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THE
POETRY OF GERMANY.

A SELECTION

FROM THE MOST CELEBRATED GERMAN POETS
OF THE TWO LAST CENTURIES.

CHRONOLOGICALLY ARRANGED AND ACCOMPANIED

WITH

AN HISTORICAL SURVEY OF THE GERMAN POETRY

FROM

HALLER TO THE PRESENT TIME,

BY

DR. F. AHN, *h*

AUTHOR OF THE NEW METHOD OF LEARNING THE GERMAN LANGUAGE.



LEIPZIG:
F. A. BROCKHAUS.

1859.

ITALY IN THE MIDDLE



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A SHORT SURVEY OF GERMAN POETRY FROM HALLER TO THE PRESENT TIME.

§. 1.

The poetry of Germany occupies a prominent position in the literature of the refined nations of Europe. In it, beyond that of any other people do Bacon's words find their full application, that, "Poetry promotes generous sentiments, supports morality, and is a source of the highest pleasure." Patriotism, constancy and faith, love and wine have ever, from the earliest times, been the themes of the impassioned strains of the bards of Germany.

§. 2.

The history of the national poetry of Germany in general may be divided into three main sections:

1. *The Earliest Period*, extending into the twelfth century. In the productions of this period we see the struggle between the old German and the Christian spirit — the contest of the deep-rooted national heathenism with Christianity.

2. *The Old Period*, extending from the middle of the twelfth into the seventeenth century. This may be further divided into two sub-periods: a) *The First Classical Period of German Poetry*, in which the cordial harmony between the German and Christian element attains its full development, and which is likewise the period of the national epic poetry and of the minnesongs; from 1200 to 1300. b) *The Period of the Decline of Poetry from the*

height it had attained, a decline which was at first slow and gradual, afterwards more rapid; from 1300 to the beginning of the seventeenth century.

3. *The Modern Period*, extending down to the present time. This third main period of German national poetry may again be divided into several well defined sub-periods. a) *The period from OPITZ to HALLER (1624—1720)*, during which the foreign element prevailed, almost to the entire exclusion of the national; and which may be styled the period of learned poetry. b) *From HALLER to KLOPSTOCK (1720—1750)*. The period in which the way was paved for new self-dependence. c) *The Second Classical Period, from KLOPSTOCK to GOETHE and SCHILLER (1750—1832)*. d) *The Literature of the Present; from GOETHE and SCHILLER to our own time (1832—1850)*.

§. 3.

As the following collection of poems only begins with the time of the revival of polite literature in Germany, the sole object of this introduction will be, to trace the development of German poetry from the time of HALLER and HAGEDORN to the present time, and especially to enumerate and call attention to such productions as most faithfully reflect the German spirit, customs and character.

§. 4.

The condition of the German language and literature during the last half of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth was a deplorable one. French was the language of the courts and of the fashionable world. At the Universities Latin was the prevailing language; the erudite professors held it beneath their dignity to write or to teach in the language of the people. While, however, men of mediocre talent paid their willing homage to the spirit of the times, and cultivated a foreign style at the expense of nationality, a few highly-gifted men, animated by nobler sentiments, determined no longer to endure so perverted a state of things, and opened the road for the development of a truly national element. Foremost in the ranks of these stand HALLER and his fellow-countrymen BODMER and BREITINGER. Attacking the poetry of the time (if poetry that can be called which is destitute of all imagination and servilely subjected to rule), they reinstated ever youthful fancy in her

ancient rights as the all-powerful and creative goddess of poetry.

The period which was to usher in the revival of self-dependence we may consequently fairly consider as beginning with HALLER. One of the most erudite scholars that have ever lived, he is not less celebrated as poet, novelist and historian, than as a scientific writer in general. His poems, which, in his efforts to be brief and terse, are occasionally obscure, are replete with severe earnestness and manly sense and understanding. His most celebrated poem is entitled "The Alps." It is in Alexandrine verse; and in it he describes nature and life upon the mountains. — Equally worthy of note, as having been not less influential in giving a new turn to poetry, is FRIEDRICH VON HAGEDORN. He is the originator of the light and easy song, and in more respects than one, through his cheerful, pleasing and good-natured character, he forms a contrast to HALLER. The latter took the English and Virgil as his models; HAGEDORN on the other hand imitated in his epistles Horace, and in his fables and poetical narrations the best French writers. — Side by side with HAGEDORN we may suitably rank the fabulists GELLERT, LICHTWER and PFEFFEL. GELLERT, who, besides his fables, wrote comedies, narratives and sacred hymns, made the attainment of a simple, easy and popular style the object of his efforts, so that his compositions are consequently often prolix and ordinary. In his fables he was an imitator of the French, particularly of Lafontaine. The short Æsopian fables with their native vigour and blunt and artless simplicity found no favour in an age of over-refined culture; a finer tone and fuller narrative were consequently introduced; while inoffensive wit and moral observations took the place of blunt and simple nature. Similar in character are the fables of LICHTWER and PFEFFEL, except that the latter brought them still nearer to the polished style of the French. Another poet of this period, who ought not to be passed by unnoticed, is CHRISTIAN FELIX WEISSE. His poetry is chiefly adapted for youth and is full of easy grace.

