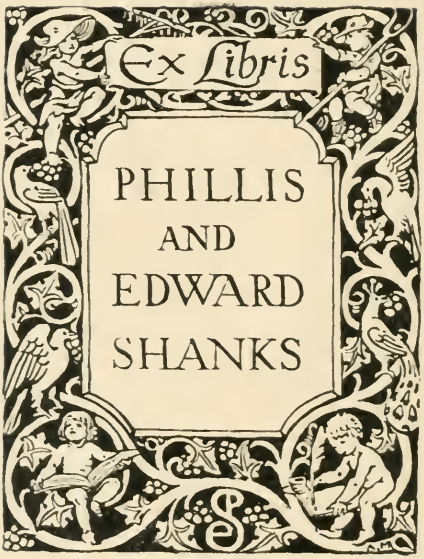
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THE GERMAN LYRIC

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GERMAN LYRIC

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TO

OTTO SCHLAPP AND RUDOLF HENNING

WITH THE GRATITUDE AND ADMIRATION OF A
FORMER PUPIL

CONTENTS

THE GERMAN LYRIC

FOREWORD

A SHORT history of the German lyric for English readers should need no apology. It is almost universally admitted that in music and in song the German genius has achieved more success than in any other sphere of artistic activity. Their music we have made our own, but it cannot be said that we know their poetry adequately. Some very great lyricists, Mörike, Storm, Keller, Meyer, Liliencron, are still known only to students and specialists: we possess neither biographies of these authors in English nor translations of their poems. This is all the more surprising in that German lyric poetry is as a rule so easy to read, so pleasing in its melody, and so much nearer in spirit to our own than the lyrics of France, or Italy, or Greece. Like our own, it has a development of seven hundred years behind it. It has its periods of brilliance, and other epochs when poetry lies dormant or seems stifled by unfavourable circumstances. The most barren ages are the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The summit of excellence was reached by Goethe, Schiller, and Hölderlin at the end

of the eighteenth century, and here the German lyric can claim to rank with the greatest lyric of any people. The nineteenth century, too, has produced singers of sweetness and originality, poets of attractive personality, whose voices sooner or later must be heard beyond their native land.

The present book has grown from lectures delivered during the last ten years to the Graduation Class in the University of Aberdeen. Its primary object is to supply a lucid and concise guide to students of German minor poetry. If, in addition, it may serve a wider public, and attract readers to authors whom hitherto they may not have known, the author will regard his work as well-spent labour. Purely biographical details, which can be found in books of reference, have been strictly limited. Only the few facts are mentioned which form the necessary introduction to the poetry itself. The books most frequently drawn upon for information were the standard histories of literature by Gervinus, Hettner, Scherer, Biese, Robertson, R. M. Meyer, and Kummer. Special mention should be made of the following treatises which deal more particularly with the nature and development of the lyric—Witkop's *Neuere deutsche Lyrik*, R. M. Werner's *Lyrik und Lyriker*, Schuré's *Histoire du Lied*, Biese's *Deutsche Lyrik und neuere deutsche Lyriker*, Susmann's *Wesen der modernen deutschen Lyrik*, Spiero's *Geschichte der deutschen Lyrik seit Claudius*, Kretschmar's *Geschichte des deutschen Liedes*. Other important books are referred to in the notes. In all cases, however, the author has endeavoured to form an opinion of his own. An Englishman's view of German art must differ at many points from a German's. The former may, of course,

be wrong, but his opinion should be interesting, even to the Germans themselves, and it is certainly in no spirit of superiority or through neglect of German views that an independent attitude is sometimes adopted, but simply because, after all, every man has only one honest judgment, and it is the best that he can give.

KING'S COLLEGE,
ABERDEEN, *April* 1914.

CHAPTER I

Definitions—The German Development—Character of the German Lyric

To define the lyric is almost as difficult as to define poetry itself. We are so accustomed to the publication of anthologies that everyone knows in a general way what it means. The difficulties begin when we try to draw definite lines, when we attempt to say what should be excluded, or what should be regarded as lyrical art in its highest form. It may in fact be impossible to find a definition at all corresponding to the manifoldness and ever changing nature of the lyric. In the opinion of a recent learned writer, "the lyric is above any formula that may be devised."[1] But we cannot proceed one single step on our way without making it as clear as possible to ourselves and our readers what lyrical poetry means and embraces. The name and the art we owe to Greece; Aristotle's division of poetry into the three classes—epic, dramatic, and lyric—still holds good, and it is to be regretted that he refrained from discussing the nature and essence of the lyric. For in Greece we see the lyric at an early stage of its development, and growing gradually till it reached the highest refinement and

[1] E. B. Reed, *English Lyrical Poetry*, Yale University Press, 1913.

variety of form. Many types cultivated in Germany were already well known in Greece—hymns to the gods, choral songs, dance songs, laudatory poems, festive songs, dirges, and even the lyric of impassioned individual emotion. In Greece it was inseparably bound up with music, as it was also in the early German ages. The modern lyric is perhaps more subjective, but this element is by no means new. In the modern lyric we should include certain types of poems which are not necessarily meant to be sung, the ode, the elegy, the epithalamium, the philosophical lyric, and on the other hand we should class the ballad among epic forms, although it was sung for centuries. Song and lyric are consequently not synonymous. Song is too narrow a term in one respect, and too broad in another. Shortness has been seized upon as a criterion by many critics. "The lyric," says Palgrave,[1] "turns on some single thought, feeling, or situation." He excludes narrative, descriptive, and didactic poems, "unless accompanied by rapidity of movement, brevity, and the colouring of human passion." This may be accepted as a general rule, but many genuine lyrics in Goethe and Schiller are by no means short. Like music, with which it is so closely allied in its origins, lyric poetry is the expression of emotion. Unlike music, it may also be expressive of thought, moulded and intensified by feeling. But here already there is room for divergence of opinion and variance in the judgments passed upon individual poems. A poet like Storm insists on the subordination of thought to feeling. A critic like Lessing has more interest in the epigram

[1] In the introduction to *The Golden Treasury*, London, 1903.

than in the song. Many poems universally regarded as lyrical are epigrammatic or satirical, but the epigram and the satire may be quite devoid of lyrical emotion. The very multiplicity of terms, such as the lyric of feeling, the lyric of love or nature, the political or philosophical lyric, and more specific classes like the ode, the song, the idyll, the pastoral, the madrigal, the roundelay, show what very divergent forms the short personal poem may take, and it is rather difficult to say that any of these forms deserves to be preferred, as form, to the other. Practically any metrical form can be employed, provided always that the language is subjected to definite laws which bring it near to music. In regard to content the lyric knows no limits; every emotion which the soul of man knows, the outer world and its relations to the human mind, the past, the present, and the future, the realms of fact and of pure imagination, all may equally form the starting-point of the lyric. The important point is evidently the attitude of the poet, whether, as in the epic and the drama, he chooses to take his stand apart from and above his subject, treating it in a purely objective way, or, as in the lyric generally, he makes himself the centre of things and gives his artistic utterance a personal, subjective form. But the boundary between the two great forms, objective and subjective, is sometimes extremely narrow. One could point to many passages in the great epics, and many speeches in representative dramas, which are essentially lyrical. Among lyricists, on the other hand, there are many, such as Uhland, Meyer, or Browning, who prefer to be impersonal; they frequently express their experience by a symbol from nature, or through the mouth of

another person, or even by an event or a situation. Coleridge called the "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" a lyrical ballad, and in German there are poems like "Röslein auf der Heide," or "Das Verlassene Mägdlein," which might be included in an anthology of lyrics or of ballads.

This brings us to the discussion of a criterion which has bulked largely in modern German criticism, the canon of inner truth. Since Goethe's time it has been recognised that the personality of the lyrical poet is of prime importance. Goethe himself was of this opinion, and Friedrich Hebbel, whose influence has been very great, insisted absolutely on this point. To him poetry is the necessary expression of inner life, of feelings which, in hallowed moments, rise from the depths of the soul, and while finding their natural utterance, free the soul from the emotions which had held it in bondage. He even went so far as to say that Shakespeare's creating of murderers saved him from the necessity of becoming one,[1] a dictum the only saving grace of which is its oddity. But with a certain school of æsthetic critics Hebbel's views have become dogma. In Wilhelm Dilthey's book, *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung*, they are still expressed with moderation, but in the *Neuere deutsche Lyrik* of Philipp Witkop, the only complete history of the German lyric, rules and formulas based on Hebbel and Dilthey are set up which, by their dogmatic narrowness, inevitably provoke opposition. It may be advisable to discuss Witkop's theories because they influence very strongly his estimation of individual

[1] Hebbel, *Tagebücher*, "Dass Shakespeare Mörder schuf, war seine Rettung, dass er nicht selbst Mörder zu werden brauchte."

poets, but above all because the discussion will clear our own views regarding the nature of the lyric. "The lyric," says Witkop, "gives us solely and directly the poet, the individual." It must be personal, and based upon an experience. With the Minnesang he has little sympathy, because the poet here veils his feelings, if he is not, as is generally the case, writing of merely imaginary passions. The Folksong is typical as opposed to individual; it is the poetry of a class, and so is the Kirchenlied. The idyllic poetry of the seventeenth century is simply a lie, because the poets represented a world in which they did not live. In regard to modern poetry, he exalts the thinker over the mere singer. Taking a poem like Goethe's "Ueber allen Gipfeln," he asks if this lyric would impress us so vividly if we did not know that it was the utterance of the personal unrest and longing of a great and attractive personality. In the lyric generally he considers first the man and his actual life, and judges the lyric poetry almost solely by what he calls its inner truth, hardly at all by its outer form. If we turn from theory to an anthology of real poetry, Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*, and take a lyric almost at random, a sonnet of Sidney or Shakespeare, or a lyric like "Full fathom five thy father lies," we shall see how difficult it is to agree with Witkop. These sonnets give the impression of a real love experience, but do they? It may be long before a definite answer to that question can be given.[1] And on what actual experience is the lyric from "The Tempest" based? Would it, moreover, cause us in

[1] See F. E. Schelling, *The English Lyric*, London, 1913, pp. 59, 64; also E. B. Reed, *l.c.*, 149, 170.

the slightest degree to modify our opinion upon these sonnets if we knew that they were addressed to nobody in particular? Their appeal simply lies in the fact that they are beautiful, that they express feelings which are universal with an art and unity which appeal to every reader. There is a large substratum of truth in the German theory. No one can be impressed by meretricious sentiment, when, for example, a poet like Gleim imitates without inner emotion all sorts of moods and styles. Moreover, if we keep our eye fixed upon Goethe alone we shall be inclined almost to subscribe to the German dictum *in toto*. He possessed the great personality, the will, the intellect, the industry which so many others lacked. He made himself the centre of his world, took it all in, and reduced it to harmony; he never lost himself in the multiplicity of phenomena, his utterance is always connected and harmonious. Naturally, much of his excellence is due to his mastery of rhythmical language. But, on the whole, his pre-eminence is chiefly based on his greatness as an individual, and on the fact that his lyrical poetry is the artistic but immediate expression of his manifold emotions and experiences. We could also point to other poets who failed because they lacked some quality of character or mind which Goethe possessed, or because they suppressed the personal note. Romanticists like Brentano and Eichendorff step into the background themselves and let personified nature speak. With them there was a danger of lyrical poetry becoming detached, descriptive, and uninteresting. The great epic geniuses, Keller and Meyer, show a tendency to veil the personal utterance, and to adopt in the lyric a tone of almost epic objectivity. In many poems

they consequently fail to impress us vividly for lack of a direct, personal association. But even these facts do not justify us in generalising about all lyric poetry. According to the best authorities lyrical poetry in its origin was not subjective. It was communal song, sung in chorus. "As the savage laureate slips from the singing, dancing crowd," says Gummere, "which turns audience for the nonce, and gives his short improvisation, only to yield to the refrain of the chorus, so the actual habit of individual composition and performance has sprung from the choral composition and performance."[1] However that may be, we find in the modern lyric poems which are not directly personal, in which the criterion of inner truth is no canon of criticism at all. Take a poem like Storm's "Meine Mutter hat's gewollt." The "experience" theorist may say that the poet is really, though not apparently, speaking in the first person, that the emotion is his own. Occasionally that may be so in this type of poem, as in Goethe's "Mignon" or Uhland's "Schäfers Sonntagslied," but we can hardly say that Storm in the above poem expresses a feeling which he had experienced, the "tragedy of being married to the wrong man." The material of this lyric is in no way more personal than is the hero of an epic or a drama. The character who sings the song is, of course, Storm's own creation. A certain artistic insight and knowledge of life were necessary to enable him to draw the character, and it needed lyrical genius to enable him to feel the crisis in the life of another, and to body it forth with such con-

[1] F. B. Gummere, *The Beginnings of Poetry*, New York, 1901, p. 92.

vincing artistry; but looking at the process quite impartially, we must admit that the poem is based on an imaginative fiction. This, too, may be called an experience, but it is not the kind of experience which Dilthey and Witkop had in view. If we extend the term to include not merely a love affair or an impression from nature, but every movement of poetical feeling, whatever the motive force may be, a thought, a vision, an apperception, a melody heard, or a haunting refrain, then we may say that every lyric is based on an individual experience. And in the working up of his material the poet can hardly be granted too much freedom. Even Goethe does not always give us his experience in the form in which it came to him. In Mörike's lyrics there is a very large fictional element. The poet may veil his passion under the fantastic garb and scenery of the pastoral, he may suggest it rather than give it direct expression. None the less it is lyrical. And where the personality of the poet is unknown, or the motives of the poem doubtful, the criterion of inner truth fails altogether; we have the work of art alone before us, and it must stand or fall by what is after all the soundest criterion, whether it produces upon the reader the effect which the artist intended it to convey.

