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ABOUT NO OTHER WORK DOES JEAN PAUL COMPLAIN SO much of labor pains as in his letters about his Self-Life Description (W 12.1039ff.). To the closest friend of his later years, Emanuel Osmund, he said he had become so used to telling lies in his novels, he would rather tell the story of any other life than his own. It afforded him little pleasure, he wrote to Voß, for he had nothing to make up and in no one was he less interested than in himself. It had nothing to do with aversion toward the past, he wrote to his son Max, but with his indifference to “my I, as such” and his abhorrence of merely narrating (H-KA 3.7.224, 238; 3.8.135). He considered various ways of fictionalizing it, as a necrology, or by coupling it with The Comet, to give his own kind of Dichtung and Wahrheit. In the end, he imagined himself holding a Professorship in the History of Himself and delivering a course of lectures in the winter semester on his special topic. As it turned out, however, it is a very straightforward narrative, lively and graphic in spite of his misgivings. It is a fragment (of which about two-thirds is translated here) of three lectures, the first on his birthplace, Wunsiedel, the second and longest on the scene of his early childhood, Joditz, and the third beginning the period when his father went to the larger parish of Schwarzenbach.

First Lecture

Wonsiedel — Birth — Grandfather

Most Gentle Benefactors and Benefactresses!

It was in the year 1763 that the Peace of Hubertusburg came into the world and also the present Professor of His Own History; — to be precise, in that month that also saw the arrival of the blue-headed and the grey wagtails, the red robin, the crane, the reed bunting and divers snipe and marsh birds, viz, in March; — moreover, on that day of the month when, had his cradle been strewn with flowers, spoonwort and celandine and the aspen burst into bloom to that very end, as did the field speedwell or chickweed, on the 21st of March; — moreover, at the earliest and sweetest time of the day, namely at 1½ o’clock in the morning; but the supreme glory of it all was that the beginning of his life should also be the beginning of spring.

But let me return to our history and betake myself among the dead; for they have all departed the world who saw me into it. My Father was called Johann Christian Christoph Richter, and he was third teacher and organist in Wunsiedel; my Mother, the daughter of cloth maker Johann Paul Kuhn in Hof, was called Sophia Rosina. I was baptized by Senior Pastor Apel on the day after my birth. The aforementioned Johann Paul was one of my godfathers; the other was Johann Friedrich Thieme, a bookbinder, ignorant of the fact on how great a Maecenas of his art he was bestowing his name at the time; whence arose the name of Johann Paul Friedrich, amalgamated from both, and the grandfatherly half of which I translated into French, thus elevating it to the full name of Jean Paul, for reasons to be stated during later lectures in the course of this winter term.

But for the time being, we shall let the protagonist and object of this historical lecture rest unobserved in his cradle and at his mother’s breast and sleep on — as there is nothing of interest to be gained with regard to general world history from the auscultation of life’s long matutinal sleep — sleep on, I say, until I have spoken, albeit only a little and insuf-
ficiently, of those toward whom both my heart and my pen impel me, of my forebears, of father, mother, and grandparents.

My Father was the son of Rector Johann Richter in Neustadt on Kulm. Nothing is known of the latter but that he was both exceedingly poor and devout. Whenever one of his two remaining grandsons arrives in Neustadt, he is received with grateful and joyful affection by its inhabitants, and the older people will tell him how conscientious and strict his life and his lessons had been, but how cheerful at the same time. They will show you a little bench at the back of the organ, where he had knelt in prayer each Sunday; and a hollow, which he had dug for himself in the Little Culm as it was called, in order to pray there, and which faced the faraway places where his fiery son—albeit too fiery in his eyes only—was the playmate of both the Muses and Penia. Dusk was to him a diurnal autumn season, in which he would reckon in prayer today's crop and tomorrow's sowing, while pacing the humble schoolroom for a few dark hours. His schoolhouse was a jail, to be sure, if not on water and bread, at least on beer and bread; for a rector's position did not yield much more than those two—together with perhaps the most godly contentment—brining in, as it did, in conjunction with the cantor's and organist's posts and, notwithstanding this treble-office pride of lions, no more than 150 gulden per annum. And it was at this ordinary Baireuthean schoolmasters' trickle spring that the man stood for 35 long years drawing water. To be sure, he would have earned a few more bites or pence had he been promoted to country parson, for instance. When schoolmasters change their gown, for example the schoolmasterly for the priestly cloth, their sustenance improves with it, just as silkworms receive a richer feed each time they slough off their skins; so that such a man can increase his income by increasing his labors to the point of approaching, with allowances and gratuities or a general pension, the higher retired servant of the state, whose five staves are dotted with notes all the way through the revenue office score, notwithstanding the instrument's many rests.

Whenever my grandfather called on his pupils' parents during the afternoon, more for the pupils' than their parents' benefit: he would carry in his pocket the bread of the aforementioned bread and beer, on which he existed all his life, and expect hospitality only in the shape of a mug of beer. However, finally it did come to pass in the year 1763—that is to say, in the year of my birth—on the 6th of August, that, probably thanks to special higher connections, he received in passing one of the most important positions for which it was easy, indeed, to exchange rectorship, town, and Hill of Culm; he was in fact only 76 years, 4 months, and 8 days of age when he really was awarded the said position in the—churchyard of Neustadt; his wife having preceded him there 20 years before into the associate position. — My parents had journeyed to his deathbed with me, a 5-months-old infant in arms. And as he was at Death's door, a clergyman (as my Father was fond of telling me) said to my parents: Ask old Jakob to lay hands on the child that he might bless him. I was handed into the deathbed, and he laid his hand on me—Saintly Grandfather! Time and again I have thought of thy dying hand imparting that blessing, when Fate led me out of dark hours into brighter ones; and I may indeed hold onto my faith in thy blessing in this world imbued with and ruled and animated by miracles and spirits!

My Father, born in Neustadt in 1727 on the 16th of December—almost more for the winter of life than for spring like myself, I should have said, had his strong disposition not known how to chisel a decent harbor even from icebergs—could only enjoy or suffer, the Wunsiedel Latin school, like Luther the one in Eisenach, as a so-called alumnus, or charity scholar; for if one duly divided an annual income of 150 florin between father, mother, and several sisters, nothing whatever was left for him but the alumnus bread, at the most. Thereafter, he entered the gymnasium poeticum in the city of Regensburg, so that he might not only starve in a bigger city but germinate there the true flower of his being instead of the mere foliage. And that was the art of music. In the chapel of the then Prince of Thurn and Taxis,—the renowned cognoscente and patron of music—he was able to serve the saint to whose praise he had lifted and sanctified souls in Catholic churches during those days. I am afraid I must confess that, on visiting Regensburg a few years ago, none of the local antiquities and past events—not even excepting the Imperial Diet—were as important to me as the straitened paternal existence there; and in the castle of Thurn and Taxis and in the narrow streets where a couple of potbellies would be hard put not to bump into each other, I was often reminded of the strait paths and narrow thoroughfares of the days of his youth. Afterward, he studied theology in Jena and Erlangen instead of music, maybe only in order to toil as a tutor in Baireuth for a time, where his son is collecting all these reports, viz, into his 32nd year. For as early as 1760 he wrested the post of organist and third teacher in Wonsiedel from the state; and accordingly, as a subject of the Margrave
of Baireuth, made his fortune earlier and more successfully than that candidate did in Hanover of whom I read, who lived to be seventy and yet never gained an ecclesiastical position apart from the one in the churchyard beside it.

Let none of my audience now conclude from the preceding that they might be offered by me a father who would shuffle along miserably like some latter-day super christian swaddled in tear-drenched handkerchiefs; nay, he was wing borne, and he was welcomed as the most congenial of companions, full of good cheer, by the best families of all Brandenburg and Schöpf. The virtue of drawing-room pleasantry stayed with him all through his life, while in office he was considered the strictest clergyman and in the pulpit a so-called preacher of the law. In his home town, his enthusiastic sermons won over his relatives, but in Hof in Vogtland something still more important, viz, a bride and, even more formidable, on the one hand, this particular third teacher could only have conquered of Baireuth, made his fortune earlier and more successfully than that candidate did in Hanover of whom I read, who lived to be seventy and yet never gained an ecclesiastical position apart from the one in the churchyard beside it.

In the course of my history lectures, going hungry will feature increasingly, to be sure, — it is about to rise considerably for our hero — and I dare say at least as frequently as feasting in Thimmel's Journeys and drinking tea in Richardson's Clarissa; yet I cannot but say to poverty: hail to thee, as long as thou comest not too late in life. Riches do weigh more heavily on talent than poverty, and many a mental giant may well lie crushed and buried beneath thrones and mountains of gold. Should the oil of riches be poured onto the flames of youth and its burning forces: not much more than ashes will be left of the phoenix; and only a Goethe possessed the strength not to have singed his phoenix's wings at the sun of good fortune. The present poor professor of history would not like for all the gold in the world to have had a lot of it in his youth. Fate deals with poets as we do with birds, when we keep the cage darkened until the singer finally knows the tune he is expected to sing.