The so-called *Anacreontic Poets*, the poets of Prussia and Halle, formed at this time a distinct school of poetry. As most deserving of notice we may mention KLEIST, GLEIM, Uz and JACOBI. GLEIM, who lived in Halberstadt, was the soul of this poetical union, the members of which paid their

devotions to cheerfulness and gaiety as the main object of life, read Anacreon and Horace, composed mirthful Anacreontic songs, as patriots sang the praises of Frederic the Great, studied the ancients, the English and the French, and devoted themselves chiefly to lyric poetry. GLEIM himself possesses but little merit as a poet; but on the other hand, his benevolence and his readiness to assist obscure talent deserve all praise. — CHR. VON KLEIST was a valiant soldier, and found a hero's death in the battle of Kunersdorf. His descriptive poem "The Spring," written in a sentimental strain, is the best known of his works. — JOH. UZ, worthy of all esteem as a man, was a poet of a serious turn. He wrote odes, songs and didactic poems. — JOH. GEORG JACOBI's songs are full of deep feeling, love and sorrow. His song of the "Mother" is so truthful, so tender and so melodious, that it may be classed among the first poems of this kind that we possess.

§. 5.

The Second Classical Period of Germany: KLOPSTOCK, WIELAND, LESSING, HERDER, GOETHE, SCHILLER. In the second half of the eighteenth century a mighty impulse was given to science and poetry in Germany. Men of high and most varied endowments struck out new paths; and, partly by opposing and overturning errors, prejudices and ideas which had long outlived their time, partly by their own genial productions in the empire of poetry, laid the foundation for a degree of perfection perhaps without a parallel in modern times. The greatest geniuses of the nation devoted their talents to poetry. KLOPSTOCK stands pre-eminent as the creative genius of this new period of German literature. He pointed beyond this existence on earth to an endless eternity and life on the other side the grave; and aroused in the people susceptibility and enthusiasm by imprinting on the hearts of the youth of Germany, in worthy and lofty language, his christian faith, his warmth of feeling and his patriotic spirit of freedom. We discover in his poems three elements; the *ancient-classical*, which led him to adopt the metres of Horace, to abandon rhyme and to imitate the poetical language and nice form-distinctions of the ancients; the *German patriotic element*, which inspired him with an insuperable aversion for all foreign influence, and led him in his odes and Bardiete back to the

old German mythology; the *Christian element*, which incited him to his solemn sacred songs, and his grand lyric heroic poem, the "Messias," the theme of which is the idea which for 1800 years has been one of all absorbing interest to the Christian, viz. the salvation of the world by the offering up of the Saviour.

As second in the older classical triad of poets of the modern period stands WIELAND. This "merry philosopher," though inferior to the greatest poets in his subject-matter and execution, nevertheless undoubtedly exercised a great influence on his age. His poems, the theme of which was sensual enjoyment, and which are in an easy, flowing style, followed an entirely different tendency to that which had prevailed since KLOPSTOCK's time. The most considerable poem he has left is the romantic epic "Oberon." The charming language, easy versification and attractive descriptions of this poem, gained it readers among every class and made WIELAND's name popular. Though much that WIELAND has written is of an objectionable character, yet he was a man of the purest morals and of unblemished life.

The third hero of the second classical period is LESSING, the accomplished disciple of the antique, the clear and discerning critic and moulder of new forms. Unwearied investigation and untiring aspirations after truth form the main features in his vigorous and manly character. He had as little of KLOPSTOCK's sentimentality and overstrained feeling as he had of WIELAND's epicurism and sophistry. His character was straight-forward and purely German, and his mind was nourished at the healthy stream of classical antiquity, which he drew at its source. In a word, LESSING is one of the grandest names in literature; an excellent critic, the introducer of a vigorous and noble prose, a reformer of taste, an acute thinker and a great poet.

§. 6.

HERDER, GOETHE and SCHILLER form the second triad of our classical poets: HERDER was a great genius, whose manifold talent could grasp the most heterogeneous ideas and mould them anew. He knew how to penetrate to the inmost and noblest peculiarities of every station, and could most attractively disclose the inmost kernel of these foreign elements and store them up in his own heart. What KLOPSTOCK and LESSING had begun, and WIELAND had in his own

peculiar manner paved the way for, was by HERDER carried out and brought to such a pitch of perfection, that nothing more was needed than a genius like GOETHE to manifest and realize in living poetical images the union of the German spirit with that of foreign nations. The best of HERDER's poetical productions are his imitations and translations of national songs; next to these stand his "Legends," and then his last work, his remodelling of the Spanish "Cid," which will always be mentioned as one of the noblest poetical creations of our nation. — GOETHE, the greatest genius of the century, began where Herder left off. In his charming lyric poems, full of truth and warmth of feeling, in his classical dramas "Tasso" and "Iphigenie," in which we find the spirit and clear harmonious form of antiquity — in his lyrical epic poem "Hermann and Dorothea," in which he depicts the political events of his time and the sufferings of the emigrants — and above all, in his grand dramatic poem "Faust," the main occupation of his whole life — do we see most vividly reflected the soul of the nation at large, and the progress of GOETHE's own mental development.

