

bornness of the other. I served as scapegoat to the caprices of the obstinate couple, and languished as such nine weeks long in the university prison at Jena.* At last my father consented to advance me money on my formally abandoning, before the university board, all claim on his property in the shape of inheritance; and so, in the end, I got free.

In spite of the gloom into which my position as a prisoner plunged me, the time of my arrest was not utterly barren. My late endeavours towards scientific knowledge had made me more and more conscious of my need of a solid foundation in my knowledge of Latin; therefore I now tried to supply deficiencies to the extent of my ability, and with the help of a friend. It was extremely hard to me, this working my way through the dead and fragmentary teaching of an elementary grammar. It always seemed to me as if the mere outer acquisition of a language could but little help forward my true inner desire for knowledge, which was deeply in earnest, and was the result of my own free choice. But wherever the knowledge of language linked itself to definite external impressions, and I was able to perceive its connection with facts, as, for instance, in the scientific nomenclature of botany, I could quickly make myself master of it. This peculiarity of mind passed by me unnoticed at the time; I knew and understood too little, nay, indeed, almost nothing of myself as yet, even as regards the actions of my every-day life.

A second occupation of this prison period was the preparation of an exercise (or academical thesis) in geometry, which I undertook that I might the sooner obtain an independent position in some profession.

Thirdly, I studied Winckelmann's "Letters on Art." Through them some germs of higher artistic feeling may have been awakened within me; for I examined the engravings which the work contains with intense delight. I could quite perceive the glow of pleasure that they aroused, but at the time I took little

* "In carcer;" that is, in the prison of the university, where in the last resort students who fail to comply with university regulations are confined. The "carcer" still exists in German universities. It has of course nothing to do with the ordinary prison of the town.

account of this influence, and indeed the feeling for art altogether was late in developing itself in me. When I now glance over the earlier and later, the greater and smaller, artistic emotions which have swayed me, and observe their source and direction, I see that it was with arts (sculpture as well as music) as it was with languages—I never succeeded in accomplishing the outward acquisition of them: yet I now feel vividly that I, too, might have been capable of something in art had I had an artistic education.

Further, there came into my hands, during the time of my imprisonment, a bad translation of an abridgment of the *Zendavesta*. The discovery [in these ancient Persian Scriptures] of similar life-truths to our own, and yet coupled with a quite separate religious standpoint from ours, aroused my attention, and gave some feeling of universality to my life and thought; this, however, disappeared as quickly as it had come.

By the beginning of the summer term in 1801 I was at length set free from arrest. I at once left Jena and my academical career, and returned to my father's house. I was just nineteen years old. It was but natural that I should enter my parents' house with heavy heart, overclouded soul, and oppressed mind. But spring warmed and awakened all nature once more, and recalled to life, too, my slumbering desire for better things.

As yet I had busied myself but little with German literature, and the names of Schiller, Goethe, Wieland, and the rest I now, for the first time, began to learn. In this, too, it was with me as in so many other things; any mental influence that came before me I had either to fully interweave with my inner life, or else altogether to forego its acquisition.

With this peculiarity of temperament, I could master only a rather restricted amount of mental material. My father's library was once more ransacked. I found not much that was of any use to me, for it contained chiefly theological works; but I seized with the greatest enjoyment on a book which had come out some ten years before in Gotha, a general view of all the sciences and fine arts in their various ramifications, with a short sketch of the object of the several sciences and of the literature of each department. The arrangement was based upon the usual division

of the faculties, but it served to give me a general outlook, long desired, over the whole of human knowledge, and I was right glad to have found this "Mappe du monde littéraire"—for that was its title. I resolved to turn this book to the best advantage I could, and set about putting my resolution into practice. In order to make a collection of comprehensive extracts of scientific matters from the several periodicals received by my father (who shared for that purpose in a joint subscription with other preachers and educated people), I had already begun a sort of diary. The form of this journal was shapeless—everything was put down as it came, one thing after the other; and thereby the use of it all was rendered very inconvenient. Now, however, I perceived the value of division according to a settled plan, and soon hit upon a scheme of procedure.

