

**THE GOETHE GALLERY,
WITH EXPLANATORY
TEXT, PP. 1-65**

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The Goethe Gallery, with Explanatory Text, pp. 1-65 by Wilhelm Von Kaulbach

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WILHELM VON KAULBACH

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THE GOETHE GALLERY.

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GOETHE GALLERY

FROM THE ORIGINAL DRAWINGS OF WILHELM
VON KAULBACH

WITH EXPLANATORY TEXT



BOSTON
JAMES R. OSGOOD AND COMPANY

1881



Goethe and the Muse.

9

Oh, how I panted for the first clear gleaming
Made by the gloom it banished doubly bright !
It came not, but a glory round me beaming ;
And I stood blinded by the gush of light.

A moment, and I felt enforced to look,
By some strange impulse of the heart's emotion.
There, in the glorious clouds that seemed to bear her,
A form angelic hovered in the air :
Ne'er did my eyes behold a vision fairer ;
And still she gazed upon me, floating there.

The poet sank on his knees, overpowered by this vision.

Straightway she stretched her hand among the thin
And watery haze that round her presence hovered :
Slowly it wilted, and shrank her grasp within ;
And lo ! the landscape once more lay uncovered :
Again mine eye could scan the sparkling meadow.
I looked to heaven, and all was clear and bright :
I saw her hold a veil without a shadow,
That undulated round her in the light.

The Goddess of Poetry endeavors to inspire Goethe with confidence in his own powers, and bestows upon him her gift, "the veil of song."

"I know thee : all thy weakness, all that yet
Of good within thee lives and glows, I've measured."
She said (her voice I never may forget),
"Accept the gift that long for thee was treasured.
Oh ! happy he, thrice blest in earth and heaven,
Who takes this gift with soul serene and true, —
The veil of song, by Truth's own fingers given,
Inwoven of sunshine and the morning dew."

UORM



LOTTE.

IN the latter part of the year 1773 Goethe wrote "The Sorrows of Werther," of which Lotte is the heroine. This novel is so bound up with the life of its author, that his history at this epoch is the record of the materials from which it was created. It was a period of deep unrest in Europe, — the travail of the French Revolution.

In Germany the spirit of the revolution issued from the study and the lecture-hall. Authority was everywhere attacked, because everywhere it had shown itself feeble or treacherous. It was a sceptical era, in which every thing established came into question. "The Sorrows of Werther" was the expression of the temper of the times.

The original of Lotte, the heroine, was Charlotte Buff, who, although only sixteen, was betrothed to Kestner, secretary to the Hanoverian legation. Kestner was a quiet, cultivated man, possessing a magnanimity and dignity which are not represented in the Albert of the novel. Charlotte (or Lotte) Buff was not the sentimental girl described by Werther, but a serene, joyous, open-hearted German maiden. Her mother had died two years before, and the care of the house and children devolved upon her.

Kestner, her *fiancé*, speaks of her in a letter to a friend as "not strictly a brilliant beauty; but she is, notwithstanding, the fascinating maiden who might have hosts of admirers. But she knows how to convince them quickly that their only safety must be sought in flight or in friendship."

Goethe was a constant visitor at Lotte's house; and here his arrival was a jubilee to the children, who seized hold of him, and forced him to tell them stories.