

The
GERMAN LYRIC

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TO
OTTO SCHLAPP AND RUDOLF HENNING

WITH THE GRATITUDE AND ADMIRATION OF A
FORMER PUPIL.

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CHAPTER V

THE CLASSICAL AGE OF GERMAN POETRY

THE eighteenth century is a history of progress not only in the lyric but in all other branches of literature. Bürger is greater than Hagedorn or Günther, Klopstock an advance upon Haller and Brockes. Yet even the best of these writers fall far short of what is universally regarded as great lyric poetry. Klopstock's failure was not due to the same reason as that of Bürger, nor Bürger's failure similar to that of Haller. There was something lacking in each, in some of them a great deal. We could point to Bürger's want of character and personality, but Klopstock and Haller possessed these. Haller was perhaps too engrossed in analytical studies to acquire deep insight into the essence of poetry, to feel what poetry is ; this insight and feeling Klopstock certainly had. In him, again, we miss the sweet cadence, the rounded phrase, the sense for beautiful style. This shows how extremely difficult it is to excel in poetry, perhaps the most difficult thing in the world. Men like Gleim fail to take the task seriously, and posterity is doubtful whether such deserve the name of poet at all. Others, like Jacobi, succeed once or twice in reaching the highest stage, but the few pearls have to be diligently sought for among a huge heap

of traditional lumber and tawdry ornaments. The slopes of Parnassus are certainly roomy, and the man who has ascended even a little way need not be despised. But when we see the spectacle of another man who has climbed to the summit, and stands there pre-eminent, we can appreciate all the better the greatness of his achievement. It is certainly not possible to explain the genius of a Goethe ; we can say this and that, we can talk about his surroundings, his development, his great innate gifts ; we may be almost certain that some events and circumstances in his life have aided him, that the presence of certain other things might have thwarted him ; we may make it clear that his artistic work is the true and necessary expression of his personality and experience, but even then are we so very much nearer to an explanation ? What is this personality of genius ? And how did Goethe acquire that sovereign ease of artistic song, the golden line, the apt word, the vivid image, the perfect harmony between feeling and utterance ? How is it that he contrived to remain great for so long and in so many spheres ? German critics talk glibly of descending into the poet's workshop, and studying the poem in the process of development. An interesting, and, in Goethe's case, an easy task ! But when we ask ourselves, whether anyone has ever, even in the remotest sense, been able to imitate this craftsman, his skill in the mingling of metals, in wielding the hammer and shaping the object which he had in view, it becomes apparent that the metaphor and the method are but touching the shadow of the matter, that this God-given skill is something rare and strange, mysterious even to its possessor, unapproachable and inimitable. A poet must read,

observe, study ; there we can follow him. But what of that other gift of which Coleridge speaks, the "hearing of that divine and nightly whispering voice which speaks to mighty minds of predestinated garlands, starry and unwithering"? There is an optimistic feeling among modern German critics that the poet's secret has at length been wrung from him, that they know not only what great poetry is, but how and under what conditions it is produced. "Die bequeme Lehre von der Inspiration ist heute widerlegt," says Witkop. Such certainty in speculative matters is something to be envied. And from this it is but a step with the more reckless to the setting up of rules and formulas which they apply to the poetical production of all poets. But the history of art, and of literary criticism above all, has shown how frequently the acutest minds, from an Aristotle to a Lessing, have been at fault, how in poetry and genius it is the unexpected, the seemingly impossible thing that is ultimately achieved. Carlyle speaks of Goethe's creative work as "dawning mysterious on a world that hoped not for it." The poet has helped us all that he could ; he has spoken of himself, his experiences, his whole inner being with a candour which is pardonable only in so great a man, and which in England, where Goethe is not yet known as he ought to be, has contributed to retard his popularity. Everyone knows how difficult it is to understand, still more to explain one's own mental inheritance and development. It must, therefore, take a courageous critic to say that Goethe's wonderful development and power were due to this and that, and a still more daring one to set up Goethe as the touchstone of all later lyricists, to keep his example, so to speak, in the mind's eye, and con-

demn or extol according to the principles deduced from his experience. The critic is wise who remembers that, in addition to the "fieri" there is also the "nasci," and, in regard to the latter, we are still in a "no man's land," a region vast, uncharted and undefined.

No poet, not even Shakespeare, has been more fully investigated than Goethe, and the mass of facts, as opposed to mere hypotheses, collected regarding him is enormous. We know that in originality of mind, strength of character for overcoming obstacles, power of drawing inspiration from everything around him, and capacity of lyrical expression, he has no equal. He goes to no predecessor for his theme; nature and life are his teachers. He sings directly what he feels, nothing less and nothing more, with spontaneity, freshness, and simplicity. He is never at a loss for a subject, because his sensitive mind was alive to every suggestion and he could not rest, or rather could not move onward to a new mood till he had found in lyrical form the natural and necessary expression for his feelings. He is one of the most subjective of poets. He does not always use the personal form, not even in the lyric, but behind almost all his artistic creations, be they presented in epic, dramatic, or lyrical garb, we can feel the personality and mind and experience of the man. From this fact two conclusions are apparent, that the study of Goethe's lyric will furnish us with a history of his emotional life in a continued though incomplete form, and that a very considerable knowledge of Goethe's life and of his relationships to men and movements of his time is the indispensable preparation for a thorough understanding of his work. He himself was not of this opinion, for he intentionally discarded

the chronological arrangement of his poems and expressed the fear that the analytic critic might reduce to prosaic elements the artistic whole which he had created. But no pedantry can destroy the inheritance which Goethe has bequeathed. "Ein geistreich ausgesprochenes Wort wirkt auf die Ewigkeit." His charm is indestructible, and the labours of historical criticism have not only revealed the reality and genuineness of every poetical creation, but have also brought home to us the extraordinary richness of Goethe's inner life, his wonderful insight, his self-knowledge. These qualities he did not always possess, and here again we discover one of the secrets of his greatness, his unique power of development. We see Goethe grow in mental breadth and strength, in harmoniousness of mind, in moral and æsthetic culture, in ideality. When the crown is laid upon the structure we stand spellbound at the majesty and beauty of the edifice, but it does one good to reflect that it was toilfully raised after many a slip and error. Such a life is a monument to the power of human endeavour, for Goethe as poet and man is one of the greatest phenomena of history.