Second, and second only, in the realm of modern German poetry, is SCHILLER. SCHILLER's first and nearest archetype was his countryman SCHUBART, one of the most popular poets of Germany, both on account of his poetry and his well-known fate. SCHILLER's high-aspiring and imaginative mind was early cramped by narrow circumstances; what wonder then that he abandoned reality and betook himself into the realms of the ideal. He beheld poesy as the ideal before him — it was the goal of his most fervent desires and of his fiery will. In his poetry he ever strikes cords that find their echo in every German heart, the strife for liberty and a lofty and noble enthusiasm which soared into the pure atmosphere of morality. His whole poetry is one mighty appeal to mankind. It is the oratorical element clad in poetical colours that caused Schiller's works to produce such a universal effect.

His youthful productions "Die Räuber," "Fiesco" and "Cabale und Liebe," were but an earnest of what he was subsequently to achieve in dramatic composition, in which he reached the height of perfection and gained an undying renown. In his ballads, each of which he grounds on some definite idea, SCHILLER depicts man as a free agent conscious of his powers, while GOETHE shows us in his a being cramped in his efforts

and dependent on outward circumstances. "Die Glocke," which is, as it were, the scale of every human feeling, is the crowning point of his didactic lyrics. If, as poet, SCHILLER was a star of the first magnitude, so likewise as man was he morally great, noble and amiable. GOETHE says of him, "that was a true man, and such ought all to be."

GOETHE and SCHILLER are the twins in the poetical firmament, from which the genial rays of truth and poetry, life and ideality, pure humanity and lofty freedom of spirit beam forth. Both stars, in closest union, shed their guiding light on our path through life. The one sheds its beams over the endless world, over human life with its inexhaustible treasures; the other darts its rays into heaven itself, our second home, and discloses to us in its purest splendour all the infinite grandeur it contains, and thus irresistibly urges us to struggle to attain it. Through their mutual union were the two eternal antitheses, *Ideality* and *Reality*, *subjective* and *objective* treatment, placed harmoniously side by side.

§. 7.

The Göttingen Poetical Union. In the year 1772 in Göttingen a number of aspiring young men formed a union for the cultivation of poetry, friendship and virtue. Among the best known members of this union, of which VOSS was the soul, were BÜRGER, HÖLTY; the two counts STOLBERG, CLAUDIUS and GÖCKINGK. Friendship, religion, patriotism, and all that is lofty and noble were the objects of their enthusiasm; they honoured KLOPSTOCK as poet-king and burned WIELAND's wanton writings. KLOPSTOCK himself became a member of the union; he placed the highest confidence in the enthusiastic youths who gave such decided proofs of following his own three main tendencies, the patriotic, the antique and the christian.

1. AUGUST BÜRGER was a highly-gifted, fiery poet, whom penury, passions and want of self-control brought to an early grave. He possessed exactly that talent necessary for a poet of the people; he has enriched our literature with ballads, and romantic poems full of vigour, truth and fire. His song of "Der brave Mann" and several others became favourites of the people. BÜRGER was the first to re-introduce the sonnet; he likewise began a translation of Homer's Iliad in iambs and hexameters.

2. CHRISTOPH HÖLTY, the poet of tender feelings, sweet dreams, and gloomy forebodings, died too young for his fame. In his poems, songs, odes, idylls, and some ballads, he gives utterance to his longings for an existence wholly consecrated to the pure and unalloyed enjoyments of nature; and as these feelings were at that time general in Germany, his poems struck a kindred cord in the hearts of many. One of his best known poems is "The old Countryman to his Son".

3. LEOPOLD VON STOLBERG was incontestably the most talented of the two brothers. In his works we at once recognize the features of KLOPSTOCK's poetry, viz. enthusiasm for antiquity, liberty, country and religion. His works consist chiefly of ballads, patriotic poems, satires, and a translation of the Iliad and of Æschylus.

4. JOHANN HEINRICH VOSS was the soul of the Göttingen union. He displayed great love and enthusiasm for the classical works of antiquity, and indeed, without this he would never have been such an incomparable interpreter and translator of them. As an original writer it is only in his idylls that he displays eminent talent; in his songs, odes, and elegies, on the other hand, one is conscious of a want of creative imagination and elevation of ideas.

5. MATTHIAS CLAUDIUS, the true-hearted, cheerful, and pious "Wandsbecker Bote," animated with love for virtue, liberty and country, possessed the talents of a poet of the people in a still more eminent degree than BÜRGER, and ranked nature higher than art. His "Evening song" is with justice universally known and valued.

6. GÜNTHER GÜCKINGK. His youthful attempts at satire are of no account; far better are his epigrams, which are many of them severe and stinging. On the other hand several of his poetical epistles are exceedingly clever, especially those addressed to his servant, in which he expresses his noble — one might almost say patriarchal — feelings in singularly appropriate and adequate language.

§. 8.