Only spare, impartial fate, an old man a life in poverty! He is the one who shall and must be rewarded; his back has been bent too low by his burdensome years, and he is able no longer to straighten up and to shoulder the load as in the days of his youth. Old age needs the peace beneath the ground while still above it; for there is no longer a future of planting and flowering as a foil to the present. Two steps away from his last and profoundest slumber, with only flowers as curtains, he wishes only to rest and to take it easy in the grandfather chair of old age and, between sleeping and waking, to open his eyes one last time and to gaze on the old familiar stars and meads of his youth; and I have nothing at all against it if — having accomplished what was important, even for the beyond — he looks forward to breakfast at night and to his bed in the morning and if, a child for the second time, he is dismissed by the world while enjoying the innocent sensual pleasures with which it had welcomed him at first.

I return at last to the protagonist and subject of our historical lecture, laying particular stress on the fact that I was born in Wunsiedel (less correctly Wonsiedel), a town at the foot of the Fichtel Mountains. The Fichtel Mountains, almost the highest region of Germany, bestow on their residents health (they are the first who can do without the spa of Alexandersbad) and a fine physique; and the professor will leave it to his female audience to decide whether he himself appears as living proof or the exception to this in his chair.

I was gladly born in thee, little town at the tall mountain range, whose peaks look down on us like the heads of eagles! — Thou hast adorned thy mountain throne with steps leading up to it; and thy healing well provides the energy — not for thyself but for the — sick to ascend to the canopy on high and to hold sway over the wide plains and villages at his feet. — I was gladly born in thee, thou small but dear luminous town! —
As my Father had been ordained pastor in Joditz by 1765: I can isolate my Wonsiedel childhood reliquary all the more clearly from my first and earliest relics and childhood memories of Joditz.

That parish now is the second act of this little historical monodrama, in which ye, most esteemed Gentlemen and Mistresses, are going to encounter the protagonist of this play in very different developments in the course of the second lecture. . . . Our hero's ascent has begun, and we have the pleasure of meeting the historical person, whom we had left behind in our first lecture a mere Tertius's son, only two years later, in our second, as the son of a pastor; for in 1765, my Father was called to Joditz by Baroness von Plotho in Zedwitz, née Bodenhausen, the wife of the same Plotho who, in the reign of Frederick the Unique, had, with reason, thrown an Austrian delegate down the stairs at the Diet.

Second Lecture (comprising the period between 1765 and 1775)

Joditz - Village-Idylls

Most Esteemed Gentlemen and Mistresses!

Ye now find the Professor of Self-History in the parish of Joditz where, dressed in a female bonnet and a little girl's smock, he had made his entry together with his parents; the river Saale, springing like myself from the Fichtel Mountains, had followed me there, just as it was to wend its way past the town of Hof before I would come to live there myself later on. The river is the most beautiful, or at least the longest, object in Joditz, flowing around it along the surrounding hills, while the village itself is bisected by a little stream with its footbridge. An ordinary castle and parsonage will be its most significant buildings. The surrounding area is no larger than twice the size of the village, unless one climbs up the hills. - All the same, the village is of greater importance even to a Professor of Self-History than the town of his birth, because he experienced there the most important matter, viz, his boyhood olympiads.

I could never applaud the 19 towns, which (according to Suidas) squabbled about the honor of having been Homer's birthplace, no more than the various Dutch locations all claiming to have given birth to Erasmus (according to Bayle); for even where they lay buried could more merit - or demerit as the case may be - be shared by the inhabitants than where their cradles had stood. But although on the whole a great many princes are born in capital cities, ye'll never hear London, Paris, Berlin, and Vienna boast of it; otherwise all those towns and villages that had produced archscoundrels would have to bear the brunt in inverse ratio. At the most, one might allow native countries to usurp the kudos of native towns provided that a glut of commendable births there has benefited their regions and their inhabitants quite decisively; but one Pindar in Boetia does by no means make it a swallows' summer.

But the real birthplace, that is to say, the spiritual one, is the place of our earliest and most prolonged education; and this even for those world-famous men who rarely require and rarely have recourse to education but more especially for average men of village- or town-fame, like my hero, who gained so much by both education and spoliation and who really did become thus, in combination with reading (yet another educational and spoliative institution), the man he now is, viz, a Legation Counselor of Hildburghausen and a Doctor of Philosophy of Heidelberg and, afterward a thrice-affiliated member of various societies and the present unworthy incumbent of this Self-historical professorship.

Let no poet ever be born and educated in a capital city but, if at all possible, in a village, or at least in nothing larger than a small town. To the excitable, delicate infant soul, the superabundance and overstimulation of a large city are a diet of sweetmeats and brandies and bathing in mulled wine. His life will exhaust itself therein in his boyhood, and having tasted the largest, there will be nothing left to whet his appetite but the smaller, a village at most. But there is not half as much to be gained and discovered by moving from town to country as the other way around, from Joditz to Hof. And if, furthermore, I consider what matters most for a poet, loving: in town he will have to encircle the warm equator of parental friends and acquaintances with the wider, frigid tropic and polar zones of unloved people whom he encounters anonymously and who kindle in him as much love or warmth as ships passing each other in the night. But in a village, one loves the whole village; and not an infant in arms will be buried there without everybody else knowing its name and its sickness and sorrow; the people of Joditz are closely attached to each other by habituation and habit; - and this wonderful solidarity with anyone human, including stranger and beggar, is the wellspring of an intensified love of mankind, and its proper heartbeat. - And later on, when the poet takes leave of his village, he will have plenty of heart to share with anybody he might encounter, and he will have a long way to go before his heart will finally have been spent on the highways and byways.

There is a misfortune, however, that is even greater than growing up in a capital city, viz, the misfortune of having been brought up en route
as a wellborn child passing through one strange town after another and from one stranger to the next for years on end and knowing no house but the coach box.

We are about to catch up again with our son of the parsonage, whose life in Joditz I believe I can best represent by letting it file past as a complete idyll yearbook; but I shall let that which does not belong to the bright days go ahead, like foggy weather; that is to say, my lessons; although this fog did lift in the end, to be sure—but only after 10 long years. All learning was life to me, and I would have revelled in being instructed, like a prince, by half a dozen teachers at once, but I had hardly one proper one. I still remember the winter evening bliss when at last I received into my hands from town the ABC reader with its attached stylus as line indicator, on whose cover was printed in truly golden letters (and not without justification) the content of the first page, consisting of alternate red and black letters; no gambler has ever derived more thrills out of gold or rouge et noir than I did out of my book; this is not even counting the stylus. Armed with this now—having gone through enough exclusive tuition and passed all the lower classes within myself—and decked in a bonnet of green taffeta but already in little trousers (in wrestling with which, the schoolmaster’s wife was to deputize for my own inept little fingers in public), I made my way to the academy, viz, to the schoolmaster’s apartment across the road from the parsonage, and proceeded to recite to all and sundry with the help of my stylus. True to custom, I fell in love with every living thing in the schoolroom, first and foremost with the consumptive, gaunt, but wide-awake schoolmaster, with whom I would have liked to enjoy the bliss of spelling as well as singing in concert.

And the Greenlandic winter fog of the crowded schoolroom I remember with pleasure the long stuffed linen bungs, which plugged small air holes drilled into the wooden wall and which one had only to pull out in order to gulp the most wonderful frosty draughts from outside. I was inspired by each new letter out of the schoolmaster’s hand, as others might be by a painting; and I envied the ones who were saying their lessons, as I would dearly have liked to enjoy the bliss of spelling as well as singing in concert.

Nothing could please me and my brother Adam—although he would rather have had a bird’s nest than a muse’s seat any day—more than not finding our dinner ready at 12 o’clock; for we would dash back with our hunger to school so as not to miss even a minute of it and appease the former afterward. Much was made of our devotion to learning; but I know well that the normal child’s predilection for a change in the daily routine provided the lion’s share; we wanted to eat 3 hours later; and it was for the same reason that we looked forward to the late dinners on fast- and penance-days. Giddy little humans know no greater fun than having the whole house topsy-turvy, whether because rooms were being whitewashed, or we stayed in a strange house, or a lot of visitors were expected, or whatever.

Alas, I looked myself out of the schoolroom forever through an untimely complaint to my Father about a lanky peasant boy (Zob is his name, for posterity) who had tapped my fingers with a jackknife. And out of ambitious ire, he alone now took over my own and my brothers’ schooling; and I had to watch the schoolchildren across the road sailing into a port each winter that remained barred to me. However, there was still the minor pleasure of delivering many a papal bull and decree of his village pope to the schoolmaster and, instead of the Roman agnus dei, or blessed swaddling clothes, or roses, Christmas gifts, a platter of meats or sausages on pig-killing day or some other delectable dish.

