THE

Irish

Quarterly Review.

VOL. VIII.

DUBLIN:
W. B. KELLY, 8, GRAFTON-STREET.
LONDON: SIMPKIN, MARSHALL AND CO.
M. T. GASSON, 139, ELIZABETH-STREET, MELBOURNE.
TO BE HAD OF ALL BOOKSELLERS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.
1858.

THE

IRISH QUARTERLY REVIEW.

No. XXX.—JULY, 1858.

VOL. VIII.

CONTENTS.

Art. VIII.—POETS AND POETRY OF GERMANY.

Poets and Poetry of Germany—Biographical and Critical Notices, by Madame L. Davésiés De Pontés.—2 Vols. London, Chapman and Hall, 1858.

The poetry of every people undergoes with the nation to which it belongs, certain changes or phases dependant on the growth of taste, intellect, wealth or power. At first the rudeness of barbarism or tribe-life, produces war songs, or metrical accounts of the achievements of heroes, sung perhaps extemporaneously to excite the followers of chiefs to glorious deeds in battle. Mingled with these, the superstitions of heathenism, whose influence on the mind of man in a savage state is greater than that of any earthly power, are introduced to terrify the wavering or cowardly into the observance of the duties they owe their fellow men, by the idea of unseen agents watching their actions. When the nation has settled down to pastoral life, and abandoned the roving, marauding, or conquering phase, the bucolic era arises, when the delights of country life are sung, the woodland deities are invoked, and a host of kind, beneficient fairies, elves, and nymphs, who protect and watch over the husbandman, are invented. The gathering of men into towns, the building of fortalices, and the consequent strife for dominion, give rise to romances, songs celebrating feats of arms, ladies' love, and a more advanced form of religious superstition, founded on the more agreeable part of the creed of the nation. These forms of poetry alternate with each other until the popular element has gained the upper hand, when songs of the affections, high class lyrics, epics and dramas, in varied order, bring the language to its highest state of perfection.

Among some people the first phase partakes more of the heroic than of the mythological, as among the Greeks and Romans, whose mortals were kept separate and inferior to the deities. In others, as the Scandinavians and Teutons, mythology prevails almost exclusively, or the heroes themselves are turned into Gods. Odin, originally a mere mortal, peoples the Walhalla with his paladins and followers. Thor, the god of battles, seems to have been originally conceived as a blacksmith, with his huge hammer by which he vanquished giants. The second phase is almost completely wanting among the relics of

the Teutonic tribes, the only evidence of its having once existed being the legendary lays of gnomes, cobolds, nixes, dwarfs, and other inhabitants of the words and fields, who play a very large part in the pages of early German romance. The third phase is by far the most prolific, reproduced at various intervals from the 8th to the 16th century, alternating with the lyrics of minne-singers, the songs and hymns of the meistersänger, and the legendary tales of wizards, witches, and goblins. When all these had died out, and the wars engendered by the reformation had spent their strength throughout the land, the revival of letters in the rest of Europe produced a chastening influence on the literature of Germany. Bodmer and others, by their influence as professers in many of the universities, fashioned taste of the people and them to a due appreciation of the merits of composition. They commenced the era of modern poetry, which has been brought on by various stages of perfection to the writings of Lessing, Klopstock, Wieland, Schiller and Goethe. Whether the German language has yet attained it greatest degree of perfectibility, is a question not yet decided, and probably will not be finally settled for another half century. But the most reasonable theory is, that it being a language, which in its present form has not been fashioned and shaped into general use, for a long time after the principal tongues of Europe had been so, it may still require a vast deal of developement. Certain it is that its literature within very recent times has advanced with giant strides.

German writers generally distinguish three marked periods of their national poetry. The first or heathen extends from the earliest times, when the achievements of Odin and his fellow deities were celebrated in the Edda, down to the twelfth century, when the Hohenstauffen dynasty ascended the imperial throne. The second or Schwabian period comes down to the times of Wieland and Goethe, whose age formed the third epoch, sometimes called after Charles Augustus, Duke of Weimar, a celebrated revivor and patron of letters. The heathen division cannot be said to be properly named, as it includes not only many Saga, dating from before the spread of Christianity in the north, but also many metrical ballads and poems of the middle ages, in which are introduced the superstitions and chivalry of the new religion. This classification is however very convenient, as the poetic power of the German people did not during that great lapse of time, undergo any considerable increase of strength or perfection.

The earliest recorded writer in German prose or verse is Ovid, who states that when he was exiled among the Getae, he attempted to compose a book in their barbarous language.

Ah! pudet! et Getico scripsi sermone libellum.
Structaque sunt nostris barbara verba modis.

It does not appear however what was the nature of the tongue in which he composed, most probably Gothic, resembling very little in structure the modern German. He chose for subject the decease and apotheosis of Augustus, no doubt in order to gain some favor with the emperor and shorten his exile.

From what period the Edda dates cannot at present be satisfactorily ascertained. No doubt it has been added to, and enlarged at various times. The collection of the present poems under that name is chiefly due to Charlemagne. They treat of the achievements of Odin or Wodin, and his heroes of the Walhalla, and indicate a great analogy between the ancient mythology of Greece and Rome, and that of Scandinavia or the Teutonic races. Some doubt has been thrown upon the identity of the divinities of the Scandinavians and Teutons, but we find that the Anglo-Saxons of Britain had the very same deities and traditions respecting them, before the introduction of Christianity, as are mentioned in the Edda. Odin appears to be the Jove although some consider him more resembling Mercury; Thor's "giant strength and redoubtable hammer" have a great affinity with the attributes of Hercules. Balder suggests the idea of the gentle Apollo; and Hertha, who drives through the land in a car drawn by white oxen, disarming warriors, causing the flowers and fruits of the earth to spring forth at her touch, recalls at once the benignant reign of Ceres. Mixed up with the actions of these deities are many legends concerning remarkable personages, the most striking of which, that of Wieland or Veland Smith, brings to mind at once certain superstitions formerly existing in parts of England, and the Grecian fable of Icarus, the Cretan, who gave his name to a part of the sea. Wieland was a cunning forger of metal, who having married one of the *Valkyres*, or maidens presiding over the carnage of battle, is deserted by her at the sound of a trumpet. She flies away from him by means of a robe of feathers which he endeavours to imitate. The King of Sweden seizes him, and compels him to work night and day, having cut his ham-strings in order to prevent his escape. Wieland revenges

himself by slaying the king's two sons, making drinking-cups of their sculls, and breast-clasps of their teeth, as a present for the parents. He flies away afterwards with the king's daughter, having discovered the secret of the robe of feathers, and mocks the king in the distance with an account of his revenge.

Attached to this mythology is a goodly array of spirits of a minor order, Elves, Dwarfs, Gnomes, Cobolds, and Nixes, who peopled the woods, fields, and rocky caverns, in the same manner as the Fauns, and Nymphs did among the Greeks and Romans, and interfered in the affairs of men. The stories of them and their good or evil propensities are innumerable, but the most remarkable are those of the white women, denoting a transition from Paganism to the rites of Christianity.

There are the white women who often appear at early dawn, or dewy evening with their pale sad faces and shadowy forms; these are the goddesses of ancient Paganism condemned to wander through ages to expiate the guilt of having received divine worship, and sentenced at length to eternal punishment unless redeemed by mortal aid. At certain times they are permitted to appear to human view to seek that which alone can procure them salvation. A fisherman in the neighbourhood of Fieben, suddenly beheld a white woman standing before him; "Home, home!" she cried, "thy wife has brought a boy into the world, carry it hither, let me kiss it that I may be redeemed." The fisherman amazed, hastened to his cottage and found all as the white woman had said; but fearing very naturally to trust his new born infant into the hands of this unearthly being till protected by the holy rite of baptism, he had this ceremony performed, and then bore it to the sea shore where he found the white woman weeping bitterly, for the condition attached to her salvation was, that the child should not be baptized! and still at times does she appear upon the sea shore sighing and lamenting.

The goddess Hertha, mentioned by Tacitus, designated in the middle ages by the name of Perchta, plays a most conspicuous part in these legends. She had been spouse to Odin, and watched over certain districts of the country with beneficent sway, having the privilege of appearing on the feast of the three kings to the inhabitants of upper earth. In consequence however of a slight put upon her and her attendant dwarfs, she withdrew from the neighbourhood, which soon lost its fertility, and became lone and desolate. Some of those fables indicate the influence which the first seeds of Christianity had among the people, and the way in which the priests endeavoured to turn these superstitions to the advantage of the new creed.

The translation of the Scriptures in the Mæso Gothic tongue, done by Ulphilas, Bishop of the Visigoths, in the middle of the fourth century, may be looked upon as the earliest specimen of German literature extant. It is still preserved in the Cathedral at Upsal under the title of the "silver codex," having been brought from Prague by Count Königsmark. It is partially written in metre, and adheres in many passages to the rythm of the Greek version. Thus in Matthew, chap. xi. verse xvii, the original runs thus :—

Ηυλησαμεν υμιν, και ουκ ωρχησασθε
Εθρηνησαμεν υμιν, και ουκ εκοψασθε.

The meaning of which is ; "*we have piped to you and you have not danced ; we have lamented and you have not mourned.*" The Mæso Gothic version of Ulphilas is as follows :—

Swiglodedum izwis, jah ni plinsideduth,
Gaunodedum izwis, jah ni gaigeroduth.

The words of this passage do not seem to have much affinity with modern German, except those "jah ni," which are evidently the first forms of the "ja nicht" of the present day.

After Ulphilas a great hiatus of nearly four hundred years occurs, during which there does not appear to have been any noted lay produced among the German nations. No doubt they had their warlike chaunts and songs celebrating achievements of their heroes, but the first signs of revival are in the eight century, when the Northmen began to form their piratical excursions. One of these "Ragnar the sea king," the terror of the coasts, who was taken prisoner while invading the territories of Ella, King of Northumberland, and perished stung to death by serpents in a loathsome dungeon, has left behind him an ode sung in the midst of tortures. It is composed of short strophes, without rhyme, each commencing with the refrain "we fought with the sword." A series of similar lays, in which may be reckoned the Weissbrunnen Gebet, Hildebrand lied, Walter of Aquitaine and Beowulf, form the Frankish period of German poetry, in which a certain number of characters are constantly reproduced in different views and adventures. They are rhymeless, the measure consisting of a species of alliteration, formed by the accentuation of the principal words in each line commencing with the same consonants. The hero Siegfried, Etzel, or Attila, King of the Huns, Theodoric the Great under the name of Dietrich of Berne or

Verona, Günther, King of the Burgandians, and his vassals Hagan and Hildebraud, are the principal personages running through the whole.

Walter of Aquitaine appears to be the most complete of the series, although the only manuscripts now extant of it are in the Latin tongue. It commences with an account of an expedition by Etzel and his Hunnish army, in which he takes Hagan and Walter, then mere youths, as captives from the Burgundians. When they grow up the former escapes from his servitude, and the other having made Etzel and his court drunk, flies off with the king's daughter Hildegunda and two boxes of treasures. They arrive in the territories of Günther, the King of Burgandy, who sends out Hagan and twelve picked men to seize the maiden and jewels. They are vanquished by Walter and Hagan's son Patafred slain. Gunther and Hagan afterwards attacked Walter together, and fight until one has lost a hand, another an eye, and the third a foot, when they consider it right to make up the quarrel, become good friends, and return to Worms in company. This lay is attributed to a monk of St. Gall, Eckard, who lived in the ninth century. A manuscript copy dating from about that period is still preserved in the library at Carlsruhe. From some passages translated by Madame Pontés it would appear to have been written in a discursive ballad style, and gives a good idea of the manners of that strange age. Walter's declaration of love to Hildegunda, when he persuades her to fly with him, would not disgrace some of the more finished romances of the present day. He finds Hildegunda pensive and alone in the royal apartment, and the following scene takes place :—

Upon the maiden's lips he prest a tender kiss, the first.
Give me a draught of wine, he cried, or I must die of thirst.
Not long the maiden tarried, she loved the hero bold;
She filled with rich and sparkling wine the cup of ruddy gold.

She gave it to the warrior; he crossed himself and drank;
Then clasped in his the maiden's hand, her gentle zeal to thank.
She did not draw her hand away; but fixed on her his eye,
Sir Walter drained the generous draught and laid the goblet by.

I was destined for thy husband; thou wert chosen for my bride;
How often, lovely maiden, has the youth stood by thy side!
And never has a single word those lips of coral passed,
And never e'en a single glance thou hast deigned on him to cast.

But why deny each other in this sad and foreign land,
The only consolation which we can yet command?
But she did not dare to trust him, that fair and timid maid.
Awile she kept her peace, and then looked full at him and said;

"Thy tongue affects a language which is foreign to thy heart;
It is but bitter mockery, in which love has no part;
Young queens of radiant beauty thy hand and homage crave:
How canst thou think of Hildegand, the captive and the slave?"

