КОЛЛЕКТИВ АВТОРОВ

THE GERMAN CLASSICS OF THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES, VOLUME 04

Коллектив авторов

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Содержание

The German Classics of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, Volume 04 / Masterpieces of German Literature Translated into English. in Twenty Volumes

EDITOR'S NOTE

From this volume on, an attempt will be made to bring out, in the illustrations, certain broad tendencies of German painting in the nineteenth century, parallel to the literary development here represented. There will be few direct illustrations of the subject matter of the text. Instead, each volume will be dominated, as far as possible, by a master, or a group of masters, whose works offer an artistic analogy to the character and spirit of the works of literature contained in it. Volumes IV and V, for instance, being devoted to German Romantic literature of the early nineteenth century, will present at the same time selections from the work of two of the foremost Romantic painters of Germany: Moritz von Schwind and Ludwig Richter. It is hoped that in this way THE GERMAN CLASSICS OF THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES will shed a not unwelcome side-light upon the development of modern German art.

KUNO FRANCKE.

JEAN PAUL

* * * * *

THE LIFE OF JEAN PAUL

By BENJAMIN W. WELLS, Ph.D.
Author of *Modern German Literature*.

"The Spring and I came into the world together," Jean Paul liked to tell his friends when in later days of comfort and fame he looked back on his early years. He was, in fact, born on the first day (March 21) and at almost the first hour of the Spring of 1763 at Wunsiedel in the Fichtelgebirge, the very heart of Germany. The boy was christened Johann Paul Friedrich Richter. His parents called him Fritz. It was not till 1793 that, with a thought of Jean Jacques Rousseau, he called himself Jean Paul.

Place and time are alike significant in his birth. Wunsiedel was a typical German hill village; the ancestry, as far back as we can trace it, was typically German, as untouched as Wunsiedel itself, by any breath of cosmopolitan life. It meant much that the child who was in later life to interpret most intimately the spirit of the German people through the days of the French Revolution, of the Napoleonic tyranny and of the War of Liberation, who was to be a bond between the old literature and the new, beside, yet independent of, the men of Weimar, should have such heredity and such environment. Richter's grandfather had held worthily minor offices in the church, his father had followed in his churchly steps with especial leaning to music; his maternal grandfather was a well-to-do clothmaker in the near-by town of Hof, his mother a long-suffering housewife. It was well that Fritz brought sunshine with him into the world; for his temperament was his sole patrimony and for many years his chief dependence. He was the eldest of seven children. None, save he, passed unscathed through the privations and trials of the growing household with its accumulating burdens of debt. For Fritz these trials meant but the tempering of his wit, the mellowing of his humor, the deepening of his sympathies.

When Fritz was two years old the family moved to Joditz, another village of the Fichtelgebirge. Of his boyhood here Jean Paul in his last years set down some mellowed recollections. He tells how his father, still in his dressing gown, used to take him and his brother Adam across the Saale to dig potatoes and gather nuts, alternating in the labor and the play; how his thrifty mother would send him with the provision bag to her own mother's at Hof, who would give him goodies that he would share with some little friend. He tells, too, of his rapture at his first A B C book and its gilded cover, and of his eagerness at school, until his too-anxious father took him from contact with the rough peasant boys and tried to educate him himself, an experience not without value, at least as a warning, to the future author of *Levana*. But if the Richters were proud, they were very poor. The boys used to count it a privilege to carry the father's coffee-cup to him of a Sunday morning, as he sat by the window meditating his sermon, for then they could carry it back again "and pick the unmelted remains of sugar-candy from the bottom of it." Simple pleasures surely, but, as Carlyle says, "there was a bold, deep, joyful spirit looking through those young eyes, and to such a spirit the world has nothing poor, but all is rich and full of loveliness and wonder."

Every book that the boy Fritz could anywise come at was, he tells us, "a fresh green spring-place," where "rootlets, thirsty for knowledge pressed and twisted in every direction to seize and absorb." Very characteristic of the later Jean Paul is one incident of his childhood which, he says, made him doubt whether he had not been born rather for philosophy than for imaginative writing. He was witness to the birth of his own self-consciousness.

"One forenoon," he writes, "I was standing, a very young child, by the house door, looking to the left at the wood-pile, when, all at once, like a lightning flash from heaven, the inner vision arose before me: I am an *I*. It has remained ever since radiant. At that moment my *I* saw itself for the first time and forever."

It is curious to contrast this childhood, in the almost cloistered seclusion of the Fichtelgebirge, with Goethe's at cosmopolitan Frankfurt or even with Schiller's at Marbach. Much that came unsought, even to Schiller, Richter had a struggle to come by; much he could never get at all. The place of "Frau Aja" in the development of the child Goethe's fancy was taken at Joditz by the cow-girl. Eagerness to learn Fritz showed in pathetic fulness, but the most diligent search has revealed no trace in these years of that creative imagination with which he was so richly dowered.

When Fritz was thirteen his father received a long-hoped-for promotion to Schwarzenbach, a market town near Hof, then counting some 1,500 inhabitants. The boy's horizon was thus widened, though the family fortunes were far from finding the expected relief. Here Fritz first participated in the Communion and has left a remarkable record of his emotional experience at "becoming a citizen in the city of God." About the same time, as was to be expected, came the boy's earliest strong emotional attachment. Katharina Bärin's first kiss was, for him, "a unique pearl of a minute, such as never had been and never was to be." But, as with the Communion, though the memory remained, the feeling soon passed away.

The father designed Fritz, evidently the most gifted of his sons, for the church, and after some desultory attempts at instruction in Schwarzenbach, sent him in 1779 to the high school at Hof. His entrance examination was brilliant, a last consolation to the father, who died, worn out with the anxieties of accumulating debt, a few weeks later. From his fellow pupils the country lad suffered much till his courage and endurance had compelled respect. His teachers were conscientious but not competent. In the liberally minded Pastor Vogel of near-by Rehau, however, he found a kindred spirit and a helpful friend. In this clergyman's generously opened library the thirsty student made his first acquaintance with the unorthodox thought of his time, with Lessing and Lavater, Goethe and even Helvetius. When in 1781 he left Hof for the University of Leipzig the pastor took leave of the youth with the prophetic words: "You will some time be able to render me a greater service than I have rendered you. Remember this prophecy."

Under such stimulating encouragement Richter began to write. Some little essays, two addresses, and a novel, a happy chance has preserved. The novel is an echo of Goethe's *Werther*, the essays are marked by a clear, straightforward style, an absence of sentimentality or mysticism, and an eagerness for reform that shows the influence of Lessing. Religion is the dominant interest, but the youth is no longer orthodox, indeed he is only conditionally Christian.

With such literary baggage, fortified with personal recommendations and introductions from the Head Master at Hof, with a Certificate of Maturity and a *testimonium paupertatis* that might entitle him to remission of fees and possibly free board, Richter went to Leipzig. From the academic environment and its opportunities he got much, from formal instruction little. He continued to be in the main self-taught and extended his independence in manners and dress perhaps a little beyond the verge of eccentricity. Meantime matters at home were going rapidly from bad to worse. His grandfather had died; the inheritance had been largely consumed in a law-suit. He could not look to his mother for help and did not look to her for counsel. He suffered from cold and stretched his credit for rent and food to the breaking point. But the emptier his stomach the more his head abounded in plans "for writing books to earn money to buy books." He devised a system of spelling reform and could submit to his pastor friend at Rehau in 1782 a little sheaf of essays on various aspects of Folly, the student being now of an age when, like Iago, he was "nothing if not critical." Later these papers seemed to him little better than school exercises, but they gave a promise soon to be redeemed in *Greenland Law-Suits*, his first volume to find a publisher. These satirical sketches, printed early in 1783, were followed later in that year by another series, but both had to wait 38 years for a second edition, much mellowed in revision—not altogether to its profit.

The point of the *Law-Suits* is directed especially against theologians and the nobility. Richter's uncompromising fierceness suggests youthful hunger almost as much as study of Swift. But Lessing,

had he lived to read their stinging epigrams, would have recognized in Richter the promise of a successor not unworthy to carry the biting acid of the *Disowning Letter* over to the hand of Heine.

The *Law-Suits* proved too bitter for the public taste and it was seven years before their author found another publisher. Meanwhile Richter was leading a precarious existence, writing for magazines at starvation prices, and persevering in an indefatigable search for some one to undertake his next book, *Selections from the Papers of the Devil*. A love affair with the daughter of a minor official which she, at least, took seriously, interrupted his studies at Leipzig even before the insistence of creditors compelled him to a clandestine flight. This was in 1784. Then he shared for a time his mother's poverty at Hof and from 1786 to 1789 was tutor in the house of Oerthel, a parvenu Commercial-Counsellor in Töpen. This experience he was to turn to good account in *Levana* and in his first novel, *The Invisible Lodge*, in which the unsympathetic figure of Röper is undoubtedly meant to present the not very gracious personality of the Kommerzienrat.

To this period belongs a collection of *Aphorisms* whose bright wit reveals deep reflection. They show a maturing mind, keen insight, livelier and wider sympathies. The *Devil's Papers*, published in 1789, when Richter, after a few months at Hof, was about to become tutor to the children of three friendly families in Schwarzenbach, confirm the impression of progress. In his new field Richter had great freedom to develop his ideas of education as distinct from inculcation. Rousseau was in the main his guide, and his success in stimulating childish initiative through varied and ingenious pedagogical experiments seems to have been really remarkable.

Quite as remarkable and much more disquieting were the ideas about friendship and love which Richter now began to develop under the stimulating influence of a group of young ladies at Hof. In a note book of this time he writes: "Prize question for the Erotic Academy: How far may friendship toward women go and what is the difference between it and love?" That Richter called this circle his "erotic academy" is significant. He was ever, in such relations, as alert to observe as he was keen to sympathize and permitted himself an astonishing variety of quickly changing and even simultaneous experiments, both at Hof and later in the aristocratic circles that were presently to open to him. In his theory, which finds fullest expression in *Hesperus*, love was to be wholly platonic. If the first kiss did not end it, the second surely would. "I do not seek," he says, "the fairest face but the fairest heart. I can overlook all spots on that, but none on this." "He does not love who *sees* his beloved, but he who *thinks* her." That is the theory. The practice was a little different. It shows Richter at Hof exchanging fine-spun sentiments on God, immortality and soul-affinity with some half dozen young women to the perturbation of their spirits, in a transcendental atmosphere of sentiment, arousing but never fulfilling the expectation of a formal betrothal. That Jean Paul was capable of inspiring love of the common sort is abundantly attested by his correspondence. Perhaps no man ever had so many women of education and social position "throw themselves" at him; but that he was capable of returning such love in kind does not appear from acts or letters at this time, or, save perhaps for the first years of his married life, at any later period.

The immediate effect of the bright hours at Hof on Richter as a writer was wholly beneficent. *Mr. Florian Fülbel's Journey* and *Bailiff Josuah Freudel's Complaint Bible* show a new geniality in the personification of amusing foibles. And with these was a real little masterpiece, *Life of the Contented Schoolmaster Maria Wuz*, which alone, said the Berlin critic Moritz, might suffice to make its author immortal. In this delicious pedagogical idyl, written in December, 1790, the humor is sound, healthy, thoroughly German and characteristic of Richter at his best. It seems as though one of the great Dutch painters were guiding the pen, revealing the beauty of common things and showing the true charm of quiet domesticity. Richter's *Contented Schoolmaster* lacked much in grace of form, but it revealed unguessed resources in the German language, it showed democratic sympathies more genuine than Rousseau's, it gave the promise of a new pedagogy and a fruitful esthetic; above all it bore the unmistakable mint-mark of genius.

Wuz won cordial recognition from the critics. With the general public it was for the time overshadowed by the success of a more ambitious effort, Richter's first novel, *The Invisible Lodge*. This fanciful tale of an idealized freemasonry is a study of the effects in after life of a secluded education. Though written in the year of the storming of the Tuileries it shows the prose-poet of the Fichtelgebirge as yet untouched by the political convulsions of the time. The *Lodge*, though involved in plot and reaching an empty conclusion, yet appealed very strongly to the Germans of 1793 by its descriptions of nature and its sentimentalized emotion. It was truly of its time. Men and especially women liked then, better than they do now, to read how "the angel who loves the earth brought the most holy lips of the pair together in an inextinguishable kiss, and a seraph entered into their beating hearts and gave them the flames of a supernal love." Of greater present interest than the heartbeats of hero or heroine are the minor characters of the story, presenting genially the various types of humor or studies from life made in the "erotic academy" or in the families of Richter's pupils. The despotic spendthrift, the Margrave of Bayreuth, has also his niche, or rather pillory, in the story. Notable, too, is the tendency, later more marked, to contrast the inconsiderate harshness of men with the patient humility of women. Encouraged by Moritz, who declared the book "better than Goethe," Richter for the first time signed his work "Jean Paul." He was well paid for it and had no further serious financial cares.

Before the *Lodge* was out of press Jean Paul had begun *Hesperus, or 45 Dog-post-days*, which magnified the merits of the earlier novel but also exaggerated its defects. Wanton eccentricity was given fuller play, formlessness seemed cultivated as an art. Digressions interrupt the narrative with slender excuse, or with none; there is, as with the English Sterne, an obtrusion of the author's personality; the style seems as wilfully crude as the mastery in word-building and word-painting is astonishing. On the other hand there is both greater variety and greater distinction in the characters, a more developed fabulation and a wonderful deepening and refinement of emotional description. *Werther* was not yet out of fashion and lovers of his "Sorrows" found in *Hesperus* a book after their hearts. It established the fame of Jean Paul for his generation. It brought women by swarms to his feet. They were not discouraged there. It was his platonic rule "never to sacrifice one love to another," but to experiment with "simultaneous love," "*tutti* love," a "general warmth" of universal affection. Intellectually awakened women were attracted possibly as much by Richter's knowledge of their feelings as by the fascination of his personality. *Hesperus* lays bare many little wiles dear to feminine hearts, and contains some keenly sympathetic satire on German housewifery.

While still at work on *Hesperus* Jean Paul returned to his mother's house at Hof. "Richter's study and sitting-room offered about this time," says Doering, his first biographer, "a true and beautiful picture of his simple yet noble mind, which took in both high and low. While his mother bustled about the housework at fire or table he sat in a corner of the same room at a plain writing-desk with few or no books at hand, but only one or two drawers with excerpts and manuscripts. * * * Pigeons fluttered in and out of the chamber."

At Hof, Jean Paul continued to teach with originality and much success until 1796, when an invitation from Charlotte von Kalb to visit Weimar brought him new interests and connections. Meanwhile, having finished *Hesperus* in July, 1794, he began work immediately on the genial *Life of Quintus Fixlein, Based on Fifteen Little Boxes of Memoranda*, an idyl, like *Wuz*, of the schoolhouse and the parsonage, reflecting Richter's pedagogical interests and much of his personal experience. Its satire of philological pedantry has not yet lost pertinence or pungency. Quintus, ambitious of authorship, proposes to himself a catalogued interpretation of misprints in German books and other tasks hardly less laboriously futile. His creator treats him with unfailing good humor and "the consciousness of a kindred folly." Fixlein is the archetypal pedant. The very heart of humor is in the account of the commencement exercises at his school. His little childishnesses are delightfully set forth; so, too, is his awe of aristocracy. He always took off his hat before the windows of the manor house, even if he saw no one there. The crown of it all is The Wedding. The bridal pair's visit

to the graves of by-gone loves is a gem of fantasy. But behind all the humor and satire must not be forgotten, in view of what was to follow, the undercurrent of courageous democratic protest which finds its keenest expression in the "Free Note" to Chapter Six. *Fixlein* appeared in 1796.

Richter's next story, the unfinished *Biographical Recreations under the Cranium of a Giantess*, sprang immediately from a visit to Bayreuth in 1794 and his first introduction to aristocracy. Its chief interest is in the enthusiastic welcome it extends to the French Revolution. Intrinsically more important is the *Flower, Fruit and Thorn Pieces* which crowded the other subject from his mind and tells with much idyllic charm of "the marriage, life, death and wedding of F. H. Siebenkäs, Advocate of the Poor" (1796-7).

In 1796, at the suggestion of the gifted, emancipated and ill-starred Charlotte von Kalb, Jean Paul visited Weimar, already a Mecca of literary pilgrimage and the centre of neo-classicism. There, those who, like Herder, were jealous of Goethe, and those who, like Frau von Stein, were estranged from him, received the new light with enthusiasm—others with some reserve. Goethe and Schiller, who were seeking to blend the classical with the German spirit, demurred to the vagaries of Jean Paul's unquestioned genius. His own account of his visit to "the rock-bound Schiller" and to Goethe's "palatial hall" are precious commonplaces of the histories of literature. There were sides of Goethe's universal genius to which Richter felt akin, but he was quite ready to listen to Herder's warning against his townsman's "unrouged" infidelity, which had become socially more objectionable since Goethe's union with Christiane Vulpius, and Jean Paul presently returned to Hof, carrying with him the heart of Charlotte von Kalb, an unprized and somewhat embarrassing possession. He wished no heroine; for he was no hero, as he remarked dryly, somewhat later, when Charlotte had become the first of many "beautiful souls" in confusion of spirit about their heart's desire.

In 1797 the death of Jean Paul's mother dissolved home bonds and he soon left Hof forever, though still for a time maintaining diligent correspondence with the "erotic academy" as well as with new and more aristocratic "daughters of the Storm and Stress." The writings of this period are unimportant, some of them unworthy. Jean Paul was for a time in Leipzig and in Dresden. In October, 1798, he was again in Weimar, which, in the sunshine of Herder's praise, seemed at first his "Canaan," though he soon felt himself out of tune with Duchess Amalia's literary court. To this time belongs a curious *Conjectural Biography*, a pretty idyl of an ideal courtship and marriage as his fancy now painted it for himself. Presently he was moved to essay the realization of this ideal and was for a time betrothed to Karoline von Feuchtersleben, her aristocratic connections being partially reconciled to the *mésalliance* by Richter's appointment as Legationsrat. He begins already to look forward, a little ruefully, to the time when his heart shall be "an extinct marriage-crater," and after a visit to Berlin, where he basked in the smiles of Queen Luise, he was again betrothed, this time to the less intellectually gifted, but as devoted and better dowered Karoline Mayer, whom he married in 1801. He was then in his thirty-eighth year.

Richter's marriage is cardinal in his career. Some imaginative work he was still to do, but the dominant interests were hereafter to be in education and in political action. In his own picturesque language, hitherto his quest had been for the golden fleece of womanhood, hereafter it was to be for a crusade of men. The change had been already foreshadowed in 1799 by his stirring paper *On Charlotte Corday* (published in 1801).

Titan, which Jean Paul regarded as his "principal work and most complete creation," had been in his mind since 1792. It was begun in 1797 and finished, soon after his betrothal, in 1800. In this novel the thought of God and immortality is offered as a solution of all problems of nature and society. *Titan* is human will in contest with the divine harmony. The maturing Richter has come to see that idealism in thought and feeling must be balanced by realism in action if the thinker is to bear his part in the work of the world. The novel naturally falls far short of realizing its vast design. Once more the parts are more than the whole. Some descriptive passages are very remarkable and the minor characters, notably Roquairol, the Mephistophelean Lovelace, are more interesting than the hero or

the heroine. The unfinished *Wild Oats* of 1804, follows a somewhat similar design. The story of Walt and Vult, twin brothers, Love and Knowledge, offers a study in contrasts between the dreamy and the practical, with much self-revelation of the antinomy in the author's own nature. There is something here to recall his early satires, much more to suggest Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*.

While *Wild Oats* was in the making, Richter with his young wife and presently their first daughter, Emma, was making a sort of triumphal progress among the court towns of Germany. He received about this time from Prince Dalberg a pension, afterward continued by the King of Bavaria. In 1804 the family settled in Bayreuth, which was to remain Richter's not always happy home till his death in 1825.

The move to Bayreuth was marked by the appearance of *Introduction to Esthetics*, a book that, even in remaining a fragment, shows the parting of the ways. Under its frolicsome exuberance there is keen analysis, a fine nobility of temper, and abundant subtle observation. The philosophy was Herder's, and a glowing eulogy of him closes the study. Its most original and perhaps most valuable section contains a shrewd discrimination of the varieties of humor, and ends with a brilliant praise of wit, as though in a recapitulating review of Richter's own most distinctive contribution to German literature.

The first fruit to ripen at the Bayreuth home was *Levana*, finished in October, 1806, just as Napoleon was crushing the power of Prussia at Jena. Though disconnected and unsystematic *Levana* has been for three generations a true yeast of pedagogical ideas, especially in regard to the education of women and their social position in Germany. Against the ignorance of the then existing conditions Jean Paul raised eloquent and indignant protest. "Your teachers, your companions, even your parents," he exclaims, "trample and crush the little flowers you shelter and cherish. * * * Your hands are used more than your heads. They let you play, but only with your fans. Nothing is pardoned you, least of all a heart." What *Levana* says of the use and abuse of philology and about the study of history as a preparation for political action is no less significant. Goethe, who had been reticent of praise in regard to the novels, found in *Levana* "the boldest virtues without the least excess."

