own portrait painted for her in the dress of a nun. The picture came into Goethe's possession in 1815.

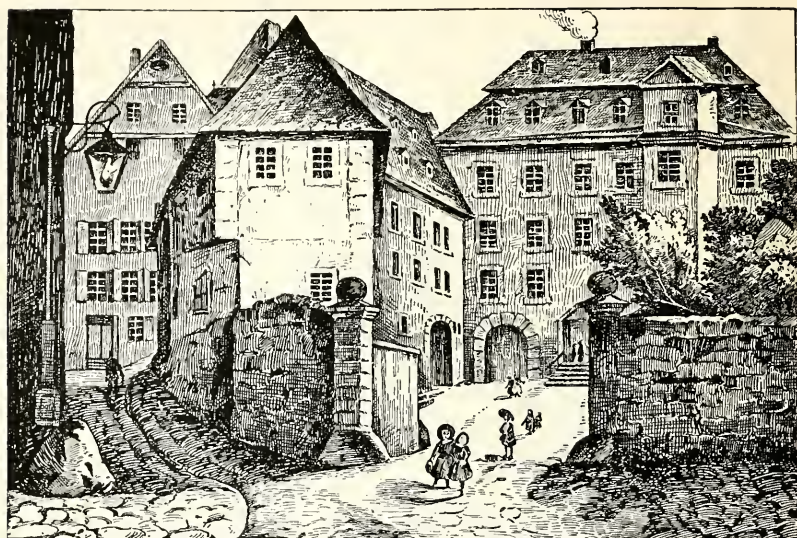
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At Wetzlar on the Lahn Goethe met Charlotte Buff, the daugh-

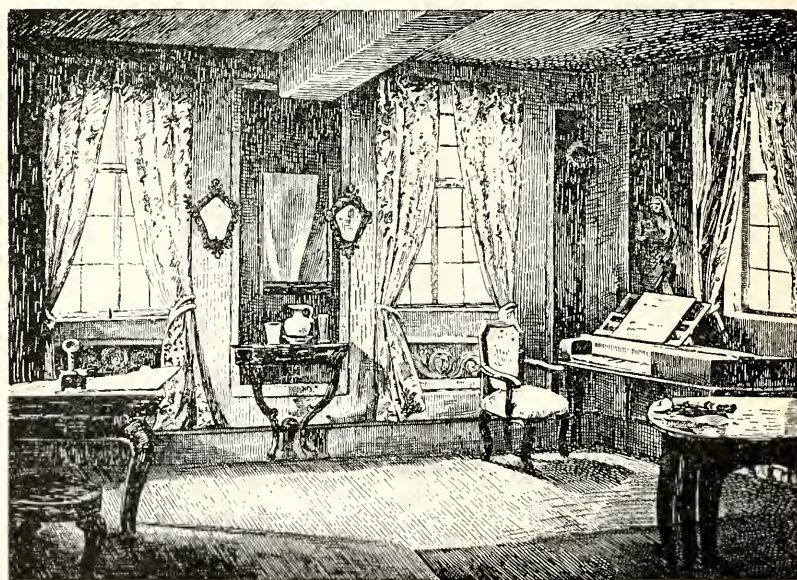


FRAU SOPHIE VON LA ROCHE.

ter of an imperial government official. She acted as a real mother to her many younger brothers and sisters and was engaged to be married to Kestner, secretary to the Hanoverian legation. Goethe felt greatly attracted to the young lady and, being at the same time a good and fast friend of Kestner, was a constant visitor at the home of her father in the *Deutsche Haus*. Charlotte was made the heroine of "*The Sorrows of Werther*," and as Goethe's acquaintance



THE DEUTSCHE HAUS, SHOWING THE WINDOWS OF CHARLOTTE'S ROOM.



CHARLOTTE BUFF'S ROOM IN THE DEUTSCHE HAUS AT WETZLAR.

with her was followed by the sad fate of his friend Jerusalem, the combination suggested to him the tragic plot of this novel.

In those days Goethe was in an irritable and almost pathological condition. He experienced in his own mind a deep longing for an escape from the restlessness of life and in his autobiography he



FRAU MAXIMILIANA BRENTANO.

Daughter of Frau von La Roche, and mother of Bettina Brentano, later Frau von Arnim.

speaks of "the efforts and resolutions it cost him to escape the billows of death." His friend Merck came to the rescue. From the dangerous atmosphere of Wetzlar he took him on a visit to the jolly circle of Frau Sophie von La Roche at Ehrenbreitstein.⁴

Goethe had met Frau von La Roche in the preceding April

⁴The novels and moral tales of Frau von La Roche were much read in those days. In a somewhat sentimental language she advocated marriage for love's sake, but she herself did what she condemned other mothers for; she urged her daughters to accept aged husbands for the sake of worldly advantages. Bettina, the daughter of Maximiliana, will be mentioned further on.