Then thus the prudent hero to the damsel made reply;
"Nay, speak to me without deceit, lay empty phrases by;
I have spoken to thee frankly, from my very heart, believe.
It is the truth, sweet maiden, Walter knows not to deceive."

Then at his feet the maiden sank, and cried with trembling tone,
"Command whate'er thou listest, I am thine and thine alone,
No power on earth shall hinder me thy bidding to fulfill;
For Hildegand lives only to do her Walter's will."

We now enter upon the cycle of the Niebelungen, containing several lays all relating to the same personages under different phases, and forming such a train of extraordinary encounters as are read of in Ariosto's Orlando Furioso. The first is that of the Horny Siegfried, who may be styled the Achilles of the North, for he owes his extraordinary power to a bath of dragon's blood, which changes the surface of his body into horn, and makes him invulnerable. He delivers Chriemhild, a princess of Burgundy, from the jaws of a monstrous giant, and is married to her at Worms to be stabbed by Hagan, Günther's fierce vassal, in the only spot where he is vulnerable. Thus the termination of the poem is anti-classical, ending in the slaughter of the hero himself.

The Niebelungen lay itself, the crowning effort of ancient German chivalrous poetry, is of such a truculent nature that it is very difficult to conceive how it can have formed the delight of the ladies' bower of those ages of romance. The characters are nearly the same as before; Siegfried is introduced winning Chriemhild, the sister of Günther, by his prowess. The Burgundian king, seeking to obtain the hand of Brunhild, a warlike princess of Isenland, employs Siegfried to overcome her in the combat. A rivalry ensues between the two ladies, and Brunhild obtains the assassination of Siegfried. Chriemhild, for the sake of revenge, marries Etzel, the king of the Huns, and having invited her brother Günther and his wife to a banquet, procures them to be murdered. A general slaughter ensues, only three of the characters being left alive at the end of the poem. The action of the epic extends over a great period of years, nearly thirty, and by some has been regarded as proceeding from several hands, not put together by one composer. There are many passages of great power and beauty, impossible to give in a translation, which have caused

it to be compared with the great Greek and Roman heroic poems, but its unartistic arrangement, prolixity, and truculent termination, depreciate very much its merits as a production of human genius.

Another lay of this cycle, the Gudrune, may be considered to have more interest for our readers, as one of the principal personages is Siegbert, king of Ireland, and Hagan, his son. Hilda, the daughter of the latter, is persecuted by three royal suitors, who carry her off at various times, but she is at length married to her real lover, Herwig. The construction of the poem and verse is said to be much superior to the other lays, while many tender and artistic touches soften the harsher manners of the age pourtrayed. This, along with the other Niebelungen, was preserved in the Castle Ambras, near Innspruck in the Tyrol, by the Emperor Maximilian the First in 1517. It contains some 4,700 verses, of a gentle, melodious kind, well calculated to draw the reader on to a full appreciation of its beauties.

Another cycle, that of Dietrich of Berne, or Theodoric of Verona, contains the Ecken Ausfahrt, Battle of Ravenna, Dwarf Laurin, and the Rosengarten. The principal hero throughout is Dietrich, but in the last poem several of the characters of the Niebelungen are introduced. It begins thus in ballad style :—

Upon the lordly Rhine, there lies a fair and goodly town,
An antique city and well known to knight of high renown.
Here dwelt a gallant hero, all both knew and feared his sword;
His name was Giebig, and he reigned, a mighty prince and lord.

His gentle wife had given him three sons both fair and brave;
The fourth child was a girl, who brought unto a bloody grave
Full many a noble warrior, as the old tale hath said.
Her name was Chriemhild; never yet was seen a lovelier maid.

A garden of sweet roses was the beauteous virgin's pride;
A mile at least it was in length, and half a mile 'twas wide.
Around, instead of walls of stone, was a silken thread so fine.
No bower on earth, Chriemhild exclaimed, is like this bower of mine.

The bower is guarded by twelve knights, whom Dietrich and his followers engage to overcome. All are conquered except the horny Siegfried, husband to Chriemhild, whom on account of his early friendship Dietrich does not wish to fight. He is induced to do so, however, by a stratagem of one of his own warriors, old Hildebrand, and comes off victorious. There is more of chivalry and knightly bearing in this poem than in the others. It remained a favorite romance in Germany up

to the 17th century, and is the last of the extraordinary ballads celebrating the half barbarian heroes of the middle ages.

The era of Charlemagne from the 9th to the 12th century, did not produce much original composition in the vernacular German, although the conqueror and lawgiver of the Saxons established schools and universities in every direction, to foster the growing desire for learning in Europe. The chief productions were in the Latin tongue, except some few of a religious character in the native dialect, Heliand's Evangelical Harmonies, and the Ludwig's lied, which celebrated the victory of Louis III. over the Normans at Salcourt. The latter was written by a monk named Herschell, who may have wielded the sword and lance, as well as conned his breviary, in the troublous times. There existed however a cultivator of the drama in the person of Hroswitha, a nun of the convent of Gandersheim, founded by Ludolf of Saxony in 859. She imitated Terence, wrote six plays as she said herself "to the glorification of female chastity," six legends on saintly subjects and a panegyric on the Othos. This was the age of mysteries and farces, in which sacred events were represented according to holy writ for the edification of the people.

During the reigns of the Othos, Henry IV. and Henry VI. there does not appear to have been any advance made in literature or poetry by the German race. Their language still partook very much of the Frankish and Gothic dialects, in which almost the only remaining song, the Anno Lied in praise of Anno, Archbishop of Cologne, is written. There succeeded however shortly after a new cycle, or series of poems, similar to those of the Niebelungan, called the Lombard, evincing a more advanced state of civilization, more exclusively Christian belief, and more knightly manners in the heroes. These were Duke Ernest of Swabia, Count Rudolph, King Ruother, Orendel, &c. The last is the legend of the holy coat of Treves, and commences with a detailed account of the Saviour's death. It tells how the coat is thrown into the sea, swallowed by a fish, and found inside the animal. It relates the adventures of Orendel, in searching for it, how he rescues a princess from her rebellious vassals, and is rescued in turn by her, with the aid of a dwarf. The whole is evidently of a piece with the extravagant romances of the middle ages, brought to such perfection in Italy.

With Conrad III., of the Hohenstauffen dynasty, there arose a new spirit of poetry throughout Germany. The cru-

sades had been carried on for some time, blending together the different nations of Europe, and importing the manners of one into the other. The Troubadours and Trouvères of France carried with them a prevailing influence, which changed the habits of the German courts from their semi-barbarous roughness, to an excess of chivalrous and almost effeminate luxury The minne-singers imitated the minstrels of the other side of the Rhine, almost deified their lady loves. "Frau minne," (love) became the divinity of the age, her favourite haunt being settled in Horselberg, a mountain near Eisenach in Thuringia, and called the Venusberg.

The Minne-singers with rare exceptions belonged to the order of knighthood. Their duty was to protect the feeble, to defend the oppressed. Every knight had his lady-love, who was in most cases, the wife of another. So universally indeed was this usage recognised, that the husbands generally acquiesced without any difficulty, and in their turn benefitted by the privilege. In a Provençal romance, Philomena, composed in the 12th century by a monk whose name has not come down to us, Oriunde, the wife of the King Matran, besieged in Narbonne by the army of Charlemagne, chances to see the Paladin Roland, and they become enamoured of each other. In consequence Oriunde most unpatriotically rejoices in the success of the foe, and to the just reproaches of her husband, that her delight is the result of her love for Roland, and that one day she will be punished for it, she replies, "Seigneur, occupy yourself with your wars, and leave me and my love. It does not dishonour you since I love so noble a chevalier as Roland, nephew to Charlemagne, and with chaste affection." Matran having heard this, retired quite discomfited and abashed.

All husbands, however, were not quite so accommodating. The Count de Limousin for instance, not only banished Bernard Count de Ventadour from his court and kingdom, on discovering his amorous devotion to his wife, though we are assured it was perfectly innocent, but actually shut up the poor lady in her chamber, where he kept her a close prisoner for a considerable time. But such instances of exaggerated scruples seem to have been the exception not the rule. That the choice of a knight or a lady-love was regarded as an affair of no ordinary importance, is attested by the ceremonies, with which it was everywhere accompanied. The knight kneeling down before his lady, swore to serve her faithfully until death, while the fair one accepted his services, vowed truth and devotion, presented him a ring, and then raising him, imprinted a chaste kiss on his forehead. Although it was in France, and above all in Provence, that those singular customs took their rise, the Germans as we shall see, were not long behind their neighbours in romantic gallantry.

Of course marriage was reduced to a mere material necessity, with which love was deemed absolutely incompatible. To what

strange anomalies this system gave rise may be imagined; a lady promised one of her adorers to accept him for her knight, if the other to whom she was sincerely attached, was lost to her. Having, however, married the object of her affection, and happening to love him still although he had become her husband, she was somewhat embarrassed when his rival claimed the fulfilment of her engagement, and refused to listen to his suit, But Eleanor of Poitiers, to whom the case was referred, decided it against her, alleging that she had really lost her lover, by accepting him as her lord.

This curious system was not however carried so far in Germany; the minne-singers who were all noblemen attached themselves to the courts of particular princes, by whom they were held in great respect. The dialect in which their lays were written was principally Swabian, from the native country of the reigning family. The first lyric in the German language is referred to Henry VI., son of the great Barbarossa. Spervogel and Wernher von Tegernsee produced devotional verses, and Henry von Veldecke, the most famous of all, wrote a new Æneid, in a low dialect of German. Frederick von Haissen was so engrossed by the devotion for his lady-love, that he continually said "good night" for "good morning," and turned his doublet wrong side outwards. He died in the Holy Land in 1190, having rendered his name and that of his lady-love famous by his deeds of valour. The reign of the Emperor Frederick II. may be looked upon as the golden age of poetry in the middle ages. The lays of 160 minne-singers of the period have been collected by Roger Manesse of Zurich, himself a member of the craft in 1300, of which Walter von der Vogelweide, Gottfried von Strasbourg, Wolfram von Eschenboch Hartmann von der Aue, Ulrich von Lichtenstein, and Jacob von der Warte were certainly the most superior. The last has left the following delicate little lay.

I.

Hark, the little birds are singing,
Merrily o'er mead and vale;
Lays of grateful praise are ringing,
From the daintie nightingale.
Look upon the dewy brae,
On the heath with wild flowers bright,
See how gaily they're bedight,
By the bounteous hand of May.

II.

Many a pretty little flower
Laughs out from the sweet May dew;
In the sunshine, hill and bower
Don their very gayest hue.
What shall soothe my bosom's care!
What shall comfort me I trow!
She with whom I fain were now,
Will not listen to my prayer!

A version of the poems of Walter von der Vogelweide was brought out in the modern German tongue in 1832, by Dr. Carl Simrock, and some by Tieck. The following will give some idea of his style.

I.

To me it chanced, as to a wayward boy,
Who seeks in vain the charming face to clasp
Which in the glass he sees, with eager joy,
Until the mirror breaks within his grasp:
Then all his joy is turned to woe and pain.
E'en so I dreamed that bliss would be mine own,
When I sought my sweet lady, but in vain;
Much grief from that fond love,
And only grief I've known.

II.

1.

Both pure and beauteous is my lady fair,
And chaste and lovely as the lily white;
Her breath is balmy as the perfumed air,
Her eyes are like the sky on summer's night:
The strawberry is not redder than her lip,
Would I were but a bee, its dewy sweet to sip!

2.

When in her bower, to lyre or lute she sings,
The nightingale doth hush her wonted strain;
The falcon rests upon his outstretched wings
And hovers listening o'er the grassy plains,
In all she does, there is so much of grace,
I know not which most sweet,
Her music or her face.

3.

Her beauty thaws my heart, e'en as the sun
Thaws ice or snow; but oh! not unto me
Doth she show forth her beams! she is not won
By sigh, or pray'r, or tuneful melody;
And yet I've loved her from a little child,
And sum up ev'ry hour that she on me hath smiled.

4.

What boots it that all others greet my lays
With loud applause! that ladies fair and bright
List to my song! I only seek her praise,
I only seek to shine in her dear sight:
Star of my solitary heart! look down,
And soothe my bitter woe, or kill me with thy frown.

Ulrich von Lichtenstein was a wealthy Austrian noble, who pursued his lady with the most unremitting gallantry. He was disfigured by a deformity of three lips, of which he got one cut off for her sake; then he lost a finger in a tournament in her honor; afterwards he assumed female attire and having obtained an interview with his mistress, she caused him to be trust out of the castle window into the moat for his devotion. At length he was cured of his love at the age of forty-five by being maimed at the command of the cruel fair one.