Johann Wolfgang Goethe¹ (1749-1832) was the son of well-to-do parents and passed a sunny youth in Frankfort-on-the-Maine. Unlike so many German poets he was, throughout his life, one of fortune's favourites. Bode calls him "der fröhliche Goethe," and this bright optimism was the result of health, comfort, and cheerful society. His earliest poem, "Die Höllenfahrt Christi," shows no particular promise,

¹ B. Litzmann, *Goethes Lyrik*, Berlin, 1903. E. Lichtenberger, *Étude sur les poésies lyriques de Goethe*, Paris, 1882.

and even the pieces written by Goethe when a student in Leipzig, the "Annette" songs and the *Neue Lieder*, published in 1769, are too much under the spell of Anacreontic tradition, too gallant and erotic to be the expression of Goethe's inmost self. "Die schöne Nacht" is characteristic in its borrowed cynicism but one of the best in form and feeling for nature. In the spring of 1770 Goethe came to Strassburg to complete his legal studies, and here, under the influence of Herder's tuition and the awakening of his soul through his passionate love for Friedrike Brion, the daughter of the pastor of Sesenheim, Goethe became a great lyrical poet. No reader of the *Neue Lieder* could have expected the author to have produced, a year or two later, such a poem as "Mailed," which is as fresh and irresistible as the song of the skylark exulting in love and sunshine:—

“So liebt die Lerche
Gesang und Luft,
Und Morgenblumen
Den Himmelsduft,

Wie ich dich liebe
Mit warmem Blut,
Die du mir Jugend
Und Freud' und Mut

Zu neuen Liedern
Und Tänzén gibst.
Sei ewig glücklich,
Wie du mich liebst !”

Still more impressive is that brilliant picture of his journey on horseback through the black night, his arrival and departure contained in "Willkommen und Abschied." What an eye for the mysterious effects

of the mist and the moonlight, what power of reproducing them in a few words:—

“Schon stand im Nebelkleid die Eiche
 Ein aufgetürmter Riese da,
 Wo Finsternis aus dem Gesträuche
 Mit hundert schwarzen Augen sah.”

“Mit einem gemalten Band” gives us the lighter side of this love idyll, while “Heidenröslein,” a masterpiece of delicate suggestion, is full of the elements of tragedy. No such love poetry had ever been written in German before.

The lyrics of the Frankfort and Wetzlar period are more varied both in form and content. He tried his hand at unrhymed stanzas, but with indifferent success, in poems like “Elysium” and “Pilgersmorgenlied.” “Der Wanderer,” a pretty idyll in dialogue, representing the sweetness of simple domestic life, is riper in conception and in execution. Other poems, “Künstlers Morgenlied,” “Künstlers Abendlied,” “Künstlers Fug und Recht,” deal with the relation of art to life, with critics and criticism in a humorous, epigrammatic manner. He attempted a higher flight in a series of philosophical poems, some of them fragments, “Der ewige Jude,” “Mahomets Gesang,” “Ganymed,” “Adler und Taube,” “An Schwager Kronos,” etc. The greatest of them is “Prometheus,” a magnificent ode on the spirit of strength, self-reliance, and defiance. These works represent the storm and stress of Goethe’s youth, his aspirations, his unsettled longing, his revolt, and stand even higher than his poems of love, for they are not merely song but the utterance of a great mind and personality. He has, however, still the tenderness of a singer of the people, as the graceful lines of “Das

Veilchen" and the inimitable simplicity and sweetness of "Der König in Thule" prove. The love poetry of the period inspired by Lili Schönemann, the daughter of a Frankfort banker, is less passionate than the Sesenheim lyrics. In "Neue Liebe, Neues Leben," "An Belinden," "Lili's Park" we see the poet struggling, protesting against a tie from which he ultimately wrenched himself free. The episode is worthily closed by the beautiful poem, "Auf dem See":—

"Und frische Nahrung, neues Blut
Saug ich aus freier Welt;
Wie ist Natur so hold und gut,
Die mich am Busen hält!"

Thus the poem opens with a hint of the situation, on nature's breast, abruptly as if the pen had suddenly caught the train of the poet's reflection. As he sails across the Swiss lake, the mountains in the distance before his eyes, the image of Lili rises before him and makes him pause; the new feeling is expressed by a change in the metre:—

"Aug', mein Aug', was sinkst du wieder?
Gold'ne Träume, kommt ihr wieder?
Weg, du Traum! so gold du bist;
Hier auch Lieb' und Leben ist."

Then, to strengthen his resolution, the stars, the morning wind, and the ripening fruit appear before him and suggest in admirable symbolism a brighter and happier future:—

"Auf der Welle blinken
tausend schwebende Sterne.
Weiche Nebel trinken
rings die türmende Ferne.

Morgenwind umflügel
 die beschattete Bucht,
 Und im See bespiegelt
 Sich die reife Frucht."

As in the best of Goethe's poems there is here a clear movement from one mood to another, a crescendo to a definite artistic climax.

As he returned from Switzerland Goethe was introduced to the young Duke of Weimar, who invited him to his court and succeeded in retaining him there. As an official, and latterly the factotum of the Duke, he showed administrative ability of the highest order. During the first Weimar period, 1775 to 1786, he did not succeed in finishing the longer works which he undertook, but in the sphere of minor poetry he attained to his highest achievements. The refinement of court life, practical work, and cultured society gave him a new outlook and freed him from the inartistic rebellious mood of his Sturm und Drang years; with the aid of Frau von Stein, his new confidant, he acquired a higher ideal of life and art. This lady was already past the first bloom of youth, and the mother of seven children, when Goethe met her, and it was by her personal magnetism and great mental gifts that she attracted the youthful poet. She seems to have understood Goethe better than any other. She knew, as he says, every fibre in his nature:—

"Kanntest jeden zug in meinem Wesen,
 spähtest, wie die reinste Nerve klinget,
 konntest mich mit einem Blicke lesen,
 den so schwer ein sterblich Aug durchdringt.
 Tropftest Mässigung dem heissen Blute,
 richtetest den wilden, irren Lauf,
 und in deinen Engelsarmen ruhte
 die zerstörte Brust sich wieder auf."

He opened his heart to her without restraint, and this opportunity of revealing himself, his ideas and aims, to another, not vaguely and in the general terms of passion, but in the intimacy of cultured friendship, gave Goethe a clearer insight into his own nature and his surroundings. That self-knowledge and self-mastery which we admire in the Goethe of mature life was largely acquired at this stage in his development. The calmness of self-recognition, the joy at the discovery and certainty of his vocation and his strength, are nobly expressed in "Zueignung," which was written in 1784, and later prefixed to his poems. "Ilmenau" is of the same character, giving a poetical picture of the situation in Weimar, with its dangers and distractions, but confident and hopeful in tone. Some of the finest lyrics, "Rastlose Liebe," "Wanderers Nachtlied," "Ein Gleiches," "An Lida," were inspired by Frau von Stein; they are hardly love poems in the ordinary sense of the word, though the poet's passion breaks forth here and there, but rather confessions, expressions of feeling, from which the singer has been freed by artistic utterance:—

"Gab mir ein Gott zu sagen was ich leide."