(1772) in Homburg, and he was glad to renew the friendship at this critical moment of his life. Born December 6, 1731, Sophie von La Roche was the daughter of Dr. Gutermann, a physician of Kaufbeuren and was a relative and childhood companion of Wieland, whose friend she remained throughout her life. In 1754 she mar-



ANNA ELISABETH SCHÖNEMANN: GOETHE'S LILI.

ried Georg Michael Frank von Lichtenfels, surnamed La Roche. As an author she is best known by "Rosalie's Letters to Her Friend Mariane." She had two beautiful daughters. While in Ehrenbreitstein Goethe passed the time with Maximiliana in a harmless but entertaining flirtation, before she was married to an older and jealous husband, Mr. Brentano. Frau von La Roche removed with

her husband to Speyer and later to Offenbach where she died February 18, 1807.



LILI'S MENAGERIE.

By Kaulbach.

During the winter of 1774-75 Goethe became acquainted with Anna Elisabeth Schönnemann, the daughter of a rich banker, a pretty

girl of sixteen but a spoiled child and a flirt. He called her Lili, and devoted several poems to her which are exceedingly poetical but at the same time betray his dissatisfaction with the charms of the fascinating young lady. In "Lili's Park" he compares her many lovers to a menagerie and himself to a bear who does not fit into the circle of his mistress at the Schöнемann residence.

In April 1775 Goethe was officially engaged to Lili, but the engagement lasted only into May; since both families were opposed to it, it was soon revoked. Three years later she was married to the Strassburg banker Bernhard Friedrich von Türkheim. She died near Strassburg in 1817.

The poems "New Love, New Life"; "To Belinde," and "Lili's Park" are dedicated to her, and some later songs made in Weimar, "Hunter's Evening Song" and "To a Golden Heart" Goethe wrote in remembrance of Lili.

* * *

While Goethe's heart was still troubled with his love for Lili, he received an anonymous letter signed "Gustchen." The writer gained his confidence and he answered with unusual frankness, telling her of all that moved him and especially also the joys and disappointments of his courtship with Lili. This correspondence developed into a sincere and pure friendship with his unknown correspondent, and Goethe soon found out that Gustchen was the countess Augusta Stolberg, the sister of his friends, the brothers Stolberg.

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In the summer of 1775 when Goethe visited his friends Bodmer and Lavater in Zurich, the latter introduced him to his friend Frau Barbara Schulthess, née Wolf, the wife of a merchant in Zurich. At first sight she was not particularly attractive nor was she brilliant in conversation, but she had a strong character and impressed her personality upon all with whom she came in contact. Her connection with Goethe has not been sufficiently appreciated presumably because two years before her death (1818) she burned all the letters she had received from him. We know, however, that Goethe submitted to her most of his new productions, among them *Iphigenie*, *Tasso* and *Wilhelm Meister*, and he appears to have been greatly influenced by her judgment. He calls her *die Herzliche*, "my cordial friend." He is known to have met her on only two occasions afterwards, in 1782 and again on October 23, 1797. Herder characterizes her briefly as follows:

"Frau Schulthess, to be brief, is a she-man (*Männin*). She

says almost nothing, and acts without any show of verbiage. She is not beautiful, nor well educated, only strong and firm without



BARBARA SCHULTHEß.

After a painting by Tischbein (1781) in possession of Dr. Denzler-Ernst of Zurich.

coarseness. She is stern and proud without spreading herself, an excellent woman and a splendid mother. Her silence is instructive criticism. To me she is a monitor and a staff. . . . She is only useful

through silence. She only receives and does not give from pure humility, from true pride."



MIGNON IN WILHELM MEISTER.

Through her a most important work of Goethe's has been preserved, which is nothing less than his original conception of Wilhelm

Meister. It is not merely a variation of the one finally published, but a different novel altogether, three times as large in extent. It bore the title *Wilhelm Meister's theatralische Sendung*, and was written in 1777. Goethe sent it to Frau Schultheiss, familiarly called Bebé, in 1783, and the entire manuscript was copied partly by her-



CORONA SCHRÖTER.*

By Anton Graff.

self, partly by her daughter. This copy was discovered by Dr. Gustav Villeter, Professor at the Zurich Gymnasium, to whom it was brought by one of his scholars. It has been edited by Dr. H. Mayne and was published in 1910.

When speaking of the women who played a part in Goethe's life we must not forget Corona Schröter (born January 17, 1751,

* The picture is not definitely identified, but judging from tradition and its similarity to a known portrait of the actress there can scarcely be any doubt that she is the subject of the painting.

at Guber). She had met Goethe as a student in Leipsic and had at that time been greatly impressed by the charm of his personality. In 1776 she was engaged as an opera singer at Weimar, and to her



AMALIA, DUCHESS DOWAGER OF SAXE WEIMAR.

