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My dear Ré,

The nicest letters I have ever received in my life have always been from women. This pleasing peculiarity seems to be holding true for the last period of my life too. And since we are talking about age I recall your tactful indication that "the later years also have their own kind of beauty." In my opinion this is quite true, even when one's health is not all that great. You see this inner completion very well in a critical experience of oneself and of many things around us that we "don't think are so important any more!" Sometimes it is quite amusing and gratifying to compare the wisdom of later years with the cleverness of the more stormy periods of one's youth. A lot of things have lost their importance but in one's late years life brings as yet unsuspected possibilities of living.

There is so much that is new when we read "Wilhelm Meister" again, and we see so much more now in a poem by Hölderlin, that we did not really understand before, and when we read good literature so much is understandable and familiar, simply because we have experienced it ourselves in the meantime. This is true not only of looking at and understanding visual art, which Curtius is supposed to have said at one time, but rather "people only see what they already know!"

It is similar with nature. The elderly hiker finds all those things interesting which he formerly did not notice or did not care about because he was always in a hurry. He wants to know the names of all the flowers and plants, which species and families they belong to, and where they originated. Their blooms and fruits accompany the elderly gentleman on his walks

throughout the year and he is a little sad when the mimosa or bona nox flowers are not quite so beautiful and abundant as usual. Anyone who knows his forest also knows where an armadillo has his hideout, where a small grey rabbit hides (from dogs) in the undergrowth, which palms are visited by a squirrel (serelepe) for their fruit and how quickly a short-legged lagarte (a big lizard) can run if he is disturbed. The kolibris and the many other songbirds accepted him long ago as a harmless creature to practice their tunes with. He goes frequently to the top of a hill to admire the silver, or usually gold sunsets, lets his quietest thoughts float northward with the white clouds and as he walks home in the dark he looks for the constellations and planets in the southern sky.

Now you notice. Many things that formerly seemed so unimportant have now taken the place of those that seemed to be important back then and have now assumed an importance of their own. It is the eternal change in life. Tempora mutantur and we change with the times. That is fine and it helps us to endure in the face of rising despair. Woe to a world in which nothing is important any more, for there would be no more values either. Sometimes I dread time that disintegrates and the future full of nihilist promises.

And so I sit with my friends and we talk and contemplate all these things. They also dislike the noise and hassle of the big city, as well as its superficial, social behavior. They too like living "out here," where you can hear a rooster crowing at dawn, or a calf bleating for its mother's milk, a mule neighing through the night and the mare answering with a whinny. The garden is very big and the grass, trees and shrubs, flowers and plants need a lot of care, they have to be cut, trimmed, re-planted and fertilized. But in

return there is never a lack of color around the house all through the year, because there is always something in bloom. At Easter there are the quaresmas and alleluias, at Whitsun the fedegosos (cassias), then the long-stemmed ensolirias (bromel.), the coral trees, euphorbias, dahlias and hibiscus; almost throughout the year: sage, geraniums, yellow roses and many wild flowers with the most beautiful Latin names. When the weather is at its coldest there is a shower of blooms on the lianas in the nearby woods and as soon as spring comes there are innumerable gladioli, amaryllis and lilies and incredibly lush bushes of Japanese miracle flowers (mirabil. jalap.) of all possible color combinations. And then in the summer [words missing]

If I am the father of all these plant-children, then their mother is Gi., the lady of the house, with whom I share an interest in literature and music, besides gardening. We also socialize with Mu-s, who have similar interests, and until his departure La, the poet-and-thinker-original, was the instigator of and participant in numerous "good talks" and sometimes spirited discussions too. Ge. formed the counterpoint. The group is small but we have still not reached its limits, which is virtually impossible as long as we remain open-minded and do not become one-sided. At times there is not always so much intellectual and artistic animation in a bigger group of people. I cannot go to concerts and operas but there are good records and radio broadcasts which are some compensation. Unfortunately our little battery-run record-player is now useless for classical music, so we have to give up this pleasure too, until we get electric light in the house. The comforts of one's later years are often a question of money. This is true also for color photography, which is so expensive here that, to paraphrase Agfa's slogan: "Anyone who takes a lot of photographs has nothing more to live on!" [originally: "gets more out

of life."] Now my old intention to turn more to literature is becoming productive. What one experienced in one's youth might be worth writing down in later life. And there you have the program for the "rest!" Simple, but by no means easy!