I aimed at collecting all that seemed worthy to be known, all that was necessary for cultured men in general, and for myself in my own calling in particular; and this rich treasure was to be brought out under favourable circumstances, or whenever need was, from its storehouse. Also I desired to acquire a general idea of those subjects which the craving for knowledge, growing ever more and more sharp within my soul, was always urging me thoroughly to work through over again. I felt happy in my work; and I had already been chained to my task for several days, from early morning till late at night, in my little distant chamber with its iron-barred windows, when my father suddenly and unexpectedly walked into the room. He looked over what I had done, and remarked the quantity of paper used over it, which indeed was not small. Upon this cursory inspection he held my work for a foolish waste of time and paper; and it would have been all over with my labour of love for that time, if my brother (Christoph), who had so often stood as protector by my side, had not just then been on a visit with us. He had become the minister of a place which lay a few hours' journey from Oberweissbach, and at this moment was staying with my parents. My father at once told him of what he considered my useless, if not indeed injurious occupation; but my brother saw it differently. I ventured, therefore, to continue, with the silent permission of my father. And indeed the work proved of actual service

to me, for it brought a certain order, breadth, and firmness into my ideas which had the most beneficial effect upon me.

My father now strove to procure me a settled position in my chosen calling; or at all events to provide some active work which would bring me into nearer connection with it. And for this purpose a fortunate opportunity soon offered. Some of my father's relatives had property in the district of Hildburghausen, managed by a steward. The friendly footing on which my father stood with these relatives permitted me to study practical farming under this steward. There I took part in all the ordinary farming occupations. These, however, did not attract me greatly, and I ought to have at once discovered what an unsuitable career I had chosen, if I had but understood my own nature.

The thing that most painfully occupied my mind at this time was the absence of cordial understanding between me and my father. At the same time I could not help esteeming and honouring him. Notwithstanding his advanced age he was still as strong and as healthy in body as in mind, penetrating in speech and counsel, vigorous in fulfilment and actual work, earnest, nay, hard, in address. He had a firm, strong will, and at the same time was filled with noble, self-sacrificing endeavour. He never shirked skirmish nor battle in the cause of what he deemed the better part; he carried his pen into action, as a soldier carries his sword, for the true, the good, and the right. I saw that my father was growing old and was drawing near the grave, and it made me sorry to feel that I was yet a stranger to such a father. I loved him, and felt how much good resulted from that love; so I took the resolution to write to my father, and by letter to show him my true nature, so far as I could understand myself. Long did I revolve this letter in my mind; never did I feel strength nor courage to write it. Meanwhile a letter called me back home in November, after I had been some months engaged on the estate. I was called upon to help my father, now quite weak and almost bedridden; at all events I could assist him in his correspondence. Family and other cares and the activities of life absorbed my whole time. What I meant to have done in my letter now happily became possible in speech from man to man, in glances from eye to eye. My father was occupied by cares for my future

prospects up till the end. He died in February 1802. May his enlightened spirit look down full of peace and blessing upon me as I write; may he now be content with that son who so loved him!

I now stood in every respect my own master, and might decide the direction of my future life for myself, according to the circumstances which lay around me. With this intention I once more left the paternal roof at Easter, to undertake the post of clerk in the Office of Woods and Forests which formed one part of the general administration (divided into Treasury, Woods and Forests, and Tithe departments) of the as yet episcopal territory of Bamberg.* My district lay amidst unusual and lovely scenery; my duties were light, and when they were over I was free to roam in the neighbourhood, now doubly beautiful in the springtime, to live out my life in freedom, and gain strength for mind and soul.

Thus once again I lived much out of doors and in companionship with Nature. My chief was proud of the possession of a considerable library, of which I made good use; and in this manner many of the publications then issuing from the press, and treating of matters connected with the occupation which I had chosen, passed through my hands, as well as those on other subjects. I was especially attracted by some volumes which contained aphorisms, thoughts, and observations on conduct, selected from ancient and modern writers and thinkers. My character grew upon and entwined itself around these aphorisms, which I could easily glance over, and as easily retain, and, more than all, which I could weave into my own life and thoughts, and by which I could examine my conduct. I made extracts of those which were in closest accord with my inner life, and bore them always about my person.