For four hours in the morning and three in the afternoon we were instructed by our Father, which meant that he made us learn things by heart: proverbs, the catechism, Latin words, and Lange’s Grammar. We had to memorize the long gender rules of each declension, complete with exceptions, as well as the attached Latin paradigms, without understanding any of them. On fine summer’s days when he would walk abroad: we would be given such confounded exceptions as panis piscis to be recited next morning, of which my brother Adam, for whom a whole day wasn’t long enough for his romps and capers, never remembered more than a fraction. For only rarely did Fortune smile on him when he was made to recite such delightful declensions as scarnnum or even cornu in the singular, of which he at least knew how to declaim the Latin half perfectly. Believe me, Ladies and Gentlemen, it was not at all easy on an azure June day, and while the omnipotent lord and father was not at home, to detain and arrest oneself in some corner and memorize two or three pages of vocabulary, all of the same initial and sounding alike; as I say, on such long cerulean days of delight, it was not as easy as on a dim white December day; and it is no surprise that my brother Adam would reap a lot of thrashings on days like that. But the Professor of this Self-History makes bold to put forward the general statement that he himself never received a thrashing during his whole pupillage, neither limb by limb nor in his entirety; the Professor always knew his piece.

But we must not let this memorizing put my indefatigable and loving
Father into a false light. He who sacrificed the whole day to writing down and learning by heart his sermons for the peasants, and that only out of an overdeveloped sense of duty, although he had experienced the force of his extemporaneous rhetoric on more than one occasion, and who, by his weekly visits to the schoolroom and his doubling of public religious instruction for children and in everything else exceeded his duties with his devotion, and who, with his soft, warm, paternal heart was attached to me most of all and was easily moved to tears of joy at small signs of my talents or progress, this Father of mine made no mistakes in his whole mode of education — no matter how strange the ones we may yet come across — save those of reason, not of intent.

This method ought to be recommended even to actual teachers, because no other saves as much time and labor as this truly convenient one, whereby the pupil receives in the book the vicar, or adjunct, or the curator absentis, of his teacher and mesmerizes himself like a vigorous clairvoyant. Nay, this mental self-suckling of children allows expansion to such a degree that I venture by mere letter post to take the helm of whole schools somewhere in North America or at the other end of the world, and I would merely write and tell my schoolchildren what to memorize every day and engage some insignificant person to hear their lessons, and I would enjoy being aware of their beautiful mental reminiscere Sundays in Lent.

I translated much of the beginning of Speccius, as ordered, with the same pleasure with which I would strip any other new branch of learning; the last part I put into Latin under my own steam, but without finding somebody to correct my mistakes. The colloquia (discourses) in Lange's Grammar I divined on my own in German from a longing to know their contents; but my Father did not make me translate in Joditz. In a Greek grammar written in Latin, I avidly and voraciously studied the alphabet and, in the end, quite managed writing Greek, at least with regard to the script. How gladly I would have learned more, and how easily! The spirit, if not the body, of a language easily took possession of me, as will perhaps be demonstrated in public in the course of the third lecture of our winter term.

Only once, on a winter's evening — I might have been eight or nine years old — when my Father wanted to practice a short Latin word book with me, that is, to make me learn it by heart, and I had to read out the first page to him: I read lingua not lingva, but always lin-gua, despite his correction and repeated that mistake in the face of all his corrective gestures so often that he became furious and, in a fit of angry impatience,
it to our profit precisely because we received it in volumes rather than sheets. A political newspaper offers true reports only if read not in single sheets but in volumes, as it is only within the space of a whole volume that it contains the sheets that confuse its earlier sheets; and like the wind, it cannot show its true color in single puffs and batches but in its larger volume, again as the aforementioned air its cerulean blue only in bulk. I would carry my news atlas into old Lady Reitzenstein's manor and divine one or other item of what I had brought for her during her morning coffee, waiting to be praised for it. I can still recall a certain plural featuring frequently at the time, viz., "confederates." Although it was most likely that the plural belonged to Poland, I cannot recall having taken the slightest interest, as I expect the whole matter was incomprehensible to me in any case. With such a degree of impartiality and equanimity were Poland's affairs viewed in our village, both by myself and my audience.

Our protagonist's avid roots squeezed and twisted in every direction seeking to grasp and to feed. He manufactured clocks, whose dials were their best features and which were equipped with a pendulum and one wheel and weights, and which marked time beautifully: He even invented a sundial by inking a clockface onto a wooden plate; and he positioned and fixed the plate with its tin gnomon pointing at the church clock; hence he frequently knew what time it was. Like many a state, he preferred issuing figures on timepieces and beforehand and, like Lichtenberg with his book titles, well in advance of the works themselves. The present author revealed himself in miniature by a box, in which he assembled a pocket compendium of little sextodecimo works of his own, stitched together and cut into shape from the narrow scraps of his Father's octavo sermons. Their content was of a theological and Protestant nature and, in each case, consisted of an exegetical note beneath a verse copied from Luther's bible; he did not bother with the verse itself in his booklet. Thus there was a little Friedrich von Schlegel buried in our Friedrich Richter who, in his excerpts "The Spirit of Lessing" likewise extracted the man's opinions on certain scriptural passages without recourse to the passages.

In like manner, our protagonist launched himself into painting. Several potentates on horseback lay, rather than sat, for him by means of a fork he conscientiously traced their features through a sheet of greasy, sooty paper and thus strikingly printed their likenesses on a clean page. All the same, I take leave to doubt that he might, in a different clime, have grown into a full-blown Raphael Mengs, who should have been beaten not, like the first, toward painting (but) rather away from it, notwithstanding conjectures based on the fact that, having been given a little paint box, he had illuminated the whole orbis pictus (the painted world) true to life, as contained in his paint box, never mind how colorfully the first leather balls with red dots and the red building bricks and the slates, which he had fashioned himself, and the glorious paint tray in his box, and the greenish golden beetles glow in his memory. It would be only marginally less justified than concluding from his skill in producing herrings in winter that he should end up a great cameralistics correspondent. His knack of replacing the herring inland and at such great distance from the coast was, when going to buy flour, to wade into the millstream, silently lifting a stone, under which he might catch a gudgeon or an even tinier fish. Those he would stuff into a hollowed-out cabbage stalk (doing duty as herring barrel) and salt thoroughly, and he would have been eating herrings as soon as his little barrel was full had it not been for the odor. And I am afraid the other portents proclaiming the young cameralistics correspondent were even less serviceable, viz., his surrogate inventions, like pretending dried pear halves were little hams, and offering chopped-off pigeons' feet baked in shards as a cooked dinner, or driving snails to pasture. Indeed, I should consider any future historical scholar researching the present one quite ridiculous who would try to make something of importance from the bits and pieces that lie about ready to be picked up in every other childhood as well; nay, that foolish man would seem to be no better than that barber in Paris who, with the help of a Jesuit, assembled sundry elephant bones and sold them as the skeleton of Teutobald, the German giant. A beard does not prove the philosopher, albeit perhaps the sailor or miscreant as they emerge from ship or dungeon, where no razor would have come near them.

As our hero's boundless activity centered on mental rather than physical games—all being pursued with unspeakable transports of delight— he also invented new letters of new languages. He would simply take calendar symbols—or geometrical ones out of an old book—or chemical ones—or invented ones out of his head and concoct a whole new alphabet. On its completion: he would first of all put his alphabetical solitaire into practice by cloaking a page or two of copied material in it. Thus he became his own cryptographer and hide-and-seek player with himself; and yet—without recourse to Büttrner's comparative tables of scripts—he could read off his latest as easily as any common script straightaway, as he had marked the new code with its own handbill letter by letter, and it only needed a peep. For once, we might not take it amiss if the often mentioned historical scholar were to detect in this en-
de-coding, which, even at so early a stage, valued the contents less highly than their investment, a natural disposition toward the future Legation Counselor or possibly legate; and I did indeed acquire Legation Counselor status and could encipher many a thing to this day.

My soul had been receptive to music in every way; not unlike my Father's, perhaps, and I possessed a hundred Argus ears for it. When the schoolmaster's final organ cadenzas dismissed the devout of a Sunday: my whole little uplifted being would laugh and skip as into a spring; or when in the early morning after the night's kermis dancing, to be condemned and anathemized by my Father on the following Sunday, the vagrant musicians and the beribboned farm lads marched past our parsonage walls with their shawms and fiddles, much to his chagrin: I would climb the wall, and a bright glorious world would ring through my tittle little breast, and vernal desires and springs skylarked within it, heedless of any paternal sermons. I used to spend hours at our ancient discordant piano, whose tunning was strictly left to the weather, strumming improvisations unsurpassed in their daring by the freest rhythms in Europe, especially as I knew neither notes, nor chords, nor anything else; for my pianoskilled Father had never shown me a single key. But if—like any modern composer for ropedances and witches sabbaths and fingers on piano strings—I hit on a short tune, or a tierce, or a sext: I would be in a seventh heaven, and I would repeat the digital find as relentlessly as any decent modern German writer repeats the stylist cerebral one that had earned him applause in the first place; because, acting with greater kindness than Heligobalus, who had made the cook of an inferior potage eat it himself until he had invented a better one, he conversely treats his reading public to an excellent mess for the course of so many Leipzig Fairs that it turns as insipid as the imperial cook's inferior one.