From the education of children for life Richter turned naturally to the education of his fellow Germans for citizenship. It was a time of national crisis. Already in 1805 he had published a *Little Book of Freedom*, in protest against the censorship of books. Now to his countrymen, oppressed by Napoleon, he addressed at intervals from 1808 to 1810, a *Peace Sermon, Twilight Thoughts for Germany* and *After Twilight*. Then, as the fires of Moscow heralded a new day, came *Butterflies of the Dawn*; and when the War of Liberation was over and the German rulers had proved false to their promises, these "Butterflies" were expanded and transformed, in 1817, into *Political Fast-Sermons for Germany's Martyr-Week*, in which Richter denounced the princes for their faithlessness as boldly as he had done the sycophants of Bonaparte.

Most noteworthy of the minor writings of this period is *Dr. Katzenberger's Journey to the Baths*, published in 1809. The effect of this rollicking satire on affectation and estheticism was to arouse a more manly spirit in the nation and so it helped to prepare for the way of liberation. The patriotic youth of Germany now began to speak and think of Richter as Jean Paul the Unique. In the years that follow Waterloo every little journey that Richter took was made the occasion of public receptions and festivities. Meanwhile life in the Bayreuth home grew somewhat strained. Both partners might well have heeded *Levana's* counsel that "Men should show more love, women more common sense."

Of Richter's last decade two books only call for notice here, *Truth about Jean Paul's Life*, a fragment of autobiography written in 1819, and *The Comet*, a novel, also unfinished, published at intervals from 1820 to 1822. Hitherto, said Richter of *The Comet*, he had paid too great deference to rule, "like a child born curled and forthwith stretched on a swathing cushion." Now, in his maturity, he will, he says, let himself go; and a wild tale he makes of it, exuberant in fancy, rich in comedy, unbridled in humor. The Autobiography extends only to Schwarzenbach and his confirmation, but of all his writings it has perhaps the greatest charm.

Richter's last years were clouded by disease, mental and physical, and by the death of his son Max. A few weeks before his own death he arranged for an edition of his complete works, for which he was to receive 35,000 thaler ($26,000). For this he sought a special privilege, copyright being then very imperfect in Germany, on the ground that in all his works not one line could be found to offend religion or virtue.

He died on November 14, 1825. On the evening of November 17 was the funeral. Civil and military, state and city officials took part in it. On the bier was borne the unfinished manuscript of *Selina*, an essay on immortality. Sixty students with lighted torches escorted the procession. Other students bore, displayed, *Levana* and the *Introduction to Esthetics*.

Sixteen years after Richter's death the King of Bavaria erected a statue to him in Bayreuth. But his most enduring monument had already long been raised in the funeral oration by Ludwig Börne at Frankfurt. "A Star has set," said the orator, "and the eye of this century will close before it rises again, for bright genius moves in wide orbits and our distant descendants will be first again to bid glad welcome to that from which their fathers have taken sad leave. * * * We shall mourn for him whom we have lost and for those others who have not lost him, for he has not lived for all. Yet a time will come when he shall be born for all and all will lament him. But he will stand patient on the threshold of the twentieth century and wait smiling till his creeping people shall come to join him."

QUINTUS FIXLEIN'S WEDDING[1]

From *The Life of Quintus Fixlein* (1796)
By JEAN PAUL
TRANSLATED BY T. CARLYLE

At the sound of the morning prayer-bell, the bridegroom—for the din of preparation was disturbing his quiet orison—went out into the churchyard, which (as in many other places) together with the church, lay round his mansion like a court. Here, on the moist green, over whose closed flowers the churchyard wall was still spreading broad shadows, did his spirit cool itself from the warm dreams of Earth: here, where the white flat grave-stone of his Teacher lay before him like the fallen-in door of the Janus-temple of life, or like the windward side of the narrow house, turned toward the tempests of the world: here, where the little shrunk metallic door on the grated cross of his father uttered to him the inscriptions of death, and the year when his parent departed, and all the admonitions and mementos, graven on the lead—there, I say, his mood grew softer and more solemn; and he now lifted up by heart his morning prayer, which usually he read, and entreated God to bless him in his office, and to spare his mother's life, and to look with favor and acceptance on the purpose of today. Then, over the graves, he walked into his fenceless little angular flower-garden; and here, composed and confident in the divine keeping, he pressed the stalks of his tulips deeper into the mellow earth.

But on returning to the house, he was met on all hands by the bell-ringing and the Janizary-music of wedding-gladness; the marriage-guests had all thrown off their nightcaps, and were drinking diligently; there was a clattering, a cooking, a frizzling; tea-services, coffee-services, and warm beer-services, were advancing in succession; and plates full of bride-cakes were going round like potter's frames or cistern-wheels. The Schoolmaster, with three young lads, was heard rehearsing from his own house an *Arioso*, with which, so soon as they were perfect, he purposed to surprise his clerical superior. But now rushed all the arms of the foaming joy-streams into one, when the sky-queen besprinkled with blossoms the bride, descended upon Earth in her timid joy, full of quivering, humble love; when the bells began; when the procession-column set forth with the whole village round and before it; when the organ, the congregation, the officiating priest, and the sparrows on the trees of the church-window, struck louder and louder their rolling peals on the drum of the jubilee-festival.

* * * The heart of the singing bridegroom was like to leap from its place for joy "that on his bridal-day it was all so respectable and grand." Not till the marriage benediction could he pray a little.

Still worse and louder grew the business during dinner, when pastry-work and march-pane-devices were brought forward, when glasses, and slain fishes (laid under the napkins to frighten the guests) went round, and when the guests rose and themselves went round, and, at length, danced round: for they had instrumental music from the city there.

One minute handed over to the other the sugar-bowl and bottle-case of joy: the guests heard and saw less and less, and the villagers began to see and hear more and more, and toward night they penetrated like a wedge into the open door—nay, two youths ventured even in the middle of the parsonage-court to mount a plank over a beam and commence seesawing. Out of doors, the gleaming vapor of the departed sun was encircling the earth, the evening-star was glittering over parsonage and churchyard; no one heeded it.

However, about nine o'clock, when the marriage-guests had well nigh forgotten the marriage-pair, and were drinking or dancing along for their own behoof; when poor mortals, in this sunshine of Fate, like fishes in the sunshine of the sky, were leaping up from their wet cold element; and when

[1] Permission Porter & Coates, Philadelphia.

the bridegroom under the star of happiness and love, casting like a comet its long train of radiance over all his heaven, had in secret pressed to his joy-filled breast his bride and his mother—then did he lock a slice of wedding-bread privily into a press, in the old superstitious belief that this residue secured continuance of bread for the whole marriage. As he returned, with greater love for the sole partner of his life, she herself met him with his mother, to deliver him in private the bridal-nightgown and bridal-shirt, as is the ancient usage. Many a countenance grows pale in violent emotions, even of joy. Thiennette's wax-face was bleaching still whiter under the sunbeams of Happiness. O, never fall, thou lily of Heaven, and may four springs instead of four seasons open and shut thy flower-bells to the sun! All the arms of his soul, as he floated on the sea of joy, were quivering to clasp the soft warm heart of his beloved, to encircle it gently and fast, and draw it to his own.

He led her from the crowded dancing-room into the cool evening. Why does the evening, does the night, put warmer love in our hearts? Is it the nightly pressure of helplessness or is it the exalting separation from the turmoil of life—that veiling of the world, in which for the soul nothing more remains but souls;—is it therefore that the letters in which the loved name stands written on our spirit appear, like phosphorus-writing, by night, *in fire*, while by day in their *cloudy* traces they but smoke?

He walked with his bride into the Castle garden: she hastened quickly through the Castle, and past its servants' hall, where the fair flowers of her young life had been crushed broad and dry, under a long dreary pressure; and her soul expanded and breathed in the free open garden, on whose flowery soil destiny had cast forth the first seeds of the blossoms which today were gladdening her existence. Still Eden! Green flower-chequered *chiaroscuro*! The moon is sleeping under ground like a dead one; but beyond the garden the sun's red evening-clouds have fallen down like rose-leaves; and the evening-star, the brideman of the sun, hovers, like a glancing butterfly, above the rosy red, and, modest as a bride, deprives no single starlet of its light.

The wandering pair arrived at the old gardener's hut, now standing locked and dumb, with dark windows in the light garden, like a fragment of the Past surviving in the Present. Bared twigs of trees were folding, with clammy half-formed leaves, over the thick intertwisted tangles of the bushes. The Spring was standing, like a conqueror, with Winter at his feet. In the blue pond, now bloodless, a dusky evening sky lay hollowed out, and the gushing waters were moistening the flower-beds. The silver sparks of stars were rising on the altar of the East, and, falling down, were extinguished in the red sea of the West.

The wind whirred, like a night-bird, louder through the trees, and gave tones to the acacia-grove; and the tones called to the pair who had first become happy within it: "Enter, new mortal pair, and think of what is past, and of my withering and your own; be holy as Eternity, and weep not only for joy, but for gratitude also!" And the wet-eyed bridegroom led his wet-eyed bride under the blossoms, and laid his soul, like a flower, on her heart, and said: "Best Thiennette, I am unspeakably happy, and would say much, but cannot! Ah, thou Dearest, we will live like angels, like children together! Surely I will do all that is good to thee; two years ago I had nothing, no, nothing; ah, it is through thee, best love, that I am happy. I call thee Thou, now, thou dear good soul!" She drew him closer to her, and said, though without kissing him: "Call me Thou always, Dearest!"

And as they stept forth again from the sacred grove into the magic-dusky garden, he took off his hat; first, that he might internally thank God, and, secondly, because he wished to look into this fairest evening sky.

They reached the blazing, rustling, marriage-house, but their softened hearts sought stillness; and a foreign touch, as in the blossoming vine, would have disturbed the flower-nuptials of their souls. They turned rather, and winded up into the churchyard to preserve their mood. Majestic on the groves and mountains stood the Night before man's heart, and made that also great. Over the *white* steeple-obelisk the sky rested *bluer*, and *darker*; and, behind it, wavered the withered summit of the May-pole with faded flag. The son noticed his father's grave, on which the wind was opening and shutting, with harsh noise, the little door of the metal cross, to let the year of his death be read on

the brass plate within. As an overpowering sadness seized his heart with violent streams of tears, and drove him to the sunk hillock, he led his bride to the grave, and said: "Here sleeps he, my good father; in his thirty-second year he was carried hither to his long rest. O thou good, dear father, couldst thou today but see the happiness of thy son, like my mother! But thy eyes are empty, and thy breast is full of ashes, and thou seest us not." He was silent. The bride wept aloud; she saw the moldering coffins of her parents open, and the two dead arise and look round for their daughter, who had stayed so long behind them, forsaken on the earth. She fell upon his heart, and faltered: "O beloved, I have neither father nor mother. Do not forsake me!"

O thou who hast still a father and a mother, thank God for it, on the day when thy soul is full of joyful tears and needs a bosom whereon to shed them.

And with this embracing at a father's grave, let this day of joy be holily concluded.

ROME[2]

From *Titan* (1800)
By JEAN PAUL
TRANSLATED BY C. T. BROOKS

Half an hour after the earthquake the heavens swathed themselves in seas, and dashed them down in masses and in torrents. The naked *Campagna* and heath were covered with the mantle of rain. Gaspard was silent, the heavens black; the great thought stood alone in Albano that he was hastening on toward the bloody scaffold and the throne-scaffolding of humanity, the heart of a cold, dead heathen-world, the eternal Rome; and when he heard, on the *Ponte Molle*, that he was now going across the Tiber, then was it to him as if the past had risen from the dead, as if the stream of time ran backward and bore him with it; under the streams of heaven he heard the seven old mountain-streams, rushing and roaring, which once came down from Rome's hills, and, with seven arms, uphove the world from its foundations. At length the constellation of the mountain city of God, that stood so broad before him, opened out into distant nights; cities, with scattered lights, lay up and down, and the bells (which to his ear were alarm-bells) sounded out the fourth hour;[3] when the carriage rolled through the triumphal gate of the city, the *Porta del Popolo*, then the moon rent her black heavens, and poured down out of the cleft clouds the splendor of a whole sky. There stood the Egyptian Obelisk of the gateway, high as the clouds, in the night, and three streets ran gleaming apart. "So," (said Albano to himself, as they passed through the long *Corso* to the tenth ward) "thou art veritably in the camp of the God of war—here is where he grasped the hilt of the monstrous war-sword, and with the point made the three wounds in three quarters of the world!" Rain and splendor gushed through the vast, broad streets; occasionally he passed suddenly along by gardens, and into broad city-deserts and market-places of the past. The rolling of the carriages amidst the rush and roar of the rain resembled the thunder whose days were once holy to this heroic city, like the thundering heaven to the thundering earth; muffled-up forms, with little lights, stole through the dark streets; often there stood a long palace with colonnades in the light of the moon, often a solitary gray column, often a single high fir tree, or a statue behind cypresses. Once, when there was neither rain nor moonshine, the carriage went round the corner of a large house, on whose roof a tall, blooming virgin, with an uplooking child on her arm, herself directed a little hand-light, now toward a white statue, now toward the child, and so, alternately, illuminated each. This friendly group made its way to the very centre of his soul, now so highly exalted, and brought with it, to him, many a recollection; particularly was a Roman child to him a wholly new and mighty idea.

They alighted at last at the Prince *di Lauria's*—Gaspard's father-in-law and old friend. * * * Albano, dissatisfied with all, kept his inspiration sacrificing to the unearthly gods of the past round about him, after the old fashion, namely, with silence. Well might he and could he have discussed, but otherwise, namely in odes, with the whole man, with streams which mount and grow upward. He looked even more and more longingly out of the window at the moon in the pure rain-blue, and at single columns of the Forum; out of doors there gleamed for him the greatest world. At last he rose up, indignant and impatient, and stole down into the glimmering glory, and stepped before the Forum; but the moonlit night, that decoration-painter, which works with irregular strokes, made almost the very stage of the scene irrecognizable to him.

What a dreary, broad plain, loftily encompassed with ruins, gardens and temples, covered with prostrate capitals of columns, and with single, upright pillars, and with trees and a dumb wilderness!

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[2] Permission Porter & Coates, Philadelphia.

[3] Ten o'clock.

The heaped-up ashes out of the emptied urn of Time! And the potsherds of a great world flung around! He passed by three temple columns,[4] which the earth had drawn down into itself even to the breast, and along through the broad triumphal arch of Septimius Severus; on the right, stood a chain of columns without their temple; on the left, attached to a Christian church, the colonnade of an ancient heathen temple, deep sunken into the sediment of time; at last the triumphal arch of Titus, and before it, in the middle of the woody wilderness, a fountain gushing into a granite basin.

He went up to this fountain, in order to survey the plain out of which the thunder months of the earth once arose; but he went along as over a burnt-out sun, hung round with dark, dead earths. "O Man, O the dreams of Man!" something within him unceasingly cried. He stood on the granite margin, turning toward the Coliseum, whose mountain ridges of wall stood high in the moonlight, with the deep gaps which had been hewn in them by the scythe of Time. Sharply stood the rent and ragged arches of Nero's golden house close by, like murderous cutlasses. The Palatine Hill lay full of green gardens, and, in crumbling temple-roofs, the blooming death-garland of ivy was gnawing, and living ranunculi still glowed around sunken capitals. The fountain murmured babblingly and forever, and the stars gazed steadfastly down, with transitory rays, upon the still battlefield over which the winter of time had passed without bringing after it a spring; the fiery soul of the world had flown up, and the cold, crumbling giant lay around; torn asunder were the gigantic spokes of the main-wheel, which once the very stream of ages drove. And in addition to all this, the moon shed down her light like eating silver-water upon the naked columns, and would fain have dissolved the Coliseum and the temples and all into their own shadows!

Then Albano stretched out his arm into the air, as if he were giving an embrace and flowing away as in the arms of a stream, and exclaimed, "O ye mighty shades, ye, who once strove and lived here, ye are looking down from Heaven, but scornfully, not sadly, for your great fatherland has died and gone after you! Ah, had I, on the insignificant earth, full of old eternity which you have made great, only done one action worthy of you! Then were it sweet to me and legitimate to open my heart by a wound, and to mix earthly blood with the hallowed soil, and, out of the world of graves, to hasten away to you, eternal and immortal ones! But I am not worthy of it!"

At this moment there came suddenly along up the *Via Sacra* a tall man, deeply enveloped in a mantle, who drew near the fountain without looking round, threw down his hat, and held a coal-black, curly, almost perpendicular, hindhead under the stream of water. But hardly had he, turning upward, caught a glimpse of the profile of Albano, absorbed in his fancies, when he started up, all dripping, stared at the count, fell into an amazement, threw his arms high into the air, and said, "*Amico*!" Albano looked at him. The stranger said, "Albano!" "My Dian!" cried Albano; they clasped each other passionately and wept for love.

Dian could not comprehend it at all; he said in Italian: "But it surely cannot be you; you look old." He thought he was speaking German all the time, till he heard Albano answer in Italian. Both gave and received only questions. Albano found the architect merely browner, but there was the lightning of the eyes and every faculty in its old glory. With three words he related to him the journey, and who the company were. "How does Rome strike you?" asked Dian, pleasantly. "As life does," replied Albano, very seriously, "it makes me too soft and too hard." "I recognize here absolutely nothing at all," he continued; "do those columns belong to the magnificent temple of Peace?" "No," said Dian, "to the temple of Concord; of the other there stands yonder nothing but the vault." "Where is Saturn's temple?" asked Albano. "Buried in St. Adrian's church," said Dian, and added hastily: "Close by stand the ten columns of Antonine's temple; over beyond there the baths of Titus; behind us the Palatine hill; and so on. Now tell me—!"

They walked up and down the Forum, between the arches of Titus and Severus. Albano (being near the teacher who, in the days of childhood, had so often conducted him hitherward) was yet

[4] Of Jupiter Tonans.

full of the stream which had swept over the world, and the all-covering water sunk but slowly. He went on and said: "Today, when he beheld the Obelisk, the soft, tender brightness of the moon had seemed to him eminently unbecoming for the giant city; he would rather have seen a sun blazing on its broad banner; but now the moon was the proper funeral-torch beside the dead Alexander, who, at a touch, collapses into a handful of dust." "The artist does not get far with feelings of this kind," said Dian, "he must look upon everlasting beauties on the right hand and on the left." "Where," Albano went on asking, "is the old lake of Curtius—the Rostrum—the pila Horatia—the temple of Vesta—of Venus, and of all those solitary columns?" "And where is the marble Forum itself?" said Dian; "it lies thirty span deep below our feet." "Where is the great, free people, the senate of kings, the voice of the orators, the procession to the Capitol? Buried under the mountain of potsherds! O Dian, how can a man who loses a father, a beloved, in Rome shed a single tear or look round him with consternation, when he comes out here before this battle-field of time and looks into the charnel-house of the nations? Dian, one would wish here an iron heart, for fate has an iron hand!"

Dian, who nowhere stayed more reluctantly than upon such tragic cliffs hanging over, as it were, into the sea of eternity, almost leaped off from them with a joke; like the Greeks, he blended dances with tragedy! "Many a thing is preserved here, friend!" said he; "in Adrian's church yonder they will still show you the bones of the three men that walked in the fire." "That is just the frightful play of destiny," replied Albano, "to occupy the heights of the mighty ancients with monks shorn down into slaves."

"The stream of time drives new wheels," said Dian "yonder lies Raphael twice buried.[5]" * * * And so they climbed silently and speedily over rubbish and torsos of columns, and neither gave heed to the mighty emotion of the other.

Rome, like the Creation, is an entire wonder, which gradually dismembers itself into new wonders, the Coliseum, the Pantheon, St. Peter's church, Raphael, etc.

With the passage through the church of St. Peter, the knight began the noble course through Immortality. The Princess let herself, by the tie of Art, be bound to the circle of the men. As Albano was more smitten with edifices than with any other work of man, so did he see from afar, with holy heart, the long mountain-chain of Art, which again bore upon itself hills, so did he stop before the plain, around which the enormous colonnades run like Corsos, bearing a people of statues. In the centre shoots up the Obelisk, and on its right and left an eternal fountain, and from the lofty steps the proud Church of the world, inwardly filled with churches, rearing upon itself a temple toward Heaven, looks down upon the earth. But how wonderfully, as they drew near, had its columns and its rocky wall mounted up and flown away from the vision!

He entered the magic church, which gave the world blessings, curses, kings and popes, with the consciousness, that, like the world-edifice, it was continually enlarging and receding more and more the longer one remained in it. They went up to two children of white marble who held an incense-muscle-shell of yellow marble; the children grew by nearness till they were giants. At length they stood at the main altar and its hundred perpetual lamps. What a place! Above them the heaven's arch of the dome, resting on four inner towers; around them an over-arched city of four streets in which stood churches. The temple became greatest by walking in it; and, when they passed round one column, there stood a new one before them, and holy giants gazed earnestly down.

Here was the youth's large heart, after so long a time, filled. "In no art," said he to his father, "is the soul so mightily possessed with the sublime as in architecture; in every other the giant stands within and in the depths of the soul, but here he stands out of and close before it." Dian, to whom all images were more clear than abstract ideas, said he was perfectly right. Fraischdörfer replied, "The sublime also here lies only in the brain, for the whole church stands, after all, in something greater, namely, in Rome, and under the heavens; in the presence of which latter we certainly should

[5] The body in the Pantheon, the head in Saint Luke's church.

not feel anything." He also complained that "the place for the sublime in his head was very much narrowed by the innumerable volutes and monuments which the temple shut up therein at the same time with itself." Gaspard, taking everything in a large sense, remarked, "When the sublime once really appears, it then, by its very nature, absorbs and annihilates all little circumstantial ornaments." He adduced as evidence the tower of the Minster,[6] and Nature itself, which is not made smaller by its grasses and villages.

