CRITICAL AND MISCELLANEOUS

ESSAYS

COLLECTED AND REPUBLISHED

BY

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JEAN PAUL FRIEDRICH RICHTER.—STATE OF GERMAN LITERATURE—LIFE AND WRITINGS OF WERNER

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JEAN PAUL FRIEDRICH RICHTER.

A well-written life almost as rare as a well-spent one. Döring's Gallery of Weimar Authors: His helpless biographical method: No pique against him, poor man. His No-life of Richter. (p. 5).—Jean Paul little known out of Germany. The leading events of his life: Personal characteristics. His multifarious Works. (9).—Must be studied as well as read. Eccentricities: Every work embaled in some fantastic wrappage. Not affectation: Consistent enough from his own point of vision. (14).—Intellect, imagination, and humour: Sport the element in which his nature lived and worked. He loved all living with the heart of a brother. True Humour a kind of inverse sublimity, exalting into our affections what is lowly: In this quality Richter excels all German authors. (17).—All genuine things are what they ought to be: A harmonious development of being, the object of all true culture. Richter's worst faults nearly allied to his best merits. (22).—Imperfection of his Novels: A true work of art requires to be fused in the mind of its creator. Chiefly successful in his humorous characters, and with his heroines: His Dreams. His Philosophy not mechanical. Richter, in the highest sense of the word, religious: The martyr Fearlessness combined with the martyr Reverence. Extract from Quintus Fixlein: A Summer Night. Richter's value as a writer. (23).
Dr. Johnson, it is said, when he first heard of Boswell's intention to write a life of him, announced, with decision enough, that, if he thought Boswell really meant to write his life, he would prevent it by taking Boswell's! That great authors should actually employ this preventive against bad biographers is a thing we would by no means recommend: but the truth is, that, rich as we are in Biography, a well-written Life is almost as rare as a well-spent one; and there are certainly many more men whose history deserves to be recorded, than persons willing and able to record it. But great men, like the old Egyptian kings, must all be tried after death, before they can be embalmed: and what, in truth, are these 'Sketches,' 'Anas,' 'Conversations,' 'Voices,' and the like, but the votes and pleadings of so many ill-informed advocates, jurors, and judges; from whose conflict, however, we shall in the end have a true verdict? The worst of it is at the first; for weak eyes are precisely the fondest of glittering objects. Accordingly, no sooner does a great man depart, and leave his character as public property, than a crowd of little men rushes towards it. There they are gathered together, blinking up to it with such vision as they have, scanning it from afar, hovering round it this way and that, each cunningly endeavouring, by all arts, to catch some reflex of it in the little mirror of Himself; though, many times, this mirror is so twisted with convexities and concavities, and, indeed, so ex-

1 Edinburgh Review, No. 91.—Jean Paul Friedrich Richter's Leben, nebst Charakteristik seiner Werke; von Heinrich Döring. (Jean Paul Friedrich Richter's Life, with a Sketch of his Works; by Heinrich Döring) Gotha; Hennings, 1826. 12mo, pp. 208.
tremely small in size, that to expect any true image, or any image whatever from it, is out of the question.

Richter was much better-natured than Johnson; and took many provoking things with the spirit of a humorist and philosopher; nor can we think that so good a man, had he even foreseen this Work of Döring's, would have gone the length of assassinating him for it. Döring is a person we have known for several years, as a compiler, and translator, and ballad-monger; whose grand enterprise, however, is his Gallery of Weimar Authors; a series of strange little Biographies, beginning with Schiller, and already extending over Wieland and Herder;—now comprehending, probably by conquest, Klopstock also; and lastly, by a sort of droit d'aubaine, Jean Paul Friedrich Richter; neither of whom belonged to Weimar. Authors, it must be admitted, are happier than the old painter with his cocks: for they write, naturally and without fear of ridicule, the name of their work on the title-page; and thenceforth the purport and tendency of each volume remains indisputable. Döring is sometimes lucky in this privilege; otherwise his manner of composition, being so peculiar, might occasion difficulty now and then. Biographies, according to Döring's method, are a simple business. You first ascertain, from the Leipsic Conversationslexicon, or Jördens's Poetical Lexicon, or Flögel, or Koch, or other such Compendium or Handbook, the date and place of the proposed individual's birth, his parentage, trade, appointments, and the titles of his works; the date of his death you already know from the newspapers: this serves as a foundation for the edifice. You then go through his writings, and all other writings where he or his pursuits are treated of, and wherever you find a passage with his name in it, you cut it out, and carry it away. In this manner a mass of materials is collected, and the building now proceeds apace. Stone is laid on the top of stone, just as it comes to hand; a trowel or two of biographic mortar, if perfectly convenient, being spread in here and there, by way of cement; and so the strangest pile suddenly arises; amorphous, pointing every way but to the zenith, here a block of granite, there a mass of pipe-clay; till the whole finishes,
when the materials are finished;—and you leave it standing to posterity, like some miniature Stonehenge, a perfect architectural enigma.

To speak without figure, this mode of life writing has its disadvantages. For one thing, the composition cannot well be what the critics call harmonious: and, indeed, Herr Döring's transitions are often abrupt enough. The hero changes his object and occupation from page to page, often from sentence to sentence, in the most unaccountable way; a pleasure-journey, and a sickness of fifteen years, are despatched with equal brevity; in a moment you find him married, and the father of three fine children. He dies no less suddenly;—he is studying as usual, writing poetry, receiving visits, full of life and business, when instantly some paragraph opens under him, like one of the trap-doors in the Vision of Mirza, and he drops, without note of preparation, into the shades below. Perhaps, indeed, not forever; we have instances of his rising after the funeral, and winding up his affairs. The time has been that, when the brains were out, the man would die; but Döring orders these things differently.

After all, however, we have no pique against poor Döring: on the contrary, we regularly purchase his ware; and it gives us true pleasure to see his spirits so much improved since we first met him. In the Life of Schiller his state did seem rather unprosperous: he wore a timorous, submissive, and downcast aspect, as if, like Sterne's Ass, he were saying, 'Don't thrash me;—but if you will, you may!' Now, however, comforted by considerable sale, and praise from this and the other Litteraturblatt, which has commended his diligence, his fidelity, and, strange to say, his method, he advances with erect countenance and firm hoof, and even recalcitrates contemptuously against such as do him offence. Glück auf dem Weg! is the worst we wish him.

Of his Life of Richter, these preliminary observations may be our excuse for saying but little. He brags much, in his Preface, that it is all true and genuine; for Richter's widow, it seems, had, by public advertisement, cautioned the world against it; another biography, partly by the illustrious de-
ceased himself, partly by Otto, his oldest friend and the appointed Editor of his Works, being actually in preparation. This rouses the indignant spirit of Döring, and he stoutly asseverates, that, his documents being altogether authentic, this biography is no pseudo-biography. With still greater truth he might have asseverated that it was no biography at all. Well are he and Hennings of Gotha aware that this thing of shreds and patches has been vamped together for sale only. Except a few letters to Kunz, the Bamberg Bookseller, which turn mainly on the purchase of spectacles, and the journeyings and freightage of two boxes that used to pass and repass between Richter and Kunz's circulating library; with three or four notes of similar importance, and chiefly to other booksellers, there are no biographical documents here, which were not open to all Europe as well as to Heinrich Döring. Indeed, very nearly one-half of the Life is occupied with a description of the funeral and its appendages,—how the 'sixty torches, with a number of lanterns and pitchpans,' were arranged; how this Patrician or Professor followed that, through Friedrich-street, Chancery-street, and other streets of Bayreuth; and how at last the torches all went out, as Dr. Gabler and Dr. Spatzier were perorating (decidedly in bombast) over the grave. Then, it seems, there were meetings held in various parts of Germany, to solemnise the memory of Richter; among the rest, one in the Museum of Frankfort-on-the-Maine; where a Dr. Börne speaks another long speech, if possible in still more decided bombast. Next come threnodies from all the four winds, mostly on very splay-footed metre. The whole of which is here snatched from the kind oblivion of the newspapers, and 'lives in Settle's numbers one day more.'

We have too much reverence for the name of Richter to think of laughing over these unhappy threnodists and pane-gyrists; some of whom far exceed anything we English can exhibit in the epicedial style. They rather testify, however maladroitly, that the Germans have felt their loss,—which, indeed, is one to Europe at large; they even affect us with a certain melancholy feeling, when we consider how a heavenly
voice must become mute, and nothing be heard in its stead but the whoop of quite earthly voices, lamenting, or pretending to lament. Far from us be all remembrance of Döring and Company, while we speak of Richter! But his own Works give us some glimpses into his singular and noble nature; and to our readers a few words on this man, certainly one of the most remarkable of his age, will not seem thrown away.

Except by name, Jean Paul Friedrich Richter is little known out of Germany. The only thing connected with him, we think, that has reached this country, is his saying, imported by Madame de Staël, and thankfully pocketed by most newspaper critics:—'Providence has given to the 'French the empire of the land, to the English that of the 'sea, to the Germans that of—the air!' Of this last element, indeed, his own genius might easily seem to have been a denizen; so fantastic, many-coloured, far-grasping, everyway perplexed and extraordinary is his mode of writing. To translate him properly is next to impossible; nay, a dictionary of his works has actually been in part published for the use of German readers! These things have restricted his sphere of action, and may long restrict it, to his own country: but there, in return, he is a favourite of the first class; studied through all his intricacies with trustful admiration, and a love which tolerates much. During the last forty years, he has been continually before the public, in various capacities, and growing generally in esteem with all ranks of critics; till, at length, his gainsayers have either been silenced or convinced; and Jean Paul, at first reckoned half-mad, has long ago vindicated his singularities to nearly universal satisfaction, and now combines popularity with real depth of endowment, in perhaps a greater degree than any other writer; being second in the latter point to scarcely more than one of his contemporaries, and in the former second to none.

The biography of so distinguished a person could scarcely fail to be interesting, especially his autobiography; which, accordingly, we wait for, and may in time submit to our
readers, if it seem worthy: meanwhile, the history of his life, so far as outward events characterise it, may be stated in a few words. He was born at Wunsiedel in Bayreuth, in March, 1763. His father was a subaltern teacher in the Gymnasium of the place, and was afterwards promoted to be clergyman at Schwarzbach on the Saale. Richter's early education was of the scantiest sort; but his fine faculties and unwearyed diligence supplied every defect. Unable to purchase books, he borrowed what he could come at, and transcribed from them, often great part of their contents,—a habit of excerpting which continued with him through life, and influenced, in more than one way, his mode of writing and study. To the last, he was an insatiable and universal reader: so that his extracts accumulated on his hands, 'till they filled whole chests.' In 1780, he went to the University of Leipsic; with the highest character, in spite of the impediments which he had struggled with, for talent and acquirement. Like his father, he was destined for Theology; from which, however, his vagrant genius soon diverged into Poetry and Philosophy, to the neglect, and, ere long, to the final abandonment of his appointed profession. Not well knowing what to do, he now accepted a tutorship in some family of rank; then he had pupils in his own house,—which, however, like his way of life, he often changed; for by this time he had become an author, and, in his wanderings over Germany, was putting forth, now here, now there, the strangest books, with the strangest titles. For instance,—Greenland Lawsuits;—Biographical Recreations under the Cranium of a Giantess;—Selection from the Papers of the Devil;—and the like! In these indescribable performances, the splendid faculties of the writer, luxuriating as they seem in utter riot, could not be disputed; nor, with all its extravagance, the fundamental strength, honesty and tenderness of his nature. Genius will reconcile men to much. By degrees, Jean Paul began to be considered not a strange crack-brained mixture of enthusiast and buffoon, but a man of infinite humour, sensibility, force and penetration. His writings procured him friends and fame; and at length a wife and a settled provision. With
Caroline Mayer, his good spouse, and a pension (in 1802) from the King of Bavaria, he settled in Bayreuth, the capital of his native province; where he lived thenceforth, diligent and celebrated in many new departments of Literature; and died on the 14th of November, 1825, loved as well as admired by all his countrymen, and most by those who had known him most intimately.

A huge, irregular man, both in mind and person (for his Portrait is quite a physiognomical study), full of fire, strength and impetuosity, Richter seems, at the same time, to have been, in the highest degree, mild, simple-hearted, humane. He was fond of conversation, and might well shine in it: he talked, as he wrote, in a style of his own, full of wild strength and charms, to which his natural Bayreuth accent often gave additional effect. Yet he loved retirement, the country and all natural things; from his youth upwards, he himself tells us, he may almost be said to have lived in the open air; it was among groves and meadows that he studied,—often that he wrote. Even in the streets of Bayreuth, we have heard, he was seldom seen without a flower in his breast. A man of quiet tastes, and warm compassionate affections! His friends he must have loved as few do. Of his poor and humble mother he often speaks by allusion, and never without reverence and overflowing tenderness. 'Unhappy is the man,' says he, 'for whom his own mother has not made all other mothers venerable!' And elsewhere: 'O thou who hast still a father and a mother, thank God for it in the day when thy soul is full of joyful tears, and needs a bosom wherein to shed them!'—We quote the following sentences from Döring, almost the only memorable thing he has written in this Volume:

'Richter's studying or sitting apartment offered, about this time (1793), a true and beautiful emblem of his simple and noble way of thought, which comprehended at once the high and the low. Whilst his mother, who then lived with him, busily pursued her household work, occupying herself about stove and dresser, Jean Paul was sitting in a corner of the same room, at a simple writing-desk, with few or no books
'about him, but merely with one or two drawers containing excerpts and manuscripts. The jingle of the household operations seemed not at all to disturb him, any more than 'did the cooing of the pigeons, which fluttered to and fro in the chamber,—a place, indeed, of considerable size.'

Our venerable Hooker, we remember, also enjoyed 'the jingle of household operations,' and the more questionable jingle of shrewd tongues to boot, while he wrote; but the good thrifty mother, and the cooing pigeons, were wanting. Richter came afterwards to live in finer mansions, and had the great and learned for associates; but the gentle feelings of those days abode with him: through life he was the same substantial, determinate, yet meek and tolerating man. It is seldom that so much rugged energy can be so blandly tempered; that so much vehemence and so much softness will go together.

The expected Edition of Richter's Works is to be in sixty volumes; and they are no less multifarious than extensive; embracing subjects of all sorts, from the highest problems of Transcendental Philosophy, and the most passionate poetical delineations, to Golden Rules for the Weather-Prophet, and instructions in the Art of Falling Asleep. His chief productions are Novels: the Unsichtbare Loge (Invisible Lodge); Flegeljahre (Wild-Oats); Life of Fixlein; the Jubelsenior (Parson in Jubilee); Schmelzle's Journey to Flätz; Katzenberger's Journey to the Bath; Life of Fibel; with many lighter pieces; and two works of a higher order, Hesperus and Titan, the largest and the best of his Novels. It was the former that first (in 1795) introduced him into decisive and universal estimation with his countrymen: the latter he himself, with the most judicious of his critics, regarded as his master piece. But the name Novelist, as we in England must understand it, would ill describe so vast and discursive a genius: for, with all his grotesque, tumultuous pleasantry, Richter is a man of a truly earnest, nay high and solemn character; and seldom writes without a meaning far beyond the sphere of common romancers. Hesperus and Titan them-
selves, though in form nothing more than 'novels of real life,' as the Minerva Press would say, have solid metal enough in them to furnish whole circulating libraries, were it beaten into the usual filigree; and much which, attenuate it as we might, no quarterly subscriber could well carry with him. Amusement is often, in part almost always, a mean with Richter; rarely or never his highest end. His thoughts, his feelings, the creations of his spirit, walk before us embodied under wondrous shapes, in motley and ever-fluctuating groups; but his essential character, however he disguise it, is that of a Philosopher and moral Poet, whose study has been human nature, whose delight and best endeavour are with all that is beautiful, and tender, and mysteriously sublime, in the fate or history of man. This is the purport of his writings, whether their form be that of fiction or of truth, the spirit that pervades and ennobles his delineations of common life, his wild wayward dreams, allegories, and shadowy imaginings, no less than his disquisitions of a nature directly scientific.

But in this latter province also Richter has accomplished much. His Vorschule der Aesthetik (Introduction to Aesthetics') is a work on Poetic Art, based on principles of no ordinary depth and compass, abounding in noble views, and, notwithstanding its frolicsome exuberance, in sound and subtle criticism; esteemed even in Germany, where criticism has long been treated of as a science, and by such persons as Winkelmann, Kant, Herder, and the Schlegels. Of this work we could speak long; did our limits allow. We fear it might astonish many an honest brother of our craft, were he to read it; and altogether perplex and dash his maturest counsels, if he chanced to understand it.—Richter has also written on Education, a work entitled Levana; distinguished by keen practical sagacity, as well as generous sentiment, and a certain sober magnificence of speculation; the whole presented in that singular style that characterises the man. Germany is

1 From αισθάνομαι, to feel. A word invented by Baumgarten (some eighty years ago), to express generally the Science of the Fine Arts; and now in universal use among the Germans. Perhaps we also might as well adopt it; at least if any such science should ever arise among us.
rich in works on Education; richer at present than any other country: it is there only that some echo of the Lockes and Miltons, speaking of this high matter, may still be heard; and speaking of it in the language of our own time, with insight into the actual wants, advantages, perils and prospects of this age. Among the writers on this subject Richter holds a high place; if we look chiefly at his tendency and aims, perhaps the highest. The Clavis-Fichtiana is a ludicrous performance, known to us only by report; but Richter is said to possess the merit, while he laughs at Fichte, of understanding him; a merit among Fichte’s critics which seems to be one of the rarest. Report also, we regret to say, is all that we know of the Campaner Thal, a Discourse on the Immortality of the Soul; one of Richter’s beloved topics, or rather the life of his whole philosophy, glimpses of which look forth on us from almost every one of his writings. He died while engaged, under recent and almost total blindness, in enlarging and remodelling this Campaner Thal; the unfinished manuscript was borne upon his coffin to the burial vault: and Klopstock’s hymn, ‘Auferstehen wirst du, Thou shalt arise, my soul,’ can seldom have been sung with more appropriate application than over the grave of Jean Paul.

We defy the most careless or prejudiced reader to peruse these works without an impression of something splendid, wonderful and daring. But they require to be studied as well as read, and this with no ordinary patience, if the reader, especially the foreign reader, wishes to comprehend rightly either their truth or their want of truth. Tried by many an accepted standard, Richter would be speedily enough disposed of; pronounced a mystic, a German dreamer, a rash and presumptuous innovator; and so consigned, with equanimity, perhaps with a certain jubilee, to the Limbo appointed for all such windbags and deceptions. Originality is a thing we constantly clamour for, and constantly quarrel with; as if, observes our Author himself, any originality but our own could be expected to content us! In fact, all strange things are apt, without fault of theirs, to estrange us at first
view; unhappily scarcely anything is perfectly plain, but what is also perfectly common. The current coin of the realm passes into all hands; and be it gold, silver, or copper, is acceptable and of known value: but with new ingots, with foreign bars, and medals of Corinthian brass, the case is widely different.

There are few writers with whom deliberation and careful distrust of first impressions are more necessary than with Richter. He is a phenomenon from the very surface; he presents himself with a professed and determined singularity; his language itself is a stone of stumbling to the critic; to critics of the grammarian species, an unpardonable, often an insuperable, rock of offence. Not that he is ignorant of grammar, or disdains the sciences of spelling and parsing; but he exercises both in a certain latitudinarian spirit; deals with astonishing liberality in parentheses, dashes, and subsidiary clauses; invents hundreds of new words, alters old ones, or, by hyphen, chains and pairs and packs them together into most jarring combination; in short, produces sentences of the most heterogeneous, lumbering, interminable kind. Figures without limit; indeed, the whole is one tissue of metaphors, and similes, and allusions to all the provinces of Earth, Sea and Air; interlaced with epigrammatic breaks, vehement bursts, or sardonic turns, interjections, quips, puns, and even oaths! A perfect Indian jungle it seems; a boundless, unparalleled imbroglio; nothing on all sides but darkness, dissonance, confusion worse confounded! Then the style of the whole corresponds, in perplexity and extravagance, with that of the parts. Every work, be it fiction or serious treatise, is embaled in some fantastic wrappage, some mad narrative accounting for its appearance, and connecting it with the author, who generally becomes a person in the drama himself, before all is over. He has a whole imaginary geography of Europe in his novels; the cities of Flachsenfingen, Haarhaar, Scheerau, and so forth, with their princes, and privy-councillors, and serene highnesses; most of whom, odd enough fellows everyway, are Richter's private acquaintances, talk with him of state matters (in the purest Tory
dialect), and often incite him to get on with his writing. No story proceeds without the most erratic digressions, and voluminous tagrags rolling after it in many a snaky twine. Ever and anon there occurs some ‘Extra-leaf,’ with its satirical petition, program, or other wonderful intercalation, no mortal can foresee on what. It is, indeed, a mighty maze; and often the panting reader toils after him in vain; or, baffled and spent, indignanty stops short, and retires, perhaps forever.

All this, we must admit, is true of Richter; but much more is true also. Let us not turn from him after the first cursory glance, and imagine we have settled his account by the words Rhapsody and Affectation. They are cheap words, and of sovereign potency; we should see, therefore, that they be not rashly applied. Many things in Richter accord ill with such a theory. There are rays of the keenest truth, nay steady pillars of scientific light rising through this chaos: Is it in fact a chaos; or may it be that our eyes are of finite, not of infinite vision, and have only missed the plan? Few ‘rhapsodists’ are men of science, of solid learning, of rigorous study, and accurate, extensive, nay universal knowledge; as he is. With regard to affectation also, there is much to be said. The essence of affectation is that it be assumed: the character is, as it were, forcibly crushed into some foreign mould, in the hope of being thereby reshaped and beautified; the unhappy man persuades himself that he has in truth become a new creature, of the wonderfullest symmetry; and so he moves about with a conscious air, though every movement betrays not symmetry but dislocation. This it is to be affected, to walk in a vain show. But the strangeness alone is no proof of the vanity. Many men that move smoothly in the old-established railways of custom will be found to have their affectation; and perhaps here and there some divergent genius be accused of it unjustly. The show, though common, may not cease to be vain; nor become so for being uncommon. Before we censure a man for seeming what he is not, we should be sure that we know what he is. As to Richter in particular, we cannot but observe, that, strange and tumultuous as he is,
there is a certain benign composure visible in his writings; a mercy, a gladness, a reverence, united in such harmony as be-speaks not a false, but a genuine state of mind; not a feverish and morbid, but a healthy and robust state.

The secret of the matter is, that Richter requires more study than most readers care to give him. As we approach more closely, many things grow clearer. In the man's own sphere there is consistency; the farther we advance into it, we see confusion more and more unfold itself into order, till at last, viewed from its proper centre, his intellectual universe, no longer a distorted incoherent series of air-landscapes, coalesces into compact expansion; a vast, magnificent, and variegated scene; full of wondrous products; rude, it may be, and irregular; but gorgeous, benignant, great; gay with the richest verdure and foliage, glittering in the brightest and kindest sun.

Richter has been called an intellectual Colossus; and in truth it is somewhat in this light that we view him. His faculties are all of gigantic mould; cumbrous, awkward in their movements; large and splendid, rather than harmonious or beautiful; yet joined in living union; and of force and compass altogether extraordinary. He has an intellect vehement, rugged, irresistible; crushing in pieces the hardest problems; piercing into the most hidden combinations of things, and grasping the most distant: an imagination vague, sombre, splendid, or appalling; brooding over the abysses of Being; wandering through Infinitude, and summoning before us, in its dim religious light, shapes of brilliancy, solemnity, or terror: a fancy of exuberance literally unexampled; for it pours its treasures with a lavishness which knows no limit, hanging, like the sun, a jewel on every grass-blade, and sowing the earth at large with orient pearl. But deeper than all these lies Humour, the ruling quality with Richter; as it were the central fire that pervades and vivifies his whole being. He is a humorist from his inmost soul; he thinks as a humorist, he feels, imagines, acts as a humorist: Sport is the element in which his nature lives and works. A tumultuous element for such a nature, and wild work he makes in it!

Titan in his sport as in his earnestness, he oversteps all bound, and riots without law or measure. He heaps Pelion upon Ossa, and hurls the universe together and asunder like a case of playthings. The Moon 'bombards' the Earth, being a rebellious satellite; Mars 'preaches' to the other planets, very singular doctrine; nay, we have Time and Space themselves playing fantastic tricks: it is an infinite masquerade; all Nature is gone forth mumming in the strangest guises.

Yet the anarchy is not without its purpose: these wizards are not mere hollow masks; there are living faces under them, and this mumming has its significance. Richter is a man of mirth, but he seldom or never condescends to be a merryandrew. Nay, in spite of its extravagance, we should say that his humour is of all his gifts intrinsically the finest and most genuine. It has such witching turns; there is something in it so capricious, so quaint, so heartfelt. From his Cyclopean workshop, and its fuliginous limbes, and huge unwieldy machinery, the little shrivelled twisted Figure comes forth at last, so perfect and so living, to be forever laughed at and forever loved! Wayward as he seems, he works not without forethought: like Rubens, by a single stroke, he can change a laughing face into a sad one. But in his smile itself a touching pathos may lie hidden, a pity too deep for tears. He is a man of feeling, in the noblest sense of that word; for he loves all living with the heart of a brother; his soul rushes forth, in sympathy with gladness and sorrow, with goodness or grandeur, over all Creation. Every gentle and generous affection, every thrill of mercy, every glow of nobleness, awakens in his bosom a response; nay strikes his spirit into harmony; a wild music as of wind-harps, floating round us in fitful swells, but soft sometimes, and pure and soul-entrancing, as the song of angels! Aversion itself with him is not hatred; he despises much, but justly, with tolerance also, with placidity, and even a sort of love. Love, in fact, is the atmosphere he breathes in, the medium through which he looks. His is the spirit which gives life and beauty to whatever it embraces. Inanimate Nature itself is no longer an insensible assemblage of colours and perfumes, but a mys-
terious Presence, with which he communes in unutterable sympathies. We might call him, as he once called Herder, 'a Priest of Nature, a mild Bramin,' wandering amid spicy groves, and under benignant skies. The infinite Night with her solemn aspects, Day, and the sweet approach of Even and Morn, are full of meaning for him. He loves the green Earth with her streams and forests, her flowery leas and eternal skies; loves her with a sort of passion, in all her vicissitudes of light and shade; his spirit revels in her grandeur and charms; expands like the breeze over wood and lawn, over glade and dingle, stealing and giving odours.

It has sometimes been made a wonder that things so discordant should go together; that men of humour are often likewise men of sensibility. But the wonder should rather be to see them divided; to find true genial humour dwelling in a mind that was coarse or callous. The essence of humour is sensibility; warm, tender fellow-feeling with all forms of existence. Nay, we may say that unless seasoned and purified by humour, sensibility is apt to run wild; will readily corrupt into disease, falsehood, or, in one word, sentimentality. Witness Rousseau, Zimmerman, in some points also St. Pierre: to say nothing of living instances; or of the Kotzebues, and other pale host of woe-begone mourners, whose wailings, like the howl of an Irish wake, have from time to time cleft the general ear. 'The last perfection of our faculties,' says Schiller with a truth far deeper than it seems, 'is that their activity, without ceasing to be sure and earnest, become sport.' True humour is sensibility, in the most catholic and deepest sense; but it is this sport of sensibility; wholesome and perfect therefore; as it were, the playful teasing fondness of a mother to her child.

That faculty of irony, of caricature, which often passes by the name of humour, but consists chiefly in a certain superficial distortion or reversal of objects, and ends at best in laughter, bears no resemblance to the humour of Richter. A shallow endowment this; and often more a habit than an endowment. It is but a poor fraction of humour; or rather, it is the body to which the soul is wanting; any life it has
being false, artificial and irrational. True humour springs not more from the head than from the heart; it is not contempt, its essence is love; it issues not in laughter, but in still smiles, which lie far deeper. It is a sort of inverse sublimity; exalting, as it were, into our affections what is below us, while sublimity draws down into our affections what is above us. The former is scarcely less precious or heart-affecting than the latter; perhaps it is still rarer, and, as a test of genius, still more decisive. It is, in fact, the bloom and perfume, the purest effluence of a deep, fine and loving nature; a nature in harmony with itself, reconciled to the world and its stintedness and contradiction, nay finding in this very contradiction new elements of beauty as well as goodness. Among our own writers, Shakspeare, in this as in all other provinces, must have his place: yet not the first; his humour is heartfelt, exuberant, warm, but seldom the tenderest or most subtle. Swift inclines more to simple irony; yet he had genuine humour too, and of no unloving sort, though cases, like Ben Jonson's, in a most bitter and caustic rind. Sterne follows next; our last specimen of humour, and, with all his faults, our best; our finest, if not our strongest; for Yorick and Corporal Trim and Uncle Toby have yet no brother but in Don Quixote, far as he lies above them. Cervantes is indeed the purest of all humorists; so gentle and genial, so full, yet so ethereal is his humour, and in such accordance with itself and his whole noble nature. The Italian mind is said to abound in humour; yet their classics seem to give us no right emblem of it: except perhaps in Ariosto, there appears little in their current poetry that reaches the region of true humour. In France, since the days of Montaigpne, it seems to be nearly extinct. Voltaire, much as he dealt in ridicule, never rises into humour; even with Molière, it is far more an affair of the understanding than of the character.

That, in this point, Richter excels all German authors, is saying much for him, and may be said truly. Lessing has humour,—of a sharp, rigid, substantial, and, on the whole, genial sort; yet the ruling bias of his mind is to logic. So
likewise has Wieland, though much diluted by the general loquacity of his nature, and impoverished still farther by the influences of a cold, meagre, French scepticism. Among the Ramlers, Gellerts, Hagedorns, of Frederick the Second's time, we find abundance, and delicate in kind too, of that light matter which the French call pleasantry; but little or nothing that deserves the name of humour. In the present age, however, there is Goethe, with a rich true vein; and this sublimated, as it were, to an essence, and blended in still union with his whole mind. Tieck also, among his many fine susceptibilities, is not without a warm keen sense for the ridiculous; and a humour rising, though by short fits, and from a much lower atmosphere, to be poetic. But of all these men, there is none that, in depth, copiousness and intensity of humour, can be compared with Jean Paul. He alone exists in humour; lives, moves and has his being in it. With him it is not so much united to his other qualities, of intellect, fancy, imagination, moral feeling, as these are united to it; or rather unite themselves to it, and grow under its warmth, as in their proper temperature and climate. Not as if we meant to assert that his humour is in all cases perfectly natural and pure; nay, that it is not often extravagant, untrue, or even absurd: but still, on the whole, the core and life of it are genuine, subtle, spiritual. Not without reason have his panegyrists named him 'Jean Paul der Einzige, Jean Paul the Unique:' in one sense or the other either as praise or censure, his critics also must adopt this epithet; for surely, in the whole circle of Literature, we look in vain for his parallel. Unite the sportfulness of Rabelais, and the best sensibility of Sterne, with the earnestness, and, even in slight portions, the sublimity of Milton; and let the mosaic brain of old Burton give forth the workings of this strange union, with the pen of Jeremy Bentham!