After a painting by Angelica Kaufmann.

were assigned the heroine parts of romantic love dramas. She was admired as one of the greatest stars in her specialty, and was a great favorite with Goethe who sometimes appeared with her on

the stage. Later on she became a successful teacher of recitation and singing, and many of the Weimar ladies were her pupils.

Corona Schröter was also distinguished as a painter and com-



DUCHESS DOWAGER AMALIA IN ADVANCED YEARS.

Etching by Steinla, after a painting by Jagermann.

poser. Her "Erl-King," which was the first attempt to set Goethe's famous poem to music, appears like a rough draft of Schubert's more elaborate, more powerful and more artistic composition. When she retired from the stage she lived in Ilmenau and died August 23,

1802. In his poem on Mieding's death, Goethe also mentions Corona Schröter and immortalizes her as a great actress.

Anna Amalia, Duchess Dowager of Saxe-Weimar, plays a most



FRIEDRICH HILDEBRAND VON EINSIEDEL.

Drawing by Schmeller.

important part in Goethe's life; and her influence on his destiny cannot be overestimated, for she was the guiding star which led him to Weimar. The elevating spirit in which she dominated the

social atmosphere of the small duchy contributed not a little to mature the untamed spirit of the wild young genius.

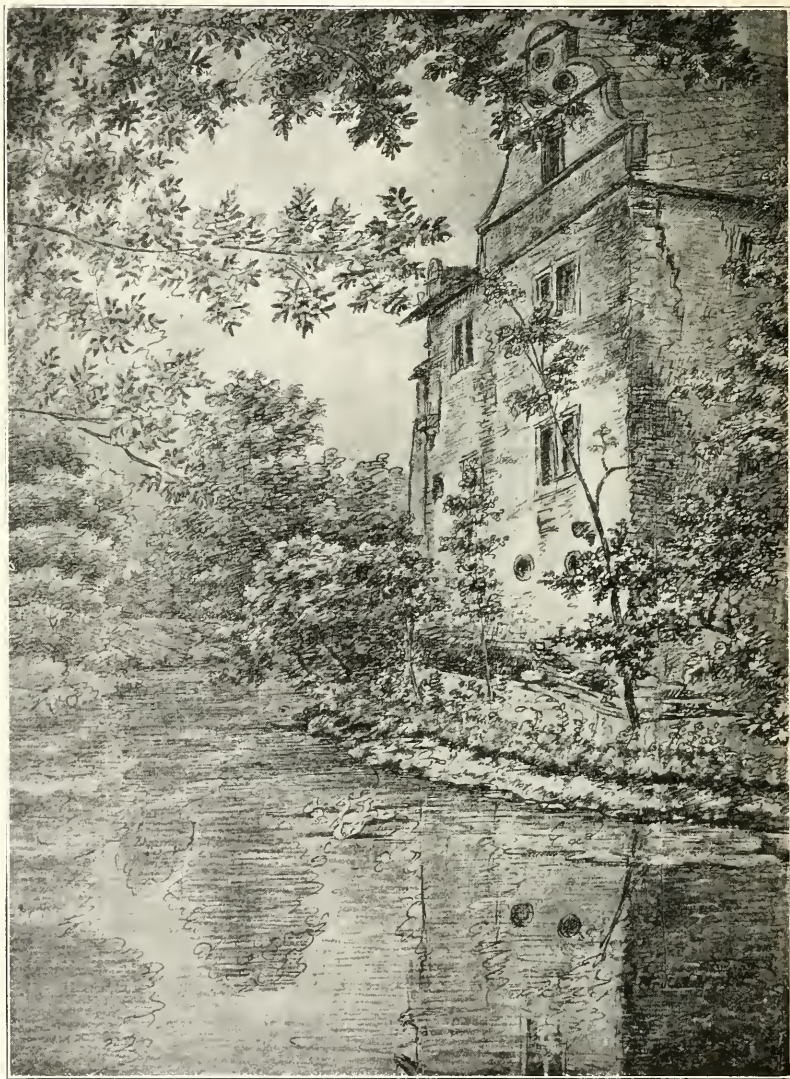


FRIEDRICH CONSTANTIN VON STEIN (CALLED FRITZ).

Drawing by Schmeller, about 1819.