Among so many connoisseurs of art, the Princess enjoyed in silence.

The ascent of the dome Gaspard recommended to defer to a dry and cloudless day, in order that they might behold the queen of the world, Rome, upon and from the proper throne; he therefore proposed, very zealously, the visiting of the Pantheon, because he was eager to let this follow immediately after the impression of Saint Peter's church. They went thither. How simply and grandly the hall opens! Eight yellow columns sustain its brow, and majestically as the head of the Homeric Jupiter its temple arches itself. It is the Rotunda or Pantheon. "O the pigmies," cried Albano, "who would fain give us new temples! Raise the old ones higher out of the rubbish, and then you have built enough!"[7] They stepped in. There rose round about them a holy, simple, free world-structure, with its heaven-arches soaring and striving upward, an Odeum of the tones of the Sphere-music, a world in the world! And overhead[8] the eye-socket of the light and of the sky gleamed down, and the distant rack of clouds seemed to touch the lofty arch over which it shot along! And round about them stood nothing but the temple-bearers, the columns! The temple of *all* gods endured and concealed the diminutive altars of the later ones.

Gaspard questioned Albano about his impressions. He said he preferred the larger church of Saint Peter. The knight approved, and said that youth, like nations, always more easily found and better appreciated the sublime than the beautiful, and that the spirit of the young man ripened from strong to beautiful, as the body of the same ripens from the beautiful into the strong; however, he himself preferred the Pantheon. "How could the moderns," said the Counsellor of Arts, Fraischdörfer, "build anything, except some little Bernini-like turrets?" "That is why," said the offended Provincial Architect, Dian (who despised the Counsellor of Arts, because he never made a good figure except in the esthetic hall of judgment as critic, never in the exhibition-hall as painter), "we moderns are, without contradiction, stronger in criticism; though in practice we are, collectively and individually, blockheads." Bouverot remarked that the Corinthian columns might be higher. The Counsellor of Arts said that after all he knew nothing more like this fine hemisphere than a much smaller one, which he had found in Herculaneum molded in ashes, of the bosom of a fair fugitive. The knight laughed, and Albano turned away in disgust and went to the Princess.

He asked her for her opinion about the two temples. "Sophocles here, Shakespeare there; but I comprehend and appreciate Sophocles more easily," she replied, and looked with new eyes into his new countenance. For the supernatural illumination through the zenith of Heaven, not through a hazy horizon, transfigured, in her eyes, the beautiful and excited countenance of the youth; and she took for granted that the saintly halo of the dome must also exalt her form. When he answered her: "Very good! But in Shakespeare, Sophocles also is contained, not, however, Shakespeare in Sophocles—and upon Peter's Church stands Angelo's Rotunda!", just then the lofty cloud, all at once, as by the blow of a hand out of the ether, broke in two, and the ravished Sun, like the eye of a Venus floating through her ancient heavens—for she once stood even here—looked mildly in from the upper deep; then a holy radiance filled the temple, and burned on the porphyry of the pavement, and Albano looked around him in an ecstasy of wonder and delight, and said with low voice: "How transfigured at this moment is everything in this sacred place! Raphael's spirit comes forth from his grave in this noontide hour,

[6] Strassburg.

[7] The hall of the Pantheon seems too low, because a part of its steps is hidden by the rubbish.

[8] This opening in the roof is twenty-seven feet in diameter.

and everything which its reflection touches brightens into godlike splendor!" The Princess looked upon him tenderly, and he lightly laid his hand upon hers, and said, as one vanquished, "Sophocles!"

On the next moonlit evening, Gaspard bespoke torches, in order that the Coliseum, with its giant-circle, might the first time stand in fire before them. The knight would fain have gone around alone with his son, dimly through the dim work, like two spirits of the olden time, but the Princess forced herself upon him, from a too lively wish to share with the noble youth his great moments, and perhaps, in fact, her heart and his own. Women do not sufficiently comprehend that an idea, when it fills and elevates man's mind, shuts it, then, against love, and crowds out persons; whereas with woman all ideas easily become human beings.

They passed over the Forum, by the *Via Sacra*, to the Coliseum, whose lofty, cloven forehead looked down pale under the moonlight. They stood before the gray rock-walls, which reared themselves on four colonnades one above another, and the torchlight shot up into the arches of the arcades, gilding the green shrubbery high overhead, and deep in the earth had the noble monster already buried his feet. They stepped in and ascended the mountain, full of fragments of rock, from one seat of the spectators to another. Gaspard did not venture to the sixth or highest, where the men used to stand, but Albano and the Princess did. Then the youth gazed down over the cliffs, upon the round, green crater of the burnt-out volcano, which once swallowed nine thousand beasts at once, and which quenched itself with human blood. The lurid glare of the torches penetrated into the clefts and caverns, and among the foliage of the ivy and laurel, and among the great shadows of the moon, which, like departed spirits, hovered in caverns. Toward the south, where the streams of centuries and barbarians had stormed in, stood single columns and bare arcades. Temples and three palaces had the giant fed and lined with his limbs, and still, with all his wounds, he looked out livingly into the world.

"What a people!" said Albano. "Here curled the giant snake five times about Christianity. Like a smile of scorn lies the moonlight down below there upon the green arena, where once stood the Colossus of the Sun-god. The star of the north[9] glimmers low through the windows, and the Serpent and the Bear crouch. What a world has gone by!" The Princess answered that "twelve thousand prisoners built this theatre, and that a great many more had bled therein." "O! we too have building prisoners," said he, "but for fortifications; and blood, too, still flows, but with sweat! No, we have no present; the past, without it, must bring forth a future."

The Princess went to break a laurel-twig and pluck a blooming wall-flower. Albano sank away into musing: the autumnal wind of the past swept over the stubble. On this holy eminence he saw the constellations, Rome's green hills, the glimmering city, the Pyramid of Cestius; but all became Past, and on the twelve hills dwelt, as upon graves, the lofty old spirits, and looked sternly into the age, as if they were still its kings and judges.

"This to remember the place and time!" said the approaching Princess, handing him the laurel and the flower. "Thou mighty One! a Coliseum is thy flower-pot; to thee is nothing too great, and nothing too small!" said he, and threw the Princess into considerable confusion, till she observed that he meant not her, but nature. His whole being seemed newly and painfully moved, and, as it were, removed to a distance: he looked down after his father, and went to find him; he looked at him sharply, and spoke of nothing more this evening.

[9] The Pole-star, as well as other northern constellations, stands lower in the south.

THE OPENING OF THE WILL

From the *Flegeljahre* (1804)
By JEAN PAUL
TRANSLATED BY FRANCES H. KING

Since Haslau had been a princely residence no one could remember any event—the birth of the heir apparent excepted—that had been awaited with such curiosity as the opening of the Van der Kabel will. Van der Kabel might have been called the Haslau Croesus—and his life described as a pleasure-making mint, or a washing of gold sand under a golden rain, or in whatever other terms wit could devise. Now, seven distant living relatives of seven distant deceased relatives of Kabel were cherishing some hope of a legacy, because the Croesus had sworn to remember them. These hopes, however, were very faint. No one was especially inclined to trust him, as he not only conducted himself on all occasions in a gruffly moral and unselfish manner—in regard to morality, to be sure, the seven relatives were still beginners—but likewise treated everything so derisively and possessed a heart so full of tricks and surprises that there was no dependence to be placed upon him. The eternal smile hovering around his temples and thick lips, and the mocking falsetto voice, impaired the good impression that might otherwise have been made by his nobly cut face and a pair of large hands, from which New Year's presents, benefit performances, and gratuities were continually falling. Wherefore the birds of passage proclaimed the man, this human mountain-ash in which they nested and of whose berries they ate, to be in reality a dangerous trap; and they seemed hardly able to see the visible berries for the invisible snares.

Between two attacks of apoplexy he made his will and deposited it with the magistrate. Though half dead when, he gave over the certificate to the seven presumptive heirs he said in his old tone of voice that he did not wish this token of his decease to cause dejection to mature men whom he would much rather think of as laughing than as weeping heirs. And only one of them, the coldly ironical Police-Inspector Harprecht, answered the smilingly ironical Croesus: "It was not in their power to determine the extent of their collective sympathy in such a loss."

At last the seven heirs appeared with their certificate at the city hall. These were the Consistorial Councilor Glanz, the Police Inspector, the Court-Agent Neupeter, the Attorney of the Royal Treasury Knol, the Bookseller Passvogel, the Preacher-at-Early-Service Flachs, and Herr Flitte from Alsace. They duly and properly requested of the magistrates the charter consigned to the latter by the late Kabel, and asked for the opening of the will. The chief executor of the will was the officiating Burgomaster in person, the under-executors were the Municipal-Councilors. Presently the charter and the will were fetched from the Council-chamber into the Burgomaster's office, they were passed around to all the Councilors and the heirs, in order that they might see the privy seal of the city upon them, and the registry of the consignment written by the town clerk upon the charter was read aloud to the seven heirs. Thereby it was made known to them that the charter had really been consigned to the magistrates by the late departed one and confided to them *scrinio rei publicæ*, likewise that he had been in his right mind on the day of the consignment. The seven seals which he himself had placed upon it were found to be intact. Then—after the Town-Clerk had again drawn up a short record of all this—the will was opened in God's name and read aloud by the officiating Burgomaster. It ran as follows:

"I, Van der Kabel, do draw up my will on this seventh day of May 179-, here in my house in Haslau, in Dog Street, without a great ado of words, although I have been both a German notary and a Dutch *dominé*. Notwithstanding, I believe that I am still sufficiently familiar with the notary's art to be able to act as a regular testator and bequeather of property.

"Testators are supposed to commence by setting forth the motives which have caused them to make their will. These with me, as with most, are my approaching death, and the disposal of an inheritance which is desired by many. To talk about the funeral and such matters is too weak and silly. That which remains of me, however, may the eternal sun above us make use of for one of his verdant springs, not for a gloomy winter!

"The charitable bequests, about which notaries must always inquire, I shall attend to by setting aside for three thousand of the city's paupers an equal number of florins so that in the years to come, on the anniversary of my death, if the annual review of the troops does not happen to take place on the common that day, they can pitch their camp there and have a merry feast off the money, and afterward clothe themselves with the tent linen. To all the schoolmasters of our Principality also I bequeath to every man one august d'or, and I leave my pew in the Court church to the Jews of the city. My will being divided into clauses, this may be taken as the first.

"SECOND CLAUSE

It is the general custom for legacies and disinheritances to be counted among the most essential parts of the will. In accordance with this custom Consistorial Councillor Glanz, Attorney of the Royal Treasury Knol, Court-Agent Peter Neupeter, Police-Inspector Harprecht, the Preacher-at-Early-Service Flachs, the Court-bookseller Passvogel and Herr Flitte, for the time being receive nothing; not so much because no *Trebellianica* is due them as the most distant relatives, or because most of them have themselves enough to bequeath, as because I know out of their own mouths that they love my insignificant person better than my great wealth, which person I therefore leave them, little as can be got out of it."

Seven preternaturally long faces at this point started up like the Seven-sleepers. The Consistorial Councillor, a man still young but celebrated throughout all Germany for his oral and printed sermons, considered himself the one most insulted by such taunts. From the Alsatian Flitte there escaped an oath accompanied by a slight smack of the tongue. The chin of Flachs, the Preacher-at-Early-Service, grew downward into a regular beard.

The City Councillors could hear several softly ejaculated obituaries referring to the late Kabel under the name of scamp, fool, infidel, etc. But the officiating Burgomaster waved his hand, the Attorney of the Royal Treasury and the Bookseller again bent all the elastic steel springs of their faces as if setting a trap, and the Burgomaster continued to read, although with enforced seriousness.

"THIRD CLAUSE

I make an exception of the present house in Dog Street which, after this my third clause, shall, just as it stands, devolve upon and belong to that one of my seven above-named relatives, who first, before the other six rivals, can in one half hour's time (to be reckoned from the reading of the Clause) shed one or two tears over me, his departed uncle, in the presence of an estimable magistrate who shall record the same. If, however, all eyes remain dry, then the house likewise shall fall to the exclusive heir whom I am about to name."

Here the Burgomaster closed the will, remarked that the condition was certainly unusual but not illegal, and the court must adjudge the house to the first one who wept. With which he placed his watch, which pointed to half-past eleven, on the office-table, and sat himself quietly down in order in his capacity of executor to observe, together with the whole court, who should first shed the desired tear over the testator. It cannot fairly be assumed that, as long as the earth has stood, a more woe-begone and muddled congress ever met upon it than this one composed of seven dry provinces assembled together, as it were, in order to weep. At first some precious minutes were spent merely in confused wondering and in smiling; the congress had been placed too suddenly in the situation

of the dog who, when about to rush angrily at his enemy, heard the latter call out: Beg!—and who suddenly got upon his hind legs and begged, showing his teeth. From cursing they had been pulled up too quickly into weeping.

Every one realized that genuine emotion was not to be thought of; downpours do not come quite so much on the gallop; such sudden baptism of the eyes was out of the question; but in twenty-six minutes something might happen.

The merchant Neupeter asked if it were not an accursed business and a foolish joke on the part of a sensible man, and he refused to lend himself to it; but the thought that a house might swim into his purse on a tear caused him a peculiar irritation of the glands, which made him look like a sick lark to whom a clyster is being applied with an oiled pinhead—the house being the head.

The Attorney of the Royal Treasury Knol screwed up his face like a poor workman, whom an apprentice is shaving and scraping on a Saturday evening by the light of a shoemaker's candle; he was furiously angry at the misuse made of the title "Will" and quite near to shedding tears of rage.

The crafty Bookseller Passvogel at once quietly set about the matter in hand; he hastily went over in his mind all the touching things which he was publishing at his own expense or on commission, and from which he hoped to brew something; he looked the while like a dog that is slowly licking off the emetic which the Parisian veterinary, Demet, had smeared on his nose; it would evidently be some time before the desired effect would take place.

Flitte from Alsace danced around in the Burgomaster's office, looked laughingly at all the serious faces and swore he was not the richest among them, but not for all Strasburg and Alsace besides was he capable of weeping over such a joke.

At last the Police-Inspector looked very significantly at him and declared: In case Monsieur hoped by means of laughter to squeeze the desired drops out of the well-known glands and out of the Meibomian, the caruncle, and others, and thus thievishly to cover himself with this window-pane moisture, he wished to remind him that he could gain just as little by it as if he should blow his nose and try to profit by that, as in the latter case it was well known that more tears flowed from the eyes through the *ductus nasalis* than were shed in any church-pew during a funeral sermon. But the Alsatian assured him he was only laughing in fun and not with serious intentions.

The Inspector for his part tried to drive something appropriate into his eyes by holding them wide open and staring fixedly.

The Preacher-at-Early-Service Flachs looked like a Jew beggar riding a runaway horse. Meanwhile his heart, which was already overcast with the most promising sultry clouds caused by domestic and church-troubles, could have immediately drawn up the necessary water, as easily as the sun before bad weather, if only the floating-house navigating toward him had not always come between as a much too cheerful spectacle, and acted as a dam.

The Consistorial Councillor had learned to know his own nature from New Year's and funeral sermons, and was positive that he himself would be the first to be moved if only he started to make a moving address to others. When therefore he saw himself and the others hanging so long on the drying-line, he stood up and said with dignity: Every one who had read his printed works knew for a certainty that he carried a heart in his breast, which needed to repress such holy tokens as tears are —so as not thereby to deprive any fellowman of something—rather than laboriously to draw them to the surface with an ulterior motive. "This heart has already shed them, but in secret, for Kabel was my friend," he said, and looked around.

He noticed with pleasure that all were sitting there as dry as wooden corks; at this special moment crocodiles, stags, elephants, witches, ravens[10] could have wept more easily than the heirs, so disturbed and enraged were they by Glanz. Flachs was the only one who had a secret inspiration. He hastily summoned to his mind Kabel's charities and the mean clothes and gray hair of the women

[10] The German texts read: *Reben*, vines. But the conjecture *Raben* as the correct reading may be permitted.—ED.

who formed his congregation at the early-service, Lazarus with his dogs, and his own long coffin, and also the beheading of various people, Werther's Sorrows, a small battlefield, and himself—how pitifully here in the days of his youth he was struggling and tormenting himself over the clause of the will—just three more jerks of the pump-handle and he would have his water and the house.

"O Kabel, my Kabel!" continued Glanz, almost weeping for joy at the prospect of the approaching tears of sorrow. "When once beside your loving heart covered with earth my heart too shall mol—"

"I believe, honored gentlemen," said Flachs mournfully, arising and looking around, his eyes brimming over, "I am weeping." After which he sat down again and let them flow more cheerfully; he had feathered his nest. Under the eyes of the other heirs he had snatched away the prize-house from Glanz, who now extremely regretted his exertions, since he had quite uselessly talked away half of his appetite. The emotion of Flachs was placed on record and the house in Dog Street was adjudged to him for good and all. The Burgomaster was heartily glad to see the poor devil get it. It was the first time in the principality of Haslau that the tears of a school-master and teacher-of-the-church had been metamorphosed, not like those of the Heliades into light amber, which incased an insect, but like those of the goddess Freya, into gold. Glanz congratulated Flachs, and gayly drew his attention to the fact that perhaps he, Glanz, had helped to move him. The rest drew aside, by their separation accentuating their position on the dry road from that of Flachs on the wet; all, however, remained intent upon the rest of the will.

Then the reading of it was continued.

WILHELM VON HUMBOLDT

* * * * *

SCHILLER AND THE PROCESS OF HIS INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

From the *Introduction to the Correspondence of Schiller and W. von Humboldt* (1830)

TRANSLATED BY FRANCES H. KING

Schiller's poetic genius showed itself in his very first productions. In spite of all their defects in form, in spite of many things which to the mature artist seemed absolutely crude, *The Robbers* and *Fiesko* gave evidence of remarkable inherent power. His genius later betrayed itself in the longing for poetry, as for the native atmosphere of his spirit, which longing constantly breaks out in his varied philosophical and historical labors and is often hinted at in his letters to me. It finally revealed itself in virile power and refined purity in those dramas which will long remain the pride and the renown of the German stage.

This poetic genius, however, is most closely wedded, in all its height and depth, to thought; it manifests itself, in fact, in an intellectuality which by analysis would separate everything into its parts, and then by combination would unite all in one complete whole. In this lies Schiller's peculiar individuality. He demanded of poetry more profundity of thought and forced it to submit to a more rigid intellectual unity than it had ever had before. This he did in a two-fold manner—by binding it into a more strictly artistic form, and by treating every poem in such a way that its subject-matter readily broadened its individuality until it expressed a complete idea.

It is upon these peculiarities that the excellence which characterizes Schiller as a writer rests. It is because of them that, in order to bring out the greatest and best of which he was capable, he needed a certain amount of time before his completely developed individuality, to which his poetic genius was indissolubly united, could reach that point of clearness and definiteness of expression which he demanded of himself. * * *

On the other hand, it would probably be agreeable to the reader of this correspondence if I should attempt briefly to show how my opinion of Schiller's individuality was formed by intercourse with him, by reminiscences of his conversation, by the comparison of his productions in their successive sequence, and by a study of the development of his intellect.

What must necessarily have impressed every student of Schiller as most characteristic was the fact that thinking was the very substance of his life, in a higher and more significant sense than perhaps has ever been the case with any other person. His intellect was alive with spontaneous and almost tireless activity, which ceased only when the attacks of his physical infirmity became overpowering. Such activity seemed to him a recreation rather than an effort, and was manifested most conspicuously in conversation, for which Schiller appeared to have a natural aptitude.

He never sought for deep subjects of conversation, but seemed rather to leave the introduction of a subject to chance; but from each topic he led the discourse up to a general point of view, and after a short dialogue one found oneself in the very midst of a mentally stimulating discussion. He always treated the central idea as an end to be attained in common; he always seemed to need the help of the person with whom he was conversing, for, although the latter always felt that the idea was supplied by Schiller alone, Schiller never allowed him to remain inactive.

This was the chief difference between Schiller's and Herder's mode of conversing. Never, perhaps, has there been a man who talked with greater charm than Herder, if one happened to catch him in an agreeable mood—not a difficult matter when any kind of note was struck with which he was in harmony.

All the extraordinary qualities of this justly admired man seemed to gain double power in conversation, for which they were so peculiarly adapted. The thought blossomed forth in expression

with a grace and dignity which appeared to proceed from the subject alone, although really belonging only to the individual. Thus speech flowed on uninterruptedly with a limpidness which still left something remaining for one's own imagination, and yet with a *chiaroscuro* which did not prevent one from definitely grasping the thought. As soon as one subject was exhausted a new one was taken up. Nothing was gained by making objections which would only have served as a hindrance. One had listened, one could even talk oneself, but one felt the lack of an interchange of thought.