Amidst these surroundings my life contained many elements of growth. Although my chief, as well as his family, was a strong Roman Catholic, he chose a (Protestant) private tutor recommended to him by Professor Carus. This gentleman had many

* The Prince-Bishop of Bamberg shared in the general Napoleonic earthquake. The domain of the bishopric went to Bavaria ultimately, the title alone remaining to the Church.

excellent qualities, so that we soon became great friends. We had also both of us the pleasure of being acquainted with some highly-cultured people, the families of the physician, of the minister, and of the schoolmaster in the neighbouring Protestant village, which was as yet still a fief of the Empire.* My friend the tutor was a young man quite out of the common, with an actively inquiring mind; especially fond of making plans for wide-stretching travels, and comprehensive schemes of education. Our intercourse and our life together were very confidential and open, for the subjects he cared for were those dear to me; but we were of diametrically opposite natures. He was a man of scholastic training, and I had been deficiently educated. He was a youth who had plunged into strife with the world and society; my thought was how to live in peace with myself and all men. Besides, our outward lives bore such different aspects that a truly intimate friendship could not exist between us. Nevertheless our very contrasts bound us more closely together than we deemed.

Practical land-surveying at this time chiefly interested me, for it at once satisfied my love for out-of-doors life, and fully occupied my intelligence. But the everlasting scribbling which now fell to my share I could not long endure, in spite of my otherwise pleasant life.

Early in the spring of 1803 I left my situation and went to Bamberg, feeling sure that the political changes by which Bamberg had been transferred to Bavaria, and the general survey of the district which was therefore in contemplation, would immediately provide me with a sphere of work suited to my capabilities. My expectations were not falsified. In pursuance of my plan I introduced myself to the land-surveyors in Bamberg, and at once received employment from one of them. He had had considerable surveys in hand, and was still engaged upon them. As I showed some proficiency in mapping, he entrusted me with the preparation of the necessary maps which accompanied the surveys. This

* Shared the fate of the Bamberg possessions, and of many other principalities and small domains at that time existent; namely, absorption under the Napoleonic *regime* into the neighbouring States. This went to Bavaria; see the text, later on.

kept me employed for some time on work sufficiently remunerative for my needs.

Of course the question in hand with the new Government was the appointment of land-surveyors, and those who were resident in the town were invited to send in maps of Bamberg as specimens of their work. Through the instruction I had enjoyed in my youth I was not unacquainted with such work. I therefore took pleasure in drawing a map, which I sent in. My work was approved, and I received something for it; but being a stranger, inexperienced, and young, and having hardly taken the best way towards my purposed aim, I obtained no appointment.

After I had finished the work I have mentioned the survey of a small private property was put into my hands to carry out. From this engagement ensued consequences which were most important for me. I note only one point here. One of the joint owners of this property was a young doctor of philosophy, who leaned towards the new school of Schelling. It could hardly be expected but that we should talk over things which stirred our mental life, and so it came about that he lent me Schelling's "Bruno, oder über die Welt-seele" * to read. What I read in that book moved me profoundly, and I thought I really understood it. The friendly young fellow, not much older than myself—we had already met in Jena,—saw the lively interest I was taking in the book, and, in fact, I talked it over with him many a time. One day, after we had been to see an important picture-gallery together, he addressed me in these words, which from his mouth sounded startlingly strange, and which at the time seemed to me inexplicable:—

"Guard yourself against philosophy; she leads you towards doubt and darkness. Devote yourself to art, which gives life, peace, and joy."

It is true I retained the young man's words, but I could not understand them, for I regarded philosophy as a necessary part of the life of mankind, and could not grasp the notion that one could be verging towards darkness and doubt when one calmly investigated the inner life. Art, on the other hand, lay much further from me than philosophy; for except a profound enjoyment in works of art

* Bruno, or the Over-Soul.

(for which I could give no clear reason), no glimmering of an active æsthetic sense had yet dawned upon me. This remark of my friend the doctor's called my attention to myself, however, and to my life and its aim, and made me aware of two very different and widely separate systems of life.