We shall be of two minds, in our hero's cultural history to come, as to whether he might have been destined for philosophy rather than poetry. During my earliest childhood, the phrase wisdom of the world— as also another phrase, land of the rising sun— had been to me as the gates of heaven, open to pleasure gardens as far as the eye could see. I shall never forget that epiphany within myself, which I had never mentioned to a living soul, where I was present at the birth of my self-consciousness, and I can yet quote place and time. One morning, when I was a very young child, I stood on our doorstep looking toward the woodpile on my left when, all of a sudden, the inner vision "I am an I' descended from the sky like a flash of lightning in front of my eyes, and it has remained aglow ever since: my I had beheld itself for the first time and forever. It is unlikely that memory should play me false, as nothing that anyone else might have told me could have mingled with, and added to, something that happened in man's innermost sanctum and whose novelty alone invested such ordinary concomitant circumstances with permanence.

It seems to me that, in order to give as true an account as possible of our Hans Paul's life in Joditz—for by this name we are going to call him for a while, although we shall certainly ring the changes—it might be well to conduct it throughout one whole idyll year and to divide the normal year with its four seasons into the same number of idyll quarters; four idylls sum up his happiness.

Nobody need be surprised, by the way, at finding a realm of idylls and a diminutive pastoral world in a small village and parsonage. A tulip tree may be grown in the tiniest little patch, but it will spread its flowering branches over the whole garden; and the life-giving air of happiness may be breathed through a window just as well as out there in the vast woods and under the open sky. The human spirit itself (with its infinite heavenly space) is, after all, bound by a five-foot-high body, complete with skins and Malpighian membranes and capillary tubes, and it has only five narrow windows of sensory stimulation that can be opened to the vast universe, with all its orbs and suns;—and yet it will perceive and reproduce a whole universe.

I might find it difficult to decide with which of the four idyll quarters we ought to begin, each one of them being a little preheaven leading on to the next one, were it not that, by beginning with winter and January, our intensification of pleasures should warrant the greatest success. During the cold spell, our Father would, just like an alpine herdsman, descend from the heights of his study upstairs, and to his children's delight, dwell in the plains of the communal living room. In the mornings he would sit in a window corner memorizing his Sunday sermon, and we three brothers, Fritz (that is myself), Adam, and Gottlieb (Heinrich was only to join us toward the end of our idyll life in Joditz), took turns in delivering his full coffee cup and, better still, fetching it back empty, when the carrier was entitled to the undisolved rock candy deposits, which he took for his cough. While the sky had shrouded everything outside in silence, the stream in ice, and the village in snow, there was life in our living room, a pigeon house under the stove, siskin- and goldfinch-cages at the window, at our feet Bonne, our bounding bulldog bitch, the night watchman of the parsonage, and a Spitz, and the affable Scharmantel, a present from Frau von Ploto,—and next door, the servants' room with two maids; farther along, at the other end of the par-
sation, the stables with all manner of livestock, cows, pigs, and fowl, and their cacophony; I might add our threshers with their flails, also embraced by the parsonage. Thus in the midst of noisy company, the complete male component of our living room might be spending their forenoon learning by heart cheek by jowl with the female cookery.

There is not a single occupation in the world without the vacation to go with it; hence I, too, had my air vacation,—not unlike the well vacations—when I was permitted to go through the snow in the yard to the threshing barn. Indeed, if there was a difficult oral message to be delivered in the village, to the schoolmaster perhaps, or to the master tailor, I would be called away from my studies and sent there; and thus I got out into the fresh cold air and could match myself against the newly fallen snow. At midday, before our own meal and on an empty stomach, we could enjoy watching the threshers, how they fell to and polished off their dinners in the servants' room.

The afternoon was to bring more important events and more pleasures. The hours of learning would be shortened and sweetened by winter. Our Father used to perambulate during the long drawn-out dusk, and we children would trot along with him under his housecoat and, if possible, hold his hand. At the toll of the evening bell, we would all of us gather and, in a circle and with one voice, pray the hymn: "The gloom of night with might descends."

It is only in villages—not in cities where there are more nighttime than daytime labors and pleasures—that the evening bell makes sense and is of value, as the swan song of the day; the evening bell mutes our overloud hearts, as it were, and like the cowherd's tune on the plain, it calls men away from their bustling and toiling into the land of silence and dreaming. After the sweet expectation of the tallow-candle moonrise in the door of the little servants' room, our living room would be lit up and fortified simultaneously, viz, the shutters were closed and bolted; and behind these window embrasures and parapets the child felt snugly preserved and sufficiently sheltered from all those confounded villains and from Knecht Ruprecht, who could not get in but was left growling in vain outside.

And that was the time when we were allowed to undress and to hop around clad in nothing but our trailing shirts. Idyll pleasures of various kinds followed each other. Our Father might enter into a quarto bible, which was interleaved with blank pages, references as to where he had read a particular verse; or, more usually, he had his folio manuscript book in front of him and composed a complete piece of sacred music, with its

full score, in the midst of our childish commotion: in either case, but particularly in the latter, I loved to watch him writing and was always delighted if, because of an interval of several instruments, whole quarter pages were quickly filled. He composed his inner music unaided by any exterior sounds—as recommended by Reichard—and without being put out of tune by the children's commotion. We were all sitting and playing at the long writing- and dining-table, nay, even beneath it. Part of the joys that forever vanish together with our beautiful childhood was that if the frost turned sufficiently fierce the long table was pushed up to the bench around our stove to keep us warm; and we looked forward to that happy event each winter. For two wooden benches surrounded our monstrosity of a stove; and we profited by being able to walk as well as sit on them and to enjoy the stove-summer next to our skin even at mealtimes.

Oh how the winter's evenings grew in importance several times each week, when the old messenger woman from town stepped into the servants' room, covered in snow, with her cornucopia of fruit and meat and sundry wares, and all of us in the little chamber had the distant city in excerpt and miniature in front of our eyes and our noses, too, in the shape of several butter buns!

During the earlier, and more childish, times our Father would give permission for a delicious dessert after the early winter's evening supper, dished up by the cattle maid at her disstaff in the servants' room, which was lit by what little light the pinewood torches afforded, which were ignited and stuck into their holders as needed, as in Westphalia. This sweet course boasted—on top of several biscuit barrels and ice cups filled with folk tales such as Cinderella—the Maid's very own pineapple of a story, telling of a shepherd and his animal fights against wolves, how at one time his danger increased, but then again, his food supply grew. I can still feel the shepherd's good luck as if it were mine; I might mention in passing, based on my own experience, that children are gripped far more by a buildup of luck in stories than by a misfortune, and that they love to pursue ascensions right up to eternity, but descents into hell only as far as is necessary for the elevation and glorification of the heavenly throne. These childish desires become the desires of man; and their fulfilment would be demanded from poets more often if a new heaven were only created as easily as a new hell. It is easy enough for a tyrant to inflict unspeakable pain; but should he wish to invent untold pleasures, he has to offer a prize for the best. The basis for that is our skin; hundreds of hells can pitch tent on every inch of it; while the five heavens of our senses float above our heads, airy and monochrome.—
Only the tail ends of those winter's eves showed our hero their noisome wasps' stings or vampires' tongues. For at 9 o'clock, we children had to retire to our lodgings upstairs, my brothers to a communal one in the closet, and myself to one in the bedroom shared with my Father. Until he completed his two hours' nightly reading below, I would hide under the featherbed bathed in the cold sweat of my fear of ghosts, watching the lightning flicker across the louring spectral sky in the dark, and I felt as if man himself was being cocooned by ghostly caterpillars. Thus I suffered helplessly for two hours every night, until my Father came up at last like a morning sun chasing the specters and the dreams away. Next morning, ghostly terrors and nightmares were quite forgotten; although both would make their appearance again in the evening. Yet I never did tell a soul about it except— the public today.

At the same time, this fear of ghosts was—not so much caused as—fed by my Father himself. He did not spare us a single apparition or foolish story, which he had ever heard of or believed to have met with, himself; but, like the theologians of yore, he combined with a firm belief in them the equally firm courage to face them, and God or the cross was their buckler and shield against the ghostly realm. Many a child filled with body fear will yet show ghost courage, but only for lack of imagination; but another—such as myself—may tremble before the invisible world because it is peopled and shaped by his imagination, but will quickly take heart in the face of the visible world, which never reaches the depths and vastnesses of the invisible. Thus an occurrence of physical danger, even a sudden one,—like a bolting horse, a thunderclap, the din of war or fire, would leave me calm and collected, because I only feared through my imagination but not through my senses; and even a spirit shape would solidify into an ordinary live body once I had passed my initial shock, provided it did not precipitate me once more into the boundless realm of imagination through its sounds and features. How, then, can the tragic primacy of the spirit-summoning imagination be curbed by the educator? Certainly not by way of rebuttal or Biester's or Wagner's dissolving of the extraordinary into the ordinary—for a potential undissoled exception will be retained by one's deepest feeling—but on the one hand by a prosaic habituating, presenting and billeting in places and times, which would otherwise kindle imagination's magic incense again, and on the other hand by arming imagination itself against imagination and con-

1. Some prose-souls should be inoculated with, or left uncured of, a little fear of ghosts, as religion and poetry.

fronting the spirits with the spirit, and the Devil with God and righteousness.