Schiller's speech was not really beautiful, but his mind constantly strove, with acumen and precision, to make new intellectual conquests; he held this effort under control, however, and soared above his subject in perfect liberty. Hence, with a light and delicate touch he utilized any side-issue which presented itself, and this was the reason why his conversation was peculiarly rich in words that are so evidently the inspiration of the moment; yet, in spite of such seeming freedom in the treatment of the subject, the final end was not lost sight of. Schiller always held with firmness the thread which was bound to lead thither, and, if the conversation was not interrupted by any mishap, he was not prone to bring it to a close until he had reached the goal.

And as Schiller in his conversation always aimed to add new ground to the domain of thought, so, in general, it may be said that his intellectual activity was always characterized by an intense spontaneity. His letters demonstrate these traits very perceptibly, and he knew absolutely no other method of working.

He gave himself up to mere reading late in the evening only, and during his frequently sleepless nights. His days were occupied with various labors or with specific preparatory studies in connection with them, his intellect being thus kept at high tension by work and research.

Mere studying undertaken with no immediate end in view save that of acquiring knowledge, and which has such a fascination for those who are familiar with it that they must be constantly on their guard lest it cause them to neglect other more definite duties—such studying, I say, he knew nothing about from experience, nor did he esteem it at its proper value. Knowledge seemed to him too material, and the forces of the intellect too noble, for him to see in this material anything more than mere stuff to be worked up. It was only because he placed more value upon the higher activity of the intellect, which creates independently out of its own depths, that he had so little sympathy with its efforts of a lower order. It is indeed remarkable from what a small stock of material and how, in spite of wanting the means by which such material is procured by others, Schiller obtained his comprehensive theory of life (*Weltanschauung*), which, when once grasped, fairly startles us by the intuitive truthfulness of genius; for one can give no other name to that which originates without outside aid.

Even in Germany he had traveled only in certain districts, while Switzerland, of which his *William Tell* contains such vivid descriptions, he had never seen. Any one who has ever stood by the Falls of the Rhine will involuntarily recall, at the sight, the beautiful strophe in *The Diver* in which this confusing tumult of waters, that so captivates the eye, is depicted; and yet no personal view of these rapids had served as the basis for Schiller's description.

But whatever Schiller did acquire from his own experience he grasped with a clearness which also brought distinctly before him what he learned from the description of others. Besides, he never neglected to prepare himself for every subject by exhaustive reading. Anything that might prove to be of use, even if discovered accidentally, fixed itself firmly in his memory; and his tirelessly-working imagination, which, with constant liveliness, elaborated now this now that part of the material collected from every source, filled out the deficiencies of such second-hand information.

In a manner quite similar he made the spirit of Greek poetry his own, although his knowledge of it was gained exclusively from translations. In this connection he spared himself no pains. He preferred translations which disclaimed any particular merit in themselves, and his highest consideration was for the literal classical paraphrases.

* * * *The Cranes of Ibycus* and the *Festival of Victory* wear the colors of antiquity with all the purity and fidelity which could be expected from a modern poet, and they wear them in the most beautiful and most spirited manner. The poet, in these works, has quite absorbed the spirit of the ancient world; he moves about in it with freedom, and thus creates a new form of poetry which, in all its parts, breathes only such a spirit. The two poems, however, are in striking contrast with each other. *The Cranes of Ibycus* permitted a thoroughly epic development; what made the subject of intrinsic value to the poet was the idea which sprung from it of the power of artistic representation upon the human soul. This power of poetry, of an invisible force created purely by the intellect and vanishing away when brought into contact with reality, belonged essentially to the sphere of ideas which occupied Schiller so intensely.

As many as eight years before the time when this subject assumed the ballad form within his mind it had floated before his vision, as is evident in the lines which are taken from his poem *The Artists*—

"Awed by the Furies' chorus dread
Murder draws down upon its head
The doom of death from their wild song."

This idea, moreover, permitted an exposition in complete harmony with the spirit of antiquity; the latter had all the requisites for bringing it into bold relief in all its purity and strength. Consequently, every particular in the whole narrative is borrowed immediately from the ancient world, especially the appearance and the song of Eumenides. The chorus as employed by Æschylus is so artistically interwoven with the modern poetic form, both in the matter of rhyme and the length of the metre, that no portion of its quiet grandeur is lost.

The Festival of Victory is of a lyric, of a contemplative nature. In this work the poet was able —indeed was compelled—to lend from his own store an element which did not lie within the sphere of ideas and the sentiments of antiquity; but everything else follows the spirit of the Homeric poem with as great purity as it does in the *Cranes of Ibycus*. The poem as a whole is clearly stamped with a higher, more distinct, spirituality than is usual with the ancient singers; and it is in this particular that it manifests its most conspicuous beauties.

The earlier poems of Schiller are also rich in particular traits borrowed from the poems of the ancients, and into them he has often introduced a higher significance than is found in the original. Let me refer in this connection to his description of death from *The Artists*—"The gentle bow of necessity"—which so beautifully recalls the *gentle darts* of Homer, where, however, the transfer of the adjective from *darts* to *bow* gives to the thought a more tender and a deeper significance.

Confidence in the intellectual power of man heightened to poetic form is expressed in the distichs entitled *Columbus*, which are among the most peculiar poetic productions that Schiller has given us. Belief in the invisible force inherent in man, in the opinion, which is sublime and deeply true, that there must be an inward mystic harmony between it and the force which orders and governs the entire universe (for all truth can only be a reflection of the eternal primal Truth), was a characteristic feature of Schiller's way of thinking. It harmonized also with the persistence with which he followed up every intellectual task until it was satisfactorily completed. We see the same thought expressed in the same kind of metaphor in the bold but beautiful expression which occurs in the letters from Raphael to Julius in the magazine, *The Thalia*—

"When Columbus made the risky wager with an untraveled sea." * * *

Art and poetry were directly joined to what was most noble in man; they were represented to be the medium by means of which he first awakens to the consciousness of that nature, reaching out beyond the finite, which dwells within him. Both of them were thus placed upon the height from which they really originate. To safeguard them upon this height, to save them from being desecrated

by every paltry and belittling view, to rescue them from every sentiment which did not spring from their purity, was really Schiller's aim, and appeared to him as his true life-mission determined for him by the original tendency of his nature.

His first and most urgent demands are, therefore, addressed to the poet himself, from whom he requires not merely genius and talent isolated, as it were, in their activity, but a mood which takes possession of the entire soul and is in harmony with the sublimity of his vocation; it must be not a mere momentary exaltation, but an integral part of character. "Before he undertakes to influence the best among his contemporaries he should make it his first and most important business to elevate his own self to the purest and noblest ideal of humanity." * * * To no one does Schiller apply this demand more rigorously than to himself.

Of him it can truthfully be said that matters which bordered upon the common or even upon the ordinary, never had the slightest hold upon him; that he transferred completely the high and noble views which filled his thoughts to his mode of feeling and his life; and that in his compositions he was ever, with uniform force, inspired with a striving for the ideal. This was true even of his minor productions.

To assign to poetry, among human endeavors, the lofty and serious place of which I have spoken above, to defend it from the petty point of view of those who, mistaking its dignity, and the pedantic attitude of those who, mistaking its peculiar character, regard it only as a trifling adornment and embellishment of life or else ask an immediate moral effect and teaching from it—this, as one cannot repeat too often, is deeply rooted in the German habit of thought and feeling. Schiller in his poetry gave utterance—in his own individual manner, however—to whatever his German nature had implanted in him, to the harmony which rang out to him from the depths of the language, the mysterious effect of which he so cleverly perceived and knew how to use so masterfully. * * *

The deeper and truer trend of the German resides in his highly developed sensibility which keeps him closer to the truths of nature, in his inclination to live in the world of ideas and of emotions dependent upon them, and, in fact, in everything which is connected therewith. * * *

A favorite idea which often engaged Schiller's attention was the need of educating the crude natural man—as he understood him—through art, before he could be left to attain culture through reason. Schiller has enlarged upon this theme on many occasions, both in prose and verse. His imagination dwelt by preference upon the beginnings of civilization in general, upon the transition from the nomadic life to the agricultural, upon the covenant established in naïve faith with pious Mother Earth, as he so beautifully expresses it.

Whatever mythology offered here as kindred material, he grasped with eagerness and firmness. Faithfully following the traces of fable, he made of Demeter, the chief personage in the group of agricultural deities, a figure as wonderful as it was appealing, by uniting in her breast human feelings with divine. It was long a cherished plan with Schiller to treat in epic form the earliest Attic civilization resulting from foreign immigration. *The Eleusinian Festival*, however, replaced this plan, which was never executed. * * *

The merely emotional, the fervid, the simply descriptive, in fact every variety of poetry derived directly from contemplation and feeling, are found in Schiller in countless single passages and in whole poems. * * * But the most remarkable evidence of the consummate genius of the poet is seen in *The Song of the Bell*, which, in changing metre, in descriptions full of vivacity where a few touches represent a whole picture, runs through the varied experiences in the life of man and of society; for it expresses the feelings which arise in each of them, and ever adapts the whole, symbolically, to the tones of the bell, the casting and completing of which the poem accompanies throughout in all its various stages. I know of no poem, in any language, which shows so wide a poetic world in so small a compass, that so runs through the scale of all that is deepest in human feelings, and, in the guise of a lyric, depicts life in its important events and epochs as if in an epic poem confined within natural limits. But the poetic clearness is enhanced by the fact that a subject which is portrayed as actually

existing, corresponds with the shadowy visions of the imagination; and the two series thus formed run parallel with each other to the same end. * * *

Schiller was snatched from the world in the full maturity of his intellectual power, though he would undoubtedly have been able to perform an endless amount of additional work. His scope was so unlimited that he would never have been able to find a goal, and the constantly increasing activity of his mind would never have allowed him time for stopping. For long years ahead he would have been able to enjoy the happiness, the rapture, yes, the bliss of his occupation as a poet, as he so inimitably describes it in one of the letters in this collection, written about a plan for an idyl. His life ended indeed before the customary limit had been reached, yet, while it lasted, he worked exclusively and uninterruptedly in the realm of ideas and fancy.

Of no one else, perhaps, can it be said so truthfully that "he had thrown away the fear of that which was earthly and had escaped out of the narrow gloomy life into the realm of the ideal." And it may be observed, in closing, that he had lived surrounded only by the most exalted ideas and the most brilliant visions which it is possible for a mortal to appropriate and to create. One who thus departs from earth cannot be regarded as otherwise than happy.

THE EARLY ROMANTIC SCHOOL

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The latter half of the eighteenth century has been styled the Age of Enlightenment, a convenient name for a period in which there was a noticeable attempt to face the obvious, external facts of life in a clear-eyed and courageous way. The centralizing of political power in the hands of Louis XIV. of France and his successors had been accompanied by a "standardizing" of human affairs which favored practical efficiency and the easier running of the social machine, but which was far from helpful to the self-expression of distinctly-marked individuals.

The French became sovereign arbiters of taste and form, but their canons of art were far from nature and the free impulses of mankind. The particular development of this spirit of clarity in Berlin, the centre of German influence, lay in the tendency to challenge all historic continuity, and to seek uniformity based upon practical needs.

Rousseau's revolutionary protests against inequality and artificiality—particularly his startling treatise *On the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Men* (1754)—and his fervent preaching of the everlasting superiority of the heart to the head, constitute the most important factor in a great revolt against regulated social institutions, which led, at length, to the "Storm and Stress" movement in Germany, that boisterous forerunner of Romanticism, yet so unlike it that even Schlegel compared its most typical representatives to the biblical herd of swine which stampeded—into oblivion. Herder, proclaiming the vital connection between the soul of a whole nation and its literature, and preaching a religion of the feelings rather than a gospel of "enlightenment;" young Goethe, by his daring and untrammeled Shakespearian play, *Goetz von Berlichingen*, and by his open defiance, announced in *Werther*, of the authority of all artistic rules and standards; and Bürger, asserting the right of the common man to be the only arbiter of literary values, were, each in his own way, upsetting the control of an artificial "classicism." Immanuel Kant, whose deep and dynamic thinking led to a revolution comparable to a cosmic upheaval in the geological world, compelled his generation to discover a vast new moral system utterly disconcerting to the shallow complacency of those who had no sense of higher values than "practical efficiency."

When, in 1794, Goethe and Schiller, now matured and fully seasoned by a deep-going classical and philosophical discipline, joined their splendid forces and devoted their highest powers to the building up of a comprehensive esthetic philosophy, the era was fully come for new constructive efforts on German soil. Incalculably potent was the ferment liberated by Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* (1795-1796)—its attacking the problem of life from the emotional and esthetic side; its defense of the "call" of the individual as outweighing the whole social code; its assertion that genius outranks general laws, and imagination every-day rules; its abundance of "poetic" figures taking their part in the romance.

The birth of the Romantic School can be pretty definitely set at about 1796; its cradle was in the quaint university town of Jena, at that time the home of Schiller and his literary-esthetic enterprises, and only a few miles away from Goethe in Weimar. Five names embody about all that was most significant in the earlier movement: Fichte, the brothers Friedrich and Wilhelm Schlegel, Tieck, and Novalis.

The discussion of Fichte belonging to another division of this work, it is enough to recall here that he was already professor of philosophy at Jena when the Schlegel brothers made their home there in 1796, and that it was while there that he published his *Doctrine of Science*, the charter of independence of the Romantic School, announcing the annihilation of physical values, proclaiming the soul as above things perceived, the inner spirit as that alembic in which all objects

are produced. With almost insolent freshness Fichte asserted a re-valuation of all values: what had been "enlightenment" was now to be called shallowness; "ancient crudities" were to be reverenced as deeper perceptions of truth; "fine literature" was to be accounted a frivolous thing. Fichte made a stirring appeal to young men, especially, as being alone able to perceive the meaning of science and poetry.

To take part in the contagion of these ideas, there settled in Jena in 1796 the two phenomenal Schlegel brothers. It is not easy or necessary to separate, at this period, the activities of their agile minds. From their early days, as sons in a most respectable Lutheran parsonage in North Germany, both had shown enormous hunger for cultural information, both had been voracious in exploiting the great libraries within their reach. It is generally asserted that they were lacking in essential virility and stamina; as to the brilliancy of their acquisitions, their fineness of appreciation, and their wit, there can be no question whatever. Madame de Staël called them "the fathers of modern criticism," a title which has not been challenged by the best authorities of our time.

Friedrich von Schlegel (1772-1829), the younger of the two, is counted to be the keener and more original mind. He had a restless and unsettled youth, mostly spent in studies; after various disappointments, he determined to make classical antiquity his life-work; while mastering the body of ancient literature, he was assimilating, with much the same sort of eagerness, the philosophical systems of Kant and Fichte. His first notable publication was an esthetic-philosophic essay, in the ample style of Schiller's later discourses, *Concerning the Study of Greek Poetry*. He found in the Greeks of the age of Sophocles the ideal of a fully developed humanity, and exhibited throughout the discussion a remarkable mastery of the whole field of classical literature. Just at this time he removed to Jena to join his older brother, Wilhelm, who was connected with Schiller's monthly *The Hours* and his annual *Almanac of the Muses*. By a strange condition of things Friedrich was actively engaged at the moment in writing polemic reviews for the organs of Reichardt, one of Schiller's most annoying rivals in literary journalism; these reviews became at once noticeable for their depth and vigorous originality, particularly that one which gave a new and vital characterization of Lessing. In 1797 he moved to Berlin, where he gathered a group about him, including Tieck, and in this way established the external and visible body of the Romantic School, which the brilliant intellectual atmosphere of the Berlin salons, with their wealth of gifted and cultured women, did much to promote. In 1799 both he and Tieck joined the Romantic circle at Jena.

In Berlin he published in 1798 the first volume of the *Athenæum*, that journal which in a unique way represents the pure Romantic ideal at its actual fountain-head. It survived for three years, the last volume appearing in 1800. Its aim was to "collect all rays of human culture into one focus," and, more particularly, to confute the claim of the party of "enlightenment" that the earlier ages of human development were poor and unworthy of respect on the part of the closing eighteenth century. A very large part of the journal was written by the two brothers, Friedrich furnishing the most aggressive contributions, more notably being responsible for the epigrammatic *Fragments*, which became, in their, detached brevity and irresponsibility, a very favorite model for the form of Romantic doctrine. "I can talk daggers," he had said when younger, and he wrote the greater part of these, though some were contributed by Wilhelm Schlegel, by his admirable wife Caroline, by Schleiermacher, and Novalis. The root of this form lies in French thinking and expression—especially the short deliverances of Chamfort, the epigrammatist of the French Revolution. These Orphic-apocalyptic sentences are a sort of foundation for a new Romantic bible. They are absolutely disconnected, they show a mixture and interpenetration of different spheres of thought and observation, with an unexpected deference to the appraisals of classic antiquity. Their range is unlimited: philosophy and psychology, mathematics and esthetics, philosophy and natural science, sociology and society, literature and the theatre are all largely represented in their scope.

Friedrich Schlegel's epigrammatic wit is the direct precursor of Heine's clever conceits in prose: one is instantly reminded of him by such *Athenæum*-fragments as "Kant, the Copernicus of

Philosophy;" "Plato's philosophy is a worthy preface to the religion of the future;" "So-called 'happy marriages' are related to love, as a correct poem to an improvised song;" "In genuine prose all words should be printed in italics;" "Catholicism is naïve Christianity; Protestantism is sentimental." The sheer whimsicality of phrase seems to be at times its own excuse for being, as in an explanation of certain elegiac poems as "the sensation of misery in the contemplation of the silliness of the relations of banality to craziness;" but there are many sentences which go deep below the surface—none better remembered, perhaps, than the dictum, "The French Revolution, Fichte's *Doctrine of Science*, and Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* are the greatest symptoms of our age."

In the *Athenæum* both brothers give splendid testimony to their astonishing and epoch-making gift in transferring classical and Romance metrical forms into elegant, idiomatic German; they give affectionate attention to the insinuating beauty of elegiac verse, and secure charming effects in some of the most alien Greek forms, not to mention *terza rima, ottava rima*, the Spanish gloss, and not a few very notable sonnets.

The literary criticisms of the *Athenæum* are characteristically free and aggressive, particularly in the frequent sneers at the flat "homely" poetry of sandy North Germany. At the end of the second volume, the "faked" *Literary Announcements* are as daring as any attempts of American newspaper humor. When the sum of the contents and tendency of the journal is drawn, it is a strange mixture of discriminating philosophy, devoted Christianity, Greek sensuousness, and pornographic mysticism. There is a never-ending esthetic coquetry with the flesh, with a serious defense of some very Greek practices indeed. All of this is thoroughly typical of the spirit of the Romantic school, and it is by no means surprising that Friedrich's first book, the novel *Lucinda* (1799), should stand as the supreme unsavory classic in this field. That excellent divine, Schleiermacher, exalted this document of the Rights of the Flesh as "a pæan of Love, in all its completeness," but it is a feeble, tiresome performance, absolutely without structure, quite deserving the saucy epigram on which it was pilloried by the wit of the time:

> Pedantry once of Fancy begged the dole
> Of one brief kiss; she pointed him to Shame.
> He, impotent and wanton, then Shame's favors stole.
> Into the world at length a dead babe came—
> "*Lucinda*" was its name.

The preaching of "religion," "womanliness," and the "holy fire of divine enjoyment" makes an unedifying *mélange*: "The holiest thing in any human being is his own mind, his own power, his own will;" "You do all according to your own mind, and refuse to be swayed by what is usual and proper." Schleiermacher admired in it that "highest wisdom and profoundest religion" which lead people to "yield to the rhythm of fellowship and friendship, and to disturb no harmony of love." In more prosaic diction, the upshot of its teaching was the surrender to momentary feelings, quite divorced from Laws or Things. The only morality is "full Humanity;" "Nature alone is worthy of honor, and sound health alone is worthy of love;" "Let the discourse of love," counsels Julius, "be bold and free, not more chastened than a Roman elegy"—which is certainly not very much—and the skirmishes of inclination are, in fact, set forth with an almost antique simplicity. Society is to be developed only by "wit," which is seriously put into comparison with God Almighty. As to practical ethics, one is told that the most perfect life is but a pure vegetation; the right to indolence is that which really makes the discrimination between choice and common beings, and is the determining principle of nobility. "The divine art of being indolent" and "the blissful bosom of half-conscious self-forgetfulness" naturally lead to the thesis that the empty, restless exertion of men in general is nothing but Gothic perversity, and "boots naught but *ennui* to ourselves and others." Man is by nature "a serious beast; one must labor to counteract this shameful tendency." Schleiermacher ventured, it is true, to raise the question

as to whether the hero ought not to have some trace of the chivalrous about him, or ought not to do something effective in the outer world—and posterity has fully supported this inquiry.

Friedrich's next most important move was to Paris (1802), where he gave lectures on philosophy, and attempted another journal. Here he began his enthusiastic studies of the Sanskrit language and literature, which proved to have an important influence on the development of modern philology. This is eminently true of his work *On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians* (1808). In 1804 he removed to Cologne, where he entered with great eagerness into the work of re-discovering the medieval Lower Rhenish School of religious art and Gothic architecture. In 1808 he, with his wife Dorothea (the daughter of Moses Mendelssohn, who years before this time had left her home and family to become his partner for life), entered the Roman Catholic church, the interests of which engaged much of his energies for the remainder of his life.

He lived most of the time in Vienna, partly engaged in the literary service of the Austrian government, partly in lecturing on history and literature. He died in 1829 in Dresden, whither he had gone to deliver a course of lectures.