Anna Amalia was the daughter of the Duke Karl of Brunswick. She was born October 24, 1739, and was married to the duke Con-

stantin of Saxe-Weimar, March 16, 1756. Her husband died on May 28, 1758, after a married life of only two years, and she took

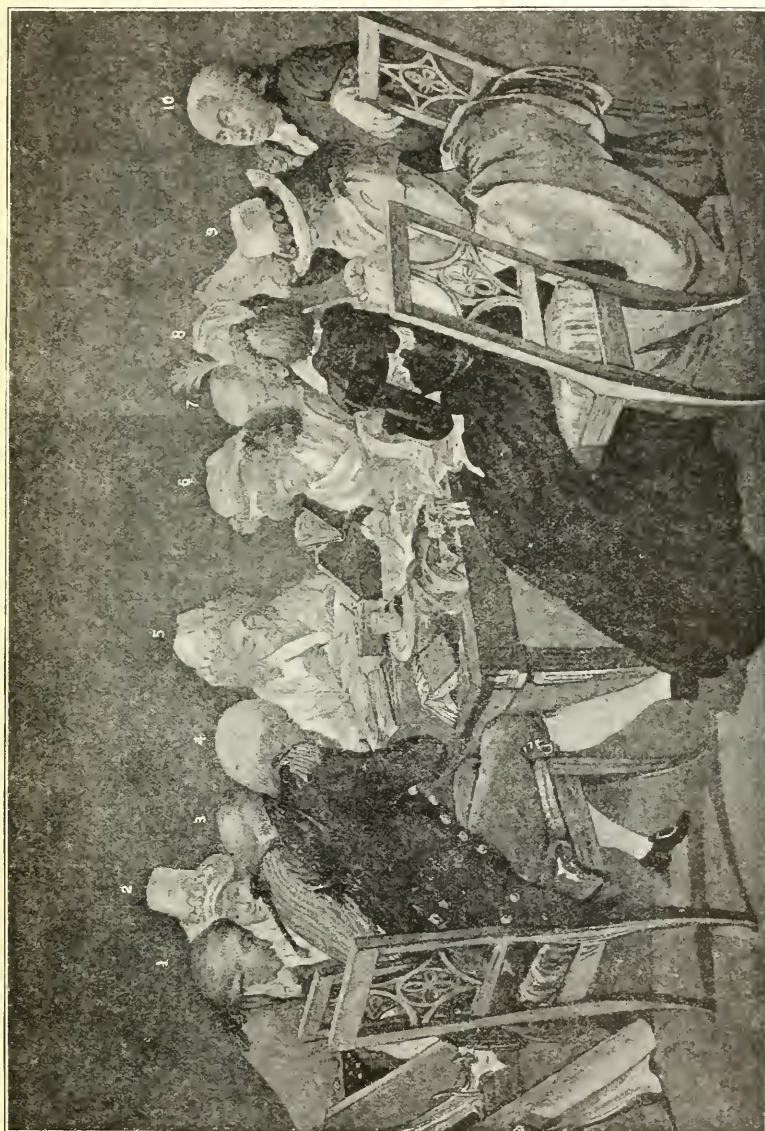


CASTLE KOCHBERG, MANSION ON THE STEIN ESTATE.

Drawn by Goethe.

the regency until her son, the young Duke Karl August, became of age, September 3, 1775. She proved not only very efficient in the affairs of government but was also a good mother and did her

best to bestow upon her son a broad and liberal education. When the Duke married Louise, the daughter of the Landgrave of Hesse-

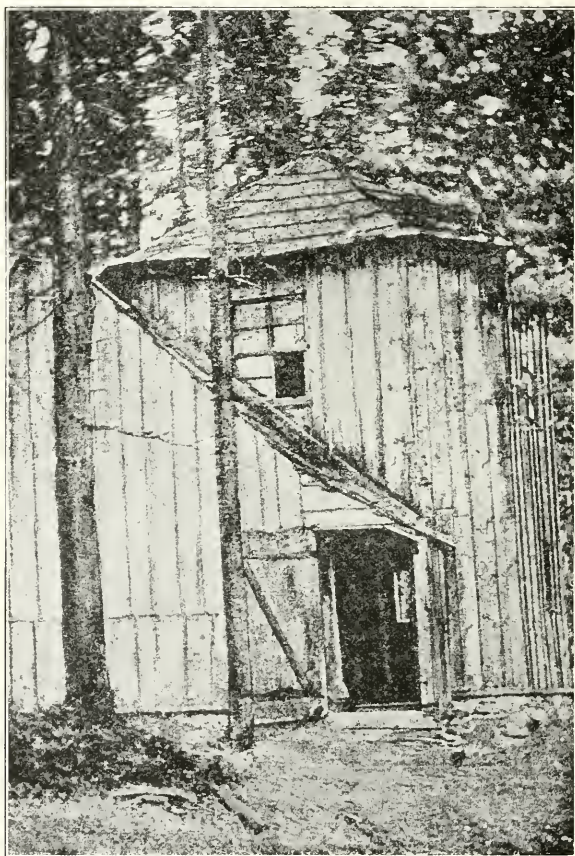


THE CIRCLE OF DUCHESS AMALIA.
After a water color by Kraus, 1795.

Darmstadt, these three royal personages, the Duke, his mother, and his wife, formed an auspicious trinity in their love and patronage of German literature.