Conrad von Würtzburg, Henry von Ofterdingen and Klingsohr of Hungary, were the last most celebrated minnesingers. The two latter are said to to have defeated all the other minstrels of Germany at the "minstrel war on the Wartburg," which was made the subject of a poem in the year 1207. The contest is said to have taken place at the court of Hermann von Thuringen, the most polished in Germany, and was decided by the lady of the castle, as a tournament. The executioner did the duty of his office on the unsuccessful party, a barbarous practice not to be found in the other annals of provençal or German lyrics.

To the minne-singers succeeded a number of romance writers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Their favorite subject was that of the Saint Graal, or vase in which the water was turned into wine at the marriage feast of Cannah. Another founded on Arthur and the Knights of the round table, was called the Pareival, composed by Wolfram of Eschenbach, who along with Godfrey of Strasbourgh and Hartmann von der

Aue, my be considered the novel writers of their age. Their dimensions however are altogether too large for our space.

Another cycle followed, that of the romance, whose heroes were taken from ancient history. The Alexander-lied and Pseudo Callisthenes are specimens of this. Charlemagne and his Paladins furnished also subjects for the rhymers of the day in the Roland-lied, Flos and Blankflos, and several of a like nature. These however all declined at the accession of Rudolph of Hapsburg in the end of the thirteenth century. This emperor being wholly engrossed in the improvement of the commerce and wellbeing of his subjects, discouraged to a great extent the minstrelsy, which had been supported by his predecessors. It died away for a long period, to be reproduced in another form among the lower classes, the artizans of some of the most considerable towns of Southern Germany, Mainz, Augsburg, Ulm and Nurnberg, who obtained the appellation of meister sänger. Their songs have generally a religious or moral character, such as those of Rosenblut, and Michael Beeheim. Fables became also a favorite form of poetry, those of Bona and Hugo of Trimberg being the most celebrated. The Narrenshiff, or vessel of fools by Sebastian Brant must be considered an able satire on the absurd manners of the age. At this period arose the sanguinary wars of the Hussites in Bohemia, which so disturbed the centre of Germany, that very few traces of poetic composition during their continuance have been left.

The drama however began now to shew some signs of cultivation. As in the rest of Europe it commenced by mysteries taken from subjects of Holy Writ. The devil was a favorite character, on whom all sorts of tricks were played by cunning mortals. Dr. Paraselsus especially was often pitted against his satanic majesty on the stage. The character of these productions is of too scurrilous and doggrel a character to merit a place among the literature of a nation.

The French fable of Renard the fox, was successfully imitated in Germany at different times. Goethe has given since a delightful version of it, but the earliest " Reinecke fuchs" dates from the thirteenth century, and is supposed to have contained a covert satire on a certain Duke of Lorraine. Its subject is well known as representing a meeting of the animals, at which the lion presides, the pranks and subtleties of the fox forming the main interest of the piece. The wit or incident is not at

all equal to that of the French original, although it remained a popular favorite up to the middle of the last century. The Narren Beschworung, or Exorcism of Fools, and the Schilburghers, were satirical poems of the same class, levelled against some of the religious fanatics of the day, or the assumed airs of grandeur of some of the wealthy burghers of the towns.

The writings of Luther in the commencement of the sixteenth centuary, his translation of the Scriptures into the vulgar tongue, and the invention of printing, had a great effect in hastening on the perfection of German literature. Between his language and that of Bona two centuries before, there is as much difference, as between Chaucer and the English writers of the sixteenth century. His studies were not confined to Theology; he delighted in poetry and music, and influenced very much in these matters the spirit of his times. The Reformation produced many men of independent genius in all ranks of life, warriors, poets and theologians. Ulrich von Hutten was one of these adventurous men whom that age brought forth. He had been destined for the cloister but fled from it in disgust. His mishaps and those of his cousin Johann, who was murdered by Ulrich, Duke of Wurtemberg, on account of too handsome a wife, would form a good tale of romance. He has left various sonnets and small poems commemorating many of them. Germany at this time was troubled with the horrors of the war of the peasants, who had risen against the burthens imposed upon them and the coercion of their religion. Luther at first was the main cause in rousing them, but subsequently he declared that they ought to be exterminated. The sect of the Anabaptists renewed the contest and relighted the flames of civil war. In other countries the arts of peace, literature, sculpture, painting, &c., were being carried to the highest perfection, while Germany could only produce Hans Sach, Hans Holz, Fischart, and a few of less note. The first was a shoemaker, but of a most prolific vein in composition. Before he was sixty years of age, he had written some sixty thousand verses, besides three hundred comedies. Many of the former are hymns, others fables and satires full of humour and naiveté, which notwithstanding their rudeness, have elicited the praise of Goethe himself.

The benightedness of this period is no better evinced than in the persecution which was practised on many unfortunate old women and men on the plea of witchcraft, and the general

belief in the power of certain men, such as Paracelsus and Cornelius Agrippa, to control the elements. The legends of women changed into wolves, and witches assuming various forms, became so multiplied as to form the staple romance for nearly a century. The persecution of the unfortunate victims reached such a height that between the middle of the 16th and the end of the 17th century, it is calculated not less than 100,000 persons perished by fire. In the Bishopric of Bamberg in the space of three years, 225 women were committed to the flames. No wonder that the story of Dr. Faustus became one of the favourite themes of poetry and the drama. The subject was not always such as it is represented by Goethe, and it was frequently brought out in puppet shows and marionettes to the delight of the vulgar. In one piece 'tis by means of a ring that he recovers his youth, when he travels to Venice, Athens, and other luxurious cities. The ring is stolen from his finger by a lady that he loves; he loses his youth, and is carried off by the demon. In another play he has the power of evoking the heroes and heroines of Homer, and brings up Helen of Greece for some of his boon companions at a tavern. That such a person as Dr. Faustus really existed there can be no doubt, as he is mentioned personally by several writers of the age. Johannes Manlius knew him, and says that he was born at the village of Kundlingen in Wurtemberg, and studied magic at Cracow. He seems to have resided a considerable time at Leipsic, where many of his exploits are depicted on the walls of Auerbach's cellar. Here it was that he played the trick upon the students, who asked him to cause to grow from the table a vine covered with bunches of grapes. He did so, but when they stretched forth their hands to seize the bunches, the tree vanished, and each man found his neighbour pulling his nose with one hand, with a knife in the other as if about to sever it. The doctor's ride out of the cellar on a cask is also commemorated there, and other feats, which at one time formed the subject of many a ballad or farce in the middle ages.

The calamities of the thirty years' war retarded for a considerable time the growth of letters in Germany; it was not until near the end of the 17th century, that they began to revive from the prostration state. Gradually, however, certain schools of poetry began to arise, which though humble at first, laid the way for the great blaze of genius afterwards displayed. The

Silesian school of which Opitz was the leader; that of Konigsberg whose chiefs were Dach and Albert, that of Nuremberg ruled by Philip von Lezen and Holstein, with the second Silesian of Hoffmannswaldau and Lohenstein were the academies, in which the rising taste was fostered. The greater number of these however are mere versifiers, much inferior to Paul Fleming, who has left many gems of sacred poetry. Andreas Gryphius composed several successful tragedies, as well as hymns. Paul Gerahrdt too, a preacher at the Nicolair Church in Berlin, delighted his age by various effusions on moral and sacred subjects. All these however were only as preludes to the opening of the modern vein of poetry.

In the midst of the thirty years war, Gottsched published his poems, and was at once "hailed as a star of the first magnitude." He has been since reduced very much in public estimation on account of his want of invention, stiffness and dearth of imagination. But great thanks must be due to him, as a professor in the university of Leipsic for asserting the rights of the German tongue against the Latin, and his improvements in dramatic composition. Frederick the Great, who had a contempt for German poetry, permitted his verses to be recited before him.

But the real regenerator of letters was Jacob Bodmer of Zurich; he stands in the very gate of the temple of the modern Germanic muses. He was at first sent to Bergamo in Italy to prepare himself for mercantile pursuits. He threw these up, returned to Berlin, applied himself to attending lectures, studying English, and at length was appointed professor of literature at Berlin. He admired Addison and Sir Roger de Coverly, published a journal on the model of the Spectator, and produced a translation of Milton's Paradise Lost. These created a paper war between him and Gottsched, who then reigned supreme, and served to open the eyes of his fellow countrymen to the defects in their national letters. His two comedies "The Triumph of the good Wife," and "Mute Beauty" were acted with great applause, causing a revolution in public taste. To him is due the collection of the lays of the minne-singers, the discovery of the Niebelungen Lied and the Parcival. Several of his school, Kestner, Professor Rammler, Hagedorn, Von Haller, the two Schlegels and Gleim, contributed very much to improve the public taste, and to soften down the rough method of composition of the old schools.

The last writer, Gleim, was principally inspired by the heroism of Frederick the Great contending against nearly all the power of Europe. His war songs and hymns were chaunted by the Prussian soldiers, and contributed not a little to the discomfiture of the warriors of Maria Theresa. He produced also several fables, which gained a great reputation at Berlin. His desire was to form a complete German Academy of literature at Halberstadt, by drawing there together the first men of the country; but the public mind was not ripe for such a consummation. He lived until the first era of the French Revolution, and predicted a dictatorship among the French people.

This period produced four other names, once the reigning monarchs of their day, Kleist, Gellert, Gessner, and Uz. The first was an officer in the Prussian army during the seven years' war, and gained great favour with Frederick on account of the hymns and chaunts, by means of which he inspired the courage of the soldiery. His poem of "Spring," raised him to a great height in the estimation of his countrymen, although it contained much of the rhapsody of the times about shepherds and shepherdesses. At the battle of Kunersdorf, he led his battalion as major against a battery, and had his leg and arm smashed. The Cossacks then stripped and rifled him, leaving him helpless on a heap of rubbish. He was carried off prisoner to Frankfort on the Oder, where he died from hardship.

Gellert filled the post of professor of literature at Leipsic, where he produced many hymns, fables and dramas, very few of which are above mediocrity. Yet he was very famous in his time, and rendered essential service to German literature, by his defence of it against Frederick the Great, who held the Belles Lettres of his countrymen in contempt. He delivered also moral lectures in the Oratorium of the University, which had a very beneficial influence upon the youth of his age. Gessner is well known in this country for his Idyls and the death of Abel, the characters in which are of such a pure, simple style, as not to belong to this earth at all. His effusions are very pleasing, but convey no feeling of reality. Uz enjoyed a large reputation during his life, and was even styled the Anacreon of Germany; but he is now considered as wholly unworthy of the crown of laurels.

We have now arrived at a very striking era in German poetry, that of Klopstock's Messiah. He was the son of a farmer, but having received a good education in his native

town, and at the University of Schulpforte, he was able to appreciate the translation of the "Paradise Lost" by Bodmer, and to see how much his countrymen were inferior in the cultivation of the muses to the English and French. He undertook the composition of an original poem, the Messiah, and having first prepared matter for three cantos in prose, selected the hexameter verse after the ancient model, as most suiting the sublimity of the subject. The first part appeared in a paper named "Bremen Contributions," and produced at once a burst of enthusiasm in its favour. The new metre was rapturously applauded as being peculiarly suited for the German tongue, on account of its involved construction similar to that of ancient Greek and Latin. This however may be questioned, from the difficulty of producing dactyls and spondees, long and short syllables, where the words are composed of so many consecutive consonants. It procured for him, however, the admiration of his countrymen and the patronage of the King of Denmark, who settled on him a pension of 150 thalers, or about 24 pounds a-year.

He was not at first so successful with the fair sex. A young lady, named Fanny, to whom he had devoted himself heart and soul, listened to his proposals and ended by marrying another gentleman. He was introduced, however, by his friend Giessecker to a second, Margaretha Mollar, who had criticised his poem in a favourable style, and consoled him for his lost love. She corresponded with him under the name of Meta, and they were finally united in 1754. Unfortunately he lost her in four years afterwards, when giving birth to a child, shortly after his father had been carried to the grave. The image of domestic happiness was not entirely lost to his mind, although he mourned for a long time over the wife of his youth. After 33 years of widowhood, in a green old age, he was again married to Frau von Wideman, who kindly tended his declining years.

His great poem was not completed until the year 1773, after 27 years of labour. The subject of it is so well-known, that it is needless to set it forth here. There are, however, some strange characters in it, such as the lovers, Selmar and Sidli, who are resuscitated beings, constantly engaged in contemplation and praise. Where their mutual affection, or worldly feeling comes from, it is difficult to discover. Abbadona, a fallen seraph, who had been induced by Satan to rebel,

is filled with unceasing remorse and repentance. After being reduced to despair on the day of Judgment, he is finally pardoned and received into Heaven, contrary to the creed of the Christian. The tone of the composition is kept at such a height, that it requires a religiously enthusiastic mind, to be able to follow the poet. Or as Madame de Stael says; "a certain degree of monotony results from a subject so continually elevated; the soul is fatigued by too much contemplation; the author occasionally requires readers already resuscitated like Sidli and Selmar."