Friedrich Schlegel's philosophy of life was based upon the theory of supremacy of the artist, the potency of poetry, with its incidental corollaries of disregard for the Kantian ideal of Duty, and aversion to all Puritanism and Protestantism. "There is no great world but that of artists," he declared in the *Athenæum*; "artists form a higher caste; they should separate themselves, even in their way of living, from other people." Poetry and philosophy formed in his thought an inseparable unit, forever joined, "though seldom together—like Castor and Pollux." His interest is in "Humanity," that is to say, a superior type of the species, with a corresponding contempt for "commonness," especially for the common man as a mere machine of "duty." On performances he set no great store: "Those countenances are most interesting to me in which Nature seems to have indicated a great design without taking time to carry it out."

August Wilhelm von Schlegel (1767-1845), more simply known as "Wilhelm," was the more balanced, dignified, and serene nature, and possessed in a far higher degree than Friedrich the art of steering his course smoothly through life. Of very great significance in his training were his university years at Göttingen, and his acquaintance there with the poet Bürger, that early apostle of revolt from a formal literature, whose own life had become more and more discredited and was destined to go out in wretchedness and ignominy; the latter's fecundating activities had never been allowed full scope, but something of his spirit of adventure into new literary fields was doubtless caught by the younger man. Bürger's attempts at naturalizing the sonnet, for instance, are interesting in view of the fact that Wilhelm Schlegel became the actual creator of this literary form among the Germans. Schlegel's own pursuits as a student were prevailingly in the field of Hellenism, in which his acquisitions were astounding; his influence was especially potent in giving a philological character to much of the work of the Romanticists. In Göttingen he became acquainted with one of the most gifted women which Germany has ever produced, Caroline, the daughter of the Göttingen professor Michaelis, at the time a young widow in the home of her father, and destined to become not only his wife, but the Muse of much of his most important work. This office she performed until the time of their unfortunate separation.

After finishing his university studies, Wilhelm was for a while private tutor in a wealthy family at Amsterdam, where conditions of living were most agreeable, but where a suitable stimulus to the inborn life of his mind was lacking. He accordingly gave up this position and returned, with little but hopes, to Germany. Then came a call which was both congenial and honorable. Schiller's attention had been drawn, years before, to a review of his own profound philosophical poem, *The Artists*, by an unknown young man, whom he at once sought to secure as a regular contributor to his literary journal, *The New Thalia*. Nothing came of this, chiefly because of Schlegel's intimate relations to Bürger at the time. Schiller had published, not long before, his annihilatory review of Bürger's poems, which did so much to put that poet out of serious consideration for the remainder of his days. In the meantime

Schiller had addressed himself to his crowning enterprise, the establishing of a literary journal which should be the final dictator of taste and literary criticism throughout the German-speaking world. In 1794 the plan for *The Hours* was realized under favorable auspices, and in the same year occurred the death of Bürger. In 1796 Schiller invited Wilhelm to become one of the regular staff of *The Hours*, and this invitation Schlegel accepted, finding in it the opportunity to marry Caroline, with whom he settled in Jena in July of that year. His first contribution to *The Hours* was a masterful and extended treatise on *Dante*, which was accompanied by translations which were clearly the most distinguished in that field which the German language had ever been able to offer. Schlegel also furnished elaborated poems, somewhat in Schiller's grand style, for the latter's *Almanac of the Muses*. During the years of his residence at Jena (which continued until 1801) Schlegel, with the incalculable assistance of his wife, published the first eight volumes of those renderings of Shakespeare's plays into German which doubtless stand at the very summit of the art of transferring a poet to an alien region, and which have, in actual fact, served to make the Bard of Avon as truly a fellow-citizen of the Germans as of the Britons. Wilhelm's brother Friedrich had remained but a year with him in Jena, before his removal to Berlin and his establishment of the *Athenæum*. Although separated from his brother, Wilhelm's part in the conduct of the journal was almost as important as Friedrich's, and, in effect, they conducted the whole significant enterprise out of their own resources. The opening essay, *The Languages*, is Wilhelm's, and properly, for at this time he was by far the better versed in philological and literary matters. His cultural acquisitions, his tremendous spoils of reading, were greater, and his judgment more trustworthy. In all his work in the *Athenæum* he presents a seasoned, many-sided sense of all poetical, phonetic and musical values: rhythm, color, tone, the lightest breath and aroma of an elusive work of art. One feels that Wilhelm overhauls the whole business of criticism, and clears the field for coming literary ideals. Especially telling is his demolition of Klopstock's violent "Northernism," to which he opposes a far wider philosophy of grammar and style. The universality of poetry, as contrasted with a narrow "German" clumsiness, is blandly defended, and a joyous abandon is urged as something better than the meticulous anxiety of chauvinistic partisanism. In all his many criticisms of literature there are charm, wit, and elegance, an individuality and freedom in the reviewer, who, if less penetrating than his brother, displays a far more genial breadth and humanity, and more secure composure. His translations, more masterly than those of Friedrich, carry out Herder's demand for complete absorption and re-creation.

In 1801 Schlegel went to Berlin, where for three successive winters he lectured on art and literature. His subsequent translations of Calderon's plays (1803-1809) and of Romance lyrics served to naturalize a large treasure of southern poetry upon German soil. In 1804, after having separated from his wife, he became attached to the household of Madame de Staël, and traversed Europe with her. It is through this association that she was enabled to write her brilliant work, *On Germany*. In 1808 he delivered a series of lectures on dramatic art and literature in Vienna, which enjoyed enormous popularity, and are still reckoned the crowning achievement of his career; perhaps the most significant of these is his discourse on Shakespeare. In the first volume of the *Athenæum*, Shakespeare's universality had already been regarded as "the central point of romantic art." As Romanticist, it was Schlegel's office to portray the independent development of the modern English stage, and to defend Shakespeare against the familiar accusations of barbaric crudity and formlessness. In surveying the field, it was likewise incumbent upon him to demonstrate in what respects the classic drama differed from the independently developed modern play, and his still useful generalization regards antique art as limited, clear, simple, and perfected—as typified by a work of sculpture; whereas romantic art delights in mingling its subjects—as a painting, which embraces many objects and looks out into the widest vistas. Apart from the clarity and smoothness of these Vienna discourses, their lasting merit lies in their searching observation of the import of dramatic works from their inner soul, and in a most discriminating sense of the relation of all their parts to an organic whole.

In 1818 Schlegel accepted a professorship at the University of Bonn, in which place he exercised an incalculable influence upon one of the rising stars of German literature, young Heinrich Heine, who derived from him (if we may judge from his own testimony at the time; Heine's later mood is a very different matter) an inspiration amounting to captivation. The brilliant young student discovered here a stimulating leader whose wit, finish, and elegance responded in full measure to the hitherto unsatisfied cravings of his own nature. Although Heine had become a very altered person at the time of writing his *Romantic School* (1836), this book throws a scintillating illumination upon certain sides of Schlegel's temperament, and offers a vivid impression of his living personality.

In these last decades of his life Schlegel turned, as had his younger brother, to the inviting field of Sanskrit literature and philology, and extracted large and important treasures which may still be reckoned among mankind's valued resources. When all discount has been made on the side of a lack of specific gravity in Wilhelm Schlegel's character, it is only just to assert that throughout his long and prolific life he wrought with incalculable effect upon the civilization of modern Europe as a humanizer of the first importance.

Ludwig Tieck (1773-1853) is reckoned by many students of the Romantic period to be the best and most lasting precipitate which the entire movement has to show. For full sixty years a most prolific writer, and occupied in the main with purely literary production, it is not strange that he came to be regarded as the poetic mouthpiece of the school.

His birth was in a middle-class family of Berlin. A full university training at Halle, Göttingen and Erlangen was accorded him, during which he cannot be said to have distinguished himself by any triumph in the field of formal studies, but in the course of which he assimilated at first hand the chief modern languages of culture, without any professional guidance. At an early stage in his growth he discovered and fed full upon Shakespeare. As a university student he also fell in love with the homely lore of German folk-poetry. In 1794 he came back to Berlin, and turned to rather banal hack-writing for the publisher Nicolai, chief of all exponents of rationalism. Significant was his early rehabilitation of popular folk-tales and chapbooks, as in *The Wonderful Love-Story of Beautiful Magelone and Count Peter of Provence* (1797). The stuff was that of one of the prose chivalry-stories of the middle ages, full of marvels, seeking the remote among strange hazards by land and sea. The tone of Tieck's narrative is childlike and naïve, with rainbow-glows of the bliss of romantic love, glimpses of the poetry and symbolism of Catholic tradition, and a somewhat sugary admixture of the spirit of the *Minnelied*, with plenty of refined and delicate sensuousness. With the postulate that song is the true language of life, the story is sprinkled with lyrics at every turn. The whole adventure is into the realm of dreams and vague sensations.

Tieck must have been liberally baptized with Spree-water, for the instantaneous, corrosive Berlin wit was a large part of his endowment. His cool irony associated him more closely to the Schlegels than to Novalis, with his life-and-death consecrations. His absurd play-within-a-play, *Puss in Boots* (1797), is delicious in its bizarre ragout of satirical extravaganzas, where the naïve and the ironic lie side by side, and where the pompous seriousness of certain complacent standards is neatly excoriated.

Such publications as the two mentioned were hailed with rejoicing by the Schlegels, who at once adopted Tieck as a natural ally. Even more after their own hearts was the long novel, *Franz Sternbald's Wanderings* (1798), a vibrant confession, somewhat influenced by *Wilhelm Meister*, of the Religion of Art (or the Art of Religion): "Devout worship is the highest and purest joy in Art, a joy of which our natures are capable only in their purest and most exalted hours."

Sternbald, a pupil of Albrecht Dürer, makes a roving journey to the Low Countries, the Rhine, and Italy, in order to deepen his artistic nature. The psychology of the novel is by no means always true to the spirit of the sixteenth century; in fact a good part of the story reflects aristocratic French chateau-life in the eighteenth century. The intensities of romantic friendship give a sustained thrill, and the style is rhythmic, though the action is continually interrupted by episodes, lyrics, and

discourses. In the unworldliness, the delicacy of sensibility, and the somewhat vague outlines of the story one may be reminded, at times, of *The Marble Faun*. Its defense of German Art, as compared with that of the Italian Renaissance, is its chief message.

This novel has been dwelt upon because of its direct influence upon German painting and religion. A new verb, "*sternbaldisieren*," was coined to parody a new movement in German art toward the medieval, religious spirit. It is this book which Heine had in mind when he ridiculed Tieck's "silly plunge into medieval naïveté." Overbeck and Cornelius in Rome, with their pre-Raphaelite, old-German and catholicizing tendencies, became the leaders of a productive school. Goethe scourged it for its "mystic-religious" aspirations, and demanded a more vigorous, cheerful and progressive outlook for German painting.

Having already formed a personal acquaintance with Friedrich Schlegel in Berlin, Tieck moved to Jena in 1799, came into very close relations with Fichte, the Schlegels, and Novalis, and continued to produce works in the spirit of the group, notably the tragedy *Life and Death of Saint Genoveva* (1800). His most splendid literary feat at this period, however, was the translation of *Don Quixote* (1799-1801), a triumph over just those subtle difficulties which are well-nigh insurmountable, a rendering which went far beyond any mere literalness of text, and reproduced the very tone and aura of its original.

In 1803 he published a graceful little volume of typical *Minnelieder*, renewed from the middle high-German period. The note of the book (in which Runge's copperplate outlines are perhaps as significant as the poems) is spiritualized sex-love: the utterance of its fragrance and delicacy, its unique place in the universe as a pathway to the Divine—a point of view to which the modern mind is prone to take some exceptions, considering a religion of erotics hardly firm enough ground to support an entire philosophy of living. All the motives of the old court-lyric are well represented—the torments and rewards of love, the charm of spring, the refinements of courtly breeding—and the sophisticated metrical forms are handled with great virtuosity. Schiller, it is true, compared them to the chatter of sparrows, and Goethe also paid his compliments to the "sing-song of the Minnesingers," but it was this same little book which first gave young Jakob Grimm the wish to become acquainted with these poets in their original form.

That eminently "Romantic" play, *Emperor Octavian* (1804), derived from a familiar medieval chap-book, lyric in tone and loose in form, is a pure epitome of the movement, and the high-water mark of Tieck's apostleship and service. Here Tieck shows his intimate sense of the poetry of inanimate nature; ironic mockery surrenders completely to religious devotion; the piece is bathed in—

> The light that never was on sea or land,
> The consecration and the poet's dream.

It is in the prologue to this play that personified Romance declares her descent from Faith, her father, and Love, her mother, and introduces the action by the command:

> "Moonshine-lighted magic night
> Holding every sense in thrall;
> World, which wondrous tales recall,
> Rise, in ancient splendors bright!"

During a year's residence in Italy Tieck applied himself chiefly to reading old-German manuscripts, in the Library of the Vatican, and wavered upon the edge of a decision to devote himself to Germanic philology.

The loss to science is not serious, for Tieck hardly possessed the grasp and security which could have made him a peer of the great pioneers in this field. From the time of his leaving for Italy, Tieck's importance for the development of Romanticism becomes comparatively negligible.

After a roving existence of years, during which he lived in Vienna, Munich, Prague and London, he made a settled home in Dresden. Here he had an enviable place in the very considerable literary and artistic group, and led an existence of almost suspiciously "reasonable" well-being, from a Romantic view-point. The "dramatic evenings" at his home, in which he read plays aloud before a brilliant gathering, were a feature of social life. For seventeen years he had an influential position as "dramaturg" of the Royal Theatre, it being his duty to pass on plays to be performed and to decide upon suitable actors for the parts.

During his long residence in Dresden Tieck produced a very large number of short stories (*Novellen*) which had a decided vogue, though they differ widely from his earlier writings in dealing with real, contemporary life.

It is pleasant to record that the evening of Tieck's long life was made secure from anxieties by a call to Berlin from Friedrich Wilhelm IV., the "Romantic king." His last eleven years were spent there in quiet and peace, disturbed only by having to give dramatic readings before a self-sufficient court circle which was imperfectly equipped for appreciating the merits of Tieck's performances.

The early Romantic movement found its purest expression in the person and writings of Friedrich von Hardenberg, better known under his assumed literary name Novalis (1772-1801). Both his father, Baron von Hardenberg (chief director of the Saxon salt-works), and his mother belonged to the Moravians, that devoted group of mystical pietists whose sincere consecration to the things of the spirit has achieved a deathless place in the annals of the religious history of the eighteenth century, and, more particularly, determined the beginnings and the essential character of the world-wide Methodist movement. His gentle life presents very little of dramatic incident: he was a reserved, somewhat unsocial boy, greatly devoted to study and to the reading of poetry. He was given a most thorough education, and, while completing his university career, became acquainted with Friedrich Schlegel, and remained his most intimate friend. He also came to know Fichte, and eagerly absorbed his *Doctrine of Science*. A little later he came into close relations with Wilhelm Schlegel and Tieck in Jena. He experienced a seraphic love for a delicate girl of thirteen, whose passing away at the age of fifteen served to transport the youth's interests almost exclusively to the invisible world: "Life is a sickness of the spirit, a passionate Doing." His chief conversation lay in solitude, in seeking for a mystic inner solution of the secrets of external nature. He loved to discourse on these unseen realms, and to create an ideal connection between them all. The testimony of his friend Tieck, who in company with Friedrich Schlegel edited his works in a spirit of almost religious piety, runs: "The common life environed him like some tale of fiction, and that realm which most men conceive as something far and incomprehensible was the very Home of his Soul." He was not quite twenty-nine years old at the time of his peaceful death, which plunged the circle of his Romantic friends into deepest grief.

The envelope of his spiritual nature was so tenuous that he seemed to respond to all the subtler influences of the universe; a sensitive chord attuned to poetic values, he appeared to exercise an almost mediumistic refraction and revelation of matters which lie only in the realm of the transcendental—

"Weaving about the commonplace of things
The golden haze of morning's blushing glow."

In reading Novalis, it is hardly possible to discriminate between discourse and dreaming; his passion was for remote, never-experienced things—

"Ah, lonely stands, and merged in woe,

Who loves the past with fervent glow!"

His homesickness for the invisible world became an almost sensuous yearning for the joys of death.

In the first volume of the *Athenæum* (1798) a place of honor was given to his group of apothegms, *Pollen* (rather an unromantic translation for "*Blüthenstaub*"); these were largely supplemented by materials found after his death, and republished as *Fragments*. In the last volume of the same journal (1800) appeared his *Hymns to Night*. Practically all of his other published works are posthumous: his unfinished novel, *Henry of Ofterdingen*; a set of religious hymns; the beginnings of a "physical novel," *The Novices at Saïs*.

Novalis's aphoristic "seed-thoughts" reveal Fichte's transcendental idealistic philosophy as the fine-spun web of all his observations on life. The external world is but a shadow; the universe is in us; there, or nowhere, is infinity, with all its systems, past or future; the world is but a precipitate of human nature.

The Novices at Saïs, a mystical contemplation of nature reminding us of the discourses of Jakob Böhme, has some suggestion of the symbolistic lore of parts of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, and proves a most racking riddle to the uninitiated. The penetration into the meaning of the Veiled Image of Nature is attempted from the point of view that all is symbolic: only poetic, intuitive souls may enter in; the merely physical investigator is but searching through a charnel-house. Nature, the countenance of Divinity, reveals herself to the childlike spirit; to such she will, at her own good pleasure, disclose herself spontaneously, though gradually. This seems to be the inner meaning of the episodic tale, *Hyacinth and Rose-Blossom*. The rhythmic prose *Hymns to Night* exhale a delicate melancholy, moving in a vague haze, and yet breathing a peace which comes from a knowledge of the deeper meanings of things, divined rather than experienced. Their stealing melody haunts the soul, however dazed the mind may be with their vagueness, and their exaltation of death above life. In his *Spiritual Poems* we feel a simple, passionate intensity of adoration, a yearning sympathy for the hopeless and the heavy-laden; in their ardent assurance of love, peace, and rest, they are surely to be reckoned among the most intimate documents in the whole archives of the "varieties of religious experience."

The unfinished novel *Henry of Ofterdingen* reaches a depth of obscurity which is saved from absurdity only by the genuinely fervent glow of a soul on the quest for its mystic ideals: "The blue flower it is that I yearn to look upon!" No farcical romance of the nursery shows more truly the mingled stuff that dreams are made on, yet the intimation that the dream is not all a dream, that the spirit of an older day is symbolically struggling for some expression in words, gave it in its day a serious importance at which our own age can merely marvel. It brings no historical conviction; it is altogether free from such conventional limits as Time and Space. Stripped of its dreamy diction, there is even a tropical residue of sensuousness, to which the English language is prone to give a plainer name. It develops into a fantastic *mélange* which no American mind can possibly reckon with; what its effect would be upon a person relegated to reading it in close confinement, it would not be safe to assert, but it is quite certain that "this way madness lies."

To generalize about the Romantic movement, may seem about as practical as to attempt to make a trigonometrical survey of the Kingdom of Dreams. No epoch in all literary history is so hopelessly entangled in the meshes of subtle philosophical speculation, derived from the most complex sources. To deal with the facts of classic art, which is concerned with seeking a clearly-defined perfection, is a simple matter compared with the unbounded and undefined concepts of a school which waged war upon "the deadliness of ascertained facts" and immersed itself in vague intimations of glories that were to be. Its most authorized exponent declared it to be "the delineation of sentimental matter in fantastic form." A more elaborated authoritative definition is given in the first volume of the *Athenæum*:

"Romantic poetry is a progressive universal-poetry. Its aim is not merely to reunite all the dispersed classes of poetry, and to place poetry in touch with philosophy and rhetoric; it aims and ought to aim to mingle and combine poetry and prose, genius and criticism, artistic and natural poetry; to make poetry lively and social, to make life and society poetic; to poetize wit, to saturate all the forms of art with worthy materials of culture and enliven them by the sallies of humor. It embraces everything that is poetic, from the greatest and most inclusive system of art, to the sigh, the kiss, that the poetic child utters in artless song. Other classes of poetry are complete, and may now be exhaustively dissected; romantic poetry is still in process of becoming—in fact this is its chief characteristic, that it forever can merely become, but never be completed. It can never be exhausted by any theory, and only an intuitive criticism could dare to attempt to characterize its ideals. It alone is endless, as it alone is free, and asserts as its first law that the whim of the poet tolerates no law above itself. Romantic poetry is the only sort which is more than a class, and, as it were, the art of poetry itself."

We may in part account for Romanticism by recalling that it was the product of an age which was no longer in sympathy with its own tasks, an age of political miseries and restrained powers, which turned away from its own surroundings and sought to be free from all contact with them, striving to benumb its sensations by an auto-intoxication of dreams.

Romanticism is built upon the imposing corner-stone of the unique importance of the Individual: "To become God, to be man, to develop one's own being, these are expressions for the same thing." As personality is supreme, it is natural that there should follow a contempt for the mediocrity of current majorities, standards and opinions. It abhorred universal abstractions, as opposed to the truth and meaning of individual phenomena. It stoutly believed in an inexpugnable right to Illusions, and held clarity and earnestness to be foes of human happiness. "The poem gained great applause, because it had so strange, so well-nigh unintelligible a sound. It was like music itself, and for that very reason attracted so irresistibly. Although the hearers were awake, they were entertained *as though in a dream*."