When we consider the subject of outer form other interesting questions arise. It will not do to put form aside as a matter of little importance, as Witkop is inclined to do. In some lyrics the musical rhythm is as important as the emotion or thought conveyed. Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" is an example, and among modern German lyrics there are poems which merely suggest, play upon the senses, their content cannot be

summarised in words or interpreted. Subjective feeling alone will not make a lyric; it must also be tuneful, the more so the better. Some poets, though rich in poetical thought, are less successful than minor men in the matter of pure form. And there are others, like Heyse and Geibel, with whom perfection of form does not always go hand in hand with beauty or originality of content. Yet both contribute in their own way to the development of lyrical art. The question of rhyme has been much discussed in recent years. The example of Klopstock, Goethe, and Heine show that very high artistic effects can be attained without it. From time to time there have been revolts against the cramping influence of rhyme and the jingling fluency of some rhymsters, as in the eighteenth century and recently in the movement headed by Arno Holz. It would seem as if this artistic instrument from time to time exhausted itself and needed renewal. But the actual charm of rhyme is based upon a natural psychological law, and will always remain a factor of artistic power.[1] Examples could easily be found to prove that sometimes it has been employed with such wonderful effect that we should be loth to do without it. In regard to rhythm theorists are more at variance. Its essentiality is admitted; it is as necessary in the lyric as in music; it is based on the rhythm of actuality, of natural work and play, on the throb of the human pulse, on the rise and fall of mental emotion. The difficulties arise when we consider the way in which the poet chooses a definite rhythmical scheme to express his poetical emotion.

[1] See R. M. Meyer, "Ueber Reimfindung," *Das Litterarische Echo*, 1913.

"Rhythm is not a mere dress," says Alfred Biese in his *Lyrische Dichtung*.[1] He holds that it corresponds to the vibrations of the chords in the soul of the poet, that the poetic mood creates the rhythm suitable for its utterance. This may be true of great original poetry, but it is not true of all poetry, not even of all good poetry. The poet frequently borrows his rhythm and his stanza. The form is sometimes the first thing to suggest itself. A well-known line, a piece of music, a refrain have not infrequently suggested the theme of a successful poem. There are many standard forms handed down by tradition, and we find even the greatest poets attempting the sonnet, for example, in emulation of others, or simply to see what they could achieve by this medium of expression. Naturally the borrowed dress should fit, but the only criterion of a poet's right to use a borrowed form seems to me to be whether he uses it successfully or not, and whether it is the most suitable expression for the content. We find Witkop objecting to Heine's imitation of the Folksong. But the four-lined stanza is common property, and the simplest and most natural means of expressing human emotion. We cannot demand a new form from every singer, and the question should rather be: Is this form suitable? Have form and content become so beautifully and so completely bound together that they appear to us to be one, to be artistically harmonious and inseparable?

The study of the poets' methods of composition and some critical writings by representative poets have thrown considerable light upon the essence and

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[1] Alfred Biese, *Lyrische Dichtung und neuere deutsche Lyriker*, Berlin, 1896.

origin of the lyric. In his *Defence of Poetry* Shelley, no mean authority, defines poetry as "the expression of the imagination." He is convinced of the dependence of the singer on the hour of inspiration, and regards it as an error to say that poetry can be produced by labour and study. The mind in creation he compares to a fading coal, "which some invisible influence, like an inconsistent wind, awakens to transitory brightness." Heine likens poems to tears which "come to us suddenly." In his autobiography we see how Burns, one of nature's own bards, was stirred to write partly through emulation of popular dance songs, but even more by his own vivid passions. "The agitations of his mind and body exceeded anything I ever knew in real life," said his brother Gilbert. Goethe described his procedure in the following words to Eckermann (6th May 1827): "I received in my mind impressions of sense, vivid, delightful impressions of a hundred different kinds, such as a lively imagination presented to me; and I had nothing further to do than to give to these impressions an artistic rounding, to shape them and body them forth in such a living form that others received the same impressions when they heard or read what I had represented." In his letters Mörike gives us an interesting account of the origin of the ballad, "Schön-Rohtraut." There he writes: "Such moments of sudden inspiration are not exactly rare. The most powerful which I experienced in myself was the origin of the ballad 'Rohtraut.' In Cleversulzbach I encountered by chance, when reading a dictionary of foreign words, the old German name Rohtraut, which before was quite unknown to me. It seemed to glow with the radiance of roses, and the figure of

the king's daughter stood before me. Warmed by this vision I stepped from my room into the garden, walked once down the broad path to the arbour at the end, and had invented the poem, and almost simultaneously the metre and the first lines, whereupon the execution followed of its own accord." One might multiply such examples,[1] but the consideration of even a few proves that no two poets work in the same way. Even in the case of one poet the connection between inspiration and execution, experience and utterance, content and form, may vary almost infinitely. Sometimes the lyric is a mystery even to its author; it is there, feeling and melody, and he knows not how or why. Sometimes it is the result of laborious meditation and prolonged filing. Frequently a poet carries the material in his mind for a long time, but is unable until a definite moment to give it artistic shape.

When we consider the general development of the German lyric, the interesting fact obtrudes itself that in the first few centuries we can only speak of certain kinds of poetry, such as the Minnesang, the Volkslied, the Kirchenlied, and so on, whereas in the last two centuries there are no such groups: the poetry of the individual man stands by itself. The Folksongs are anonymous, the hymns show a certain resemblance, the Minnesang has definite peculiarities. In our appreciation of this poetry the question of the poet's personality hardly enters into consideration. But even here there is danger in schematising. To call the Volkslied typical as opposed to personal, as Witkop does, is meaningless. The Volk, as such,

[1] See Biese, *l.c.*, p. 43 f.

never creates anything, least of all lyrical poetry. In the various songs the sentiment is as direct and personal as in any of the lyrics of the present day. Among the Minnesingers, too, there were men like Walther von der Vogelweide and Wolfram von Eschenbach, whose strength of personality burst through the ethical and literary conventions of their time. Above all, to call the Volkslied the "song of the peasants," and the Kirchenlied the "song of the clergy," as Witkop does, is in opposition to facts. One man in his time plays many parts, and just as among the hymnists there were knights and laymen of every degree, so beyond doubt many classes were represented in the Folksong. It is true that the personal element in the Minnesang and the Kirchenlied is not so great as that which is due to the general atmosphere and circumstances of the time, and here we find the real contrast to the modern lyric. The poetry of Goethe, or Heine, or Storm certainly owes much to the age in which it came to light, but indirectly through the medium of the poet. In them the subjective element is very much greater than that which is due to literary tradition, or the class of society in which the author moved. There is also another difference. In later ages we have been brought into closer touch with the authors. The record of their lives is before us; their letters, diaries, even their conversation, is public property. Sometimes they invite confidence by theoretical explanations of their production; sometimes they fear and shun it. It is quite pertinent to ask to what extent this may influence the relations between the poet and the critical reader. The latter enters, so to speak, on a personal discussion with the author, and strange results may

follow, a compromise or an antipathy. The commentator further complicates matters, and he has much more scope in modern poetry than in ancient. Goethe feared that exposition might be a disadvantage, as it tended to resolve into prosaic detail what he had shaped into poetry. In Goethe's case the fear has proved groundless. The greater our knowledge of his methods and the origins of his poetry, the more convinced do we become of his unique gifts, and his supreme position among German lyricists. The really great poet will write from inner necessity and as his genius impels him, heedless of what anyone may think or say. But the man of weaker fibre or of particularly sensitive temperament may be influenced by his public. It would be interesting to inquire, for example, whether some of the vagueness of modern lyric poetry, with its tendency towards allegory and symbolism, may not be due to some extent, consciously or unconsciously, to a desire to attain the artistic effect without, at the same time, revealing to the gaze of curiosity the innermost secrets of the poet's soul.

There is another important difference between early lyric poetry and that of the present day. The Minnesinger was both poet and musician ; the modern author is freed from the necessity of composing a melody to accompany the words of his song. The loss of music may at first sight appear a disadvantage, but it is compensated by a gain in literary vitality and philosophic depth. The Minnesinger was restricted to definite forms and conventions, only certain themes were permitted, and the manner of his utterance was more important than the thought or feeling expressed. The modern poet has more freedom in the choice of his metre, no consideration of length obtrudes itself,

his subjects range from the simplest expression of emotion to the sublimest thought. Very many German lyricists have been musical, some have been capable musicians. This is no doubt a great advantage, but it is not essential. To become what it is, the expression of the feeling of the finest minds of the people, something individual and yet national, German lyric poetry had to free itself from music and grow in manifoldness and in power. We must also remember that the separation has not been complete. The great modern composers have set to music the choicest songs of the poets with a mastery which no early singer could have rivalled, and the result is that a great mass of German lyric poetry is so inseparably associated in our minds with the music that we can hardly think of the words apart from the melody. How much of the popularity of Heine, for example, is due to the consummate art of his composers!

The Folksong supplies the key to the development of the German lyric, at least in its broad outlines, and till recent times. It is an understatement of the case to say that the Folksong has been a source of inspiration. In the very greatest lyricists we simply find the Folksong in a new shape: it has become more polished and artistic, and it has been made the instrument of personal lyrical utterance. Goethe's lyrics before 1770, that is, previous to his study of the Folksong under Herder's guidance, might be neglected except for their historical interest. Heine's debt to the Folksong has been pointed out again and again, besides being frankly admitted by himself. Mörike is almost one of the people in his close touch with his native soil, his naïveté and spontaneous imagination. Uhland profited from his study of the

historical Folksong, and is a master of the simple effective idiom of the people. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when many forces hostile to literature were at work, the neglect of the Folksong is contemporaneous with the decline of the lyric. Much of modern lyric poetry, it is true, has nothing of the Folksong about it; Schiller, for example, was hardly influenced by popular poetry at all. Moreover, there were other streams of influence, from the classics, from France, England, and the East, while events like the Seven Years' War and the War of Liberation have also to be considered. Yet there is much to be said for the view that the history of the German lyric, till 1870 at least, is on the whole the study of the manner in which the simple song of the later Middle Ages was reshaped and made more artistic by those who found this a suitable expression for their lyrical feeling, and who, while uttering something personal and new, at the same time awakened, like the nameless singers of the past, sympathetic chords in the hearts of the whole community.