Even at an advanced age the Duchess preserved her beauty and distinguished appearance, and when she retired from active participation in the government, she concentrated her interest in *belles lettres*, art and everything that tends to the cultivation of the mind. She died at Weimar, April 10, 1807.

The painter Kraus immortalized the circle of the Duchess



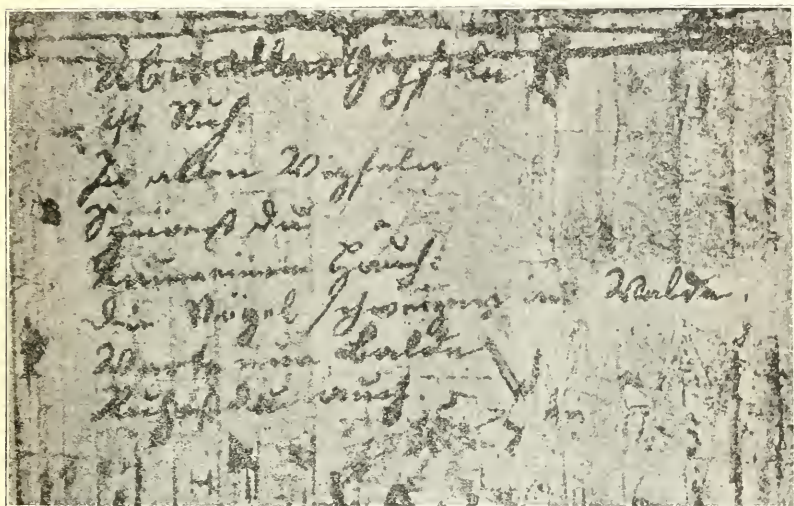
THE HUNTER'S HUT ON GICKELHAHN NEAR ILMENAU.

After a photograph.

Amalia in a watercolor which we here reproduce, and we may assume that it represents a scene of actual life. The figures as numbered in the picture are (1) Johann Heinrich Meyer, called Kunstmeyer, born in Zurich 1760; met Goethe on his Italian journey 1786; was called as professor of drawing to Weimar 1791; after 1807 director of the academy; died October 11, 1832, in Jena. (2) Frau Henriette von Fritsch, née Wolfskell, lady-in-waiting. (3) Goethe.

(4) Friedrich Hildebrand von Einsiedel, councilor in the government at Weimar, later chief master of ceremonies of Duchess Amalia. (5) Duchess Amalia. (6) Elise Gore. (7) Charles Gore. (8) Emilie Gore. (9) Fräulein von Gönchhausen, lady-in-waiting. (10) Herder.

Among the acquaintances Goethe made in Weimar was Charlotte von Stein, the wife of the Master of the Horse. She was seven years older than Goethe and mother of seven children, to the eldest of whom, called Fritz, Goethe was greatly attached. Goethe's correspondence with Charlotte von Stein throws much light upon the poet's thoughts and sentiments and explains the



GOETHE'S POEM IN THE HUNTER'S HUT.

origin of many of his poems. Among the poems dedicated to her we will mention "Restless Love," "To Linda," "Dedication," and above all the two short poems entitled "Wanderer's Nightsong," one of which Goethe composed in the night of September 6-7, 1780, and wrote on the wall of the little wooden hut on the peak of the Gickelhahn near Ilmenau. The handwriting was renewed by himself August 27, 1813. The hut burned down August 11, 1870.

This song of the Gickelhahn hut is familiar to all lovers of music. Various English translations have been made though Longfellow's is perhaps the most familiar. In its sweet simplicity it is almost untranslatable, but we add herewith another attempt, which has the advantage of fitting the music:

"Over all the mountains
Lies peace.
Hushed stand the treetops;
Breezes cease
Slumber caressed.
Asleep are the birds on the bough,—
Wait then, and thou
Soon too wilt rest."—*Tr. by P. C.*



CHRISTIANA VULPIUS.

On his return from a journey to Italy Goethe's relations to Frau von Stein had become cool. In 1788 he met Christiana Vulpius who handed him a petition in favor of her brother. She was the daughter of a talented man, who, however, had lost his position through love of liquor. The girl was a buxom country lass with rosy cheeks, and a simple-hearted disposition. Goethe brought her into his home where she took charge of the household. A charm-

ing little poem is dedicated to her which describes their meeting in a figurative way.

In the translation of William Gibson it reads as follows:

"I walked in the woodland,
And nothing sought;
Simply to saunter—
That was my thought.

"I would have plucked it,
When low it spake:
'My bloom to wither,
Ah! wherefore break?"

"I saw in shadow
A floweret rise,
Like stars it glittered,
Like lovely eyes.

"I dug, and bore it,
Its roots and all,
To garden-shades of
My pretty hall.



CAROLINE VON HEYGENDORF, NÉE JAGEMANN.

"And planted now in
A sheltered place,
There grows it ever
And blooms apace."