To say how, with so peculiar a natural endowment, Richter should have shaped his mind by culture, is much harder than to say that he has shaped it wrong. Of affectation we will neither altogether clear him, nor very loudly pronounce him guilty. That his manner of writing is singular, nay in fact, a
wild complicated Arabesque, no one can deny. But the true question is, How nearly does this manner of writing represent his real manner of thinking and existing? With what degree of freedom does it allow this particular form of being to manifest itself; or what fetters and perversions does it lay on such manifestations? For the great law of culture is: Let each become all that he was created capable of being; expand, if possible, to his full growth; resisting all impediments, casting off all foreign, especially all noxious adhesions; and show himself at length in his own shape and stature, be these what they may. There is no uniform of excellence, either in physical or spiritual Nature: all genuine things are what they ought to be. The reindeer is good and beautiful, so likewise is the elephant. In Literature it is the same: 'every man,' says Lessing, 'has his own style, like his own nose.' True, there are noses of wonderful dimensions; but no nose can justly be amputated by the public,—not even the nose of Slawkenbergius himself; so it be a real nose, and no wooden one, put on for deception's sake and mere show!

To speak in grave language, Lessing means, and we agree with him, that the outward style is to be judged of by the inward qualities of the spirit which it is employed to body forth; that, without prejudice to critical propriety well understood, the former may vary into many shapes as the latter varies; that, in short, the grand point for a writer is not to be of this or that external make and fashion, but, in every fashion, to be genuine, vigorous, alive,—alive with his whole being, consciously, and for beneficent results.

Tried by this test, we imagine Richter's wild manner will be found less imperfect than many a very tame one. To the man it may not be unsuitable. In that singular form, there is a fire, a splendour, a benign energy, which persuades us into tolerance, nay into love, of much that might otherwise offend. Above all, this man, alloyed with imperfections as he may be, is consistent and coherent: he is at one with himself; he knows his aims, and pursues them in sincerity of heart, joyfully and with undivided will. A harmonious development of being, the first and last object of all true culture,
has been obtained; if not completely, at least more completely than in one of a thousand ordinary men. Nor let us forget, that, in such a nature, it was not of easy attainment; that where much was to be developed, some imperfection should be forgiven. It is true, the beaten paths of Literature lead the safest to the goal; and the talent pleases us most, which submits to shine with new gracefulness through old forms. Nor is the noblest and most peculiar mind too noble or peculiar for working by prescribed laws: Sophocles, Shakespeare, Cervantes, and in Richter’s own age, Goethe, how little did they innovate on the given forms of composition, how much in the spirit they breathed into them! All this is true; and Richter must lose of our esteem in proportion. Much however, will remain; and why should we quarrel with the high, because it is not the highest? Richter’s worst faults are nearly allied to his best merits; being chiefly exuberance of good, irregular squandering of wealth, a dazzling with excess of true light. These things may be pardoned the more readily, as they are little likely to be imitated.

On the whole, Genius has privileges of its own; it selects an orbit for itself; and be this never so eccentric, if it is indeed a celestial orbit, we mere star-gazers must at last compose ourselves; must cease to cavil at it, and begin to observe it, and calculate its laws. That Richter is a new Planet in the intellectual heavens, we dare not affirm; an atmospheric Meteor he is not wholly; perhaps a Comet, that, though with long aberrations, and shrouded in a nebulous veil, has yet its place in the empyrean.

Of Richter’s individual Works, of his opinions, his general philosophy of life, we have no room left us to speak. Regarding his Novels, we may say, that, except in some few instances, and those chiefly of the shorter class, they are not what, in strict language, we can term unities: with much callida junctura of parts, it is rare that any of them leaves on us the impression of a perfect, homogeneous, indivisible whole. A true work of art requires to be fused in the mind of its creator, and, as it were, poured forth (from his imagination, though
not from his pen) at one simultaneous gush. Richter's works do not always bear sufficient marks of having been in fusion; yet neither are they merely riveted together; to say the least, they have been welded. A similar remark applies to many of his characters; indeed, more or less to all of them, except such as are entirely humorous, or have a large dash of humour. In this latter province he is at home; a true poet, a maker; his Siebenkäs, his Schmelzle, even his Fibel and Fixlein are living figures. But in heroic personages, passionate, massive, overpowering as he is, we have scarcely ever a complete ideal; art has not attained to the concealment of itself. With his heroines again he is more successful; they are often true heroines, though perhaps with too little variety of character; bustling, buxom mothers and housewives, with all the caprices, perversities, and warm, generous helpfulness of women; or white, half-angelic creatures, meek, still, long-suffering, high-minded, of tenderest affections, and hearts crushed yet uncomplaining. Supernatural figures he has not attempted; and wisely, for he cannot write without belief. Yet many times he exhibits an imagination of a singularity, nay on the whole, of a truth and grandeur, unexampled elsewhere. In his Dreams there is a mystic complexity, a gloom, and amid the dim gigantic half-ghastly shadows, gleamings of a wizard splendour, which almost recall to us the visions of Ezekiel. By readers who have studied the Dream in the New-Year's Eve we shall not be mistaken.

Richter's Philosophy, a matter of no ordinary interest, both as it agrees with the common philosophy of Germany and disagrees with it, must not be touched on for the present. One only observation we shall make: it is not mechanical, or sceptical; it springs not from the forum or the laboratory, but from the depths of the human spirit; and yields as its fairest product a noble system of Morality, and the firmest conviction of Religion. In this latter point we reckon him peculiarly worthy of study. To a careless reader he might seem the wildest of infidels; for nothing can exceed the freedom with which he bandies to and fro the dogmas of religion, nay, sometimes, the highest objects of Christian reverence. There are pas-
sages of this sort, which will occur to every reader of Richter: but which, not to fall into the error we have already blamed in Madame de Staël, we shall refrain from quoting. More light is in the following: ‘Or,’ inquires he, in his usual abrupt way, ‘Or are all your Mosques, Episcopal Churches, Pagodas, Chapels of Ease, Tabernacles, and Pantheons, anything else but the Ethnic Forecourt of the Invisible Temple and its Holy of Holies?’ Yet, independently of all dogmas, may perhaps in spite of many, Richter is, in the highest sense of the word, religious. A reverence, not a self-interested fear, but a noble reverence for the spirit of all goodness, forms the crown and glory of his culture. The fiery elements of his nature have been purified under holy influences, and chastened by a principle of mercy and humility into peace and well-doing. An intense and continual faith in man’s immortality and native grandeur accompanies him; from amid the vortices of life, he looks up to a heavenly loadstar; the solution of what is visible and transient, he finds in what is invisible and eternal. He has doubted, he denies, yet he believes. ‘When, in your last hour,’ says he, ‘when, in your last hour (think of this), all faculty in the broken spirit shall fade away and die into inanity,—imagination, thought, effort, enjoyment,—then at last will the night-flower of Belief alone continue blooming, and refresh with its perfumes in the last darkness.’

To reconcile these seeming contradictions, to explain the grounds, the manner, the congruity of Richter’s belief, cannot be attempted here. We recommend him to the study, the tolerance, and even the praise, of all men who have inquired into this highest of questions with a right spirit; inquired with the martyr fearlessness, but also with the martyr reverence, of men that love Truth, and will not accept a lie. A frank, fearless, honest, yet truly spiritual faith is of all things the rarest in our time.

Of writings which, though with many reservations, we have praised so much, our hesitating readers may demand some specimen. To unbelievers, unhappily, we have none of a con-

1 Note to Schmelzle’s Journey.  
2 Levana, p. 251.
vincing sort to give. Ask us not to represent the Peruvian forests by three twigs plucked from them; or the cataracts of the Nile by a handful of its water! To those, meanwhile, who will look on twigs as mere dissevered twigs, and a handful of water as only so many drops, we present the following. It is a summer Sunday night; Jean Paul is taking leave of the Hukelum Parson and his wife; like him we have long laughed at them or wept for them; like him, also, we are sad to part from them:

'We were all of us too deeply moved. We at last tore ourselves asunder from repeated embraces; my friend retired with the soul whom he loves. I remained alone behind with the Night.

'And I walked without aim through woods, through valleys, and over brooks, and through sleeping villages, to enjoy the great Night, like a Day. I walked, and still looked, like the magnet, to the region of midnight, to strengthen my heart at the gleaming twilight, at this upstretching aurora of a morning beneath our feet. White night-butterflies flitted, white blossoms fluttered, white stars fell, and the white snow-powder hung silvery in the high Shadow of the Earth, which reaches beyond the Moon, and which is our Night. Then began the Æolian Harp of the Creation to tremble and to sound, blown on from above; and my immortal Soul was a string in that Harp.—The heart of a brother, everlasting Man, swelled under the everlasting heaven, as the seas swell under the sun and under the moon.—The distant village clocks struck midnight, mingling, as it were, with the ever-pealing tone of ancient Eternity.—The limbs of my buried ones touched cold on my soul, and drove away its blots, as dead hands heal eruptions of the skin.—I walked silently through little hamlets, and close by their outer churchyards, where crumbled upcast coffin-boards were glimmering, while the once-bright eyes that had lain in them were mouldered into gray ashes. Cold thought! clutch not like a cold spectre at my heart: I look up to the starry sky, and an everlasting chain stretches thither, and over, and below; and all is Life, and Warmth, and Light, and all is Godlike or God.

'Towards morning, I descried thy late lights, little city of my dwelling, which I belong to on this side the grave; I returned to the Earth; and in thy steeples, behind the by-ad-
vanced great midnight, it struck half-past two: about this hour, in 1794, Mars went down in the west, and the Moon rose in the east; and my soul desired, in grief for the noble warlike blood which is still streaming on the blossoms of Spring: "Ah, retire, bloody War, like red Mars; and thou, still Peace, come forth like the mild divided Moon."

Such, seen through no uncoloured medium, but in dim remoteness, and sketched in hurried transitory outline, are some features of Jean Paul Friedrich Richter and his Works. Germany has long loved him; to England also he must one day become known; for a man of this magnitude belongs not to one people, but to the world. What our countrymen may decide of him, still more what may be his fortune with posterity, we will not try to foretell. Time has a strange contracting influence on many a wide-spread fame; yet of Richter we will say, that he may survive much. There is in him that which does not die; that Beauty and Earnestness of soul, that spirit of Humanity, of Love and mild Wisdom, over which the vicissitudes of mode have no sway. This is that excellence of the inmost nature which alone confers immortality on writings; that charm which still, under every defacement, binds us to the pages of our own Hookers, and Taylors, and Brownes, when their way of thought has long ceased to be ours, and the most valued of their merely intellectual opinions have passed away, as ours too must do, with the circumstances and events in which they took their shape or rise. To men of a right mind, there may long be in Richter much that has attraction and value. In the moral desert of vulgar Literature, with its sandy wastes, and parched, bitter and too often poisonous shrubs, the Writings of this man will rise in their irregular luxuriance, like a cluster of date-trees, with its greensward and well of water, to refresh the pilgrim, in the sultry solitude, with nourishment and shade.

End of Quintus Fixlein.
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STATE OF GERMAN LITERATURE.

Franz Horn's merits as a literary Historian. (p. 31).—French scepticism about German literature. Duty of judging justly: Human Society, at the present era, struggling to body itself forth anew: Necessity for an open mind. The French mind conspicuously shut: English ignorance of Germany accounted for. Difficulty of judging rightly the character of a foreign people. The Germans in particular have been liable to misrepresentation. Madame de Staël's Allemagne did much to excite a reasonable curiosity: Promise of better knowledge and friendlier intercourse. (33).—Groundless or half-grounded objections to German literature. The Germans supposed to have a radically bad taste: Of what section of their literature this is true. The first condition of any real criticism, a transposition of the critic into the author's point of vision. The notion that outward meanness and unsightliness. True taste and culture, and loving insight into truth and nobleness, not the peculiar possession of any rank: Claude Lorraine, Shakspere, and many others. The spirit of Mammon has a wide empire, but must not be worshipped in the Holy of Holies. (40) — The German authors better situated, and also show less care for wealth, than many of our own. The German nobility not insensible to genius: Goethe. The English might even learn of them in this respect. The Germans not defective in taste: English and German dulness contrasted. National taste can only be judged from its perennial models: Wieland, Klopstock, Lessing, the two Jacobis, Mendelssohn and others. (47).—Germany far in advance of other nations. The highest Criticism an interpreter between the inspired and the uninspired. Every literature of the world has been cultivated by the Germans. Essence and origin of Poetic Beauty. (54).—Bread-artists, and lovers of 'fame.' Schiller's. Schiller's noble idea of a true Artist: Fichte's. The plastic arts: Specimen of Goethe's pictorial criticism. (60).—High aspiration and earnest insight of German Poetry: Goethe. Growth of German literature parallel with that of our own: Utilitarianism: Passional extravagance. Byron, in his youth, what Schiller and Goethe had been in theirs: If Germany has gained the true path, we too shall find it. (67).—German literature vaguely objected to for its Mysticism: Mystical generally meaning not understood. Things visible and invisible: Methods of teaching suitable to each. Tendencies to real mysticism: a George Fox or Jacob Böhme. (73).—Absurdity of styling Kant a mystic: Distinctness and rigid sequence of his conceptions. Parlour-fire Philosophy of mind little valued in Germany. True claims of Kant, Schelling and Fichte. High worth of the Critical Philosophy. British inductive Philosophy since the time of Hume: Dugald Stewart: The German eductive method. The Kantian distinction between Understanding and Reason. Charge of 'Irreligion.' (77).—Superiority of the Recent Poetry of Germany: A little light precious in great darkness. Present ominous aspect of spiritual Europe. Religion and Poetry can never die, however little their voice may be heeded: Happy the man or nation that can hear the tidings they are forever bringing, and can profit by them. (87).
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[1827.]

These two Books, notwithstanding their diversity of title, are properly parts of one and the same; the Outlines, though of prior date in regard to publication, having now assumed the character of sequel and conclusion to the larger Work,—of fourth volume to the other three. It is designed, of course, for the home market; yet the foreign student also will find in it a safe and valuable help, and, in spite of its imperfections, should receive it with thankfulness and goodwill. Doubtless we might have wished for a keener discriminative and descriptive talent, and perhaps for a somewhat more catholic spirit, in the writer of such a history; but in their absence we have still much to praise. Horn's literary creed would, on the whole, we believe, be acknowledged by his countrymen as the true one; and this, though it is chiefly from one immovable station that he can survey his subject, he seems heartily anxious to apply with candour and tolerance. Another improvement might have been, a deeper principle of arrangement, a firmer grouping into periods and schools; for, as it stands, the work is more a critical sketch of German Poets, than a history of German Poetry.


2. Umrisse zur Geschichte und Kritik der schönen Literatur Deutschlands während der Jahre 1790-1818. (Outlines for the History and Criticism of Polite Literature in Germany, during the Years 1790-1818.) By Franz Horn. Berlin, 1819. 8vo.
Let us not quarrel, however, with our author; his merits as a literary historian are plain, and by no means inconsiderable. Without rivalling the almost frightful laboriousness of Bouterwek or Eichhorn, he gives creditable proofs of research and general information, and possesses a lightness in composition, to which neither of these erudite persons can well pretend. Undoubtedly he has a flowing pen, and is at home in this province; not only a speaker of the word, indeed, but a doer of the work; having written, besides his great variety of tracts and treatises, biographical, philosophical and critical, several very deserving works of a poetic sort. He is not, it must be owned, a very strong man, but he is nimble and orderly, and goes through his work with a certain gaiety of heart; nay, at times, with a frolicsome alacrity, which might even require to be pardoned. His character seems full of susceptibility; perhaps too much so for its natural vigour. His novels, accordingly, to judge from the few we have read of them, verge towards the sentimental. In the present Work, in like manner, he has adopted nearly all the best ideas of his contemporaries, but with something of an undue vehemence; and he advocates the cause of religion, integrity and true poetic taste with great heartiness and vivacity, were it not that too often his zeal outruns his prudence and insight. Thus, for instance, he declares repeatedly, in so many words, that no mortal can be a poet unless he is a Christian. The meaning here is very good; but why this phraseology? Is it not inviting the simple-minded (not to speak of scoffers, whom Horn very justly sniffs at,) to ask, When Homer subscribed the Thirty-nine Articles; or Whether Sadi and Hafiz were really of the Bishop of Peterborough's opinion? Again, he talks too often of 'representing the Infinite in the Finite,' of expressing the unspeakable, and such high matters. In fact, Horn's style, though extremely readable, has one great fault: it is, to speak it in a single word, an affected style. His stream of meaning, uniformly clear and wholesome in itself, will not flow quietly along its channel; but it is ever and anon spurtng itself up into epigrams and antithetic jets. Playful he is, and kindly, and, we do
believe, honest-hearted; but there is a certain snappishness in him, a frisking abruptness; and then his sport is more a perpetual giggle, than any dignified smile, or even any sufficient laugh with gravity succeeding it. This sentence is among the best we recollect of him, and will partly illustrate what we mean. We submit it, for the sake of its import likewise, to all superfine speculators on the Reformation, in their future contrasts of Luther and Erasmus. 'Erasmus,' says Horn, 'belongs to that species of writers who have all the desire in the world to build God Almighty a magnificent church,—at the same time, however, not giving the Devil any offence; to whom, accordingly, they set up a neat little chapel close by, where you can offer him some touch of sacrifice at a time, and practise a quiet household devotion for him without disturbance.' In this style of 'witty and conceited mirth,' considerable part of the book is written.

But our chief business at present is not with Franz Horn, or his book; of whom, accordingly, recommending his labours to all inquisitive students of German, and himself to good estimation with all good men, we must here take leave. We have a word or two to say on that strange literature itself; concerning which our readers probably feel more curious to learn what it is, than with what skill it has been judged of.

Above a century ago, the Père Bouhours propounded to himself the pregnant question: *Si un Allemand peut avoir de l'esprit?* Had the Père Bouhours bethought him of what country Kepler and Leibnitz were, or who it was that gave to mankind the three great elements of modern civilisation, Gunpowder, Printing, and the Protestant Religion, it might have thrown light on his inquiry. Had he known the *Nibelungen Lied*; and where Reinecke Fuchs, and Faust, and the *Ship of Fools*, and four-fifths of all the popular mythology, humour and romance to be found in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, took its rise; had he read a page or two of Ulrich Hutten, Opitz, Paul Flemming, Logau, or even Lohenstein and Hoffmannswaldau, all of whom had already lived and written in his day; had the Père Bouhours
taken this trouble,—who knows but he might have found, with whatever amazement, that a German could actually have a little esprit, or perhaps even something better? No such trouble was requisite for the Père Bouhours. Motion in vacuo is well known to be speedier and surer than through a resisting medium, especially to imponderous bodies; and so the light Jesuit, unimpeded by facts or principles of any kind, failed not to reach his conclusion; and, in a comfortable frame of mind, to decide, negatively, that a German could not have any literary talent.

Thus did the Père Bouhours evince that he had a pleasant wit; but in the end he has paid dear for it. The French, themselves, have long since begun to know something of the Germans, and something also of their own critical Daniel; and now it is by this one untimely joke that the hapless Jesuit is doomed to live; for the blessing of full oblivion is denied him, and so he hangs, suspended in his own noose, over the dusky pool, which he struggles toward, but for a great while will not reach. Might his fate but serve as a warning to kindred men of wit, in regard to this and so many other subjects! For surely the pleasure of despising, at all times and in itself a dangerous luxury, is much safer after the toil of examining than before it.

We altogether differ from the Père Bouhours in this matter, and must endeavour to discuss it differently. There is, in fact, much, in the present aspect of German Literature, not only deserving notice but deep consideration from all thinking men, and far too complex for being handled in the way of epigram. It is always advantageous to think justly of our neighbours; nay, in mere common honesty, it is a duty; and, like every other duty, brings its own reward. Perhaps at the present era this duty is more essential than ever; an era of such promise and such threatening, when so many elements of good and evil are everywhere in conflict, and human society is, as it were, struggling to body itself forth anew, and so many coloured rays are springing up in this quarter and in that, which only by their union can produce pure light. Happily, too, though still a difficult, it is no
longer an impossible duty; for the commerce in material things has paved roads for commerce in things spiritual, and a true thought, or a noble creation, passes lightly to us from the remotest countries, provided only our minds be open to receive it. This, indeed, is a rigorous proviso, and a great obstacle lies in it; one which to many must be insurmountable, yet which it is the chief glory of social culture to surmount. For, if a man who mistakes his own contracted individuality for the type of human nature, and deals with whatever contradicts him as if it contradicted this, is but a pedant, and without true wisdom, be he furnished with partial equipments as he may,—what better shall we think of a nation that, in like manner, isolates itself from foreign influence, regards its own modes as so many laws of nature, and rejects all that is different as unworthy even of examination?

Of this narrow and perverted condition, the French, down almost to our own times, have afforded a remarkable and instructive example; as indeed of late they have been often enough upbraidingly reminded, and are now themselves, in a manlier spirit, beginning to admit. That our countrymen have at any time erred much in this point, cannot we think, truly be alleged against them. Neither shall we say, with some passionate admirers of Germany, that to the Germans in particular they have been unjust. It is true, the literature and character of that country, which, within the last half century, have been more worthy perhaps than any other of our study and regard, are still very generally unknown to us, or, what is worse, misknown; but for this there are not wanting less offensive reasons. That the false and tawdry ware, which was in all hands, should reach us before the chaste and truly excellent, which it required some excellence to recognise; that Kotzebue's insanity should have spread faster, by some fifty years, than Lessing's wisdom; that Kant's Philosophy should stand in the background as a dreary and abortive dream, and Gall's Craniology be held out to us from every booth as a reality;—all this lay in the nature of the case. That many readers should draw conclusions from imperfect premises, and by the imports judge too
hastily of the stock imported from, was likewise natural. No unfair bias, no unwise indisposition, that we are aware of, has ever been at work in the matter; perhaps, at worst, a degree of indolence, a blamable incuriosity to all products of foreign genius: for what more do we know of recent Spanish or Italian literature, than of German; of Grossi and Manzoni, of Campomanes or Jovellanos, than of Tieck and Richter? Wherever German art, in those forms of it which need no interpreter, has addressed us immediately, our recognition of it has been prompt and hearty; from Dürer to Mengs, from Händel to Weber and Beethoven, we have welcomed the painters and musicians of Germany, not only to our praise, but to our affections and beneficence. Nor, if in their literature we have been more backward, is the literature itself without blame. Two centuries ago, translations from the German were comparatively frequent in England: Luther's *Table-Talk* is still a venerable classic in our language; nay, Jacob Böhme has found a place among us, and this not as a dead letter, but as a living apostle to a still living sect of our religionists. In the next century, indeed, translation ceased; but then it was, in a great measure, because there was little worth translating. The horrors of the Thirty-Years War, followed by the conquests and conflagrations of Louis the Fourteenth, had desolated the country; French influence, extending from the courts of princes to the closets of the learned, lay like a baleful incubus over the far nobler mind of Germany; and all true nationality vanished from its literature, or was heard only in faint tones, which lived in the hearts of the people, but could not reach with any effect to the ears of foreigners.¹ And now that the genius of the

¹ Not that the Germans were idle; or altogether engaged, as we too loosely suppose, in the work of commentary and lexicography. On the contrary, they rhymed and romanced with due vigour as to quantity; only the quality was bad. Two facts on this head may deserve mention: In the year 1749, there were found in the library of one virtuoso no fewer than 300 volumes of devotional poetry, containing, says Horn, 'a treasure of 33,712 German hymns'; and, much about the same period, one of Gottsched's scholars had amassed as many as 1500 German novels, all of the seventeenth century. The hymns we understand to
country has awakened in its old strength, our attention to it has certainly awakened also; and if we yet know little or nothing of the Germans, it is not because we wilfully do them wrong, but, in good part, because they are somewhat difficult to know.

In fact, prepossessions of all sorts naturally enough find their place here. A country which has no national literature, or a literature too insignificant to force its way abroad, must always be, to its neighbours, at least in every important spiritual respect, an unknown and misestimated country. Its towns may figure on our maps; its revenues, population, be much better than the novels, or rather, perhaps, the novels to be much worse than the hymns. Neither was critical study neglected, nor indeed honest endeavour on all hands to attain improvement: witness the strange books from time to time put forth, and the still stranger institutions established for this purpose. Among the former we have the 'Poetical Funnel' (Poetische Trichter), manufactured at Nürnberg in 1650, and procressing, within six hours, to pour-in the whole essence of this difficult art into the most unfurnished head. Nürnberg also was the chief seat of the famous Meistersänger and their Sängerzünfte, or Singer-guilds, in which poetry was taught and practised like any other handicraft, and this by sober and well-meaning men chiefly artisans, who could not understand why labour, which manufactured so many things, should not also manufacture another. Of these tuneful guild-brethren, Hans Sachs, by trade a shoemaker, is greatly the most noted and most notable. His father was a tailor; he himself learned the mystery of song under one Nunnebeck, a weaver. He was an adherent of his great contemporary Luther, who has even deigned to acknowledge his services in the cause of the Reformation. How diligent a labourer Sachs must have been, will appear from the fact, that, in his 74th year (1568), on examining his stock for publication, he found that he had written 6048 poetical pieces, among which were 208 tragedies and comedies; and this besides having all along kept house, like an honest Nürnberg burgher, by assiduous and sufficient shoe-making! Hans is not without genius, and a shrewd irony; and, above all, the most gay, childlike, yet devout and solid character. A man neither to be despised nor patronised; but left standing on his own basis, as a singular product, and a still legible symbol and clear mirror of the time and country where he lived. His best piece known to us, and many are well worth perusing, is the Fastnachtspiel (Shrovetide Farce) of the Narrenschneiden where the Doctor cures a bloated and lethargic patient by cutting-out half-a-dozen Fools from his interior!
manufactures, political connections, may be recorded in statistical books: but the character of the people has no symbol and no voice; we cannot know them by speech and discourse, but only by mere sight and outward observation of their manners and procedure. Now, if both sight and speech, if both travellers and native literature, are found but ineffectual in this respect, how incalculably more so the former alone! To seize a character, even that of one man, in its life and secret mechanism, requires a philosopher; to delineate it with truth and impressiveness, is work for a poet. How shall one or two sleek clerical tutors, with here and there a tedium-stricken 'squire, or speculative half-pay captain, give us views on such a subject. How shall a man, to whom all characters of individual men are like sealed books, of which he sees only the title and the covers, decipher, from his four-wheeled vehicle, and depict to us, the character of a nation? He courageously depicts his own optical delusions; notes this to be incomprehensible, that other to be insignificant; much to be good, much to be bad, and most of all indifferent; and so, with a few flowing strokes, completes a picture which, though it may not even resemble any possible object, his countrymen are to take for a national portrait. Nor is the fraud so readily detected: for the character of a people has such complexity of aspect, that even the honest observer knows nor always, not perhaps after long inspection, what to determine regarding it. From his, only accidental, point of view, the figure stands before him like the tracings on veined marble,—a mass of mere random lines, and tints, and entangled strokes, out of which a lively fancy may shape almost any image. But the image he brings along with him is always the readiest; this is tried, it answers as well as another; and a second voucher now testifies its correctness. Thus each, in confident tones, though it may be with a secret misgiving, repeats his precursor; the hundred times repeated comes in the end to be believed; the foreign nation is now once for all understood, decided on, and registered accordingly; and dunce the thousandth writes of it like dunce the first.
With the aid of literary and intellectual intercourse, much of this falsehood may, no doubt, be corrected; yet even here, sound judgment is far from easy; and most national characters are still, as Hume long ago complained, the product rather of popular prejudice than of philosophic insight. That the Germans, in particular, have by no means escaped such misrepresentation, nay perhaps have had more than the common share of it, cannot, in their circumstances, surprise us. From the time of Opitz and Flemming, to those of Klopstock and Lessing,—that is, from the early part of the seventeenth to the middle of the eighteenth century,—they had scarcely any literature known abroad, or deserving to be known: their political condition, during this same period, was oppressive and everyway unfortunate externally; and at home, the nation, spilt into so many fractions and petty states, had lost all feeling of itself as of a nation; and its energies in arts as in arms were manifested only in detail, too often in collision, and always under foreign influence. The French, at once their plunderers and their scoffers, described them to the rest of Europe as a semi-barbarous people; which comfortable fact the rest of Europe was willing enough to take on their word. During the greater part of the last century, the Germans, in our intellectual survey of the world, were quietly omitted; a vague contemptuous ignorance prevailed respecting them; it was a Cimmerian land, where, if a few sparks did glimmer, it was but so as to testify their own existence, too feebly to enlighten us. The Germans passed

1 So late as the year 1811, we find, from Pinkerton’s Geography, the sole representative of German literature to be Gottsched (with his name wrong spelt), ‘who first introduced a more refined style.’—Gottsched has been dead the greater part of a century; and for the last fifty years, ranks among the Germans somewhat as Prynne or Alexander Ross does among ourselves. A man of a cold, rigid, perseverant character, who mistook himself for a poet and the perfection of critics, and had skill to pass current during the greater part of his literary life for such. On the strength of his Boileau and Batteux, he long reigned supreme; but it was like Night, in rayless majesty, and over a slumbering people. They awoke, before his death, and hurled him, perhaps too indignantly, into his native Abyss.
for apprentices in all provinces of art; and many foreign craftsmen scarcely allowed them so much.

Madame de Staël's book has done away with this: all Europe is now aware that the Germans are something; something independent and apart from others; nay, something deep, imposing and, if not admirable, wonderful. What that something is, indeed, is still undecided; for this gifted lady's *Allemagne*, in doing much to excite curiosity, has still done little to satisfy or even direct it. We can no longer make ignorance a boast, but we are yet far from having acquired right knowledge; and cavillers, excluded from contemptuous negation, have found a resource in almost as contemptuous assertion. Translators are the same faithless and stolid race that they have ever been: the particle of gold they bring us over is hidden from all but the most patient eye, among ship-loads of yellow sand and sulphur. Gentle Dullness too, in this as in all other things, still loves her joke. The Germans, though much more attended to, are perhaps not less mistaken than before.

Doubtless, however, there is in this increased attention a progress towards the truth; which it is only investigation and discussion that can help us to find. The study of German literature has already taken such firm root among us, and is spreading so visibly, that by and by, as we believe, the true character of it must and will become known. A result, which is to bring us into closer and friendlier union with forty millions of civilised men, cannot surely be other than desirable. If they have precious truth to impart, we shall receive it as the highest of all gifts; if error, we shall not only reject it, but explain it and trace out its origin, and so help our brethren also to reject it. In either point of view, and for all profitable purposes of national intercourse, correct knowledge is the first and indispensable preliminary.

Meanwhile, errors of all sorts prevail on this subject: even among men of sense and liberality we have found so much hallucination, so many groundless or half-grounded objections to German literature, that the tone in which a multitude of other men speak of it cannot appear extraordinary.
To much of this, even a slight knowledge of the Germans would furnish a sufficient answer. We have thought it might be useful were the chief of these objections marshalled in distinct order, and examined with what degree of light and fairness is at our disposal. In attempting this, we are vain enough, for reasons already stated, to fancy ourselves discharging what is in some sort a national duty. It is unworthy of one great people to think falsely of another; it is unjust, and therefore unworthy. Of the injury it does to ourselves we do not speak, for that is an inferior consideration: yet surely if the grand principle of free intercourse is so profitable in material commerce, much more must it be in the commerce of the mind, the products of which are thereby not so much transported out of one country into another, as multiplied over all, for the benefit of all, and without loss to any. If that man is a benefactor to the world who causes two ears of corn to grow where only one grew before, much more is he a benefactor who causes two truths to grow up together in harmony and mutual confirmation, where before only one stood solitary, and, on that side at least, intolerant and hostile.