Hence a purely lyric attitude toward life, which was apprehended only on transcendent, musical valuations. Poetry was to be the heart and centre of actual living; modern life seemed full of "prose and pettiness" as compared with the Middle Ages; it was the doctrine of this Mary in the family of Bethany to leave to the Martha of dull externalists the care of many things, while she "chose the better part" in contemplative lingering at the vision of what was essentially higher. A palpitant imagination outranks "cold intelligence;" sensation, divorced from all its bearings or functions, is its own excuse for being. Of responsibility, hardly a misty trace; realities are playthings and to be treated allegorically.

The step was not a long one to the thesis that "disorder and confusion are the pledge of true efficiency"—such being one of the "seed-thoughts" of Novalis. In mixing all species, Romanticism amounts to unchartered freedom, "*die gesunde, kräftige Ungezogenheit*." It is no wonder that so many of its literary works remain unfinished fragments, and that many of its exponents led unregulated lives.

"Get you irony, and form yourself to urbanity" is the counsel of Friedrich Schlegel. The unbridgeable chasm between Ideal and Life could not be spanned, and the baffled idealist met this hopelessness with the shrug of irony. The every-day enthusiasm of the common life invited only a sneer, often, it is true, associated with flashing wit.

Among its more pleasing manifestations, Romanticism shows a remarkable group of gifted, capable women, possibly because this philosophy of intuition corresponds to the higher intimations of woman's soul. Other obvious fruits of the movement were the revival of the poetry and dignity of the Middle Ages, both in art and life—that colorful, form-loving musical era which the Age of Enlightenment had so crassly despised. That this yearning for the beautiful background led to reaction in politics and religion is natural enough; more edifying are the rich fruits which scholarship recovered when Romanticism had directed it into the domains of German antiquity and philology, and the wealth

of popular song. In addition to these, we must reckon the spoils which these adventurers brought back from their quest into the faery lands of Poetry in southern climes.

When all is said, and in spite of Romanticism's weak and unmanly quitting of the field of duty, in spite of certain tendencies to ignore and supersede the adamant foundations of morality upon which the "humanities" as well as society rest, one cannot quite help hoping that somehow good may be the final hint of it all. Like Mary Stuart, it is, at least, somewhat better than its worst repute, as formulated by its enemies. Estimates change; even the excellent Wordsworth was held by the English reviewers to be fantastic and vague in his *Ode to Duty*. We should not forget that the most shocking pronouncements of the Romanticists were uttered half-ironically, to say the least. After its excursion into the fantastic jungle of Romanticism, the world has found it restful and restorative, to be sure, to return to the limited perfection of the serene and approved classics; yet perchance it *is* the last word of all philosophy that the astounding circumambient Universe is almost entirely unperceived by our senses and reasoning powers.

Let us confess, and without apology, that the country which claims a Hawthorne, a Poe, and a youthful Longfellow, can never surrender unconditionally its hold upon the "True Romance:"

"Through wantonness if men profess
They weary of Thy parts,
E'en let them die at blasphemy
And perish with their arts;
But we that love, but we that prove
Thine excellence august,
While we adore discover more
Thee perfect, wise, and just….

A veil to draw 'twixt God His Law
And Man's infirmity;
A shadow kind to dumb and blind
The shambles where we die;
A sum to trick th' arithmetic
Too base of leaguing odds;
The spur of trust, the curb of lust—
Thou handmaid of the Gods!"

AUGUST WILHELM SCHLEGEL

* * * * *

LECTURES ON DRAMATIC ART[11] (1809)

TRANSLATED BY JOHN BLACK

LECTURE XXII

Comparison of the English and Spanish Theatres—Spirit of the Romantic Drama—Shakespeare—His age and the circumstances of his Life.

In conformity with the plan which we laid down at the first, we shall now proceed to treat of the English and Spanish theatres. We have been, on various occasions, compelled in passing to allude cursorily, sometimes to the one and sometimes to the other, partly for the sake of placing, by means of contrast, many ideas in a clearer light, and partly on account of the influence which these stages have had on the theatres of other countries. Both the English and Spaniards possess a very rich dramatic literature, both have had a number of prolific and highly talented dramatists, among whom even the least admired and celebrated, considered as a whole, display uncommon aptitude for dramatic animation and insight into the essence of theatrical effect. The history of their theatres has no connection with that of the Italians and French, for they developed themselves wholly out of the abundance of their own intrinsic energy, without any foreign influence: the attempts to bring them back to an imitation of the ancients, or even of the French, have either been attended with no success, or not been made till a late period in the decay of the drama. The formation of these two stages, again, is equally independent of each other; the Spanish poets were altogether unacquainted with the English; and in the older and most important period of the English theatre I could discover no trace of any knowledge of Spanish plays (though their novels and romances were certainly known), and it was not till the time of Charles II. that translations from Calderon first made their appearance.

So many things among men have been handed down from century to century and from nation to nation, and the human mind is in general so slow to invent, that originality in any department of mental exertion is everywhere a rare phenomenon. We are desirous of seeing the result of the efforts of inventive geniuses when, regardless of what in the same line has elsewhere been carried to a high degree of perfection, they set to work in good earnest to invent altogether for themselves; when they lay the foundation of the new edifice on uncovered ground, and draw all the preparations, all the building materials, from their own resources. We participate, in some measure, in the joy of success, when we see them advance rapidly from their first helplessness and need to a finished mastery in their art. The history of the Grecian theatre would afford us this cheering prospect could we witness its rudest beginnings, which were not preserved, for they were not even committed to writing; but it is easy, when we compare Æschylus and Sophocles, to form some idea of the preceding period. The Greeks neither inherited nor borrowed their dramatic art from any other people; it was original and native, and for that very reason was it able to produce a living and powerful effect. But it ended with the period when Greeks imitated Greeks; namely, when the Alexandrian poets began learnedly and critically to compose dramas after the model of the great tragic writers. The reverse of this was the case with the Romans; they received the form and substance of their dramas from the Greeks; they never attempted to act according to their own discretion, or to express their own way of thinking; and hence they occupy so insignificant a place in the history of dramatic art. Among the nations of modern Europe, the English and Spaniards alone (for the German stage is but forming) possess as yet a theatre entirely original and national, which, in its own peculiar shape, has arrived at maturity.

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Those critics who consider the authority of the ancients, as models, to be such that in poetry, as in all the other arts, there can be no safety out of the pale of imitation, affirm that, as the nations in question have not followed this course, they have brought nothing but irregular works on the stage, which, though they may possess occasional passages of splendor and beauty, must yet, as a whole, be forever reprobated as barbarous and wanting in form. We have already, in the introductory part of these Lectures, stated our sentiments generally on this way of thinking; but we must now examine the subject somewhat more closely.

If the assertion be well founded, all that distinguishes the works of the greatest English and Spanish dramatists, a Shakespeare and a Calderon, must rank them far below the ancients; they could in no wise be of importance for theory, and would at most appear remarkable, on the assumption that the obstinacy of these nations in refusing to comply with the rules may have afforded a more ample field to the poets to display their native originality, though at the expense of art. But even this assumption, on a closer examination, appears extremely questionable. The poetic spirit requires to be limited, that it may move with a becoming liberty within its proper precincts, as has been felt by all nations on the first invention of metre; it must act according to laws derivable from its own essence, otherwise its strength will evaporate in boundless vacuity.

The works of genius cannot therefore be permitted to be without form; but of this there is no danger. However, that we may answer this objection of want of form, we must understand the exact meaning of the term "form," since most critics, and more especially those who insist on a stiff regularity, interpret it merely in a mechanical, and not in an organical sense. Form is mechanical when, through external force, it is imparted to any material merely as an accidental addition without reference to its quality; as, for example, when we give a particular shape to a soft mass that it may retain the same after its induration. Organical form, again, is innate; it unfolds itself from within, and requires its determination contemporaneously with the perfect development of the germ. We everywhere discover such forms in nature throughout the whole range of living powers, from the crystallization of salts and minerals to plants and flowers, and from these again to the human body. In the fine arts, as well as in the domain of nature, the supreme artist, all genuine forms are organical, that is, determined by the quality of the work. In a word, the form is nothing but a significant exterior, the speaking physiognomy of each thing, which, as long as it is not disfigured by any destructive accident, gives a true evidence of its hidden essence.

Hence it is evident that the spirit of poetry, which, though imperishable, migrates, as it were, through different bodies, must, so often as it is newly born in the human race, mold to itself, out of the nutrimental substance of an altered age, a body of a different conformation. The forms vary with the direction taken by the poetical sense; and when we give to the new kinds of poetry the old names, and judge of them according to the ideas conveyed by these names, the application which we make of the authority of classical antiquity is altogether unjustifiable. No one should be tried before a tribunal to which he is not amenable. We may safely admit that most of the English and Spanish dramatic works are neither tragedies nor comedies in the sense of the ancients; they are romantic dramas. That the stage of a people in its foundation and formation, who neither knew nor wished to know anything of foreign models, will possess many peculiarities, and not only deviate from, but even exhibit a striking contrast to, the theatres of other nations who had a common model for imitation before their eyes, is easily supposable, and we should only be astonished were it otherwise.

But when in two nations, differing so widely as the English and Spanish in physical, moral, political, and religious respects, the theatres (which, without being known to one another, arose about the same time) possess, along with external and internal diversities, the most striking features of affinity, the attention even of the most thoughtless cannot but be turned to this phenomenon; and the conjecture will naturally occur that the same, or, at least, a kindred principle must have prevailed in the development of both. This comparison, however, of the English and Spanish theatre, in their common contrast with every dramatic literature which has grown up out of an imitation of

the ancients, has, so far as we know, never yet been attempted. Could we raise from the dead a countryman, a contemporary and intelligent admirer of Shakespeare, and another of Calderon, and introduce to their acquaintance the works of the poet to which in life they were strangers, they would both, without doubt, considering the subject rather from a national than a general point of view, enter with difficulty into the above idea and have many objections to urge against it. But here a reconciling criticism[12] must step in; and this, perhaps, may be best exercised by a German, who is free from the national peculiarities of either Englishmen or Spaniards, yet by inclination friendly to both, and prevented by no jealousy from acknowledging the greatness which has been earlier exhibited in other countries than his own.

The similarity of the English and Spanish theatres does not consist merely in the bold neglect of the Unities of Place and Time, or in the commixture of comic and tragic elements; that they were unwilling or unable to comply with the rules and with right reason (in the meaning of certain critics these terms are equivalent), may be considered as an evidence of merely negative properties. The ground of the resemblance lies far deeper, in the inmost substance of the fictions and in the essential relations through which every deviation of form becomes a true requisite, which, together with its validity, has also its significance. What they have in common with each other is the spirit of the romantic poetry, giving utterance to itself in a dramatic shape. However, to explain ourselves with due precision, the Spanish theatre, in our opinion, down to its decline and fall in the commencement of the eighteenth century, is almost entirely romantic; the English is completely so in Shakespeare alone, its founder and greatest master; but in later poets the romantic principle appears more or less degenerated, or is no longer perceivable, although the march of dramatic composition introduced by virtue of it has been, outwardly at least, pretty generally retained. The manner in which the different ways of thinking of the two nations, one a northern and the other a southern, have been expressed; the former endowed with a gloomy, the latter with a glowing imagination; the one nation possessed of a scrutinizing seriousness disposed to withdraw within itself, the other impelled outwardly by the violence of passion—the mode in which all this has been accomplished will be most satisfactorily explained at the close of this section, when we come to institute a parallel between Shakespeare and Calderon, the only two poets who are entitled to be called great.

Of the origin and essence of the romantic I treated in my first Lecture, and I shall here, therefore, merely briefly mention the subject. The ancient art and poetry rigorously separate things which are dissimilar; the romantic delights in indissoluble mixtures; all contrarieties—nature and art, poetry and prose, seriousness and mirth, recollection and anticipation, spirituality and sensuality, terrestrial and celestial, life and death, are by it blended in the most intimate combination. As the oldest law-givers delivered their mandatory instructions and prescriptions in measured melodies; as this is fabulously ascribed to Orpheus, the first softener of the yet untamed race of mortals; in like manner the whole of ancient poetry and art is, as it were, a rhythmical *nomos* (law), a harmonious promulgation of the permanently established legislation of a world submitted to a beautiful order and reflecting in itself the eternal images of things. Romantic poetry, on the other hand, is the expression of the secret attraction to a chaos which lies concealed in the very bosom of the ordered universe, and is perpetually striving after new and marvelous births; the life-giving spirit of primal love broods here anew on the face of the waters. The former is more simple, clear, and like to nature in the self-existent perfection of her separate works; the latter, notwithstanding its fragmentary appearance, approaches nearer to the secret of the universe. For Conception can only comprise each object separately, but nothing in truth can ever exist separately and by itself; Feeling perceives all in all at one and the same time.

[12] This appropriate expression was, if we mistake not, first used by M. Adam Müller in his *Lectures on German Science and Literature*. If, however, he gives himself out as the inventor of the thing itself, he is, to use the softest word, in error. Long before him other Germans had endeavored to reconcile the contrarieties of taste of different ages and nations, and to pay due homage to all genuine poetry and art. Between good and bad, it is true, no reconciliation is possible.

Respecting the two species of poetry with which we are here principally occupied, we compared the ancient Tragedy to a group in sculpture, the figures corresponding to the characters, and their grouping to the action; and to these two, in both productions of art, is the consideration exclusively directed, as being all that is properly exhibited. But the romantic drama must be viewed as a large picture, where not merely figure and motion are exhibited in larger, richer groups, but where even all that surrounds the figures must also be portrayed; where we see not merely the nearest objects, but are indulged with the prospect of a considerable distance; and all this under a magical light which assists in giving to the impression the particular character desired.

Such a picture must be bounded less perfectly and less distinctly than the group; for it is like a fragment cut out of the optic scene of the world. However, the painter, by the setting of his foreground, by throwing the whole of his light into the centre, and by other means of fixing the point of view, will learn that he must neither wander beyond the composition nor omit anything within it.

In the representation of figure, Painting cannot compete with Sculpture, since the former can exhibit it only by a deception and from a single point of view; but, on the other hand, it communicates more life to its imitations by colors which in a picture are made to imitate the lightest shades of mental expression in the countenance. The look, which can be given only very imperfectly by Sculpture, enables us to read much deeper in the mind and perceive its lightest movements. Its peculiar charm, in short, consists in this, that it enables us to see in bodily objects what is least corporeal, namely, light and air.

The very same description of beauties are peculiar to the romantic drama. It does not (like the Old Tragedy) separate seriousness and the action, in a rigid manner, from among the whole ingredients of life; it embraces at once the whole of the chequered drama of life with all its circumstances; and while it seems only to represent subjects brought accidentally together, it satisfies the unconscious requisitions of fancy, buries us in reflections on the inexpressible signification of the objects which we view blended by order, nearness and distance, light and color, into one harmonious whole; and thus lends, as it were, a soul to the prospect before us.

The change of time and of place (supposing its influence on the mind to be included in the picture and that it comes to the aid of the theatrical perspective, with reference to what is indicated in the distance, or half-concealed by intervening objects); the contrast of gayety and gravity (supposing that in degree and kind they bear a proportion to each other); finally, the mixture of the dialogical and the lyrical elements (by which the poet is enabled, more or less perfectly, to transform his personages into poetical beings)—these, in my opinion, are not mere licenses, but true beauties in the romantic drama. In all these points, and in many others also, the English and Spanish works, which are preeminently worthy of this title of Romantic, fully resemble each other, however different they may be in other respects.

Of the two we shall first notice the English theatre, because it arrived at maturity earlier than the Spanish. In both we must occupy ourselves almost exclusively with a single artist, with Shakespeare in the one and Calderon in the other; but not in the same order with each, for Shakespeare stands first and earliest among the English; any remarks we may have to make on earlier or contemporary antiquities of the English stage may be made in a review of his history. But Calderon had many predecessors; he is at once the summit and almost the close of dramatic art in Spain.

The wish to speak with the brevity which the limits of my plan demand, of a poet to the study of whom I have devoted many years of my life, places me in no little embarrassment. I know not where to begin; for I should never be able to end, were I to say all that I have felt and thought, on the perusal of his works. With the poet, as with the man, a more than ordinary intimacy prevents us, perhaps, from putting ourselves in the place of those who are first forming an acquaintance with him: we are too familiar with his most striking peculiarities to be able to pronounce upon the first impression which they are calculated to make on others. On the other hand, we ought to possess, and to have the power of communicating, more correct ideas of his mode of procedure, of his concealed

or less obvious views, and of the meaning and import of his labors, than others whose acquaintance with him is more limited.

Shakespeare is the pride of his nation. A late poet has, with propriety, called him "the genius of the British isles." He was the idol of his contemporaries during the interval, indeed, of puritanical fanaticism, which broke out in the next generation and rigorously proscribed all liberal arts and literature, and, during the reign of the second Charles, when his works were either not acted at all, or, if so, very much changed and disfigured, his fame was awhile obscured, only to shine forth again about the beginning of the last century with more than its original brightness; but since then it has only increased in lustre with the course of time; and for centuries to come (I speak it with the greatest confidence) it will, like an Alpine avalanche, continue to gather strength at every moment of its progress. Of the future extension of his fame, the enthusiasm with which he was naturalized in Germany, the moment that he was known, is a significant earnest. In the South of Europe,[13] his language and the great difficulty of translating him with fidelity will be, perhaps, an invincible obstacle to his general diffusion. In England, the greatest actors vie with one another in the impersonation of his characters; the printers in splendid editions of his works; and the painters in transferring his scenes to the canvas. Like Dante, Shakespeare has received the perhaps inevitable but still cumbersome honor of being treated like a classical author of antiquity. The oldest editions have been carefully collated, and, where the readings seemed corrupt, many corrections have been suggested; and the whole literature of his age has been drawn forth from the oblivion to which it had been consigned, for the sole purpose of explaining the phrases and illustrating the allusions of Shakespeare. Commentators have succeeded one another in such number that their labors alone, with the critical controversies to which they have given rise, constitute of themselves no inconsiderable library. These labors deserve both our praise and gratitude—more especially the historical investigations into the sources from which Shakespeare drew the materials of his plays and also into the previous and contemporary state of the English stage, as well as other kindred subjects of inquiry. With respect, however, to their merely philological criticisms, I am frequently compelled to differ from the commentators; and where, too, considering him simply as a poet, they endeavor to enter into his views and to decide upon his merits, I must separate myself from them entirely. I have hardly ever found either truth or profundity in their remarks; and these critics seem to me to be but stammering interpreters of the general and almost idolatrous admiration of his countrymen. There may be people in England who entertain the same views of them with myself, at least it is a well-known fact that a satirical poet has represented Shakespeare, under the hands of his commentators, by Actæon worried to death by his own dogs; and, following up the story of Ovid, designated a female writer on the great poet as the snarling Lycisca.

We shall endeavor, in the first place, to remove some of these false views, in order to clear the way for our own homage, that we may thereupon offer it the more freely without let or hindrance.

From all the accounts of Shakespeare which have come down to us it is clear that his contemporaries knew well the treasure they possessed in him, and that they felt and understood him better than most of those who succeeded him. In those days a work was generally ushered into the world with Commendatory Verses; and one of these, prefixed to an early edition of Shakespeare, by an unknown author, contains some of the most beautiful and happy lines that were ever applied to any poet.[14] An idea, however, soon became prevalent that Shakespeare was a rude and wild genius, who poured forth at random, and without aim or object, his unconnected compositions. Ben Jonson, a younger contemporary and rival of Shakespeare, who labored in the sweat of his brow, but with no great success, to expel the romantic drama from the English stage and to form it on the model

[13] This difficulty extends also to France; for it must not be supposed that a literal translation can ever be a faithful one. Mrs. Montague has done enough to prove how wretchedly even Voltaire, in his rhymeless Alexandrines, has translated a few passages from *Hamlet* and the first act of *Julius Cæsar*.

[14] It begins with the words: *A mind reflecting ages past*, and is subscribed I.M.S.

of the ancients, gave it as his opinion that Shakespeare did not blot enough, and that, as he did not possess much school-learning, he owed more to nature than to art. The learned, and sometimes rather pedantic Milton was also of this opinion, when he says—

> Our sweetest Shakespeare, fancy's child,
> Warbles his native wood-notes wild.

Yet it is highly honorable to Milton that the sweetness of Shakespeare, the quality which of all others has been least allowed, was felt and acknowledged by him. The modern editors, both in their prefaces, which may be considered as so many rhetorical exercises in praise of the poet, and in their remarks on separate passages, go still farther. Judging them by principles which are not applicable to them, not only do they admit the irregularity of his pieces, but, on occasion, they accuse him of bombast, of a confused, ungrammatical, and conceited mode of writing, and even of the most contemptible buffoonery. Pope asserts that he wrote both better and worse than any other man. All the scenes and passages which did not square with the littleness of his own taste, he wished to place to the account of interpolating players; and he was on the right road, had his opinion been taken, of giving us a miserable dole of a mangled Shakespeare. It is, therefore, not to be wondered at if foreigners, with the exception of the Germans latterly, have, in their ignorance of him, even improved upon these opinions.[15] They speak in general of Shakespeare's plays as monstrous productions, which could have been given to the world only by a disordered imagination in a barbarous age; and Voltaire crowns the whole with more than usual assurance when he observes that *Hamlet*, the profound masterpiece of the philosophical poet, "seems the work of a drunken savage." That foreigners, and, in particular, Frenchmen, who ordinarily speak the most strange language of antiquity and the middle ages, as if cannibalism had been terminated in Europe only by Louis XIV., should entertain this opinion of Shakespeare, might be pardonable; but that Englishmen should join in calumniating that glorious epoch of their history,[16] which laid the foundation of their national greatness, is incomprehensible.