Goethe married Christiana October 19, 1806.

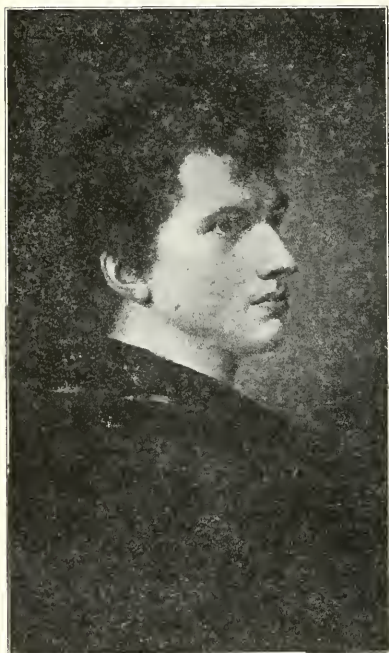
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In 1797 Caroline Jagemann, distinguished both as a singer and an actress, filled an engagement at the Weimar theater. She was born at Weimar on January 15, 1777, and began her career on the stage at Mannheim at the age of fifteen. Four years later she returned to her native city to take a leading place in both the opera and the drama. She was not only of unusual beauty and queenly

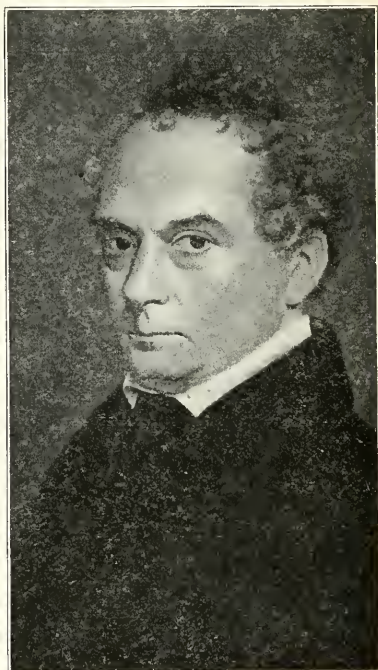
bearing, but was also distinguished by rare talent and gained the favor of the Duke, who conferred nobility upon her under the name of Frau von Heygendorf. Strange to say she is the only woman of Goethe's acquaintance who was hostile to him. She used her influence with the Duke to intrigue against the poet and caused him so much annoyance that he considered it a relief when in 1817 he resigned his position as director of the theater.

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In April, 1807, Bettina Brentano (later Frau von Arnim) the



LUDWIG JOACHIM VON ARNIM,
KNOWN AS ACHIM VON ARNIM.



CLEMENS BRENTANO.

daughter of Maximiliana von La Roche, and a sister of the poet Clemens Brentano, visited Goethe and was well received. Being an exceedingly pretty girl of a romantic disposition, she entered soon into a friendship with the famous poet which continued for some time; but she caused him so much annoyance through her eccentricities that Goethe was glad of an opportunity to break with her. When once in 1811 she behaved disrespectfully to his wife, Frau Geheimerath Goethe, he forbade Bettina his house.



BETTINA BRENTANO.

Later Frau von Arnim. Enlarged from a miniature by A. von Achim Baerwalde.

Goethe had corresponded with Bettina and some time after his death she published letters that purported to be their correspondence, under the title "Goethe's Correspondence with a Child." Whatever of this book may be genuine, we know that it is greatly embellished and shows Goethe in a wrong light. Poems addressed to Minna



MINNA HERZLIEB.

Herzlieb are appropriated by Bettina, and Goethe is made to express sentiments which can not have been in the original letters.

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Minna Herzlieb (born May 22, 1789, in Züllichau) was educated in the house of the publisher Frommel at Jena, where Goethe made her acquaintance and entertained a fatherly friendship for her.

We may assume that he loved her, though the word "love" was never spoken between them. It is believed that she furnished the main features for the character of Otilie in the "Elective Affinities" which he planned at that time. She was married in 1821 to Professor Walch of Jena but later separated from her husband. She suffered from melancholia and died July 10, 1865, in a sanatorium at Goerlitz.