The Romantic poets, as the writers of this new school were called, are distinguished by the preference which they gave to the Middle Ages. The songs, stories and traditions of the people were their favourite themes. To extol, to pro-

mulgate, and to restore the union of poetry with life, was the sole object of their efforts. They sought to penetrate to the inner existence and the inmost depths of the soul, to dive into the profoundest secrets of nature, and to arouse harmonious sympathy with her.

Beyond all others we must notice NOVALIS, TIECK and the two SCHLEGELS as heads of the romantic school. NOVALIS looks upon poetry as the centre of all mental activity, so that his contemplation of the whole universe at once assumed the character of one mighty poem. His best poems are his sacred and other songs. His sacred songs breathe the spiritual tenderness and fervour of christian poetry; the tuneful spiritual existence of a nature which was both poetical and religious has in them found utterance, with a fulness and fervency till then unimagined. His secular songs, especially his "Bergmännelied," have all of them the same softness and melody of language, the same depth of contemplation and of feeling as his sacred songs.

If NOVALIS was the first to introduce the romantic style, LUDWIG TIECK carried it to the height of perfection. He is, in the fullest sense of the words, the head and representative of this school. Beginning with novels, he afterwards turned his attention to the drama, to return however subsequently and finally to novels. TIECK likewise distinguished himself as a poet of nature in his lyrics; he translated the minnesongs of the Swabian period, and called up their spirit again amongst us.

Whilst the romantic style received its first impulse and origin from NOVALIS and reached its perfection in TIECK, the two SCHLEGELS are celebrated as the scientific and critical representatives of the school. A new impulse was given by their "Charakteristiken and Kritiken," and especially by AUGUST WILHELM SCHLEGEL's lectures on dramatic art and literature; and through their exertions a new and profounder contemplation of poetry was introduced. Of A. W. SCHLEGEL's own original poems only the beautiful romanze "Arion," distinguished for its clearness and euphonic language, is still much read. FRIEDRICH SCHLEGEL was superior to his brother in creative talent. With the exception of one lyrical poem, which surpasses his brother's in originality and power, his merit lies almost entirely in histories of literature. In these he insisted on a deeper insight into, and a less superficial treatment of, the matter than had heretofore been the

case; and he may thus be said to have introduced a new era in this department of literature.

Next to these chiefs of the romantic school rank, either as actual members or as disciples of it, VON ARNIM, CLEMENS BRENTANO, CHAMISSE and EICHENDORFF, whose poems may be designated as "the echo of the romantic style." ARNIM displays in his lyric poems and romances great richness of imagination, warmth of feeling, real poetry, and susceptibility for the romantic tone of the middle ages. He has earned an imperishable renown by his collection of popular songs known by the title of "des Knaben Wunderhorn," in editing which he was assisted by Brentano. CLEMENS BRENTANO possessed a rich fancy, wit and feeling; his poems are distinguished for the sensibility they display for every thing high and holy. His last work, "Gockel, Hinkel and Gockeleia," must be considered as one of the most beautiful in our literature, in respect of its description of a life of nature, of which it reflects the very soul.

In the poems of CHAMISSE and EICHENDORFF we catch the least faint echoes of the romantic tone. Skilful in technical execution and looking upon life from a humorous point of view, Chamisso shows us a mind unsullied and alive to nature, and a character foreign to everything low; in a word, we see the poet's nobility of soul in all his productions. He is most eminently successful in the romance, ballad, and poetical narration.

The last champion of the romantic style is EICHENDORFF. His songs, which in freshness and glorious poetical colouring stand alone in the lyrics of our language, are the purest expression of his amiable and childlike character. With all their unassuming simplicity they abound in depth of fervour, and strength, and charming truth of feeling. Especially do his sacred songs merit a careful perusal, for they are the genuine expression of a poet-mind penetrated with the true spirit of christianity, and in melodious numbers give utterance to a healthful childlike piety, as we particularly see in his "Morgengebet," which discloses to us the full purity of his heart.

EICHENDORFF does not stand alone amongst his immediate contemporaries in deep feeling and cheerful tone; of a kindred spirit, though otherwise unconnected with him, was WILHELM MÜLLER, the bard of Grecian liberty. In him we have one of our most graceful lyric poets — one too who un-

folds to us his ideas in a manner peculiar to himself. In his songs descriptive of Nature, above all others, does he distinguish himself by a rare sweetness of character, a cheerful naiveté and gentle fervour.

We may here most suitably mention, as next in order, the *Poets of Nature*, who adopted the softer elements of KLOPSTOCK's poetry, viz. its sentimentality and plaintive melancholy. Of them MATTHISON is the best known. His melodious elegiac poems are full of soft sadness, of contemplative enthusiasm, and rich, melancholy strains. SALIS stands still higher than MATTHISON, as presenting us in his poems more true and fervent feeling in a simpler language. KOSEGARTEN wrote lyrical poems, idylls and romances, in which he always appears as a poet endowed with rich imagination and fine feeling. TIEDGE's poems possess considerable rhetorical ornament, but are deficient in vigour and depth of feeling. His philosophical didactic poem on God and immortality, entitled "Urania," acquired great celebrity. "There was a time," says Goethe, "in which the "Urania" was found on every table." Finally HÖLDERLIN, possessed true poetic fire; which according to his humour at the time, burnt sometimes clear and bright, sometimes wild and glowing. His poems are distinguished by their pure, in many cases perfectly antique, form.