In dealing with the host of objections which front us on this subject, we think it may be convenient to range them under two principal heads. The first, as respects chiefly unsoundness or imperfection of sentiment; an error which may in general be denominated Bad Taste. The second, as respects chiefly a wrong condition of intellect; an error which may be designated by the general title of Mysticism. Both of these, no doubt, are partly connected; and each, in some degree, springs from and returns into the other: yet, for present purposes, the divisions may be precise enough.

First, then, of the first: It is objected that the Germans have a radically bad taste. This is a deep-rooted objection, which assumes many forms, and extends through many ramifications. Among men of less acquaintance with the subject of German taste, or of taste in general, the spirit of the accusation seems to be somewhat as follows: That the Germans, with much natural susceptibility, are still in a rather
coarse and uncultivated state of mind; displaying, with the energy and other virtues of a rude people, many of their vices also; in particular, a certain wild and headlong temper, which seizes on all things too hastily and impetuously; weeps, storms, loves, hates, too fiercely and vociferously; delighting in coarse excitements, such as flaring contrasts, vulgar horrors, and all sorts of showy exaggeration. Their literature, in particular, is thought to dwell with peculiar complacency among wizards and ruined towers, with mailed knights, secret tribunals, monks, spectres, and banditti: on the other hand, there is an undue love of moonlight, and mossy fountains, and the moral sublime: then we have descriptions of things which should not be described; a general want of tact; nay, often a hollowness, and want of sense. In short the German Muse comports herself, it is said, like a passionate and rather fascinating, but tumultuous, uninstructed and but half civilised Muse. A belle sauvage at best, we can only love her with a sort of supercilious tolerance; often she tears a passion to rags; and, in her humid vehemence, struts without meaning, and to the offence of all literary decorum.

Now, in all this there is not wanting a certain degree of truth. If any man will insist on taking Heinse's Ardinghello, and Miller's Siegwart, and the works of Veit Weber the Younger, and, above all, the everlasting Kotzebue, as his specimens of German literature, he may establish many things. Black Forests, and the glories of Lubberland; sensuality and horror, the spectre nun, and the charmed moonshine, shall not be wanting. Boisterous outlaws also, with huge whiskers and the most cat-o'-mountain aspect; tear-stained sentimentalists, the grimmest manhaters, ghosts and the like suspicious characters, will be found in abundance. We are little read in this bowl-and-dagger department; but we do understand it to have been at one time rather diligently cultivated; though at present it seems to be mostly relinquished as unproductive. Other forms of Unreason have taken its place; which in their turn must yield to still other forms; for it is the nature of this goddess to descend in frequent avatars among men. Perhaps not less than five hun-
dred volumes of such stuff could still be collected from the bookstalls of Germany. By which truly we may learn that there is in that country a class of unwise men and unwise women; that many readers there labour under a degree of ignorance and mental vacancy, and read not actively but passively, not to learn but to be amused. Is this fact so very new to us? Or what should we think of a German critic that selected his specimens of British literature from the Castle Spectre, Mr. Lewis's Monk or the Mysteries of Udolpho, and Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus? Or would he judge rightly of our dramatic taste, if he took his extracts from Mr. Egan's Tom and Jerry; and told his readers, as he might truly do, that no play had ever enjoyed such currency on the English stage as this most classic performance? We think, not. In like manner, till some author of acknowledged merit shall so write among the Germans, and be approved of by critics of acknowledged merit among them, or at least secure for himself some permanency of favour among the million, we can prove nothing by such instances. That there is so perverse an author, or so blind a critic, in the whole compass of German literature, we have no hesitation in denying.

But farther: among men of deeper views, and with regard to works of really standard character, we find, though not the same, a similar objection repeated. Goethe's Wilhelm Meister, it is said, and Faust, are full of bad taste also. With respect to the taste in which they are written, we shall have occasion to say somewhat hereafter: meanwhile, we may be permitted to remark that the objection would have more force, did it seem to originate from a more mature consideration of the subject. We have heard few English criticisms of such works, in which the first condition of an approach to accuracy was complied with;—a transposition of the critic into the author's point of vision, a survey of the author's means and objects as they lay before himself, and a just trial of these by rules of universal application. Faust, for instance, passes with many of us for a mere tale of sorcery and art-magic. It would scarcely be more unwise to consider Hamlet as de-
pending for its main interest on the ghost that walks in it, than to regard Faust as a production of that sort. For the present, therefore, this objection may be set aside; or at least may be considered not as an assertion, but an inquiry, the answer to which may turn out rather that the German taste is different from ours, than that it is worse. Nay, with regard even to difference, we should scarcely reckon it to be of great moment. Two nations that agree in estimating Shakespeare as the highest of all poets, can differ in no essential principle, if they understood one another, that relates to poetry.

Nevertheless, this opinion of our opponents has attained a certain degree of consistency with itself; one thing is thought to throw light on another; nay, a quiet little theory has been propounded to explain the whole phenomenon. The cause of this bad taste, we are assured, lies in the condition of the German authors. These, it seems, are generally very poor; the ceremonial law of the country excludes them from all society with the great; they cannot acquire the polish of drawing-rooms, but must live in mean houses, and therefore write and think in a mean style.

Apart from the truth of these assumptions, and in respect of the theory itself, we confess there is something in the face of it that afflicts us. Is it then so certain that taste and riches are indissolubly connected? That truth of feeling must ever be preceded by weight of purse, and the eyes be dim for universal and eternal Beauty, till they have long rested on gilt walls and costly furniture? To the great body of mankind this were heavy news; for, of the thousand, scarcely one is rich, or connected with the rich; nine hundred and ninety-nine have always been poor, and must always be so. We take the liberty of questioning the whole postulate. We think that, for acquiring true poetic taste, riches, or association with the rich, are distinctly among the minor requisites; that, in fact, they have little or no concern with the matter. This we shall now endeavour to make probable.

Taste, if it mean anything but a paltry connoisseurship, must mean a general susceptibility to truth and nobleness;
a sense to discern, and a heart to love and reverence, all beauty, order, goodness, wheresoever or in whatsoever forms and accompaniments they are to been seen. This surely implies, as its chief condition, not any given external rank or situation, but a finely gifted mind, purified into harmony with itself, into keenness and justness of vision; above all, kindled into love and generous admiration. Is culture of this sort found exclusively among the higher ranks? We believe it proceeds less from without than within, in every rank. The charms of Nature, the majesty of Man, the infinite loveliness of Truth and Virtue, are not hidden from the eye of the poor; but from the eye of the vain, the corrupted and self-seeking, be he poor or rich. In old ages, the humble Minstrel, a mendicant, and lord of nothing but his harp and his own free soul, had intimations of those glories, while to the proud Baron in his barbaric halls they were unknown. Nor is there still any aristocratic monopoly of judgment more than of genius: for as to that Science of Negation which is taught peculiarly by men of professed elegance, we confess we hold it rather cheap. It is a necessary, but decidedly a subordinate accomplishment, nay, if it be rated as the highest, it becomes a ruinous vice. This is an old truth; yet ever needing new application and enforcement. Let us know what to love, and we shall know also what to reject; what to affirm, and we shall know also what to deny: but it is dangerous to begin with denial, and fatal to end with it. To deny is easy; nothing is sooner learnt or more generally practised: as matters go, we need no man of polish to teach it; but rather, if possible, a hundred men of wisdom to show us its limits, and teach us its reverse.

Such is our hypothesis of the case: how stands it with the facts? Are the fineness and truth of sense manifested by the artist found, in most instances, to be proportionate to his wealth and elevation of acquaintance? Are they found to have any perceptible relation either with the one or the other? We imagine, not. Whose taste in painting, for instance, is truer and finer than Claude Lorraine's? And was not he a poor colour-grinder; outwardly, the meanest of menials?
Where, again, we might ask, lay Shakspeare's rent-roll; and what generous peer took him by the hand and unfolded to him the 'open secret' of the Universe; teaching him that this was beautiful, and that not so? Was he not a peasant by birth, and by fortune something lower; and was it not thought much, even in the height of his reputation, that Southampton allowed him equal patronage with the zanies, jugglers and bearwards of the time? Yet compare his taste, even as it respects the negative side of things; for, in regard to the positive and far higher side, it admits no comparison with any other mortal's,—compare it, for instance, with the taste of Beaumont and Fletcher, his contemporaries, men of rank and education, and of fine genius like himself. Tried even by the nice, fastidious and in great part false and artificial delicacy of modern times, how stands it with the two parties; with the gay triumphant men of fashion, and the poor vagrant linkboy? Does the latter sin against, we shall not say taste, but etiquette, as the former do? For one line, for one word, which some Chesterfield might wish blotted from the first, are there not in the others whole pages and scenes which, with palpitating heart, he would hurry into deepest night? This too, observe, respects not their genius, but their culture; not their appropriation of beauties, but their rejection of deformities, by supposition the grand and peculiar result of high breeding! Surely, in such instances, even that humble supposition is ill borne out.

The truth of the matter seems to be, that with the culture of a genuine poet, thinker or other artist, the influence of rank has no exclusive or even special concern. For men of action, for senators, public speakers, political writers, the case may be different; but of such we speak not at present. Neither do we speak of imitators, and the crowd of mediocre men, to whom fashionable life sometimes gives an external inoffensiveness, often compensated by a frigid malignity of character. We speak of men who, from amid the perplexed and conflicting elements of their everyday existence, are to form themselves in harmony and wisdom, and show forth the same wisdom to others that exists along with them. To such
a man, high life, as it is called, will be a province of human life but nothing more. He will study to deal with it as he deals with all forms of mortal being; to do it justice, and to draw instruction from it; but his light will come from a loftier region, or he wanders forever in darkness; dwindles into a man of vers de société, or attains at best to be a Walpole or a Caylus. Still less can we think that he is to be viewed as a hireling; that his excellence will be regulated by his pay. 'Sufficiently provided for from within, he has need of little from without:' food and raiment, and an unviolated home, will be given him in the rudest land; and with these, while the kind earth is round him, and the everlasting heaven is over him, the world has little more that it can give. Is he poor? So also were Homer and Socrates; so was Samuel Johnson; so was John Milton. Shall we reproach him with his poverty, and infer that, because he is poor, he must likewise be worthless? God forbid that the time should ever come when he too shall esteem riches the synonym of good! The spirit of Mammon has a wide empire; but it cannot, and must not, be worshipped in the Holy of Holies. Nay, does not the heart of every genuine disciple of literature, however mean his sphere, instinctively deny this principle, as applicable either to himself or another? Is it not rather true, as D'Alembert has said, that for every man of letters, who deserves that name, the motto and the watchword will be Freedom, Truth, and even this same Poverty; that if he fear the last, the two first can never be made sure to him?

We have stated these things, to bring the question somewhat nearer its real basis; not for the sake of the Germans, who nowise need the admission of them. The German authors are not poor; neither are they excluded from association with the wealthy and well-born. On the contrary, we scruple not to say, that, in both these respects, they are considerably better situated than our own. Their booksellers, it is true, cannot pay as ours do; yet, there as here, a man lives by his writings; and, to compare Jörden's with Johnson and D'Israeli, somewhat better there than here. No case like our own noble Otway's has met us in their biographies;
Boyces and Chattertons are much rarer in German than in English history. But farther, and what is far more important: From the number of universities, libraries, collections of art, museums, and other literary or scientific institutions of a public or private nature, we question whether the chance which a meritorious man of letters has before him, of obtaining some permanent appointment, some independent civic existence, is not a hundred to one in favour of the German, compared with the Englishman. This is a weighty item, and indeed the weightiest of all; for it will be granted, that, for the votary of literature, the relation of entire dependence on the merchants of literature is, at best, and however liberal the terms, a highly questionable one. It tempts him daily and hourly to sink from an artist into a manufacturer; nay, so precarious, fluctuating and everyway unsatisfactory must his civic and economic concerns become, that too many of his class cannot even attain the praise of common honesty as manufacturers. There is, no doubt, a spirit of martyrdom, as we have asserted, which can sustain this too: but few indeed have the spirit of martyrs; and that state of matters is the safest which requires it least. The German authors, moreover, to their credit be it spoken, seem to set less store by wealth than many of ours. There have been prudent, quiet men among them, who actually appeared not to want more wealth; whom wealth could not tempt, either to this hand or that, from their preappointed aims. Neither must we think so hardly of the German nobility as to believe them insensible to genius, or of opinion that a patent from the Lion King is so superior to 'a patent direct from Almighty God.' A fair proportion of the German authors are themselves men of rank: we mention only, as of our own time, and notable in other respects, the two Stolbergs and Novalis. Let us not be unjust to this class of persons. It is a poor error to figure them as wrapt up in ceremonial stateliness, avoiding the most gifted man of a lower station; and, for their own supercilious triviality, themselves avoided by all truly gifted men. On the whole, we should change our notion of the German nobleman: that ancient, thirsty, thickheaded, sixteen-quartered
Baron, who still hovers in our minds, never did exist in such perfection, and is now as extinct as our own Squire Western. His descendant is a man of other culture, other aims and other habits. We question whether there is an aristocracy in Europe, which, taken as a whole, both in a public and private capacity, more honours art and literature, and does more both in public and private to encourage them. Excluded from society! What, we would ask, was Wieland's, Schiller's, Herder's, Johannes Müller's society? Has not Goethe, by birth a Frankfort burgher, been, since his twenty-sixth year, the companion, not of nobles but of princes, and for half his life a minister of state? And is not this man, unrivalled in so many far deeper qualities, known also and felt to be unrivalled in nobleness of breeding and bearing; fit not to learn of princes in this respect, but by the example of his daily life to teach them?

We hear much of the munificent spirit displayed among the better classes in England; their high estimation of the arts, and generous patronage of the artist. We rejoice to hear it; we hope it is true, and will become truer and truer. We hope that a great change has taken place among these classes, since the time when Bishop Burnet could write of them, 'They are for the most part the worst instructed, and 'the least knowing, of any of their -rank I ever went among!'

Nevertheless, let us arrogate to ourselves no exclusive praise in this particular. Other nations can appreciate the arts, and cherish their cultivators, as well as we. Nay, while learning from us in many other matters, we suspect the Germans might even teach us somewhat in regard to this. At all events, the pity, which certain of our authors express for the civil condition of their brethren in that country is, from such a quarter, a superfluous feeling. Nowhere, let us rest assured, is genius more devoutly honoured than there, by all ranks of men, from peasants and burghers up to legislators and kings. It was but last year that the Diet of the Empire passed an Act in favour of one individual poet: the Final Edition of Goethe's Works was guaranteed to be protected against commercial injury in every State of Germany; and special assurances to
that effect were sent him, in the kindest terms, from all the Authorities there assembled, some of them the highest in his country or in Europe. Nay, even while we write, are not the newspapers recording a visit from the Sovereign of Bavaria in person to the same venerable man?—a mere ceremony perhaps, but one which almost recalls to us the era of the antique Sages and the Grecian Kings.

This hypothesis, therefore, it would seem, is not supported by facts, and so returns to its original elements. The causes it alleges are impossible: but, what is still more fatal, the effect it proposes to account for has, in reality, no existence. We venture to deny that the Germans are defective in taste; even as a nation, as a public, taking one thing with another, we imagine they may stand comparison with any of their neighbours; as writers, as critics, they may decidedly court it. True, there is a mass of dulness, awkwardness and false susceptibility in the lower regions of their literature: but is not bad taste endemical in such regions of every literature under the sun? Pure Stupidity, indeed, is of a quiet nature, and content to be merely stupid. But seldom do we find it pure; seldom unadulterated with some tincture of ambition, which drives it into new and strange metamorphoses. Here it has assumed a contemptuous trenchant air, intended to represent superior tact, and a sort of all-wisdom; there a truculent atrabilious scowl, which is to stand for passionate strength: now we have an outpouring of timid fervour; now a fruitless, asthmatic hunting after wit and humour. Grave or gay, enthusiastic or derisive, admiring or despising, the dull man would be something which he is not and cannot be. Shall we confess, that, of these two common extremes, we reckon the German error considerably the more harmless, and, in our day, by far the more curable? Of unwise admiration much may be hoped, for much good is really in it, but unwise contempt is itself a negation; nothing comes of it, for it is nothing.

To judge of a national taste, however, we must raise our view from its transitory modes to its perennial models; from the mass of vulgar writers, who blaze out and are extinguished
with the popular delusion which they flatter, to those few who are admitted to shine with a pure and lasting lustre; to whom, by common consent, the eyes of the people are turned, as to its loadstars and celestial luminaries. Among German writers of this stamp, we would ask any candid reader of them, let him be of what country or creed he might, whether bad taste struck him as a prevailing characteristic. Was Wieland's taste uncultivated? Taste, we should say, and taste of the very species which a disciple of the Negative School would call the highest, formed the great object of his life; the perfection he unweariedly endeavoured after, and, more than any other perfection, has attained. The most fastidious Frenchman might read him, with admiration of his merely French qualities. And is not Klopstock, with his clear enthusiasm, his azure purity, and heavenly if still somewhat cold and lunar light, a man of taste? His Messias reminds us oftener of no other poets than of Virgil and Racine. But it is to Lessing that an Englishman would turn with readiest affection. We cannot but wonder that more of this man is not known among us; or that the knowledge of him has not done more to remove such misconceptions. Among all the writers of the eighteenth century, we will not except even Diderot and David Hume, there is not one of a more compact and rigid intellectual structure; who more distinctly knows what he is aiming at, or with more gracefulness, vigour and precision sets it forth to his readers. He thinks with the clearness and piercing sharpness of the most expert logician; but a genial fire prevades him, a wit, a heartiness, a general richness and fineness of nature, to which most logicians are strangers. He is a sceptic in many things, but the noblest of sceptics; a mild, manly, half-careless enthusiasm struggles through his indignant unbelief: he stands before us like a toilworn but unwearied and heroic champion, earning not the conquest but the battle; as indeed himself admits to us, that 'it is not the finding of truth, but the honest search for it, that profits.' We confess, we should be entirely at a loss for the literary creed of that man who reckoned Lessing other than a thoroughly cultivated writer; nay, entitled to rank, in
this particular, with the most distinguished writers of any existing nation. As a poet, as a critic, philosopher, or controversialist, his style will be found precisely such as we of England are accustomed to admire most; brief, nervous, vivid; yet quiet, without glitter or antithesis; idiomatic, pure without purism; transparent, yet full of character and reflex hues of meaning. 'Every sentence,' says Horn, and justly, 'is like a phalanx;' not a word wrong-placed, not a word that could be spared; and it forms itself so calmly and lightly, and stands in its completeness, so gay, yet so impregnable! As a poet he contempitiously denied himself all merit; but his readers have not taken him at his word: here too a similar felicity of style attends him; his plays, his Minna von Barnhelm, his Emilie Galotti, his Nathan der Weise, have a genuine and graceful poetic life; yet no works known to us in any language are purer from exaggeration, or any appearance of falsehood. They are pictures, we might say, painted not in colours, but in crayons; yet a strange attraction lies in them; for the figures are grouped into the finest attitudes, and true and spirit-speaking in every line. It is with his style chiefly that we have to do here; yet we must add, that the matter of his works is not less meritorious. His Criticism and philosophic or religious Scepticism were of a higher mood than had yet been heard in Europe, still more in Germany: his Dramaturgie first exploded the pretensions of the French theatre, and, with irresistible conviction, made Shakspeare known to his countrymen; preparing the way for a brighter era in their literature, the chief men of which still thankfully look back to Lessing as their patriarch. His Laocoon, with its deep glances into the philosophy of Art, his Dialogues of Freemasons, a work of far higher import than its title indicates, may yet teach many things to most of us, which we know not, and ought to know.

With Lessing and Klopstock might be joined, in this respect, nearly every one, we do not say of their distinguished, but even of their tolerated contemporaries. The two Jacobis, known more or less in all countries, are little known here, if they are accused of wanting literary taste. These are men,
whether as thinkers or poets, to be regarded and admired for their mild and lofty wisdom, the devoutness, the benignity and calm grandeur of their philosophical views. In such, it were strange if among so many high merits, this lower one of a just and elegant style, which is indeed their natural and even necessary product, had been wanting. We recommend the elder Jacobi no less for his clearness than for his depth; of the younger, it may be enough in this point of view to say, that the chief praisers of his earlier poetry were the French. Neither are Hamann and Mendelsohn, who could meditate deep thoughts, defective in the power of uttering them with propriety. The Phaedon of the latter, in its chaste precision and simplicity of style, may almost remind us of Xenophon: Socrates, to our mind, has spoken in no modern language so like Socrates, as here, by the lips of this wise and cultivated Jew. 1

Among the poets and more popular writers of the time, the case is the same: Utz, Gellert, Cramer, Ramler, Kleist, Hagedorn, Rabener, Gleim, and a multitude of lesser men, whatever excellences they might want, certainly are not chargeable with bad taste. Nay, perhaps of all writers they

1 The history of Mendelsohn is interesting in itself, and full of encouragement to all lovers of self-improvement. At thirteen he was a wandering Jewish beggar, without health, without home, almost without a language,—for the jargon of broken Hebrew and provincial German which he spoke could scarcely be called one. At middle age he could write this Phaedon; was a man of wealth and breeding, and ranked among the teachers of his age. Like Pope, he abode by his original creed, though often solicited to change it: indeed, the grand problem of his life was to better the inward and outward condition of his own ill-fated people; for whom he actually accomplished much benefit. He was a mild, shrewd and worthy man; and might well love Phaedon and Socrates, for his own character was Socratic. He was a friend of Lessing’s: indeed, a pupil; for Lessing, having accidentally met him at chess, recognised the spirit that lay struggling under such incumbrances, and generously undertook to help him. By teaching the poor Jew a little Greek, he disenchanted him from the Talmud and the Rabbins. The two were afterwards co-laborers in Nicolai’s Deutsche Bibliothek, the first German Review of any character, which, however, in the hands of Nicolai himself, it subsequently lost. Mendelsohn’s Works have mostly been translated into French.
are the least chargeable with it: a certain clear, light, unaffected elegance, of a higher nature than French elegance, it might be, yet to the exclusion of all very deep or genial qualities, was the excellence they strove after, and, for the most part, in a fair measure attained. They resemble English writers of the same, or perhaps an earlier period, more than any other foreigners: apart from Pope, whose influence is visible enough, Beattie, Logan, Wilkie, Glover, unknown perhaps to any of them, might otherwise have almost seemed their models. Goldsmith also would rank among them; perhaps in regard to true poetic genius, at their head, for none of them has left us a Vicar of Wakefield; though, in regard to judgment, knowledge, general talent, his place would scarcely be so high.

The same thing holds in general, and with fewer drawbacks, of the somewhat later and more energetic race, denominated the Göttingen School; in contradistinction from the Saxon, to which Rabener, Cramer and Gellert directly belonged, and most of those others indirectly. Hölt, Bürger, the two Stolbergs, are men whom Bossu might measure with his scales and compasses as strictly as he pleased. Of Herder, Schiller, Goethe, we speak not here: they are men of another stature and form of movement, whom Bossu’s scale and compasses could not measure without difficulty or rather not at all. To say that such men wrote with taste of this sort, were saying little; for this forms not the apex, but the basis, in their conception of style; a quality not to be paraded as an excellence, but to be understood as indispensable, as there by necessity, and like a thing of course.

In truth, for it must be spoken out, our opponents are widely astray in this matter; so widely that their views of it are not only dim and perplexed, but altogether imaginary and delusive. It is proposed to school the Germans in the Alphabet of taste; and the Germans are already busied with their Accidence! Far from being behind other nations in the practice or science of Criticism, it is a fact, for which we fearlessly refer to all competent judges, that they are distinctly and even considerably in advance. We state what is already
known to a great part of Europe to be true. Criticism has assumed a new form in Germany; it proceeds on other principles, and proposes to itself a higher aim. The grand question is not now a question concerning the qualities of diction, the coherence of metaphors, the fitness of sentiments, the general logical truth, in a work of art, as it was some half century ago among most critics; neither is it a question mainly of a psychological sort, to be answered by discovering and delineating the peculiar nature of the poet from his poetry, as is usual with the best of our own critics at present: but it is, not indeed exclusively, but inclusively of those two other questions, properly and ultimately a question on the essence and peculiar life of the poetry itself. The first of these questions, as we see it answered, for instance, in the criticisms of Johnson and Kames, relates, strictly speaking, to the garment of poetry; the second, indeed, to its body and material existence, a much higher point; but only the last to its soul and spiritual existence, by which alone can the body, in its movements and phases, be informed with significance and rational life. The problem is not now to determine by what mechanism Addison composed sentences, and struck out similitudes; but by what far finer and more mysterious mechanism Shakespeare organised his dramas, and gave life and individuality to his Ariel and his Hamlet. Wherein lies that life; how have they attained that shape and individuality? Whence comes that empyrean fire, which irradiates their whole being, and pierces, at least in starry gleams, like a diviner thing, into all hearts? Are these dramas of his not verisimilar only, but true; nay, truer than reality itself, since the essence of unmixed reality is bodied forth in them under more expressive symbols? What is this unity of theirs; and can our deeper inspection discern it to be indivisible, and existing by necessity, because each work springs, as it were, from the general elements of all Thought, and grows up therefrom, into form and expansion by its own growth? Not only who was the poet, and how did he compose; but what and how was the poem, and why was it a poem and not rhymed eloquence, creation and not figured passion? These are the
questions for the critic. Criticism stands like an interpreter between the inspired and uninspired; between the prophet and those who hear the melody of his words, and catch some glimpse of their material meaning, but understand not their deeper import. She pretends to open for us this deeper import; to clear our sense that it may discern the pure brightness of this eternal Beauty, and recognise it as heavenly, under all forms where it looks forth, and reject, as of the earth earthy, all forms, be their material splendour what it may, where no gleaming of that other shines through.

This is the task of Criticism, as the Germans understand it. And how do they accomplish this task? By a vague declamation clothed in gorgeous mystic phraseology? By vehement tumultuous anthems to the poet and his poetry; by epithets and laudatory similitudes drawn from Tartarus and Elysium, and all intermediate terrors and glories; whereby, in truth, it is rendered clear both that the poet is an extremely great poet, and also that the critic's allotment of understanding, overflowed by these Pythian raptures, has unhappily melted into deliquium? Nowise in this manner do the Germans proceed: but by rigorous scientific inquiry by appeal to principles which, whether correct or not, have been deduced patiently, and by long investigation, from the highest and calmest regions of Philosophy. For this finer portion of their Criticism is now also embodied in systems; and standing, so far as these reach, coherent, distinct and methodical, no less than, on their much shallower foundation, the systems of Boileau and Blair. That this new Criticism is a complete, much more a certain science, we are far from meaning to affirm: the aesthetic theories of Kant, Herder, Schiller, Goethe, Richter, vary in external aspect, according to the varied habits of the individual; and can at best only be regarded as approximations to the truth, or modifications of it; each critic representing it, as it harmonises more or less perfectly with the other intellectual persuasions of his own mind, and of different classes of minds that resemble his. Nor can we here undertake to inquire what degree of such approximation to the truth there is in each or all of these writers; or in
Tieck and the two Schlegels, who, especially the latter, have laboured so meritoriously in reconciling these various opinions; and so successfully in impressing and diffusing the best spirit of them, first in their own country, and now also in several others. Thus much, however, we will say: That we reckon the mere circumstance of such a science being in existence, a ground of the highest consideration, and worthy the best attention of all inquiring men. For we should err widely if we thought that this new tendency of critical science pertains to Germany alone. It is a European tendency, and springs from the general condition of intellect in Europe. We ourselves have all, for the last thirty years, more or less distinctly felt the necessity of such a science: witness the neglect into which our Blairs and Bossus have silently fallen; our increased and increasing admiration, not only of Shakspeare, but of all his contemporaries, and of all who breathe any portion of his spirit; our controversy whether Pope was a poet; and so much vague effort on the part of our best critics, everywhere to express some still unexpressed idea concerning the nature of true poetry; as if they felt in their hearts that a pure glory, nay a divineness, belonged to it, for which they had as yet no name, and no intellectual form. But in Italy too, in France itself, the same thing is visible. Their grand controversy, so hotly urged, between the Classicists and Romanticists, in which the Schlegels are assumed, much too loosely, on all hands, as the patrons and generalissimos of the latter, shows us sufficiently what spirit is at work in that long-stagnant literature. Doubtless this turbid fermentation of the elements will at length settle into clearness, both there and here, as in Germany it has already in a great measure done; and perhaps a more serene and genial poetic day is everywhere to be expected with some confidence. How much the example of the Germans may have to teach us in this particular, needs no further exposition.

The authors and first promulgators of this new critical doctrine were at one time contemptuously named the New School; nor was it till after a war of all the few good heads in the nation, with all the many bad ones, had ended as such wars
must ever do,¹ that these critical principles were generally adopted; and their assertors found to be no School, or new heretical Sect, but the ancient primitive Catholic Communion, of which all sects that had any living light in them were but members and subordinate modes. It is, indeed, the most sacred article of this creed to preach and practise universal tolerance. Every literature of the world has been cultivated by the Germans; and to every literature they have studied to give due honour. Shakspeare and Homer, no doubt, occupy alone the loftiest station in the poetical Olympus; but there is space in it for all true Singers out of every age and clime. Ferdusi and the primeval Mythologists of Hindostan live in brotherly union with the Troubadours and ancient Storytellers of the West. The wayward mystic gloom of Calderon, the lurid fire of Dante, the auroral light of Tasso, the clear icy glitter of Racine, all are acknowledged and revered; nay, in the celestial forecourt an abode has been appointed for the Gressets and Delilles, that no spark of inspiration, no tone of mental music, might remain unrecognised. The Germans study foreign nations in a spirit which deserves to be oftener imitated. It is their honest endeavour to understand each, with its own peculiarities, in its own special manner of existing; not that they may praise it, or censure it, or attempt to alter it, but simply that they may see this manner of existing as the nation itself sees it, and so participate in whatever worth or beauty it has brought into being. Of all literatures, accordingly, the German has the best as well as the most

¹ It began in Schiller's Musenalmanach for 1797. The Xenien (a series of philosophic epigrams jointly by Schiller and Goethe, descended there unexpectedly, like a flood of ethereal fire, on the German literary world; quickening all that was noble into new life, but visiting the ancient empire of Dulness with astonishment and unknown pangs. The agitation was extreme; scarcely since the age of Luther has there been such stir and strife in the intellect of Germany; indeed, scarcely since that age has there been a controversy, if we consider its ultimate bearings on the best and noblest interests of mankind, so important as this which, for the time, seemed only to turn on metaphysical subtleties, and matters of mere elegance. Its farther applications became apparent by degrees.
translations; men like Goethe, Schiller, Wieland, Schlegel, Tieck, have not disdained this task. Of Shakspeare there are three entire versions admitted to be good; and we know not how many partial, or considered as bad. In their criticisms of him we ourselves have long ago admitted, that no such clear judgment or hearty appreciation of his merits had ever been exhibited by any critic of our own.