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At the celebration of the first anniversary of the battle of Leipsic in 1814, Goethe visited his native city, where he met a rich

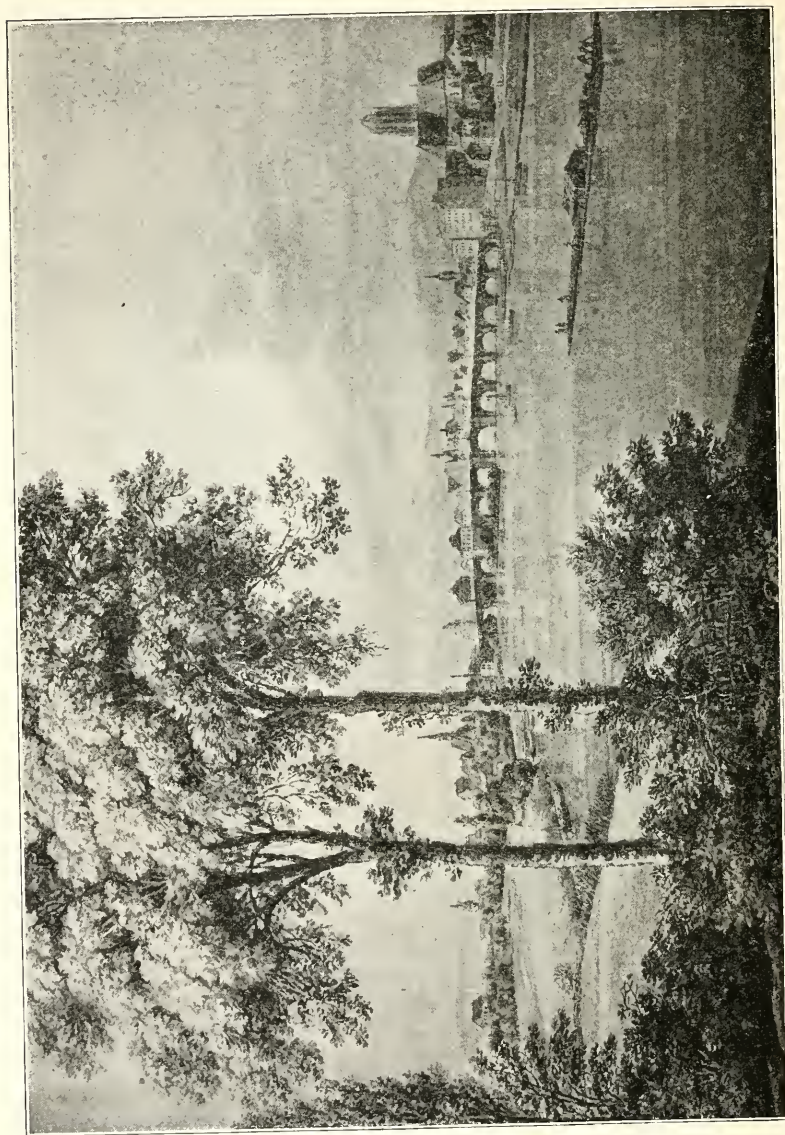


FRAU MARIANNE VON WILLEMER, NÉE JUNG.

As she appeared in 1814. (After an engraving by Doris Raab, published by Cotta).

banker, the privy councilor Johann Jacob von Willemer. On the Willemer estate in the vicinity of the Gerbermühle near Offenbach, the poet made the acquaintance of Marianne Jung, later Frau von Willemer, a most attractive and highly intellectual lady. She was born November, 1784, as the daughter of Matthias Jung, a manufacturer of musical instruments at Linz on the Danube, but since her father died during her childhood the young girl was compelled to make her own living, and she joined the Thaub ballet at Frankfurt on the Main in 1799. She appeared on the stage, but the privy councilor who was in charge of the business management of the

theater soon rescued the charming maiden from the dangers of a theatrical career. He took her into his home and had her educated



THE BRIDGE OVER THE MAIN AT FRANKFORT.

Drawing in sepia by A. Radl, presumably given to Goethe August 28, 1815, after his visit to Herr and Frau von Willemer, August 12-18, 1815.

as if she were his own daughter. Very soon after their acquaintance with Goethe in August, 1814, Marianne became the wife of her then widowed benefactor, September 27 of the same year.

Goethe enjoyed the company of the Willemer family so much that he visited them at Frankfort again for a few days in 1815. He never saw them again but remained in correspondence with Frau von Willemer to the end of his life. With all her warm friendship for Goethe, Marianne never ceased to be a dutiful wife. Her husband knew of her letters to the poet and found no fault with her. This



OTTILIE VON GOETHE, NÉE VON POGWISCH.

After a crayon drawing by Heinrich Müller about 1820.

correspondence has been published in 1877 and contains a letter of Eckermann with an account of Goethe's last moments. She influenced Goethe while he wrote the "West-Eastern Divan," many verses of which (especially the Suleika verse) literally express her own sentiments.

Goethe's wife died June 6, 1816, and he felt the loss more keenly than might have been expected. He felt lonely in his

home until after the marriage of his only son August with Ottilie von Pogwisch he saw his grandchildren grow up around him. Ottilie, born October 31, 1796, in Danzig, was the daughter of Baron Pogwisch and his wife, née countess Henckel von Donnersmarck. She was educated at Weimar where her mother was mistress of ceremonies at the ducal court. She was married to August von Goethe in 1817 and bore him three children, Walther Wolfgang, born April 9, 1818, Wolfgang Maximilian, born September 18, 1820, and Alma, born October 29, 1827.