They exemplify Goethe's own explanation of poetry, "Thus I feel what makes the poet, a heart full, absolutely full of an emotion." But the form is as chaste as the emotion. In "Wanderers Nachtlied,"

"Der du von dem Himmel bist
alles Leid und Schmerzen stillest,
den, der doppelt elend ist,
doppelt mit Erquickung füllest,
ach, ich bin des Treibens müde!
Was soll all der Schmerz und Lust?
Süsser Friede,
komm, ach komm in meine Brust!"

the inversion of the relative clause, the grammatical looseness, the anacoluthon, the irregularity of the verses, all express the dissonance and unrest of his soul. The heartfelt prayer is so naturally and powerfully uttered that form and content are one. Sometimes Goethe expresses his ideas in short epigrams, a form of which he grew very fond later; examples are to be found in the group, "Antiker Form sich nähernd." Sometimes he strikes a nobler note, as in the great philosophical poems, "Gesang der Geister über den Wassern," "Die Grenzen der Menschheit," and "Das Göttliche." The two latter are magnificent examples of the power of unrhymed verse. If the reader will compare them with the unrhymed stanzas of Klopstock, if he will read the one after the other, he will be surprised; nothing will bring home to him so effectively the lucidity, the melody, the supreme mastery of phrase, line, and stanza in Goethe's poetry. They mark a new stage in Goethe's attitude to life. How different the calm but confident tone as compared with the ambition and passion of the Mahomet and Prometheus poems! He has now recognised his limitations as a human being, his dependence upon nature, his subordination to a higher will. Let man be helpful and good, for this is his distinction. Nature and fortune are blind and feelingless, man alone can distinguish, choose, and judge:—

"Er allein darf
 Den Guten lohnen,
 Den Bösen strafen,
 Heilen und retten
 Alles Irrende, Schweifende
 Nützlich verbinden."

On one occasion Goethe said, "All my lyrics are

poems of the moment (*Gelegenheitsgedichte*); they are inspired by actuality, and rooted therein." A well-known example is the "Gesang der Geister über den Wassern," the theme of which occurred to Goethe while watching the Staubbach Fall near Lauterbrunnen in the Bernese Oberland. But one important point must here be noted, and it applies to nearly all of Goethe's philosophical poems. The theme has become transfigured, generalised; as the poem stands in its completed ideality, the "Gelegenheit," the occasion or impulse, vanishes. It matters little or nothing what waterfall was before his eyes; the philosophical thought or idea, the comparison of human life with falling water is the burden of the song. So too in "Ganymed," "Prometheus," "Das Göttliche," and "Die Grenzen der Menschheit," though we know that they embody Goethe's experience, yet the form is impersonal, and it is even doubtful if we are entitled to identify Goethe in each case with all the sentiments of his heroes. When Goethe wrote his love lyrics, for example,

"Wie herrlich leuchtet
Mir die Natur!
Wie glänzt die Sonne!
Wie lacht die Flur!"

it is as if he had thrown open his window in Sesenheim, and in the freshness and glow of awakened enthusiasm, with the glorious spectacle before him, and love warming his heart, he had given immediate utterance to his emotion. In the philosophical poems he has gone further. The ephemeral impression, the chance impulse, the temporal thing has become eternal. The love poems are impassioned action, subjective and dramatic; the philosophical lyrics are objective truth. In some cases the two forms are

happily combined. Take, as an example, the poem, "An den Mond":—

"Füllest wieder Busch und Thal
Still mit Nebelglanz,
Lösest endlich auch einmal
Meine Seele ganz ;
Breitest über mein Gefild
Lindernd deinen Blick,
Wie des Freundes Auge mild
Über mein Geschick."

Goethe has gone forth in the evening for a walk near his "Gartenhäuschen," when the moonlight with its soothing influence, and the rustling stream by which he is wandering play upon the poet's senses and suggest feelings and thoughts of relief, of love past and gone, but also of hopefulness and poetical activity:—

"Rausche, Fluss, das Thal entlang,
Ohne Rast und Ruh,
Rausche, flüstre meinem Sang
Melodien zu. . ."

Outward nature and the human mind are in wonderful harmony, the "musical thought" springs from the direct inspiration of external suggestions; but as the emotion softens and dies down, the poet raises himself above his surroundings, reaching his climax in the consoling thought that in friendship and retirement man finds support and happiness:—

"Selig wer sich vor der Welt
Ohne Hass verschliesst,
Einen Freund am Busen hält
Und mit dem genießt,
Was von Menschen nicht gewusst
Oder nicht bedacht,
Durch das Labyrinth der Brust
Wandelt in der Nacht."

The early Weimar period is noteworthy, too, for the ballads which Goethe now wrote. "Der Sanger" is a glorification of the bard who sings freely and for no reward. In "Der Erlkonig" the mysterious powers that besiege the human mind in peril and trouble are made to live with rare dramatic power. The very willows and the dry leaves of autumn seem to breathe, while the shadowy form of the king of the elves grows to gigantic, demonic proportions. The language, with the variation of hard and soft consonants, the play of high and low vowels, the ever-changing rhythm, above all the rapid development of the action as seen in the words of the Erlking, the increasing fear of the child, and the final terror of its father, make this poem a masterpiece of ballad literature. Goethe has here succeeded in solving a problem, where the Romanticists at a later age failed, in making the incredible live, in giving the supernatural such tangible shape and voice that it grips the imagination of every reader. If in "Erlkonig" it is the supernatural, in "Der Fischer" nature itself, the spirit of the calm, cooling water on a broiling summer day, is represented as attracting and overpowering the senses of man. This is true poetry: few but have experienced the feeling, but who could give it voice with the simplicity and powers of language which he has shown? In this period of great activity many poems of less note were written, "Auf Miedings Tod," "Hans Sachsens poetische Sendung," "Die Harzreise im Winter," "Meine Gottin," "Mut," "Einschrankung," etc. They show us Goethe's wide interests and sympathies, his mental attitude to things, and testify to the store of human wisdom which he had acquired in the first few years of his life at Weimar.

In September 1786 Goethe set out for Italy, where he remained till the summer of 1788. Quite suddenly he tore himself free from the Weimar influences¹ and lived in a new world, a new nature, a new art. J. J. Winckelmann (1717-1768) had been the first to attract attention to Italy as the guardian and keeper of the treasures of antiquity, and now Rome had become the Mecca of art for the European world. Goethe travelled here and there, saw, studied, sketched, discussed art principles with artists of note, Tischbein, Trippel, and Angelika Kaufmann, and revelled in the exhilaration of this bright, artistic Italian milieu. When he returned to the cold North, he was absolutely out of sympathy with the still lingering tendencies of the Sturm und Drang, his admiration for Gothic art had given place to the conviction that in the calm, majestic beauty of antique sculpture he had found the highest ideal of art. In his great dramas, *Iphigenie* and *Tasso*, these new principles bore splendid fruit; but in the lyrical sphere there is less poetry of a high standard. He has curbed his youthful fire, his spontaneous subjectivity, and poems like "Gefunden," "Erster Verlust," "Beherrigung," show a greater tendency to objectivity and reflection. The "Roman Elegies" are the most noteworthy product of this period: in them Goethe excels in statuesque imagery, but the sensual delights of Italian life are painted too boldly for many readers. The "Epigrams from Venice" contain many short poems of note, revealing neatness of expression and freshness of thought.