We will give the following specimens of his composition in order that the reader may have some idea, both of the new style of metre and versification, which he introduced into the German, and be able at the same time to understand a little of the spirit of the original. The commencement of the Messiah in the vernacular, is in these words:

Sing, unsterbliche Seele, der sündigen menschen Erlösung,
Die der Messias auf Erden in seiner Menschheit vollendet,
Und durch die er Adams Geschlecht zu der Liebe der Gottheit,
Leidend getödtet und verherrlichet, wieder erhöht hat.
Also geschah des Ewigen Wille, Vergebens erhub sich
Satan gegen den göttlichen sohn; umsonst stand Juda
Gegen ihn auf; er that's und vollbrachte die Grosse Versöhnung.

Which have been translated by the celebrated Lessing into the following Latin hexameters.

Quam sub carne Deus lustrans terrena novavit
Crimine depressis, cane, mens œterna, salutem,
Infelicis Adœ generi dum foderis icti,
Sanguine reclusit fontem cœlestis amoris.
Hoc fatum æterni. Frustra se opponere tentat
Divinæ proli Satanas; Judæque frustra
Nititur. Est aggressus opus, totumque peregit.

The passage where Abbadona is pardoned and received into eternal bliss is thus rendered by Madame Pontés.

"Abbadona bows down in mute despair, when after a long and solemn silence he hears the joyful words.

Come! Abbadona! come to thy Redeemer:
* * * * * * * * * *
Then swift as borne upon the tempest's wings,
The seraph soared on high. Scarce had he breathed
Celestial air, when once again his form
Assumed angelic beauty, and his eyes
Resting on God, beamed forth with light divine.
No longer could Abdiel restrain his joy;

With arms outstretch'd, he rushed towards the being
He loved so well; his cheeks glowed with delight,
Trembling with bliss he sank upon the breast
Of the forgiven; but from that glad embrace
The seraph tore himself, and lowly sunk
Before the Judge's throne. On every side
Arose the sound of weeping—blissful sound.

Klopstock carried his love of the ancient metre and style of composition into his minor poems. He composed a great number of odes in various forms of construction to be found in Horace, Iambic, Trochaic, Cataleptic, &c. One example will be sufficient to shew the effect in German.

Sie schläft, oh, giess ihr, Schlummer, geflügeltes
Balsamisch Leben über ihr sanftes Herz!
Aus Edens ungetrübter Quelle
Schöpfe den lichten, krystallnen Tropfen.

Und lass ihn wo der Wange die Röth, entfloh,
Dort duftig hinthaun! Und du, oh bessere,
Der Tugend und der Liebe Ruhe,
Grazie deines Olymps, bedecke

Mit deinem Fittig Cidli! wie schlummert sie,
Wie Stille! Schweig! oh leisere saite selbst,
Es welket dir dein Lorbersprössling,
Wenn aus dem Schlummer du Cidli lispelt.

Which Mme. Pontés translates thus:

HER SLUMBER.

She sleeps! oh slumber, from thy dewy wings,
Distil thy sweetest balm on that pure heart,
And let her draw from Eden's silvery springs,
Those crystal drops that bid all pain depart.
Where the Red rose that virgin cheek has fled,
There gently print thy fragrant touch; and thou,
Peace, holy peace, which love and virtue shed,
Inmate of Heaven, but rarely found below.
With thy soft wings, my best loved Cidly shade,
How calm her rest! Then let thy harp strings sleep,
Thy budding laurel wreath will surely fade,
If with thy song thou break'st that slumber deep.

Klopstock's great work is certainly, as Herder says, "beautiful in parts, but faulty as a whole." His leading traits, religion and patriotism, strike the reader very boldly, but it is at once perceived, that he adheres too servilely to the ancient models he had placed before his mind's eye. He stands one of the first who relieved his fellow-countrymen from a mania

for imitating French authors and styles of composition, but he caused to a certain extent another extreme, that of the Grœcomania.

Klopstock lived until the period of the French Revolution, and evinced great admiration for the efforts of France to free herself from tyranny. He celebrated the states general in an ode, and was elected a member of the French National Institute in 1802.

Contemporary with him was another writer, of a more vigorous mind, who in a different direction, chastened and purified the taste of Germany. This was Lessing, the son of a Protestant clergyman of Saxony. He at first applied himself to the stage, but at the request of his family gave it up. Attaching himself then to literature, he met at Berlin Mendelsohn, Nicolai, and De Louvaine, secretary to Voltaire. At Berlin he brought out his plays, Miss Sara Sampson, and the Laocoon, which astonished his countrymen from their novelty and vivacity of style. Shortly after he was appointed theatrical manager at Hamburg, where the German drama was beginning to establish an independent existence. Here also he commenced publishing a weekly journal, named "Dramaturgie," in which he attacked the French style of writing for the stage, the ultra classicalities of Racine, Corneille, Voltaire &c. He shewed how much the observance of the poetic unities of time and place and action hampered the composition of a piece, and pointed out how the range of the drama could be extended, by not confining it exclusively to high class personages, kings, princes &c. Shakespeare appeared to him the purest model, whose historical plays, he said, when "contrasted with the tragedies of French taste, are something like an enormous fresco painting in comparison with a miniature."

Lessing's writings are thoroughly German; he rejects with disdain the Frenchification introduced by Frederick the Great. His "Minna von Bornhelm" which appeared in 1763, was superior to his two former plays. The interest of the piece turns on the fact, that the hero who is disgraced, thinks himself unworthy of the heroine, who is wealthy. Before the end of the play their respective situations are reversed, and they see the folly of their former ideas. Two other dramas followed. "Emilia Gallotti," once esteemed beyond price in Germany, and Nathan the Wise," without doubt his master piece. He got into a quarrel with Klotz and some of the French school, which compelled him to give up his post at the theatre at

Hamburg. He fell into bad habits, gambling, &c. notwithstanding that he had married a Mme. König, who however died in a year after, while giving birth to a son. He died from the effects of a paralytic stroke in the year 1781, leaving behind him more celebrity as a critic, than as a poet.

Wieland was neither so lofty in his fancy and sentiments as Klopstock, or so correct in his taste and vigorous in his judgment as Lessing. He had been intended for the study of Theology by his father, but being obliged to relinquish it on account of ill health, he returned to his native town, where he fell in love with a young lady named Sophia. She at first requited his passion; her parents however opposed their union, and she married another. This mischance seems to have influenced very much the rest of his life. He commenced writing many minor pieces, none of which except "Agathon," the hero of which is a young Athenian Epicurean, seem to be of any value. Of another piece, "Musarion," on a somewhat similar subject, Mme. Pontés gives the following sketch:—

"We must agree with Gervinus that 'Musarion' scarcely deserves the admiration Gœthe expresses for it. The subject possesses no very absorbing interest, and the moral is anything but commendable. The young Athenian Phanias, having dissipated his patrimony, has retired to a little farm on the sea shore, resolved to fly for ever a world of which he fancies he has exhausted the enjoyments, and where, at all events, he can no longer shine. He received no one save his two most intimate friends, Theosophron and Cleanthes; the former is a disciple of Plato, the latter of Diogenes. Musarion, a young courtezan, whom in the days of his splendour he had loved, but who had refused to listen to his suit, now moved by his sorrows comes to visit him. Ashamed to be seen in his present humble condition, Phanias refuses an interview; but Musarion persists, and at last prevails. The friends arrive. They order a supper, of which they force the recluse to partake. While at table Musarion victoriously defends the doctrines of Epicurus against his assailants. The hours pass on unheeded. The disciple of Diogenes falls dead drunk under the table. The Platonist makes love, in no very Platonic form, to one of Musarion's female slaves, and in short Phanias, convinced of the folly alike of his misanthropy, and of his high-flown expectations, yields to Musarion's generous affection, and permits her to share his retreat.

In justice to Wieland we subjoin a translation of a few of the verses, premising that if their grace and melody do not answer the reader's expectation, the fault lies in our version, not in the original:—

Wearied upon the grass he sinks again,
Unmoved he gazes on the landscape fair,
Unmoved he hears the nightingale's sweet strain,
Her tender lay soothes not his bosom's care.

The gloomy night of inward grief and pain,
Hangs o'er his soul, and darkens all things there
Since the last obole from his purse has fled
His friends have disappeared, and flattery's self is dead.

Yes! false and fleeting as the wind, are all,
Friendship's fond vows, and love's deceitful smile,
Soon as the golden showers no longer fall,
Cold is the heart that lures us with its wile,
Soon as the goblet's dry, in vain we call
On our Patroclus! yes; that metal vile
Is stronger still than virtue, wit or beauty,
That gone—the swarm goes too, and Lais talks of duty.

Now thrill'd and saddened by the mournful truth,
How vain those dreams so transient, tho' so bright
Which lull us in the rosy days of youth,
As in an atmosphere of life and light
When man's a God unto himself in sooth,
Phanias resolved this time to choose aright;
To tear himself, although 'twas somewhat late,
From the delusive past, and brave the storms of fate.

The poet soon consoled himself for his lost love, by marrying the daughter of a merchant at Augsburg, but seems to have still kept up a species of Platonic attachment for Sophia, then Mme. de la Roche. He had several interviews with her, even in the presence of her husband, when she still shewed a very warm affection for him. He was appointed by the elector of Mainz to the directorship of the university of Erfurth, which he endeavoured to regenerate, and succeeded in attracting crowds of students to his lectures. The professors were annoyed with him on account of certain innovations, that he had introduced into the old system, and they and the clergy attacked him on account of the too great freedom of his poetic compositions. He gave up his directorship and repaired to Weimar at the solicitation of the duchess, as tutor to the young Duke. Here he brought out a journal, the "Mercury," in which he criticized the tastes of the day, and published various satirical pieces against the imitations of the French school. "Oberon" was also commenced here. It is founded on a story of French chivalry. "Huon de Bordeaux," and introduces the Oberon and Titania of Shakespeare. It is well known in these countries by the translation done by Sotheby. This was the last of his romantic works.

He purchased a small estate called Osmanstadt, with his accumulated savings, and retired there with his family. His

mother shortly joined him, as also Mme. de la Roche, who had lost her husband through political discomfitures. He was destined, however, to misfortune in his declining years. His wife, mother, and several children died; his property became reduced in value on account of the French wars; he was obliged to sell it, and retire to Weimar. After the battle of Jena, his house was sacked, notwithstanding the orders of Napoleon to the contrary. Marshal Ney visited him, and remedied, to a certain extent, his distress. At the conferences in Erfurth, during 1809, Napoleon expressed great desire to see, and conversed with him in the most cordial manner on the subject of Cæsar, who, Napoleon said, should have forestalled his assassins, as he had known them long before.

Wieland, at the age of eighty, translated "Cicero's Letters," and though he had suffered a severe illness, after which he broke his collar bone, he lingered on to January, 1813, when paralysis put an end to his existence. He was buried beside his wife at Osmanstadt, where a pyramid of white marble covers their remains, with the following inscription by Wieland himself: "Three souls who loved each other during life. Their mortal relics sleep within the same sepulchre." The inhabitants of Weimar have appreciated his talents so much, that they inaugurated his statue, along with those of Goethe and Schiller, in the month of last September, when the following tribute was paid to his name:—"Wieland was the first German author whose works were translated and admired by our neighbours, and by means of whom our poetry was replaced amid the ranks of European literature. Goethe expressly called him his master. His whole existence flowed on like a source, fructifying and cheering the spirit of the nation, and our latest posterity will hail him, even as we hail him now, as the immortal Wieland!"

The poet and the critic were joined together in Lessing, the latter perhaps in a greater degree than the former. The converse was the fact with respect to Herder, the incidents of whose life, as related by Mde. Pontés, possess much quiet interest. His passionate love of study when young; the admiration he excited when a preacher at Riga; his travels with the Prince of Holstein; his meeting, and subsequent marriage, with Caroline Flachsland, are all told with feeling. Herder did not produce much poetry, his compositions being chiefly translations, some from Scotch ballads, lyrics called "Lays of the People,"

and the "Cid," a free version of the Spanish romance. In his "Fragments for German Literature," and "Critische Wälder," he drew a very truthful contrast between the writings of the ancients and those of his fellow-countrymen poets. The philosophy of the age, Kant and Fichte, did not escape his criticism, by which he showed its tendency to destroy all true religion. He visited Italy late in life, where he met the celebrated Angelica Kauffman, whose misfortunes and virtues excited a great deal of interest in his mind. His acquaintance with Goethe and Schiller lasted for a great number of years; by both was he esteemed as a man of great worth. "I come from Herder," writes Schiller to his friend Körner; "If you have seen his picture at Graff, you can represent him perfectly to yourself; only that his countenance is not sufficiently stern. He has pleased me much; his conversation is full of vigour, intellect, and fire; but all his sensations consist of love and hate. Goethe he loves with passion, a sort of adoration. I must be quite unknown to him, for he asked if I were married. He treated me like a person of whom he had seen nothing, but who possessed the reputation of being somebody. Herder is amazingly polite. One feels one's self at ease in his presence." He died in 1803, having contributed much to elevate the taste of Germany in literature and poetry.