Even at daytime this horror of ghosts would sometimes attack me on a special occasion. When, for instance, during a funeral, the cortège with pastor, schoolmaster, and children and crucifix and myself wended its chanting way from the parsonage past the church toward the churchyard close by the village, it would be my job to take my Father's bible through the churchyard and into the sacristy. I screwed up my courage and barely managed to race through the dim silent church at a gallop and to reach the poky sacristy; but which one among us can picture the shuddering terrified bounds of flight with the menace in hot pursuit and the awful dash out of the church gate? And who, picturing it, would not laugh?—And yet I accepted the office of bearer each time without a word of demur and bore my agony silently and by myself.

We are now on the threshold of a grander idyll season, of spring and summer in Joditz. There are reasons for both seasons being merged into one idyll, above all in the country. In actual fact, spring only dwells within our hearts, whereas in the gardens outside there is only summer, solely designed for fruition and for the present. Snow is the curtain, which has to be raised over the stage, or earth, for the village to commence its summer amusements—the city enjoying its own amusements in winter—; for tilling and sowing are spring harvestings to the countryman, and each day will produce novel scenes for the pastor, who has his own tillage, and for his ever-imprisoned sons. Then we poor children, locked into the parsonage by the long winter and jailer, will be liberated at last by the heaven-sent seraph of the season, and scattered into the open fields and meadows and gardens. There will be tilling—sowing—planting—mowing—saving the hay—reaping the corn—harvesting—and our Father will be present everywhere, helping, and the children in turn helping him, especially myself, as the eldest. If only ye knew, gentle audience, what it means all at once to escape, and I do not mean escape from the city walls, which after all enclose quite a bit of country as well, but from the walls surrounding a yard, and what is more, to escape to far beyond even the whole village, into wall-less regions and to look down from on high into the village, which one had never looked at from down below.

Now life in heaven, viz, under the vault of heaven, began. Those dew-fresh mornings still sparkle for me, as I took my Father's coffee into the parson's garden outside the village, where he sat learning his sermons by heart in the little summer house open to all directions and where we
children were to learn our Lange later on in the grass. The evenings used
to take us into the garden a second time, but this time with our lettuce-
gathering Mother and to the currant bushes and raspberry canes. Eating
supper without lighting the lamp is another little-known country delight.
Having enjoyed it, my Father would sit in the open, viz, in our walled
parsonage yard, with his pipe, and I and my brothers would dash about
in the fresh evening air, robed in our shirts, and pretending to be
the swallows that swooped above our heads, and we would flit hither
and thither, carrying things to our nests.

The most beautiful thing on wings, however, a delicate blue butterfly
dancing about our hero throughout this aestival season, was his first love.
She was a blue-eyed peasant girl the same age as himself, of slender ap-
pearance, and with an oval face dotted with a few pockmarks yet with a
thousand features bewitching his heart like a magic circle. Augusta, or
Augustina, lived with her brother Römer, a fine youth, known for his
singing voice in the choir and his grasp of figures. Whereas Paul never
declared his love—unless my lecture should fall into her hands in printed
form—he conducted his affaire-de-coeur so vividly from the distance by
gazing at her in her women's pew in the church, not too far away from
his parson's pew, yet never getting his fill. But this was only a start; for
when she would drive her grazing cattle home of an evening, whose un-
togetherness might leave the yard —and transfer some confectionary like sugared
almonds or some other delicacy, which he had brought back from town,
to squeeze his hand through a gap—no other parts of the children's bod-
ies must leave the yard—and transfer some confectionary like sugared
almonds or some other delicacy, which he had brought back from town,
to her hand. Sad to say, in some summers he did not even succeed to
that extent but had to swallow his sweetmeats, himself, and the chagrin
to go with them. If, however, his almonds, instead of falling on stony
ground, reached this Elysium of his eye: then a whole hanging garden of
blossoms and fragrance would spring up in his head, and he would be
strolling in it for weeks on end. For pure love desires nothing but giving,
and finding happiness by giving it; and should there be an eternity of
ever-augmenting bliss, who should be more blessed than Love?

We are coming to Paul's Sundays, when the idyll waxes considerably.
Sundays seem almost to have been created for parsons and parsonage
children; and Paul was particularly enchanted by a large number of Trin-
ity Sundays, or shall we say, the largest of 27, although none of the 27
added one extra summer Sunday, as far as the world or the church were
concerned. In cities royal or official birthdays or Fair days are the true
Trinitatises. Paul began his enjoyment on bright Sunday mornings by
sallying forth through the village, even before the service, jingling a
bunch of keys—thus announcing his presence to all and sundry—un-
locking the parsonage garden, and picking some roses for the lectern
on his Father's pulpit. In the church, things looked more cheerful simply
by virtue of the tall windows throwing wide bands of light across the
chilly floor and the women's pews and because sunlight cascaded over the
magic shepherdess Augustina. Nor should we underrate the fact that he
(in company with his brothers in office) was given permission to deliver
the statutory half pound of bread and some money to the tenants of the
week between service and dinner, firstly because his Father would send
generous measure, thus giving happiness to his peasantry, and secondly,
because children love delivering pleasant surprises to houses, and Paul
most of all. Every once in a while he had to deliver his share to the peas-
ant Römer, as well, and he would look out for the patron saint of his
church and his heart—but always in vain; for ten paces more or less made
quite a difference in his love's scenography after all; and just think if for-
tune had smiled on him and he had found himself less than a step away
from her!—Alas, not a hint can I give of such bliss manqué—for in that
case he would have spoken for sure.

I hold that nobody, not even tenants of judges', princes', professors'
or any other chairs can have an idea of how parsonage children relish
their Sunday evening suppers (but for the pulpit tenant himself), once
both divine services have been concluded, for they will celebrate with
their Father his late Sabbath repose, as it were, after his pastoral burdens
are shed and his priestly cassock has been exchanged for the lighter
housecoat—in a place, moreover, where of a Sunday evening the village
is guest performer and audience, pari passu. I might be accused of giving
short measure if I omitted another Trinity joy, only because it happened
less often; but it was all the greater for that, when Pastor Hagen of Köditz
appeared with his wife during the sermon in order to hear our Father
preach and to call on him; and Paul's little playmate, the suffragan pastor,
turned up on the porch. And if Paul and his brother spotted him through
the latticework of their choir stall: a wriggling and fidgeting and a pal-
pitating of hearts and a waving of hands would begin, and any idea of
listening to the sermon—and should the combined propaganda society
and the ten supreme court preachers and pastors primarii queue up on
the pulpit to have their say—was quickly dismissed. But the moment's
pre-Sabbath, the foothills of highest hopes, the breakfast of the day had
JEAN PAUL: Texts

He who, after the first happy rush of filial and parental preparations, still demands to be given descriptions of the beatific evening zephyrs and calms: forgets that I cannot provide the impossible. At the most one might add on a little extra panel that the Joditz pastorate would accompany the House of Köditz far beyond the boundary of the village late at night and that, in consequence this jumping the village fences for the wide world, heightened by the presence of parents and suffragan pastor, and at such a late hour to boot, was bound to bestow and entail beatitudes of which more in the life to come.

And now, gentle male and female listeners, let us advance to such Joditz idylls as are enjoyed by Paul outside rather than in Joditz, and which might be most conveniently divided into those where himself is absent from home and those where his Father is not at home. I shall start with the latter, because I count it as one of the unrecognized childhood pleasures where fathers go on a trip. For it is during those very times that mothers will grant that dazzling release from academic censorship and the freedom to act to their children. Under the eyes of their Mother, caught up in her duties, Paul and his brothers ventured in quest of such a village-boundary game beyond the confines of their own gateway as butterflies, gudgeon, and the sap of birches, and willow bark for flutes, or to admit a new playfellow, Schoolmaster's Fritz, or to help tolling the noonday bell just for the fun of being lifted by the swinging bell rope. One amusement within the gate was great enough in itself—only Paul might have easily broken his neck in its execution and thus deprived me of my whole professorship in advance—as it consisted of climbing a ladder to a free-standing beam in the barn and jumping into the hay two stories lower down, just for the thrill of flying. Now and again he would push the piano up to the window upstairs and play it beyond all moderation for the benefit of the village below and any chance passersby. He used to increase its volume immensely by forcing a quill with his right hand across the strings tensed by his left on the keys. Indeed, he also applied a few quill strokes to the other side, where the bridge tautened the strings, but not much of a harmony could be achieved.

Of course our Joditz summer idylls will be enhanced by walking out of the village to visit another, or even a town. Can one receive a more blessed instruction on a fine summer's day and after a Lange's Grammar recital than hearing the words: "Go and get dressed, you are going to Köditz with me after dinner"? Never was food less palatable, and Paul had to keep up with his father's vigorous strides. An hour later, however, he would have his little suffragan pastor, unrestrained games, his friend's wonderful mother—the sound of whose speech he can still hear ringing across the distance like the strains of a lute and the harmonica bell of the heart—and now and again one or the other tiny laurel wreath just wide enough to encircle his little head. For his Father in his paternal gratification at his grasp and retention of his own sermons, whose main proposition and parts and sundry fragments he could nimbly repeat in the evening, would make him recite the same again for his parsonage friends;—and the little one, I may say, succeeded successively. It showed courage in a young boy who in the course of his life had never encountered anything grand—earl—general—superintendent—apart from a nobleman twice a year at the most (Herr von Reitzenstein, because he was under arrest for a long time and a fugitive afterward)—it showed courage in such a boy to speak in public before the parsonage family in their living room. But no matter how great his shyness while standing silent, once he opened his mouth he was filled with courage and fire. And did he not venture farther afield? Had he not one afternoon, when his Father was not at home, picked up a hymnal and visited an old crone, bedridden with palsy for years, and stood before her like a fully fledged pastor on a sick call and proceeded to read to her suitable bits from the hymnal? But he was soon interrupted by weeping and sobbing, not that of the crone being moved to tears by the hymnal—she remained coldly indifferent—but by his own.