Goethe's close intimacy with Schiller, which began

¹ For Goethe's reasons for this step see R. M. Meyer, *Goethe*, p. 217 f.

in 1794, was the means of awakening him to a deeper interest and a greater activity in literary affairs. The satirical "Xenien," which the two poets wrote in collaboration, failed in their object, which was to chastise the unworthy scribblers of the day, and pave the way for an appreciation of true art. Both asserted themselves much more effectively by the magnificent series of ballads which they produced. In "Die Braut von Korinth," "Der Gott und die Bajadere," "Der Zauberlehrling," Goethe's art has grown more expansive, more epic, more ornate than in the earlier pieces, but his delicacy in rounding off the main theme and his skill in rhythmical language are as great as ever. The lyrics of this period, "Nähe des Geliebten," "Frühzeitiger Frühling," "Trost in Thränen," "Meeresstille," are more objective, more pensive, less enthusiastic than the youthful pieces. They have not the same personal interest, but excel in form. "Nachtgesang,"

"O gib vom weichen Pfühle
 Träumend ein halb Gehör!
 Bei meinem Saitenspiele
 Schlafe! Was willst du mehr. . ."

is an example of a playfully humorous piece in lines of exquisite smoothness and melody. Mention should here be made of the songs in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, which was published in 1795-96: they mark the culmination of Goethe's art as a song-writer: each of them deserves to be printed in letters of gold. Here are the songs of the old harper: "Wer sich der Einsamkeit ergibt," "An die Türen will ich schleichen," "Wer nie sein Brot mit Thränen ass," and the songs of his ill-starred daughter, Mignon: "Heiss mich

nicht reden, heiss mich schweigen," "Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt," "Kennst du das Land, wo die Citronen blühn," "So lasst mich scheinen, bis ich werde." No other German poet has written seven songs which are so beautiful in conception and so admirable in the simplicity and grandeur of their form as these. Some of them were written earlier, but their effect is enhanced by their setting in the novel. Goethe is here objective in form but yet personal, "Kennst du das Land" breathes his own longing for the land of the blue skies. Indeed it is more; in it the deep-seated German love of sunny Italy has received final and perfect expression. Among the noteworthy productions of the period were the "Elegien," or Idylls—Goethe uses the words as practically synonymous—"Alexis und Dora," "Pausias und sein Blumenmädchen," "Amyntas," "Euphrosyne." They were written with great ease, as Goethe tells us, after the classical scheme of the hexameter, followed by the pentameter. In the "Episteln" there is the charm of wise reflection, the carefully balanced thought of a mature mind, which has safely ridden through the storms of youthful passion, and attained the perfect equilibrium which marks, as Legras says, the happy hours of great poets. A number of the group, entitled "Gesellige Lieder," were written during this time; some were composed much earlier, and some in Goethe's mature years, and naturally they are of very different character. "Ergo Bibamus" is still a popular drinking song. "Frech und Froh," "Bundeslied," and "Generalbeichte" are in the same jovial strain, while others, like "Zum neuen Jahr" and "Kophtisches Lied," are more thoughtful and sedate. The second Cophtic

song is one of Goethe's most successful didactic poems :—

“Geh ! gehorche meinen Winken,
 Nutze deine jungen Tage,
 Lerne zeitig klüger sein ;
 Auf des Glückes grosser Wage
 Steht die Zunge selten ein ;
 Du musst steigen oder sinken
 Du musst herrschen und gewinnen,
 Oder dienen und verlieren,
 Leiden oder triumphiren,
 Amboss oder Hammer sein.”

After Schiller's death in 1805 Goethe proceeded on his majestic course alone. None of his contemporaries understood him so well, and could stimulate his poetical activity so successfully, as Schiller had done. The new literary movements, the great political struggles, were unable to arrest his attention more than cursorily. He was now fifty-six years of age, and even his ever-active mind was bound to lose something of its receptivity, and concentrate more upon itself and its own interests. He was led by the example of the Romantic school, particularly of Zacharias Werner, to try the sonnet form. There are seventeen of these poems in his completed works, supposed to be inspired by Minna Herzlieb, but these expressions of love are not to be taken quite literally. Goethe has here raised the individual to the typical, and one of the best, “Warum ich wieder zum Papier mich wende,” represents the imaginary answer of the maiden to her lover. In the “Epilog zu Schillers Glocke” (1806) Goethe has written one of the finest elegiac tributes ever given by one poet to another. He celebrates Schiller as friend, historian, dramatist, and enthusiastic idealist :—

“Indessen schritt sein Geist gewaltig fort
 Ins Ewige des Wahren, Guten, Schönen,
 Und hinter ihm, im wesenlosen Scheine
 Lag, was uns alle bändigt, das Gemeine.”

One form of poetry shows a falling off in power. Ballads such as “Die wandelnde Glocke” and “Der getreue Eckhart” are lacking in interest, less effective in diction, and more didactic in tone than this form can bear. He continued to feel the influence of love, and the expression of his emotion is graceful and tender, sometimes laconic, half-apologetic. The most noteworthy work of this character is the “West-östlicher Divan,” in which his affection for Marianne von Willemer is combined with the wisdom of the East, to which Goethe’s attention has been drawn by Hammer-Purgstall’s translation of the “Divan” of the Persian poet, Hafiz. This love poetry and that of the “Trilogie der Leidenschaft,” which was inspired by Ulrike von Levezow, whom he met in 1822, are altogether different from the love poetry of Goethe’s youth. It is not so spontaneous and passionate in tone: there is more blending of thought with the emotion, but what the poems have lost in youthful fervour is made up by ripeness of insight and self-knowledge:—

“In unsers Busens Reine wogt ein Streben,
 Sich einem Höhern, Reinern, Unbekannten,
 Aus Dankbarkeit freiwillig hinzugeben,
 Enträtselnd sich den ewig Ungenannten ;
 Wir heissen’s : fromm sein !—Solcher seligen Höhe
 Fühl’ ich mich teilhaft, wenn ich vor dir stehe.”