To attempt stating in separate aphorisms the doctrines of this new poetical system, would, in such space as is now allowed us, be to insure them of misapprehension. The science of Criticism, as the Germans practise it, is no study of an hour; for it springs from the depths of thought, and remotely or immediately connects itself with the subtest problems of all philosophy. One characteristic of it we may state, the obvious parent of many others. Poetic beauty, in its pure essence, is not, by this theory, as by all our theories, from Hume's to Alison's, derived from anything external, or of merely intellectual origin; not from association, or any reflex or reminiscence of mere sensations; nor from natural love, either of imitation, of similarity in dissimilarity, of excitement by contrast, or of seeing difficulties overcome. On the contrary, it is assumed as underived; not borrowing its existence from such sources, but as lending to most of these their significance and principal charm for the mind. It dwells and is born in the inmost Spirit of Man, united to all love of Virtue, to all true belief in God; or, rather, it is one with this love and this belief, another phase of the same highest principle in the mysterious infinitude of the human Soul. To apprehend this beauty of poetry, in its full and purest brightness, is not easy, but difficult; thousands on thousands eagerly read poems, and attain not the smallest taste of it; yet to all uncorrupted hearts, some effulgences of this heavenly glory are here and there revealed; and to apprehend it clearly and wholly, to acquire and maintain a sense and heart that sees and worships it, is the last perfection of all humane culture. With mere readers for amusement, therefore, this Criticism has, and can have, nothing to do; these find their amusement, in less or greater measure, and the nature of Poetry remains
forever hidden from them in deepest concealment. On all hands, there is no truce given to the hypothesis, that the ultimate object of the poet is to please. Sensation, even of the finest and most rapturous sort, is not the end, but the means. Art is to be loved, not because of its effects, but because of itself; not because it is useful for spiritual pleasure, or even for moral culture, but because it is Art, and the highest in man, and the soul of all Beauty. To inquire after its utility, would be like inquiring after the utility of a God, or, what to the Germans would sound stranger than it does to us, the utility of Virtue and Religion.—On these particulars, the authenticity of which we might verify, not so much by citation of individual passages, as by reference to the scope and spirit of whole treatises, we must for the present leave our readers to their own reflections. Might we advise them, it would be to inquire farther, and, if possible, to see the matter with their own eyes.

Meanwhile, that all this must tend, among the Germans, to raise the general standard of Art, and of what an Artist ought to be in his own esteem and that of others, will be readily inferred. The character of a Poet does, accordingly, stand higher with the Germans than with most nations. That he is a man of integrity as a man; of zeal and honest diligence in his art, and of true manly feeling towards all men, is of course presupposed. Of persons that are not so, but employ their gift, in rhyme or otherwise, for brutish or malignant purposes, it is understood that such lie without the limits of Criticism, being subjects not for the judge of Art, but for the judge of Police. But even with regard to the fair tradesman, who offers his talent in open market, to do work of a harmless and acceptable sort for hire,—with regard to this person also, their opinion is very low. The 'Bread-artist,' as they call him, can gain no reverence for himself from these men. 'Unhappy mortal!' says the mild but lofty-minded Schiller, 'Unhappy mortal! that, with Science and Art, the noblest of all instruments, effectest and attemptest nothing more than the day-drudge with the meanest; that, in the domain of perfect Freedom, bearest about in thee the spirit of
‘a Slave!’ Nay, to the genuine Poet they deny even the privilege of regarding what so many cherish, under the title of their ‘fame,’ as the best and highest of all. Hear Schiller again:

‘The Artist, it is true, is the son of his age; but pity for him if he is its pupil, or even its favourite! Let some beneficent divinity snatch him, when a suckling, from the breast of his mother, and nurse him with the milk of a better time, that he may ripen to his full stature beneath a distant Grecian sky. And having grown to manhood, let him return, a foreign shape, into his century; not, however, to delight it by his presence, but dreadful, like the son of Agamemnon, to purify it. The matter of his works he will take from the present, but their form he will derive from a nobler time; nay, from beyond all time, from the absolute unchanging unity of his own nature. Here, from the pure æther of his spiritual essence, flows down the Fountain of Beauty, uncontaminated by the pollutions of ages and generations, which roll to and fro in their turbid vortex far beneath it. His matter Caprice can dishonour, as she has ennobled it; but the chaste form is withdrawn from her mutations. The Roman of the first century had long bent the knee before his Caesars, when the statues of Rome were still standing erect; the temples continued holy to the eye, when their gods had long been a laughing-stock; and the abominations of a Nero and a Commodus were silently rebuked by the style of the edifice, which lent them its concealment. Man has lost his dignity, but art has saved it, and preserved it for him in expressive marbles. Truth still lives in fiction, and from the copy the original will be restored.

‘But how is the Artist to guard himself from the corruptions of his time, which on every side assail him? By despising its decisions. Let him look upwards to his dignity and the law, not downwards to his happiness and his wants. Free alike from the vain activity that longs to impress its traces on the fleeting instant, and from the querulous spirit of enthusiasm that measures by the scale of perfection the meagre product of reality, let him leave to mere Understanding, which is here at home, the province of the actual; while he strives, by uniting the possible with the necessary, to produce the ideal. This let him imprint and express in fiction and truth; imprint it in the sport of his imagination and the earnest of his actions;
imprint it in all sensible and spiritual forms, and cast it silently into everlasting time."  

Still higher are Fichte’s notions on this subject; or rather expressed in higher terms, for the central principle is the same both in the philosopher and the poet. According to Fichte, there is a ‘Divine Idea’ pervading the visible Universe; which visible Universe is indeed but its symbol and sensible manifestation, having in itself no meaning, or even true existence independent of it. To the mass of men this Divine Idea of the world lies hidden: yet to discern it, to seize it, and live wholly in it, is the condition of all genuine virtue, knowledge, freedom; and the end, therefore, of all spiritual effort in every age. Literary Men are the appointed interpreters of this Divine Idea; a perpetual priesthood, we might say, standing forth generation after generation, as the dispensers and living types of God’s everlasting wisdom, to show it in their writings and actions, in such particular form as their own particular times require it in. For each age, by the law of its nature, is different from every other age, and demands a different representation of the Divine Idea, the essence of which is the same in all; so that the literary man of one century is only by mediation and re-interpretation applicable to the wants of another. But in every century, every man who labours, be it in what province he may; to teach others, must first have possessed himself of the Divine Idea, or, at least, be with his whole heart and his whole soul striving after it. If, without possessing it or striving after it, he abide diligently by some material practical department of knowledge, he may indeed still be (says Fichte, in his rugged way) a ‘useful hodman;’ but should he attempt to deal with the Whole, and to become an architect, he is, in strictness of language, ‘Nothing;’—‘he is an ambiguous mongrel between the possessor of the Idea, and the man who feels himself solidly supported and carried on by the common Reality of things: in his fruitless endeavour after the Idea, he has neglected to acquire the

1 Über die Aesthetische Erziehung des Menschen,—On the Ästhetic Education of Man.
The "craft of taking part in this Reality; and so hovers between 'two worlds, without pertaining to either.' Elsewhere he adds:

"There is still, from another point of view, another division in our notion of the Literary Man, and one to us of immediate application. Namely, either the Literary Man has already laid hold of the whole Divine Idea, in so far as it can be comprehended by man, or perhaps of a special portion of this its comprehensible part,—which truly is not possible without at least a clear oversight of the whole;—he has already laid hold of it, penetrated, and made it entirely clear to himself, so that it has become a possession recallable at all times in the same shape to his view, and a component part of his personality: in that case he is a completed and equipt Literary Man, a man who has studied. Or else, he is still struggling and striving to make the Idea in general, or that particular portion and point of it, from which onwards he for his part means to penetrate the whole,—entirely clear to himself; detached sparkles of light already spring forth on him from all sides, and disclose a higher world before him; but they do not yet unite themselves into an indivisible whole; they vanish from his view as capriciously as they came; he cannot yet bring them under obedience to his freedom: in that case he is a progressing and self-unfolding literary man, a Student. That it be actually the Idea, which is possessed or striven after, is common to both. Should the striving aim merely at the outward form, and the letter of learned culture, there is then produced, when the circle is gone round, the completed, when it is not yet gone round, the progressing, Bungler (Stümper). The latter is more tolerable than the former; for there is still room to hope that, in continuing his travel, he may at some future point be seized by the Idea; but of the first all hope is over."  

From this bold and lofty principle the duties of the Literary Man are deduced with scientific precision; and stated, in all their sacredness and grandeur, with an austere brevity more impressive than any rhetoric. Fichte's metaphysical theory may be called in question, and readily enough misap-

1 Ueber das Wesen des Gelehrten (On the Nature of the Literary Man): a Course of Lectures delivered at Erlangen, in 1805.
prehended; but the sublime stoicism of his sentiments will
find some response in many a heart. We must add the con-
clusion of his first Discourse, as a farther illustration of his
manner:

'In disquisitions of the sort like ours of to-day, which all
the rest too must resemble, the generality are wont to censure:
First, their severity; very often on the goodnatured supposi-
tion that the speaker is not aware how much his rigour must
displease us; that we have but frankly to let him know this,
and then doubtless he will reconsider himself, and soften his
statements. Thus, we said above, that a man who, after liter-
ary culture, had not arrived at knowledge of the Divine Idea,
or did not strive towards it, was in strict speech Nothing;
and farther down, we said that he was a Bungler. This is in
the style of those unmerciful expressions by which philoso-
phers give such offence.—Now, looking away from the present
case, that we may front the maxim in its general shape, I re-
mind you that this species of character, without decisive force
to renounce all respect for Truth, seeks merely to bargain
and cheapen something out of her, whereby he himself on
easier terms may attain to some consideration. But Truth,
which once for all is as she is, and cannot alter aught of her
nature, goes on her way; and there remains for her, in regard
to those who desire her not simply because she is true, noth-
ing else, but to leave them standing as if they had never ad-
dressed her.

'Then farther, discourses of this sort are wont to be cen-
sured as unintelligible. Thus I figure to myself,—nowise
you, Gentlemen, but some completed Literary Man of the
second species, whose eye the disquisition here entered upon
chanced to meet, as coming forward, doubting this way and
that, and at last reflectively exclaiming: "The Idea, the Divine
Idea, that which lies at the bottom of Appearance: what, pray,
may this mean?" Of such a questioner I would inquire in
turn: "What, pray, may this question mean?"—Investigate
it strictly; it means in most cases nothing more than so:
"Under what other names, and in what other formulas, do I
already know this same thing, which thou expressest by so
strange and to me so unknown a symbol?" And to this again
in most cases the only suitable reply were so: "Thou knowest
this thing not at all, neither under this, nor under any other
name; and wouldst thou arrive at the knowledge of it, thou
must even now begin at the beginning to make study thereof; —and then, most fitly, under that name by which it is here first presented to thee!"

With such a notion of the Artist, it were a strange inconsistency did Criticism show itself unscientific or lax in estimating the product of his Art. For light on this point, we might refer to the writings of almost any individual among the German critics: take, for instance, the Charakteristiken of the two Schlegels, a work too of their younger years; and say whether in depth, clearness, minute and patient fidelity, these Characters have often been surpassed, or the import and poetic worth of so many poets and poems more vividly and accurately brought to view. As an instance of a much higher kind, we might refer to Goethe’s criticism of Hamlet in his Wilhelm Meister. This truly is what may be called the poetry of criticism: for it is in some sort also a creative art; aiming, at least, to reproduce under a different shape the existing product of the poet; painting to the intellect what already lay painted to the heart and the imagination. Nor is it over poetry alone that criticism watches with such loving strictness: the mimic, the pictorial, the musical arts, all modes of representing or addressing the highest nature of man, are acknowledged as younger sisters of Poetry, and fostered with like care. Winkelmann’s History of Plastic Art is known by repute to all readers: and of those who know it by inspection, many may have wondered why such a work has not been added to our own literature, to instruct our own statuaries and painters. On this subject of the plastic arts, we cannot withhold the following little sketch of Goethe’s, as a specimen of pictorial criticism in what we consider a superior style. It is of an imaginary Landscape-painter, and his views of Swiss scenery; it will bear to be studied minutely, for there is no word without its meaning:

'He succeeds in representing the cheerful repose of lake prospects, where houses in friendly approximation, imaging themselves in the clear wave, seem as if bathing in its depths; shores encircled with green hills, behind which rise forest
mountains, and icy peaks of glaciers. The tone of colouring in such scenes is gay, mirthfully clear; the distances as if overflowed with softening vapour, which from watered hollows and river-valleys mounts up grayer and mistier, and indicates their windings. No less is the master's art to be praised in views from valleys lying nearer the high Alpine ranges, where declivities slope down, luxuriantly overgrown, and fresh streams roll hastily along by the foot of rocks.

With exquisite skill, in the deep shady trees of the foreground, he gives the distinctive character of the several species; satisfying us in the form of the whole, as in the structure of the branches, and the details of the leaves; no less so, in the fresh green with its manifold shadings, where soft airs appear as if fanning us with benignant breath, and the lights as if thereby put in motion.

In the middle-ground, his lively green tone grows fainter by degrees; and at last, on the more distant mountain-tops, passing into weak violet, weds itself with the blue of the sky. But our artist is above all happy in his paintings of high Alpine regions; in seizing the simple greatness and stillness of their character; the wide pastures on the slopes, where dark solitary firs stand forth from the grassy carpet; and from high cliffs foaming brooks rush down. Whether he relieve his pasturages with grazing cattle, or the narrow winding rocky path with mules and laden pack-horses, he paints all with equal truth and richness; still introduced in the proper place, and not in too great copiousness, they decorate and enliven these scenes, without interrupting, without lessening their peaceful solitude. The execution testifies a master's hand; easy, with a few sure strokes, and yet complete. In his later pieces, he employed glittering English permanent-colours on paper: these pictures, accordingly, are of preeminently blooming tone; cheerful, yet, at the same time, strong and sated.

His views of deep mountain-chasms, where, round and round, nothing fronts us but dead rock, where, in the abyss, overspanned by its bold arch, the wild stream rages, are, indeed, of less attraction than the former: yet their truth excites us; we admire the great effect of the whole, produced at so little cost, by a few expressive strokes, and masses of local colours.

With no less accuracy of character can he represent the regions of the topmost Alpine ranges, where neither tree nor shrub any more appears; but only amid the rocky teeth and
snow-summits, a few sunny spots clothe themselves with a soft sward. Beautiful, and balmy and inviting as he colours these spots, he has here wisely forborne to introduce grazing herds; for these regions give food only to the chamois, and a perilous employment to the wild-hay-men.'

We have extracted this passage from *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*, Goethe's last Novel. The perusal of his whole Works would show, among many other more important facts, that Criticism also is a science of which he is master; that if ever any man had studied Art in all its branches and bearings, from its origin in the depths of the creative spirit, to its minutest finish on the canvas of the painter, on the lips of the poet, or under the finger of the musician, he was that man. A nation which appreciates such studies, nay requires and rewards them, cannot, wherever its defects may lie, be defective in judgment of the arts.

But a weightier question still remains. What has been the fruit of this its high and just judgment on these matters? What has criticism profited, to the bringing forth of good works? How do its poems and its poets correspond with so lofty a standard? We answer, that on this point also, Germany may rather court investigation than fear it. There are poets in that country who belong to a nobler class than most nations have to show in these days; a class entirely unknown to some nations; and, for the last two centuries, rare in all. We have no hesitation in stating, that we see in certain of the best German poets, and those too of our own time, something which associates them, remotely or nearly we say not, but which does associate them with the Masters of Art, the Saints of Poetry, long since departed, and, as we thought, without successors, from the earth, but canonised in the hearts of all generations, and yet living to all by the memory of what they did and were. Glances we do seem to find of that ethereal

1 The poor wild-hay-man of the Rigiberg,
   Whose trade is, on the brow of the abyss,
   To mow the common grass from nooks and shelves,
   To which the cattle dare not climb.

—Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell*. 
glory, which looks on us in its full brightness from the Trans-
figuration of Raffaelle, from the Tempest of Shakspeare; and
in broken, but purest and still heart-piercing beams, strug-
gling through the gloom of long ages, from the tragedies of
Sophocles, and the weather-worn sculptures of the Parthenon.
This is that heavenly spirit, which, best seen in the aerial em-
bodyment of poetry, but spreading likewise over all the
thoughts and actions of an age, has given us Surreys, Sydneys,
Raleighs in court and camp, Cecils in policy, Hookers in
divinity, Bacons in philosophy, and Shakspeares and Spensers
in song. All hearts that know this, know it to be the highest;
and that, in poetry or elsewhere, it alone is true and im-
perishable. In affirming that any vestige, however feeble, of
this divine spirit, is discernible in German poetry, we are
aware that we place it above the existing poetry of any other
nation.

To prove this bold assertion, logical arguments were at all
times unavailing; and, in the present circumstances of the
case, more than usually so. Neither will any extract or spe-
cimen help us; for it is not in parts, but in whole poems,
that the spirit of a true poet is to be seen. We can, there-
fore, only name such men as Tieck, Richter, Herder, Schiller,
and, above all, Goethe; and ask any reader who has learned
to admire wisely our own literature of Queen Elizabeth's age,
to peruse these writers also; to study them till he feels that
he has understood them, and justly estimated both their light
and darkness; and then to pronounce whether it is not, in
some degree, as we have said. Are there not tones here of
that old melody? Are there not glimpses of that serene soul,
that calm harmonious strength, that smiling earnestness, that
Love and Faith and Humanity of nature? Do these foreign
contemporaries of ours still exhibit, in their characters as
men, something of that sterling nobleness, that union of
majesty with meekness, which we must ever venerate in those
our spiritual fathers? And do their works, in the new form
of this century, show forth that old nobleness, not consistent
only, with the science, the precision, the scepticism of these
days, but wedded to them, incorporated with them, and shin-
ing through them like their life and soul? Might it in truth almost seem to us, in reading the prose of Goethe, as if we were reading that of Milton; and of Milton writing with the culture of this time; combining French clearness with old English depth? And of his poetry may it indeed be said that it is poetry, and yet the poetry of our own generation; an ideal world, and yet the world we even now live in?—These questions we must leave candid and studious inquirers to answer for themselves; premising only, that the secret is not to be found on the surface; that the first reply is likely to be in the negative, but with inquirers of this sort, by no means likely to be the final one.

To ourselves, we confess, it has long so appeared. The poetry of Goethe, for instance, we reckon to be Poetry, sometimes in the very highest sense of that word; yet it is no reminiscence, but something actually present and before us; no looking back into an antique Fairyland, divided by impassable abysses from the real world as it lies about us and within us; but a looking round upon that real world itself, now rendered holier to our eyes, and once more become a solemn temple, where the spirit of Beauty still dwells, and is still, under new emblems, to be worshipped as of old. With Goethe, the mythologies of bygone days pass only for what they are. We have no witchcraft or magic in the common acceptation; and spirits no longer bring with them airs from heaven or blasts from hell; for Pandemonium and the stedfast Empyrean have faded away, since the opinions which they symbolised no longer are. Neither does he bring his heroes from remote Oriental climates, or periods of Chivalry, or any section either of Atlantis or the Age of Gold; feeling that the reflex of these things is cold and faint, and only hangs like a cloud-picture in the distance, beautiful but delusive, and which even the simplest know to be a delusion. The end of Poetry is higher: she must dwell in Reality, and become manifest to men in the forms among which they live and move. And this is what we prize in Goethe, and more or less in Schiller and the rest; all of whom, each in his own way, are writers of a similar aim. The coldest sceptic, the
most callous worldling, sees not the actual aspects of life more sharply than they are here delineated: the Nineteenth Century stands before us, in all its contradiction and perplexity; barren, mean and baleful, as we have all known it; yet here no longer mean or barren, but enamelled into beauty in the poet's spirit; for its secret significance is laid open, and thus, as it were, the life-giving fire that slumbers in it is called forth, and flowers and foliage, as of old, are springing on its bleakest wildernesses, and overmantling its sternest cliffs. For these men have not only the clear eye, but the loving heart. They have penetrated into the mystery of Nature; after long trial they have been initiated; and to unwearied endeavour, Art has at last yielded her secret; and thus can the Spirit of our Age, embodied in fair imaginations, look forth on us, earnest and full of meaning, from their works. As the first and indispensable condition of good poets, they are wise and good men: much they have seen and suffered, and they have conquered all this, and made it all their own; they have known life in its heights and depths, and mastered in it both, and can teach others what it is, and how to lead it rightly. Their minds are as a mirror to us, where the perplexed image of our own being is reflected back in soft and clear interpretation. Here mirth and gravity are blended together; wit rests on deep devout wisdom, as the greensward with its flowers must rest on the rock, whose foundations reach downward to the centre. In a word, they are believers; but their faith is no sallow plant of darkness; it is green and flowery, for it grows in the sunlight. And this faith is the doctrine they have to teach us, the sense which, under every noble and graceful form, it is their endeavour to set forth:

'As all Nature's thousand changes
But one changeless God proclaim,
So in Art's wide kingdoms ranges
One sole meaning, still the same:
This is Truth, eternal Reason,
Which from Beauty takes its dress,
And, serene through time and season,
Stands for aye in loveliness.'
Such indeed is the end of Poetry at all times; yet in no recent literature known to us, except the German, has it been so far attained; nay, perhaps, so much as consciously and steadfastly attempted.

The reader feels that if this our opinion be in any measure true, it is a truth of no ordinary moment. It concerns not this writer or that; but it opens to us new views on the fortune of spiritual culture with ourselves and all nations. Have we not heard gifted men complaining that Poetry had passed away without return; that creative imagination consorted not with vigour of intellect, and that in the cold light of science there was no longer room for faith in things unseen? The old simplicity of heart was gone; earnest emotions must no longer be expressed in earnest symbols; beauty must recede into elegance, devoutness of character be replaced by clearness of thought, and grave wisdom by shrewdness and persiflage. Such things we have heard, but hesitated to believe them. If the Poetry of the Germans, and this not by theory but by example, have proved, or even begun to prove, the contrary, it will deserve far higher encomiums than any we have passed upon it.

In fact, the past and present aspect of German literature illustrates the literature of England in more than one way. Its history keeps pace with that of ours; for so closely are all European communities connected, that the phases of mind in any one country, so far as these represent its general circumstances and intellectual position, are but modified repetitions of its phases in every other. We hinted above, that the Saxon School corresponded with what might be called the Scotch: Cramer was not unlike our Blair: Von Cronegk might be compared with Michael Bruce; and Rabener and Gellert with Beattie and Logan. To this mild and cultivated period, there succeeded, as with us, a partial abandonment of poetry, in favor of political and philosophical Illumination. Then was the time when hot war was declared against Prejudice of all sorts; Utility was set up for the universal measure of mental as well as material value; poetry, except of an economical and preceptorial character, was found to be the
product of a rude age; and religious enthusiasm was but derangement in the biliary organs. Then did the Princes and Courtiers of Germany indulge in day-dreams of perfectibility. A new social order was to bring back the Saturnian era to the world; and philosophers sat on their sunny Pisgah, looking back over dark savage deserts, and forward into land flowing with milk and honey.

This period also passed away, with its good and its evil, of which chiefly the latter seems to be remembered; for we scarcely ever find the affair alluded to, except in term of contempt, by the title Aufklärerei (Illuminationism); and its partisans, in subsequent satirical controversies, received the nickname of Philistern (Philistines) which the few scattered remnants of them still bear, both in writing and speech. Poetry arose again, and in a new and singular shape. The Sorrows of Werter, Götz von Berlichingen, and the Robbers, may stand as patriarchs and representatives of three separate classes, which, commingled in various proportions, or separately coexisting, now with the preponderance of this, now of that, occupied the whole popular literature of Germany till near the end of the last century. These were the Sentimentalists, the Chivalry-play writers, and other gorgeous and outrageous persons; as a whole, now pleasantly denominated the Kraftmänner, literally, Power-men. They dealt in sceptical lamentation, mysterious enthusiasm, frenzy and suicide: they recurred with fondness to the Feudal Ages, delineating many a battlemented keep, and swart buff-belted man-at-arms; for in reflection, as in action, they studied to be strong, vehement, rapidly effective; of battle-tumult, love-madness, heroism and despair, there was no end. This literary period is called the Sturm- und Drang-Zeit, the Storm- and Stress-Period; for great indeed was the woe and fury of these Power-men. Beauty, to their mind, seemed synonymous with Strength. All passion was poetical, so it were but fierce enough. Their head moral virtue was pride; their beau idéal of manhood was some transcript of Milton's Devil. Often they inverted Bolingbroke's plan, and instead of 'patronising Providence,' did directly the opposite; raging with extreme animation against
Fate in general, because it enthralled free virtue; and with clenched hands, or sounding shields, hurling defiance towards the vault of heaven.

These Power-men are gone too; and, with few exceptions, save the three originals above named, their works have already followed them. The application of all this to our own literature is too obvious to require much exposition. Have not we also had our Power-men? And will not, as in Germany, to us likewise a milder, a clearer, and a truer time come round? Our Byron was in his youth but what Schiller and Goethe had been in theirs: yet the author of Werter wrote Iphigenie and Torquato Tasso; and he who began with the Robbers ended with Wilhelm Tell. With longer life, all things were to have been hoped for from Byron: for he loved truth in his inmost heart, and would have discovered at last that his Corsairs and Harold's were not true. It was otherwise appointed. But with one man all hope does not die. If this way is the right one, we too shall find it. The poetry of Germany, meanwhile, we cannot but regard as well deserving to be studied, in this as in other points of view; it is distinctly an advance beyond any other known to us; whether on the right path or not, may be still uncertain; but a path selected by Schillers and Goethes, and vindicated by Schlegels and Tiecks, is surely worth serious examination. For the rest, need we add that it is study for self-instruction, no-wise for purposes of imitation, that we recommend? Among the deadliest of poetical sins is imitation; for if every man must have his own way of thought, and his own way of expressing it, much more every nation. But of danger on that side, in the country of Shakspeare and Milton, there seems little to be feared.

We come now to the second grand objection against German literature, its Mysticism. In treating of a subject itself so vague and dim, it were well if we tried, in the first place, to settle, with more accuracy, what each of the two contending parties really means to say or to contradict regarding it. Mysticism is a word in the mouths of all: yet, of the hundred,
perhaps not one has ever asked himself what this opprobrious epithet properly signified in his mind; or where the boundary between true science and this Land of Chimeras was to be laid down. Examined strictly, mystical, in most cases, will turn out to be merely synonymous with not understood. Yet surely there may be haste and oversight here; for it is well known, that, to the understanding of anything, two conditions are equally required; intelligibility in the thing itself being no whit more indispensable than intelligence in the examiner of it. "I am bound to find you in reasons, Sir," said Johnson, "but not in brains;" a speech of the most shocking unpoliteness, yet truly enough expressing the state of the case.

It may throw some light on this question, if we remind our readers of the following fact. In the field of human investigation there are objects of two sorts: First, the visible, including not only such as are material, and may be seen by the bodily eye; but all such, likewise, as may be represented in a shape, before the mind's eye, or in any way pictured there: And, secondly, the invisible, or such as are not only unseen by human eyes, but as cannot be seen by any eye; not objects of sense at all; not capable, in short, of being pictured or imaged in the mind, or in any way represented by a shape either without the mind or within it. If any man shall here turn upon us, and assert that there are no such invisible objects; that whatever cannot be so pictured or imagined (meaning imaged) is nothing, and the science that relates to it nothing; we shall regret the circumstance. We shall request him, however, to consider seriously and deeply within himself, what he means simply by these two words, God and his own Soul; and whether he finds that visible shape and true existence are here also one and the same? If he still persist in denial, we have nothing for it, but to wish him good speed on his own separate path of inquiry; and he and we will agree to differ on this subject of mysticism, as on so many more important ones.

Now, whoever has a material and visible object to treat, be it of natural Science, Political Philosophy, or any such exter-
nally and sensibly existing department, may represent it to his own mind, and convey it to the minds of others, as it were, by a direct diagram, more complex indeed than a geometrical diagram, but still with the same sort of precision; and, provided his diagram be complete, and the same both to himself and his reader, he may reason of it, and discuss it, with the clearness, and, in some sort, the certainty of geometry itself. If he do not so reason of it, this must be for want of comprehension to image out the whole of it, or of distinctness to convey the same whole to his reader: the diagrams of the two are different; the conclusions of the one diverge from those of the other, and the obscurity here, provided the reader be a man of sound judgment and due attentiveness, results from incapacity on the part of the writer. In such a case, the latter is justly regarded as a man of imperfect intellect; he grasps more than he can carry; he confuses what, with ordinary faculty, might be rendered clear; he is not a mystic, but, what is much worse, a dunce. Another matter it is, however, when the object to be treated of belongs to the invisible and immaterial class; cannot be pictured out even by the writer himself, much less, in ordinary symbols, set before the reader. In this case, it is evident, the difficulties of comprehension are increased an hundred-fold. Here it will require long, patient and skilful effort, both from the writer and the reader, before the two can so much as speak together; before the former can make known to the latter, not how the matter stands, but even what the matter is, which they have to investigate in concert. He must devise new means of explanation, describe conditions of mind in which this invisible idea arises, the false persuasions that eclipse it, the false shows that may be mistaken for it, the glimpses of it that appear elsewhere; in short, strive, by a thousand well-devised methods, to guide his reader up to the perception of it; in all which, moreover, the reader must faithfully and toilsomely cooperate with him, if any fruit is to come of their mutual endeavour. Should the latter take up his ground too early, and affirm to himself that now he has seized what he still has not seized; that this and nothing else is the thing aimed at
by his teacher, the consequences are plain enough: disunion, darkness and contradiction between the two; the writer has written for another man, and this reader, after long provocation, quarrels with him finally, and quits him as a mystic.

Nevertheless, after all these limitations, we shall not hesitate to admit, that there is in the German mind a tendency to mysticism, properly so called; as perhaps there is, unless carefully guarded against, in all minds tempered like theirs. It is a fault; but one hardly separable from the excellences we admire most in them. A simple, tender and devout nature, seized by some touch of divine Truth, and of this perhaps under some rude enough symbol, is rapt with it into a whirlwind of unutterable thoughts; wild gleams of splendour dart to and fro in the eye of the seer, but the vision will not abide with him, and yet he feels that its light is light from heaven, and precious to him beyond all price. A simple nature, a George Fox, or a Jacob Böhme, ignorant of all the ways of men, of the dialect in which they speak, or the forms by which they think, is labouring with a poetic, a religious idea, which, like all such ideas, must express itself by word and act, or consume the heart it dwells in. Yet how shall he speak; how shall he pour forth into other souls that of which his own soul is full even to bursting? He cannot speak to us; he knows not our state, and cannot make known to us his own. His words are an inexplicable rhapsody, a speech in an unknown tongue. Whether there is meaning in it to the speaker himself, and how much or how true, we shall never ascertain; for it is not in the language of men, but of one man who had not learned the language of men; and, with himself, the key to its full interpretation was lost from amongst us. These are mystics; men who either know not clearly their own meaning, or at least cannot put it forth in formulas of thought, whereby others, with whatever difficulty, may apprehend it. Was their meaning clear to themselves, gleams of it will yet shine through, how ignorantly and unconsciously soever it may have been delivered; was it still wavering and obscure, no science could have delivered it wisely. In either case, much more in the last, they merit
and obtain the name of mystics. To scoffers they are a ready and cheap prey; but sober persons understand that pure evil is as unknown in this lower Universe as pure good; and that even in mystics, of an honest and deep-feeling heart, there may be much to reverence, and of the rest more to pity than to mock.