The Folksong was, to begin with, the song of the country; it breathes the freshness of the fields, and the simplicity of early communal life. Many of the best known pieces begin with a situation drawn from nature, fixing the scene as the hill, the linden, or the village well. It is not surprising, therefore, that in the modern lyric nature plays so great a part. Love of nature is characteristic of the German mind; it is not always regarded or celebrated in the same way, but wherever the German lyric rises above mediocrity, this is one of its finest and most convincing elements. Goethe's poetry is full of the

subtle charm of nature and its influence upon the human mind in its soothing, cheering, or awe-inspiring aspects. Mörike was of the same mould, extremely sensitive to his surroundings, and naïve in his attitude to nature. In the Romanticists, nature is lifted out of her own sphere and endowed with a soul-life; the rose and the butterfly are not merely parts of a world of which man is the centre, they have become human like ourselves:—

> "Die Veilchen kichern und kosen
> Und schaun nach den Sternen empor:
> Heimlich erzählen die Rosen
> Sich duftende Märchen ins Ohr."

With Droste-Hülshoff the attitude to nature again becomes realistic; even in the South her heart hangs on her Westphalian home. Storm, too, when in exile, sings of the Holstein landscape, the grey strand, the roar of the sea, the misty dunes, and the cry of the sea-bird. In Keller and Meyer new motives appear, the snowy peaks, the torrents and lakes of Switzerland. Here, again, we have individuality and freshness. Two poets may describe the same landscape quite differently, but what a wealth of suggestions in a land of such diversity as Germany, what contrasts between low-lying Holstein and the Alps, between the bright Rhineland and the sombre beauty of Silesia! The background of the German lyric is never merely typical or traditional; it has an intimate appeal and a warmth and variety of colouring which speak of personal contact, individuality, and truth.

The landscape has contributed in another way to the variety and individuality of the German lyric, although in this case other influences have also been at work. The mountain ranges of Germany and the

large rivers are situated in such a way that from the earliest times the inhabitants of one district were effectively separated from those of another. And even at the present day, when local barriers have almost disappeared, there are great differences between the Alsatian and the Swabian, the Bavarian and the Frank, the Rhineländer and the Mecklenburger. They have grown up under different surroundings, traditions, and sometimes a different mental and physical inheritance. Swabia was at one time pre-eminent as the motherland of poetry, while the practical talents of the North have proclaimed themselves on the battlefield, in statesmanship, and in successful industrial enterprise. But when we look back from the standpoint of the present day we see that there is scarcely a single district but has contributed to the list of German poets. And these men have borne upon their faces the stamp of their race and native soil. This is why there have been so few so-called schools of poetry in Germany; and none of them has ever been national or has dominated literature so powerfully as to cramp the individual in the expression of his personal experience. From first to last there has been a healthy development of style, free from the mere slavish imitation of tradition or fashion.

In England, where German poetry is not nearly so well known as French, nor so familiar as its artistic merits entitle it to be, there are still, even among cultured people, two fairly strong prejudices against the German lyric. The one is that German poetry is too sentimental; the second that the language is harsh and clumsy. Opinions such as these die hard, especially if there is the least foundation for them.

It may be at once admitted that sometimes in the popular songs, and above all in the poetry of the Romanticists, resignation, homesickness, disappointed love, and the longing for death are expressed in a way that appears to a Briton with his reserved, practical, and perfectly self-controlled temperament, and I have no doubt to many Germans too, to be effeminate, if not unnatural. Heine is frequently sentimental, and Lenau or Grün so extremely pessimistic that their view of life can only be regarded as abnormal. These are examples among the greater poets, and more could be found among the minor ones. But when applied to the German lyric as a whole the criticism is unjust. There is no false sentiment in Goethe. He is extremely candid ; in his lyrics of love or his philosophical poems we find strong passion and deep feeling breaking forth spontaneously, but it rings natural and true. Schiller, Mörike, Droste, Keller, Meyer, Storm, Liliencron are absolutely free from any taint of sentimentalism. More names might be mentioned, but the above are characteristic. They represent all that is best in the German lyric, its intensity of feeling, its simplicity and directness of expression. With regard to the second point the least insight into the actual facts will show that it is a mere prejudice and nothing more. Certainly there are words in the German language that it would be difficult to employ in a line of verse. There is, as compared with the older stages of the language, a remarkable preponderance of consonants over vowels, and many constructions are cumbrous and difficult to adapt to the rules of metre. Official or legal German, even some of the German written by biographers and essayists, seems an impossible language for the finer touches of poetry.

But the German poet has found a way out of the difficulty by creating a language of his own. Fortunately German is rich in synonyms, it has an incomparable store of onomatopoetic words and alliterative phrases. As far as syntax is concerned, the modern lyricist follows the example of the folksong and makes his sentences as simple as possible. He allows himself great freedom in the order of words. The separable prefix is frequently retained where prose usage would require it to be put at the end of the sentence. The sign of the past participle may be omitted, and many other such anomalies are not only permitted but quite common. The consequence is that German poetry possesses a pliancy and melody that are rare in German prose. Goethe is a master of musical rhythm. Heine has shown us the possibilities of the German language in his "North Sea Pictures." In fact, almost all the poets of distinction excel in their handling of the language. There may be rough strength, extraordinary minuteness of distinction, and occasionally not a little harshness in German prose, but this language at the same time possesses an abundant vocabulary to express the tenderness of the elegy, the sublimest meditation of the philosophical poet, the fire of the ode, or the rapture of the song of love.

CHAPTER II

The Beginnings—Minnesang—Meistersang—Volkslied

As far back as we can trace the origins of German history we hear of the elements of music and song. Tacitus tells us in his *Germania* that the only history of the Germans consisted of songs, "carmina antiqua," in which they sang of Tuisto and his son Mannus and of Hercules. He makes special mention of a battle-song which they sang as they advanced upon the enemy. He calls it "barditus." It was to inspire them with courage, and from the sound of the chorus they were afraid or were confident of the issue of the fight. In singing it they placed their shields before their mouths that the sound might be fuller and more impressive. In his *Annals* he mentions also the lays of Arminius. Jordanes, too, in his history of the Goths, speaks of dirges sung for the death of Attila. None of this poetry was written down, and it has been irretrievably lost. It was probably not till a hundred years after Tacitus that the Runic script became common, and even then it was not employed to record poetry. It is impossible to say whether these chorus songs were epic or lyrical; probably they partook of the nature of both. Even in the Old High German age only the scantiest traces of anything resembling lyric poetry can be found. There

are lyrical passages in some of the epics, the Heliand, Ludwigslied, and the Hildebrandslied, and the old riddles and charms come near in form if not in spirit to the lyric. They may have inspired later lyricists as they were handed down by oral tradition in an age which made no clear distinction between epic, dramatic, and lyrical utterance. We find, for instance, the second Merseburg Spruch, a charm against lameness in horses, living on in Scotland in the eighteenth century, and being among the store of folklore handed down to Burns by word of mouth :—

"The Lord rade,
And the foal slade ;
He lighted,
And it righted :
Joint to joint,
Bone to bone,
Sinew to sinew,
Heal now, in the Holy name !"

Doubtless there was in Germany, as there was in Greece and in France,[1] an early popular poetry associated with the great events in the lives of the people, hunting, war, love, the dance, death and burial, the coming of the seasons, the religious festivals. But as in France, so in Germany every kind of mythological or historical song, every ceremonial or amusement that could remind the people of their ancient creed and traditional customs, were ruthlessly suppressed by the Church. The loss of this poetry was the price paid for the higher civilisation of Christianity. It is inconceivable that a people which in later days showed such genius in the art of poetry should not even at this early time have brightened

[1] See Gaston Paris, *Journal des Savants*, 1891-92.

their daily occupations and ennobled their tribal gatherings with dancing, singing, and playing. The "Sänger" was almost an official personage, and as time went on his place was taken by the wandering "Spielmann" and the unplaced cleric. To the former we owe the preservation of the great popular traditions, to the latter the earliest extant collection of lyric poetry. But as to the form of the earlier lyric poetry we are absolutely in the dark. We hear of "winileodos" in the year 789, but we only hear of them because in that year nuns were forbidden by edict "to write or send them." These words "winileodos scribere vel mittere" have been variously interpreted, but it is almost certain that love-songs are meant, and whether the nuns composed or merely copied them, the main fact is clear that some kind of lyric poetry did exist at this time, and that it was not regarded with favour by the Church. Even without this casual reference we could conclude from the form of the early Minnesang, its peculiarities of versification, its use of certain poetical formulas, and its remarkable fluency and elegance of style, that a long development preceded it. Apart from the Church there were other influences hostile to the growth of German lyric poetry. Under the Ottonian dynasty Latin became the language of court, and acquired an ascendancy which was broken only in the age of chivalry. But as in all ages, so in this the various classes of society merged into each other. The educated cleric who could find no employment, or who was unwilling to accept the strict rule of the Church, inevitably came into contact with the "Spielmann." Both were wandering singers compelled to earn their living by music and song. The

one sang in Latin, the other in his native tongue; the culture of the one consisted in his theological training, that of the other in his knowledge of the mythological and historical traditions, but life was the same problem to both, and the extant poetry of the clerics shows that they were far from confining themselves to religious themes. The *Carmina Burana*[1] is a collection of poems dating from the twelfth century, and was discovered in the Bavarian monastery of Benediktbeuren. It is mostly in Latin, but sometimes the refrain, sometimes a verse, is in German. Lyrical feeling is expressed in various ways: there is the lusty drinking song, the lyric of love, keen satire and the bitterness of poverty. We find references to living personages, even glimpses of an already awakened interest in nature, personal laments over weakness and misfortune, the conflict between the wish to serve Heaven and the attractions of the world.

From the middle of the twelfth century onwards, a new spirit animates German literature. The winning of the Holy Land for Christianity was an idea that had its origin in the Church. The practical object of the Crusades remained unachieved, but the enthusiasm which it aroused, the new idea of the Christian soldier which it gave birth to, and the contact between East and West, as also between the various peoples of Europe, gave an extraordinary stimulus to German civilisation. The whole essence of chivalry was new, and was adopted almost unchanged from France. The knight became not merely the leader of society, but the bearer of culture and the arts. To copy the example, of the Provençal troubadour, that is, to be

[1] Ed. J. A. Schmeller, Breslau, 1883.

not only a good knight and true, but to be able also to play the violin or the lute, and to invent elegant songs, became the ideal of knighthood. The clergy step into the background, the knights take their place, and celebrate their advent by the creation of a literature which is unique in the history of Germany. It began, both in the epic and the lyric, with close imitations of French poetry, but soon blossomed out into freedom and originality. Its most outstanding features are elegance and taste. But its summer was of short duration. It died with the class that created it, and never again shall we see such close connection between the highest ranks of society and the practice of letters. The great festival of 1184, celebrated at Mayence by the Emperor Friedrich Barbarossa on the conferring of knightly privileges upon his two sons, is a tangible date for fixing the establishment of chivalrous etiquette in Germany. But even before this time the poetry of Provence had spread to the south and south-west of the country, awakening interest and emulation. In form the Minnesang adheres to the rules of its models. In the "Lied" the stanza falls into two main divisions known as the "Aufgesang" and the "Abgesang," the former of which is in two parts known as "Stollen." The "Leich" is free in structure and of various length; its content is generally of a religious character. The "Spruch" is in one stanza, mostly short and didactic in content. In regard to the length of the lines, their number, and the arrangement of the rhymes, the poet has absolute freedom in all three classes. So far as the content is concerned the Minnesang shows more originality. The word "Minne" denotes more than love; this emotion, in fact, plays a subordinate part in mediæval poetry.

The knightly devotion to womanhood manifested in the "Frauendienst" owed much to the worship of the Virgin, and the Latin poetry which celebrated the mother of Christ has strongly influenced the Minnesang. The "Herrin" whom the Minnesinger looked up to might be a lady of much higher rank, married or single, and thus arose the binding convention that no hint of the actual personality should be given in the song. This naturally opened the door for the celebration of merely hypothetical passions, and the absence of sincerity, directness, and spontaneity is generally regarded as the chief weakness of the Minnesang. But it is a mistake, which several German critics have made, to regard the Minnesang as mere conventional poetry. Passion may be genuine though veiled; indeed, the poet would have regarded it as a gross breach of etiquette, a betrayal of himself and his mistress, to be personal. And there are compensating qualities, a delicacy rare in early German verse, neatness of fancy, and very remarkable graces of style. In some of the poems it is the lady who speaks, and these are among the most passionate and direct. In others there is a fanciful dialogue between the lovers, while in the "Tagelied" a third personage is introduced, the watchman who awakens the lovers at break of day and bids them think of their danger. One of the earliest examples of the Minnesang is the well known:—

"Dû bist mîn, ich bin dîn:
des solt dû gewis sîn.
dû bist beslozzen
in mînem herzen;
verlorn ist das slüzzelîn,
dû muost immer drinne sîn."