§. 9.

The Patriotic Poets at the time of the War of Independence. The struggle for freedom in Germany aroused a host of poets, who, inspired by the consecrating flames of ardent patriotism, were enabled not only courageously to raise their voice in song, but also to stake their life for the freedom of their country.

At the head of these patriotic poets stands the singer-hero of the island of Rügen, the venerable ARNDT, whose vigorous songs at that time aroused and inflamed all hearts. Besides his patriotic songs, Arndt has written sacred songs full of fervent belief, and others full of freshness, vigour and grace.

As next to ARNDT we must not omit to mention THEODOR KÖRNER, the author of "Leier und Schwert," many of the songs of which, such as, "Vater ich rufe dich," and "Du Schwert an meiner Linken," have become the people's property.

MAX VON SCHENKENDORF gives us strains more gentle but at the same time more heartfelt and often deeply affecting. His

songs, which are animated with the true spirit of chivalry and with real patriotism, possess a sweet, captivating fervour. To love for Germany's sacred cause he united deep and pure christian faith. — ERNST SCHULZE was another poet who likewise took part in the contest for liberty. In early youth he conceived an affection for Cæcilie Tychsen, who however died in the spring of her life. This love, which pervaded his inmost existence, he immortalized in his romantic epic "Cecilia," which he only lived long enough to complete.

FRIEDRICH RÜCKERT's muse is likewise the offspring of the spirit that animated the patriotic poets. In his "Geharnischten Sonetten," he struck a cord which heretofore one had not been wont to hear in the sonnet. He wrote, besides, various lyrics, oriental poems and religious verses. His poems possess a vivacity and fullness, a tenderness and fervour, and frequently, too, a depth and earnestness which stamps them as some of the most considerable poetical productions of our time. RÜCKERT is a perfect master of form, moulding the language to his will with extraordinary skill and dexterity.

The greatest master in form is AUGUST PLATEN, who was a kindred spirit to RÜCKERT. It is preeminently in the ode that he displays his power, so that he is with justice called the German Pindar. In his poems, which partake somewhat of the character of the romantic school, PLATEN has developed the greatest vigour of which the lyric poem is capable. In these so vividly does he depict his ideas, and that in language so soul-felt and musical, that we must admit him to have attained the acme of perfection in poetry; and his works will ever possess a high value.

§. 10.

The Swabian School of Poetry. This school is chiefly important from the circumstance of its members treating Nature if not with greater depth, yet at any rate with more life than the romantic poets. "Where the vine-dresser, where the reaper," sings KERNER, "sings a song on mountain and in plain, there is the school of the Swabian poets, and Nature is their teacher."

As head of this school we behold LUDWIG UHLAND. He it was who first helped to awaken the new dawning of German poetry by his fresh and purely German songs. Of his nature-poetry GUTZKOW says, "UHLAND has clad nature in her sabbath dress of joy, and diffused over the landscape the

spirit of song. He rung the chapel bells, placed shepherd-boys upon the mountain summits, and put in their mouth sacred songs. With magic wand he charmed the spirit of the past in glorified form again from ruins, let fly again the falcons as in days of yore, and made minstrels knock at castle gates for entrance. As SCHILLER called up an ideal supernatural world, so did UHLAND create an ideal world of reality in his poems." Eminent as UHLAND is in his lyrics, it is nevertheless in the lyric epic and in his romances and ballads that he displays all his greatness. He has also attempted the dramatic form with considerable success.

Next to UHLAND stands GUSTAV SCHWAB, who has distinguished himself as much by his original creations as by the impulse he gave in the most varied departments of literature. In the song and romance he is second in merit to UHLAND only, the main point in which he differs from him being that, with all his love for his German home, he displays a heart and sympathy for distant lands. His ballads and poetical narratives deserve unqualified praise, his "Gewitter" especially, in which he endeavours to make evident to us the truth of the proverb "Man proposes, God disposes."

Much more peculiar is the strain that JUSTINUS KERNER introduced in the Swabian School. His poems have mostly a lyrical character, and in them he took UHLAND as his type, though at the same time preserving a striking originality. UHLAND displays more plain sense and variety — KERNER, more sensibility and fancy; UHLAND has the gift of being able to place himself in the various conditions of mankind, KERNER that of imagining himself beyond such. No one, however, has seized the tone of popular song more successfully than KERNER. Who does not know, for instance, his popular song: "Wohlauf noch getrunken den funkelnden Wein!"? In his romances and legends KERNER aims at the awful and spectral.

These, then, are the poets of Swabia, the home of the minnesongs and of the great SCHILLER.

§. 11.

Young Germany. HEGEL had no sooner published his pantheistic philosophy than at once a great number of the followers of this philosophy abandoned their belief in a personal God, and deified mankind. At the same time the dissatisfaction in the political sphere was great, and had become more and more decided since the July revolution.