But it is not to apologise for Böhme, or Novalis, or the school of Theosophus and Flood, that we have here undertaken. Neither is it on such persons that the charge of mysticism brought against the Germans mainly rests. Böhme is little known among us; Novalis, much as he deserves knowing, not at all; nor is it understood, that, in their own country, these men rank higher than they do, or might do, with ourselves. The chief mystics in Germany, it would appear, are the Transcendental Philosophers, Kant Fichte, and Schelling! With these is the chosen seat of mysticism, these are its 'tenebrific constellation,' from which it 'doth ray out darkness' over the earth. Among a certain class of thinkers, does a frantic exaggeration in sentiment, a crude fever-dream in opinion, anywhere break forth, it is directly labelled as Kantism; and the moon-struck speculator is, for the time, silenced and put to shame by this epithet. For often, in such circles, Kant's Philosophy is not only an absurdity, but a wickedness and a horror; the pious and peaceful sage of Königsberg passes for a sort of Necromancer and Black-artist in Metaphysics; his doctrine is a region of boundless baleful gloom, too cunningly broken here and there by splendours of unholy fire; spectres and tempting demons people it, and, hovering over fathomless abysses, hang gay and gorgeous air-castles, into which the hapless traveller is seduced to enter, and so sinks to rise no more.

If anything in the history of Philosophy could surprise us, it might well be this. Perhaps among all the metaphysical writers of the eighteenth century, including Hume and Hartley themselves, there is not one that so ill meets the conditions of a mystic as this same Immanuel Kant. A quiet, vigilant, clear-sighted man, who had become distinguished to the world in mathematics before he attempted philosophy;
who, in his writings generally, on this and other subjects, is perhaps characterised by no quality so much as precisely by the distinctness of his conceptions, and the sequence and iron strictness with which he reasons. To our own minds, in the little that we know of him, he has more than once recalled Father Boscovich in Natural Philosophy; so piercing, yet so sure; so concise, so still, so simple; with such clearness and composure does he mould the complicity of his subject; and so firm, sharp and definite are the results he evolves from it. Right or wrong as his hypothesis may be, no one that knows him will suspect that he himself had not seen it, and seen over it; had not meditated it with calmness and deep thought, and studied throughout to expound it with scientific rigour. Neither, as we often hear, is there any superhuman faculty required to follow him. We venture to assure such of our readers as are in any measure used to metaphysical study, that the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* is by no means the hardest task they have tried. It is true, there is an unknown and forbidding terminology to be mastered; but is not this the case also with Chemistry, and Astronomy, and all other sciences that deserve the name of science? It is true, a careless or unprepared reader will find Kant's writing a riddle; but will a reader of this sort made much of Newton's *Principia*, or D'Alembert's *Calculus of Variations*? He will make nothing of them; perhaps less than nothing; for if he trust to his own judgment, he will pronounce them madness. Yet if the Philosophy of Mind is any philosophy at all, Physics and Mathematics must be plain subjects compared with it. But these latter are happy, not only in the fixedness and simplicity of their methods, but also in the universal acknowledgment of their claim to that prior and continual intensity of application, without which all progress in any science is impossible; though more than one may be attempted without it; and blamed, because without it they will yield no result.

1 We have heard that the Latin Translation of his Works is unintelligible, the Translator himself not having understood it; also that Villers is no safe guide in the study of him. Neither Villers nor those Latin Works are known to us.
The truth is, German Philosophy differs not more widely from ours in the substance of its doctrines, than in its manner of communicating them. The class of disquisitions, named *Kamin-Philosophie* (Parlour-fire Philosophy) in Germany, is held in little estimation there. No right treatise on anything, it is believed, least of all on the nature of the human mind, can be profitably read, unless the reader himself co-operates: the blessing of half-sleep in such cases is denied him; he must be alert, and strain every faculty, or it profits nothing. Philosophy, with these men, pretends to be a Science, nay the living principle and soul of all Sciences, and must be treated and studied scientifically, or not studied and treated at all. Its doctrines should be present with every cultivated writer; its spirit should pervade every piece of composition, how slight or popular soever: but to treat itself popularly would be a degradation and an impossibility. Philosophy dwells aloft in the Temple of Science, the divinity of its inmost shrine; her dictates descend among men, but she herself descends not; whose would behold her, must climb with long and laborious effort; nay still linger in the forecourt, till manifold trial have proved him worthy of admission into the interior solemnities.

It is the false notion prevalent respecting the objects aimed at, and the purposed manner of attaining them, in German Philosophy, that causes, in great part, this disappointment of our attempts to study it, and the evil report which the disappointed naturally enough bring back with them. Let the reader believe us, the Critical Philosophers, whatever they may be, are no mystics, and have no fellowship with mystics. What a mystic is, we have said above. But Kant, Fichte, and Schelling, are men of cool judgment, and determinate energetic character; men of science and profound and universal investigation; nowhere does the world, in all its bearings, spiritual or material, theoretic or practical, lie pictured in clearer or truer colours than in such heads as these. We have heard Kant estimated as a spiritual brother of Böhme: as justly might we take Sir Isaac Newton for a spiritual brother of Baron Swedenborg, and Laplace's *Mechanism of*
the Heavens for a peristyle to the Vision of the New Jerusalem. That this is no extravagant comparison, we appeal to any man acquainted with any single volume of Kant's writings. Neither, though Schelling's system differs still more widely from ours, can we reckon Schelling a mystic. He is a man evidently of deep insight into individual things; speaks wisely, and reasons with the nicest accuracy, on all matters where we understand his data. Fairer might it be in us to say that we had not yet appreciated his truth, and therefore could not appreciate his error. But above all, the mysticism of Fichte might astonish us. The cold, colossal, adamantine spirit, standing erect and clear, like a Cato Major among degenerate men; fit to have been the teacher of the Stoa, and to have discoursed of Beauty and Virtue in the groves of Academe! Our reader has seen some words of Fichte's: are these like words of a mystic? We state Fichte's character, as it is known and admitted by men of all parties among the Germans, when we say that so robust an intellect, a soul so calm, so lofty, massive and immovable, has not mingled in philosophical discussion since the time of Luther. We figure his motionless look, had he heard this charge of mysticism! For the man rises before us, amid contradiction and debate, like a granite mountain amid clouds and wind. Ridicule, of the best that could be commanded, has been already tried against him; but it could not avail. What was the wit of a thousand wits to him? The cry of a thousand choughs assaulting that old cliff of granite: seen from the summit, these, as they winged the midway air, showed scarce so gross as beetles, and their cry was seldom even audible. Fichte's opinions may be true or false; but his character, as a thinker, can be slightly valued only by such as know it ill; and as a man, approved by action and suffering, in his life and in his death, he ranks with a class of men who were common only in better ages than ours.

The Critical Philosophy has been regarded by persons of approved judgment, and nowise directly implicated in the furthering of it, as distinctly the greatest intellectual achievement of the century in which it came to light. August Wil-
helm Schlegel has stated in plain terms his belief, that, in respect of its probable influence on the moral culture of Europe, it stands on a line with the Reformation. We mention Schlegel as a man whose opinion has a known value among ourselves. But the worth of Kant's philosophy is not to be gathered from votes alone. The noble system of morality, the purer theology, the lofty views of man's nature derived from it; nay perhaps the very discussion of such matters, to which it gave so strong an impetus, have told with remarkable and beneficial influence on the whole spiritual character of Germany. No writer of any importance in that country, be he acquainted or not with the Critical Philosophy, but breathes a spirit of devoutness and elevation more or less directly drawn from it. Such men as Goethe and Schiller cannot exist without effect in any literature or in any century: but if one circumstance more than another has contributed to forward their endeavours, and introduce that higher tone into the literature of Germany, it has been this philosophical system; to which, in wisely believing its results, or even in wisely denying them, all that was lofty and pure in the genius of poetry, or the reason of man, so readily allied itself.

That such a system must, in the end, become known among ourselves, as it is already becoming known in France and Italy, and over all Europe, no one acquainted in any measure with the character of this matter, and the character of England, will hesitate to predict. Doubtless it will be studied here, and by heads adequate to do it justice; it will be investigated duly and thoroughly; and settled in our minds on the footing which belongs to it, and where thenceforth it must continue. Respecting the degrees of truth and error which will then be found to exist in Kant's system, or in the modifications it has since received, and is still receiving, we desire to be understood as making no estimate, and little qualified to make any. We would have it studied and known, on general grounds; because even the errors of such men are instructive; and because, without a large admixture of truth, no error can exist under such combinations, and become diffused so widely. To judge of it we pretend not: we are still inquirers in the mere
outskirts of the matter; and it is but inquiry that we wish to see promoted.

Meanwhile, as an advance or first step towards this, we may state something of what has most struck ourselves as characterising Kant's system; as distinguishing it from every other known to us; and chiefly from the Metaphysical Philosophy which is taught in Britain, or rather which was taught; for, on looking round, we see not that there is any such Philosophy in existence at the present day. The Kantist, in direct contradiction to Locke and all his followers, both of the French, and English or Scotch school, commences from within, and proceeds outwards; instead of commencing from without, and, with various precautions and hesitations, endeavouring to proceed inwards. The ultimate aim of all Philosophy must be to interpret appearances,—from the given symbol to ascertain the thing. Now the first step towards this, the aim of what may be called Primary or Critical Philosophy, must be to find

1 The name of Dugald Stewart is a name venerable to all Europe, and to none more dear and venerable than to ourselves. Nevertheless his writings are not a Philosophy, but a making ready for one. He does not enter on the field to till it; he only encompasses it with fences, invites cultivators, and drives away intruders: often (fallen on evil days) he is reduced to long arguments with the passers-by, to prove that it is a field, that this so highly prized domain of his is, in truth, soil and substance, not clouds and shadow. We regard his discussions on the nature of Philosophic Language, and his unwearied efforts to set forth and guard against its fallacies, as worthy of all acknowledgment; as indeed forming the greatest, perhaps the only true improvement, which Philosophy has received among us in our age. It is only to a superficial observer that the import of these discussions can seem trivial; rightly understood, they give sufficient and final answer to Hartley's and Darwin's, and all other possible forms of Materialism, the grand Idolatry, as we may rightly call it, by which, in all times, the true Worship, that of the Invisible, has been polluted and withstood. Mr. Stewart has written warmly against Kant; but it would surprise him to find how much of a Kantist he himself essentially is. Has not the whole scope of his labours been to reconcile what a Kantist would call his Understanding with his Reason; a noble, but still too fruitless effort to overarch the chasm which, for all minds but his own, separates his Science from his Religion? We regard the assiduous study of his Works as the best preparation for studying those of Kant.
some indubitable principle; to fix ourselves on some unchangeable basis; to discover what the Germans call the Urwahr, the Primitive Truth, the necessarily, absolutely and eternally True. This necessarily True, this absolute basis of Truth, Locke silently, and Reid and his followers with more tumult, find in a certain modified Experience, and evidence of Sense, in the universal and natural persuasion of all men. Not so the Germans: they deny that there is here any absolute Truth, or that any Philosophy whatever can be built on such a basis; nay, they go to the length of asserting, that such an appeal even to the universal persuasions of mankind, gather them with what precautions you may, amounts to a total abdication of Philosophy, strictly so called, and renders not only its farther progress, but its very existence, impossible. What, they would say, have the persuasions, or instinctive beliefs, or whatever they are called, of men, to do in this matter? Is it not the object of Philosophy to enlighten, and rectify, and many times directly contradict these very beliefs? Take, for instance, the voice of all generations of men on the subject of Astronomy. Will there, out of any age or climate, be one dissentient against the fact of the Sun’s going round the Earth? Can any evidence be clearer; is there any persuasion more universal, any belief more instinctive? And yet the Sun moves no hairsbreadth; but stands in the centre of his Planets, let us vote as we please. So is it likewise with our evidence for an external independent existence of Matter, and, in general, with our whole argument against Hume; whose reasonings, from the premises admitted both by him and us, the Germans affirm to be rigorously consistent and legitimate, and, on these premises, altogether uncontroverted and incontrovertible. British Philosophy, since the time of Hume, appears to them nothing more than a ‘laborious and unsuccessful striving to build dike after dike in front of our ‘Churches and Judgment-halls, and so turn back from them the deluge of Scepticism, with which that extraordinary ‘writer overflowed us, and still threatens to destroy whatever ‘we value most.’ This is August Wilhelm Schlegel’s verdict; given in words equivalent to these.
The Germans take up the matter differently, and would assail Hume, not in his outworks, but in the centre of his citadel. They deny his first principle, that Sense is the only inlet of Knowledge, that Experience is the primary ground of Belief. Their Primitive Truth, however, they seek, not historically and by experiment, in the universal persuasions of men, but by intuition, in the deepest and purest nature of Man. Instead of attempting, which they consider vain, to prove the existence of God, Virtue, an immaterial Soul, by inferences drawn, as the conclusion of all Philosophy, from the world of Sense, they find these things written as the beginning of all Philosophy, in obscured but ineffaceable characters, within our inmost being; and themselves first affording any certainty and clear meaning to that very world of Sense, by which we endeavour to demonstrate them. God is, nay alone is, for with like emphasis we cannot say that anything else is. This is the Absolute, the Primitively True, which the philosopher seeks. Endeavouring, by logical argument, to prove the existence of God, a Kantist might say, would be like taking out a candle to look for the sun; nay, gaze steadily into your candle-light, and the sun himself may be invisible. To open the inward eye to the sight of this Primitively True; or rather we might call it, to clear off the Obscurations of Sense, which eclipse this truth within us, so that we may see it, and believe it not only to be true, but the foundation and essence of all other truth,—may, in such language as we are here using, be said to be the problem of Critical Philosophy.

In this point of view, Kant's system may be thought to have a remote affinity to those of Malebranche and Descartes. But if they in some measure agree as to their aim, there is the widest difference as to the means. We state what to ourselves has long appeared the grand characteristic of Kant's Philosophy, when we mention his distinction, seldom perhaps expressed so broadly, but uniformly implied, between Understanding and Reason (Verstand and Vernunft). To most of our readers this may seem a distinction without a difference: nevertheless, to the Kantists it is by no means such. They
believe that both Understanding and Reason are organs, or rather, we should say, modes of operation, by which the mind discovers truth; but they think that their manner of proceeding is essentially different; that their provinces are separable and distinguishable, nay that it is of the last importance to separate and distinguish them. Reason, the Kantists say, is of a higher nature than Understanding; it works by more subtle methods, on higher objects, and requires a far finer culture for its development, indeed in many men it is never developed at all; but its results are no less certain, nay rather, they are much more so; for Reason discerns Truth itself, the absolutely and primitively True; while Understanding discerns only relations, and cannot decide without if. The proper province of Understanding is all, strictly speaking, real, practical and material knowledge, Mathematics, Physics, Political Economy, the adaptation of means to ends in the whole business of life. In this province it is the strength and universal implement of the mind: an indispensable servant, without which, indeed, existence itself would be impossible. Let it not step beyond this province, however; not usurp the province of Reason, which it is appointed to obey, and cannot rule over without ruin to the whole spiritual man. Should Understanding attempt to prove the existence of God, it ends, if thorough-going and consistent with itself, in Atheism, or a faint possible Theism, which scarcely differs from this: should it speculate of Virtue, it ends in Utility, making Prudence and a sufficiently cunning love of Self the highest good. Consult Understanding about the Beauty of Poetry, and it asks, Where is this Beauty? or discovers it at length in rhythms and fitnesses, and male and female rhymes. Witness also its everlasting paradoxes on Necessity and the Freedom of the Will; its ominous silence on the end and meaning of man; and the enigma which, under such inspection, the whole purport of existence becomes.

Nevertheless, say the Kantists, there is a truth in these things. Virtue is Virtue, and not Prudence; not less surely than the angle in a semicircle is a right angle, and no trape-
ziurn: Shakspeare is a Poet, and Boileau is none, think of it as you may: neither is it more certain that I myself exist, than that God exists, infinite, eternal, invisible, the same yesterday, to-day and forever. To discern these truths is the province of Reason, which therefore is to be cultivated as the highest faculty in man. Not by logic and argument does it work; yet surely and clearly may it be taught to work: and its domain lies in that higher region whither logic and argument cannot reach; in that holier region, where Poetry, and Virtue and Divinity abide, in whose presence Understanding wavers and recoils, dazzled into utter darkness by that 'sea of light,' at once the fountain and the termination of all true knowledge.

Will the Kantists forgive us for the loose and popular manner in which we must here speak of these things, to bring them in any measure before the eyes of our readers?—It may illustrate the distinction still farther, if we say, that, in the opinion of a Kantist, the French are of all European nations the most gifted with Understanding, and the most destitute of Reason;¹ that David Hume had no forecast of this latter, and that Shakspeare and Luther dwelt perennially in its purest sphere.

Of the vast, nay in these days boundless, importance of this distinction, could it be scientifically established, we need remind no thinking man. For the rest, far be it from the reader to suppose that this same Reason is but a new appearance, under another name, of our own old 'Wholesome Prejudice,' so well known to most of us! Prejudice, wholesome or unwholesome, is a personage for whom the German Philosophers disclaim all shadow of respect; nor do the vehement among them hide their deep disdain for all and sundry who fight under her flag. Truth is to be loved purely and solely because it is true. With moral, political, religious considerations, high and dear as they may otherwise be, the Philosopher, as such, has no concern. To look at them would but

¹ Schelling has said as much or more (Methode des Academischen Studium, pp. 105-111), in terms which we could wish we had space to transcribe.
perplexed him, and distract his vision from the task in his hands. Calmly he constructs his theorem, as the Geometer does his, without hope or fear, save that he may or may not find the solution; and stands in the middle, by the one may be, accused as an Infidel, by the other as an Enthusiast and Mystic, till the tumult ceases, and what was true, is and continues true to the end of all time.

Such are some of the high and momentous questions treated of, by calm, earnest and deeply meditative men, in this system of Philosophy, which to the wiser minds among us is still unknown, and by the unwiser is spoken of and regarded in such manner as we see. The profoundness, subtlety, extent of investigation, which the answer of these questions presupposes, need not be farther pointed out. With the truth or falsehood of the system, we have here, as already stated, no concern: our aim has been, so far as might be done, to show it as it appeared to us; and to ask such of our readers as pursue these studies, whether this also is not worthy of some study. The reply we must now leave to themselves.

As an appendage to the charge of Mysticism brought against the Germans, there is often added the seemingly incongruous one of Irreligion. On this point also we had much to say; but must for the present decline it. Meanwhile, let the reader be assured, that to the charge of Irreligion, as to so many others, the Germans will plead not guilty. On the contrary, they will not scruple to assert that their literature is, in a positive sense, religious; nay, perhaps to maintain, that if ever neighbouring nations are to recover that pure and high spirit of devotion, the loss of which, however we may disguise it or pretend to overlook it, can be hidden from no observant mind, it must be by travelling, if not on the same path, at least in the same direction, in which the Germans have already begun to travel. We shall add, that the Religion of Germany is a subject not for slight but for deep study, and, if we mistake not, may in some degree reward the deepest.

Here, however, we must close our examination or defence. We have spoken freely, because we felt distinctly, and thought
the matter worthy of being stated, and more fully inquired into. Farther than this, we have no quarrel for the Germans: we would have justice done to them, as to all men and all things; but for their literature or character we profess no sectarian or exclusive preference. We think their recent Poetry, indeed, superior to the recent Poetry of any other nation; but taken as a whole, inferior to that of several; inferior not to our own only, but to that of Italy, nay perhaps to that of Spain. Their Philosophy too must still be regarded as uncertain; at best only the beginning of better things. But surely even this is not to be neglected. A little light is precious in great darkness: nor, amid the myriads of Poetasters and Philosophes, are Poets and Philosophers so numerous that we should reject such, when they speak to us in the hard, but manly, deep and expressive tones of that old Saxon speech, which is also our mother tongue.

We confess, the present aspect of spiritual Europe might fill a melancholic observer with doubt and foreboding. It is mournful to see so many noble, tender and high-aspiring minds deserted of that religious light which once guided all such: standing sorrowful on the scene of past convulsions and controversies, as on a scene blackened and burnt-up with fire; mourning in the darkness, because there is desolation, and no home for the soul; or what is worse, pitching tents among the ashes, and kindling weak earthly lamps which we are to take for stars. This darkness is but transitory obscuration: these ashes are the soil of future herbage and richer harvests. Religion, Poetry, is not dead; it will never die. Its dwelling and birthplace is in the soul of man, and it is eternal as the being of man. In any point of Space, in any section of Time, let there be a living Man; and there is an Infinitude above him and beneath him, and an Eternity encompasses him on this hand and on that; and tones of Sphere-music, and tidings from loftier worlds, will flit round him, if he can but listen, and visit him with holy influences, even in the thickest press of trivialities, or the din of busiest life. Happy the man, happy the nation that can hear these tidings; that has them written in fit characters, legible to every eye, and the solemn import
of them present at all moments to every heart! That there is, in these days, no nation so happy, is too clear; but that all nations, and ourselves in the van, are, with more or less discernment of its nature, struggling towards this happiness, is the hope and the glory of our time. To us, as to others, success, at a distant or a nearer day, cannot be uncertain. Meanwhile, the first condition of success is, that, in striving honestly ourselves, we honestly acknowledge the striving of our neighbour; that with a Will unwearyed in seeking Truth, we have a Sense open for it, wheresoever and howsoever it may arise.
LIFE AND WRITINGS OF WERNER.

The charm of 'fame.' Werner's tumultuous career indicative of much in the history of his time. (p. 93).—Hitzig's Lives of Werner and Hoffmann. Werner's birth and parentage: Early connexion with the theatre. Left at fourteen, by his father's death, to the sole charge of his mother. Her hypochondria. Coincidences of Werner's and Hoffman's early circumstances. Werner's dissolute college-life, and desultory strivings. At thirty he had already divorced two wives, and was looking out for a third: Unsteady irrational hopes, and wild enthusiasm of character. (95).—His early writings singularly contrasted with his later: His French scepticism overlaid with wondrous theosophic garniture. High colloquies in rather questionable fashion. His drama of the Söhne des Thals: Chiefly interesting as containing a picture of himself. Extracts, in which, with much tumid grandiloquence, he shadows forth his own creed: Scene, Story of the Fallen Master, Opinions and practices of the Templars. Scene, Robert d'Heredon on Destiny and the Resurrection of the body. (98).—Some account of the Second Part of the Sons of the Valley: Scene, Story of Phosphoros. Werner's dramatic talent. His prophetic aspirations. Self-forgetfulness the summary of his moral code: His strange missionary zeal. (118).—He marries his third wife. His faithful care and affection for his poor mother: Her death. His life at Warsaw: Intimacy with Hoffmann. His Kreuz an der Ostsee: Not suitable for the Stage. His drama of Martin Luther, oder die Weihe der Kraft. His portraiture of Luther: Allegorical superfluities, and general insufficiency. (126).—Dramatic popularity: Vortex of society: Divorced from his third Wife. Strange state of marriage-law. Bedouin wanderings: See Goethe, Napoleon, and Madame de Staël. His project of a New Religion abandoned. Detestation of modern Protestantism. He visits Italy. Spiritual Exercitations: Returns to the Catholic Faith of his fathers. Ordained a Priest; Preaches with all his might at Vienna and elsewhere, amid much tumult and obloquy. Literary dregs. Drawing nigh to his end: Sleep of Death. Pray, wanderer, for a wanderer's soul. (135).—Questionable character of his Life and Works. Gigantic endeavour, leading to most dwarfish performance. His change of faith evidently sincere: A melancholy posthumous fragment: No thought of returning to Protestantism. His mysticism and dissoluteness: His belief probably persuasion rather than conviction. Religious opinion in Germany. We cannot justify Werner, yet let him be condemned with pity. (143).
LIFE AND WRITINGS OF WERNER.¹

[1828.]

If the charm of fame consisted, as Horace has mistakenly declared, 'in being pointed at with the finger, and having it said, This is he!' few writers of the present age could boast of more fame than Werner. It has been the unhappy fortune of this man to stand for a long period incessantly before the world, in a far stronger light than naturally belonged to him, or could exhibit him to advantage. Twenty years ago he was a man of considerable note, which has ever since been degenerating into notoriety. The mystic dramatist, the sceptical enthusiast, was known and partly esteemed by all students of poetry; Madame de Staël, we recollect, allows him an entire chapter in her Allemagne. It was a much coarser curiosity, and in a much wider circle, which the dissipated man, by successive indecorums, occasioned; till at last the convert to Popery, the preaching zealot, came to figure in all newspapers; and some picture of him was required for all heads that would not sit blank and mute in the topic


4 Martin Luther, oder die Weihe der Kraft. (Martin Luther, or the Consecration of Strength.) A Tragedy. Berlin, 1807.

5 Die Mutter der Makkabäer. (The mother of the Maccabes.) A Tragedy. Vienna, 1820.
of every coffeehouse and *aesthetic tea*. In dim heads, that is, in the great majority, the picture was, of course, perverted into a strange bugbear, and the original decisively enough condemned; but even the few, who might see him in his true shape, felt too well that nothing loud could be said in his behalf; that, with so many mournful blemishes, if extenuation could not avail, no complete defense was to be attempted.

At the same time, it is not the history of a mere literary profligate that we have here to do with. Of men whom fine talents cannot teach the humblest prudence, whose high feeling, unexpressed in noble action, must lie smouldering with baser admixtures in their own bosom, till their existence, assaulted from without and from within, becomes a burnt and blackened ruin, to be sighed over by the few, and stared at, or trampled on, by the many, there is unhappily no want in any country; nor can the unnatural union of genius with depravity and degradation have such charms for our readers, that we should go abroad in quest of it, or in any case dwell on it, otherwise than with reluctance. Werner is something more than this: a gifted spirit struggling earnestly amid the new, complex, tumultuous influences of his time and country, but without force to body himself forth from amongst them; a keen adventurous swimmer, aiming towards high and distant landmarks, but too weakly in so rough a sea; for the currents drive him far astray, and he sinks at last in the waves, attaining little for himself, and leaving little, save the memory of his failure, to others. A glance over his history may not be unprofitable; if the man himself can less interest us, the ocean of German, of European Opinion, still rolls in wild eddies to and fro; and with its movements and refluxes, indicated in the history of such men, every one of us is concerned.

Our materials for this survey are deficient, not so much in quantity as quality. The 'Life,' now known to be by Hitzig of Berlin, seems a very honest, unpresuming performance; but, on the other hand, it is much too fragmentary and discursive for our wants; the features of the man are nowhere
united into a portrait, but left for the reader to unite as he may; a task which, to most readers, will be hard enough: for the Work, short in compass, is more than proportionally short in details of facts; and Werner's history, much as an intimate friend must have known of it, still lies before us, in great part, dark and unintelligible. For what he has done we should doubtless thank our Author; yet it seems a pity, that in this instance he had not done more and better. A singular chance made him, at the same time, companion of both Hoffmann and Werner, perhaps the two most showy, heterogeneous and misinterpretable writers of his day; nor shall we deny that, in performing a friend's duty to their memory, he has done truth also a service. His Life of Hoffmann,' pretending to no artfulness of arrangement, is redundant, rather than defective, in minuteness; but there, at least, the means of a correct judgment are brought within our reach, and the work, as usual with Hitzig, bears marks of the utmost fairness; and of an accuracy which we might almost call professional: for the Author, it would seem, is a legal functionary of long standing, and now of respectable rank; and he examines and records, with a certain notarial strictness too rare in compilations of this sort. So far as Hoffmann is concerned, therefore, we have reason to be satisfied. In regard to Werner, however, we cannot say so much: here we should certainly have wished for more facts, though it had been with fewer consequences drawn from them; were these somewhat chaotic expositions of Werner's character exchanged for simple particulars of his walk and conversation, the result would be much surer, and, especially to foreigners, much more complete and luminous. As it is, from repeated perusals of this biography, we have failed to gather any very clear notion of the man: nor with perhaps more study of his writings than, on other grounds, they could have merited, does his manner of existence still stand out to us with that distinct cohesion which puts an end to doubt. Our view of him the reader will accept as an approximation, and be content to wonder with us, and charitably pause where we cannot altogether interpret.

1 See Appendix I. § Hoffmann.
Werner was born at Königsberg, in East Prussia, on the 18th of November 1768. His father was Professor of History and Eloquence in the University there; and farther, in virtue of this office, Dramatic Censor; which latter circumstance procured young Werner almost daily opportunity of visiting the theatre, and so gave him, as he says, a greater acquaintance with the mechanism of the stage than even most players are possessed of. A strong taste for the drama it probably enough gave him; but this skill in stage-mechanism may be questioned, for often in his own plays, no such skill, but rather the want of it, is evinced.

The Professor and Censor, of whom we hear nothing in blame or praise, died in the fourteenth year of his son, and the boy now fell to the sole charge of his mother; a woman whom he seems to have loved warmly, but whose guardianship could scarcely be the best for him. Werner himself speaks of her in earnest commendation, as of a pure, high-minded and heavily-afflicted being. Hoffmann, however, adds, that she was hypochondriacal, and generally quite delirious, imagining herself to be the Virgin Mary, and her son to be the promised Shiloh! Hoffmann had opportunity enough of knowing; for it is a curious fact that these two singular persons were brought up under the same roof, though, at this time, by reason of their difference of age, Werner being eight years older, they had little or no acquaintance. What a nervous and melancholic parent was, Hoffmann, by another unhappy coincidence, had also full occasion to know; his own mother, parted from her husband, lay helpless and broken-hearted for the last seventeen years of her life and the first seventeen of his; a source of painful influences, which he used to trace through the whole of his own character; as to the like cause he imputed the primary perversion of Werner's. How far his views on this point were accurate or exaggerated, we have no means of judging.

Of Werner's early years the biographer says little or nothing. We learn only that, about the usual age, he matriculated in the Königsberg University, intending to qualify
himself for the business of a lawyer; and with his professional studies united, or attempted to unite, the study of philosophy under Kant. His college-life is characterised by a single, but too expressive word: 'It is said,' observes Hitzig, 'to have been very dissolute.' His progress in metaphysics, as in all branches of learning, might thus be expected to be small; indeed, at no period of his life can he, even in the language of panegyric, be called a man of culture or solid information on any subject. Nevertheless, he contrived, in his twenty-first year, to publish a little volumne of 'Poems,' apparently in very tolerable magazine metre; and after some 'roamings' over Germany, having loitered for a while at Berlin, and longer at Dresden, he betook himself to more serious business; applied for admittance and promotion as a Prussian man of law; the employment which young jurists look for in that country being chiefly in the hands of Government; consisting, indeed, of appointments in the various judicial or administrative Boards by which the Provinces are managed. In 1793, Werner accordingly was made Kammersecretdr (Exchequer Secretary); a subaltern office, which he held successively in several stations, and last and longest in Warsaw, where Hitzig, a young man following the same profession, first became acquainted with him in 1799.

What the purport or result of Werner's 'roamings' may have been, or how he had demeaned himself in office or out of it, we are nowhere informed; but it is an ominous circumstance that, even at this period, in his thirtieth year, he had divorced two wives, the last at least by mutual consent, and was looking out for a third! Hitzig, with whom he seems to have formed a prompt and close intimacy, gives us no full picture of him under any of his aspects: yet we can see that his life, as naturally it might, already wore somewhat of a shattered appearance in his own eyes; that he was broken in character, in spirit, perhaps in bodily constitution; and, contenting himself with the transient gratifications of so gay a city and so tolerable an appointment, had renounced all steady and rational hope either of being happy, or of deserving to be so. Of unsteady and irrational hopes, however, he
had still abundance. The fine enthusiasm of his nature, un-
destroyed by so many external perplexities, nay to which per-
haps these very perplexities had given fresh and undue ex-
citement, glowed forth in strange many-coloured brightness
from amid the wreck of his fortunes; and led him into wild
worlds of speculation, the more vehemently, that the real
world of action and duty had become so unmanageable in
his hands.