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In the year 1823 Goethe became deeply interested in Ulrike von Levetzow, whose mother he had formerly met in Carlsbad in company with her parents, Herr and Frau Brösigke. Amalia Brösigke



ULRIKE VON LEVETZOW.

After a miniature pastel. She met Goethe at Marienbad in the summer of 1822-1823.

had first been married to a Herr von Levetzow, who was court marshal of Mecklenburg Schwerin, and by this marriage she had two daughters, Ulrike and Amalia. After a divorce she married her husband's cousin Friedrich von Levetzow, an officer in the battle of Waterloo, where he met his death. By this second marriage Amalia von Levetzow had another daughter named Bertha, and Goethe met the interesting widow and her three daughters in Marienbad in 1821 and 1822. He felt a deep attachment for the oldest daughter Ulrike, and to characterize their relation we quote one of his letters to her, dated January 9, 1823, in which he speaks of himself as "her loving papa" and also of her daughterly affection. The letter in answer to one of hers reads thus:

"Your sweet letter, my dear, has given me the greatest pleas-

ure, and indeed doubly so on account of one particular circumstance. For though your loving papa always remembers his faithful and lovely daughter, yet for some time her welcome figure has been more clearly and vividly before my inner vision than ever. But now the matter is explained. It was just those days and hours when you too were thinking of me to a greater degree than usual and felt the inclination to give expression to your thoughts from afar.

"Therefore many thanks, my love; and at the same time my best wishes and greetings to your kind mother of whom I like to think as a shining star on my former horizon. The excellent physician who has so entirely restored her health shall also be an honored Æsculapius to me.

"So be assured that my dearest hope for the whole year would be again to enter your cheerful family circle and to find all its members as kindly disposed as when I said farewell....

"So my darling I bespeak your daughterly consideration for the future. May I find in your company as much health in that valley among the mountains (Marienbad) and in its springs as I hope again to see you joyous and happy."

When Goethe met the Levetzow family late in the following summer his attachment for Ulrike became so strong that though he was then 74 years old he seriously thought of marrying this charming young girl of nineteen. But the difference in their ages seemed too great an obstacle. He resigned himself and wrote in the same year the "Trilogy of Passion" which was dedicated to Ulrike. This summer in Marienbad was the last occasion on which they met. Ulrike lived to an advanced age and died in 1899.

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Goethe lived in a house of glass in the sense that all he ever did or that ever happened to him lies before us like an open book. During his lifetime he was watched by many curious people, by both friends and enemies, and the gossips of Weimar noted whom he visited or on whom he called. Even to-day we can almost study his life day by day, and know whom he ever met or how he busied himself. Every letter of his that is still extant has been published, and we have an insight into every one of his friendships, yet nothing has ever been discovered that could be used to his dishonor, or would support the malicious accusations of his enemies. The married women to whom Goethe was attracted never tried to conceal their friendship with the poet, nor did their husbands see any reason to enter a protest. Apparently the good conscience which Goethe en-

joyed made him unconcerned about the possibility of stirring gossip; and yet he felt it deeply, and sometimes gave expression to his in-



FRAU CHARLOTTE VON STEIN.

After a painting by H. Meyer, 1880, in the Grand Duke's Museum at Weimar.

dignation, as for instance in a letter to Frau von Stein, May 24, 1776. He said: "Even the relation, the purest, most beautiful and

truest which, except to my sister, I ever held to a woman, is thus disturbed. . . . The world which can be nothing to me, does not want that you should be something to me."

While at different times Goethe cherished several friendships with different women, and while his poetic nature seemed to need a stimulation in different ways and by different characters, he longed for an ideal monogamy in which all his friendship and love would be concentrated on one woman, but fate did not grant him this boon.



FRAU CHARLOTTE VON STEIN, NÉE SCHARDT.

Drawn by herself, 1790. Cf. Lavater's *Essai sur la physiognomie*, IV, 108.

He expresses his wish in a letter to Frau von Stein, dated March 2, 1779, as follows: "It is an unpleasant idea to me that there was a time when you did not know and love me. Should I come again upon earth, I will ask the gods that I may love only one, and if you were not so opposed to this world, I would then ask you to become this dear companion of mine."

Goethe was human, and his life, his passions, his interests and his work were thoroughly human. We will not make out that he was

a saint, but grant that he had human failings. We claim, however, that even his failings had no trace of vulgarity and that his character was much purer than that of many a saint whom we know not in his sins but only in his contrition and repentance. Goethe did not want to be anything but human and so he portrays his humanity without trying to make it appear different from what it was, and with all his shortcomings we must come to the conclusion that his humanity was ennobled by all the considerations demanded by reason as well as a respect for the rights of others. While he did not hesitate to enjoy himself he never lost self-control nor did he ever do anything that would cause remorse.