It is thoroughly characteristic in the construction of the stanza, and its epigrammatic "pointe" is more French than German. Only a few of the Minnesangs are anonymous; it is a splendid token to the respect paid to poetry, that the author not only named himself with pride, but was also jealous of his rights. No other might imitate his "Ton," that is, the stanza and the melody which he had invented, without being characterised by the singularly effective word "doenediep." One of the earliest singers was a certain **Herr von Kürenberg,** an Austrian, who calls up before us situations of simple beauty, sometimes by means of symbolism, as when the loss of the lady's lover is expressed by the story of the well-tended but faithless falcon. Some discussion has arisen over the fact that he is an Austrian. This is, however, not sufficient ground for thinking that the Minnesang was in its origins German, for French influence reached Austria at an early time through Italy. Another Austrian poet of note was **Dietmar von Aist,** whose songs of spring and longing appeal to us by their directness and simplicity. A contemporary of these earliest singers was called **Spervogel,** but the collection of "Sprüche" handed down under this name may have been written by two, if not three, different poets. These pieces are in one stanza, mostly reflective, elegaic, or didactic in character, and reveal a somewhat pessimistic attitude to life. There were many Minnesingers of charm and originality, whose poems have been preserved chiefly in two beautiful manuscripts, the Weingartner in Stuttgart, and the Manessian in Heidelberg. It is impossible to characterise them individually here; perhaps it may suffice if the most important are noted. The

Rhineland is represented by **Heinrich von Veldeke** and **Friedrich von Hausen.** Veldeke, who wrote about 1170, is a fluent and optimistic singer, with a keen eye for the beauty of nature; Hausen, who fell in the Crusade of 1190, is more elegaic. His favourite theme is longing for home and his distant mistress. In both the Provençal influence is very strong. **Heinrich von Morungen** was a native of Thuringia, and the greatest of the early singers, though not the most popular. This honour belonged to **Reinmar von Hagenau**, an Alsatian who went to Vienna, and became court poet there. He now appears to us as somewhat effeminate in sentiment, and he is invariably despondent in his view of life. He wrote a great many poems, but his chief importance lies in the fact that he was the teacher of Walther von der Vogelweide. Two great epic poets deserve mention here, **Wolfram von Eschenbach** and **Hartmann von Aue.** Wolfram, the author of *Parzival*, is somewhat crabbed in form, but in depth and sincerity the equal of any writer of the time. Hartmann is an enthusiast for the Crusades and earnestness in life. His elegy on the death of his liege lord is one of the best of its kind. In addition, he reveals the usual themes of the Minnesang, devotion to womanhood, joy in the spring and the summer, sadness at the approach of winter. The Minnesang reached its zenith in **Walther von der Vogelweide,**[1] indubitably the greatest lyric poet till the time of Goethe. He was too true a poet to be a mere Minnesinger, his enthusiasm and passion too ardent to be restrained by literary traditions and

[1] A. E. Schönbach, *Walther von der Vogelweide*, Dresden, 1895.

conventions. His life, which we know principally from his poetry, was characteristic of the time. He was of noble birth, but extremely poor, a South German, born about 1170. At an early age he sought the court of Vienna, and came under the influence of Reinmar von Hagenau. Some of his poems, supposed to belong to an early period, breathe a livelier passion than the usual Minnesang, and seem to have a real love experience as their basis. The four stanzas of the well-known poem :—

"Under der linden
an der heide
dâ unser zweier bette was,
dâ mugent ir vinden
schône beide
gebrochen bluomen unde gras.
Vor dem walde in einem tal,
tandaradei !
schône sanc diu nahtegal . . ."

have the form of the Minnesang, but in their naïveté and directness they are more akin to the Folksong. In 1198 Walther left the court for some reason or other, and was forced to adopt the life of a wandering singer. It was now that he came into close touch with nature, the beauty of the May, the joy of the flowers, the singing of the birds, the village dance, but he learned at the same time the hardships of winter, hoar frost and snow, which made him utter the humorous wish :—

"Möhte ich verslâfen des winters zît !
wache ich die wîle, sô hân ich sîn nît,
daz sîn gewalt ist sô breit und sô wît.
weizgot, er lât ouch dem meien den strît :
sô lise ich bluomen, dâ rîfe nû lît."

He wandered from castle to castle, gaining a deep insight into society and life while entertaining his hosts by his poetry. But his independent nature prevented him from settling long anywhere. His lyre had many notes—humour, irony, hatred, tenderness. He was above all frank, manly, and sincere, a lovable personality, free from roughness and bad taste. He was the father of German political poetry, and one of its greatest exponents. In the disturbed times in which he lived, in the factions of this or that claimant to the imperial crown, he played an important part. He proved a powerful opponent of the abuses of the Church, the sale of indulgences, the exercise of the power of excommunication, and the interference of the Papal stool in the politics of Germany. Without office or home, without money or influence, he made himself, simply by the telling force of his "Sprüche," a power to be reckoned with. He was, moreover, an ardent patriot who sang the praises of Germany in melodious stanzas:—

"Ich hân lande vil gesehen
unde nam der besten gerne war:
Übel müeze mir geschehen,
künde ich ie mîn herze bringen dar,
Daz im wol gefallen
wolde fremeder site.
nû waz hulfe mich, ob ich unrehte strite?
tiuschiu zuht gât vor in allen."

The religious note, too, is to be found in his poetry, and one of his finest efforts is an elegaic poem written near the end of his life, giving a retrospect of the years gone past, and the feelings of an old man who no longer finds himself satisfied with the present. Thus in Walther the Minnesang rises to the rank of

great poetry; besides what is merely traditional, it gives us a personal experience, it reflects and ennobles the life of the time. How any critic, who is not bound hand and foot to a theory, can say of Walther, after explaining the conventionality of the knightly poetry, "Selbst Walther von der Vogelweide hat sich aus dieser ständischen Gebundenheit nicht losgelöst,"[1] is to me inconceivable. He wielded a power almost comparable to that of the modern review, but he did it in such an artistic way that the force and charm of his poetry are still to be felt. The last years of his life were spent in comfort. The Emperor Frederick II. had a warm admiration for Walther, and gave him a small estate. In a poem of gratitude he exults in his independence of the covetous and his release from the fear of winter, and thanks the Emperor for raising him to a position of respect and sweetening his song. After 1228 we hear no more of him; some think he may have taken part in the crusade of that year, but it is unlikely. According to tradition he lies buried in the cloisters of the cathedral of Würzburg.

Neidhart von Reuental is the greatest of Walther's successors. He died about 1250, and forms a connecting link between the poetry of chivalry and that of the people. His songs of summer and winter generally open with the description of some scene from nature, and pass on to describe the preparations for the dance. He is full of humour, enthusiasm, and joy in life, and possesses very great skill in handling various metrical forms. A characteristic example is the poem in which a girl, after pleading in vain with

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[1] Witkop, *l.c.*, i. 39.

her mother to allow her to join the revels, takes matters into her own hand, secretly breaks open the box, and hurries off in her finery to join her lover. Neidhart has also a keen eye for the follies of the country bumpkins, and satirises them to some purpose :—

> " Sîn gewant
> sol man an eim œden kragen suochen."

Walther's political poetry was carried on in a feeble way by **Reinmar von Zweter**, in whom we find the other forms popular at this time—the fable, the riddle, and the parable. Didactic and epigrammatic poetry flourished too in this age, the latter in particular, for there are some splendid epigrams in the collection known as *Freidanks Bescheidenheit.* Their neatness, humour, and cleverness may best be illustrated by three examples chosen almost at random :—

> " Swie dicke ein tôre im spiegel siht,
> er kennet doch sîn selbes niht."

> " Ich waene, daz iht bettes sî,
> da'n sî ein bœsiu veder bî."

> " Swer zwêne wege welle gân,
> der muoz lange schenkel hân."

In **Ulrich von Liechtenstein's** *Frauendienst*, a kind of autobiography finished in 1255, the knightly conception of " Minne " is carried to absurd lengths, but the songs that occur are melodious and spirited. The Minnepoesie was also practised by men like **Johannes Hadlaub** of Zürich, **Hugo von Montfort,** and **Oswald von Wolkenstein.** In them, too, other signs of decadence begin to appear, pedantry, triviality, and self-consciousness. It was these things that

destroyed the vitality of the Minnesang, but what really killed it was the evolution of society, namely, the decadence of knighthood and the advance of the cities. Its last representative is **Heinrich von Meissen**, named Frauenlob, but he is at the same time regarded as one of the founders of the Meistergesang.

The transition from Minnesang to Meistergesang was a very gradual one. Some writers represent both types, and the "Meister" had much to learn from his predecessor, the knight. The latter, however, gradually receded further and further into the background, and the middle classes sought to carry on the literary tradition. While the nobility had been engaged in fruitless crusades, commerce had increased, cities were growing in size and strength, the merchant now vied successfully with the lords of the land in wealth and importance. During the second half of the thirteenth century the absence of a strong personality on the imperial throne led to anarchy among the barons, and every little territorial prince was in arms against his neighbour. Robbed by those more powerful than himself the knight sought to recoup himself by plundering the caravans of the merchants; a class of "Raubritter" arose and proved a continual thorn in the sides of the townships; there were constant feuds between the two, but the invention of gunpowder robbed the "Burg" of its natural strength and rendered the prowess of the individual of less and less importance. While it gave the cities security, it reduced the knights to a precarious and desperate position. They had neither time nor inclination for the finer arts; the erstwhile ideal of service of womanhood and of the Church in arms was now forgotten;

as a class they have become the victims of circumstances, and their glorious literature died with their former pre-eminence. Our regret at their passing is all the keener because their successors were so incapable of carrying on the high traditions of art. The burgher of the mediæval city had a narrow horizon; he had neither the idealistic view of life nor the knowledge of the world, gathered by travel and adventure, which enriched the knightly poetry. He is fond of airing his learning; the habit of imitation, so common in urban populations, smothered his natural inventiveness. His poetry is a very meekly trotting Pegasus. But the Meistersingers were very much in earnest. With remarkable zeal they formed schools of poetry, with written codes of rules for admission and promotion to the various grades of Schüler, Schulfreund, Singer, Dichter, and Meister. The highest title was conferred upon the man who could satisfy the "markers," in writing, composing, and singing a new song. In Mayence, Augsburg, Ulm, Strassburg, Nuremberg, these schools flourished for centuries and endeavoured to "make" poetry. It is an interesting experiment, characteristic of the minds which attempted it. In lyric poetry next to nothing of lasting importance was achieved; men like **Muscatblut** and **Michael Beheim** are only of historical interest, and the most original of the Meistersingers, **Hans Sachs** (1494-1576), owes his place in literature not to the 4,275 songs which he wrote, but to his farces, witty dialogues, and to his efforts to improve the drama.