Schubart's life was much more extraordinary, combining reckless extravagance with the most fearless patriotic feeling, and great love of the muses. His follies obliged his wife to fly from him. He then set up a paper at Augsburg, in which he attacked the tyranny of the nobles, and the luxury of many of the German courts. Driven from thence, he took refuge at Ulm, where he became partially reformed, and was joined by his wife and children The enmity of the Duke of Würtenberg pursued him; he was suddenly seized and thrown into prison at the fortress of Hohenasperg, where he lingered, sometimes between life and death, during a period of ten years. It was during this confinement that he wrote some of his best pieces, though unable for a long time to procure paper or ink, on account of the jealousy of the governor. A pair of snuffers was his stylus, and the wooden table of his apartment the tablet, on which he inscribed many touching lines. His mind was constantly occupied with his misfortunes, the miseries of the wretched subjects of the prince who held him in durance vile, and many romantic subjects. When he was released, he

resumed the publishing of his journal with great vigour, but having unfortunately broken his arm, his health failed, and he died in 1791. To his talents as a writer and poet, he united those of a good musician, having filled the post of organist at Ludwigsberg during some period with much distinction.

Voss commenced his classical studies by joining a Greek club of twelve students, each of whom took, in turn, the mastership, and lectured his fellows. From Klopstock and Ramler he learned to versify in hexameters, and commenced sending contributions to the "Göttingen Almanack of the Muses." He obtained a post of professor in the Philological Seminary from his friend Heyne, whom, notwithstanding, he attacked in a low, improper tone, and in consequence lost his post again. With a number of young men he formed a society named the "Gottingen Friends," which furnished materials for the "Almanack of the Muses." In this club were a number of poets of the day, Bürger, Boie, the Stolbergs, Hoelty, Miller, and Klopstock himself; they called themselves the "Gottingen, or Hainbund," and often celebrated by songs and verses, under wide-spreading oaks, the names of their favorite poets. Voss describes one of these festivals:—"On either side of the table sat the children of the bards. Boie at the head, leaning back in his arm chair. Toasts were drunk, first Klopstock's. Boie stood up, took the glass and exclaimed "Klopstock!" Every one followed his example, raised his glass, uttered the sacred name, and, after a reverential silence, drank. Then were proposed other healths, but not so solemnly, Lessing, Ramler, Gleim, Gessner, Gerstenberg, &c. Some one, Boie I think, named Wieland. We sprang up with full glasses, and exclaimed, "Death to the destroyer of morality, death to Wieland!"

The taste and freedom in versification, which Lessing and Herder introduced became so general, that each of the members of this society conceived himself to be a poet, and wrote verses, which were criticised and commented on by the others. Voss, who on account of his straitened circumstances was barely able to get an education at the college at New Braudenburgh, and afterwards saved some money as tutor in a gentleman's family, became a member of the bund, through the kind friendship of Boie. Some of his fugitive verses were published in the "Almanach of the Muses," the organ of the "Gottingen Friends." Klopstock even encouraged him to

pursue the path of poetry, and he gave up his vocation of a clergyman, for which he had been educated. He proceeded to Hamburg to visit the author of the "Messiah," whom he looked on as little less than an Apostle. A short illness afterwards confined him to bed in Boie's house, where he was attended by Ernestine, the daughter of his friend, and fell in love with her accordingly. He settled down afterwards at the village of Wandsbeck, with his friend Mathias Claudius, and though he missed the directorship of a school, which he had solicited, yet his income from the "Musen Almanach" was about 500 thalers, or £65 per annum, at that time a reasonable stipend and sum to live on in Germany. This income was not, however, considered sufficient by the mother of Ernestine to allow of her marrying her lover; they were obliged to wait until Voss obtained the directorship of the "Musen Almanach," and an increased salary of £70 a year. The life of the young couple on this pittance must have been very constrained indeed; still they did not despair of better days. He hired a small garden pavillion in addition to the room he had occupied as a bachelor; a table, a few chairs, sofa, foot-stool, and curtains, were all their furniture, yet they were happy.

Here he composed several original poems, the "Evening Walk," "The Penitent Damsel," and worked heavily through a versified translation of Homer. This is one of the most surprising productions ever brought forth by man. It follows line for line, almost word for word, and in hexameter verse, the original Greek. He was obliged, however, to publish it at Hamburg, in 1781, by subscription, on account of his limited means. This translation had a most important effect on the literature of the time, and the German language. It brought the German hexameter almost to its greatest perfection, and rendered it ready and pliable for the master-hand of Goethe. Though Menzel accuses Voss of "Plunging all the worthy poets of old into his witches' cauldron fresh and healthy, whence they come out little Vosses, all marching in buckram," yet a great meed of praise must be awarded to him, for the lucidity and fidelity with which he has transposed Homer and Virgil from the old languages into his own modern tongue.

He continued still struggling with his pecuniary difficulties; one of his boys died, his wife became ill, but he obtained a good situation at Eutin, through the friendship of Count Stolberg. Having completed his translations, he turned his

mind to an original poem, "Louise," which for a long time was very popular in Germany. It was very much admired by Schiller, who declares in his "Essay on Naive and Sentimental Poetry," that "it resembles the antique in its purity and simplicity;" yet it has lost all its charms for the taste of the present day. His "Idyls" are much in the same character, and gained also a great reputation for their author.

The translations of Horace, Hesiod, and Theocritus were not so good as his first, and did not serve in any way to increase his fame. He obtained the office of Principal of the College at Heidelberg, just founded by the Grand Duke of Baden, and ended his days quietly in that town at the age of seventy-five years.

Voss's excellence lies in the peculiar faithfulness of his translations, and the perfection to which he brought the German hexameters. His other principal poem, the "Louise," though now thought very little of beyond the Rhine, yet enjoyed in its time a large reputation.

The Hainbund produced three other remarkable poets of the second order, Stolberg, Hoelty, and Claudius. The first, who was the son of the Chamberlain to the Queen of Denmark, has been rendered chiefly famous by his conversion to the Roman Catholic faith. His friends, Voss, Gleim, Jacobi, and others, looked upon this "apostacy" with the utmost horror, and certainly used no very measured terms towards their former associate, when he was about changing his form of religion. His second wife, Sophia, Countess Dinadra, and the Princess Galitzin used a very strong influence on the mind of Stolberg, in producing the revolution of belief; but it cannot be said, on that account, that he was of weak mind, or not capable of forming a satisfactory judgment on the subject. That he was a true poet, his ballads, still very popular in Germany, attest to the fullest extent. The following will serve as an example:

LAY OF THE SWABIAN KNIGHT TO HIS SON.

Take, my son, thy father's spear,
This weak arm no more can bear;
Take the shield to guard at need,
Mount henceforth my gallant steed.

Fifty years upon my head
Has this iron helmet weighed.
Every year, my sword, my life,
Have I risked in war and strife.

Duke Rudolph, my honoured lord,
Gave this spear, and shield, and sword,
For his cause I still maintained.
And proud Henry's pay disdained.

Staunch in freedom's cause he stood,
Shed for it his noble blood,
And despite full many a wound,
Gallantly he held his ground.

Hasten to the war's alarms,
Emperor Conrad calls to arms;
Son, thine aid I should not seek,
Were this hand less old or weak.

Never draw in vain the brand
For thy dear, thy native land,
Vigilant in watch by night,
And by day the first in fight.

Every peril swift to meet,
Always seek the conflict's heat,
Spare the unresisting breast,
Strike down every haughty crest.

If in vain thy standard wave
O'er thy faltering troop, then brave,
Firm as some unshaken tower,
All the foe's advancing power.

Seven loved sons, brave spirits all,
Have I seen before me fall,
And thy mother, broken-hearted,
Faded, pined, and then departed.

Lonely am I now and old,
But thy shame were hundredfold
Heavier to this aged breast,
Than the loss of all the rest.

Dread not death, for die we must,
In the Almighty place thy trust,
Fight as fought thy sires of yore,
And rejoice this heart once more.

Hoelty was a native of Hanover. In his youth, being very studious, he acquired a competent knowledge of the principal European languages, by teaching which he was afterwards able to gain his livelihood. This, alternating with his poetical compositions, rambles in the country, and evenings passed with his friends of the Hainbund, constituted the even tenor of his life. He has left several pleasant poems and songs, generally of a melancholy character. The following, of another description, is still sung in Germany with enthusiasm:—

DRINKING SONG.

A very paradise of bliss
We owe to father Rhine.
Sweet I confess a gentle kiss,
But sweeter rosy wine.
When I but see the table spread,
And glasses brightly gleam,
As lightsome as a fawn I tread
That dances by the stream.

What matters all the world to me
When bright the bowl is gleaming,
And the rich juice I love to see
Ripe at my lip is streaming?
Then, like the gods, the flask I drain,
With purple mantling o'er;
The fire runs swift through every vein;
I drink and ask for more.

This world were but a vale of woe,
Of whim and gout and grief,
If noble Rhine wine did not flow
A source of sure relief;
That lifts the beggar to the throne,
Annuls both Heaven and Earth,
Gives an Elysium of its own
To all of mortal birth.

'Tis the true panacea, 'tis plain;
The old man's blood it fires;
It frights away each ache and pain,
And hope and youth inspires.
Long live the fair and blissful land
That grows the rosy wine,
And long live he whose skilful hand
Planted and propp'd the vine.

And every pretty little lass
Who plucked the grape I ween,
To her a full and brimming glass
I dedicate as queen!
So long live every German bold
Who still his Rhine wine drinks
So long as the glass can hold;
Then down to earth he sinks!

A spitting of blood and consequent consummation carried off this gentle poet in his twenty-eighth year. His verses, which usually appeared in the "Musen Almanach," are light and melodious, have been frequently set to music, and are still great favorites with his countrymen. Claudius, another of the associates, called the "Wandsbecker Messenger," from the village in which he resided, has left poems of the same style and character of those of Hoelty, and may be classed in the same school.

Another member of the Hainbund is still better known in this country than any of the former by the translations of Sir

Walter Scott. Bürger, the incidents of whose life are of a most romantic description, was in his youth of very dissipated habits until somewhat reclaimed by the influence of his friend Boie, who made him a contributor to the Musen Almanach. In this he published a well-known song, "Herr Bacchus ist ein braver mann," (Bacchus is a gallant fellow,) which resounded throughout Germany, and became a favorite chaunt of the Göttingen students. His "Wild Huntsman" and "Leonore" may be found in Scott's works, so that it is unnecessary to re-produce them here.

He married a young lady named Dora ——, although at the time deeply in love with her sister, a girl of sixteen. This produced the most baneful effects upon the poet's happiness and that of his wife. During ten long years Molly the sister lived in his house, a constant cause of jealousy and misery to Dora, yet she bore it all with the calmest resignation, until a consumption relieved her for ever from the troubles of this life. Shortly after her death Bürger married the sister Molly, whom he has celebrated in many sonnets and minor poems, but lost her again within a year on giving birth to a son. This event threw him into a dreadful state of despair, which was relieved by a very curious incident. A young Swabian lady, named Eliza, fell in love with him merely from perusing his poetry, and published in a newspaper called the "Examiner" the following lines as a challenge to the man she adored:—

Oh! Bürger, Bürger! noble man,
Who pours forth lays as no one can
Save thee, replete with fire
And passion, lend me, to impart
The thoughts that fill my glowing heart,
Thy poet's lyre.

The verses continued in the same strain, and thus concluded:

For if a thousand suitors came
Laden with gold—to press their flame,
And Burger too were there,
I'd give him modestly my hand,
And gladly change my fatherland
For thee! no matter where.

Then if again inclined to woo,
Seek thee a Swabian maiden true,
And choose me, I implore,
With German soul and Swabian truth,
And all the generous warmth of youth,
I'll love thee evermore.

Bürger's answer to this was a long letter, in which he gave a full account of his own peccadilloes, and warned the young lady against deciding to marry him. She, however, was resolute; they were united, and the natural result followed. Eliza began to live in the most extravagent style, beyond the means of her husband, and finally treated him as he had done his first wife. A separation followed, which along with a law-

suit brought against him by his patron Count Ulten, soon brought him to the grave. His poems, principally consisting of sonnets to Molly, during his first wife's lifetime and after her death, have been done into English by various hands, and must be familiar to many of our readers. The following little piece gives a charming description of rural scenery :—

MY VILLAGE.