BÖRNE and HEINE are accounted the champions of this dissolute and destructive tendency in literature. Of all the poets of young Germany we have in our collection noticed only the principal one, HEINE, so that it will be here necessary to devote a few words to his characteristic. HEINE is a man entirely destitute of stability — a man whose character consists in his having none at all. His so called “Weltschmerz,” which is in reality nothing but his own mental distraction, is a mere piece of coquetry, for he is in reality incapable of real sorrow. What HEINE has produced as champion of young Germany, as vague philosopher, as discontented controvertist, and as ironical humorist — was of such a character, that everybody of pure morals, whether poet or reader, turned from him with aversion. Far otherwise is it with his lyrical productions, the greater number of which will live as long as German songs are read, and felt and sung. From their first appearing no one could help doing them full justice, and in spite of the misanthropy, the vulgarity and distraction which often shows itself in them, their deep pure lyric style has been nevertheless universally recognized, for in them he is second to Goethe alone. The most successful of his lyrical productions are collected in his “Buch der Lieder.”

§. 12.

Poets whose writings present Novelty either in Matter or Form. RÜCKERT and PLATEN were surpassed by several more modern German poets both in novelty of matter and novelty and variety of form. Such are FREILIGRATH, KINKEL, REINICK and SIMROCK. FREILIGRATH in his poems loves to lead us into the primeval woods and savannas of America, into the burning tropical clime of Africa, amid the scorching desert sand of Arabia, and into the wondrous world of the ocean. In this period he seldom, as in the “Auswanderer,” turns his thoughts toward home; this was more the case in his second period, commencing with 1840; in his third period, i. e. since 1848, he devotes himself in his new political and social poems entirely to the present, and to the politics of the present.

No one lyric poet of late times has developed such variety in matter and form as KINKEL. He is at home in every measure, in the ancient as well as in the German; and whether he gives vent to his feelings in distichs in the metres of Horace and Pindar, or in rhymed stanzas, he displays in

all the same elegant, euphonious and noble language. KINKEL's productions abound in a truth and depth of feeling which cannot fail to captivate. He is most successful in tender elegiac strains, particularly when such are of a picturesque hue. Peculiarly beautiful is his poem entitled "Trost der Nacht," in which the gently intimated comparison between the state of nature and of the human mind is singularly happy.

The third poet who displays pure novelty and originality in matter and form, is the painter and poet REINICK. He possesses a truly cheerful and childlike poet-nature. Humor and naiveté form the ground tone of his songs, and are most charmingly interwoven with each other. Nature and social mirth are his favourite themes; he is likewise excellent where he assumes a serious didactic tone, as for instance in his "Vor Menschen sei ein Mann, vor Gott ein Kind!"

It remains now to notice SIMROCK, as the last poet of this kind. He has made the German poetry of the middle ages his favourite study, and has with masterly skill and truth translated the most beautiful poems of the Hohenstauffer period into modern high German. Such are, the "Nibelungen Lied," "Gudrun," "Parcival," "Der arme Heinrich," and the "Songs of Walther von der Vogelweide." Of his own original poems his epics are most successful. The latest work he has published is his "Legenden," which contains passages of great beauty and merit.

§. 13.

Austrian Poets. While the poetical activity of most of the poets of Austria is principally centred on their own country, the works of three poets in particular have been welcomed throughout the whole of Germany with universal enthusiasm; these are VON ZEDLITZ, NIKOLAUS LENAU and ANASTASIUS GRÜN. VON ZEDLITZ was a disciple of the romantic school. Full praise is deservedly awarded to his "Todtenkränze," a series of canzonis, in which the spirit of the grave conducts him to the resting-places of the mighty dead. His other poems and songs likewise contain much that is beautiful and excellent. In them he comes forward as one of the first who sang the glorification of Napoleon. One of the most beautiful of these is his well known poem "Die nächtliche Heerschau." — The second in the number of Austria's poets is NIKOLAUS LENAU. The gloomy trace of secret sorrow was

early imprinted on his life, and this manifests itself in his poems, which are characterized by a deep melancholy and gloomy enthusiasm. His poetry is the offspring not of happiness, but of deep inward grief, and is peculiarly affecting, from its disclosing to us, as it does, his whole heart. Lamentations over lost belief and lost love, longing for death as the end of all trouble, love of Nature's solitude as promising to put an end to internal strife — these form the key-note of his lyrics. — ANASTASIUS GRÜN, the third of the Austrian poets, speaks in behalf of liberty, and that as a true patriot; his aim is not to stir up the people to revolution but to raise them to a consciousness of their moral dignity. Reflection is the main feature of his poetry. His language is rich, full and noble. One of his most beautiful poems is "Der letzte Dichter," in which the bard maintains that, as poetry is most intimately united with human nature, and is one of its most indispensable wants, it can only cease to exist with humanity itself.

§. 14.