What the Meistersingers, owing to their pedantry and artificiality, had failed to do, to create a national lyric poetry, was accomplished spontaneously by the

Folksong.[1] Its earliest records take us back to the thirteenth century, according to all indication it flourished especially in the fourteenth and fifteenth; in the sixteenth it barely maintained its position, while it was neglected and despised, at least in learned and literary circles, in the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth century. Herder, Goethe, Bürger, and the Romanticists brought it once more to light, and built upon it the foundations of modern lyric poetry. The early songs of the people were anonymous, they had generally no title, they were created by individuals who at the same time composed a melody or indicated a popular air to which they were to be sung. After this they became common property, to be sung with variations by others. Preservation depended solely upon popularity, for the Folksong was already past its bloom when it began to be printed on detached sheets, or in short collections. There is scarcely any event of importance in the Middle Ages, any occupation or industry, any feature of the life of the community, which is not celebrated in these poems. One group of songs is of historical character, dealing freely with subjects like the battle of Sempach, the fate of Agnes Bernauer, characters like Franz von Sickingen and Prince Eugene. Detail and accuracy are of no moment; the poet gives what he has seen or heard, the episodes of general public interest. Closely connected with these are poems of the ballad type, "Hildebrand," "Tannhäuser," "Das Schloss in Oesterreich," "Zwei Königskinder," and "Die Nonne." The last named

[1] J. W. Bruinier, *Das Deutsche Volkslied*, Leipzig, 2nd ed., 1904.

was discovered by Goethe in Alsace in 1771, but in 1877 Böhme was able to publish no less than thirty different versions, some of them going back to the sixteenth century. It is a thoroughly representative Folksong in form, content, and history. It is short, direct, full of sudden transitions, dialogue being freely used. The subject is the separation of a Count and his love, who in the meantime has became a nun. He follows her to the monastery, and the result is beautifully suggested rather than fully described in the two stanzas :—

"Sie kam heraus geschritten,
Schneweiss war sie bekleidt,
Ir har war abgeschnitten,
Zur nonn war sie bereit.
Was hat sie in den händen?
Von gold ein becherlein ;
Er hat kaum ausgetrunken,
Springt im sein herz entzwei."

Equally characteristic are the different versions, some ending without the Count's death, one telling how she dug his grave with her snow-white hands, another warning the "proud youths" to beware of aiming too high, and to be content with the dark-brown maidens from the people. The songs expressive of simple feelings—longing, love, joy, sorrow, hope, or despair—are numerous and frequently of great merit. The associations of springtime and summer, of the linden-tree and the village, are inseparably bound up with the story of human experience. Some are extremely short, occasionally consisting of only one stanza :—

"Dort hoch auf jenem berge,
Da get ein mülerad,
Das malet nichts denn liebe,
Die nacht bis an den tag ;

Die müle ist zerbrochen,
Die liebe hat ein end,
So gsegen dich got, mein feines lieb!
Jez fahr ich ins ellend."

Apart from the touch of mythological symbolism in the first part, this expression of personal experience could hardly be simpler or more concise. It is the utterance of a man who speaks as he feels, but also of one who has little to learn from the rules of art. The separation of lovers is finely rendered in "Ach Elslein, liebes Elslein," the sorrow of parting in "Ach Gott, wie weh tut scheiden," "Innsbruck, ich muss dich lassen," or in the exquisite lines:—

"Morgen muss ich fort von hier
Und muss Abschied nehmen;
O du allerschönste Zier,
Scheiden das bringt Grämen.
Da ich dich so sehr geliebt,
Über alle Massen,
Soll ich dich verlassen!
Soll ich dich verlassen! . . ."

There is a trace of reflection here, but it is restrained, and the images and thoughts are beautiful and fitting. The country labourer, the huntsman, the miller, the shoemaker, the begging monk, the tailor, the hired soldier, all have their characteristic songs. There are religious songs associated with the festivals of Easter, Pentecost, and Christmas. There are songs of mirth and laughter, riddles and jests, merry drinking songs. The happy-go-lucky vagabond is well delineated in the ballad "Schwartenhals," while the pathos in the soldier's life has been beautifully expressed in "O Strassburg, O Strassburg," and "Zu Strassburg auf der Schanz." In all these poems we find the natural

rhythm of the language, pliant and expressive, accommodating itself to the words and the action or sentiment which these convey. There is no mechanical counting of syllables: the variation in the number of accented and unaccented syllables is the secret of the verse. The rhymes are generally correct; in cases where they are not, the original poet is not always to blame, since the modern version of the poem frequently contains forms different from those originally used. The beauty and directness of the language are due to the fact that the poet knew no abstract terms. As Herder pointed out in the *Blätter für deutsche Art und Kunst*, there is nothing artificial or premeditated; the expression is natural, clear, vivid; they express exactly and directly what they feel. That is the great charm of the Folksong. It is art of the highest kind, but art unconscious of itself. The words naturally express the feelings, which are naïve and beautiful, and the form, as such, is due not to any process of thought or elaboration, but to the immediate enthusiasm of the senses and the imagination. That is the reason why modern poetry, whenever it has been in danger of being spoiled by too much reflection or artificiality, has found in the Folksong a model of great and simple art.

CHAPTER III

The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

This is the poorest age in the history of the German lyric. The Volkslied and the Meistergesang continued, but the former was no longer at its zenith, and lived on unheeded and unvalued by the educated classes, while the Meistergesang tended to become didactic and polemical. With the advent of the humanistic movement and the founding of universities, a new social class had appeared, that of the scholars or "Gelehrte." With them now lay the hope of German letters. But in the first place the German language was not considered dignified enough for a man of learning. Just as Latin became the language for University instruction, so it was largely used in writing. The most cultured section of the community thus became an exclusive minority, and the cleft between them and the people grew wider and wider. In the first half of the sixteenth century the Reformation threw every other interest into the shade. This, too, was to a large extent the work of a few, in fact we may say of one man, whose path, it is true, was clearly marked out for him by all that had gone before, but who by his personality and faith made himself the religious teacher of his age. **Martin**

Luther[1] (1483-1546) dominates the first half of the century. He forms a link between the learned and the great mass of the people. His life-work was two-fold, political and religious, the one quite as much as the other. He combined in himself remarkable strength of will and great insight into the most effective means of attaining his end. His literary production was conditioned by this important fact. He translated the Bible with a view to spreading the true light. He issued tract after tract, but each was dictated by the need of the moment. His connection with the German hymn was of the same nature. He was by no means a born poet. The idea of writing hymns first came to him when he was forty years of age, and chiefly from the circumstance that he needed the Protestant hymn to assist in popularising the doctrines of the Reformation. He knew the power of music, the deep effect produced by singing simple religious poetry when the whole congregation joins in the song. "I have made up my mind," he wrote, "to make German psalms for the people, that is, religious songs, that the word of God may long remain among them." This again, as in the case of the Meistersingers, was an effort to make poetry. But the circumstances were different. Luther was intensely musical, he was full of buoyant enthusiasm to proclaim the good news, he had no need to seek long for a theme; his resolve to make hymns for the people was the result of an inner necessity to burst forth into religious song. He made an appeal to others to assist him, but the best pieces were written

[1] On Luther as a poet, see A. Hausrat, *Luthers Leben*, Berlin, 1895, vol. ii, c. xxx.

by himself. In the year 1524 he wrote twenty-three hymns, about the half of his total production. They are based upon the sources from which the Reformer drew his faith and strength. "Eine feste Burg ist unser Gott" follows the forty-sixth psalm, "Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir" the one hundred and thirtieth. The old Latin hymns of the Church provided him with the material for others; for example, the well-known "Mitten wir im Leben sind" was borrowed from Notker Balbulus' "Media vita in morte sumus." The Folksong, too, supplied him with suggestions. He does not reveal great artistry, and his verses are occasionally hard and metallic; but so strong and bold is the expression of his trust in God, his resolute convictions, and his defiance of all hostile powers, that his religious hymns gripped the popular imagination, and have retained their hold ever since. Luther reveals only one side of his personality in these poems, that which he shares with the congregation of the faithful. We do not find the pronoun "I" or "me" in his poetry, always "we" and "us." His personal joys or cares are strictly excluded. No man had a life richer in experience, but he has too great a feeling for the importance of his life-work, he is too intent upon the attainment of the object immediately before him, to indulge in the solace of subjective song. Thus he became silent whenever the hymns which he desired were provided; but he had by his example and enthusiasm established the religious poem on the firm foundation of earnestness and faith, and filled it with a personal and universal content of such simple strength and manliness as are unique in the history of the German religious hymn.

Among Luther's associates mention should be made

of Nicolaus Decius, the author of "Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr'," and of Johannes Mathesius, Luther's friend and biographer, who wrote :—

"Aus meines Herzens Grunde
Sag' ich Dir Lob und Dank."

Religious poetry was written also by Paulus Speratus, Philipp Nikolai, Lazarus Spengler, Hans Sachs, and Johann Fischart. The Catholic theologians were quick to follow in Luther's wake, and produced in Vehe's *Gesangbüchlein*, in 1537, a rival to the collections edited by the Reformer. The century, however, as a whole, was unlyrical, one might almost say unpoetical. It is characteristic of the German mind to take any great movement very seriously, to devote itself to its solution to the exclusion of all other interests. Thus it was that the humanistic movement and the Reformation completely overshadowed poetry, not only during Luther's lifetime, but to the very end of the century. Polemical and satirical writings flourished, but with more rough strength than grace. Even the Volksbücher, *Doktor Faust*, *Kaiser Friedrich*, *Der ewige Jude*, *Die schöne Magelone*, etc., were written in prose by authors who were occasionally extraordinarily blind to the more poetical aspects of these themes. In England, in the meantime, the Elizabethan age of poetry had come in with all its youthful freshness and originality. Before any German thought of it, Marlowe had turned the Faust legend into poetry. In France, too, and Italy, artistic effort had reached very high standards. To this Germany had not yet awakened. It was bound to do so sooner or later. Before the end of the century the English Comedians had begun to tour Germany,

and to give the German drama an important stimulus, particularly in regard to form and acting. It is useless to indulge in imagining what might have taken place; in any case, the religious strife was still all-absorbing, the state of the country was unsettled, and the next century opened with a calamity which postponed, for at least a hundred years, any hopes of rivalling the other European nations in culture and literature.

The first few years of the seventeenth century were not at all unpromising. Latin was still the language of the cultured, even for poetry, as we see in the *Delicię poetarum Germanorum* published in 1612. But the Universities were reaching wider and wider sections of the community. The Renaissance brought not only the great literatures of Greece and Rome within the ken of the educated classes, but directed the attention of writers also to the models of Italy, France, and England. The French court poetry, the Italian idyll and opera, showed the Germans how far their own literature lagged behind in range of subject and grace of form. The aims of **Georg Rudolf Weckherlin** (1584-1653) are characteristic of the age. He had travelled in France and England, held an office under the English Government, and determined to raise the standard of his own literature. His *Oden und Gesänge* (1618-19) show the influence of the Roman lyric, Horace, Tibullus, and Propertius. He introduced styles new to Germany, the congratulatory ode, poems addressed to patrons, and new forms, such as the sonnet and the alexandrine. In addition to the classics, he had profited from the study of Ronsard and Marot. But the great drawback to the poetry of Weckherlin, and the same applies to men like