I claim a name
For my hamlet's fame;
For meads so green
Are no where seen
As charms us here;
Here rocks arise,
A pasture there,
While yonder lies
The meadow fair.
Here groves extend
Their shadowy gloom,
And lime-trees lend
Their sweet perfume.
The sheep-cotes stand
On yonder height,
A mead at hand,
My "calm delight,"
For thus I call
That lowly spot
Where stands my all,
My own sweet cot.
Where elm and vine
Their leaves entwine,
And form above
The shade I love.

A silver brook
With murmuring sound
From yonder nook
Its way has found,
And flows on singing
Its joyous hymn,
Mid tall trees flinging
Their shadows dim.
In its clear fountain
Reflecting still
The grove, the mountain,
The lambs, the hill,
The sunlight dancing
Across the stream,
The fishes glancing
With silvery gleam,
Now upwards dashing,
Now diving low,
Their gay fires flashing
With radiant glow.
Oh! all is fair;
But loveliest, thou,
Givest it the air
Of Heaven below.

The earliest dawn
Of rosy morn,
Awakes us both,
While, nothing loathe,
My steps she leads
Where morning's queen
The flowery meads
And pastures green
With dew is sprinkling,
Where pearls are glittering
And dew-drops twinkling,
And birds are twittering.
The bud uncloses
Its hidden bloom,
And blushing roses
Shed sweet perfume.
They blossom bright, love,
But not more bright
Than thy sweet form, love,
My life, my light!
And now we spread
Our frugal meal,
Where o'er our head
The sunbeams steal
Through leaves embowering
And branches flowering.

Thus in full measure
Still abound
Mirth and pleasure
In joyful sound,
Oh! blissful lot!
If time be kind
And blight thee not,
But leave my mind
Untainted still
And firm my will,
Nor change the form
And heart so warm,
Then fortune go
To East or West,
Thy gifts bestow
As thou deem'st best
I still shall gaze
From envy clear,
And sing thy praise,
My village dear!

The Hainbund produced another school of poets, which bid fair to carry the German taste into an extreme opposite to that of Voss, Goethe, and Schiller, into whose era we are now arriving, the romantic as opposed to the classical school. These were the two Schlegels, Tieck, de la Motte

Fouqué, Novalis, and Schulze, who revived the taste for old Gothic manners, chivalrous poems, and a despisal of the unities in composition. The taste of the old school in Gothic architecture, and paintings of the middle ages, was renewed; old cathedrals crumbling to ruins were repaired, and the works of Hemmling and Lucas Cranach were drawn forth from obscurity. The two first, William and Frederick Schlegel, are more celebrated as philologists and critics than as poets. William wrote at Jena in a periodical called the "Horen," afterwards lectured at Berlin, accompanied Madame de Stael to Coppet as tutor to her son, and finally ended his career at Vienna. His works on "Dramatic Art and Literature" are well known in this country; not so his translation of Shakespeare, which is the most perfect in German, rendering the sense and spirit of our great dramatist in a very accurate manner. He did not finish it completely. Tieck undertook the remainder with an equal degree of success. Frederick Schlegel was intended for a commercial life, married the daughter of the famous philosophic Jew Mendelsohn, and became a convert to the Roman Catholic faith. He followed the Archduke Charles in his campaign of 1800, and was appointed Secretary of Legation to the Austrian Embassy at Frankfort, and died in 1829. His work "On the Wisdom and Language of the Indians" and his "History of Ancient and Modern Literature" will render him famous to all ages as a critic; but he attempted poems, particularly one called "Lucinde," which were complete failures, from want of passion or imagination. He supported, however, very strenuously the school of romance, and wrote down the strictness of classicality.

The followers of the Romanticists did not long observe moderation in their principles or ideas. They fell into the most grievous absurdities, producing the most extravagant romances and effusions, which threatened to destroy all true poetic feeling in Germany. This was very much owing to the writings of Tieck, who though he did not himself wander very far into the regions of wild fancy, yet his influence led many others who were not able to restrain their imaginations. He was the son of an honest rope-maker, but from the early perusal of "Götz von Berlichingen" and Schiller's "Robbers" he worked up his mind to a high pitch of excitement. At the Universities of Halle and Göttingen, he studied very vigorously, translating while at the latter Shakespeare's Tempest and other plays, and writing a variety of novels. He threw himself into

the mystic philosophy of Böhme, Kant, Fichte and Schelling, for a time, only to abandon altogether as ridiculous the doctrines of transcendentalism. He visited London in 1810, paying the greatest reverence for every reminiscence of Shakespeare, and died at Berlin in 1843. His "Volksmärchen" or Popular Tales, and "Novellen," are his principal claims to celebrity. They are pretty well known here by Carlyle's translations.

Novalis was one of those strange minds, who now and then appear on the surface of the earth, and of whom it is very difficult to pronounce whether a strain of madness does not run through their composition. He united an extraordinary religious fervour and desire to fathom the attributes of the Eternal, and the mysteries of religion, a wild species of mysticism, which caused him to be nearly idolized by his youthful contemporaries, with a fantastic imagination bordering on extravagance. He fell in love with a young lady of thirteen, who died in his arms from consumption, and he died himself almost in the arms of another young lady, his affianced bride, at the early age of twenty-eight years. His "Henry von Ofterdingen," "Aphorisms" and other pieces carry romanticism to a most incomprehensible extent.

The author of "Undine," so familiar with all readers of literature in this country, De la Motte Fouqué, was well acquainted with many of the associates of the Hainbund, and contributed much to propagate the doctrines of the romantic school. His fame chiefly rests on the fairy prose poem above mentioned; but he has also left many miner pieces of considerable excellence. Schülze was of another order of mind; his ballads and songs are still very popular. He commenced when only eighteen "Psyche," which displays a fertile and lively imagination, but is spoiled by diffuseness and affectation. In 1811, he commenced another poem "Cecilia," which was interrupted by the war of liberation in 1813, when he joined the rising of his countrymen. He composed several martial songs, which roused his fellow patriots. Amongst them is one very well rendered as follows by Mme. Pontés:—

THE BLACK JAGER.

What is gleaming so gaily on bush and on brae,
What is shining in greenwood so bright,
Who comes forth from the wood in such gallant array,
Who are rushing from mountain and height?
'Tis the Jägers! on, on in a torrent we flow,
And rush to the combat and pounce on the foe,
To battle, to vict'ry—to triumph we go.

We come from the Hartz and its forests so old,
Full. they tell us, of glittering store;
But what do we care or for silver or gold?
Give us freedom—we ask for no more!
To others we leave it—more nobly we feel;
We don our bright armour, our cuirass of steel;
For us upon earth the sword only has worth,
And we care for nought save our fatherland's weal!

To drink and to love and be loved has its charms;
In the shade it is pleasant to dream;
But nobler to rush 'mid the battle's alarms,
When the sword and the bayonet gleam.
Love's torch is not brighter than glory's proud hue,
And where thousands are sleeping, why we may sleep too;
As heroes we'll fall 'neath the sword or the ball,
And pour forth our heart's blood so gallant and true.

Full oft in the darkness, in forest and glen,
Or high on the storm-beaten rock,
We have lingered to track the fierce wolf to his den,
Nor dreaded the hurricane's shock.
And now the bright sunshine is streaming above us;
We go to defend all we love! all who love us!
Be it battle or chase—in the enemy's face—
To us it is one; for no peril can move us.

Schülze entered a battalion of Jägers as a volunteer in 1814, and entered Hamburg with his corps when Davoust evacuated that town, on the reverse of fortune of the French emperor. When peace ensued he returned to the composition of his "Cecilia," a story founded on the introduction of Christianity among the rites and paganism of the Odin Theology. The wife of a Northern Monarch has secretly embraced the new religion. An angel is sent down from heaven to watch over her and her twin children, and presents her with a rose of gems, on the possession of which depends their safety. A wily sorceress, representing the ancient superstition, contrives to possess herself of the flower, and the most horrible misfortunes overwhelm the unfortunate princess. This plot and the heroic actions of a son of the queen carry the poem through ten very poetic, but somewhat wearisome cantos, any extract from which would be too lengthy for these pages. Another poem, the "Enchanted Rose," for which he gained a prize at Leipsic, is in a lighter and gayer style, but wanders off into the most remote regions of fairy land. He died of the same disease as Novalis, and very nearly at the same age.

Mme. Pontés has left out of her record of German poets the most remarkable names of the series, Schiller and Goethe, partly because they have been so ably written upon by other authors before, and also because she seems to intend to dedicate a separate volume to an examination of their lives and works. This will be an arduous task, when we consider that

some of the first literary men of our own age have already nearly completed the same labour. We do not mean either for the same reason to dwell much on their history, except so far as they form a link in the chain of German poets. Their merits are principally founded on their dramatic productions, although many minor pieces have issued from their pens, especially from that of Schiller.

Goethe cannot be said to belong strictly, either to the purely classic or purely romantic, but he is decidedly very much in favour of the classical. He may be called the Sophocles of Germany; yet his greatest work, the "Faust," must be classed among the productions of the opposite school. He was born at Frankfort in 1749, and studied law at Leipsic. He established himself at Wetzlar, where he practised, and there the principal incidents of the "Sorrows of Werter," fell under his notice. They were formed into a species of novel, which produced an immense impression in Germany at the time. The attention of the young Duke of Weimar was called to the author, who became shortly after Privy-Councillor, and accompanied the duke on a journey into Switzerland. In 1782, he obtained a patent of nobility, visited Italy in 1786, and on his return established himself at Weimar, where Wieland, Schiller, and a host of other celebrated men, combined to adorn what might be then called the Athens of Germany. He made a second voyage into Italy in 1789, and then accepted the post of director of the Theatre at Weimar. His productions were not confined to dramas, poetry or novels, but extended to various subjects of natural science, the metamorphoses of plants, theories of colours, and many principles of optics. During Napoleon's sojourn at Erfurth in 1807, he shewed great consideration for the poet, who seems not to have entirely forgotten the condescension, as he kept himself altogether aloof in the great national struggle against France, a main subject of accusation against him by his fellow-countrymen. His only son, the almost only remaining link of friendship or family which held him to life, died at Rome in 1830. This had a strong effect on him, and he departed in the year 1832 under the weight of years and isolation. His ashes rest near those of two of his greatest friends, Charles Augustus, Duke of Weimar, and his rival Schiller.

His two earliest works were, "Götz von Berlichingen" and the "Sorrows of Werter." They produced an immense influ-

ence on the character of literature at the time, the first leading it towards extreme romance, and the second to sentimentalism. One of Sir Walter Scott's earliest efforts was a translation of the first; it very probably gave rise in his mind to the ideas of Marmion and the Lady of the Lake. The "Apprenticeship of Wilhelm Meister," written some twenty years after, may be regarded as a truer index of the poet's character. It was brought out at a second and sounder period of his life, and was marked out with due forethought during a period of nearly ten years. Concerning this work Carlyle has the following remarkable passage.

"It is wonderful to see with what softness the scepticism of Jarno, the commercial spirit of Werner, the reposing polished manhood of Lothario and the uncle, the unearthly enthusiasm of the harper, the gay animal vivacity of Philina, the mystic, ethereal, almost spiritual nature of Mignon, are blended together in this work; how justice is done to each, how each lives freely in his proper element, in his proper form; and how as Wilhelm himself, the mild-hearted, all-hoping, all-believing Wilhelm, struggles forward towards his world of art, through these curiously complected influences, all this unites itself into a multifarious, yet so harmonious whole, as into a clear poetic mirror, where man's life and business in this age, his passions and purposes, the highest equally with the lowest, are imaged back to us in beautiful significance."

It is impossible in this limited space to give a complete idea of the works of this greatest of the German poets. They have been so often criticized and translated by various hands in this country, that anyone who has any acquaintance with German literature, must have some idea of the immense field of imagination over which he ranged, and the influence he possessed on the spirit of his age; his period of triumph extends from that of Lessing down to our time; his effect on letters in his native land was somewhat opposed to the free national boldness and independence of Lessing. It is strange that in those among his works, which are the most novel and striking, his Wilhelm Meister, Werter, Faust, and Fact and Fiction concerning my Life, the principal interest is concentrated on facts relating to his own actions, and a certain amount of self portraiture. Faust is undoubtedly his greatest poem, and also the greatest reflection of himself, in which his deepest feelings and views of the world are depicted in various characters. We would recommend

Dr. Anster's translation to our readers, as one which gives the most faithful idea of the original. It has not been hitherto at all sufficiently appreciated in this country.