My friend, the tutor of the Government official under whom I had served at Bamberg, had in the meantime left his situation. He told me before leaving that he had it in his mind to go to Frankfurt, and thence into France. I saw his departure with regret, little dreaming that life would in a few years bring us together again, and that he would indirectly decide my future career. But, as it so often happens in life, parting in this instance but led up to meeting, and meeting to parting.

The occurrences I have named had little result upon my outward life, which for the time ran its peaceful course. I pass over many circumstances important to the uplifting and development of my character and my moral life, and come at once to the close of my stay in Bamberg.

I had now once more earnestly to turn my attention to procuring certain and settled employment. In truth, as regarded my future, I stood quite alone. I had no one to lend me a helping hand, so I made up my mind to go forward, trusting only in God and destiny. I determined to seek for a situation by means of the *Allgemeine Anzeiger der Deutschen*,* a paper then very much read, and I thought it would be good to send in to the editor, as a proof of my assertions of competency, an architectural design, and also a specimen of my work in practical surveying, together with explanations of both of them. As soon as my plan was fully conceived I set to work at it. For the architectural sketch I chose a design of a nobleman's country mansion, with the surrounding outbuildings. When I had finished it, with very few professional appliances to help me, it contained a complete working out of all the various necessary plans, and as a critical test of its accuracy and suitability to the proposed scale of dimensions, I added a statement of all the particulars and conditions involved in it. For the land-surveying I chose a table of measurements compiled from

* "General Intelligencer of the German people."

the map I had previously drawn, which I carried through under certain arbitrary assumptions. These works, together with my advertisement, I sent in 1803 to the office of the paper I have mentioned, with the request that the editor, after reading my testimonials and inspecting my work, would add a few confirmatory words as to my qualifications. Work and testimonials alike were to the satisfaction of the editor, and my request for an editorial comment was granted. I received several offers, each one containing something tempting about it. It was difficult to make a choice, but at last I decided to accept a position offered me as private secretary to the President and Privy-Councillor Von Dewitz, of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, at this time resident on one of his estates, Gross-Milchow.

Amongst the other offers was one from Privy-Councillor Von Voldersdorf, who was looking out for an accountant for his estates in the Oberpfalz.* This situation did not suit me so well as the other, but I accepted a proposition to fill up the time till the arrangements for the other post had been completed, by going down to these estates of Herr Von Voldersdorf, and bringing into order, according to a certain specified plan, the heavy accounts of his steward, which were at this time much in arrear. I set off for the Oberpfalz in the first days of 1804. But I was soon called away to Mecklenburg to the situation at Gross-Milchow which I had definitively chosen, and in the raw, frightfully severe winter-time of February I journeyed thither by the mail-coach. Yet, short as had been my stay in the Oberpfalz, and continual and uninterrupted as had been my labour in order that I might get through the work I had undertaken, the time I spent in Bavaria yielded me much that was instructive. The men, ingenuous, lively young fellows from Saxony and Prussia, received me very kindly, and the variety of their different services and their readiness to talk about them, gave me a good insight into the inner relationship between the landed aristocracy and their retainers. In recalling these circumstances I thankfully acknowledge how my ever-tender loving destiny took pains kindly to prepare me for each vocation next to come. I had never before had the opportunity to see the

* Upper Palatinate, a province in the north of Bavaria.

mode of keeping accounts used on a great estate, to say nothing of keeping them myself, and here I had this very work to do, and that after a plan both ample and clear, in which every particular, down to the single details, was carefully provided for. This was of the greatest service to me. Precisely the conduct of such well-ordered accounts was to be my work later on; therefore, having the general plan I have referred to firmly established in my mind, and being well practised in its operation, I set off well prepared for my new sphere of work. Thanks to this, I was able to satisfy most completely not only my new employer, but also his lady, who used to examine everything minutely with severe scrutiny.