Paul Schede and **Julius Wilhelm Zinkgref**, is that, with all their zeal to improve letters, their heart was not in their poetry. Poetry was to them a pleasant pastime; the content is light, witty, sometimes, especially in the "Hochzeitscarmina," in very bad taste, at least to a modern reader, while the form, though on the whole smooth and finished, not infrequently makes us pause as we encounter an awkward or unnatural rhythm. Zinkgref was Professor of poetry in Heidelberg, a town which has at various times played an interesting part in the development of literature. He gathered round him a number of ambitious young men, the most important among them being **Martin Opitz** (1597-1639). Opitz is a remarkable example of a man who, with little insight into art and still less poetical originality, yet made himself the most useful teacher of his time. His first work, *Aristarchus* (1617), was an essay on the contempt in which the German language was then held, with suggestions for raising the standard of German poetry. To this end his whole life was devoted. He translated from the Classics, from English and Italian, his *Daphne* being the first opera performed in Germany. His critical convictions are contained in the famous *Buch von der deutschen Poeterey* (1624). Nowadays the book appears narrow, dogmatic, and puerile, but it was useful at that period of depression. His views are based *in toto* upon Scaliger, Heinsius, Horace, and the Pleiade. The remarks upon poetry in general, for example—that the object of poetry is not merely to delight, but to instruct—his views on tragedy, comedy, etc., are now valueless; it was fatal, too, that he stamped with his special approval the alexandrine, and recommended writers to hunt the Classics for

epithets, similes, and figures of speech. He was on firmer ground when he recommended the improvement and unification of the poetical language, and his view of rhythm, that it depended not on quantity and syllable-counting, but upon the principle of accented and unaccented syllables, was a distinct advance upon the earlier work of Schede and Weckherlin. His own *Teutsche Poemata*, including the *Trostgedichte* (1633), are devoid of inspiration and poetical feeling; the best poems are close imitations of the work of Ronsard. Yet Opitz, who could change his politics and religious convictions whenever it was likely to procure him a new patron, was hailed as the greatest poet of the time, crowned with the laurel wreath, and ennobled by the Emperor Ferdinand II. His work was of great influence, simply because it was taken up by men of genuine poetical genius, one of whom, Paul Fleming, uttered on his death the extraordinary panegyric, "Thou Pindar, thou Homer, thou Maro of our times!" In addition to Opitz, several literary societies, founded on the model of the Italian Accademia della Crusca, had made it their object to purify the language from barbarisms, and to raise the standard of poetry. The "fruchtbringende Gesellschaft," founded in 1617, under the patronage of the Duke of Anhalt-Köthen, was the first and most influential. Others of note were the "gekrönte Blumenorden," or "society of Pegnitz shepherds" in Nuremberg, and the "deutschgesinnte Genossenschaft" of Hamburg. From the first these societies lacked broadmindedness and insight into poetry. The patriotic idea became pedantic, even such popularly established words as "Fenster" and "Natur" were to be changed into

genuine German words such as "Tageleuchter" and "Zeugemutter." The Pegnitz shepherds, of whom **Georg Philipp Harsdörfer** (1607-58) was the chief, showed by their tasteless cultivation of the Italian idyllic poetry how little they were capable of advancing poetical art. In fact, as far as literary work of a lasting kind is concerned, these societies failed signally. The men of creative genius were, however, soon to appear: Dach, Fleming, Gryphius, Spee, Gerhardt had eagerly caught up the suggestions of the new movement, and Germany would almost certainly have experienced a poetical revival, not on a popular basis, but at least within the circles of the learned, had not the hand of an adverse fate once more fallen upon the country in the shape of the Thirty Years' War. We can scarcely realise to-day what a brutal, senseless, and disastrous madness this struggle was. It began in the antagonism of religious convictions, but very soon ceased to have even this pretext for its continuance. At its close the population of Germany had fallen, through bloodshed, famine, and pestilence, to less than a half of what it had been. Education, the drama, the exercise of the finer arts had ceased. Even religious instruction was, in many places, impossible. The landscape was reduced to a desert, and the people to a state of brutal superstition and savagery. The pages of Grimmelshausen's *Simplicissimus* are eloquent of the rudeness and lack of culture generally prevailing. It took more than fifty years for the country to recover from the blow, and in the meantime, almost the only literature that flourished in the more fortunate parts of the country, the north-west and the extreme east, was the religious hymn. This seems, at first sight,

surprising, after the extreme worldliness and erotic triviality of the poetry with which the century opened. But life had become very earnest to the thinking man, and in the religious hymn, much more than in the poetry of Weckherlin or Harsdörfer, we get the real man of the seventeenth century, his devotion to mysticism, his clinging to religious consolation, the curious contrast between the awakening love of nature and the constant longing to be free from this vale of misery. **Simon Dach** (1605-59), one of the earlier hymn-writers, was born in Memel and died in Königsberg. Resignation is the keynote of his religious poetry. His "Lob der Freundschaft" is still well-known :—

"Der Mensch hat nichts so eigen,
So wohl steht ihm nichts an,
Als dass er Treu erzeigen
Und Freundschaft halten kann ;
Wenn er mit seines gleichen
Soll treten in ein Band
Verspricht sich, nicht zu weichen
Mit Herzen, Mund und Hand."

He also wrote many poems to celebrate special occasions, and in one of these, a poem on the marriage of a friend to a pastor's daughter, he so successfully caught the popular tone that his "Anke von Tharaw" has become a Folksong. **Paul Fleming** (1609-40) belonged to the Erzgebirge, but the war drove him from Leipzig, where he was studying medicine, and he spent six years travelling in Russia and Persia. He began by writing Latin poems, but later, in his *Geist- und Weltliche Poemata*, published after his death, he recorded the experiences of his life. His style is straightforward and simple, he writes

effectively and directly what he feels. "Ergebenheit" is characteristic of his art, slightly didactic, but pleasing in form and naïve in sentiment :—

"Lass dich nur nichts nicht dauern
Mit Trauern !
Sei stille !
Wie Gott es fügt,
So sei verg..ügt
Mein Wille !"

Andreas Gryphius (1616-64) belonged to Silesia. He is the only important figure in the drama of the century. He had travelled widely, possessed remarkable linguistic talents, and had taught for a time at the University of Leyden. The time was not yet ripe for good work in the drama, but in the lyric he shows remarkable depth and metrical skill. Fate had been unkind to him, and his poetry is fervent, but unrelieved in its melancholy :—

"Du siehst, wohin du siehst, nur Eitelkeit auf Erden.
Was dieser heute baut, reisst jener morgen ein ;
Wo jetzund Städte stehn, wird eine Wiese sein,
Auf der ein Schäferkind wird spielen mit den Herden."

The title "Kirchhofsgedanken" is sufficient indication of the despondency of the content, but it is a genuine deep-thinking spirit that reveals itself in Gryphius' poetry, and sonnets like "Der schnelle Tag ist hin ; die Nacht schwingt ihre Fahn," stand in marked contrast to the soulless rhyming of an Opitz. Another Silesian poet of distinction was Angelus Silesius, whose real name was **Johann Scheffler** (1624-77). He was deeply read in the mystical writings of his countryman, Jakob Böhme, and this adds fervour and depth to his religious poetry. Unfortunately he also took over into his hymns the symbolism of the idyllic

poetry with its bombast and far-fetched conceits. On a higher plane stands the epigrammatic poetry of the *Cherubinische Wandersmann.* Many of the thoughts are not new, as, for example, the following mystical sentence :—

> "Halt an, wo läufst du hin? Der Himmel ist in dir.
> Suchst du Gott anderswo, fehlst du ihn für und für";

but others reveal originality of perception and neatness of expression. The two greatest representatives of religious poetry in this century were Friedrich von Spee and Paul Gerhardt. **Friedrich von Spee** (1591-1635) was a Jesuit, but a man of liberal sentiments; he was one of the few who condemned the rack and the burning of witches. "I too," he said, "would lie when tortured, just as the saints lied." He was also keenly sensitive to the lack of culture in his age, to the suppression of truth, and the unsatisfactory condition of German poetry. Even before Opitz had written, he had perceived that what the German metre required was a delicate ear and feeling for accent, and he had resolved to exalt German poetry to the glory of God. In his *Trutznachtigall,* particularly in the eclogues, we find that conventional mingling of idyllic names and scenes with religious poetry which repels the modern reader, but on the other hand Spee is one of the first in whom a love for the beauties of nature is expressed, though still with diffidence :—

> "Gleich früh wann sich entzündet
> Der silberweisse Tag
> Und klar die Sonn verkündet
> Was nachts verborgen lag. . . ."

He is also an ardent mysticist, so ardent that

he transports himself in fancy to the immediate neighbourhood of Christ, and sings of his Passion as if he had been present and suffered with him. One of his greatest poems is the "Trauergesang von der Not Christi am Ölberg in dem Garten." He is a master of exposition, vivid, dramatic, and imaginative; in his direct simplicity of expression he sometimes approaches the style of the Folksong:—

"Ade zu tausend Jahren,
O Welt, zu guter Nacht!
Ade, lass mich nur fahren,
Ich längst hab dich veracht.
In Jesu Lieb ich lebe,
Sags rund von Herzengrund,
In lauter Lust ich schwebe,
Wie sehr ich bin verwundt."

Paul Gerhardt (1607-76) was a Protestant minister. His poetry was first collected in 1667 under the title *Geistliche Andachten*, and is a reflex of his calm and pious life. He is more tender and musical than his great predecessor, Luther, but not so strong and defiant. His view of life is essentially different. His spirit has been broken or at least subdued by the miserable conditions of the time. He calls this life a "Jammerthal," from which he longs to escape. Yet he has, perhaps more even than Spee, an eye for the charms of nature, the flowers, the birds, and the pleasant streams. However, his thoughts are too rigidly fixed upon the world to come to enable him to feel himself in harmony with this life. Absolute trust in God's will and ruling presence forms the substance of his most noteworthy hymns, "O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden," or "Befiehl du deine Wege." Simplicity and calm are the keynote of his song:—

"Ich will hie bei Dir stehen,
Verachte mich doch nicht;
Von Dir will ich nicht gehen,
Wann Dir Dein Herze bricht;
Wann Dein Herz wird erblassen
Im letzten Todesstoss,
Alsdann will ich Dich fassen
In meinem Arm und Schoss."

In addition to these well-known singers there were many men in the seventeenth century who contributed one or two hymns that have lived while their authors' names are forgotten, hymns that have played a conspicuous part in German national life. Mention may be made of **Martin Rinckart's** "Nun danket alle Gott," **Joachim Neander's** "Lobe den Herrn, den mächtigen König der Ehren," and **Michael Schirmer's** "O heilger Geist, kehr bei uns ein." These men were all ministers, whose views of life had been deepened and ennobled by the scenes of war and pestilence which had come home to them as shepherds of the people with special force and bitterness. In them, as in the case of their greater contemporaries, the religious lyric seems to have derived its inspiration from the very circumstances which weighed so heavily upon all other branches of artistic expression. The lyric had become earnest and heart-felt, no longer a mere plaything to amuse an inventive brain, but rather a personal expression of a religious view of life and a sublime trust in God's goodness. That is the merit of the German Kirchenlied, and it is this that has made it live down to the present day. It is not great art in the sense in which the Volkslied is; it lacks universality and breadth; the authors' horizon is bounded by their religious training and experience; but within its limits it is genuine lyrical poetry.

Curiously enough this age gave birth to one of Germany's most gifted epigrammatists, **Friedrich von Logau** (1604-55), but it was a century later before his merits were recognised, first of all by Lessing. He is inclined to satire, but of a mild, general type; folly and humanity he regards as inseparable:—

"Wenn keine Thorheit mehr wird sein,
So geht die Menschheit gänzlich ein."

In his "Sinngedichte" (1654) we see the earnest indignation of a public-spirited man who feels impelled to expose the corruption of manners and the follies of fashion. There is no straining after witticisms, no extravagant condemnation, he convinces by his obvious honesty of purpose and the simple force of his language. Some of his epigrams are still frequently quoted, as for example:—

"Gottes Mühlen mahlen langsam, mahlen aber trefflich klein;
Ob aus Langmut er sich säumet, bringt mit Schärf' er alles ein."

He was an ardent admirer of the German language, which he wished to see freed from all foreign affectations; it has tenderness and grace, he says, as well as strength:—

"Kann die deutsche Sprache schnauben, schnarchen, poltern, donnern, krachen,
Kann sie doch auch spielen, scherzen, lieben, güteln, kürmeln, lachen."

As the century advanced erotic poetry came once more into favour, but its chief representatives, **Hofmann von Hofmannswaldau** (1617-79) and **Caspar von Lohenstein** (1635-83) are so full of quips and conceits that the real merits which they

possess have frequently been overlooked. The Spaniard Gongora and the Italian Marini were their models, and while they are ridiculously unnatural in their language and images, they introduced again into the lyric the elements of passion, the mysterious and the dæmonic. Hofmannswaldau is the greater poet of the two, and where he puts a rein on his fancy, he can write really very fine lines :—

"Wo sind die Stunden
der süssen Zeit,
da ich zuerst empfunden,
wie deine Lieblichkeit
mich dir verbunden?
Sie sind verrauscht, es bleibet doch dabey,
dass alle Lust vergänglich sei.
Ich schwamm in Freude ;
der Liebe Hand
spann mir ein Kleid von Seide.
Das Blatt hat sich gewandt,
Ich geh im Leide,
Ich wein jetzund, dass Lieb und Sonnenschein
stets voller Angst und Wolken sein."