Once our hero was even taken along by his Father to the court of Versailles, as we may call Zedwitz without exaggeration, for it was after all the Joditz patronate's royal residence. On his return from his court audiences—almost twice monthly during the summer—he would cause the greatest rural amazement in his wife and his child in the evening with his tales of exalted persons and their court ceremonial, and of the courtly dishes, the icehouses, and the dairy cows, and how he himself had soon been sent for from the "domestics" hall into the presence of Baron von Plotho, or even the Fräulein, for whom he would render études and exercises on the piano, and finally to Frau von Bodenhause, and because of his lively nature his presence would always be requested at table, no matter how many distinguished lords of the Vogtland were dining at it. But like an old Lutheran court preacher, he acknowledged the immeasurable greatness of the estate, as he did the apparition of ghosts, without quaking at either of them. All the same: happy are ye, children of the present time, ye who are educated erect, not prostrated before rank, and fortified from within against exterior dazzle!—The adoration by the Jod-
itez parsonage sons at the throne of Zedwitz an hour’s journey away would be especially buttressed once a year through a splendid carriage, which would call each Maundy Thursday to fetch our Father to be the patronate's confessor at Holy Communion. His sons are well qualified to discuss the coach, having themselves been taken, together with their transports of delight, for little jaunts through the village on each occasion before his departure.

Ye may have an idea now of what it meant for our protagonist to walk to Zedwitz with the reigning monarch's father confessor, who had been carried away in extolling his son's virtues to a higher authority, to be presented at court. Having walked the gallery of ancestral portraits downstairs in the castle at length, Paul was received by Baroness Bodenhausen at the top of the stairs, the exhibition chamber, as it were, where he who flew up the stairs caught hold of her gown according to court rule and pressed his ceremonial kiss on it. — And thus the whole audience was duly completed without court-epees or Lord Chamberlains, and the boy was free to scamper about again.

And this he did in the glorious garden. There is hardly another legate, apart from our Hildburghausen Legation Counselor, then at a tender age, who can have absorbed and inhaled such romantic hours as these pergolas, fountains, hotbeds, and arbors imparted to a village child fantasizing within rather than outside himself, who for the first time and all by himself reeled among these splendors with a pressed and sated breast. What brought the elated Paul back to baser reality was a wooden bird on a rope, whose iron beak he could skilfully aim at a target. And a fruit tart sent down from the castle held the balance between standstill and flight, and its delicious aftertaste remained undiminished in the reliquary of our protagonist. Oh, ye beautiful hours and walks in seclusion for the famished village child, whose heart so intensely desired to sate itself with, or at least pine for, the world outside! —

Among the less illustrious summer idylls fall the frequent walks to Hof and his grandparents, which Paul undertook with his knapsack on his back in order to fetch meat and coffee and all those things that either were not to be got in the village at all or at least not at very low city prices. For his Mother gave him only a modest few coins — for the sake of appearance — so that his grandmother, full of generosity toward daughter and grandson, while parsimonious toward the rest of the world, should fill his knapsack with the items currently listed. The two-hour-long walk took him across indifferent and unremarkable country, through a wood and in it across a rushing river full of rocks, until at last on a high plain the town with its twin steeples and the River Saale in the valley below richly rewarded and showered the frugal young bearer. With a childish shudder at the ancient wars and afflictions, he would pass the entrance to a cave close by the suburb where, legend has it, the people of Hof took refuge during the 30 years' war; and the nearby fulling mill, with its continuous roar and its immense girders, expanded his village soul and made it capacious enough to receive the city. Once he had kissed the hand of his tall serious grandfather at his loom and that of his delighted short grandmother and publicly handed over both the official maternal letter — his Father being too proud to ask — and what little money he had, and behind the door in the hall the secret articles of appeal: he could trot off home again in the afternoon with his packed knapsack and with the sugared almonds for his adored Augustina, happy at the parental free board on his back.

He still remembers how on a summer's day as, at about two o'clock on his journey back, he surveyed the bright sunny hills and the rippling waves of the cornfields and the swift shadows of the clouds, he was overcome by a hitherto never experienced vague yearning, a mixture of mostly pain and a very little pleasure, a desire without remembrance. Alas, it was the whole man's longing for the heavenly things of life, embedded still without name or color in the deep, vast darkness of his heart, illumined fleetingly by the alighting sunbeams. There is a time of longing when its object does not yet bear a name, and it can only announce itself. And later on, also, it was less the moonlight, whose silver lakes can do no more than gently dissolve the heart in their depths and, thus dissolved, guide and carry it into eternity, than the light of the afternoon sun on open country that claimed this force of a painfully expanding longing; in Paul's writings, this has been described and imparted several times.

And in the snowy winter, too, Paul had to travel frequently as an impecunious Hof- or Holland-migrant, and to use his wits in negotiating subsidies, even with his grandfather, just as he was allowed to accompany his Father on his visits to the nearest parishes during the coldest spells. It was to these weekly athletic walks that he owed much of his enduring resistance and his best antidote to a nonsensical physical education, which, like any other at the time, did its best, with the assistance of fur hats, purges, and blocking of fresh air, together with keeping warm and keeping still and altogether too much pampering, to advance rather than counteract an adverse future. But precisely this is the good fortune of village children and the children of the poor that summer at last, aided
and abetted by spring and autumn, will demolish the winter weeds; because all of a sudden those plantlets, grown pale in the bleak glasshouse, will be invigorated and hardened in fresh air and fine weather and by running about barefoot and bareheaded and by eating fresh and uncooked food. Only the gentle princesses are cheated out of their salubrious summer. But common folk still don't believe that summer makes up for winter, holding conversely that the indoor season is going to cure the outdoor one.

I am afraid the fact that I have reserved autumn to be the climax of our Joditz idylls, the season which can lead nowhere but into snowdrifts, is going to cause comment, and that not only in Germany. But an imaginative being like Paul not only enjoys autumn, itself, in autumn but also winter in anticipation, with its domestic contentment, and spring with its lyrical promises, while spring arrived dissolves into summer, which in itself is truly a quiescent and intermediary stage of our imagination, too closely related to autumn and too distant from spring. Even now he beholds through the semipellucid trees of Indian summer the ranges of next year's snow blossom hills and traverses them, honey drunk like a bee, although they melt away in proximity, and spring journeys and spring harvests are being designed and enjoyed far in advance, and by the time spring does arrive, the main matter will have come to pass. And if landscape painters have a predilection for autumn: so do poets, the painters of the mind, at least in old age.

But our hero looked forward to autumn from a very particular point of view; he had always a leaning toward the domestic, the still life, a spiritual nest building. He is a domestic snail, snugly retiring into the narrowest convolutions of his shell and falling in love with it, always provided his shell remains wide open, and he will be able to extend his four feelers, not only four butterfly wings, high into the air but ten times higher, right into the sky, with each feeler touching one of Jupiter's moons, at least. We shall hear more in our lectures of this foolish bond between seeking the far and the near - like a telescope either doubling the distance or the proximity, depending on which way it is held - than I ever asked for or mere autumn delivered.

This domestic affection showed in the boy's imagination; he called the young swallows lucky who could settle so snugly inside their walled nests at night. - On climbing into the vast dovecot in the loft, he would feel at home in this roomful of roomlets or pigeons' dens, and its frontage was as a Louvre to him, or a miniature Escorial. I am afraid I must take the consequences if I include in my lectures the childish tidbit of his fully furnished fly house of clay, a palace, in fact, which he had built himself, about the size of a man's fist, only a little taller; the whole plaster edifice was painted red and subdivided by ink into blocks, and it had two stories, many stairs with handrails, many closets, and a capacious roof space; but on the outside it boasted bay-windows and overhangs and even a chimney, which was covered by glass so as to keep the flies from coming out instead of the smoke. Windows were plentiful all over, and one might say the castle consisted of more window than wall. When Paul now observed the countless flies rushing upstairs and downstairs in this vast pleasure castle and into the large rooms and dainty bays: he imagined how blissful their home life must be and longed himself to run with them along the windows inside and took the place of the owners who were at liberty to retire from the largest parlors into the daintiest, narrowest closets and bays. How insignificant and how small the parsonage must have seemed in comparison!

Even as a writer he was to continue this love of nooks and crannies in Wutz and Fixlein and Fibel; and the man even now likes the look of every pretty shingled little cot, with its two stories and flowers at its windows and its tiny garden to be watered from the window; and what is more, the dear domestic dupe will happily sit inside the closed coach and look past its side pockets saying, “A splendid little fire-proof room, this! And the largest gardens and villages rushing past out there!” - It has to be said that he would be able neither to write nor to live in a knight's hall or a St. Peter's church - to him it would be but a marketplace with a roof, whereas he could write or live forever on top of Montblanc or Mount Aetna as long as things were properly equipped for the purpose; it is only the close and human that cannot be small enough for him, as against the expanse of nature, which cannot be vast enough; for the smallness of the works of man is diminished by their magnification.