Shakespeare flourished and wrote in the last half of the reign of Queen Elizabeth and first half of that of James I.; and, consequently, under monarchs who were learned themselves and held literature in honor. The policy of modern Europe, by which the relations of its different states have been so variously interwoven with one another, commenced a century before. The cause of the Protestants was decided by the accession of Elizabeth to the throne; and the attachment to the ancient belief cannot therefore be urged as a proof of the prevailing darkness. Such was the zeal for the study of the ancients that even court ladies, and the queen herself, were acquainted with Latin and Greek, and taught even to speak the former—a degree of knowledge which we should in vain seek for in the courts of Europe at the present day. The trade and navigation which the English carried on with all the four quarters of the world made them acquainted with the customs and mental productions of other nations; and it would appear that they were then more indulgent to foreign manners than they are in the present day. Italy had already produced nearly all that still distinguishes her literature, and, in England, translations in verse were diligently, and even successfully, executed from the Italian. Spanish literature also was not unknown, for it is certain that *Don Quixote* was read in England soon

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[15] Lessing was the first to speak of Shakespeare in a becoming tone; but he said, unfortunately, a great deal too little of him, as in the time when he wrote the *Dramaturgie* this poet had not yet appeared on our stage. Since that time he has been more particularly noticed by Herder in the *Blätter von deutscher Art und Kunst*; Goethe, in *Wilhelm Meister*; and Tieck, in "Letters on Shakespeare" (*Poetisches Journal*, 1800), which break off, however, almost at the commencement.

[16] The English work with which foreigners of every country are perhaps best acquainted is Hume's *History*; and there we have a most unjustifiable account both of Shakespeare and his age. "Born in a *rude age*, and educated in the lowest manner, without any instruction either *from the world* or from books." How could a man of Hume's acuteness suppose for a moment that a poet, whose characters display such an intimate acquaintance with life, who, as an actor and manager of a theatre, must have come in contact with all descriptions of individuals, had no instruction from the world? But this is not the worst; he goes even so far as to say, "a reasonable propriety of thought he cannot for any time uphold." This is nearly as offensive as Voltaire's "drunken savage."—TRANS.

after its first appearance. Bacon, the founder of modern experimental philosophy, and of whom it may be said that he carried in his pocket all that even in this eighteenth century merits the name of philosophy, was a contemporary of Shakespeare. His fame as a writer did not, indeed, break forth into its glory till after his death; but what a number of ideas must have been in circulation before such an author could arise! Many branches of human knowledge have, since that time, been more extensively cultivated, but such branches as are totally unproductive to poetry—chemistry, mechanics, manufactures, and rural and political economy—will never enable a man to become a poet. I have elsewhere[17] examined into the pretensions of modern enlightenment, as it is called, which looks with such contempt on all preceding ages; I have shown that at bottom it is all small, superficial, and unsubstantial. The pride of what has been called "the existing maturity of human intensity" has come to a miserable end; and the structures erected by those pedagogues of the human race have fallen to pieces like the baby-houses of children.

With regard to the tone of society in Shakespeare's day, it is necessary to remark that there is a wide difference between true mental cultivation and what is called polish. That artificial polish which puts an end to everything like free original communication and subjects all intercourse to the insipid uniformity of certain rules, was undoubtedly wholly unknown to the age of Shakespeare, as in a great measure it still is at the present day in England. It possessed, on the other hand, a fulness of healthy vigor, which showed itself always with boldness, and sometimes also with coarseness. The spirit of chivalry was not yet wholly extinct, and a queen, who was far more jealous in exacting homage to her sex than to her throne, and who, with her determination, wisdom, and magnanimity, was in fact well qualified to inspire the minds of her subjects with an ardent enthusiasm, inflamed that spirit to the noblest love of glory and renown. The feudal independence also still survived in some measure; the nobility vied with one another in splendor of dress and number of retinue, and every great lord had a sort of small court of his own. The distinction of ranks was as yet strongly marked—a state of things ardently to be desired by the dramatic poet. In conversation they took pleasure in quick and unexpected answers; and the witty sally passed rapidly like a ball from mouth to mouth, till the merry game could no longer be kept up. This, and the abuse of the play on words (of which King James was himself very fond, and we need not therefore wonder at the universality of the mode), may, doubtless, be considered as instances of a bad taste; but to take them for symptoms of rudeness and barbarity is not less absurd than to infer the poverty of a people from their luxurious extravagance. These strained repartees are frequently employed by Shakespeare, with the view of painting the actual tone of the society in his day; it does not, however, follow that they met with his approbation; on the contrary, it clearly appears that he held them in derision. Hamlet says, in the scene with the gravedigger, "By the Lord, Horatio, these three years I have taken note of it: the age is grown so picked that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he galls his kibe." And Lorenzo, in the *Merchant of Venice*, alluding to Launcelot:

> O dear discretion, how his words are suited!
> The fool hath planted in his memory
> An army of good words: and I do know
> A many fools, that stand in better place,
> Garnish'd like him, that for a tricksy word
> Defy the matter.

[17] In my lectures on *The Spirit of the Age*. O, for my sake do you with fortune chide The guilty goddess of my harmless deeds, That did not better for my life provide Than public means which public manners breeds.And in the following:Your love and pity doth the impression fill, which *vulgar scandal* stamp'd upon my brow.]

Besides, Shakespeare, in a thousand places, lays great and marked stress on a correct and refined tone of society, and lashes every deviation from it, whether of boorishness or affected foppery; not only does he give admirable discourses on it, but he represents it in all its shades and modifications by rank, age, or sex. What foundation is there, then, for the alleged barbarity of his age, its offences against propriety? But if this is to be admitted as a test, then the ages of Pericles and Augustus must also be described as rude and uncultivated; for Aristophanes and Horace, who were both considered as models of urbanity, display, at times, the coarsest indelicacy. On this subject, the diversity in the moral feeling of ages depends on other causes. Shakespeare, it is true, sometimes introduces us to improper company; at others, he suffers ambiguous expressions to escape in the presence of women, and even from women themselves. This species of indelicacy was probably not then unusual. He certainly did not indulge in it merely to please the multitude, for in many of his pieces there is not the slightest trace of this sort to be found; and in what virgin purity are many of his female parts worked out! When we see the liberties taken by other dramatic poets in England in his time, and even much later, we must account him comparatively chaste and moral. Neither must we overlook certain circumstances in the existing state of the theatre. The female parts were not acted by women, but by boys; and no person of the fair sex appeared in the theatre without a mask. Under such a carnival disguise, much might be heard by them, and much might be ventured to be said in their presence, which in other circumstances would have been absolutely improper. It is certainly to be wished that decency should be observed on all public occasions, and consequently also on the stage. But even in this it is possible to go too far. That carping censoriousness which scents out impurity in every bold sally, is, at best, but an ambiguous criterion of purity of morals; and beneath this hypocritical guise there often lurks the consciousness of an impure imagination. The determination to tolerate nothing which has the least reference to the sensual relation between the sexes, may be carried to a pitch extremely oppressive to a dramatic poet and highly prejudicial to the boldness and freedom of his compositions. If such considerations were to be attended to, many of the happiest parts of Shakespeare's plays, for example, in *Measure for Measure*, and *All's Well that Ends Well*, which, nevertheless, are handled with a due regard to decency, must be set aside as sinning against this would-be propriety.

Had no other monuments of the age of Elizabeth come down to us than the works of Shakespeare, I should, from them alone, have formed the most favorable idea of its state of social culture and enlightenment. When those who look through such strange spectacles as to see nothing in them but rudeness and barbarity cannot deny what I have now historically proved, they are usually driven to this last resource, and demand, "What has Shakespeare to do with the mental culture of his age? He had no share in it. Born in an inferior rank, ignorant and uneducated, he passed his life in low society, and labored to please a vulgar audience for his bread, without ever dreaming of fame or posterity."

In all this there is not a single word of truth, though it has been repeated a thousand times. It is true we know very little of the poet's life; and what we do know consists for the most part of raked-up and chiefly suspicious anecdotes, of about such a character as those which are told at inns to inquisitive strangers who visit the birthplace or neighborhood of a celebrated man. Within a very recent period some original documents have been brought to light, and, among them, his will, which give us a peep into his family concerns. It betrays more than ordinary deficiency of critical acumen in Shakespeare's commentators, that none of them, so far as we know, has ever thought of availing himself of his sonnets for tracing the circumstances of his life. These sonnets paint most unequivocally the actual situation and sentiments of the poet; they make us acquainted with the passions of the man; they even contain remarkable confessions of his youthful errors. Shakespeare's father was a man of property, whose ancestors had held the office of alderman and bailiff in Stratford; and in a diploma from the Heralds' Office for the renewal or confirmation of his coat of arms, he is styled *gentleman*. Our poet, the oldest son but third child, could not, it is true, receive an academic education, as he married when hardly eighteen, probably from mere family considerations. This retired and unnoticed life he

continued to lead but a few years; and he was either enticed to London from wearisomeness of his situation, or banished from home, as it is said, in consequence of his irregularities. There he assumed the profession of a player, which he considered at first as a degradation, principally, perhaps, because of the wild excesses[18] into which he was seduced by the example of his comrades. It is extremely probable that the poetical fame which, in the progress of his career, he afterward acquired, greatly contributed to ennoble the stage and to bring the player's profession into better repute. Even at a very early age he endeavored to distinguish himself as a poet in other walks than those of the stage, as is proved by his juvenile poems of *Adonis and Lucrece*. He quickly rose to be a sharer or joint proprietor, and also manager, of the theatre for which he wrote. That he was not admitted to the society of persons of distinction is altogether incredible. Not to mention many others, he found a liberal friend and kind patron in the Earl of Southampton, the friend of the unfortunate Essex. His pieces were not only the delight of the great public, but also in great favor at court; the two monarchs under whose reigns he wrote were, according to the testimony of a contemporary, quite "taken" with him.[19] Many plays were acted at court; and Elizabeth appears herself to have commanded the writing of more than one to be acted at her court festivals. King James, it is well known, honored Shakespeare so far as to write to him with his own hand. All this looks very unlike either contempt or banishment into the obscurity of a low circle. By his labors as a poet, player, and stage-manager, Shakespeare acquired a considerable property, which, in the last years of his too short life, he enjoyed in his native town in retirement and in the society of a beloved daughter. Immediately after his death a monument was erected over his grave, which may be considered sumptuous for those times.

In the midst of such brilliant success, and with such distinguished proofs of respect and honor from his contemporaries, it would be singular indeed if Shakespeare, notwithstanding the modesty of a great mind, which he certainly possessed in a peculiar degree, should never have dreamed of posthumous fame. As a profound thinker he had quite accurately taken the measure of the circle of human capabilities, and he could say to himself with confidence that many of his productions would not easily be surpassed. What foundation then is there for the contrary assertion, which would degrade the immortal artist to the situation of a daily laborer for a rude multitude? Merely this, that he himself published no edition of his whole works. We do not reflect that a poet, always accustomed to labor immediately for the stage, who has often enjoyed the triumph of overpowering assembled crowds of spectators and drawing from them the most tumultuous applause, who the while was not dependent on the caprice of crotchety stage directors, but left to his own discretion to select and determine the mode of theatrical representation, naturally cares much less for the closet of the solitary reader. During the first formation of a national theatre, more especially, we find frequent examples of such indifference. Of the almost innumerable pieces of Lope de Vega, many undoubtedly were never printed, and are consequently lost; and Cervantes did not print his earlier dramas, though he certainly boasts of them as meritorious works. As Shakespeare, on his retiring from the theatre, left his manuscripts behind with his fellow-managers, he may have relied on theatrical tradition for handing them down to posterity, which would indeed have been sufficient for that purpose if the closing of the theatres, under the tyrannical intolerance of the Puritans, had not interrupted the natural order of things. We know, besides, that the poets used then to sell the exclusive copyright of their pieces to the theatre:[20] it is therefore not improbable that the right of property in his unprinted pieces was no longer vested in Shakespeare, or had not, at least, yet reverted to him. His fellow-managers entered on the publication seven years after his death (which probably cut short his own intention), as it would appear on their own account and for their own advantage.

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[18] In one of his sonnets he says:

[19] And make those flights upon the banks of Thames, That so did take Eliza and our James!

[20] This is perhaps not uncommon still in some countries.The Venetian Director Medebach, for whose company many of Goldoni's Comedies were composed, claimed an exclusive right to them.—TRANS.

LECTURE XXIII

Ignorance or Learning of Shakespeare—Costume as observed by Shakespeare, and how far necessary, or may be dispensed with in the Drama—Shakespeare the greatest drawer of Character—Vindication of the genuineness of his pathos—Play on words—Moral delicacy—Irony—Mixture of the Tragic and Comic—The part of the Fool or Clown—Shakespeare's Language and Versification.

Our poet's want of scholarship has been the subject of endless controversy, and yet it is surely a very easy matter to decide. Shakespeare was poor in dead school-cram, but he possessed a rich treasury of living and intuitive knowledge. He knew a little Latin, and even something of Greek, though it may be not enough to read with ease the writers in the original. With modern languages also, the French and Italian, he had, perhaps, but a superficial acquaintance. The general direction of his mind was not to the collection of words but of facts. With English books, whether original or translated, he was extensively acquainted: we may safely affirm that he had read all that his native language and literature then contained that could be of any use to him in his poetical avocations. He was sufficiently intimate with mythology to employ it, in the only manner he could wish, in the way of symbolical ornament. He had formed a correct notion of the spirit of Ancient History, and more particularly of that of the Romans; and the history of his own country was familiar to him even in detail. Fortunately for him it had not as yet been treated in a diplomatic and pragmatic spirit, but merely in the chronicle-style; in other words, it had not yet assumed the appearance of dry investigations respecting the development of political relations, diplomatic negotiations, finances, etc., but exhibited a visible image of the life and movement of an age prolific of great deeds. Shakespeare, moreover, was a nice observer of nature; he knew the technical language of mechanics and artisans; he seems to have been well traveled in the interior of his own country, while of others he inquired diligently of traveled navigators respecting their peculiarity of climate and customs. He thus became accurately acquainted with all the popular usages, opinions, and traditions which could be of use in poetry.

The proofs of his ignorance, on which the greatest stress is laid, are a few geographical blunders and anachronisms. Because in a comedy founded on an earlier tale, he makes ships visit Bohemia, he has been the subject of much laughter. But I conceive that we should be very unjust toward him, were we to conclude that he did not, as well as ourselves, possess the useful but by no means difficult knowledge that Bohemia is nowhere bounded by the sea. He could never, in that case, have looked into a map of Germany, but yet describes elsewhere, with great accuracy, the maps of both Indies, together with the discoveries of the latest navigators.[21] In such matters Shakespeare is faithful only to the details of the domestic stories. In the novels on which he worked, he avoided disturbing the associations of his audience, to whom they were known, by novelties—the correction of errors in secondary and unimportant particulars. The more wonderful the story, the more it ranged in a purely poetical region, which he transfers at will to an indefinite distance. These plays, whatever names they bear, take place in the true land of romance and in the very century of wonderful love stories. He knew well that in the forest of Ardennes there were neither the lions and serpents of the torrid zone, nor the shepherdesses of Arcadia; but he transferred both to it,[22] because the design and import of his picture required them. Here he considered himself entitled to take the greatest liberties. He had not to do with a hair-splitting, hypercritical age like ours, which is always seeking in poetry for

[21] *Twelfth Night, or What You Will*—Act iii., scene 2.

[22] *As You Like It*.

something else than poetry; his audience entered the theatre, not to learn true chronology, geography, and natural history, but to witness a vivid exhibition. I will undertake to prove that Shakespeare's anachronisms are, for the most part, committed of set purpose and deliberately. It was frequently of importance to him to move the exhibited subjects out of the background of time and bring it quite near us. Hence in *Hamlet*, though avowedly an old Northern story, there runs a tone of modish society, and in every respect the customs of the most recent period. Without those circumstantialities it would not have been allowable to make a philosophical inquirer of Hamlet, on which trait, however, the meaning of the whole is made to rest. On that account he mentions his education at a university, though, in the age of the true Hamlet of history, universities were not in existence. He makes him study at Wittenberg, and no selection of a place could have been more suitable. The name was very popular: the story of *Dr. Faustus of Wittenberg* had made it well known; it was of particular celebrity in Protestant England, as Luther had taught and written there shortly before, and the very name must have immediately suggested the idea of freedom in thinking. I cannot even consider it an anachronism that Richard the Third should speak of Machiavelli. The word is here used altogether proverbially the contents, at least, of the book entitled *Of the Prince* (*Del Principe*) have been in existence ever since the existence of tyrants; Machiavelli was merely the first to commit them to writing.

That Shakespeare has accurately hit the essential custom, namely, the spirit of ages and nations, is at least acknowledged generally by the English critics; but many sins against external costume may be easily remarked. Yet here it is necessary to bear in mind that the Roman pieces were acted upon the stage of that day in the European dress. This was, it is true, still grand and splendid, not so silly and tasteless as it became toward the end of the seventeenth century. (Brutus and Cassius appeared in the Spanish cloak; they wore, quite contrary to the Roman custom, the sword by their side in time of peace, and, according to the testimony of an eye witness,[23] it was, in the dialogue where Brutus stimulates Cassius to the conspiracy, drawn, as if involuntarily, half out of the sheath). This does in no way agree with our way of thinking: we are not content without the toga.

The present, perhaps, is not an inappropriate place for a few general observations on costume, considered with reference to art. It has never been more accurately observed than in the present day; art has become a slop-shop for pedantic antiquities. This is because we live in a learned and critical, but by no means poetical age. The ancients before us used, when they had to represent the religions of other nations which deviated very much from their own, to bring them into conformity with the Greek mythology. In Sculpture, again, the same dress, namely, the Phrygian, was adopted, once for all, for every barbaric tribe. Not that they did not know that there were as many different dresses as nations; but in art they merely wished to acknowledge the great contrast between barbarian and civilized: and this, they thought, was rendered most strikingly apparent in the Phrygian garb. The earlier Christian painters represent the Savior, the Virgin Mary, the Patriarchs, and the Apostles in an ideal dress, but the subordinate actors or spectators of the action in the dresses of their own nation and age. Here they were guided by a correct feeling: the mysterious and sacred ought to be kept at an awe-inspiring distance, but the human cannot be rightly understood if seen without its usual accompaniments. In the middle ages all heroical stories of antiquity, from Theseus and Achilles down to Alexander, were metamorphosed into true tales of chivalry. What was related to themselves spoke alone an intelligible language to them; of differences and distinctions they did not care to know. In an old manuscript of the *Iliad*, I saw a miniature illumination representing Hector's funeral procession, where the coffin is hung with noble coats of arms and carried into a Gothic church. It is easy to make merry with this piece of simplicity, but a reflecting mind will see the subject in a very different light. A powerful consciousness of the universal validity and the solid permanency of their own manner of being, an undoubting conviction that it has always so been and will ever continue so to be in the world—these feelings of our ancestors were symptoms of a fresh fulness of life; they were the marrow of action

[23] In one of the commendatory poems in the first folio edition: And on the stage at half sword parley were Brutus and Cassius.

in reality as well as in fiction. Their plain and affectionate attachment to everything around them, handed down from their fathers, is by no means to be confounded with the obstreperous conceit of ages of mannerism, for they, out of vanity, introduce the fleeting modes and fashion of the day into art, because to them everything like noble simplicity seems boorish and rude. The latter impropriety is now abolished: but, on the other hand, our poets and artists, if they would hope for our approbation, must, like servants, wear the livery of distant centuries and foreign nations. We are everywhere at home except at home. We do ourselves the justice to allow that the present mode of dressing, forms of politeness, etc., are altogether unpoetical, and art is therefore obliged to beg, as an alms, a poetical costume from the antiquaries. To that simple way of thinking, which is merely attentive to the inward truth of the composition, without stumbling at anachronisms or other external inconsistencies, we cannot, alas! now return; but we must envy the poets to whom it offered itself; it allowed them a great breadth and freedom in the handling of their subject.

Many things in Shakespeare must be judged of according to the above principles, respecting the difference between the essential and the merely learned costume. They will also in their measure admit of an application to Calderon.