There is something in this poetry that reminds us of the grace and elegance of the Elizabethan lyric. Such poems are, however, rare in Hofmannswaldau, and it was the others which attracted most attention and provoked a reaction towards simplicity of form. But in men like **Christian Weise** (1642-1708), one of the first advocates of simplicity in style and naturalness of sentiment, there is too little talent to accomplish anything positive. He studied and imitated the Folksong, his intentions were thoroughly sound, but both in the lyric and the drama he showed the limitations of his creative gifts. Just as little was achieved by the so-called Court poets, **Rudolf**

von Canitz (1654-99), **Johann von Besser** (1654-1729), **Ulrich von König** (1688-1744), and **Benjamin Neukirch** (1665-1729). Their recommendations in regard to form were correct enough, but their idea of poetry was a low one. They disclaim being mere poets; they are courtiers, masters of ceremonies, office-hunters, to whom the gift of verse is an elegant accomplishment likely to give them greater chances of promotion. Thus the art of poetry at the end of the seventeenth century had been lowered to the position of a useful craft; its content lacked all essential lyrical qualities; and one of the first things which the eighteenth century had to accomplish was the raising of poetry and of the poet to a position first of self-respect, and secondly of dignity and esteem in the community.

CHAPTER IV

The Early Eighteenth Century

The first fifty years of the eighteenth century seemed in no way more promising than the last half of the seventeenth, but new forces were quietly at work, and from 1750 onwards the German lyric bursts into full bloom. No military achievement or social revolution or sudden tide of national prosperity can fully explain the advent and development of the great singers. The victories of Frederick the Great certainly inspired Gleim's *Kriegslieder*, and fired the pride and patriotism of German poets. But, on the other hand, the court of Berlin regarded German letters with indifference, and though Goethe and Schiller found a home at the Weimar Court, their greatness is due principally to themselves. In the lyric, in any case, the personality is the most important factor, and at last in Goethe and Schiller Germany produced two of her greatest sons. Needless to say, they owed not a little to their predecessors, to men so inferior to them as Gleim, Gellert, and Klopstock, and to movements which seem to lie far apart from the lyric. The great movement towards spiritual freedom in theology, philosophy, and literature, known as the Aufklärung, the gradual spread of culture by the Universities, the theatre, the literary journal, the improvement in critical taste

brought about by Gottsched, by the Swiss critics, Bodmer and Breitinger, in their differences with the former, by Gellert, Lessing, and Herder, the revelation of new models by the numerous translations and adaptations in the first half of the century prepared the soil in which their genius was to flourish. The lyrical poets of the early years of the century, such as Hagedorn and Haller, were men of culture and wide reading. They were acquainted with contemporary literature in France, Italy, and England, and borrowed suggestions frankly and freely from these sources. But the foreign element in Hagedorn and Gleim was too pronounced. They had learned to write lightly and gaily, they had acquired the art of penning melodious and pleasing lines, but we scarcely ever feel that they are true to themselves, there is so little depth and seriousness in their work, and so much that is superficial and eclectic. As regards Lessing, he is totally dependent and insignificant in this sphere. Great critic though he was, he had little interest in the pure lyric of feeling, and little insight into the elements of lyrical and ballad poetry. During the five trying years of literary apprenticeship in Berlin we find him writing commonplace trivialities on the pleasures of joy, wine, love, and idleness, a collection scarcely worthy of Germany's greatest critic. Klopstock gave lyrical poetry a higher ideal, combined of dignity and earnestness. He was an innovator, too, both in metre and language. Unfortunately, the classical metres which he favoured were not suited to the genius of the German language, and he lacked that spark of creative genius which gives shape and life to new images. On the lines laid down by him the German lyric would have made little progress

towards an artistic perfection, which would appeal to the people as a whole. A different lyrical idea was required, and the credit of discovering it is due to Herder. It was extremely fortunate for German letters that Lessing's acute criticism of the drama was supplemented by Herder's intuitive genius in regard to the lyric. He cannot be called an original poet himself, but he was the first German critic to reveal the pre-eminent merits of the Folksong, its warmth, brevity, directness, sincerity, and simplicity. Not only did he induce Goethe to study these models and to begin collecting Folksongs in Alsace, but he also inspired Bürger's "Lenore," one of the greatest models of German ballad-writing. Accordingly, in the years 1770 to 1786 the lyric and the ballad attained to their highest perfection. But in addition to Herder's influence, we should note that about 1770 the literary atmosphere is simply charged with new suggestions which bore immediate and splendid fruit. Jean Jacques Rousseau's enthusiasm for nature affected Goethe and Schiller directly. In the development of both the revolutionary ideas of the "Sturm und Drang" played an important part. The bases of poetry were further strengthened and extended by the patriotic and bardic tendencies of the Göttingen group of poets known as the Hain. About 1786 a new literary current made itself felt, a return to classical simplicity and calm grandeur, but this was more favourable to the drama than to the lyric. The "Künstler" certainly denotes a stage in the development of Schiller's philosophical lyrics, but on the whole he had become uncertain of his powers in the lyrical field, and Goethe's lyrics, apart from the "Römische Elegien," have grown more diffuse and

less impressive in character. But in the last ten years of Schiller's life these two poets, working hand in hand, produced a collection of lyrics, ballads, and epigrams which are unequalled in the German language. The century is thus an extremely interesting one. One literary movement succeeds another—Gottsched's reforms, the counter-movement of the Swiss critics to give originality and imagination free play, the Anacreontists, the innovations of Klopstock, the resuscitation of the Folksong, the patriotic movement of the Hain, the "Sturm und Drang" with its contempt of rules, the classical revival, and finally, though this belongs really to the nineteenth century, the dawn of a new era under the banner of Romanticism. The scope and influence of these movements will become more apparent when we study the work of the poets themselves. Some influenced the lyric directly and permanently, others only indirectly and for a time. All, however, stimulated interest in literary questions and educated the critical faculty of poets and public alike. There is no period when criticism and creative work were so closely connected and mutually helpful. Goethe is pre-eminent in original genius, mental ability, and personality, but before he began to write, translators had introduced a mass of educative models from abroad, critical canons had been established, the simple beauty of the German lyric in early days had been revealed, new metres had been tried, the language had been purified and enriched, so that we are indebted not only to pre-eminent individuals but to a large number of second-rate men for the really high position which the lyric had attained at the end of the eighteenth century.

Johann Christian Günther (1695-1723) is a pioneer, a true poet but an unfortunate one. Alfred Biese, at the end of a very fine appreciation,[1] compares this poet to an early spring bud nipped by the lingering frosts of winter. The son of a Silesian doctor, he studied in Wittenberg and Jena, but his want of principle and strong passions blighted his career, and caused his premature death at the age of twenty-eight. Cut off by his father, he wandered from town to town, and it was only through the kindness of friends and patrons that he succeeded in keeping soul and body together. He had learned from the art poetry of the seventeenth century and from the Folksong, but he really needed no teacher, for his poetry is the candid expression of the changing feelings of his unhappy, unlicensed, but deeply religious nature. It is the experiences of his chequered life that he sings. We find in him the passionate song of love, the lusty student's song, the sad lament over wasted time and strength, the religious poem of deep feeling and hopeful faith. Günther might under happier conditions have become an Anacreontist, but he clings firmly in his hours of despondency and repentance to the Lutheranism of the seventeenth century. The verses are admirable in simplicity and directness :—

Brüder, lasst uns lustig sein,
Weil der Frühling währet
Und der Jugend Sonnenschein
Unser Laub verkläret ;
Grab und Bahre warten nicht,
Wer die Rosen jetzo bricht,
Dem ist der Kranz bescheret.

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[1] *Deutsche Literaturgeschichte*, i. 456.

He has a foreboding of his early death, but he bears it bravely; looking back upon his short life he wonders at the flight of time, but in a spirit of resigned piety he seeks to reconcile himself to God and his fellow-men. "Bussgedanken" reminds us of Walther von der Vogelweide's "Elegie," but in this and other poems like "Abendlied" there are more modern notes, the calm pensiveness of the seventeenth century hymn, and the vividness of the imagery from nature:—

Der Feierabend ist gemacht.
Die Arbeit schläft, der Traum erwacht,
Die Sonne führt die Pferde trinken.
Der Erdkreis wandert zu der Ruh.
Die Nacht drückt ihm die Augen zu,
Die schon dem süssen Schlafe winken.

In point of time Günther is a contemporary of Besser and Neukirch; they were much older men, but Günther died before them. If we compare their poetry with his, Günther's great importance becomes apparent. There fanciful trivialities cleverly put together, here undoubted genius and a poetry springing from life and experience, not yet a great poetry, for Günther's culture and mental acquirements were too limited for that, but nevertheless something genuine and heartfelt, a very promising beginning for the new century.

In the seventeenth century we already noticed that the nursery of poetry had shifted from the south to the north: Silesia, Königsberg, Hamburg, were the centres of culture and poetical interest. The impetus given to thought and religious life by Luther was one reason; a still stronger was the fact that the south, as the battlefield of Catholic and Protestant, suffered

more severely from the great war. *Inter arma silent Musae.* Even such a subjective art as lyric poetry is extremely sensitive to contemporary events, more particularly when these happenings are on so great a scale as to revolutionise social conditions. With the picture of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries before us we are almost tempted, like Taine, to ascribe nearly everything in literature to surroundings. We see the great wheel of fate revolving, nothing seems capable of arresting its ponderous weight. The individual is moulded by events, seldom they by him. Where poetry had flourished silence reigns. In the north, particularly in Hamburg, where the tramp of armies and marauding hordes was little more than a distant echo, where a new gate to industry, enterprise, and wealth was opening up towards the west, in the train of peace and affluence literary societies and poetical production flourished. It is not without interest that the two streams of poetry which are especially characteristic of the first half of the eighteenth century took their rise in Hamburg. Hagedorn is representative of the lighter vein, Brockes of the serious. No two more essentially different conceptions of life and poetry could be found, and this again is proof that the individual element in art is in the end decisive. Genius may be thwarted, may be deeply influenced or even silenced by adverse surroundings, but given fairly promising conditions it will strike out in its own congenial path.

Friedrich von Hagedorn (1708-54) was a man of a much higher stamp than Günther. He was brought up in comfortable circumstances and enjoyed a good education. He spent three years in England as Secretary to the Danish Embassy, and all his work gives the

impression of a cultured man of the world, not quite free from pedantry, but frank and sincere. His early poetry is completely under the influence of Horace,[1] his later lyrics owe much to France. He was an admirer of Prior and Gay, and testifies repeatedly to his indebtedness to these models. His fables and narrative poems were most popular during his lifetime; his literary fame is based, however, chiefly on his merits as a lyricist. He is an optimist, an enemy of melancholy, hatred, and narrow-mindedness. There is freshness and vigour in his songs of youth and love, he reveals a roguish humour in mildly satirical sketches of morbid sentimentality, such as "Die verliebte Verzweiflung." The charge of indelicacy which is sometimes made against him has no justification, nor is the fact that he suffered from gout proof either that he was a wine-drinker, or that his songs of wine are based upon experience. It matters very little whether they are or not. His praise of nature and country life is free from the conventional colouring of the idyllic poetry. He retains the pastoral names, because they are as convenient as any others, but nothing more. He had a fine ear for rhythmical effects, and reveals a neat fancy in some of his short, half-humorous pieces, such as "Die Rose," "Der Frühling," "Der Kuss," "Das Kind":—

Siehst du jene Rose blühen?
Schönste, so erkenne dich.
Siehst du Bienen zu ihr fliehen,
Phyllis, so gedenk an mich.

[1] For the great popularity of Horace at this time see A. Lehnerdt: *Die deutsche Dichtung des* 17 *und* 18 *Jahrhunderts in ihren Beziehungen zu Horaz*, 1882.

Deine Blüte lockt die Triebe
Auf den Reichtum der Natur
Und der Jugend süsse Liebe
Raubt dir nichts, und nährt sich nur.

This kind of poetry was sufficiently new at the beginning of the eighteenth century to justify Hagedorn's explanatory "Vorbericht," in which he says he has aimed not so much at the "sublime" as at the "pleasing" character of the ode, by which the latter acquires more charm and social interest. "The Muse of lyrical poets bids them sing not only of Gods or Kings and heroes, but also, in the words of Horace,

'Juvenum curas et libera vina referre.'"