In the epigrammatic and philosophical poems of his last twenty years we see Goethe in the fullness of his maturity. The groups, “Epigrammatisch,” and “Gott

and Welt," contain his ripest thoughts on man, life, God, eternity, and kindred subjects. Poems like "Angedenken," "Lebensgenuss," "Proœmion," "Eins und Alles," are worthy of attention as expressions of essential elements in Goethe's philosophy of life. In every other line the reader meets sentences of deep import, such as,

"Im Innern ist ein Universum auch,"

or—

"Uns zu verewigen
Sind wir ja da,"

or—

"Ich scheine wir an keinem Ort
Auch Zeit ist keine Zeit,
Ein geistreich aufgeschlossenes Wort
Wirkt auf die Ewigkeit."

In these epigrams we recognise the mind of the poet who created "Faust." In another sphere, too, he has lost none of his erstwhile power in the poetical visualising of the beauties of nature. Some of the nature lyrics in the second part of "Faust" belong to his last years, and they are a remarkable testimony to his freshness of vision, his sensitiveness to impressions, and his command of language and metre. There is delicate imagery in lines like

"Und in schwanken Silberwellen
Wogt die Saat der Ernte zu,"

and spirit and movement in the song of Lynceus. But for melody and poetic beauty the poems, "Dem aufgehenden Vollmonde," and

"Dämmrung senkte sich von oben,
schon ist alle Nähe fern,
doch zuerst emporgehoben
holden Lichts der Abendstern,"

are difficult to surpass.

In his long life, so rich as it was in experience, there are few lyrical themes which Goethe did not touch upon. We do not find in his poetry the treatment of traditional themes such as friendship or patriotism, though love of country and love of friends frequently occur by the way. Faith in God and the love which united him to his wife he regarded as sacred heart-secrets, and he expressed his joy at the fact that he had never by public celebration desecrated these feelings. The religious lyric in the narrow sense of the word he did not cultivate, yet the subject of religion with man's relation to man and to a higher being was illuminated frequently in his work with profound insight. Abstract things had no attraction for him. He drew his inspiration from the real, which he idealised in his own inner consciousness. He was a poet because he felt intensely and found the utterance of emotion a necessity. He was a great poet because of the brilliance of his mental gifts, the strength of his individuality, the purity and ideality of his mind, and the profundity of his inner experience.

Johann Friedrich Schiller (1749-1805), Goethe's great compeer, started with none of the advantages in life which Goethe enjoyed. The petty tyranny of the Duke of Würtemberg, in whose service his father was, hung heavy upon his youth, and when he found that the only prospect of freedom lay in flight, a long, arduous struggle with poverty awaited him. His development was not so rapid as Goethe's, but it was much more feverish: history and philosophy claimed some of his best years before he settled to his great dramatic work, and he was cut off just when he had reached the summit of his power. His lyrical poetry

is easy to survey, for it is not wide in range, and his friend, Körner, has arranged the poems in three chronological groups. In the year 1803, when issuing an edition of his poems, he discussed the omission of many of his youthful products. "Perhaps," he says, "in a collection of these poems a more critical choice should have been made. Here will be found the wild products of a youthful dilettantism, the uncertain attempts of an art which is only beginning, and of a taste which is not yet matured, side by side with those which are the fruit of riper judgment. . . . But in a collection of poems the poetical value is not the only criterion. . . . Even what is faulty denotes a stage in the intellectual development of the poet." He adds that he is glad that he has advanced, but he is not ashamed of his weaknesses. The poems of the first period, most of which were published in the *Anthologie auf das Jahr 1782*, possess only an historical interest. The subjects are varied, rhapsodies on love, extravagant odes on persons and things, a poem on the parting of Hector and Andromache, which is clearer in style than most, and a fairly successful ballad, "Graf Eberhard." On the whole, the sentiment is not original nor individual, the moralising is commonplace. In regard to the style still more objection could be taken. The metre is frequently defective, words are forced out of their natural order, the predicate is sometimes omitted, the rhymes are inexact. He shows no command of language; words are employed in a sense which is unusual, and the epithets are seldom apt. He inclines to abstract themes such as friendship, fortune, wisdom, the dignity of man, but in the treatment there is very little promise of the great philosophical poetry of

later years. The poems of the second period were written between 1783 and 1794. They are few in number, for Schiller devoted most of his time to the drama, journalism, to history, and the study of Kant's æsthetic writings. "Der Kampf" and "Die Resignation" are two strong poems, for in them we feel the genuine passion of the poet, the despair which has seized him when he finds his strength failing in the struggle towards virtue, duty, and faith. Brighter prospects opened up before the poet when he became acquainted with C. G. Körner, the father of Theodor Körner, and Schiller's devoted friend, and the "Lied an die Freude" is as extravagantly jubilant as "Die Resignation" was pessimistic.

"Freude, schöner Götterfunken,
Tochter aus Elysium,
Wir betreten feuertrunken,
Himmlische, dein Heiligtum.
Deine Zauber binden wieder,
Was die Mode streng geteilt ;
Alle Menschen werden Brüder,
Wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt."

The two most striking poems of the time are "Die Götter Griechenlands" and "Die Künstler." The former is a regret for the disappearance of the Hellenic age, which he celebrates with enthusiasm as the "holdes Blütenalter der Natur," the lovely age of nature's blossoming. The latter gives us Schiller's ideal view of art and of artists, with their value in the scheme of things. He speaks of the relations of art to science and knowledge, touches on the part played by art in human culture, the Hellenic age, the Renaissance, and the new interest in art in his own time. The poem is ultra-optimistic, and the fond dream

that man was already, through the aid of artists, near to perfection, was soon to be shattered by the spectacle of the French Revolution. The diction of the poem is not free from obscurities, but it is fervent and brilliantly rhetorical; the reader is carried away by the poet's glowing enthusiasm for art, beauty, and human progress. In regard to rhythm he has learned above all the use of variety and modulation, which were so frequently absent from the earlier poems. The final address to the artists may serve as an example:—

“Der Menschheit Würde ist in eure Hand gegeben,
 Bewahret sie!
 Sie sinkt mit euch! Mit euch wird sie sich heben!
 Der Dichtung heilige Magie
 Dient einem weisen Weltenplane,
 Still lenke sie zum Ozeane
 Der grossen Harmonie! . . .”