The surroundings of Herr Von Dewitz's estate were uncommonly pretty for that part of the country. Lakes and hills and the fresh foliage of trees abounded, and what Nature had perhaps overlooked here and there Art had made good. My good fortune has always led me amongst pretty natural scenery. I have ever thankfully enjoyed what Nature has spread before my eyes, and she has always been in true motherly unity with me. As soon as I had gained some facility in it my new work became simple, ran its regular course which was repeated week by week, and gave me time to think about my own improvement.

However, my engagement on this estate was, after all, but a short one. The bent of my life and disposition was already taken. A star had arisen within my mind which I was impelled to follow. On this account I could regard my employment at this time only as a sheet anchor, to be let go as soon as an opportunity offered itself to resume my vocation. This opportunity was not long in making its appearance.

My uncle (Hoffmann), who, like my brother, bore me always lovingly in his thoughts, had lately died. Even on his deathbed he thought of me, and charged my brother to do all he could to find me some settled occupation for life, and at any rate to prevent me from leaving the post I held at the moment before I had some reasonable prospect of a secure and better engagement elsewhere. Providence willed it otherwise. His death, through the small inheritance which thereby came to me, gave me the means of fulfilling the dearest wish of my heart. So wonderfully does God direct the fate of men.

I must mention one circumstance before I part for ever in this account of my life from my gentle, loving second-father. On my journey to Mecklenburg, when I saw my uncle (at Stadt-Ilm) for the last time, I had the deep joy of a talk with him, such as a trusting father might hold with his grown-up son, bound to him by every tie of affection. He freely pointed out the faults which had shown themselves in my boyhood, and told me of the anxiety they had at one time caused him, and in this way he went back to the time when I was taken into his family, and to the causes of that. "I loved your mother very dearly," said he; "indeed, she was my favourite out of all my brothers and sisters. In you I seemed to see my sister once more, and for her love I took charge of you, and bestowed on you that affection which hitherto had been hers alone." And dear as my own mother had become to me already through the many kind things I had heard said of her, so that I had even formed a distinct conception of what she was like, and seemed actually to remember her, she became even dearer to me after these reminiscences of my uncle than before, for did I not owe to her this noble and high-minded second-father? My conversation with my uncle first made clear to me what in later life I have found repeatedly confirmed—that the sources, springs, or motives of one's present actions often lie far away beyond the present time, outside the present circumstances, and are altogether disconnected with the persons with whom one is concerned at the moment then passing. I have also repeatedly observed in the course of my life that ties are the faster, the more enduring, and the truer the more they spring from higher, universal, and impersonal sources.

The person who in Mecklenburg stood next above me in position in the house and in the family was the private tutor, whom I found already there—a young doctor of philosophy of Göttingen University. We did not come much into contact on the whole, since he as a university graduate took a far higher stand than I; but through him I came into some connection with the clergymen of the district, and this was of benefit to me. As for the farmers, the bailiffs, etc., their hospitable nature was quite sufficient of itself to afford me a hearty welcome. Thus I lived in a way I had for a long time felt I much needed, amidst many-sided

companionable good-fellowship, cheerful and free. Healthy as I was in body and soul, in head and heart, my thoughts full of brightness and cheerfulness, it was not long before my mind again felt an eager desire for higher culture. The young tutor went away, and after his departure my craving for culture grew keener and keener, for I missed the intellectual converse I had been able to hold with him. But I was soon again to receive succour.

The President,* besides the family at home, had two sons at the Pädagogium in Halle.† They came to visit their parents, accompanied by their special tutor, a gentleman destined to become famous later on as the renowned scholar, Dr. Wollweide.

Dr. Wollweide was a mathematician and a physicist, and I found him freely communicative. He was so kind as to mention and explain to me the many various problems he had set before himself to work out. This caused my long slumbering and suppressed love for mathematics as a science, and for physics, to spring up again, fully awake. For some time past my tendency had leaned more and more towards architecture, and, indeed, I had now firmly determined to choose that as my profession, and to study it henceforth with all earnestness. My intellectual cravings and the choice of a profession seemed at last to run together, and I felt continually bright and happy at the thought. I seized the opportunity of the presence of the scholar whom I have named to learn from him what were the best books on those subjects which promised to be useful to me, and my first care was to become possessed of them. Architecture was now vigorously studied, and other books, too, were not suffered to lie idle.