Werner’s early publication had sunk, after a brief provin-
cial life, into merited oblivion: in fact, he had then only been
a rhymer, and was now, for the first time, beginning to be a
poet. We have one of those youthful pieces transcribed in
this Volume, and certainly it exhibits a curious contrast with
his subsequent writings, both in form and spirit. In form,
because, unlike the first-fruits of a genius, it is cold and
correct; while his later works, without exception, are fervid,
extravagant and full of gross blemishes. In spirit no less,
because, treating of his favourite theme, Religion, it treats of
it harshly and sceptically; being, indeed, little more than a
metrical version of common Utilitarian Freethinking, as it
may be found (without metre) in most taverns and debating-
societies. Werner’s intermediate secret-history might form a
strange chapter in psychology: for now, it is clear, his French
scepticism had got overlaid with wonderous theosophic gar-
niture; his mind was full of visions and cloudy glories, and
no occupation pleased him better than to controvert, in gen-
erous inquiring minds, that very unbelief which he appears
to have once entertained in his own. From Hitzig’s account
of the matter, this seems to have formed the strongest link of
his intercourse with Werner. The latter was his senior by
ten years of time, and by more than ten years of unhappy
experience; the grand questions of Immortality, of Fate,
Freewill, Foreknowledge absolute, were in continual agitation
between them; and Hitzig still remembers with gratitude
these earnest warnings against irregularity of life, and so
many ardent and not ineffectual endeavours to awaken in the
passionate temperament of youth a glow of purer and enlight-
nening fire.
'Some leagues from Warsaw,' says the Biographer, 'enchantingly embosomed in a thick wood, close by the high banks of the Vistula, lies the Cameldulensian Abbey of Bielany, inhabited by a class of monks, who in strictness of discipline yield only to those of La Trappe. To this cloistral solitude Werner was wont to repair with his friend, every fine Saturday of the summer of 1800, so soon as their occupations in the city were over. In defect of any formal inn, the two used to bivouac in the forest, or at best to sleep under a temporary tent. The Sunday was then spent in the open air; in roving about the woods; sailing on the river, and the like; till late night recalled them to the city. On such occasions, the younger of the party had ample room to unfold his whole heart before his more mature and settled companion; to advance his doubts and objections against many theories, which Werner was already cherishing; and so, by exciting him with contradiction, to cause him to make them clearer to himself.'

Week after week, these discussions were carefully resumed from the point where they had been left: indeed, to Werner, it would seem, this controversy had unusual attractions; for he was now busy composing a Poem, intended principally to convince the world of those very truths which he was striving to impress on his friend; and to which the world, as might be expected, was likely to give a similar reception. The character, or at least the way of thought, attributed to Robert d'Heredon, the Scottish Templar, in the Sons of the Valley, was borrowed it appears, as if by regular instalments, from these conferences with Hitzig; the result of the one Sunday being duly entered in dramatic form during the week; then audited on the Sunday following; and so forming the text for farther disquisition. 'Blissful days,' adds Hitzig, 'pure and innocent, which doubtless Werner also ever held in pleased remembrance!'

The Söhne des Thals, composed in this rather questionable fashion, was in due time forthcoming; the First Part in 1801, the Second about a year afterwards. It is a drama, or rather two dramas, unrivalled at least in one particular, in length; each Part being a play of six acts, and the whole amounting to somewhat more than 800 small octavo pages! To attempt
any analysis of such a work would but fatigue our readers to little purpose: it is, as might be anticipated, of a most loose and formless structure; expanding on all sides into vague boundlessness, and, on the whole, resembling not so much a poem as the rude materials of one. The subject is the destruction of the Templar Order; an event which has been dramatised more than once, but on which, notwithstanding, Werner, we suppose, may boast of being entirely original. The fate of Jacques Molay and his brethren acts here but like a little leaven: and lucky were we, could it leaven the lump; but it lies buried under such a mass of Mystical theology, Masonic mummerly, Cabalistic tradition and Rosicrucian philosophy, as no power could work into dramatic union. The incidents are few, and of little interest; interrupted continually by flaring shows and long-winded speculations; for Werner's besetting sin, that of loquacity, is here in decided action; and so we wander, in aimless windings, through scene after scene of gorgeousness or gloom; till at last the whole rises before us like a wild phantasmagoria; cloud heaped on cloud, painted indeed here and there with prismatic hues, but representing nothing, or at least not the subject, but the author.

In this last point of view, however, as a picture of himself, independently of other considerations, this play of Werner's may still have a certain value for us. The strange chaotic nature of the man is displayed in it: his scepticism and theosophy; his audacity, yet intrinsic weakness of character; his baffled longings, but still ardent endeavours after Truth and Good; his search for them in far journeyings, not on the beaten highways, but through a pathless infinitude of Thought. To call it a work of art would be a misapplication of names: it is little more than a rhapsodic effusion; the outpouring of a passionate and mystic soul, only half-knowing what it utters, and not ruling its own movements, but ruled by them. It is fair to add, that such also, in a great measure, was Werner's own view of the matter: most likely the utterance of these things gave him such relief, that, crude as they were, he could not suppress them. For it ought to be remembered, that in
this performance one condition, at least, of genuine inspiration is not wanting: Werner evidently thinks that in these his ultramundane excursions he has found truth; he has something positive to set forth, and he feels himself as if bound on a high and holy mission in preaching it to his fellow men.

To explain with any minuteness the articles of Werner's creed, as it was now fashioned, and is here exhibited, would be a task perhaps too hard for us, and, at all events, unprofitable in proportion to its difficulty. We have found some separable passages, in which, under dark symbolical figures, he has himself shadowed forth a vague likeness of it: these we shall now submit to the reader, with such expositions as we gather from the context, or as German readers, from the usual tone of speculation in that country, are naturally enabled to supply. This may, at the same time, convey as fair a notion of the work itself, with its tawdry splendours, and tumid grandiloquence, and mere playhouse thunder and lightning, as by any other plan our limits would admit.

Let the reader fancy himself in the island of Cyprus, where the Order of the Templars still subsists, though the heads of it are already summoned before the French King and Pope Clement; which summons they are now, not without dreary enough forebodings, preparing to obey. The purport of this First Part, so far as it has any dramatic purport, is, to paint the situation, outward and inward, of that once pious and heroic, and still magnificent and powerful body. It is entitled The Templars in Cyprus; but why it should also be called The Sons of the Valley does not so well appear; for the Brotherhood of the Valley has yet scarcely come into activity, and only hovers before us in glimpses, of so enigmatic a sort, that we know not fully so much as whether these its Sons are of flesh and blood like ourselves, or of some spiritual nature, or of something intermediate, and altogether nondescript. For the rest, it is a series of spectacles and dissertations; the action cannot so much be said to advance as to revolve. On this occasion the Templars are admitting two new members; the acolytes have already passed their preliminary trials; this is the chief and final one:
ACT FIFTH. SCENE FIRST.

Midnight. Interior of the Temple Church. Backwards, a deep perspective of Altars and Gothic Pillars. On the right-hand side of the foreground, a little Chapel; and in this an Altar with the figure of St. Sebastian. The scene is lighted very dimly by a single Lamp which hangs before the Altar.

* * * * * *

ADALBERT (dressed in white, without mantle or doublet; groping his way in the dark).

Was it not at the Altar of Sebastian
That I was bidden wait for the Unknown?
Here should it be; but darkness with her veil
Inwraps the figures. [Advancing to the Altar.

Here is the fifth pillar!
Yes, this is he, the Sainted.—How the glimmer
Of that faint lamp falls on his fading eye!—
Ah, it is not the spears o' th' Saracens,
It is the pangs of hopeless love that burning
Transfix thy heart, poor Comrade!—O my Agnes,
May not thy spirit, in this earnest hour,
Be looking on? Art hovering in that moonbeam
Which struggles through the painted window, and dies
Amid the cloister's gloom? Or linger'st thou
Behind these pillars, which, ominous and black,
Look down on me, like horrors of the Past
Upon the Present; and hidest thy gentle form,
Lest with thy paleness thou too much affright me?
Hide not thyself, pale shadow of my Agnes,
Thou affrightest not thy lover.—Hush!—
Hark! Was there not a rustling?—Father! You?

PHILIP (rushing in with wild looks).

Yes, Adalbert!—But time is precious!—Come,
My son, my one sole Adalbert, come with me!

ADALBERT.

What would you, father, in this solemn hour?

PHILIP.

This hour, or never! [Leading ADALBERT to the Altar.

Hither!—Know'st thou him?
'Tis Saint Sebastian.

Because he would not
Renounce his faith, a tyrant had him murdered. [Points to his head. These furrows, too, the rage of tyrants ploughed
In thy old father's face. My son, my first-born child,
In this great hour I do conjure thee! Wilt thou,
Wilt thou obey me?

Be it just, I will!

Then swear, in this great hour, in this dread presence,
Here by thy father's head made early gray,
By the remembrance of thy mother's agony,
And by the ravished blossom of thy Agnes,
Against the Tyranny which sacrificed us,
Inexpiable, bloody, everlasting hate!

Ha! this the All-avenger spoke through thee!—
Yes! Bloody shall my Agnes' death-torch burn
In Philip's heart; I swear it!

And if thou break
This oath, and if thou reconcile thee to him,
Or let his golden chains, his gifts, his prayers,
His dying-moan itself avert thy dagger
When th' hour of vengeance comes,—shall this gray head,
Thy mother's wail, the last sigh of thy Agnes,
Accuse thee at the bar of the Eternal?

So be it, if I break my oath!

Then man thee!—
[Looking up, then shrinking together, as with dazzled eyes.
Ha! was not that his lightning?—Fare thee well!
I hear the footstep of the Dreaded!—Firm—
Remember me, remember this stern midnight!  [Retires hastily.
ADALBERT (alone).

Yes, Grayhead, whom the beckoning of the Lord
Sent hither to awake me out of craven sleep,
I will remember thee and this stern midnight,
And my Agnes' spirit shall have vengeance!—

Enter an ARMED MAN. He is mailed from head to foot in black harness; his visor is closed.

ARMED MAN.

Pray! [ADALBERT kneels.

Bare thyself!— [He strips him to the girdle and raises him.

Look on the ground, and follow! [He leads him into the background to a trap-door, on the right. He descends first himself; and when ADALBERT has followed him, it closes.

SECOND SCENE.

Cemetery of the Templars, under the Church. The scene is lighted only by a Lamp which hangs down from the vault. Around are Tombstones of deceased Knights, marked with Crosses and sculptured Bones. In the background, two colossal Skeletons holding between them a large white Book, marked with a red Cross; from the under end of the Book hangs a long black curtain. The Book, of which only the cover is visible, has an inscription in black ciphers. The Skeleton on the right holds in its right hand a naked drawn Sword; that on the left holds in its left hand a Palm turned downwards. On the right side of the foreground stands a black Coffin open; on the left, a similar one with the body of a Templar in the full dress of his Order; on both Coffins are inscriptions in white ciphers. On each side, nearer the background, are seen the lowest steps of the stairs which lead up into the Temple Church above the vault.

ARMED MAN (not yet visible; above on the right-hand stairs).

Dreaded! Is the grave laid open?

CONCEALED VOICES.

Yea!

ARMED MAN (who after a pause shows himself on the stairs).

Shall he behold the Tombs o' th' fathers?

CONCEALED VOICES.

Yea!

[ARMED MAN withdrawn sword leads ADALBERT carefully down the steps on the right hand.]
LIFE AND WRITINGS OF WERNER.

armed man (to Adalbert.)

Look down! ’Tis on thy life! [Leads him to the open Coffin. What seest thou?

adalbert.

an open empty Coffin.

armed man.

’Tis the house Where thou one day shalt dwell.—Canst read th’ inscription?

adalbert.

no.

armed man.

Hear it, then: ’Thy wages, Sin, is Death.’ [Leads him to the opposite Coffin where the Body is lying. Look down! ’Tis on thy life!—What seest thou?

[Shows the Coffin.

adalbert.

a Coffin with a Corpse.

armed man.

He is thy Brother; One day thou art as he.—Canst read th’ inscription?

adalbert.

no.

armed man.

Hear: ’Corruption is the name of Life.’ Now look around; go forward,—move, and act!—[He pushes him toward the background of the stage.

adalbert (observing the Book).

ha! here the Book of Ordination!—Seems [Approaching. As if th’ inscription on it might be read. [He reads it.

‘Knock four times on the ground, Thou shalt behold thy loved one.’

O heavens! And may I see thee, sainted agnes?

my bosom yearns for thee!—[ Hastening close to the Book. [ With the following words, he stamps four times on the ground. One,—two,—three,—four!—[The curtain hanging from the Book rolls rapidly up, and covers it. A colossal devil’s head appears between the two Skeletons; its form is horrible; it is gilt; has a huge golden Crown, a Heart of the same on its Brow; rolling flaming Eyes; Serpents instead of Hair; golden
Chains round its neck, which is visible to the breast; and a golden Cross, yet not a Crucifix, which rises over its right shoulder, as if crushing it down. The whole Bust rests on four gilt Dragon's-feet. At sight of it, Adalbert starts back in horror, and exclaims:

Defend us!

ARMED MAN.

Dreaded! may he hear it?

CONCEALED VOICES.

Yea!

ARMED MAN (touches the Curtain with his sword; it rolls down over the Devil's-head, concealing it again; and above, as before, appears the Book, but now opened, with white colossal leaves and red characters. The armed man, pointing constantly to the Book with his sword, and therewith turning the leaves, addresses Adalbert, who stands on the other side of the Book, and nearer the foreground).

List to the Story of the Fallen Master.

[He reads the following from the Book; yet not standing before it, but on one side, at some paces distance, and whilst he reads, turning the leaves with his sword.

So now when the foundation-stone was laid,
The Lord called forth the Master, Baffometus,
And said to him: Go and complete my Temple!
But in his heart the Master thought: What boots it Building thee a temple? and took the stones,
And built himself a dwelling, and what stones Were left he gave for filthy gold and silver.
Now after forty moons the Lord returned,
And spake: Where is my Temple, Baffometus?
The Master said: I had to build myself
A dwelling; grant me other forty weeks.
And after forty weeks, the Lord returns,
And asks: Where is my Temple, Baffometus?
He said: There were no stones (but he had sold them For filthy gold); so wait yet forty days.
In forty days thereafter came the Lord,
And cried: Where is my Temple, Baffometus?
Then like a millstone fell it on his soul
How he for lucre had betrayed his Lord;
But yet to other sin the Fiend did tempt him,
And he answered, saying: Give me forty hours!
And when the forty hours were gone, the Lord Came down in wrath: My Temple, Baffometus?
Then fell he quaking on his face, and cried
For mercy; but the Lord was wroth, and said:
Since thou hast cozened me with empty lies,
And those the stones I lent thee for my Temple
Hast sold them for a purse of filthy gold,
Lo, I will cast thee forth, and with the Mammon
Will chastise thee, until a Saviour rise
Of thy own seed, who shall redeem thy trespass.
Then did the Lord lift up the purse of Gold;
And shook the gold into a melting-pot,
And set the melting-pot upon the Sun,
So that the metal fused into a fluid mass.
And then he dipt a finger in the same,
And, straightway touching Baffometus,
Anoints him on the chin and brow and cheeks.
Then was the face of Baffometus changed:
His eyeballs rolled like fire-flames,
His nose became a crooked vulture's bill,
The tongue hung bloody from his throat; the flesh
Went from his hollow cheeks; and of his hair
Grew snakes, and of the snakes grew Devil's-horns.
Again the Lord put forth his finger with the gold,
And pressed it upon Baffometus' heart;
Whereby the heart did bleed and wither up,
And all his members bled and withered up,
And fell away, the one and then the other.
At last his back itself sunk into ashes:
The head alone continued gilt and living;
And instead of back, grew dragon's-talons,
Which destroyed all life from off the Earth.
Then from the ground the Lord took up the heart,
Which, as he touched it, also grew of gold,
And placed it on the brow of Baffometus;
And of the other metal in the pot
He made for him a burning crown of gold,
And crushed it on his serpent-hair, so that
Even to the bone and brain the circlet scorched him.
And round the neck he twisted golden chains,
Which strangled him and pressed his breath together.
What in the pot remained he poured upon the ground,
Athwart, along, and there it formed a cross;
The which he lifted and laid upon his neck,
And bent him that he could not raise his head.
Two Deaths moreover he appointed warders
To guard him: Death of Life, and Death of Hope.
The Sword of the first he sees not, but it smites him;  
The other's Palm he sees, but it escapes him.  
So languishes the outcast Baffometus  
Four thousand years and four-and-forty moons,  
Till once a Saviour rise from his own seed,  
Redeem his trespass and deliver him.' 

This is the Story of the Fallen Master.  

[With his sword he touches the Curtain, which now as before rolls up over the Book; so that the Head under it again becomes visible, in its former shape.]

ADALBERT (looking at the head).

Hah, what a hideous shape!

HEAD (with a hollow voice).

Deliver me!—

ARMED MAN.

Dreaded! shall the work begin?

CONCEALED VOICES.

Yea!

ARMED MAN (to ADALBERT).

Take the Neckband Away!

[Pointing to the head.]

ADALBERT.

I dare not!

HEAD (with a still more piteous tone).

O, deliver me!

ADALBERT (taking off the chains).

Poor fallen one!

ARMED MAN.

Now lift the Crown from 's head!

ADALBERT.

It seems so heavy!

ARMED MAN.

Touch it, it grows light.

ADALBERT (taking off the Crown and casting it, as he did the chains, on the ground).

ARMED MAN.

Now take the golden heart from off his brow!
ADALBERT.

It seems to burn!

ARMED MAN.
Thou errest: ice is warmer.

ADALBERT (taking the Heart from the Brow).

Hah! shivering frost!

ARMED MAN.
Take from his back the Cross,

And throw it from thee!—

ADALBERT.

How! The Saviour's token?

HEAD.

Deliver, O deliver me!

ARMED MAN.

This Cross
Is not thy Master's, not that bloody one:
Its counterfeit is this: throw 't from thee!

ADALBERT (taking it from the Bust, and laying it softly on the ground).

The Cross of the Good Lord that died for me?

ARMED MAN.

Thou shalt no more believe in one that died;
Thou shalt henceforth believe in one that liveth:
And never dies!—Obey, and question not,—
Step over it!

ADALBERT.

Take pity on me!

ARMED MAN (threatening him with his Sword).

Step!

ADALBERT.

I do't with shuddering—
[Steps over, and then looks up to the HEAD, which raises itself as freed from a load.

How the figure rises

And looks in gladness!

ARMED MAN.

Him whom thou hast served

Till now, deny!
Adalbert (horror-struck).
Deny the Lord my God?

Armed man.
Thy God 'tis not: the Idol of this World!—
Deny him, or—

[Pressing on him with the Sword in a threatening posture.
—thou diest!

Adalbert.
I deny!

Armed man (pointing to the Head with his Sword).
Go to the Fallen!—Kiss his lips!—

—And so on through many other sulphurous pages! How much of this mummery is copied from the actual practice of the Templars we know not with certainty; nor what precisely either they or Werner intended, by this marvellous 'Story of the Fallen Master,' to shadow forth. At first view one might take it for an allegory, couched in Masonic language,—and truly no flattering allegory,—of the Catholic Church; and this trampling on the Cross, which is said to have been actually enjoined on every Templar at his initiation, to be a type of his secret behest to undermine that Institution, and redeem the spirit of Religion from the state of thralldom and distortion under which it was there held. It is known at least, and was well known to Werner, that the heads of the Templars entertained views, both on religion and politics, which they did not think meet for communicating to their age, and only imparted by degrees, and under mysterious adumbrations, to the wiser of their own Order. They had even publicly resisted, and succeeded in thwarting, some iniquitous measures of Philippe Auguste, the French King, in regard to his coinage; and this, while it secured them the love of the people, was one great cause, perhaps second only to their wealth, of the hatred which that sovereign bore them, and of the savage doom which he at last executed on the whole body.

But on these secret principles of theirs, as on Werner's manner of conceiving them, we are only enabled to guess; for Werner, too, has an esoteric doctrine, which he does not pro-
mulgate, except in dark Sibylline enigmas, to the uninitiated. As we are here seeking chiefly for his religious creed, which forms, in truth, with its changes, the main thread whereby his wayward, desultory existence attains any unity or even coherence in our thoughts, we may quote another passage from the same First Part of this rhapsody; which, at the same time, will afford us a glimpse of his favourite hero, Robert d'Heredia, lately the darling of the Templars, but now, for some momentary infraction of their rules, cast into prison, and expecting death, or, at best, exclusion from the Order. Gottfried is another Templar, in all points the reverse of Robert.

ACT FOURTH. SCENE FIRST.

Prison; at the wall a Table. Robert, without sword, cap, or mantle, sits downcast on one side of it; Gottfried, who keeps watch by him, sitting at the other.

GOTTFRIED.
But how couldst thou so far forget thyself?
Thou wert our pride, the Master's friend and favourite!

ROBERT.
I did it thou perceiv'st!

GOTTFRIED.
How could a word
Of the old surly Hugo so provoke thee?

ROBERT.
Ask not—Man's being is a spider-web:
The passionate flash o' th' soul—comes not of him;
It is the breath of that dark Genius,
Which whirls invisible along the threads:
A servant of eternal Destiny,
It purifies them from the vulgar dust,
Which earthward strives to press the net:
But Fate gives sign; the breath becomes a whirlwind,
And in a moment rends to shreds the thing
We thought was woven for Eternity.

GOTTFRIED.
Yet each man shapes his Destiny himself.
Small soul! Dost thou too know it? Has the story
Of Force and free Volition, that, defying
The corporal Atoms and Annihilation,
Methodic guides the car of Destiny,
Come down to thee? Dream'st thou, poor Nothingness,
That thou, and like of thee, and ten times better
Than thou or I, can lead the wheel of Fate
One hair's-breadth from its everlasting track?
I too have had such dreams: but fearfully
Have I been shook from sleep; and they are fled!—
Look at our Order: has it spared its thousands
Of noblest lives, the victims of its Purpose;
And has it gained this Purpose; can it gain it?
Look at our noble Molay's silvered hair:
The fruit of watchful nights and stormful days,
And of the broken yet still burning heart!
That mighty heart!—Through sixty battling years,
’T has beat in pain for nothing: his creation
Remains the vision of his own great soul;
It dies with him; and one day shall the pilgrim
Ask where his dust is lying, and not learn!

GOTTFRIED (yawning):
But then the Christian has the joy of Heaven
For recompense: in his flesh he shall see God.

ROBERT.
In his flesh?—Now fair befall the journey!
Wilt stow it in behind, by way of luggage,
When the Angel comes to coach thee into Glory?
Mind also that the memory of those fair hours
When dinner smoked before thee, or thou usedst
To dress thy nag, or scour thy rusty harness,
And such like noble business be not left behind!—
Ha! self-deceiving bipeds, is it not enough
The carcass should at every step oppress,
Imprison you; that toothache, headache,
Gout,—who knows what all,—at every moment,
Degraded the god of Earth into a beast:
But you would take this villainous mingle,
The coarser dross of all the elements,
Which, by the Light-beam from on high that visits
And dwells in it, but baser shows its baseness,—
Take this, and all the freaks which, bubble-like,
Spring forth o' th' blood, and which by such fair names
You call,—along with you into your Heaven?—
Well, be it so! much good may't—

[As his eye, by chance, lights on Gottfried, who meanwhile has fallen asleep.

—Sound already?

There is a race for whom all serves as—pillow,
Even rattling chains are but a lullaby.

This Robert d'Heredon, whose preaching has here such a narcotic virtue, is destined ultimately for a higher office than to rattle his chains by way of lullaby. He is ejected from the Order; not, however, with disgrace and in anger, but in sad feeling of necessity, and with tears and blessings from his brethren; and the messenger of the Valley, a strange, ambiguous, little, sylph-like maiden, gives him obscure encouragement, before his departure, to possess his soul in patience; seeing, if he can learn the grand secret of Renunciation, his course is not ended, but only opening on a fairer scene. Robert knows not well what to make of this; but sails for his native Hebrides, in darkness and contrition, as one who can do no other.

In the end of the Second Part, which is represented as divided from the First by an interval of seven years, Robert is again summoned forth; and the whole surprising secret of his mission, and of the Valley which appoints it for him, is disclosed. This Friedenthal (Valley of Peace), it now appears, is an immense secret association, which has its chief seat somewhere about the roots of Mount Carmel, if we mistake not; but, comprehending in its ramifications the best heads and hearts of every country, extends over the whole civilised world; and has, in particular, a strong body of adherents in Paris, and indeed a subterraneous, but seemingly very commodious suite of rooms, under the Carmelite Monastery of that city. Here sit in solemn conclave the heads of the Establishment; directing from their lodge, in deepest concealment, the principal movements of the kingdom; for William of Paris, archbishop of Sens, being of their number, the king and his
other ministers, fancying within themselves the utmost freedom of action, are nothing more than puppets in the hands of this all-powerful Brotherhood, which watches, like a sort of Fate, over the interests of mankind, and by mysterious agencies, forwards, we suppose, 'the cause of civil and religious liberty all over the world.' It is they that have doomed the Templars; and, without malice or pity, are sending their leaders to the dungeon and the stake. That knightly Order, once a favourite minister of good, has now degenerated from its purity, and come to mistake its purpose, having taken up politics and a sort of radical reform; and so must now be broken and reshaped, like a worn implement, which can no longer do its appointed work.

Such a magnificent 'Society for the Suppression of Vice' may well be supposed to walk by the most philosophical principles. These Friedenthalers, in fact, profess to be a sort of Invisible Church; preserving in vestal purity the sacred fire of religion, which burns with more or less fuliginous admixture in the worship of every people, but only with its clear sidereal lustre in the recesses of the Valley. They are Bramins on the Ganges, Bonzes on the Hoangho, Monks on the Seine. They addict themselves to contemplation, and the subtlest study; have penetrated far into the mysteries of spiritual and physical nature; they command the deep-hidden virtues of plant and mineral; and their sages can discriminate the eye of the mind from its sensual instruments, and behold, without type or material embodiment, the essence of Being. Their activity is all-comprehending and unerringly calculated; they rule over the world by the authority of wisdom over ignorance.

In the Fifth Act of the Second Part, we are at length, after many a hint and significant note of preparation, introduced to the privacies of this philosophical Santa Hermandad. A strange Delphic cave this of theirs, under the very pavements of Paris! There are brazen folding-doors, and concealed voices, and sphinxes, and naphtha-lamps, and all manner of wondrous furniture. It seems, moreover, to be a sort of gala evening with them; for the 'Old Man of Carmel, in
LIFE AND WRITINGS OF WERNER.

‘eremite garb, with a long beard reaching to his girdle,’ is for a moment discovered ‘reading in a deep monotonous ‘voice.’ The ‘Strong Ones,’ meanwhile, are out in quest of Robert d’Heredon; who, by cunning practices, has been enticed from his Hebridean solitude, in the hope of saving Molay, and is even now to be initiated, and equipped for his task. After a due allowance of pompous ceremonial, Robert is at last ushered in, or rather dragged in; for it appears that he has made a stout debate, not submitting to the customary form of being ducked,—an essential preliminary, it would seem,—till compelled by the direst necessity. He is in a truly Highland anger, as is natural: but by various manipulations and solacements, he is reduced to reason again; finding, indeed, the fruitlessness of anything else; for when lance and sword and free space are given him, and he makes a thrust at Adam of Valincourt, the master of the ceremonies, it is to no purpose: the old man has a torpedo quality in him, which benumbs the stoutest arm; and no death issues from the baffled sword-point, but only a small spark of electric fire. With his Scottish prudence, Robert, under these circumstances, cannot but perceive that quietness is best. The people hand him in succession, the ‘Cup of Strength,’ the ‘Cup of Beauty,’ and the ‘Cup of Wisdom;’ liquors brewed, if we may judge from their effects, with the highest stretch of Rosicrucian art; and which must have gone far to disgust Robert d’Heredon with his natural usquebaugh, however excellent, had that fierce drink been in use then. He rages in a fine frenzy; dies away in raptures; and then at last, considers what he wanted and what he wants.’ Now is the time for Adam of Valincourt to strike-in with an interminable exposition of the ‘objects of the society.’ To not unwilling but still cautious ears he unbosoms himself, in mystic wise, with extreme copiousness; turning aside objections like a veteran disputant, and leading his apt and courageous pupil, by signs and wonders, as well as by logic, deeper and deeper into the secrets of theosophic and thaumaturgic science. A little glimpse of this our readers may share with us; though we fear the allegory will seem to most of them but a hollow nut.
Nevertheless, it is an allegory—of its sort; and we can profess to have translated with entire fidelity:

* * * *

**ADAM.**

Thy riddle by a second will be solved. [He leads him to the Sphinx. Behold this Sphinx! Half-beast, half-angel, both Combined in one, it is an emblem to thee Of th' ancient Mother, Nature, herself a riddle, And only by a deeper to be master'd. Eternal Clearness in th' eternal Ferment: This is the riddle of Existence:—read it,— Propose that other to her, and she serves thee!

*The door on the right hand opens, and, in the space behind it, appears, as before, the OLD MAN OF CARMEL, sitting at a Table, and reading in a large Volume. Three deep strokes of a bell are heard.*

**OLD MAN OF CARMEL (reading with a loud but still monotonous voice).**

'And when the Lord saw Phosphoros'—

**ROBERT (interrupting him).**

Ha! Again

A story as of Baffometus?

**ADAM.**

Not so.

That tale of theirs was but some poor distortion Of th' outmost image of our Sanctuary.— Keep silence here; and see thou interrupt not, By too bold cavilling, this mystery.

**OLD MAN (reading).**

'And when the Lord saw Phosphoros his pride, Being wroth thereat, he cast him forth, And shut him in a prison called Life; And gave him for a Garment earth and water, And bound him straitly in four Azure Chains, And pour'd for him the bitter Cup of Fire. The Lord moreover spake: Because thou hast forgotten My will, I yield thee to the Element, And thou shalt be his slave, and have no longer Remembrance of thy Birthplace or my Name. And sithence thou hast sinn'd against me by Thy prideful Thought of being One and Somewhat,
I leave with thee that Thought to be thy whip,
And this thy weakness for a Bit and Bridle;
Till once a Saviour from the Waters rise,
Who shall again baptise thee in my bosom,
That so thou mayst be Naught and All.

'And when the Lord had spoken, he drew back
As in a mighty rushing; and the Element
Rose up around Phosphoros, and tower'd itself
Aloft to Heav'n; and he lay stunn'd beneath it.

'But when his first-born Sister saw his pain,
Her heart was full of sorrow, and she turn'd her
To the Lord; and with veil'd face, thus spake Mylitta: ¹
Pity my Brother, and let me console him!

'Then did the Lord in pity rend asunder
A little chink in Phosphoros his dungeon,
That so he might behold his Sister's face;
And when she silent peep'd into his Prison,
She left with him a Mirror for his solace;
And when he look'd therein, his earthly Garment
Pressed him less; and, like the gleam of morning,
Some faint remembrance of his Birthplace dawn'd.