Between the composition of “Die Künstler” and Schiller's riper lyrics lie four or five years of remarkable artistic development. Prolonged historical study, social life in Jena and Weimar, his marriage to a cultured lady, meditation over Kant's æsthetics, did much to refine his taste and extend his culture. But he needed the friendship of Goethe to waken him to song. They had met before in 1788, but with reserve and coldness on Goethe's part. In 1794 they met again, by accident, and were surprised to find how much they had in common. The story of the subsequent friendship is well known; their correspondence reveals an association without parallel among poets of such individual greatness, an exchange of ideas which gave a powerful stimulus to the productivity of both. In Goethe's words, “From the

moment when we drew closer to each other there was an irresistible development of our philosophical education and artistic activity." Previous to this, Schiller had become doubtful about his vocation as poet. Comparing his work with the Classics and with Goethe, he found them to be fundamentally different. He perceived that Goethe belonged to the great naïve poets like Homer and Shakespeare, while his own productions hitherto had been what he calls "sentimental," that is, reflective. The naïve poet is he who imitates the actual as fully as possible, the sentimental represents the ideal. "The former moves us by nature, by the truth of sense, by vivid presentation of actuality, the latter by ideas." Many critics have taken these words in too narrow a sense, and jumped to the conclusion that Goethe is a realist, Schiller an idealist. But Goethe is just as ideal as Schiller, we saw that in his philosophical lyrics, and Schiller is just as much of a realist as Goethe; if he were not something more than an idealist, he would not be a great dramatist, not even a great poet. Formulas like these are of little value in literature; they are subject to too many limitations. Between the artistic result in a poem like "Der Spaziergang" and one of Goethe's philosophical lyrics there is, after all, not so great a difference. As Schiller says, "At the first glance it appears as if there could be no greater contrasts than the speculative mind which proceeds from the unity, and the intuitive, which proceeds from the manifold. But if the former with chaste and faithful intention seeks experience, and the latter with spontaneous free power of thought seeks the law, they cannot fail to meet half-way." So that if we recognise the fact that Schiller changed, that he

became conscious that in his early work the philosopher frequently interfered with the poet and the poet with the philosopher, we shall see that in his maturity it is principally in method and attitude rather than in result that he differs from Goethe. He could not, like Goethe, yield to the rapture of the moment, especially in the contemplation of nature. Thoughts were suggested to him by experience, or he projected his thoughts outward, and gave them corporeal form. He felt himself to be essentially meditative and inclined to philosophise. But his great philosophical poems are not abstract philosophy. They are his life and soul, his experience, his whole being. Schiller was very frank about his debt to others, to men like Wilhelm von Humboldt, Fichte, and Goethe. "Whatever good I may have," he says, "has been planted in me by a few pre-eminent men: a kind fate introduced them to me at the decisive moment of my life." The critical essay, *Über naïve und sentimentalische Dichtung*, shows how his view of poetry has become clarified. He has regained the confidence that enabled him to write the great poems of his later years, the dramas, ballads, and philosophical lyrics.

The subjects of Schiller's ballads are drawn from many sources, but he gets below the surface of the bald narrative, grasps the ethical idea that runs through it, and brings this out with all his dramatic genius, without being in the least didactic. The most astonishing thing in these poems is his mastery of form. The obscurity and the rhetoric of the two earlier periods have vanished; almost every line is distinguished by some striking image or apt expression. All critics have admired the vividness with which he has described, not from observation but

purely from imagination, the movement of the whirlpool:—

“Und es wasset und siedet und brauset und zischt,
 Wie wenn Wasser mit Feuer sich mengt,
 Bis zum Himmel sprizet der dampfende Gischt
 Und Flut auf Flut sich ohn' Ende drängt,
 Und will sich nimmer erschöpfen und leeren,
 Als wollte das Meer noch ein Meer gebären.”

This is, however, only one of the beauties of the piece. The motives, words, and actions of the young diver are vividly rendered, the monsters of the deep are effectively pictured without exaggeration, great skill is shown in the use of the impersonal pronoun, “es,” to denote the unknown, the mysterious, the pathetic. The attendants of the king are like the chorus in a Greek tragedy, and the reader feels as if he were among them, so deeply is he moved by every action in this short, impressive tragedy. Of the other ballads, “Der Handschuh,” “Die Kraniche des Ibykus,” “Der Gang nach dem Eisenhammer,” “Der Kampf mit dem Drachen,” “Die Burgschaft,” “Der Graf von Habsburg,” it is difficult to place one above the other. They are so varied in theme and level in excellence. “Der Graf von Habsburg” is a model of the historical ballad, sustained, ornate, broad, but true to life, and profoundly impressive. It is tempting, in fact it is almost inevitable, to compare these ballads with those of Goethe. In some of them, for example “Die Kraniche des Ibykus,” there was almost a collaboration, for the subject and the plan had been discussed between them. Philipp Witkop writes,¹ “In the ballads we see again the great difference

¹ *L.c.*, i. pp. 322, 323.

between Goethe's and Schiller's manner: Goethe's ballads show us the most perfect unity of Ego and World, an unprecedented subjective-objective blending; Goethe directly expresses in the life of others his own!" As to Schiller, he says that "he turns his subject this way and that, and looks at it, as it were, only from the outside." This sounds somewhat artificial, and it is not surprising that another contemporary writer, Alfred Biese, expresses the very opposite opinion. "Goethe's ballads," he says, "were not the product of direct experience." And in regard to Schiller he emphasises the fact that in all his poetry he has "looked at life as clearly and closely as any other."¹ The truth here probably lies between the two extremes. No poet can write great ballads who has not the power of projecting himself into the life and fate of others. Goethe's "König in Thule" is as objective as any other ballad. The difference between him and Schiller is to be found rather in the style. One might emphasise Schiller's swelling rhythm, his ornate imagery, and Goethe's plastic portraiture, his mellower, deeper art. But as to subjectivity, there is quite as much in Schiller as in Goethe. All this world of action, in which bravery is triumphant, insolence punished, virtue rewarded, in which love and friendship prove superior to every obstacle, and the criminal is brought to justice, in which perseverance and humility prevail—that is Schiller's own world, his own self. He suppresses everything personal, but the choice of the subjects and the way in which they have been deepened and transfigured are characteristic of the man.

¹ *L.c.*, pp. 90, 218.

Schiller's philosophical lyrics show us the poet at the height of his power. They represent his mature thought, his ripe experience illuminated by the glow of poetical feeling, and expressed in fervid, rhetorical language. We marvel at his productivity in these last nine years. In this sphere alone we have to consider poems of such length and importance as "Der Spaziergang," "Das Lied von der Glocke," "Die Macht des Gesanges," "Die Würde der Frauen," "Die Ideale," "Das Ideal und das Leben," "Die Teilung der Erde." What an advance in style since the composition of "Die Künstler"! The "Song of the Bell" is as original in conception as it is masterly in form. The bell of a German village is closely connected with the life of the individual and the community, and it was a happy idea to describe the actual casting of a bell, and to associate therewith the moulder's thoughts on man's life, his birth, marriage, and death, his struggles and his joys. The most striking feature of the poem is the way in which the metre is varied to suit the thoughts expressed. We find bright trochaic movement for the bridal ceremony:—

"Lieblich in der Bräute Locken
Spielt der jungfräuliche Kranz,
Wenn die hellen Kirchenglocken
Laden zu des Festes Glanz";

rapid iambics for the restless activity of the mother of the household, slow movement, and long, heavy vowels in the lines that describe the burial of the matron:—

"Von dem Dome,
Schwer und bang,
Tönt die Glocke
Grabgesang.
Ernst begleiten ihre Trauerschläge
Einen Wanderer auf dem letzten Wege."