The following books took great hold upon me: Pröschke's "Fragments on Anthropology" (a small unpretending book), Novalis' Works, and Arndt's "Germany" and "Europe."‡ The

* Herr Von Dewitz, his employer.

† The Pädagogium in Halle answered somewhat to our grammar schools with a mixture of boarders and day-scholars. It was founded by Francke in 1712, after the ideas of the famous Basedow, and was endowed by means of a public subscription.

‡ These were two pamphlets by the famous patriot and poet Ernst Moritz Arndt (1769-1860), published in 1805.

first of these at one stroke drew together, so that I could recognise in them myself as a connected whole, my outer existence, my inner character, my disposition, and the course of my life. I for the first time realised myself and my life as a single entity in contrast to the whole world outside of me.* The second book lay before me the most secret emotions, perceptions, and intentions of my inmost soul, clear, open, and vivid. If I parted with that book it seemed as if I had parted with myself; if anything happened to the book I felt as though it had happened to me, only more deeply and with greater pain. The third book taught me of man in his broad historical relations, set before me the general life of my kind as one great whole, and showed me how I was bound to my own nation, both to my ancestors and my contemporaries. Yet the service this last book had done me was hardly recognised at this time; for my thoughts were bent on a definite outward aim, that of becoming an architect. But I could at all events recognise the new eager life which had seized me, and to mark this change to myself, I now began to use as a Christian name the last instead of the first of my baptismal names.† Other circumstances also impelled me to make this change; and, further, it freed me from the memory of the many disagreeable impressions of my boyhood which clustered round the name I was then called.

The time had come when I could no longer remain satisfied with my present occupation; and I therefore sent in my resignation. The immediate outward circumstance which decided me was this. I had kept up a correspondence with the young man whom I had known as a private tutor when I held a Government clerkship in Bamberg, and who left his situation to go to Frankfurt, and then on into France.‡ He had afterwards lived some time in Frankfurt, occupying himself with teaching, and now was again a private tutor in a merchant's house in the Netherlands. I im-

* That is, Froebel realised the distinction of the subject-world from the object-world.

† That is, he signed Wilhelm Froebel instead of Friedrich Froebel, for a time. It cannot have been for long, however.

‡ The young man mentioned on page 39.

parted to him my desire to leave my present post, and to seek a situation with an architect; and asked his opinion whether I should not be most likely to effect my object at Frankfurt, where so many streams of diverse life and of men intermingle. And as my friend was accurately acquainted with the ins and outs of Frankfurt life, I asked him to give me such indications as he could of the best road to take towards the fulfilment of my designs. My friend entered heartily into my project, and wrote to me that he intended himself to spend some time in Frankfurt again in the early summer; and he suggested that if I could manage to be there at the same time, a mutual consideration of the whole matter on the spot would be the best way of going to work. In consequence of this I at once firmly decided to leave my situation in the following spring, and to join my friend at Frankfurt. But where was I to find the money necessary for such a journey? I had required the whole of my salary up till now to cover my personal expenses and the settlement of some debts I had run up at Bamberg.

In this perplexity I wrote again to my eldest brother, who had up till now understood me so well, and I asked him for assistance. I was at this time in a peculiar dilemma. On the one hand, I felt very keenly that I must get out of my present position, while on the other, by my unchanging changeableness I feared to wear out the indulgence and patience of my worthy brother. In this strait I just gave him what seemed to me as I wrote it an exact account of my real state of mind; telling him that I could only find my life-aim in a continual striving towards inward perfection.

My brother's answer arrived. With a joyful tremor and agitation I held it in my hands. For hours together I carried it about me before I unsealed it, for days together before I read it; it seemed so improbable that my brother would feel himself able to help me towards the accomplishment of the desire of my soul, and I feared to find in that letter the frustration of my life's endeavour. When, after some days of vacillation between hope and doubt, I could bear the situation no longer, and opened the letter, I was not a little astonished that it began by addressing me at once in terms of the most moving sympathy. As I read on the contents agitated me deeply. The letter gave me the