'But yet the Azure Chains she could not break,
The bitter Cup of Fire not take from him.
Therefore she pray'd to Mythras, to her Father,
To save his youngest-born; and Mythras went
Up to the footstool of the Lord, and said:
Take pity on my Son!—Then said the Lord:
Have I not sent Mylitta that he may
Behold his Birthplace?—Wherefore Mythras answer'd:
What profits it? The Chains she cannot break,
The bitter Cup of Fire not take from him.
So will I, said the Lord, the Salt be given him,
That so the bitter Cup of Fire be softened;
But yet the Azure Chains must lie on him
Till once a Saviour rise from out the Waters.—
And when the Salt was laid on Phosphor's tongue,
The Fire's piercing ceased; but th' Element
Congeal'd the Salt to Ice, and Phosphoros
Lay there benumb'd, and had not power to move.
But Isis saw him, and thus spake the Mother:

'Thou who art Father, Strength, and Word and Light!
Shall he my last-born grandchild lie forever

¹ Mylitta, in the old Persian mysteries, was the name of the Moon.
Mythras that of the Sun.
In pain, the down-pressed thrall of his rude Brother?  
Then had the Lord compassion, and he sent him  
The Herald of the Saviour from the Waters;  
The Cup of Fluidness, and in the cup  
The drops of Sadness and the drops of Longing:  
And then the Ice was thawed, the Fire grew cool,  
And Phosphoros again had room to breathe.  
But yet the earthy Garment cumber'd him,  
The Azure Chains still gall'd, and the Remembrance  
Of the Name, the Lord's, which he had lost, was wanting.  

‘Then the Mother's heart was mov'd with pity,  
She beckoned the Son to her, and said:  
Thou who art more than I, and yet my nursling,  
Put on this Robe of Earth, and show thyself  
To fallen Phosphoros bound in the dungeon,  
And open him that dungeon's narrow cover.  
Then said the Word: It shall be so! and sent  
His messenger Disease; she broke the roof  
Of Phosphor's Prison, so that once again  
The Fount of Light he saw: the Element  
Was dazzled blind; but 1 hosphor knew his Father.  
And when the Word, in Earth, came to the Prison,  
The Element address'd him as his like;  
But Phosphoros look'd up to him, and said:  
Thou art sent hither to redeem from Sin,  
Yet thou art not the Saviour from the Waters.—  
Then spake the Word: The Saviour from the Waters  
I surely am not; yet when thou hast drunk  
The Cup of Fluidness, I will redeem thee.  
Then Phosphor drank the Cup of Fluidness,  
Of Longing, and of Sadness; and his Garment  
Did drop sweet drops; wherewith the Messenger  
Of the Word wash'd all his Garment, till its folds  
And stiffness vanished, and it 'gan grow bright.  
And when the Prison Life she touch'd, straightway  
It waxed thin and lucid like to crystal.  
But yet the Azure Chains she could not break.—  
Then did the Word vouchsafe him the Cup of Faith;  
And having drunk it, Phosphoros look'd up,  
And saw the Saviour standing in the Waters.  
Both hands the Captive stretch'd to grasp that Saviour;  
But he fled.  

'So Phosphoros was griev'd in heart:  
But yet the Word spake comfort, giving him  
The Pillow Patience, there to lay his head.
And having rested, he rais'd his head, and said:
Wilt thou redeem me from the Prison too?
Then said the Word: Wait yet in peace seven moons,
It may be nine, until thy hour shall come.
And Phosphor answer'd: Lord, thy will be done!

'Which when the mother Isis saw, it griev'd her;
She called the Rainbow up, and said to him:
Go thou and tell the Word that he forgive
The Captive these seven moons! And Rainbow flew
Where he was sent; and as he shook his wings
There dropt from them the Oil of Purity:
And this the Word did gather in a Cup,
And cleans'd with it the Sinner's head and bosom.

Then passing forth into his Father's Garden,
He breath'd upon the ground, and there arose
A flow'ret out of it, like milk and rose-bloom;
Which having wetted with the dew of Rapture,
He crown'd therewith the Captive's brow; then grasped him
With his right hand, the Rainbow with the left;
Mylitta likewise with her Mirror came,
And Phosphoros looked into it, and saw
Wrote on the Azure of Infinity
The long-forgotten Name, and the Remembrance
Of his Birthplace, gleaming as in light of gold.

'Then fell there as if scales from Phosphor's eyes;
He left the Thought of being One and Somewhat,
His nature melted in the mighty All;
Like sighings from above came balmy healing,
So that his heart for very bliss was bursting.
For Chains and Garment cumber'd him no more:
The Garment he had changed to royal purple,
And of his Chains were fashion'd glancing jewels.

'True, still the Saviour from the Waters tarried;
Yet came the Spirit over him; the Lord
Turn'd towards him a gracious countenance,
And Isis held him in her mother-arms.

'This is the last of the Evangels.'

[The door closes, and again conceals The Old Man of Carmel.]

The purport of this enigma Robert confesses that he does not 'wholly understand;' an admission in which, we suspect, most of our readers, and the Old Man of Carmel himself, were he candid, might be inclined to agree with him. Sometimes, in the deeper consideration which translators are bound
to bestow on such extravagances, we have fancied we could discern in this apologue some glimmerings of meaning, scattered here and there like weak lamps in the darkness: not enough to interpret the riddle, but to show that by possibility it might have an interpretation,—was a typical vision, with a certain degree of significance in the wild mind of the poet, not an inane fever-dream. Might not Phosphoros, for example, indicate generally the spiritual essence of man, and this story be an emblem of his history? He longs to be 'One and Somewhat;' that is, he labours under the very common complaint of egoism; cannot, in the grandeur of Beauty and Virtue, forget his own so beautiful and virtuous Self; but, amid the glories of the majestic All, is still haunted and blinded by some shadow of his own little Me. For this reason he is punished; imprisoned in the 'Element' (of a material body), and has the 'four Azure Chains' (the four principles of matter) bound round him; so that he can neither think nor act, except in a foreign medium, and under conditions that encumber and confuse him. The 'Cup of Fire' is given him; perhaps, the rude, barbarous passion and cruelty natural to all uncultivated tribes? But, at length, he beholds the 'Moon;' begins to have some sight and love of material Nature; and, looking into her 'Mirror,' forms to himself, under gross emblems, a theogony and sort of mythologic poetry; in which, if he still cannot behold the 'Name,' and has forgotten his own 'Birthplace,' both of which are blotted out and hidden by the 'Element,' he finds some spiritual solace, and breathes more freely. Still, however, the 'Cup of Fire' tortures him; till the 'Salt' (intellectual culture?) is vouchsafed; which, indeed, calms the raging of that furious bloodthirstiness and warlike strife, but leaves him, as mere culture of the understanding may be supposed to do, frozen into irreligion and moral inactivity, and farther from the 'Name' and his 'own Original' than ever. Then, is the 'Cup of Fluidness' a more merciful disposition? and intended, with 'the Drops of Sadness and the Drops of Longing,' to shadow forth that woestruck, desolate, yet softer and devouter state in which mankind displayed itself at the com-
ing of the 'Word,' at the first promulgation of the Christian religion? Is the 'Rainbow' the modern poetry of Europe, the Chivalry, the new form of Stoicism, the whole romantic feeling of these later days? But who or what the 'Heiland aus den Wassern' (Saviour from the Waters) may be, we need not hide our native ignorance; this being apparently a secret of the Valley, which Robert d'Heredon, and Werner, and men of like gifts, are in due time to show the world, but unhappily have not yet succeeded in bringing to light. Perhaps, indeed, our whole interpretation may be thought little better than lost labour; a reading of what was only scrawled and flourished, not written; a shaping of gay castles and metallic palaces from the sunset clouds, which, though mountain-like, and purple and golden of hue, and towered together as if by Cyclopean arms, are but dyed vapour.

Adam of Valincourt continues his exposition in the most liberal way; but, through many pages of metrical lecturing, he does little to satisfy us. What was more to his purpose, he partly succeeds in satisfying Robert d'Heredon; who, after due preparation,—Molay being burnt like a martyr, under the most promising omens, and the Pope and the King of France struck dead, or nearly so,—sets out to found the order of St. Andrew in his own country, that of Calatrava in Spain, and other knightly missions of the Heiland aus den Wassern elsewhere; and thus, to the great satisfaction of all parties, the Sons of the Valley terminates, 'positively for the last time.'

Our reader may have already convinced himself that in this strange phantasmagoria there are not wanting indications of a very high poetic talent. We see a mind of great depth, if not of sufficient strength; struggling with objects which, though it cannot master them, are essentially of richest significance. Had the writer only kept his piece till the ninth year; meditating it with true diligence and unwearied will! But the weak Werner was not a man for such things: he must reap the harvest on the morrow after seed-day, and so stands before us at last, as a man capable of much, only not of bringing aught to perfection.

Of his natural dramatic genius, this work, ill-concocted as
it is, affords no unfavourable specimen; and may, indeed, have justified expectations which were never realised. It is true, he cannot yet give form and animation to a character, in the genuine poetic sense; we do not see any of his *dramatis personae*, but only hear of them: yet, in some cases, his endeavour, though imperfect, is by no means abortive; and here, for instance, Jacques Molay, Philip Adalbert, Hugo, and the like, though not living men, have still as much life as many a buff-and-scarlet Sebastian or Barbarossa, whom we find swaggering, for years, with acceptance, on the boards. Of his spiritual beings, whom in most of his Plays he introduces too profusely, we cannot speak in commendation: they are of a mongrel nature, neither rightly dead nor alive; in fact, they sometimes glide about like real, though rather singular mortals, through the whole piece; and only vanish as ghosts in the fifth act. But, on the other hand, in contriving theatrical incidents and sentiments; in scenic shows, and all manner of gorgeous, frightful or astonishing machinery, Werner exhibits a copious invention, and strong though untutored feeling. Doubtless, it is all crude enough; all illuminated by an impure, barbaric splendour; not the soft, peaceful brightness of sunlight, but the red, resinous glare of playhouse torches. Werner, however, was still young; and had he been of a right spirit, all that was impure and crude might in time have become ripe and clear; and a poet of no ordinary excellence would have been moulded out of him.

But, as matters stood, this was by no means the thing Werner had most at heart. It is not the degree of poetic talent manifested in the *Sons of the Valley* that he prizes, but the religious truth shadowed forth in it. To judge from the parables of Baffometus and Phosphoros, our readers may be disposed to hold his revelations on this subject rather cheap. Nevertheless, taking up the character of *Vates* in its widest sense, Werner earnestly desires not only to be a poet but a prophet; and, indeed, looks upon his merits in the former province as altogether subservient to his higher purposes in the latter. We have a series of the most confused and long-winded letters to Hitzig, who had now removed to Berlin;
setting forth, with a singular simplicity, the mighty projects Werner was cherishing on this head. He thinks that there ought to be a new Creed promulgated, a new Body of Religionists established; and that, for this purpose, not writing, but actual preaching, can avail. He detests common Protestantism, under which he seems to mean a sort of Socinianism, or diluted French Infidelity: he talks of Jacob Böhme, and Luther, and Schleiermacher, and a new Trinity of 'Art, Religion and Love.' All this should be sounded in the ears of men, and in a loud voice, that so their torpid slumber, the harbinger of spiritual death, may be driven away. With the utmost gravity, he commissions his correspondent to wait upon Schlegel, Tieck and others of a like spirit, and see whether they will not join him. For his own share in the matter, he is totally indifferent; will serve in the meanest capacity, and rejoice with his whole heart, if, in zeal and ability as poets and preachers, not some only, but every one should infinitely outstrip him. We suppose, he had dropped the thought of being 'One and Somewhat;' and now wished, rapt away by this divine purpose, to be 'Naught and All.'

On the Heiland aus den Wassern this correspondence throws no farther light: what the new Creed specially was, which Werner felt so eager to plant and propagate, we nowhere learn with any distinctness. Probably, he might himself have been rather at a loss to explain it in brief compass. His theogony, we suspect, was still very much in posse; and perhaps only the moral part of this system could stand before him with some degree of clearness. On this latter point, indeed, he is determined enough; well assured of his dogmas, and apparently waiting but for some proper vehicle in which to convey them to the minds of men. His fundamental principle of morals we have seen in part already; it does not exclusively or primarily belong to himself; being little more than that high tenet of entire Self-forgetfulness, that 'merging of the Me in the Idea;' a principle which reigns both in Stoical and Christian ethics, and is at this day common, in theory, among all German philosophers, especially of the Transcendental class. Werner has adopted this princi-
ple with his whole heart and his whole soul, as the indis-

pensable condition of all Virtue. He believes it, we should
say, intensely, and without compromise, exaggerating rather
than softening or concealing its peculiarities. He will not
have Happiness, under any form, to be the real or chief end
of man: this is but love of enjoyment, disguise it as we like;
a more complex and sometimes more respectable species of
hunger, he would say; to be admitted as an indestructible
element in human nature, but nowise to be recognised as
the highest; on the contrary, to be resisted and incessantly
warred with, till it become obedient to love of God, which is
only, in the truest sense, love of Goodness, and the germ of
which lies deep in the inmost nature of man; of authority
superior to all sensitive impulses; forming, in fact, the grand
law of his being, as subjection to it forms the first and
last condition of spiritual health. He thinks that to pro-
pose a reward for virtue is to render virtue impossible. He
warmly seconds Schleiermacher in declaring that even the
hope of Immortality is a consideration unfit to be introduced
into religion, and tending only to pervert it, and impair its
sacredness. Strange as this may seem, Werner is firmly con-
vinced of its importance; and has even enforced it specifically
in a passage of his Söhne des Thals, which he is at the pains
to cite and expound in his correspondence with Hitzig. Here
is another fraction of that wondrous dialogue between Robert
d’Heredon and Adam of Valincourt, in the cavern of the Valley:

* * * * *

ROBERT.

And Death,—so dawns it on me,—Death perhaps,
The doom that leaves naught of this Me remaining,
May be perhaps the Symbol of that Self-denial,—
Perhaps still more,—perhaps,—I have it, friend!—
That cripplish Immortality, think’st not?—
Which but spins forth our paltry Me, so thin
And pitiful, into Infinitude,
That too must die?—This shallow Self of ours,
We are not nail’d to it eternally?
We can, we must be free of it, and then
Uncumbered wanton in the Force of All!
ADAM (calling joyfully into the interior of the Cavern).

Brethren, he has renounced! Himself has found it!
O, praised be Light! He sees! The North is sav’d!

CONCEALED VOICES OF THE OLD MEN OF THE VALLEY.

Hail and joy to thee, thou Strong One;
Force to thee from above, and Light!
Complete,—complete the work!

ADAM (embracing ROBERT).

Come to my heart!—&c. &c.

Such was the spirit of that new Faith, which, symbolised under mythuses of Baffometus and Phosphoros, and 'Saviours from the Waters,' and 'Trinities of Art, Religion and Love,' and to be preached abroad by the aid of Schleiermacher, and what was then called the New Poetical School, Werner seriously proposed, like another Luther, to cast forth, as good seed, among the ruins of decayed and down-trodden Protestantism! Whether Hitzig was still young enough to attempt executing his commission, and applying to Schlegel and Tieck for help; and if so, in what gestures of speechless astonishment, or what peals of inextinguishable laughter they answered him, we are not informed. One thing, however, is clear: that a man with so unbridled an imagination, joined to so weak an understanding, and so broken a volition; who had plunged so deep in Theosophy, and still hovered so near the surface in all practical knowledge of men and their affairs; who, shattered and degraded in his own private character, could meditate such apostolic enterprises,—was a man likely, if he lived long, to play fantastic tricks in abundance; and, at least in his religious history, to set the world a-wondering. Conversion, not to Popery, but, if it so chanced, to Braminism, was a thing nowise to be thought impossible.

Nevertheless, let his missionary zeal have justice from us. It does seem to have been grounded on no wicked or even illaudable motive: to all appearance, he not only believed what he professed, but thought it of the highest moment that others should believe it. And if the proselytising spirit, which dwells in all men, be allowed exercise even when it only assaults what it reckons Errors, still more should this be so,
when it proclaims what it reckons Truth, and fancies itself not taking from us what in our eyes may be good, but adding thereto what is better.

Meanwhile, Werner was not so absorbed in spiritual schemes, that he altogether overlooked his own merely temporal comfort. In contempt of former failures, he was now courting for himself a third wife, 'a young Poless of the highest personal attractions;' and this under difficulties which would have appalled an ordinary wooer: for the two had no language in common; he not understanding three words of Polish, she not one of German. Nevertheless, nothing daunted by this circumstance, nay perhaps discerning in it an assurance against many a sorrowful curtain-lecture, he prosecuted his suit, we suppose by signs and dumb-show, with such ardour, that he quite gained the fair mute; wedded her in 1801; and soon after, in her company, quitted Warsaw for Königsberg, where the helpless state of his mother required immediate attention. It is from Königsberg that most of his missionary epistles to Hitzig are written; the latter, as we have hinted before, being now stationed, by his official appointment, in Berlin. The sad duty of watching over his crazed, forsaken and dying mother, Werner appears to have discharged with true filial assiduity: for three years she lingered in the most painful state, under his nursing; and her death, in 1804, seems notwithstanding to have filled him with the deepest sorrow. This is an extract of his letter to Hitzig on that mournful occasion:

'I know not whether thou hast heard that on the 24th of February (the same day when our excellent Mnioch died in Warsaw), my mother departed here, in my arms. My Friend! God knocks with an iron hammer at our hearts; and we are duller than stone, if we do not feel it; and madder than mad, if we think it shame to cast ourselves into the dust before the All-powerful, and let our whole so highly miserable Self be annihilated in the sentiment of His infinite greatness and long-suffering. I wish I had words to paint how inexpressibly pitiful my Söhne des Thals appeared to me in that hour, when, after eighteen years of neglect, I again went to partake
in the Communion! This death of my mother,—the pure royal poet-and-martyr spirit, who for eight years had lain continually on a sick-bed, and suffered unspeakable things,—affected me (much as, for her sake and my own, I could not but wish it) with altogether agonising feelings. Ah, Friend, how heavy do my youthful faults lie on me! How much would I give to have my mother—(though both I and my wife have of late times lived wholly for her, and had much to endure on her account)—how much would I give to have her back to me but for one week, that I might disburden my heavy-laden heart with tears of repentance! My beloved Friend, give thou no grief to thy parents: ah, no earthly voice can awaken the dead! God and Parents, that is the first concern; all else is secondary."

This affection for his mother forms, as it were, a little island of light and verdure in Werner's history, where, amid so much that is dark and desolate, one feels it pleasant to linger. Here was at least one duty, perhaps indeed the only one, which, in a wayward wasted life, he discharged with fidelity: from his conduct towards this one hapless being, we may perhaps still learn that his heart, however perverted by circumstances, was not incapable of true, disinterested love. A rich heart by Nature; but unwisely squandering its riches, and attaining to a pure union only with this one heart; for it seems doubtful whether he ever loved another! His poor mother, while alive, was the haven of all his earthly voyagings; and, in after years, from amid far scenes and crushing perplexities, he often looks back to her grave with a feeling, to which all bosoms must respond.¹ The date of her decease

¹ See, for example, the Preface to his Mutter der Mackaböer, written at Vienna, in 1819. The tone of still, but deep and heartfelt sadness, which runs through the whole of this piece, cannot be communicated in extracts. We quote only a half stanza, which, except in prose, we shall not venture to translate:

'Ich, dem der Liebe Kosen
Und alle Freudenrosen,
Beym ersten Schaufeltoßen
Am Muttergrab' entflohn.'—

'I, for whom the caresses of love and all roses of joy withered away, as the first shovel with its mould sounded on the coffin of my mother.'
became a memorable era in his mind; as may appear from the title which he gave, long afterwards, to one of his most popular and tragical productions, *Die Vier-und-zwanzigste Februar* (The Twenty-fourth of February).

After this event, which left him in possession of a small but competent fortune, Werner returned with his wife to his post at Warsaw. By this time, Hitzig too had been sent back, and to a higher post: he was now married likewise; and the two wives, he says, soon became as intimate as their husbands. In a little while Hoffmann joined them; a colleague in Hitzig's office, and by him ere long introduced to Werner, and the other circle of Prussian men of law; who, in this foreign capital, formed each other's chief society; and, of course, clave to one another more closely than they might have done elsewhere. Hoffmann does not seem to have loved Werner; as, indeed, he was at all times rather shy in his attachments; and to his quick eye, and more rigid fastidious feeling, the lofty theory and low selfish practice, the general diffuseness, nay, incoherence of character, the pedantry and solemn affectation, too visible in the man, could nowise be hidden. Nevertheless, he feels and acknowledges the frequent charm of his conversation: for Werner many times could be frank and simple; and the true humour and abandonment with which he often launched forth into bland satire on his friends, and still oftener on himself, atoned for many of his whims and weaknesses. Probably the two could not have lived together by themselves: but in a circle of common men, where these touchy elements were attempered by a fair addition of wholesome insensibilities and formalities, they even relished one another; and, indeed, the whole social union seems to have stood on no undesirable footing. For the rest, Warsaw itself was, at this time, a gay, picturesque and stirring city; full of resources for spending life in pleasant occupation, either wisely or unwisely.¹

¹ Hitzig has thus described the first aspect it presented to Hoffmann:
'Streets of stately breadth, formed of palaces in the finest Italian style, and wooden huts which threatened every moment to rush down over the heads of their inmates; in these edifices, Asiatic pomp combined
It was here that, in 1805, Werner’s *Kreuz an der Ostsee* (Cross on the Baltic) was written; a sort of half-operatic performance, for which Hoffmann, who to his gifts as a writer added perhaps still higher attainments both as a musician and a painter, composed the accompaniment. He complains that, in this matter, Werner was very ill to please. A ridiculous scene, at the first reading of the piece, the same shrewd wag has recorded in his *Serapions-Brüder* : Hitzig assures us that it is literally true, and that Hoffmann himself was the main actor in the business.

"Our Poet had invited a few friends, to read to them, in manuscript, his *Kreuz an der Ostsee*, of which they already knew some fragments that had raised their expectations to the highest stretch. Planted, as usual, in the middle of the circle, at a little miniature table, on which two clear lights, stuck in high candlesticks, were burning, sat the Poet; he had drawn the manuscript from his breast; the huge snuff-box, the blue-checked handkerchief, aptly reminding you of Baltic muslin, as in use for petticoats and other indispensable things, lay arranged in order before him.—Deep silence on all sides! —Not a breath heard!—The Poet cuts one of those unparalleled, ever-memorable, altogether indescribable faces you in strange union with Greenland squalor. An ever-moving population, forming the sharpest contrasts, as in a perpetual masquerade: long-bearded Jews; monks in the garb of every order; here veiled and deeply-shrouded nuns of strictest discipline, walking self-secluded and apart; there flights of young Polresses, in silk mantles of the brightest colours, talking and promenading over broad squares. The venerable ancient Polish noble, with-moustaches, caftan, girdle, sabre, and red or yellow boots; the new generation equipt to the utmost pitch as Parisian *Incroyables*; with Turks, Greeks, Russians, Italians, Frenchmen, in ever-changing throng. Add to this a police of inconceivable tolerance, disturbing no popular sport; so that little puppet-theatres, apes, camels, dancing-bears, practised incessantly in open spaces and streets; while the most elegant equipages, and the poorest pedestrian bearers of burden, stood gazing at them. Farther, a theatre in the national language; a good French company; an Italian opera; German players of at least a very passable sort; masked-balls on a quite original but highly entertaining plan; places for pleasure-excursions all round the city, &c. &c.—Hoffmann’s *Leben und Nachlass*, b. i. s. 287.
have seen in him, and begins.—Now you recollect, at the rising of the curtain, the Prussians are assembled on the coast of the Baltic, fishing amber, and commence by calling on the god who presides over this vocation.—So begins:

Bangputtis! Bangputtis! Bangputtis!

—Brief pause!—Incipient stare in the audience!—and from a fellow in the corner comes a small clear voice: "My dearest, most valued friend! my best of poets! If thy whole dear opera is written in that cursed language, no soul of us knows a syllable of it; and I beg, in the Devil's name, thou wouldst have the goodness to translate it first!"

Of this Kreuz an der Ostsee our limits will permit us to say but little. It is still a fragment; the Second Part, which was often promised, and, we believe, partly written, having never yet been published. In some respects, it appears to us the best of Werner's dramas: there is a decisive coherence in the plot, such as we seldom find with him; and a firmness, a rugged nervous brevity in the dialogue, which is equally rare. Here, too, the mystic-dreamy agencies, which, as in most of his pieces, he has interwoven with the action, harmonise more than usually with the spirit of the whole. It is a wild subject, and this helps to give it a corresponding wildness of locality. The first planting of Christianity among the Prussians, by the Teutonic Knights, leads us back of itself into dim ages of antiquity, of superstitious barbarism, and stern apostolic zeal: it is a scene hanging, as it were, in half-ghastly chiaroscuro, on a ground of primeval Night: where the Cross and St. Adalbert come in contact with the Sacred Oak and the Idols of Romova, we are not surprised that spectral shapes peer forth on us from the gloom.

In constructing and depicting of characters, Werner, indeed, is still little better than a mannerist: his persons, differing in external figure, differ too slightly in inward nature; and no one of them comes forward on us with a rightly visible or living air. Yet, in scenes and incidents, in what may be called the general costume of his subject, he has here attained a really superior excellence. The savage Prussians,

1 Hoffmann's Scrapions-Brüder, b. iv. s. 240.
with their amber-fishing, their bear-hunting, their bloody idolatry and stormful untutored energy, are brought vividly into view; no less so the Polish Court of Plozk, and the German Crusaders, in their bridal-feasts and battles, as they live and move, here placed on the verge of Heathendom, as it were, the vanguard of Light in conflict with the kingdom of Darkness. The nocturnal assault on Plozk by the Prussians, where the handful of Teutonic Knights is overpowered, but the city saved from ruin by the miraculous interposition of the 'Harper,' who now proves to be the Spirit of St. Adalbert; this, with the scene which follows it, on the Island of the Vistula, where the dawn slowly breaks over doings of woe and horrid cruelty, but of woe and cruelty atoned for by immortal hope,—belong undoubtedly to Werner's most successful efforts. With much that is questionable, much that is merely common, there are intermingled touches from the true Land of Wonders; indeed, the whole is overspread with a certain dim religious light, in which its many pettinesses and exaggerations are softened into something which at least resembles poetic harmony. We give this drama a high praise, when we say that more than once it has reminded us of Calderon.

The 'Cross on the Baltic' had been bespoken by Ifland, for the Berlin theatre; but the complex machinery of the piece, the 'little flames' springing, at intervals, from the heads of certain characters, and the other supernatural ware with which it is replenished, were found to transcend the capabilities of any merely terrestrial stage. Ifland, the best actor in Germany, was himself a dramatist, and man of talent, but in all points differing from Werner, as a stage-machinist may differ from a man with the second-sight. Hoffmann chuckles in secret over the perplexities in which the shrewd prosaic manager and playwright must have found himself, when he came to the 'little flame.' Nothing remained but to write back a refusal, full of admiration and expostulation: and Ifland wrote one which, says Hoffmann, 'passes for a masterpiece of theatrical diplomacy.'

In this one respect, at least, Werner's next play was happier,
for it actually crossed the 'Stygian marsh' of green-room hesitations, and reached, though in a maimed state, the Elysium of the boards; and this to the great joy, as it proved, both of Inland and all other parties interested. We allude to the Martin Luther, oder die Weihe der Kraft (Martin Luther, or the Consecration of Strength), Werner's most popular performance; which came out at Berlin in 1807, and soon spread over all Germany, Catholic as well as Protestant; being acted, it would seem, even in Vienna, to overflowing and delighted audiences.

If instant acceptance, therefore, were a measure of dramatic merit, this play should rank high among that class of works. Nevertheless, to judge from our own impressions, the sober reader of Martin Luther will be far from finding in it such excellence. It cannot be named among the best dramas: it is not even the best of Werner's. There is, indeed, much scenic exhibition, many a 'fervid sentiment,' as the newspapers have it; nay, with all its mixture of coarseness, here and there a glimpse of genuine dramatic inspiration: but, as a whole, the work sorely disappoints us; it is of so loose and mixed a structure, and falls asunder in our thoughts, like the iron and the clay in the Chaldean's Dream. There is an interest, perhaps of no trivial sort, awakened in the First Act; but, unhappily, it goes on declining, till, in the Fifth, an ill-natured critic might almost say, it expires. The story is too wide for Werner's dramatic lens to gather into a focus; besides, the reader brings with him an image of it, too fixed for being so boldly metamorphosed, and too high and august for being ornamented with tinsel and gilt pasteboard. Accordingly, the Diet of Worms, plentifully furnished as it is with sceptres and armorial shields, continues a much grander scene in History than it is here in Fiction. Neither, with regard to the persons of the play, excepting those of Luther and Catharine, the Nun whom he weds, can we find much scope for praise. Nay, our praise even of these two must have many limitations. Catharine, though carefully enough depicted, is, in fact, little more than a common tragedy-queen, with the storminess, the love, and other stage-heroism, which belong
prescriptively to that class of dignitaries. With regard to Luther himself, it is evident that Werner has put forth his whole strength in this delineation; and, trying him by common standards, we are far from saying that he has failed. Doubtless it is, in some respects, a significant and even sublime delineation; yet must we ask whether it is Luther, the Luther of History, or even the Luther proper for this drama; and not rather some ideal portraiture of Zacharias Werner himself? Is not this Luther, with his too assiduous flute-playing, his trances of three days, his visions of the Devil (at whom, to the sorrow of the housemaid, he resolutely throws his huge inkbottle), by much too spasmodic and brainsick a personage? We cannot but question the dramatic beauty, whatever it may be in history, of that three days' trance; the hero must before this have been in want of mere victuals; and there, as he sits deaf and dumb, with his eyes sightless, yet fixed and staring, are we not tempted less to admire, than to send in all haste for some officer of the Humane Society?—Seriously, we cannot but regret that these and other such blemishes had not been avoided, and the character, worked into chasteness and purity, been presented to us in the simple grandeur which essentially belongs to it. For, censure as we may, it were blindness to deny that this figure of Luther has in it features of an austere loveliness, a mild yet awful beauty: undoubtedly a figure rising from the depths of the poet's soul; and, marred as it is with such adhesions, piercing at times into the depths of ours! Among so many poetical sins, it forms the chief redeeming virtue, and truly were almost in itself a sort of atonement.

As for the other characters, they need not detain us long. Of Charles the Fifth, by far the most ambitious,—meant, indeed, as the counterpoise of Luther,—we may say, without hesitation, that he is a failure. An empty Gascon this; bragging of his power, and honour and the like, in a style which Charles, even in his nineteenth year, could never have used. 'One God, one Charles,' is no speech for an emperor; and, besides, is borrowed from some panegyrist of a Spanish opera-singer. Neither can we fall-in with Charles, when he tells us that 'he
fears nothing,—not even God.' We humbly think he must be mistaken. With the old Miners, again, with Hans Luther and his Wife, the Reformer's parents, there is more reason to be satisfied: yet in Werner's hands simplicity is always apt, in such cases, to become too simple; and these honest peasants, like the honest Hugo in the 'Sons of the Valley,' are very garrulous.