The same skill in accommodating the rhythm to the thought is seen in "Die Würde der Frauen." The ideas here expressed seem nowadays very far away, but the beauty and fluency of the language still exercise their spell. His philosophy in "Die Ideale" and "Das Ideal und das Leben" is just as unconvincing. His own point of view, in fact, has changed since the appearance of "Die Künstler." He is far from optimistic now; too many dreams have been shattered; his tone is now one of resignation and calm hope. Here we see how closely these poems are connected with Schiller's own personal experience. He clings to the security of friendship, the certain consolation of ceaseless activity, the confidence that ideals will be realised, if not here, then hereafter. He takes Alcides as the symbol of his thought: here toiling as no other toiled, successful and yet unsuccessful, in another world he receives his due:—

"Des Olympus Harmonien empfangen
Den Verklärten in Kronions Saal,
Und die Göttin mit den Rosenwangen
Reicht ihm lächelnd den Pokal."

In the epigrams, which are serious and philosophical, or sharply satirical, Schiller did not excel. Poems like "Der Tanz," on the other hand, show a remarkably light touch and gracefulness in language and metre. There is no doubt that after 1795 Schiller acquired an altogether different command of poetical language. It is scarcely credible, for example, that the author of the immature songs to Minna in the *Anthologie* should have written such perfect lines as we find in "Die Erwartung." It expresses the feelings of a lover who is waiting for

his mistress, while every sound, every shape in the dim light seems to herald her coming. It is remarkable how near Schiller here comes to Goethe's style, the poetical vision is so much clearer, the attitude to nature so much naiver than usual, and there are lines and images well worthy of Goethe:—

“Die Frucht ist dort gefallen,
Von der eigenen Fülle schwer” ;

or the picture of

“der Säule Flimmern
An der dunkeln Taxuswand” ;

or the coming of the maiden,

“Wenn seine schöne Bürde, leicht bewegt,
Der zarte Fuss zum Sitz der Liebe trägt.”

There is no evidence that this poem is based on any experience, or that Schiller ever had the scene before his eyes. Nevertheless, it is one of the finest poems in the German language, and our admiration must be all the greater for the poet who, from imagination and memory, could conjure up so complete and satisfying a picture. The outlines of the situation are naturally drawn, and the detail is worked in, not only accurately, but with extraordinary insight and delicacy. There can be no doubt that Schiller did study nature, had listened to the melody of things, and gathered in his mind a store of motives for use when needed. Here the lyric borders on the epic, as it sometimes does even in Goethe—the poems of this period, like “Trost in Thränen,” “Schäfers Klagelied,” etc., are examples—and as it frequently does in the great song writers of the nineteenth century. In Schiller's case it was feasible because of his teeming imagination

and rich dramatic power, his faculty of making the visions of his mind stand before us as if they were part of nature. Goethe's universality Schiller certainly did not possess; his knowledge was not so wide nor so accurate, his insight into human nature not so profound; compared with his friend, the summer of his artistic maturity was short. But he has great qualities both as man and poet, his sublime view of the duties of man, his lofty striving, his enthusiasm for virtue and humanity. Carlyle¹ was very near the mark when he wrote, "his greatest faculty was a half-poetical, half-philosophical imagination: a faculty teeming with magnificence and brilliancy; now adorning, or aiding to erect, a stately pyramid of scientific speculation; now brooding over the abysses of thought and feeling, till thoughts and feelings, else unutterable, were embodied in expressive forms, and palaces and landscapes, glowing in ethereal beauty, rose like exhalations from the bosom of the deep."

Friedrich Hölderlin² (1770-1843) should be mentioned immediately after Goethe and Schiller as the third great lyricist of the classical age. He was born at Lauffen on the Neckar. When two years of age he lost his father, and his stepfather when only nine. He was educated for the Church, but the convictions which he formed in his eager study of philosophy determined him to give up the idea of actually officiating as a minister. His earliest poems reveal the influence of Schiller both in their rhetorical

¹ T. Carlyle, *Life of Schiller*, London, 1845. The latest English book is Robertson's *Schiller after a Hundred Years*.

² C. C. T. Litzmann, *F. Hölderlins Leben*, Berlin, 1880.

form and in the tendency to abstract themes, destiny, freedom, humanity, beauty. He shared Schiller's enthusiasm for Greece, and both of his longer works — the novel *Hyperion* and the unfinished drama *Empedokles*—have a Greek background and atmosphere. Both are distinctly subjective in their delineation of the youthful enthusiast who goes out with high hopes into the world, but after misfortune and failure sinks into resignation or pessimism. Hölderlin, too, failed to find a place for himself in the scheme of things. Private tutoring is in no case a career, to a poet it is the most miserable of existences, and Hölderlin's life is the history of few and short moments of happiness, with long spells of hopeless drifting and despondency. Beyond doubt, there must have been some brain weakness to account for his peculiarities, for the sorrows of his life would not have shattered a man of normal strength and temperament. His love experiences form one of the elements of his poetry. The early affection for Elise Lebet, to whom the Lyda poems are addressed, was short-lived; the nature of the girl was too superficial to attract him for long. In 1796, however, when he went to Frankfort as tutor to the children of the banker, Gontard, he found a worthy theme for his poetry. Frau Gontard was a woman of culture and nobility of character; she possessed, too, the warm human sympathy which Hölderlin craved, and the poet became passionately devoted to her. This hopeless love proved the tragedy of his life and the inspiration of his poetry. Poems like "Diotima" and "Abbitte" spring from the depths of his heart, and in the glow of his emotion the style has become clear and beautiful:—

" Heilig Wesen ! gestört hab ich die goldene
 Götterruhe dir oft, und der geheimeren,
 tiefern Schmerzen des Lebens
 hast du manche gelernt von mir.
 O vergiss es, vergib ! gleich dem Gewölke dort
 vor dem friedlichen Mond, geh ich dahin und Du
 ruhst und glänzest in Deiner
 Schöne wieder, Du süßes Licht."

The second feature of Hölderlin's poetry is his devotion to nature. From early boyhood he had been something of a lonely spirit, who found companionship with the flowers and trees, with the sunshine and the breezes, rather than with other men :—

" Mich erzog der Wohllaut des säuselnden Hains,
 Und lieben lernt' ich unter den Blumen."

In " Menons Klage um Diotima " the two themes are beautifully blended. So, too, in " Die Heimat " ; here he sings of his home, the woods and cool streams that once were his joy, his mother and sisters ; he hopes to greet them soon, but he fears that even they cannot bring him peace of mind :—

" aber ich weiss, ich weiss,
 der Liebe Leid, dies heilet so bald mir nicht,
 dies singt kein Wiegenesang, den tröstend
 Sterbliche singen, mir aus dem Busen."