Political Poets. It is an opinion uttered by many young poets, that no poetry but such as advocates some particular tendency is worthy of our time, and that the poet himself must stand as it were on the battlements of a party. Thus the tone of most of these latest political poets was like that of an alarm-bell or tocsin sounded to bring together an army of rebels. Two of the greatest of these revolutionary poets are PRUTZ and HOFFMANN VON FALLERSLEBEN. Prutz appeared as political poet in his poem "Der Rhein," in which his object was to show the Germans what a song ought to contain in order to be worthy to be reckoned a national song. His later poems, however, are free from prejudices and violent tendencies, and consequently the most pleasing. HOFFMANN VON FALLERSLEBEN wrote, besides his political songs, many which are skilfully attuned to the tone of national songs. His "Wiegenlieder" are full of promise.

§. 15.

Poets of the Present Time who have remained in their allegiance to the christian church. While so many modern poets closed in with a tendency hostile to the christian church — while many of them adopted the most hollow and superficial infidelity, and made a show of doing so, the

true belief has nevertheless not been destitute of defenders. We shall only call attention to two champions of this religious tendency, EMANUEL GEIBEL and OSKAR VON REDWITZ. GEIBEL is a man of right and liberty, possessing a warm heart for his country's honour and greatness; but he is at the same time a man of moderation, and far from entertaining the superficial notion of the grand point being won with the establishment of a new form of government. It was his vigorous and manly christian belief that enabled him to contemplate life with a deeper insight into it than others. It is the union of the man with the poet in GEIBEL which aroused such enthusiasm for him. He has introduced no new forms, but his language is exceedingly deep and clear, full and simple, pure and tender.

We have a second equally hopeful genius in OSKAR VON REDWITZ, the bard of the joyfully welcomed "Amaranth," the most glorious poetical creation of our days. The poet of this romantic epic lingers by the fount of christian truth, and herein lies his full meaning — herein lies the whole secret of the overwhelming power of his poetry — herein its greatest charm, its richest beauty. In this epic language and versification are equally beautiful, and the lyrical passages are really exquisite. His "Märchen," too, is a glorious production of the talent of this christian poet; and not less charming are many of his smaller poems.

Gottfried August Bürger.

Das Lied vom braven Manne.

Hoch klingt das Lied vom braven Mann,
Wie Orgelton und Glockenklang.
Wer hohes Muths sich rühmen kann,
Den lohnt nicht Gold, den lohnt Gesang.
Gottlob! dass ich singen und preisen kann,
Zu singen und preisen den braven Mann.

Der Thauwind kam vom Mittagsmeer
Und schnob durch Welschland trüb und feucht.
Die Wolken flogen vor ihm her,
Wie wenn der Wolf die Heerde scheucht.
Er fegte die Felder, zerbrach den Forst;
Auf Seen und Strömen das Grundeis borst.

Am Hochgebirge schmolz der Schnee;
Der Sturz von tausend Wassern scholl;
Das Wiesenthal begrub ein See;
Des Landes Heerstrom wuchs und schwoll;
Hoch rollten die Wogen entlang ihr Gleis
Und rollten gewaltige Felsen Eis.

Auf Pfeilern und auf Bogen schwer,
 Aus Quaderstein von unten auf,
 Lag eine Brücke drüberher,
 Und mitten stand ein Häuschen drauf.
 Hier wohnte der Zöllner mit Weib und Kind. —
 «O Zöllner! O Zöllner, entfleuch geschwind!»

Es dröhnt' und dröhnte dumpf heran,
 Laut heulten Sturm und Wog' ums Haus.
 Der Zöllner sprang zum Dach hinan,
 Und blickt' in den Tumult hinaus. —
 «Barmherziger Himmel! Erbarme dich!
 Verloren! Verloren! Wer rettet mich?»

Die Schollen rollten Schuss auf Schuss,
 Von beiden Ufern hier und dort,
 Von beiden Ufern riss der Fluss
 Die Pfeiler sammt den Bogen fort.
 Der bebende Zöllner mit Weib und Kind,
 Er heulte noch lauter als Strom und Wind.

Die Schollen rollten, Stoss auf Stoss,
 An beiden Enden hier und dort,
 Zerborsten und zertrümmert schoss
 Ein Pfeiler nach dem andern fort.
 Bald nahte der Mitte der Umsturz sich: —
 «Barmherziger Himmel! Erbarme dich!»

Hoch auf dem fernen Ufer stand
 Ein Schwarm von Gaffern gross und klein,
 Und jeder schrie und rang die Hand,
 Doch mochte niemand Retter sein.
 Der bebende Zöllner mit Weib und Kind,
 Durchheulte nach Rettung den Strom und Wind.

Wann klingst du Lied vom braven Mann,
 Wie Orgelton und Glockenklang?
 Wohlan! So nenn' ihn, nenn' ihn dann!
 Wann nennst du ihn, mein schönster Sang?
 Bald naht der Mitte der Umsturz sich.
 O braver Mann! braver Mann! zeige dich!

Rasch galopirt ein Graf hervor,
 Auf hohem Ross, ein edler Graf.
 Was hielt des Grafen Hand empor?
 Ein Beutel war es, voll und straff:
 «Zweihundert Pistolen sind zugesagt,
 Dem, welcher die Rettung der Armen wagt.»

Wer ist der Brave? Ist's der Graf?
 Sag' an, mein braver Sang, sag' an!
 Der Graf, beim höchsten Gott! war brav!
 Doch weiss ich einen bravern Mann. —
 O braver Mann! braver Mann! zeige dich!
 Schon naht das Verderben sich fürchterlich.