Goethe had a very strong inclination for supporting the aristocratic tendencies of his age, and also for regarding as nought the necessity for observing a strictness of morality among his female characters. There are very few of his pieces which on that account have not an injurious effect upon the mind of youth. By this means he has gained a great ascendancy over the feelings and tastes of the rising generation in the fatherland. His great excellence consists in the supremacy of talent which he displays, independent of the subject treated by him, in representing, adorning and delivering his scenes and feelings. Menzel says of him "Goethe is altogether a practical poet. He is in his works what the English are in their manufacturies, extremely simple, neat, convenient, yet withal durable. He has done in German literature what Wedgewood did among English artists." It must however be admitted that many of the poet's characters are not of that description which ought to be made examples worthy of imitations; there are many of them weak and dishonorable, bearing no proportion to the magnificence of composition which is thrown about them. His beauty of language and euphony of verse cannot be surpassed, but when we come to consider several of his works in the entire, their influence, object and tendency seems to be completely unworthy of the form in which they are set. Each part is conceived with great spirit and exquisitely drawn, but combines to form a dangerous compound.

The secret of his popularity among his fellow-countrymen is this, that he wrote to describe modern society, its external propriety, politeness of fashion, and social refinement. Therefore he reigned supreme in his period. He is chiefly remarkable however for his difference of styles, and the manner in which he succeeded in producing pieces very much resembling the works of other authors in different forms of letters and language. His "Werter" has been regarded as approaching Rousseau's *Nouvelle Heloise* in visionary sentimentalism; his minor comedies copy considerably Molière and Beaumarchais; his tragedies are formed very much on the model of Shakespeare and Lessing; his lyrics imitate the old popular songs, and are subject very much to the influence of Herder. In his other compositions he is original because he holds himself forward as the

model. But he endeavoured also to mix up all the tastes of different ages and countries, Grecian, Roman, classical, romantic, Chinese, French, Indian, Christian and Heathen in one heterogeneous whole. This produces such a dashing of elements, that the charm of unity and the force of poetry is lost, and a modern tasteless style, without enthusiasm or fancy has been the consequence.

The drama in Germany had been freed by Lessing from the servile imitation, which his predecessors had given to the productions of the French stage. It had been relieved from the strict rules of the unities, and allowed to range freely into the realms of imagination. The other extreme was very soon afterwards reached; all sorts of extravagancies and absurdities were brought upon the stage, whose dignity was often outraged by scenes of low life, and vulgar representations. In this state of corruption Goethe found it; he undertook to remedy the defects and to exalt the national theatre. His "Goetz von Berlichingen," a drama of the 16th century in the time of Maximilian, a picture of true chivalrous manner and nobility, had a strong effect in improving the taste of the age; "Egmont" had a like tendency. To bring back the spirit of the period from the extravagances of romanticism he composed the "Iphigenie en Taunide," a tragedy of the purest classicality. Herein consists his great superiority over the compositions of Kotzebue and Schiller, who surpass him in other pieces of modern subjects, such as "The Death of Rolla" of the former and the "Robbers" of the latter. Goethe's pieces intended for the stage are not in fact of nearly as great an excellence as those which cannot be represented. The bounds which were put to the exercise of his talents in the one case seem to have weighed on and depresed them much below those of inferior minds. One of his strangest productions is the "Natural Daughter," in which the personages are designated under general names such as the king, the father, daughter &c. without any personal appellation. "Faust," his masterpiece, may be said to contain within itself every species of poetry, dramatic, lyric, romantic &c.; the variety of its subjects is endles, but its moral is bad, and as has been before said a sneering contempt for female virtue, reigns throughout it. This is the main evil tendency of Goethe's poems.

Schiller in his youth had been destined for the church, but his ideas were turned from it by some theatrical representation,

which produced a prodigious effect on him. He afterwards attempted the military life and the study of the law with the same effect. The works of Klopstock, Goethe and Lessing, had at this time somewhat purified the taste of Germany in literature. He commenced his career of letters in the University of Stuttgard, where he also took a medical degree and shewed a great taste for the study of physchology. In 1781, he published his "Robbers," the electrical effect of which rung throughout Germany. This is one of the most remarkable dramas in the language. The rapidity of the dialogue, the horror of the scenes, the dreadful character of the hero, raised the excitement of the piece to the highest pitch. But there are many defects in it,—improbable situations, confusion of scenes, extravagant often gross language, and manners of the eighteenth carried into the 16th century. The moral tendency of the piece was so bad that it was forbidden in many of the states in Germany. His "Conspiracy of Fiesco" and "Love and Intrigue" are open to nearly the same objections, and do not possess the same stirring interest as the former tragedy. At Dresden he wrote "Don Carlos," and made the acquaintance of Wieland, Goethe and others at Weimar, where he was appointed professor extraordinary of history. Shortly after appeared his "History of the Insurrection of the Netherlands" and many historical treatises. He married in 1790 a Mlle. de Lengefeld, whom he had often seen at Rudolstadt, and the same year brought out his "History of the Thirty Years' War," which has more scope, development, description and freedom than his former work. He received pensions from the hereditary prince and from the Prime Minister of Denmark, which enabled him to carry on his literary labors without interruption. The Duke of Weimar also favored and supported him, he commenced the drama of Wallenstein in 1792, and published the magazine, called "die Horen" "The Hours" in 1795, and a series of epigrammatic distichs in common with Goethe in the "Musen Almanack" of 1797. His constant study and weakness of constitution brought on a disease of the chest which never was entirely cured. This prevented him from following up his writings as he desired. Many princes and states endeavoured to secure his presence, but the Duke of Weimar who obtained for him patents of nobility and lucrative offices fixed him at his capital, where he enjoyed the society of his friend Goethe, and an opportunity of superintending the

theatre there. His last pieces were for the stage, "Mary Queen of Scots," "Joan of Arc," "William Tell," and the "Bride of Mesina." He expired in 1805 in the 46th year of his age of a malignant fever.

Schiller is accused of having given to his plays a romantic coarseness, which does not distinguish between the elegance of literature and of common life. But it must be said of him, that he represented nothing but great and noble characters, that the dignity of his pieces is well sustained, without the immoral tendency of Goethe's writing, or the mysticism of Kotzebue and Werner. Schiller was more popular with the lower classes, Goethe with the higher, because the first delineated the true German character from its originals, the latter only from an ideal perfection of aristocracy and fashion. The minor poetry of Schiller is also full of a youthful, energetic spirit, which purified and invigorated the taste of his fellow-countrymen. There are so many, and so good translations from his works, that it would be waste of space to give any of them here. They contain so much of the philosophy of life, that they work upon the consciences of men, opposing everything evil and commonplace. His ideal characters are particularly distinguished by their purity, nobleness, and the fire of passion which they contain. Schiller may be called the Euripides of the German drama. He is not so varied, so vast in his conceptions, or so striking in his characters as Goethe, but the generosity and nobleness of his own soul pervades all his productions, and engender an enthusiasm for virtue, liberty and greatness in his readers and audience.

During nearly a period of fifty years the popularity of these two great dramatists, Goethe and Schiller, was eclipsed by that of a much inferior writer Kotzebue. His merits were at one time most ridiculously exaggerated, and since have been as unjustly depreciated. Many of his pieces are certainly open to the charge of frivolity and tediousness, but it must be also allowed that they possess several passages of great power and beauty. The greater number of them, "The Two Brothers," "Misanthropy and Repentance," "The Hussites," "The Death of Rolla, or Pizarro," have been translated into English and other languages, so that it is unnecessary to do more than allude to them here. His greatest faults are these, a morbid sensibility and straining after effect, not sufficient attention to the morals, manners, and national characters of his personages,

but a lively interest pervades all his pieces, and has made them be very popular wherever they have been represented.

Romanticism had a very powerful effect upon the drama, as well as upon lyric poetry in Germany. It tended to produce an exaggerated and absurd style of performance, full of strong and exciting incidents mixed up with mysterious and supernatural horrors scarcely fit for the stage. The principal authors of this style were Müllner, Werner, Grillparzer, and Kleist. The first began his career in an extraordinary manner, by rivalling his elder brother for the hand of a young lady, against the will of his own mother. It was not until the brother and mother died, that he obtained the accomplishment of his wishes. This however did not give him continued happiness. His wife was more inclined to dance, than to listen to his verses or enjoy his conversation, so that the union turned out to be anything but well assorted. In 1812 he brought out a dramatic poem, "Schuld," *(Crime,)* in which there is great melody of verse and vivid imagery, but the extravagant idea of a presiding fate, or overpowering destiny, something like the "Deus ex Machinâ" of the Greek tragedies, reigns throughout the action. The interest of the piece turns on the fulfilment of a fearful prophecy, by which the hero kills his brother; then torn with remorse destroys himself, which example the heroine imitates, producing a horrible fascination on the mind of the reader. The reputation of this drama was so great, that the Empress Elizabeth of Russia had it played before her, and presented the author with a diamond ring in token of her admiration. Müllner did not long survive the breach of his domestic happiness; he died rather suddenly in the year 1829.

After Schiller and Goethe, no man's plays have been so popular in Germany, as those of Werner. His life was one of extraordinary vicissitudes, beginning by the bed-side of his insane mother. He married three wives, the two first of which are altogether lost sight of; the third a Polish girl named Maria, was obliged to get a divorce from him on account of his extravagance and licentiousness, but strange to say, she and her second husband lived on terms of intimacy with him for a long period afterwards. He also was a companion of Mme. de Staël at Coppet, along with Schlegel, Chamisso, &c. Suddenly he went to Rome, joined the Roman Catholic Church, studied Theology, was made priest at Aschaffenburg, and for

a series of years preached to admiring audiences in Vienna, As an author he has shown great boldness and richness of fancy, strong and abundant fluency of language, kindness of feeling, and appreciation of all that is excellent. He has certainly some confusion of thought, mingling the romantic with the real, a confusion of the offspring of imagination with the facts of everyday life. His drama "Luther," was hailed through Germany with a burst of enthusiasm, although the characters are too ideal and fantastic. "Attila" is not so much darkened by mysticism, the personages approach nearer to those of actual history. It is founded on the tale of Hildegunda, Attila's last wife, whose father and brothers he had caused to be murdered. He then forced the maiden to become his wife, but the next morning the conqueror was found weltering in his blood, his bride seated beside his bed, bathed in tears and wrapt in her long veil. The "29th of February," the most striking and popular of Werner's dramas, is constructed from very simple but horrible materials. The scene is laid in an Alpine cottage between the cotter, his wife, and his son. The old man had slain his father in his youth, and the curse of Cain followed him. His own son slew his young sister, then fled into foreign service, and now returns to his father's roof without being recognised. The father, who has made a practice of murdering strangers under his roof, stabs his son while asleep for some gold he carried about him, and learns from his dying lips the relationship which exists between them. The plot and incidents are of the most distressing character, heightened very much by the situation and mode of life of the personages who enact it.

Another member of the romantic school of a visionary, though powerful mind, was Kleist. He began his career in the army, then studied at Frankfort for a professorship, then repaired to Berlin to endeavour to advance himself in life. He met successively with two young ladies, who returned his affection, but his wayward and extravagant procrastination and absurd ideas about domestic happiness, compelled them to give up their engagements with him. He met Wieland's son in Switzerland, through whom he obtained an intimacy with the father, and afterwards with Goethe and Schiller. At Konigsberg where he settled for some time he composed several tales, and dramas, the "Schroffenstein Family," in which two fathers kill their own children, and a comedy, "The Broken Jug," on ac-

count of the failure of which at Weimar he challenged Goethe, under whose direction it had been brought out. In 1807 he was arrested by the French at the gates of Berlin as a spy, and sent to Fort de Joux and afterwards to Chalons-sur-Seine. He afterwards settled at Dresden, where he produced his "Katchen von Heilbunn," and "Prince of Homburg," the first a drama of the middle ages, the second dating in the 30 years war. The crowning tragedy of his life arose from his intimacy with a young lady, Henrietta ——, who imagined that she had some incurable disease, which preyed on her mind. This produced a morbid melancholy, chiming in with the temper of the poet, and ending in the following dreadful scene as related by Mme. de Pontés:—

Kleist was passionately fond of music, and Henrietta had a voice of unusual power and sweetness. One day when she had sung more enchantingly than usual, Kleist exclaimed: "That is beautiful enough to shoot one's self for." "*Schön zum Todtschiessen.*" She looked at him earnestly, but made no reply. Some little time afterwards she enquired if he remembered a promise he had made to render her a great service if she desired it? He replied in the affirmative. "Well then," she exclaimed impetuously, "fulfil it now. Kill me; my sufferings render life insupportable. But no, you will not. There are no more men of honour on earth." "You are mistaken," replied Kleist, "I am a man of honour, and will do as I have said."