The painting of our Joditz autumn idyll has been almost completed through the foregoing. For autumn leads us human beings into our houses, bequeathing its cornucopia for the winter's nest, which we build, like the crossbill with its ice-month nest and fledglings. That must have been the origin for Paul's even yet listening to the first threshing, the noisy rooks' flights into the woods, the migratory birds screaming or sounding their valediction as harbingers of the snug domestic entencement of winter; and he would listen to them with a lingering pleasure. And I must apologize on his behalf for the way he heard the poor gagglings of Martinmas geese with such relish as prologues and leading singers of
wintertime, too. I have always thought that he derived such uncommon
pleasure from travelogues on winter countries like Greenland and Spitz-
bergen out of the same indoor- and winter-penchant; because the mere
contemplation of hardship on paper does not explain the concomitant
joy, else the selfsame joy would have been felt on reading about the red-
hot distress of arid countries. Whereas I should be inclined to ascribe the
familiar delight of the man in each quarter hour by which the autumn
days waned to his predilection for any kind of superlative— for the infi-
nitely great and the infinitesimally small, in short for maxima and min-
ima, particularly as he rejoiced at the waxing of days in exactly the same
way and wished for nothing as much as for one of those endless Sweden
days. All of this makes it obvious with what inestimable frugality and ac-
complishment God had prepared and equipped the man for his path
through life, which had nothing to boast of along the wayside, so that,
no matter how black things were, he could always turn black into white;
and with his amphibian instinct for land and sea, he could neither drown
nor die of thirst.

These are but autobiographical characteristics, dear sirs, which lend
themselves to his biography and which may be acknowledged with grat-
itude by his future biographer.

Nor am I conscious of any reason besides that taste for the cozy win-
ter interior that would explain why Paul used to ruminate with such gusto
on yet another autumn delight lean enough in itself. For during autumn
 evenings (and overcast ones, at that), his Father, wrapped in his house-
coat, would take himself and his brother to a potato field above the Saale;
one of the boys would carry a hoe, the other a hand basket. Out there,
plenty of new potatoes for supper would be dug by their Father; Paul
gathered them into the basket, while Adam was permitted to climb after
the biggest filberts. After a while, he had to descend from his branch and
let Paul have a turn. And they would happily make their way home with
their potatoes and hazelnuts; let each man imagine for himself the plea-
sure of being abroad for an hour and the fifteen minutes’ walk back with
the spoils and celebrating the harvest festival in the candlelit room at
home with the same intensity as the original beneficiary.

But two further fresh and green autumn flowers of joy survived in his
cerebral ventricles, both of them trees. One is only a tall sturdy muscatel
pear tree in the parsonage yard, whose glorious garlands of fruit the chil-
dren would try to convert to man-made windfall all during autumn, until
on one of the most important days of the season their Father would climb
the forbidden tree on a ladder and gather the sweet paradise for house
and oven. — The other evergreen tree, flowering on even more glo-
riously, is smaller; it is the birch, which was cut each year on St. Andrew’s
Eve by the old woodcutter and hauled into the living room by its stem,
where it was planted in a large tub of water and lime so that it should
bear its green leaves in time for Christmas and the golden fruit with
which it was to be decorated. It was the nature of this birch, which was
not a weeping- but a jubilating-birch, that it would scatter its festive flow-
ers on the dark December path up to Christmas with its little forced
leaves, each fresh one like the hand of a clock marking another day
passed, and also that each of us children celebrated his Sukkoth of fan-
tasies beneath this May tree of winter.

I assume that those of my audience who obtained representations of
Paul’s Christmas festivities in his writings, which I could not hope to
surpass, will kindly dispense me from giving my own description. But two
omissions should be made good. For when Paul stood in front of the
chandelier tree and table on Christmas morn and the new world of gold
and glory and gifts lay uncovered before his eyes and he found and was
given a new abundance: the first thing to arise in him was not a tear—
that is to say, a tear of happiness—but a sigh—that is to say, a sigh at
life—; in a word, even to the boy, the step or leap or flight out of the
surging, playful, vast ocean of fantasy onto the limited and limiting firm
coast was marked by the sigh for a larger, more beautiful country. But
before this sigh could expire and before happy reality rallied its forces:
Paul would feel from sheer gratitude that he ought to show himself ex-
ceedingly happy toward his Mother; — and he would assume this semi-
blance instantly and for a short time, for in no time at all, the dawning
light of reality was to extinguish and take away the moonlight of imagi-
nation.

And at this point we ought to be mindful of a paternal idiosyncrasy,
which pertained to the same moment: for his father—always so happily
sympathetic, giving and sharing enjoyment so generously—would
emerge from his bedroom on Christmas morn into the cheerful bright
living- and servants-rooms downstairs as if cloaked in mourning; their
Mother denied any knowledge as to the source of this annual sadness,
and no one plucked up the courage to ask him. And he left all the labor
and pleasure of laying the festive board on Christmas Eve to their
Mother, lagging behind Paul considerably in this respect, who always en-
joyed lending a hand to his wife, or she to him, with the Christmas opera
for his children; — for he had indeed played— especially while they were
younger and ignorant— postman for the fraudulent notes, and set de-
signer and dramatist on his sofa for months in advance, and finally on
the night, as director and stage-technician-in-chief, set the scene and
arranged the display on tables and trees, so full of understanding and light
that the whole thing shone as brightly as did his eyes.

This notwithstanding, one can almost explain the Father and the pa-
ternal mourning from the son, for the latter had had to cloak a similar
sadness with all exterior happiness and activity for many years since.
They are both of them stricken by the woeful comparison—chauf
through their sacred music and novels—between reality's manly autumn
and the childish springtimes that went before, when the ideal puts forth
blossoms straight from the trunk of reality, without the deviation of
leaves and branches.

And even then the child's nectar and wine demanded an added zest,
the ideal ether of belief in a bounteous Christ child. For as soon as his
eyes had chanced to convince him that it is only human beings, not an-
gels, who bring and display the blossoms and fruits of joy: their para-
disiacal fragrance and light had gone out and been wiped away, and the
humdrum cabbage patch remained. And yet it is incredible how he, like
all children, held off the iconoclasts of his heavenly belief and held onto
his angelic revelation against all the insights of his years, and against any
hints of coincidence, until finally he came to see and conquer rather than
be vanquished. Thus reluctantly does the man of any religion allow him-
self to be dragged down to men playing bountiful deity high up in the
skies.

— So far the Joditz idylls, which had lasted long enough for the par-
ents and children, viz, as long as the Trojan War. Debts and expenses for
four sons increased, and the latter's need for the promised superior
school grew ever more urgent. And their Father, too, would be exasper-
ated occasionally that his best years and greatest vigor should be strained
and drained in so narrow a parish. In the end, Pastor Barnickel died in
Schwarzenbach on the Saale, a small city or large market town. Death is
the true stage-manager and -technician on earth. He plucks a human
being out of the beginning, middle, or end of the sequence like a number,
and lo and behold, the whole sequence will reassemble in a new order.
On this occasion, that particular living, which was in the gift of the
Prince of Reuss and of Baroness Bodenhausen, alternately, fell into the
hand of Richter's patroness, who had for a long time and undisguisedly
looked forward to being able to reward and rescue the dear, selfless,
cheerful, and impoverished parson.

All the same, he did not pay Zedwitz any more visits on that account,
— I believe I have done my self-historical professorial duty with regard to the educational village of Joditz, and the time has come to accompany our protagonist in our next lecture on his family's move to Schwarzenbach, where, however, the curtain of life will be raised by several feet at once, thus allowing a little more than a glimpse at his earliest baby shoes. For we shall propel him indeed from today's into the following lecture as a youth more than twelve years of age, yet knowing less than the three-year-old Christian Heinrich Heineken did when, having passed his examination, he was put to her breast again by his wetnurse—so utterly lacking in knowledge of natural, geographical, or historical science, always excepting the particle, which was himself—of French or music—in Latin clothed but in a little Lange and Speccius—in short, as transparent and empty a little carcass or skeleton and so devoid of any learned substance or body that, just like yereselves, I can hardly wait for the place and the hour when he will begin to know and to pad his skeleton in Schwarzenbach on the River Saale.

We are about to leave the anonymous little village; but although it has never been crowned with the laurel wreath of some battle or other, like many another village: he is entitled nevertheless to hold it in high esteem, I believe, and still address it as if taking his leave today: “Beloved village!, thou wilt remain dear to my heart! Two little sisters I left interested in thy ground—My contented Father passed his happiest Sundays upon it—And during the dawn of my life I beheld thy bright rolling fields. I know that thy inhabitants whom I once knew have departed long ago, like my Father; but my heart wishes their unknown children and grand-children well; and may every battle pass them by.”