Und immer höher schwoll die Flut,
 Und immer lauter sehnob der Wind;
 Und immer tiefer sank der Muth. —
 O Retter! Retter! komm geschwind! —
 Stets Pfeiler bei Pfeiler zerborst und brach,
 Laut krachten und stürzten die Bogen nach.

«Halloh! Halloh! Frisch auf gewagt!»
 Hoch hielt der Graf den Preis empor.
 Ein jeder hört's, doch jeder zagt,
 Aus Tausenden tritt keiner vor.
 Vergebens durchheulte mit Weib und Kind
 Der Zöllner nach Rettung den Strom und Wind.

Sieh, schlecht und recht, ein Bauersmann
 Am Wanderstabe schritt daher,
 Mit grobem Kittel angethan,
 An Wuchs und Antlitz hoch und hehr.
 Er hörte den Grafen, vernahm sein Wort,
 Und schaute das nahe Verderben dort.

Und kühn in Gottes Namen sprang
 Er in den nächsten Fischerkahn;
 Trotz Wirbel, Sturm und Wogendrang
 Kam der Erretter glücklich an.
 Doch wehe! der Nachen war allzu klein,
 Der Retter von allen zugleich zu sein.

Und dreimal zwang er seinen Kahn
Trotz Wirbel, Sturm und Wogendrang;
Und dreimal kam er glücklich an,
Bis ihm die Rettung ganz gelang.
Kaum waren die letzten in sicherem Port,
So rollte das letzte Getrümmer fort. —

Wer ist, wer ist der brave Mann?
Sag' an, sag' an, mein braver Sang!
Der Bauer wagt' ein Leben dran:
Doch that er's wol um Goldesklang?
Denn spendete nimmer der Graf sein Gut,
So wagte der Bauer vielleicht kein Blut. —

«Hier», rief der Graf, «mein wackrer Freund!
Hier ist dein Preis! Komm her! Nimm hin!»
Sag' an, war das nicht brav gemeint? —
Bei Gott, der Graf trug hohen Sinn. —
Doch höher und himmlischer, wahrlich! schlug
Das Herz, das der Bauer im Kittel trug.

«Mein Leben ist für Gold nicht feil.
Arm bin ich zwar, doch ess' ich satt.
Dem Zöllner werd' eu'r Gold zu Theil,
Der Hab und Gut verloren hat!»
So rief er, mit herzlichem Biederton,
Und wandte den Rücken und ging davon.

Hoch klingt das Lied vom braven Mann,
Wie Orgelton und Glockenklang!
Wer solches Muths sich rühmen kann,
Den lohnt kein Gold, den lohnt Gesang.
Gottlob! dass ich singen und preisen kann,
Unsterblich zu preisen den braven Mann.

Das Dörfchen.

(Abgekürzt.)

Ich rühme mir
Mein Dörfchen hier;
Denn schönre Auen,

Als ringsumher
Die Blicke schauen,
Sind nirgends mehr.

Hier Aehrenfelder,
 Dort Wiesengrün,
 Dem blaue Wälder
 Die Grenze ziehn.
 An jener Höhe
 Die Schäferei,
 Und in der Nähe
 Mein Sorgenfrei.
 So nenn' ich meine
 Geliebte, kleine
 Einsiedelei,
 Worin ich lebe,
 Zur Lust versteckt, —
 Die ein Gewebe
 Von Ulm und Rebe
 Grün überdeckt.
 Dort kränzen Schlehen
 Die braune Kluft,
 Und Pappeln wehen
 In blauer Luft.
 Mit sanftem Rieseln
 Schleicht hier gemach

Auf Silberkiesel
 Ein heller Bach
 Fließt unter Zweigen,
 Die über ihn
 Sich wölbend neigen,
 Erfrischend hin,
 Und lässt im Spiegel
 Den grünen Hügel,
 Wo Lämmer gehn,
 Des Ufers Büschchen
 Und selbst die Fischchen
 Im Grunde sehn.
 Da gleiten Schmerlen
 Und blasen Perlen.
 Ihr schneller Lauf
 Geht bald hernieder,
 Und bald herauf
 Zur Fläche wieder.
 Nein, schönre Auen,
 Als ringsumher
 Die Blicke schauen,
 Sind nirgends mehr.

An die Morgenröthe.

Wenn die goldne Frühe, neu geboren,
 Am Olymp mein matter Blick erschaut,
 Dann erblass' ich, wein' und seufze laut:
 Dort im Glanze wohnt, die ich verloren!
 Grauer Tithon, du empfängst Auroren
 Froh aufs neu, sobald der Abend thaut;
 Aber ich umarm' erst meine Braut
 An des Schattenlandes schwarzen Thoren.
 Tithon, deines Alters Dämmerung
 Mildert mit dem Strahl der Rosenstirne
 Deine Gattin, ewig schön und jung.
 Aber mir erloschen die Gestirne,
 Sank der Tag in öde Finsterniss,
 Als sich Molly ¹⁾ dieser Welt entriss.

1) Seine Gattin.