* * * * * * * *

Everything was arranged between the unhappy pair with a calmness, a deliberation which would make us doubt the fact of the insanity which darkened the intellects of both, did we not know that madness, too, has its method. On the morning of the 20th November, 1811, they set off together from Berlin, without, it seems, attracting any particular attention, and drove for a while on the road to Potsdam. They stopped at a little country inn, where they spent the rest of the day and the following morn in apparent cheerfulness. Towards the afternoon they set out on foot for a walk, as they said, and proceeded towards a wood some little distance from the inn. A few hours later a forester heard two shots following each other with strange rapidity. He hastened to the spot whence they came, and found Henrietta lying lifeless beneath an old and blasted tree, her hands clasped on her bosom, whilst Kleist knelt before her—his head had fallen on his shoulder—he had shot himself through the temple. Such was the terrible end of this gifted and ill-fated man.

Grillparzer has become famous in Germany by his play of the "Ahnfrau," or "Ancestress," more wild and extravagant in fancy and language than any of Werner's or the "Robbers"

of Schiller. The plot consists in the heroine being compelled to wander over the earth, on account of an early crime, until the last scion of her race is extinct. This occurs by a robber chief stabbing his own father to the heart, and his sister and himself then immolating themselves. "Sappho," by the same author, is a poem of considerable lyric beauty, much admired by Lord Byron, when translated into Italian.

Rauppach had endeavoured to produce on the stage some of the historical glories of the ancient rulers of Germany. The "Hohenstauffen" relates the principal events in the career of that noble house. The "Nibelungen Hort," is a representation of the principal passages of the celebrated romance of that name. They are however sadly deficient in rapid action, distinctness of character, and harmony of arrangement. He spent the greater part of his life in some of the most dreary parts of Russia, and died in 1829. Since that period have arisen numerous dramatic authors, Grabbe, Kebbel, Mosen, &c., all of whom belong to the romantic school. Their productions, however, are such a mass of "extraordinary situations, exaggerated sentiments, or physiological curiosities," that confusion alone is their distinguishing feature. The romantic school has now run into the wildest extreme, and requires a Lessing or Goethe to start up, in order to reduce it to some of the rules or order of classicality.

There remains to be considered a class of lyric poets of the romantic school, the varied subjects of whose muse were not confined to ancient classicality, or modern romanticism. They brought out songs of sentiment, convivial, martial and patriotic lays, stirring the hearts of the German people, and making their authors almost the idols of the people. This phase denotes the rise of the democratic element, not yet brought to its perfection, but ere long calculated to produce its full effect.

Hoelderlin was one of those poets who endeavoured to mingle the spirit of classicality with the fancy of romanticism, the rules of antiquity with the wild fancy of the middle ages. His life was one of mental misfortune, notwithstanding the great friendship which Schiller conceived for him on account of his amiable manners. He was a tutor in the family of Mme. von Kalb, with whom Schiller had been in the same capacity, and afterwards in that of a wealthy banker at Frankfort. He was obliged however to leave this place on account of the jealousy of the husband, who was stimulated thereto by

a young companion of his wife. This event threw a strong shade of melancholy over his character, which ended by making it necessary to place him under medical restraint. In this state he lingered during six and thirty years, with a few lucid intervals, until he died in 1843. He was a great favourite with Goethe, Schiller, and other contemporaries. The following verses will give a good idea of his style.

GREECE.

Had we met on Athens' sacred ground,
Where ambition fired the soul of youth,
Where mid clustering flowers the Ilyssus wound,
Where Socrates won all hearts to truth,
Where Aspasia roved mid myrtle bow'rs,
Where the blithesome sounds of joy and mirth
From the Agora, marked the rapid hours,
Where Plato formed a Paradise on earth;
Where from Inspiration's sparkling fountain
Flowed the hymn of harmony divine,
Where on blue-eyed Pallas sacred mountain
Pilgrims bent before the goddess' shrine,
Where the hours unheeded glided by
Wrapt in dreams so beautiful, so fair.
In those realms of bliss to live—to die—
Ah! my friend, had I but met thee there!
Nobler themes had then thy song inspired,
Marathon—its heroes—they alone—
And my soul with kindred ardour fired,
Had been a worthy minstrel of thine own.
Then all burning from the glorious strife,
With the laurel round thy youthful brow,
Ne'er beneath the weary load of life
Had I seen that lofty spirit bow!
Is the star of love for ever banished
To a fairer sky, a brighter clime?
And those golden hours are they too vanished
Whose soft wings concealed the flight of time?

Ah! in Athens, like the immortal fire,
Hope and joy still dwelt in every breast,
Like the golden fruit, youth's sweet desire
Still was fresh and beautiful and blest.
If amid those proud and happy plains
Destiny had placed thy proud career,—
She was worthy thy inspiring strains,
They are useless, worse than useless, here.
In those better days so bright, so fleet,
We had formed a proud and patriot band.
Not in vain that noble heart had beat
For the freedom of thy native land.
Pause awhile—methinks the hour arrives,
When the etherial spark may burn anew—
Perish not a single hope survives;
This is not thy sphere, thou brave and true!
Attica! alas! the giant falls,
Where the sons of gods and heroes sleep;
Rent and ruined are the marble halls;
Silence broods there, silence—stern and deep.
Smiling spring descends with balmy gale,
But finds neither flower, nor leaf, nor tree.
Cold and barren is that sacred vale
Where the Ilyssus once flowed bright and free.
Oh! I long to quit this land of gloom
For Alcæus or Anacreon.
Gladly would I sleep within the tomb,
With the holy ones of Marathon.
Be these tears my eyes so often shed
For thy land, oh! sacred Greece! the last.
Fates, in mercy, cut my mingled thread;
For my heart belongeth to the past.

A simpler, less imaginative, but at the same time, less transcendental writer than the Romancist before mentioned was Chamisso, a Frenchman by birth, from the plains of Champagne. Two of his brothers were in the Gardes du Corps of Louis XVI., and one of them received a sword from the unfortuuate monarch after the eventful 10th August. The family was obliged to emigrate into Germany, where young Chamisso pursued his studies at Würtzburg, and became more than half a German. He joined in the war of Prussia against France, but afterwards returned to his native country, where he made the acquaintance of Mde. de Staël, whom he praises very highly, and to whom he attached himself even during her exile at Coppet. His first work which brought him into notice, was the strange, fantastic story of "Peter Schlemihl; or, the Man who had

lost his Shadow." This has been translated three or four times into English, and into every language in Europe. In 1815 he joined an expedition to the North Pole, which lasted during a good portion of three years, and gave him ample opportunity for developing his talent for poetry, up to that time dormant. On his return he married, and shortly after received an indemnity as an old emigrant from the restored Bourbons, of 100,000 francs. His poems, collected by himself in 1827, caused a considerable sensation in Germany, and earned for him a membership of the Academy of Sciences, at Berlin. Notwithstanding his former emigration he rejoiced in 1830, at the expulsion of the elder Bourbons. Mme. Pontés gives translations from three of his best pieces, "The Three Sisters," "Abdallah," and "The Old Washerwoman," which last was the final effort of poetic fire. Written for the subject of it, the proceeds were sufficient to insure her some comfort in her old age. His style is pure and clear, neither partaking of the romantic fancies of Tieck, or the classicalities of Hoelderlin.

Descriptive poetry in German has been the peculiar province of Matthisson, Salis, and Kosegarten. There is nothing very striking or bold in their works; they consist rather of simple delineations of scenery, natural descriptions, and the soft emotions and feelings which those are calculated to produce.

The martial and patriotic school is represented by Körner and Arndt, whose verses served most powerfully to rouse the Prussian population to resist France, in the war of freedom. The former was stricken down upon the battle field, and has had a monument erected to his poetic genius and courage by his fellow-countrymen. The greater number of their songs have been translated into English; the most celebrated, "Lyre and Sword," "The Prussian Eagle," and "Where is the German fatherland," are too well known to need reproduction here. Mde. Pontés' version of the "Song of the black Jäger" is so spirited, that it deserves to be put before our readers.

SONG OF THE BLACK JAGER.

On to the field! spirits of vengeance move us,
On Germans bold and free!
On to the field—our standard waves above us,
On—death or victory!

Small is our band; but strong is our reliance
Upon a righteous Lord.
To every art of Hell we bid defiance;
He is our shield and sword.

No quarter, friends! High wield your weapons! cheerly!
Death be the invader's doom,
And every drop of blood! oh! sell it dearly.
There's freedom in the tomb.

Still do we wear the funeral garb of sorrow,
For our departed fame,
And do ye ask what means the hue we borrow
Vengeance, that is its name.

God to our side—our righteous cause victorious,
The star of peace shall shine,
And we will plant the standard proud and glorious
Beside our own free Rhine!

The list of Poets and Poetry given here, is by no means complete, especially among the modern and contemporary, whom we do not at present mean to criticize further than this, that idealism, mysticism, and the extreme of the romantic, is their prevailing characteristic. Many of their names are well known, and famous; those of Uhland, Freiligrath, Rückart, Kerner, Geibel, &c., are very popular in the Fatherland. It is very strange, that from the days of the nun Hroswitha, before recorded, until the present time, there has been no striking instance of a female German writer of verses. Many have distinguished themselves in the province of prose fiction, but scarcely any attempted to invoke the muse.

The prevailing feature of German poetry in all ages, has been the romantic. In fact this species of composition, as opposed to the classical, may be said to have originated, like the Gothic architecture, among the Teutonic races, and from them propagated to the rest of Europe. After the Edda, the ballad epics of the Nibelungen, Gudrune, Walter of Aquitaine, &c., directed the taste of the middle ages, towards tales of chivalry, and heroes ancient and modern. Then came the minne-singers, whose lyrics tended towards the same end. The meister-sänger only fill up a hiatus, after which the influence of the Reformation changed for a time, the public taste of the age. Hymns, serious, patriotic, and martial songs, came into vogue, poetry declined into a transition state, to be revived by Opitz, Bodmer, &c. Several schools with various tendencies, were now originated; the Silesian, Köingsberg, Nuremburg, and Zurich. Bodmer's admiration for the "Paradise Lost," originated the last, and opened the way to a complete regeneration. Here commences the real era of Modern Poetry, which has been said by Menzel to have gone from the lyric, through the dramatic to the epic. In this, we cannot at all agree; on the contrary, it commenced with a species of epic by Bodmer, imitations of pieces in other languages, Hymns of Gellert, and Idyls of Gessner; through the higher epic of Klopstock to the dramas of Lessing, the romances of Wieland, Herder, &c., to the mixture of all tastes, in our own day. After the revival consequent on the Reformation, imitations of the French masters were considered the most perfect; this may be called the period of Gallomania, which extended to the time of Klopstock. He united a certain taste for following English authors and subjects, along with a mixture of classicality; he thought also, that the highest perfection was in

attiring Christian or German incidents and manners, with the garb of Greece and Rome. Ramler formed a transition between the love of French models, and the imitation of Grecian classics. He summoned gods and goddesses to his aid in unravelling the intricacies of modern situations. Wieland was overcome by the "plastic beauty" of Grecian forms, the purity of her philosophy, and the graces of Athenian manners. This amiable, refined, and witty nature, allowed itself to be decoyed into a heterogeneous species of romanticism, wherein the epicurean philosophy reigned supreme. Voss had an extravagant idea of the plasticity of the German language; he imagined that it might be made to follow the Greek, almost syllable for syllable, in metre and verse. This led him into the strangest absurdities of poetry; his translations, though curious specimens of labour, are not intelligible, on account of their involved nature. All those various tastes combined together to form the mixed talent of Goethe and Schiller, who rendered themselves superior to all the other poets of their country, by not confining themselves to any particular form, imitating all, and yet being original in their new Romanticism. The most recent authors have plunged into an abyss of mysticism, and transcendentalism, combining the philosophy of Kant, Böhme, with the extravagance of sentimentalism. Unfortunately, all true simplicity and symmetry, is lost sight of in these wild fancies; nothing but vagueness, unsubstantial forms of visionary beings, reign throughout their airy pages.

We will say a few words about Mme. Pontés' performance. It is a work of considerable merit, and shews a large acquaintance, not only with the numerous authors treated of, but also with the various critical works, which have teemed in Germany for a series of years, on this subject. Many of her translations are well worthy of the originals, reproducing faithfully their fire or pathos. We do not, however, mean to praise her undeservedly, this would be unworthy and suspicious. She is somewhat given to the romantic in her biographies, the poet's wives are all lovely, angelic beings; she is not sufficiently severe on many of the authors themselves. Her criticisms are not always sufficiently particular, nor are her extracts always long enough to cause the poet's style to be properly understood; with these slight defects, we think this book which is written with ease and grace, to be very entertaining and instructive.