**Third Lecture**

(Schwarzenbach on the Saale)

Would ye believe, gentle audience, that Paul has no recollection whatever of the upheaval of packing, moving out and moving away and moving in, of any leave-takings, either his parents’ or the children’s, nor of a single object on a two-mile-long journey, with the sole exception of the aforementioned tailor’s son, to whom he entrusted the soot portraits of a few kings, intended for his beloved?—But thus is childhood—boyhood; it will remember the infinitesimal but forget the most prominent, and who can tell rhyme or reason. Farewells are, in any case, less memorable than arrivals for childhood, eagerly thrusting in all directions; for a child will leave the long familiar conditions ten times more readily than the short-lived, and it is only in the grown man that the opposite seems to be indicated. Farewells hardly exist for children, who know no past but only a present brimful of future.

Schwarzenbach, to be sure, had a lot to offer—a pastor and a curate—a rector and a cantor—a parsonage with many small and two large rooms—facing it, two big bridges with the accompanying River Saale—from beside it the schoolhouse, the size of (or maybe larger than) the whole Joditz parsonage—and among the houses even a town hall, not to mention the long-vacant castle.

A new rector took up his post at the same time as his Father, Werner, from the district of Merseburg, a handsome man with a wide brow and nose, full of fire and feeling and of a captivating natural eloquence, bursting with questions and parables and disquisitions like Pater Abraham; otherwise without any depths in either languages or any other sciences. He compensated for the lack in this aspect by a head filled with freedom rhetoric, and his fiery tongue was a lever for the children’s minds. It was his precept to make them learn only the most fundamental forms of grammar—by which he meant nothing but declensions and conjugations—in order to have a go at reading an author. Paul had to take the instant high leap across Lange’s Colloquia straight into Cornelius; and it worked. The schoolroom, or more properly the school ark, contained raw beginners, spellers, Latin pupils; big girls and small girls—all of them ranged from floor to ceiling as on hothouse shelving or in an antique Roman theater—as well as rector and cantor, complete with the accompaniment of shouting, humming, reading, and beating. The Latin pupils constituted a school within the school, as it were. Soon an attempt was made at Greek grammar, also, with its learning of declensions and indispensable verbs; and without any further dallying over grammar, they were translated into translating the New Testament. And Werner, who when in full spate used to praise himself to the point of being surprised at his own greatness, even considered his faulty method to be an original one, whereas it was nothing but one of Basedow’s; but Paul’s rapid progress only served as another proof of his theory. About a year later, a gangway was forged from some few declensions and verbs out of Danz’s Hebrew Grammar, written in Latin, to the Book of Genesis, whose beginning, the very exposition threshold for the young Hebrew scholars, was forbidden territory for the uneducated Jews.

I shall continue with our protagonist’s life in chronological order after one moment’s excursion ahead of time to sneak a glimpse with you
at how much he had to do and to know all at once. After that I shall revert to my statarical self again.

Like a Vulgate maker, he was put to translate the Greek Testament, and the Hebrew one orally, into Latin. While Paul translated (he was the only Hebrew scholar in the whole school), the Rector would take recourse to a printed version at his elbow; and if our hero got stuck in his analytical treatment of certain words, disaster might strike again in the teacher faring no better.

The present novelist quite lost his heart to the Hebrew language and analysis lumber and trivia — yet another hidden aspect, indeed, of his love of domesticity — and he begged and borrowed Hebrew grammars from any sources he could in Schwarzenbach in order to be in possession of anything whatsoever that might throw light on diacritical dots, vowels, accents, and the like, to be dished out by himself in his analysis of each individual word. Thereupon he stitched together a quarto book and, beginning with Genesis, provided over several pages such a wealth of instruction drawn from every borrowed grammar on the first three words, on each of their letters, their vowels, and the first dagesh and shwa, that he decided to end with the word beginning (his intention had been to follow through in this way chapter by chapter). And what is written on the topic of Quintus Fixlein's battue for letters large, small, and back to front in a Hebrew folio bible (in his first notebook) may be literally applied to Paul's own life.

In the same foolish way, Paul proceeded with the by now antiquated Hofmann, a Grand Cross Speccius to any pupil, with its German translation sentences or paradigms of Latin rules, wriggling his way through their own dictatos, setting up hedge schools all over the place, notwithstanding the fact that the man was fully occupied barely keeping himself alive.

On his arrival in Schwarzenbach — to continue cursorily for a moment — Paul was taught the piano by Cantor Gressel; and here, too, having learnt to play a few dances and later on the rudiments of the chorale — God grant the poor boy a thorough teacher for once, although there is not a sign of the like on the horizon — he was soon to be left to his own devices, and he freed himself from the shackles of proper instruction by improvising on the piano and picking up and rattling off at sight any music he could lay hands on anywhere in the town. He acquired the grammar of music, basso continuo, more or less the way we pick up the grammar of German in speaking.

At the same time, he immersed himself in German belles lettres; as there were none to be had in Schwarzenbach apart from the novelistic genre, and even of that only the inferior novels of the first half of the last century: he assembled his own little tower of Babel out of these blocks, notwithstanding the fact that he could never extract more than one block at a time from it for his perusal. But out of all stories on bookshelves — for Schiller’s Armenian has only half the impact the second time — none was to charge the veins of his innermost being — to the point of physical ecstasy even — with such a nectar and balm as the original Robinson Crusoe — he still remembers hour and place of his ecstasies; it was in the evening, at the window facing the bridge; and one other novel, Veit Rosenstock, by Otto, — read and proscribed by his Father — was to repeat a moiety of that enthusiasm. It was as a pirate and plagiarist only that he enjoyed it in the paternal library until his Father’s return — once reading it during his Father’s weekday sermon as he lay on his stomach in a deserted gallery. I little envy the children of today, who are being robbed of the first impression of a childish and childlike Robinson and robbed off by the man’s latter-day adaptors, who make a lecture hall of the tranquil island, or a printed Schnepfenthal Academy, and press a textbook into the shipwrecked Robinson’s hand, making him walk about mouthing their own dictatos, setting up hedge schools all over the place, notwithstanding the fact that the man was fully occupied barely keeping himself alive.

Round about the same time, the young Curate Völk asked his Father whether he might borrow the boy for a couple of hours after dinner each day to teach him a little philosophy and geography. Why I, in my rural awkwardness, was deemed worthy of this sacrifice of his after-dinner rest by him, who was not fired by any particular pedagogical talent, I shall never know.

In philosophy he taught me, or rather, I read out to him, Gottsched’s Wisdom of the World, which for all its aridity and vacuity quickened me by its sheer novelty like a draught of fresh water. Thereupon he pointed out to me many a city and border on a map — methinks one of Germany; I cannot say that I recall any of it, however hard I search for it in my memory. I would undertake to prove myself to be among all living authors perhaps — although this may sound a bit much — the most ignorant with regard to maps. For me an Atlas of maps would carry hell in place of the sky of the mythological one, were I asked to transfer it into my head. The little of the geography of cities and countries, which may have stuck, is what came to me in passing during that course of geographical instruction I attended, in part statarically from mail coaches and in part...
cursory from their coachmen, if I may express it in decent grammar school German.

I am all the more grateful to the worthy Curate for his guidance toward so-called natural theology. For he would set me the task of proving without the Bible that there was a God, for example, or a providence, and so forth. To that purpose I would receive a little octavo-size page with the proofs and indications from Nössel or Jerusalem and others in unfinished sentences only, or even just single words and dashes. These encoded hints were explained to me; and out of this leaf my own leaves would open, following Goethe's botanical creed. If I began each essay with warmth, I would finish it in a blaze; for every time the end would be loaded with the end of the world and of life, with heavenly bliss and the overabundance pouring forth from the young vine in its spring ardor, which will bear the fruits of the spirit only in autumn. And if those hours of composition meant freedom and happiness rather than toil: who deserves praise and merit more than the selector of the right flower- and fruit-bearing topic?—For we only have to compare those fulfilling and stimulating essays with the run-of-the-mill tasks given by teachers, so vast and so vague and so alien to the young mind, or so far above the youthful sphere of existence, a thousand of which I would hazard to hatch in a footnote for fun, that I would wish in all seriousness a liberal man who understands youth would sit down and, regardless of the most sublime ideas and interpretations he might otherwise furnish, write nothing for the time being but, like those countless dispositions on Sunday texts, a volume of prize questions for teachers, so that all they in turn had to do to solve them was select from them the ones they wished to assign to their pupils.

Better still might be no exercises at all; the youth himself being free to elect the matter as he would a beloved to whom his heart warms generously and only with whom he is capable of begetting life. Only leave the young mind alone for the space of a few hours and pages—as even the older one needs—so that he may sound without interference from

2. On topics as frigid and vacuous and general, demanding all and nothing, as for instance In Praise of Diligence or the Importance of Youth, not even the most prolific and mature mind could produce anything lively. Then again others, too large and too loaded, like A Comparison of Ancient Generals or Weighing Up Ancient Modes of Government, for instance, are ostrich eggs... on which the pupil with his tiny wings is going to sit in vain and generating heat only in his head while attempting to hatch them. Between those two kinds there are handsomer ones, those replete with sensual or historical material: as for instance Description of Conflagration, of Doomsday, of the Flood, Proofs of their Non-generality.