Soon it will be autumn; your wonderful apple harvest reminds me vividly of it. The ancient tale of the apple and the first man and woman can have infinite variations. How different everything would have turned out if Adam had picked his apples, packed them in boxes and stored them in the attic, instead....yes instead..... At any rate, I am also a big apple-lover, but only if I can eat one of the nice red apples, that come from the country in which I used to live, at every meal. The apples that grow here are no good. I was happy to buy the golden russets from Ha or else I gave him raspberries in exchange, if...yes if....

In spite of the autumnal period of my life and the "one-sided" apply supply I still suffer from migraine, though not so badly, since I have found that taking aspirin is a way of checking the attacks right at the beginning. Of course, I still have a headache and am irritable and tired for a while. My age is probably a factor for the good effect of this miracle drug. "Hormonal causes" is just a clever way of saying what no one really knows. Apart from some new theories (effects of nutrition) modern medicine has not made any progress in the treatment explanation of this terrible disease. I find it interesting to view one's life from the point of view of a complaint of this kind, for instance how far this physical disfunction affects the mind, what errors it can cause one to make. Their influence on the course of one's life is quite considerable, even though indirect. On the other hand I know that

as far as I am concerned strong emotions can provoke migraine attacks.

We have already talked about time and its problems. The fact that young people are also concerned about it and do not simply accept the whole miserable matter as an undebatable fact is as gratifying as finding an empty space in a full carpark. (That's a good comparison: topical and rare!) It is not immediately relevant whether this concern fits the reality of the causes. Non-conformism and critical analysis leads to recognition of new forms and contents of life. Your Ha seems to me to be not only a rebel, but rather someone who is worried, who is seeking and who is determined to unmask the essence of this unseasonable time. There is nothing more pleasurable to see than a young person who opposes time's foolish demeanor, who looks at the world from all sides and tries to come to grips with it and think about where the route taken by this modern humanity is heading. He will inevitably fall prey to errors, which must be corrected, but which open up new insights. What he will gain is liberation from stereotypes and an original way of thinking. I know, or rather suspect, how watchful you have always been in attending to and influencing your sons' intellectual development, and that you probably mobilized something "special." If this kind of care is to bear fruit, it is also true of "later" pleasures. I hope to meet Ha in Haelde and to have a discussion with him that closes the gap between the generations. I only want to say that I am looking forward to it very much. [words missing - end of page] after so much late fulfillment. Yes, yes and for that reason a little touch-up is called for. The sun doesn't always shine for me, our days are not filled only with leisure. Behind the scenes, behind the flowers and shrubs, dissatisfaction, anger and misunderstanding sometimes lurk. But when the cloudy, bad-weather days are past, everything is all right again. The evil

spirit that cannot be driven away and which sometimes grabs tight hold of me is the feeling of being abandoned. It is only my attachment to all my friends and their insightful sympathy that bring me help and comfort. Yes, I just wanted to say that too.

If your "plates and cups, the faces and the chatter" put you to flight, or a rainy holiday checks your unrestrained wanderlust, then please write me another nice letter. I am counting on one in the fall again and close my letter with its leitmotiv, which made the happy melodies of the later years resound.

Sincerely

Aphorism

What you do or think,

All the same;

Whether you laugh or cry,

It all passes.

Bear it in jest, if it's not hard,

Child's play;

Take it to heart if it's more,

Until you are free.

Only duty holds!

Regret nothing!

Whether it must be or not:

Stay true to yourself!

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