The drama of Martin Luther is named likewise the Consecration of Strength; that is, we suppose, the purifying of this great theologian from all remnants of earthly passion, into a clear heavenly zeal; an operation which is brought about, strangely enough, by two half-ghosts and one whole ghost,—a little fairy girl, Catharine's servant, who impersonates Faith; a little fairy youth, Luther's servant, who represents Art; and the 'Spirit of Cotta's wife,' an honest housekeeper, but defunct many years before, who stands for Purity. These three supernaturals hover about in very whimsical wise, cultivating flowers, playing on flutes, and singing dirge-like epithalami-ums over unsound sleepers: we cannot see how aught of this is to 'consecrate strength;,' or, indeed, what such jack-o'-lantern personages have in the least to do with so grave a business. If the author intended by such machinery to elevate his subject from the Common, and unite it with the higher region of the Infinite and the Invisible, we cannot think that his contrivance has succeeded, or was worthy to succeed. These half-allegorical, half-corporeal beings yield no contentment anywhere: Abstract Ideas, however they may put on fleshy garments, are a class of characters whom we cannot sympathise with or delight in. Besides, how can this mere embodiment of an allegory be supposed to act on the rugged materials of life, and elevate into ideal grandeur the doings of real men, that live and move amid the actual pressure of worldly things? At best, it can stand but like a hand in the margin: it is not performing the task proposed, but only telling us that it was meant to be performed. To our feelings, this entire episode runs like straggling bindweed through the whole growth of the piece, not so much uniting as encumbering and choking-up what it meets with; in itself, perhaps, a
green and rather pretty weed; yet here superfluous, and, like any other weed, deserving only to be altogether cut away.

Our general opinion of Martin Luther, it would seem, therefore, corresponds ill with that of the 'overflowing and delighted audiences' over all Germany. We believe, however, that now, in its twentieth year, the work may be somewhat more calmly judged of even there. As a classical drama it could never pass with any critic; nor, on the other hand, shall we ourselves deny that, in the lower sphere of a popular spectacle, its attractions are manifold. We find it, what, more or less, we find all Werner's pieces to be, a splendid, sparkling mass; yet not of pure metal, but of many-coloured scoria, not unmingled with metal; and must regret, as ever, that it had not been refined in a stronger furnace, and kept in the crucible till the true silver-gleam, glancing from it, had shown that the process was complete.

Werner's dramatic popularity could not remain without influence on him, more especially as he was now in the very centre of its brilliancy, having changed his residence from Warsaw to Berlin, some time before his Weihe der Kraft was acted, or indeed written. Von Schröter, one of the state-ministers, a man harmonising with Werner in his 'zeal both for religion and freemasonry,' had been persuaded by some friends to appoint him his secretary. Werner naturally rejoiced in such promotion; yet, combined with his theatrical success, it perhaps, in the long-run, did him more harm than good. He might now, for the first time, be said to see the busy and influential world with his own eyes: but to draw future instruction from it, or even to guide himself in its present complexities, he was little qualified. He took a shorter method: 'he plunged into the vortex of society,' says Hitzig, with brief expressiveness; became acquainted, indeed with Fichte, Johannes Müller, and other excellent men, but united himself also, and with closer partiality, to players, play-lovers, and a long list of jovial, admiring, but highly unprofitable companions. His religious schemes, perhaps rebutted by collision with actual life, lay dormant for the time, or mingled in strange union with wine-vapours, and the 'feast of reason, and the
flow of soul.' The result of all this might, in some measure, be foreseen. In eight weeks, for example, Werner had parted with his wife. It was not to be expected, he writes, that she should be happy with him. 'I am no bad man,' continues he, with considerable candour; 'yet a weakling in many respects (for God strengthens me also in several), fretful, capricious, 'greedy, impure. Thou knowest me! Still, immersed in my 'fantasies, in my occupation: so that here, what with play- 'houses, what with social parties, she had no manner of en- 'joyment with me. She is innocent: I too perhaps; for can 'I pledge myself that I am so?' These repeated divorces of Werner's at length convinced him that he had no talent for managing wives; indeed, we subsequently find him, more than once, arguing in dissuasion of marriage altogether. To our readers one other consideration may occur: astonishment at the state of marriage-law, and the strange footing this 'sacra- ment' must stand on throughout Protestant Germany. For a Christian man, at least not a Mahometan, to leave three widows behind him, certainly wears a peculiar aspect. Per- haps it is saying much for German morality, that so absurd a system has not, by the disorders resulting from it, already brought about its own abrogation.

Of Werner's farther proceedings in Berlin, except by im- plication, we have little notice. After the arrival of the French armies, his secretaryship ceased; and now wifeless and placeless, in the summer of 1807, 'he felt himself,' he says, 'authorized by Fate to indulge his taste for pilgriming.' Indulge it accordingly he did; for he wandered to and fro many years, nay we may almost say, to the end of his life, like a perfect Bedouin. The various stages and occurrences of his travels, he has himself recorded in a paper furnished by him for his own Name, in some Biographical Dictionary. Hitzig quotes great part of it, but it is too long and too meagre for being quoted here. Werner was at Prague, Vienna, Munich,—everywhere received with open arms; 'saw 'at Jena, in December 1807, for the first time, the most uni- 'versal and the clearest man of his age (the man whose like 'no one that has seen him will ever see again), the great, nay
'only Goethe; and, under his introduction, the pattern of 'German princes' (the Duke of Weimar); and then, 'after 'three ever-memorable months in this society, beheld at Ber- 'lin the triumphant entry of the pattern of European tyrants' (Napoleon). On the summit of the Rigi, at sunrise, he be- came acquainted with the Crown Prince, now King, of Ba- varia; was by him introduced to the Swiss festival at Inter- laken, and to the most 'intellectual lady of our time, the 'Baroness de Staël; and must beg to be credited when, after 'sufficient individual experience, he can declare, that the 'heart of this high and noble woman was at least as great as 'her genius.' Coppet, for a while, was his head-quarters; but he went to Paris, to Weimar,1 again to Switzerland; in short, trudged and hurried hither and thither, inconstant as an ignis fatuus, and restless as the Wandering Jew. On his mood of mind during all this period, Werner gives us no direct information; but so unquiet an outward life be- tokens of itself no inward repose; and when we, from other lights, gain a transient glimpse into the wayfarer's thoughts, they seem still more fluctuating than his footsteps. His proj- ect of a New Religion was by this time abandoned: Hitzig thinks his closer survey of life at Berlin had taught him the impracticability of such chimeras. Nevertheless, the subject of Religion, in one shape or another, nay of propagating it in new purity by teaching and preaching, had nowise vanished from his meditations. On the contrary, we can perceive that it still formed the master-principle of his soul, 'the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night,' which guided him, so far as he had any guidance, in the pathless desert of his now solitary, barren and cheerless existence. What his special opinions or prospects on the matter had, at this period, become, we nowhere learn; except, indeed, negatively,—for if he has not yet found the new, he still cordially enough detests the old.  

1It was here that Hitzig saw him, for the last time, in 1809; found admittance, through his means, to a court-festival in honour of Bernadotte, and he still recollects, with gratification, 'the lordly spectacle of Goethe and that sovereign standing front to front, engaged in the live-liest conversation.'
All his admiration of Luther cannot reconcile him to modern Lutheranism. This he regards but as another and more hideous impersonation of the Utilitarian spirit of the age, nay as the last triumph of Infidelity, which has now dressed itself in priestly garb, and even mounted the pulpit, to preach, in heavenly symbols, a doctrine which is altogether of the earth. A curious passage from his Preface to the Cross on the Baltic we may quote, by way of illustration. After speaking of St. Adalbert’s miracles, and how his body, when purchased from the heathen for its weight in gold, became light as gossamer, he proceeds:

‘Though these things may be justly doubted; yet one miracle cannot be denied him, the miracle, namely, that after his death he has extorted from this Spirit of Protestantism against Strength in general,—which now replaces the old heathen and catholic Spirit of Persecution, and weighs almost as much as Adalbert’s body,—the admission, that he knew what he wanted; was what he wished to be; was so wholly; and therefore must have been a man, at all points diametrically opposite both to that Protestantism, and to the culture of our day.’ In a Note, he adds: ‘There is another Protestantism, however, which constitutes in Conduct what Art is in Speculation, and which I reverence so highly, that I even place it above Art, as Conduct is above Speculation at all times. But in this, St. Adalbert and St. Luther are—colleagues: and if God, which I daily pray for, should awaken Luther to us before the Last Day, the first task he would find, in respect of that degenerate and spurious Protestantism, would be, in his somewhat rugged manner, to—protest against it.’

A similar, or perhaps still more reckless temper, is to be traced elsewhere, in passages of a gay, as well as grave character. This is the conclusion of a letter from Vienna, in 1807:

‘We have Tragedies here which contain so many edifying maxims, that you might use them instead of Jesus Sirach, and have them read from beginning to end in the Berlin Sunday-Schools. Comedies, likewise, absolutely bursting with household felicity and nobleness of mind. The genuine Kasperl is
dead, and Schikander has gone his ways; but here too Bigotry and Superstition are attacked in enlightened Journals with such profit, that the people care less for Popery than even you in Berlin do; and prize, for instance, the Weihe der Kraft, which has also been declaimed in Regensburg and Munich to thronging audiences,—chiefly for the multitude of liberal Protestant opinions therein brought to light; and regard the author, all his struggling to the contrary unheeded, as a secret Illuminatus, or at worst an amiable Enthusiast. In a word, Vienna is determined, without loss of time, to overtake Berlin in the career of improvement; and when I recollect that Berlin, on her side, carries Porst’s Hymn-book with her, in her reticule, to the shows in the Thiergarten; and that the ray of Christiano-catholico-platonic Faith pierces deeper and deeper into your (already by nature very deep) Privy-councillor Ma’m’selle,—I almost fancy that Germany is one great madhouse; and could find in my heart to pack up my goods, and set off for Italy, to-morrow morning;—not, indeed, that I might work there, where follies enough are to be had too; but that, amid ruins and flowers, I might forget all things, and myself in the first place.’

To Italy accordingly he went, though with rather different objects, and not quite so soon as on the morrow. In the course of his wanderings, a munificent ecclesiastical Prince, the Fürst Primas von Dalberg, had settled a yearly pension on him; so that now he felt still more at liberty to go whither he listed. In the course of a second visit to Coppet, and which lasted four months, Madame de Staël encouraged and assisted him to execute his favourite project; he set out, through Turin and Florence, and ‘on the 9th of December 1809, saw, for the first time, the Capital of the World!’ Of his proceedings here, much as we should desire to have minute details, no information is given in this Narrative; and Hitzig seems to know, by a letter, merely, that ‘he knelt with streaming eyes over the graves of St. Peter and St. Paul.’ This little phrase says much. Werner appears likewise to have assisted at certain ‘Spiritual Exercitations’ (Geistliche Uebungen); a new invention set on foot at Rome for quickening the devotion of the faithful; consisting, so far as we can

1 Lebens-Abriss, s. 70.
gather, in a sort of fasting-and-prayer meetings, conducted on the most rigorous principles; the considerable band of devotees being bound over to strict silence, and secluded for several days, with conventual care, from every sort of intercourse with the world. The effect of these Exercitations, Werner elsewhere declares, was edifying to an extreme degree; at parting on the threshold of their holy tabernacle, all the brethren 'embraced each other, as if intoxicated with divine joy; and each confessed to the other, that throughout these precious days he had been, as it were, in heaven; and now, strengthened as by a soul-purifying bath, was but 'loath to venture back into the cold weekday world.' The next step from these Tabor-feasts, if, indeed, it had not preceded them, was a decisive one: 'On the 19th of April 1811, Werner had grace given him to return to the Faith of his fathers, the Catholic!'

Here, then, the 'crowning mercy' had at length arrived! This passing of the Rubicon determined the whole remainder of Werner's life; which had henceforth the merit at least of entire consistency. He forthwith set about the professional study of Theology; then, being perfected in this, he left Italy in 1813, taking care, however, by the road, 'to supplicate, and certainly not in vain, the help of the Gracious Mother at Loretto;' and after due preparation, under the superintendence of his patron, the Prince Archbishop von Dalberg, had himself ordained a Priest at Aschaffenburg, in June 1814. Next from Aschaffenburg he hastened to Vienna; and there, with all his might, began preaching; his first auditory being the Congress of the Holy Alliance, which had then just begun its venerable sessions. 'The novelty and strangeness,' he says, 'nay originality of his appearance, secured him an extraordinary concourse of hearers.' He was, indeed, a man worth hearing and seeing; for his name, noised abroad in many-sounding peals, was filling all Germany from the hut to the palace. This, he thinks, might have affected his head; but he 'had a trust in God, which bore him through.' Neither did he seem anywise anxious to still this clamour of his judges, least of all to propitiate his
detractors: for already, before arriving at Vienna, he had published, as a pendant to his *Martin Luther, or the Consecration of Strength*, a Pamphlet, in doggerel metre, entitled, the *Consecration of Weakness*, wherein he proclaims himself to the whole world as an honest seeker and finder of truth, and takes occasion to revoke his old ‘Trinity,’ of art, religion and love; love having now turned out to be a dangerous ingredient in such mixtures. The writing of this *Weihe der Unkraft* was reckoned by many a bold but injudicious measure,—a throwing down of the gauntlet when the lists were full of tumultuous foes, and the knight was but weak, and his cause, at best, of the most questionable sort. To reports, and calumnies, and criticisms, and vituperations, there was no limit.

What remains of this strange eventful history may be summed up in few words. Werner accepted no special charge in the Church; but continued a private and secular Priest; preaching diligently, but only where he himself saw good; oftenest at Vienna, but in summer over all parts of Austria, in Styria, Carinthia, and even Venice. Everywhere, he says, the opinions of his hearers were ‘violently divided.’ At one time, he thought of becoming Monk, and had actually entered on a sort of noviciate; but he quitted the establishment rather suddenly, and, as he is reported to have said, ‘for reasons known only to God and himself.’ By degrees, his health grew very weak: yet he still laboured hard both in public and private; writing or revising poems, devotional or dramatic; preaching, and officiating as father-confessor, in which last capacity he is said to have been in great request. Of his poetical productions during this period, there is none of any moment known to us, except the *Mother of the Maccabees* (1819); a tragedy of careful structure, and apparently in high favour with the author, but which, notwithstanding, need not detain us long. In our view, it is the worst of all his pieces; a pale, bloodless, indeed quite ghost-like affair; for a cold breath as from a sepulchre chills the heart in perusing it: there is no passion or interest, but a certain woe-struck martyr zeal, or rather frenzy, and this not so much
storming as shrieking; not loud and resolute, but shrill, hysterical and bleared with ineffectual tears. To read it may well sadden us: it is a convulsive fit, whose uncontrollable writhings indicate, not strength, but the last decay of that.¹

Werner was, in fact, drawing to his latter end: his health had long been ruined; especially of later years, he had suffered much from disorders of the lungs. In 1817, he was thought to be dangerously ill; and afterwards, in 1822, when a journey to the Baths partly restored him; though he himself still felt that his term was near, and spoke and acted like a man that was shortly to depart. In January 1823, he was evidently dying: his affairs he had already settled; much of his time he spent in prayer; was constantly cheerful, at intervals even gay. 'His death,' says Hitzig, 'was especially mild. On the eleventh day of his disorder, he felt himself, particularly towards evening, as if altogether light and well; so that he would hardly consent to have any one to watch with him. The servant whose turn it was did watch, however; he had sat down by the bedside between two and three next morning (the 17th), and continued there a considerable while, in the belief that his patient was asleep. Surprised, however, that no breathing was to be heard, he hastily aroused the household, and it was found that Werner had already passed away.'

In imitation, it is thought, of Lipsius, he bequeathed his Pen to the treasury of the Virgin at Mariazell, 'as a chief instrument of his aberrations, his sins and his repentance.' He was honourably interred at Enzersdorf on the Hill; where a simple inscription, composed by himself, begs the wanderer

¹ Of his Attila (1808), his Vier-und-zwanzigste Februar (1809), his Cunegunde (1814), and various other pieces written in his wanderings, we have not room to speak. It is the less necessary, as the Attila and Twenty-fourth of February, by much the best of these, have already been forcibly, and on the whole fairly, characterised by Madame de Staël. Of the last-named little work we might say, with double emphasis, Nee pueros corum populo Medea trucidet: it has a deep and genuine tragic interest, were it not so painfully protracted into the regions of pure horror. Werner's Sermons, his Hymns, his Preface to Thomas a Kempis, &c. are entirely unknown to us.
to 'pray charitably for his poor soul;' and expresses a trembling hope that, as to Mary Magdalen, 'because she loved much,' so to him also 'much may be forgiven.'

We have thus, in hurried movement, travelled over Zacharias Werner's Life and Works; noting down from the former such particulars as seemed most characteristic; and gleaning from the latter some more curious passages, less indeed with a view to their intrinsic excellence, than to their fitness for illustrating the man. These scattered indications we must now leave our readers to interpret each for himself: each will adjust them into that combination which shall best harmonise with his own way of thought. As a writer, Werner's character will occasion little difficulty. A richly gifted nature; but never wisely guided, or resolutely applied; a loving heart; an intellect subtle and inquisitive, if not always clear and strong; a gorgeous, deep and bold imagination; a true, nay keen and burning sympathy with all high, all tender and holy things: here lay the main elements of no common poet; save only that one was still wanting,—the force to cultivate them, and mould them into pure union. But they have remained uncultivated, disunited, too often struggling in wild disorder: his poetry, like his life, is still not so much an edifice as a quarry. Werner had cast a look into perhaps the very deepest region of the Wonderful; but he had not learned to live there: he was yet no denizen of that mysterious land; and, in his visions, its splendour is strangely mingled and overclouded with the flame or smoke of mere earthly fire. Of his dramas we have already spoken; and with much to praise, found always more to censure. In his rhymed pieces, his shorter, more didactic poems, we are better satisfied: here, in the rude, jolting vehicle of a certain Sternhold-and-Hopkins metre, we often find a strain of true pathos, and a deep though quaint significance. His prose, again, is among the worst known to us: degraded with silliness; diffuse, nay tautological, yet obscure and vague; contorted into endless involutions; a misshapen, lumbering, complected coil, well nigh inexplicable in its entanglements, and seldom worth the
trouble of unravelling. He does not move through his subject, and arrange it, and rule over it: for the most part, he but welters in it, and laboriously tumbles it, and at last sinks under it.

As a man, the ill-fated Werner can still less content us. His feverish, inconstant and wasted life we have already looked at. Hitzig, his determined wellwisher, admits that in practice he was selfish, wearying out his best friends by the most barefaced importunities; a man of no dignity; avaricious, greedy, sensual, at times obscene; in discourse, with all his humour and heartiness, apt to be intolerably long-winded; and of a maladroitness, a blank ineptitude, which exposed him to incessant ridicule and manifold mystifications from people of the world. Nevertheless, under all this rubbish, contends the friendly Biographer, there dwelt, for those who could look more narrowly, a spirit, marred indeed in its beauty, and languishing in painful conscious oppression, yet never wholly forgetful of its original nobleness. Werner's soul was made for affection; and often as, under his too rude collisions with external things, it was struck into harshness and dissonance, there was a tone which spoke of melody, even in its jarrings. A kind, a sad and heartfelt remembrance of his friends seems never to have quitted him: to the last he ceased not from warm love to men at large; nay, to awaken in them, with such knowledge as he had, a sense for what was best and highest, may be said to have formed the earnest, though weak and unstable aim of his whole existence. The truth is, his defects as a writer were also his defects as a man: he was feeble, and without volition; in life, as in poetry, his endowments fell into confusion; his character relaxed itself on all sides into incoherent expansion; his activity became gigantic endeavour, followed by most dwarfish performance.

The grand incident of his life, his adoption of the Roman Catholic religion, is one on which we need not heap farther censure; for already, as appears to us, it is rather liable to be too harshly than too leniently dealt with. There is a feeling in the popular mind, which, in well-meant hatred of inconsistency, perhaps in general too sweepingly condemns
such changes. Werner, it should be recollected, had at all periods of his life a religion; nay, he hungered and thirsted after truth in this matter, as after the highest good of man; a fact which of itself must, in this respect, set him far above the most consistent of mere unbelievers,—in whose barren and callous soul consistency perhaps is no such brilliant virtue. We pardon genial weather for its changes; but the steadiest of all climates is that of Greenland. Farther, we must say that, strange as it may seem, in Werner's whole conduct, both before and after his conversion, there is not visible the slightest trace of insincerity. On the whole, there are fewer genuine renegades than men are apt to imagine. Surely, indeed, that must be a nature of extreme baseness, who feels that, in worldly good, he can gain by such a step. Is the contempt, the execration of all that have known and loved us, and of millions that have never known us, to be weighed against a mess of pottage, or a piece of money? We hope there are not many, even in the rank of sharpers, that would think so. But for Werner there was no gain in any way; nay, rather certainty of loss. He enjoyed or sought no patronage; with his own resources he was already independent though poor, and on a footing of good esteem with all that was most estimable in his country. His little pension, conferred on him, at a prior date, by a Catholic Prince, was not continued after his conversion, except by the Duke of Weimar, a Protestant. He became a mark for calumny; the defenceless butt at which every callow witling made his proof-shot; his character was more deformed and mangled than that of any other man. What had he to gain? Insult and persecution; and with these, as candour bids us believe, the approving voice of his own conscience. To judge from his writings, he was far from repenting of the change he had made; his Catholic faith evidently stands in his own mind as the first blessing of his life; and he clings to it as the anchor of his soul. Scarcely more than once (in the Preface to his Mutter der Makkabäer) does he allude to the legions of falsehoods that were in circulation against him; and it is in a spirit which, without entirely concealing the querulousness
of nature, nowise fails in the meekness and endurance which became him as a Christian. Here is a fragment of another Paper, published since his death, as it was meant to be; which exhibits him in a still clearer light. The reader may contempt, or, what will be better, pity and sympathise with him; but the structure of this strange piece surely bespeaks anything but insincerity. We translate it with all its breaks and fantastic crotchets, as it stands before us:

"Testamentary Inscription, from Friedrich Ludwig Zacharias Werner, a son," &c.—(here follows a statement of his parentage and birth, with vacant spaces for the date of his death).—"of the following lines, submitted to all such as have more or less felt any friendly interest in his unworthy person, with the request to take warning by his example, and charitably to remember the poor soul of the writer before God, in prayer and good deeds.

Begun at Florence, on the 24th of September, about eight in the evening, amid the still distant sound of approaching thunder. Concluded, when and where God will!

Motto, Device and Watchword in Death: Remittuntur ei peccata multa, quoniam dilexit multum!!!—Lucas, caput vii. v. 47.

'N.B. Most humbly and earnestly, and in the name of God, does the Author of this Writing beg, of such honest persons as may find it, to submit the same in any suitable way to public examination.

'Fecisti nos, Domine, ad Te; et irrequietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in Te.—S. Augustinus.

'Per multa dispergitur, et hic illucque querit (cor) ubi requiescere possit, et nihil invenit quod ei sufficiat, donec ad ipsum (sc. Deum) redeat.—S. Bernardus.

'In the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen!

'The thunder came hither, and is still rolling, though now at a distance.—The name of the Lord be praised! Hallelujah!—I BEGIN:
'This Paper must needs be brief; because the appointed term for my life itself may already be near at hand. There are not wanting examples of important and unimportant men, who have left behind them in writing the defence, or even sometimes the accusation, of their earthly life. Without estimating such procedure, I am not minded to imitate it. With trembling I reflect that I myself shall first learn in its whole terrific compass what properly I was, when these lines shall be read by men; that is to say, in a point of Time which for me will be no Time; in a condition wherein all experience will for me be too late!

Rex tremende majestatis,  
Qui salvandos salus gratis,  
Salva me, fons pietatis!!!

But if I do, till that day when All shall be laid open, draw a veil over my past life, it is not merely out of false shame that I so order it; for though not free from this vice also, I would willingly make known my guilt to all and every one whom my voice might reach, could I hope, by such confession, to atone for what I have done; or thereby to save a single soul from perdition. There are two motives, however, which forbid me to make such an open personal revelation after death: the one, because the unclosing of a pestilential grave may be dangerous to the health of the uninfected looker-on; the other, because in my Writings (which may God forgive me!), amid a wilderness of poisonous weeds and garbage, there may also be here and there a medicinal herb lying scattered, from which poor patients, to whom it might be useful, would start back with shuddering, did they know the pestiferous soil on which it grew.

'So much, however, in regard to those good creatures as they call themselves, namely to those feeble weaklings who brag of what they designate their good hearts,—so much must I say before God, that such a heart alone, when it is not checked and regulated by forethought and stedfastness, is not only incapable of saving its possessor from destruction, but is rather certain to hurry him, full speed, into that abyss, where I have been, whence I—perhaps? ! ! !—by God's grace am snatched, and from which may God mercifully preserve every reader of these lines.'

1 Werner's Letzte Lebenstagen (quoted by Hitzig, p. 80).
All this is melancholy enough; but it is not like the writing of a hypocrite or repentant apostate. To Protestantism, above all things, Werner shows no thought of returning. In allusion to a rumour, which had spread, of his having given up Catholicism, he says (in the Preface already quoted):

'A stupid falsehood I must reckon it; since, according to my deepest conviction, it is as impossible that a soul in Bliss should return back into the Grave, as that a man, who, like me, after a life of error and search has found the priceless jewel of Truth, should, I will not say, give up the same, but hesitate to sacrifice for it blood and life, nay many things perhaps far dearer, with joyful heart, when the one good cause is concerned.'

And elsewhere in a private letter:

'I not only assure thee, but I beg of thee to assure all men, if God should ever so withdraw the light of his grace from me, that I ceased to be a Catholic, I would a thousand times sooner join myself to Judaism, or to the Bramins on the Ganges: but to that shallowest, driest, most contradictory, inanest Inanity of Protestantism, never, never, never!'

Here, perhaps, there is a touch of priestly, of almost feminine vehemence; for it is to a Protestant and an old friend that he writes: but the conclusion of his Preface shows him in a better light. Speaking of Second Parts, and regretting that so many of his works were unfinished, he adds:

'But what specially comforts me is the prospect of—our general Second Part, where, even in the first Scene, this consolation, that there all our works will be known, may not indeed prove solacing for us all; but where, through the strength of Him that alone completes all works, it will be granted to those whom He has saved, not only to know each other, but even to know Him, as by Him they are known!—With my trust in Christ, whom I have not yet won, I regard, with the Teacher of the Gentiles, all things but dross that I may win Him; and to Him, cordially and lovingly do I, in life or at death, commit you all, my beloved Friends and my beloved Enemies!'
On the whole, we cannot think it doubtful that Werner's belief was real and heartfelt. But how then, our wondering readers may inquire, if his belief was real and not pretended, how then did he believe? He, who scoffs in infidel style at the truths of Protestantism, by what alchemy did he succeed in tempering into credibility the harder and bulkier dogmas of Popery? Of Popery, too, the frauds and gross corruptions of which he has so fiercely exposed in his Martin Luther; and this, moreover, without cancelling, or even softening his vituperations, long after his conversion, in the very last edition of that drama? To this question, we are far from pretending to have any answer that altogether satisfies ourselves; much less that shall altogether satisfy others. Meanwhile, there are two considerations which throw light on the difficulty for us: these, as some step, or at least, attempt towards a solution of it, we shall not withhold. The first lies in Werner's individual character and mode of life. Not only was he born a mystic, not only had he lived from of old amid freemasonry, and all manner of cabalistic and other traditionary chimeras; he was also, and had long been, what is emphatically called dissolute; a word which has now lost somewhat of its original force; but which, as applied here, is still more just and significant in its etymological than in its common acceptation. He was a man dissolute; that is, by a long course of vicious indulgences, enervated and loosened asunder. Everywhere in Werner's life and actions we discern a mind relaxed from its proper tension; no longer capable of effort and toilsome resolute vigilance; but floating almost passively with the current of its impulses, in languid, imaginative, Asiatic reverie. That such a man should discriminate, with sharp fearless logic, between beloved errors and unwelcome truths, was not to be expected. His belief is likely to have been persuasion rather than conviction, both as it related to Religion, and to other subjects. What, or how much a man in this way may bring himself to believe, with such force and distinctness as he honestly and usually calls belief, there is no predicting.

But another consideration, which we think should nowise be omitted, is the general state of religious opinion in Ger-
many, especially among such minds as Werner was most apt to take for his exemplars. To this complex and highly interesting subject we can, for the present, do nothing more than allude. So much, however, we may say: It is a common theory among the Germans, that every Creed, every Form of worship, is a form merely; the mortal and ever-changing body, in which the immortal and unchanging spirit of Religion is, with more or less completeness, expressed to the material eye, and made manifest and influential among the doings of men. It is thus, for instance, that Johannes Müller, in his *Universal History*, professes to consider the Mosaic Law, the creed of Mahomet, nay Luther’s Reformation; and, in short, all other systems of Faith; which he scruples not to designate, without special praise or censure, simply as Vorstellungsarten, ‘Modes of Representation.’ We could report equally singular things of Schelling and others, belonging to the philosophic class; nay of Herder, a Protestant clergyman, and even bearing high authority in the Church. Now, it is clear, in a country where such opinions are openly and generally professed, a change of religious creed must be comparatively a slight matter. Conversions to Catholicism are accordingly by no means unknown among the Germans: Friedrich Schlegel, and the younger Count von Stolberg, men, as we should think, of vigorous intellect, and of character above suspicion, were colleagues, or rather precursors, of Werner in this adventure; and, indeed, formed part of his acquaintance at Vienna. It is but, they would perhaps say, as if a melodist, inspired with harmony of inward music, should choose this instrument in preference to that, for giving voice to it: the inward inspiration is the grand concern; and to express it, the ‘deep, majestic, solemn organ’ of the Unchangeable Church may be better fitted than the ‘scrannel pipe’ of a withered, trivial, Arian Protestantism. That Werner, still more that Schlegel and Stolberg could, on the strength of such hypotheses, put-off or put-on their religious creed, like a new suit of apparel, we are far from asserting; they are men of earnest hearts, and seem to have a deep feeling of devotion: but it should be remembered, that what forms the
groundwork of their religion is professedly not Demonstration but Faith; and so pliant a theory could not but help to soften the transition from the former to the latter. That some such principle, in one shape or another, lurked in Werner's mind, we think we can perceive from several indications; among others, from the Prologue to his last tragedy, where, mysteriously enough, under the emblem of a Phœnix, he seems to be shadowing forth the history of his own Faith; and represents himself even then as merely 'climbing the tree, where the pinions of his Phœnix last vanished;' but not hoping to regain that blissful vision, till his eyes shall have been opened by death.

On the whole, we must not pretend to understand Werner, or expound him with scientific rigour: acting many times with only half consciousness, he was always, in some degree, an enigma to himself, and may well be obscure to us. Above all, there are mysteries and unsounded abysses in every human heart; and that is but a questionable philosophy which undertakes so readily to explain them. Religious belief especially, at least when it seems heartfelt and well-intentioned, is no subject for harsh or even irreverent investigation. He is a wise man that, having such a belief, knows and sees clearly the grounds of it in himself: and those, we imagine, who have explored with strictest scrutiny the secret of their own bosoms, will be least apt to rush with intolerant violence into that of other men's.

'The good Werner,' says Jean Paul, 'fell, like our more vigorous Hoffmann, into the poetical fermenting-vat (Gähr-bottich) of our time, where all Literatures, Freedoms, Tastes and Untastes are foaming through each other; and where all is to be found, excepting truth, diligence and the polish of the file. Both would have come forth clearer had they studied in Lessing's day.' We cannot justify Werner: yet let him be condemned with pity! And well were it could each of us apply to himself those words, which Hitzig, in his friendly indignation, would 'thunder in the ears' of many a German gainsayer: Take thou the beam out of thine own eye; then shalt thou see clearly to take the mote out of thy brother's.

1 Letter to Hitzig, in Jean Paul's Leben, by Döring.