He sings of the sun as a Greek would have sung of Helios. The whole universe is for him alive ; he feels himself to be a part of it, as he watches the unfolding of nature's beauty, and listens to the movement and harmony of her being. This melancholy is ever present, but it is too full of nobility and too restrained to weary us. We feel that the greater his unity with nature, the more helpless is he in the struggle of life, so that he pathetically appeals to the

forms of things around him to withhold their charm ;
the pleasures they would give are turned to mockery :—

“Was weckt ihr mir die Seele? was regt ihr mir
Vergangenes auf, ihr Guten? o schonet mein
Und lasst sie ruhn, die Asche meiner
Freuden, ihr spottet nur.”

The series of poems entitled “Emilia vor ihrem Brauttag” reveal deep insight into the human soul in emotion, and very great skill in the use of the unrhymed metre. His poems read quite differently from those of Klopstock, and the reason is that he has not only a fine ear for the musical rhythm of the individual line, but contrives also so to vary his lines and group them together that the stanza is itself an artistic structure. And what the line is to the stanza, that the latter is to the poem, a perfectly fitting part of the harmonious whole. We see this above all in “Hyperions Schicksalslied” which is universally regarded as his most striking poem. It embodies the pessimistic conviction that the human being is but the sport of destiny, like a drop of water in the cataract thrown from cliff to cliff into uncertain depths. In the first stanzas he pictures the bright happiness and ease of the gods :—

“Ihr wandelt droben im Licht
auf weichem Boden, selige Genien!
Glänzende Götterlüfte
rühren euch leicht,
Wie die Finger der Künstlerin
heilige Saiten.
Schicksallos, wie der schlafende
Säugling, atmen die Himmlischen;
Keusch bewahrt
In bescheidener Knospe,
Blühet ewig

Ihnen der Geist,
 Und die seligen Augen
 Blicken in stiller
 Ewiger Klarheit."

In the last verse he contrasts the helplessness and dependence of man :—

"Doch uns ist gegeben,
 Auf keiner Stätte zu ruhn,
 Es schwinden, es fallen
 Die leidenden Menschen
 Blindlings von einer
 Stunde zur andern,
 Wie Wasser von Klippe
 Zu Klippe geworfen,
 Jahrlang ins Ungewisse hinab."

This is Hölderlin's confession, his view of life. The simplicity and artistry of these lines, the way in which the rhythm brings out the thought, without the use of a single word that could be left out or improved, reveal the master hand. This poem alone would give Hölderlin a place among the great lyricists. His poetical springtime was very short, ten years or so; the shadows that had darkened his view of life grew thicker and thicker; in 1804 he became insane, and remained in mental darkness till his death in 1843. But he has left his mark upon German poetry, as a lyricist of great originality, and as a forerunner of the romanticists in his ardent love of nature, which to him is something nearer and more intimate than it was even to Goethe. He has not the sound judgment, the knowledge, the profundity of a poet of the foremost rank. His great merit lies in the artistic delineation of nature, tinged with gentle melancholy and in the peculiarly haunting melody of his language. The history of his inner life is that of an idealist, he shows

it in his enthusiasms and in his failures; his attitude to nature is, however, that of a realist, and it is this strange blending of the world of sense and the world of emotion that constitutes the peculiar charm of his poetry.

Of the minor poets of the classical age, brief mention must be made. **Christian F. D. Schubart** (1739-91) is a Sturm und Drang nature, a "regular poetical Vesuvius," as Bürger called him. His revolutionary tirades, which savour more of the journalist than the poet, had great influence upon Schiller's early work. Schubart had many gifts, but his tactlessness and unprincipled character rendered his life a misery to himself and a constant worry to his friends. In 1777 the Duke of Württemberg had him confined in the prison of Hohenasperg, where he remained for ten years, till a poem in honour of Frederick the Great led to his liberation. "Das Kaplied" and "Die Fürstengruft" are his best poems. Like Günther, Schubart sways back and forwards between the extremes of piety and of sensuality; his outbursts against despotism, to which he owed much of his popularity, no longer attract us; he seldom, though he possessed talents as a musician and as a poet, rises above his own turbulent self to harmony of thought or life. **Johann Peter Hebel** (1760-1826) struck a popular note with his *Alemannische Gedichte*. They are in the dialect of the Black Forest, and delineate with humour and pathos the simple emotions of peasant life. **Johann Martin Usteri** (1763-1827) wrote songs, ballads, and idylls in the dialect of Zürich. "Freut euch des Lebens" is his best known song. **Johann Gottfried Seume** (1763-1810) led an adventurous life in America, Poland, and France, having been kidnapped and sold for service in war. In "Der

Wilde" he was one of the first to choose a theme which many poets since have attempted—a contrast between the nobility of the savage and the injustice of the white man. In his other poems there is little lyrical feeling or metrical skill. **Christian August Tiedge** (1752-1841) made a reputation, which has not stood the test of time, by a didactic poem "Urania," which treats of God, immortality, and freedom. **Johann Gaudenz von Salis-Sewis** (1762-1834) followed in the footsteps of Klopstock and the Göttingen school. He delineates the charms of nature with great detail but without originality. He celebrates the virtues in poems like "Die stillende Mutter" or he inclines to meditation as in "Das Bild der Lebens." There is an old-world air about his sentiments, his descriptions of the scenes of his youth, and the aspect of the fields in different seasons. In his best pieces, such as "Der Entfernten" and "Lied eines Landmanns in der Fremde," there is tenderness and simple grace. But he generally lacks imagination and warmth; it is seldom that he rises above mediocrity. **Friedrich von Matthison** (1761-1831) is also a disciple of Klopstock. He is fond of sentimental contemplation of nature, from which he passes to meditation upon human life. Elegiac themes like the ephemerality of life and beauty, love and friendship suit his style best. He is fond to excess of mythological allusions, as we see even in the titles of his poems, "Amors Zauber," "Eros," "Psyche." He has a poem to Ossian, and there are many Ossianic touches in his poetry, as:—

"Wie der Mond aus grauer
Nebeldämmrung Flor,
Hebt aus öder Trauer
Sich mein Geist empor."

Many of his poems have been suggested by scenes in Switzerland and Italy, but the picture is seldom impressive. His love poetry, as in "Lied der Liebe," is cold and reflective. Only once, in the well-known song "Adelaide," did he achieve lyrical success. Beethoven's music has contributed very greatly to the popularity of this song, but the four stanzas are lyrically conceived, the imagery is well chosen, and the emotion, without being profound, rises to an artistic climax :—

"Einst, O Wunder, entblüht auf meinem Grabe,
 Eine Blume der Asche meines Herzens ;
 Deutlich schimmert auf jedem Purpurblättchen :
 Adelaide."

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