So much with respect to the spirit of the age in which Shakespeare lived, and his peculiar mental culture and knowledge. To me he appears a profound artist, and not a blind and wildly luxuriant genius. I consider, generally speaking, all that has been said on the subject a mere fable, a blind and extravagant error. In other arts the assertion refutes itself; for in them acquired knowledge is an indispensable condition of clever execution. But even in such poets as are usually given out as careless pupils of nature, devoid of art or school discipline, I have always found, on a nearer consideration of the works of real excellence they may have produced, even a high cultivation of the mental powers, practice in art, and views both worthy in themselves and maturely considered. This applies to Homer as well as to Dante. The activity of genius is, it is true, natural to it, and, in a certain sense, unconscious; and, consequently, the person who possesses it is not always at the moment able to render an account of the course which he may have pursued; but it by no means follows that the thinking power had not a great share in it. It is from the very rapidity and certainty of the mental process, from the utmost clearness of understanding, that thinking in a poet is not perceived as something abstracted, does not wear the appearance of reflex meditation. That notion of poetical inspiration, which many lyrical poets have brought into circulation, as if they were not in their senses, and, like Pythia when possessed by the divinity, delivered oracles unintelligible to themselves—this notion (a mere lyrical invention) is least of all applicable to dramatic composition, one of the most thoughtful productions of the human mind. It is admitted that Shakespeare has reflected, and deeply reflected, on character and passion, on the progress of events and human destinies, on the human constitution, on all the things and relations of the world; this is an admission which must be made, for one alone of thousands of his maxims would be a sufficient refutation of any who should attempt to deny it. So that it was only for the structure of his own pieces that he had no thought to spare? This he left to the dominion of chance, which blew together the atoms of Epicurus. But supposing that, devoid of any higher ambition to approve himself to judicious critics and posterity, and wanting in that love of art which longs for self-satisfaction in the perfection of its works, he had merely labored to please the unlettered crowd; still this very object alone and the pursuit of theatrical effect would have led him to bestow attention to the structure and adherence of his pieces. For does not the impression of a drama depend in an especial manner on the relation of the parts to one another? And, however beautiful a scene may be in itself, if yet it be at variance with what the spectators have been led to expect in its particular place, so as to destroy the interest which they had hitherto felt, will it not be at once reprobated by all who possess plain common sense and give themselves up to nature? The comic intermixtures may be considered merely as a sort of interlude, designed to relieve the straining of the mind after the stretch of the more serious parts, so long as no better purpose can be found in them; but in the progress of the main action, in the concatenation of the events, the poet must, if possible, display even more expenditure

of thought than in the composition of individual character and situations, otherwise he would be like the conductor of a puppet-show who has so entangled his wires that the puppets receive from their mechanism quite different movements from those which he actually intended.

The English critics are unanimous in their praise of the truth and uniform consistency of his characters, of his heartrending pathos, and his comic wit. Moreover, they extol the beauty and sublimity of his separate descriptions, images, and expressions. This last is the most superficial and cheap mode of criticising works of art. Johnson compares him who should endeavor to recommend this poet by passages unconnectedly torn from his works, to the pedant in Hierocles, who exhibited a brick as a sample of his house. And yet how little, and how very unsatisfactorily does he himself speak of the pieces considered as a whole! Let any man, for instance, bring together the short characters which he gives at the close of each play, and see if the aggregate will amount to that sum of admiration which he himself, at his outset, has stated as the correct standard for the appreciation of the poet. It was, generally speaking, the prevailing tendency of the time which preceded our own, and which has showed itself particularly in physical science, to consider everything having life as a mere accumulation of dead parts, to separate what exists only in connection and cannot otherwise be conceived, instead of penetrating to the central point and viewing all the parts as so many irradiations from it. Hence nothing is so rare as a critic who can elevate himself to the comprehensive contemplation of a work of art. Shakespeare's compositions, from the very depth of purpose displayed in them, have been especially liable to the misfortune of being misunderstood. Besides, this prosaic species of criticism requires always that the poetic form should be applied to the details of execution; but when the plan of the piece is concerned, it never looks for more than the logical connection of causes and effects, or some partial and trite moral by way of application; and all that cannot be reconciled therewith is declared superfluous, or even a pernicious appendage. On these principles we must even strike out from the Greek tragedies most of the choral songs, which also contribute nothing to the development of the action, but are merely an harmonious echo of the impressions the poet aims at conveying. In this they altogether mistake the rights of poetry and the nature of the romantic drama, which, for the very reason that it is and ought to be picturesque, requires richer accompaniments and contrasts for its main groups. In all Art and Poetry, but more especially in the romantic, the Fancy lays claims to be considered as an independent mental power governed according to its own laws.

In an essay on *Romeo and Juliet*,[24] written a number of years ago, I went through the whole of the scenes in their order and demonstrated the inward necessity of each with reference to the whole; I showed why such a particular circle of characters and relations was placed around the two lovers; I explained the signification of the mirth here and there scattered, and justified the use of the occasional heightening given to the poetical colors. From all this it seemed to follow unquestionably that, with the exception of a few criticisms, now become unintelligible or foreign to the present taste (imitations of the tone of society of that day), nothing could be taken away, nothing added, nothing otherwise arranged, without mutilating and disfiguring the perfect work. I would readily undertake to do the same for all the pieces of Shakespeare's maturer years, but to do this would require a separate book. Here I am reduced to confine my observations to tracing his great designs with a rapid pencil; but still I must previously be allowed to deliver my sentiments in a general manner on the subject of his most eminent peculiarities.

Shakespeare's knowledge of mankind has become proverbial: in this his superiority is so great that he has justly been called the master of the human heart. A readiness to remark the mind's fainter and involuntary utterances, and the power to express with certainty the meaning of these signs, as determined by experience and reflection, constitute "the observer of men;" but tacitly to draw from these still further conclusions and to arrange the separate observations according to grounds of probability into a just and valid combination—this, it may be said, is to know men. The distinguishing

[24] In the first volume of *Charakteristiken und Kritiken*, published by my brother and myself.

property of the dramatic poet who is great in characterization, is something altogether different here, and which, take it which way we will, either includes in it this readiness and this acuteness, or dispenses with both. It is the capability of transporting himself so completely into every situation, even the most unusual, that he is enabled, as plenipotentiary of the whole human race, without particular instructions for each separate case, to act and speak in the name of every individual. It is the power of endowing the creatures of his imagination with such self-existent energy that they afterward act in each conjuncture according to general laws of nature: the poet, in his dreams, institutes, as it were, experiments which are received with as much authority as if they had been made on waking objects. The inconceivable element herein, and what moreover can never be learned, is, that the characters appear neither to do nor to say anything on the spectator's account merely; and yet that the poet, simply by means of the exhibition, and without any subsidiary explanation, communicates to his audience the gift of looking into the inmost recesses of their minds. Hence Goethe has ingeniously compared Shakespeare's characters to watches with crystalline plates and cases, which, while they point out the hours as correctly as other watches, enable us at the same time to perceive the inward springs whereby all this is accomplished.

Nothing, however, is more foreign to Shakespeare than a certain anatomical style of exhibition, which laboriously enumerates all the motives by which a man is determined to act in this or that particular manner. This rage of supplying motives, the mania of so many modern historians, might be carried at length to an extent which would abolish everything like individuality, and resolve all character into nothing but the effect of foreign or external influences, whereas we know that it often announces itself most decidedly in earliest infancy. After all, a man acts so because he is so. And what each man is, that Shakespeare reveals to us most immediately: he demands and obtains our belief even for what is singular, and deviates from the ordinary course of nature. Never perhaps was there so comprehensive a talent for characterization as Shakespeare. It not only grasps every diversity of rank, age, and sex, down to the lispings of infancy; not only do the king and the beggar, the hero and the pickpocket, the sage and the idiot, speak and act with equal truthfulness; not only does he transport himself to distant ages and foreign nations, and portray with the greatest accuracy (a few apparent violations of costume excepted) the spirit of the ancient Romans, of the French in the wars with the English, of the English themselves during a great part of their history, of the Southern Europeans (in the serious part of many comedies), the cultivated society of the day, and the rude barbarism of a Norman fore-time; his human characters have not only such depth and individuality that they do not admit of being classed under common names, and are inexhaustible even in conception: no, this Prometheus not merely forms men, he opens the gates of the magical world of spirits, calls up the midnight ghost, exhibits before us the witches with their unhallowed rites, peoples the air with sportive fairies and sylphs; and these beings, though existing only in the imagination, nevertheless possess such truth and consistency that even with such misshapen abortions as Caliban, he extorts the assenting conviction that, were there such beings, they would so conduct themselves. In a word, as he carries a bold and pregnant fancy into the kingdom of nature, on the other hand he carries nature into the region of fancy which lie beyond the confines of reality. We are lost in astonishment at the close intimacy he brings us into with the extraordinary, the wonderful, and the unheard-of.

Pope and Johnson appear strangely to contradict each other, when the first says, "all the characters of Shakespeare are individuals," and the second, "they are species." And yet perhaps these opinions may admit of reconciliation. Pope's expression is unquestionably the more correct. A character which should be merely a personification of a naked general idea could neither exhibit any great depth nor any great variety. The names of genera and species are well known to be merely auxiliaries for the understanding, that we may embrace the infinite variety of nature in a certain order. The characters which Shakespeare has so thoroughly delineated have undoubtedly a number of individual peculiarities, but at the same time they possess a significance which is not applicable to them alone: they generally supply materials for a profound theory of their most prominent and

distinguishing property. But even with the above correction, this opinion must still have its limitations. Characterization is merely one ingredient of the dramatic art, and not dramatic poetry itself. It would be improper in the extreme, if the poet were to draw our attention to superfluous traits of character at a time when it ought to be his endeavor to produce other impressions. Whenever the musical or the fanciful preponderates, the characteristical necessarily falls into the background. Hence many of the figures of Shakespeare exhibit merely external designations, determined by the place which they occupy in the whole: they are like secondary persons in a public procession, to whose physiognomy we seldom pay much attention; their only importance is derived from the solemnity of their dress and the duty in which they are engaged. Shakespeare's messengers, for instance, are for the most part mere messengers, and yet not common, but poetical messengers: the message which they have to bring is the soul which suggests to them their language. Other voices, too, are merely raised to pour forth these as melodious lamentations or rejoicings, or to dwell in reflection on what has taken place; and in a serious drama without chorus this must always be more or less the case, if we would not have it prosaic.

If Shakespeare deserves our admiration for his characters, he is equally deserving of it for his exhibition of passion, taking this word in its widest signification, as including every mental condition, every tone, from indifference or familiar mirth to the wildest rage and despair. He gives us the history of minds; he lays open to us, in a single word, a whole series of their anterior states. His passions do not stand at the same height, from first to last, as is the case with so many tragic poets, who, in the language of Lessing, are thorough masters of the legal style of love. He paints, with inimitable veracity, the gradual advance from the first origin; "he gives," as Lessing says, "a living picture of all the slight and secret artifices by which a feeling steals into our souls, of all the imperceptible advantages which it there gains, of all the stratagems by which it makes every other passion subservient to itself, till it becomes the sole tyrant of our desires and our aversions." Of all the poets, perhaps, he alone has portrayed the mental diseases, melancholy, delirium, lunacy, with such inexpressible and, in every respect, definite truth, that the physician may enrich his observations from them in the same manner as from real cases.

And yet Johnson has objected to Shakespeare that his pathos is not always natural and free from affectation. There are, it is true, passages, though comparatively speaking very few, where his poetry exceeds the bounds of actual dialogue, where a too soaring imagination, a too luxuriant wit, rendered a complete dramatic forgetfulness of himself impossible. With this exception, the censure originated in a fanciless way of thinking, to which everything appears unnatural that does not consort with its own tame insipidity. Hence an idea has been formed of simple and natural pathos, which consists in exclamations destitute of imagery and nowise elevated above everyday life. But energetical passions electrify all the mental powers, and will consequently, in highly-favored natures, give utterance to themselves in ingenious and figurative expressions. It has been often remarked that indignation makes a man witty; and as despair occasionally breaks out into laughter, it may sometimes also give vent to itself in antithetical comparisons.

Besides, the rights of the poetical form have not been duly weighed. Shakespeare, who was always sure of his power to excite, when he wished, sufficiently powerful emotions, has occasionally, by indulging in a freer play of fancy, purposely tempered the impressions when too painful, and immediately introduced a musical softening of our sympathy.[25] He had not those rude ideas of his art which many moderns seem to have, as if the poet, like the clown in the proverb, must strike twice on the same place. An ancient rhetorician delivered a caution against dwelling too long on the excitation of pity; for nothing, he said, dries so soon as tears; and Shakespeare acted conformably to this ingenious maxim without having learned it. The paradoxical assertion of Johnson that "Shakespeare

[25] A contemporary of the poet, the author of the already-noticed poem, (subscribed I.M.S.), tenderly felt this when he said: Yet so to temper passion that our ears Take pleasure in their pain, and eyes in tears Both smile and weep.

had a greater talent for comedy than tragedy, and that in the latter he has frequently displayed an affected tone," is scarcely deserving of lengthy notice. For its refutation, it is unnecessary to appeal to the great tragical compositions of the poet, which, for overpowering effect, leave far behind them almost everything that the stage has seen besides; a few of their less celebrated scenes would be quite sufficient. What to many readers might lend an appearance of truth to this assertion are the verbal witticisms, that playing upon words, which Shakespeare not unfrequently introduces into serious and sublime passages and even into those also of a peculiarly pathetic nature.

I have already stated the point of view in which we ought to consider this sportive play upon words. I shall here, therefore, merely deliver a few observations respecting the playing upon words in general, and its poetical use. A thorough investigation would lead us too far from our subject, and too deeply into considerations on the essence of language, and its relation to poetry, or rhyme, etc.

There is in the human mind a desire that language should exhibit the object which it denotes, sensibly, by its very sound, which may be traced even as far back as in the first origin of poetry. As, in the shape in which language comes down to us, this is seldom perceptibly the case, an imagination which has been powerfully excited is fond of laying hold of any congruity in sound which may accidentally offer itself, that by such means he may, for the nonce, restore the lost resemblance between the word and the thing. For example, how common was it and is it to seek in the name of a person, however arbitrarily bestowed, a reference to his qualities and fortunes—to convert it purposely into a significant name. Those who cry out against the play upon words as an unnatural and affected invention, only betray their own ignorance of original nature. A great fondness for it is always evinced among children, as well as with nations of simple manners, among whom correct ideas of the derivation and affinity of words have not yet been developed, and do not, consequently, stand in the way of this caprice. In Homer we find several examples of it; the Books of Moses, the oldest written memorial of the primitive world, are, as is well known, full of them. On the other hand, poets of a very cultivated taste, like Petrarch, or orators, like Cicero, have delighted in them. Whoever, in *Richard the Second*, is disgusted with the affecting play of words of the dying John of Gaunt on his own name, should remember that the same thing occurs in the *Ajax* of Sophocles. We do not mean to say that all playing upon words is on all occasions to be justified. This must depend on the disposition of mind, whether it will admit of such a play of fancy, and whether the sallies, comparisons, and allusions, which lie at the bottom of them, possess internal solidity. Yet we must not proceed upon the principle of trying how the thought appears after it is deprived of the resemblance in sound, any more than we are to endeavor to feel the charm of rhymed versification after depriving it of its rhyme. The laws of good taste on this subject must, moreover, vary with the quality of the languages. In those which possess a great number of homonymes, that is, words possessing the same, or nearly the same, sound, though quite different in their derivation and signification, it is almost more difficult to avoid, than to fall on such a verbal play. It has, however, been feared, lest a door might be opened to puerile witticism, if they were not rigorously proscribed. But I cannot, for my part, find that Shakespeare had such an invincible and immoderate passion for this verbal witticism. It is true, he sometimes makes a most lavish use of this figure; at others, he has employed it very sparingly; and at times (for example, in *Macbeth*) I do not believe a vestige of it is to be found. Hence, in respect to the use or the rejection of the play upon words, he must have been guided by the measure of the objects and the different style in which they required to be treated, and probably have followed here, as in everything else, principles which, fairly examined, will bear a strict examination.

The objection that Shakespeare wounds our feelings by the open display of the most disgusting moral odiousness, unmercifully harrows up the mind, and tortures even our eyes by the exhibition of the most insupportable and hateful spectacles, is one of greater and graver importance. He has, in fact, never varnished over wild and bloodthirsty passions with a pleasing exterior—never clothed crime and want of principle with a false show of greatness of soul; and in that respect he is every way deserving of praise. Twice he has portrayed downright villains, and the masterly way in which

he has contrived to elude impressions of too painful a nature may be seen in Iago and Richard the Third. I allow that the reading, and still more the sight, of some of his pieces, is not advisable to weak nerves, any more than was the *Eumenides* of Æschylus; but is the poet, who can reach an important object only by a bold and hazardous daring, to be checked by considerations for such persons? If the effeminacy of the present day is to serve as a general standard of what tragical composition may properly exhibit to human nature, we shall be forced to set very narrow limits indeed to art, and the hope of anything like powerful effect must at once and forever be renounced. If we wish to have a grand purpose, we must also wish to have the grand means, and our nerves ought in some measure to accommodate themselves to painful impressions, if, by way of requital, our mind is thereby elevated and strengthened. The constant reference to a petty and puny race must cripple the boldness of the poet. Fortunately for his art, Shakespeare lived in an age extremely susceptible of noble and tender impressions, but which had yet inherited enough of the firmness of a vigorous olden time not to shrink with dismay from every strong and forcible painting. We have lived to see tragedies of which the catastrophe consists in the swoon of an enamored princess: if Shakespeare falls occasionally into the opposite extreme, it is a noble error, originating in the fulness of a gigantic strength. And this tragical Titan, who storms the heavens and threatens to tear the world off its hinges, who, more terrible than Æschylus, makes our hair stand on end and congeals our blood with horror, possessed at the same time the insinuating loveliness of the sweetest poesy; he toys with love like a child, and his songs die away on the ear like melting sighs. He unites in his soul the utmost elevation and the utmost depth; and the most opposite and even apparently irreconcilable properties subsist in him peaceably together. The world of spirits and nature have laid all their treasures at his feet: in strength a demi-god, in profundity of view a prophet, in all-seeing wisdom a guardian spirit of a higher order, he lowers himself to mortals as if unconscious of his superiority, and is as open and unassuming as a child.

If the delineation of all his characters, separately considered, is inimitably bold and correct, he surpasses even himself in so combining and contrasting them that they serve to bring out one anothers' peculiarities. This is the very perfection of dramatic characterization: for we can never estimate a man's true worth if we consider him altogether abstractedly by himself; we must see him in his relations with others; and it is here that most dramatic poets are deficient. Shakespeare makes each of his principal characters the glass in which the others are reflected, and by like means enables us to discover what could not be immediately revealed to us. What in others is most profound, is with him but surface. Ill-advised should we be were we always to take men's declarations respecting themselves and others for sterling coin. Ambiguity of design with much propriety he makes to overflow with the most praiseworthy principles; and sage maxims are not infrequently put in the mouth of stupidity, to show how easily such commonplace truisms may be acquired. Nobody ever painted so truthfully as he has done the facility of self-deception, the half self-conscious hypocrisy toward ourselves, with which even noble minds attempt to disguise the almost inevitable influence of selfish motives in human nature. This secret irony of the characterization commands admiration as the profound abyss of acuteness and sagacity; but it is the grave of enthusiasm. We arrive at it only after we have had the misfortune to see human nature through and through, and after no choice remains but to adopt the melancholy truth that "no virtue or greatness is altogether pure and genuine," or the dangerous error that "the highest perfection is attainable." Here we therefore may perceive in the poet himself, notwithstanding his power to excite the most fervent emotions, a certain cool indifference, but still the indifference of a superior mind, which has run through the whole sphere of human existence and survived feeling.

The irony in Shakespeare has not merely a reference to the separate characters, but frequently to the whole of the action. Most poets who portray human events in a narrative or dramatic form themselves take a part, and exact from their readers a blind approbation or condemnation of whatever side they choose to support or oppose. The more zealous this rhetoric is, the more certainly it fails of its effect. In every case we are conscious that the subject itself is not brought immediately before us,

but that we view it through the medium of a different way of thinking. When, however, by a dextrous manoeuvre, the poet allows us an occasional glance at the less brilliant reverse of the medal, then he makes, as it were, a sort of secret understanding with the select circle of the more intelligent of his readers or spectators; he shows them that he had previously seen and admitted the validity of their tacit objections; that he himself is not tied down to the represented subject, but soars freely above it; and that, if he chose, he could unrelentingly annihilate the beautiful and irresistibly attractive scenes which his magic pen has produced. No doubt, wherever the proper tragic enters, everything like irony immediately ceases; but from the avowed raillery of Comedy, to the point where the subjection of mortal beings to an inevitable destiny demands the highest degree of seriousness, there are a multitude of human relations which unquestionably may be considered in an ironical view, without confounding the eternal line of separation between good and evil. This purpose is answered by the comic characters and scenes which are interwoven with the serious parts in most of those pieces of Shakespeare where romantic fables or historical events are made the subject of a noble and elevating exhibition. Frequently an intentional parody of the serious part is not to be mistaken in them; at other times the connection is more arbitrary and loose, and the more so, the more marvelous the invention of the whole and the more entirely it has become a light reveling of the fancy. The comic intervals everywhere serve to prevent the pastime from being converted into a business, to preserve the mind in the possession of its serenity, and to keep off that gloomy and inert seriousness which so easily steals upon the sentimental, but not tragical, drama. Most assuredly Shakespeare did not intend thereby, in defiance to his own better judgment, to humor the taste of the multitude: for in various pieces, and throughout considerable portions of others, and especially when the catastrophe is approaching, and the mind consequently is more on the stretch and no longer likely to give heed to any amusement which would distract their attention, he has abstained from all such comic intermixtures. It was also an object with him, that the clowns or buffoons should not occupy a more important place than that which he had assigned them: he expressly condemns the extemporizing with which they loved to enlarge their parts.[26]

[26] In Hamlet's directions to the players. Act iii., scene 2.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.