Hagedorn is the forerunner of the Anacreontic poetry, of Lessing and the youthful Goethe. His elegant, whole-hearted joy in life, coupled with formal talents of a high order, was like a fresh breath of air after the sombre dulness of the preceding age. He only lacked depth and earnestness, and this we find in the other stream of poetry, Brockes, Haller, Klopstock, and their numerous following.

Barthold Heinrich Brockes (1680-1747) was, like Hagedorn, a man of travel, experience, and culture. His poetry is inspired chiefly by Thomson, whose "Seasons" he translated, by Milton and Pope. To this he added his own German earnestness, and a piety and love of nature reminiscent of the Kirchenlied. His *Irdisches Vergnügen in Gott* is a long, rambling work, and its chief interest nowadays lies in the fact that here an unprecedented worship of nature in its minutest beauties, and as a revelation of God's greatness, reveals itself as the very essence of the poet's being. Its expression is sometimes

awkward enough, but the detail, sincerity, and originality of the content were all-important. He must be noted in any history of the development of the feeling for nature in the eighteenth century, that feeling which culminated in Rousseau, and which in German art had to break down the artificiality of the Rococo, with its gardens trimmed and bedecked out of all semblance to natural beauty.

It was naturally in the courts of Germany that the influence of French taste predominated. Sanssouci was built from 1745 to 1747, and it marks the high tide of the Rococo style, a style which left its mark upon almost every manifestation of the artistic life. In Dresden and Stuttgart the imitation of the splendour of Louis XIV. was carried to more extravagant lengths. In personal dress, in furniture and house decoration, in the laying out of the gardens there was the same endeavour to improve upon nature that we observe also in statuary, painting, and poetry. The sense for true, simple beauty was lost; shrub and tree had to submit to the pruning shears of the gardener; the brook had to leave its pebbly bed and glide gently over marble steps; the lawn was rude and barbaric without an artificial fountain, and the thicket needed the presence of a marble fawn or nymph. This style of national taste is so completely a thing of the past that we are now amused by its oddity, caprice, and picturesqueness. But it took many years before the beauty of wild, simple nature was appreciated. And the forerunners of the new movement were men who had been brought up in other than courtly surroundings, Brockes and Hagedorn in Hamburg,

and **Albrecht von Haller** in Switzerland. Haller was born in Berne in the year 1708; from 1736 to 1753 he was Professor in Göttingen; he died in his native town in 1777. He was one of the most distinguished men of science of his day, and it was again a sign that poetry was advancing, that a man of his learning and importance should attempt to celebrate his native country in the *Versuch schweizerischer Gedichte* (1732). Poetically the book leaves much to be desired. It is full to overflowing with intimate detail of the vegetation and appearance of the Alps, the life of the people, and the moral influence of the landscape upon the inhabitants. To describe this in passable Alexandrines was regarded as an achievement, and it certainly was at that time. But later Haller himself disclaimed the title of poet, and Lessing showed where he had failed. He describes like a botanist, and the reader is unable to visualise the object. There is no life or action in the poem, no imagination; all is cold and objective, and consequently monotonous:—

"Dort senkt ein kahler Berg die glatten Wände nieder,
den ein verjährtes Eis dem Himmel gleich getürmt,
Sein frostiger Kristall schickt alle Strahlen wieder,
den die gestieg'ne Hitz' im Krebs umsonst bestürmt.
Nicht fern von diesem streckt, voll futterreicher Weide,
ein furchtbares Gebirg den breiten Rücken her;
Sein sanfter Abhang glänzt von reifendem Getreide,
und seine Hügel sind von hundert Herden schwer."

Even from this short passage it will be seen that Haller's point of view is somewhat utilitarian and prosaic; the grandeur and magnificence of the scene

are beyond him; but his "Alpen" was nevertheless a most important step towards a due appreciation of nature.

In this respect the Anacreontic movement seems a step backwards, for here nature appears only in conventional images. **Johann Peter Uz** (1720-96) had certainly some of the seriousness of Brockes and Haller, but the other members of the school were men of a different mould. The Anacreontists linked on to Hagedorn, but they added a new element—direct imitation of the form and content of the Greek Anacreontica. The movement began in 1744, when **J. W. L. Gleim** (1719-1803) published his *Versuch in scherzhaften Liedern.* Two years later **Johann Nikolaus Götz** (1721-81) published the *Oden Anakreons in ungereimten Versen.* The model thus revealed was not without its merits. Here the lyric became again singable. In regard to content it is altogether unimportant; the motto of Gleim's *Versuch* was "nos hæc novimus esse nihil." But great as were the services of Brockes and Haller in setting up a new ideal of nature, they were heavy and tuneless in expression. The Anacreontists introduced the lighter touch, the playful humorous tone, and the elegance of their French models. Gleim in particular owed a very great deal to the court poetry of France, from Marot onwards to men like Chapelle, Pavillon, Voiture, La Fare, and Grécourt. From them he learned in particular to be pointed and witty. He is most successful with short songs of light and humorous content on love, friendship, joy in life, springtime, wine and song. He wishes to see dull care dispelled, and bids joy come and be his sister :—

"Komm, du zarte
Weise Freude,
Komm und werde
Meine Schwester,
Komm und trinke
Mit den Brüdern."

His shortest poems are invariably his best. When he attempts anything ambitious he becomes prosaic and tiresome. His romances, his songs in imitation of the Folksong, his translations of the Minnesang, are of little importance. He is remembered as Father Gleim, the friend of poets, and for an achievement which must be discussed in another chapter, his "Kriegslieder." Uz was probably less of a poet, though more of a thinker, than Gleim. He very soon turned from the themes of love and wine, preferring to sing of earnest things. After 1767 he became silent altogether. His attitude to nature is freer and more natural than that of his brother-in-arms:—

"Er geht in Büschen und sie blühen;
Den Fluren kommt ihr frisches Grün,
Und Wäldern wächst ihr Schatten wieder,
Der West, liebkosend schwingt
Sein thauendes Gefieder
Und jeder frohe Vogel singt."

Götz is little more than a skilful reproducer of motives culled from French poetry.[1] The most modern of the Anacreontists, the only real genius among them, was **Johann Georg Jacobi** (1740-1814). His early poems are spoiled by conventional conceits

[1] In support of this judgment see the author's *German Anacreontic Poetry in the 18th Century* (Aberdeen, 1911), pp. 10f., 116.

and mythological figures, cupids, amorettes, goddesses, nymphs, etc., which are mere names with no meaning. In some of his latest poems, too, that on the Schwarzwald, for example, he can be unspeakably prosaic, but he has also given us a few poems which strike a new note altogether, and are worthy to rank with the best. One is the poem, "Von dir, O Liebe, nehm' ich an"; another the song of spring, "Sieh, wie der Hain erwacht"; and still another, the song, "An die Nachtigall":—

"Süss, du im Hain Verborgene!
Steigt dein Gesang empor:
O Nachtigall, du Klagende!
Sing mir dein Leiden vor.
Gern ist der Hoffnungslose
Dem Trauerliede nah,
Wenn er die letzte Rose
Des Lebens welken sah."

Such easy mastery of the theme, such brevity and tunefulness, united to real lyrical feeling, were very rare among the versifiers of this age. Jacobi is, in fact, a link between the imitative poetry of the first half of the century and the artistic productions of the later half. Up till 1770 the Anacreontic poetry enjoyed great popularity, though well-known critics like Bodmer would have none of it. Goedeke names more than fifty Anacreontic poets. Lessing followed the prevailing fashion in his *Kleinigkeiten*, and in Goethe's Leipzig poems there are many signs that he was familiar with and appreciated the tendencies of the school of Gleim.

What was required to raise the lyric to a higher plane was deeper feeling, greater earnestness, and more mastery of the poetical language. These qualities

were found in **Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock**[1] (1724-1803). He was born in Quedlinburg, educated at Jena and Leipzig, and made his reputation in 1748 with the publication of the first three cantos of his *Messias*. In spite of its technical faults this epic showed the advent of a poetical genius. It was great poetry, and it settled once for all the vexed question which Gottsched and his opponents had been trying theoretically to solve. "When Cantos I.-III. of this epic appeared in the spring of 1748, they shattered the fabric of Gottsched's poetics, and reduced even the theories of the Swiss, who had helped to put the young poet on the right path, to a mere beating of the air."[2] In the lyrical sphere Klopstock's historical importance is equally great. In early poems, like "Das Rosenband," he follows the Anacreontists, but this tendency did not last long. Even as a young man he is seriously inclined; thoughts of death, immortality, and the meeting of kindred spirits hereafter form the burden of his song. Not infrequently, as in "Die Verwandlung," traces of sentimentality occur. But the most striking feature of his lyrical work in its maturity is his sincerity and sense of dignity as singer. He feels himself bard, seer, prophet. This tends to wearisomeness in the long run; but just as Klopstock's faults are mostly merits from a different point of view, so this new sense of dignity and importance as poet did the German lyric a great service. Poems like "Der Erlöser" and "Frühlingsfeier" not only inspired the Hain poets, Matthison and Lenau, but are the essential

[1] F. Muncker, *F. G. Klopstock*, Stuttgart, 1888.

[2] J. G. Robertson, *History of German Literature*, p. 260.

forerunners of the philosophical lyrics of Goethe and Schiller. But this grandioseness, this feeling for the limitless possibilities of poetry, must not blind us to Klopstock's artistic limitations. If we compare his poem, "Der Züricher See," with Goethe's "Auf dem See," we feel at once the infinite difference between enthusiasm, blended with love of nature and a still greater love of reflection, and what is really great poetry. The unrhymed stanzas of Klopstock are frequently unsatisfactory. Here he followed the example of Pyra and Lange in their *Freundschaftliche Lieder* (1737). With them, as with Klopstock, the last line often falls extremely flat. Alfred Biese[1] cannot express too much admiration for Klopstock's love poetry. He speaks of "Das Wiedersehen" as "the greatest, most immortal of these pieces." The genuineness and warmth of the sentiment no one will deny, but what of the verses?

> "Der Weltraum fernt mich weit von dir,
> so fernt mich nicht die Zeit.
> Wer überlebt das siebzigste
> schon hat, ist nah bei dir.
> Lang sah ich, Meta, schon dein Grab
> und seine Linde wehn;
> Die Linde wehet einst auch mir,
> streut ihre Blum' auch mir."

Surely there is something very tuneless and prosaic about the fourth and last lines here! "Liebeslied" and "Trinklied" are also examples of the inadequacy of Klopstock's unrhymed verse for certain lyrical themes. He was wrong also in trying to adapt German rhythm to classical metres designed for the play of

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[1] *Literaturgeschichte*, i. p. 523.

long and short syllables. Some of the odes suffer from obscurity, and it is no excuse to say that this is a lazy age which won't take the trouble to read carefully. Some of Klopstock's lines are so laboured and unmelodious that even the most painstaking reader may be excused. Take, as an example chosen at random, the first stanza of "Mein Vaterland."

"So schweigt der Jüngling lang,
Dem wenige Lenze verwelkten,
Und der dem silberhaarigen tatenumgebenen Greise,
Wie sehr er ihn liebe, das Flammenwort hinströmen will."

Herder was certainly right in regarding Klopstock as head and shoulders above his early contemporaries, but his remark that an ode of Klopstock "outweighed the whole lyric literature of Britain" is simply rubbish. He does rise to considerable heights in some of the shorter pieces, such as "Die Genesung," "Klagode," and "Die frühen Gräber." The last poem in particular is lucid, concise, and harmonious in sentiment and expression. In many of his poems the outlines are dim; his contemplation of nature is too much blended with reflection to appeal to the inner eye of the reader. He was a great patriot, a warm-hearted friend, fervent in religion, but orthodox rather than profound. His poetry is the antithesis of the Folk-song, indeed of song of any kind. The great difference between him and Milton, whom he emulated, is that he lacks creative genius. He never lifts us out of ourselves by one of these flashes which we see in much lesser men. The mystical and the mysterious do not call him; his horizon is that of the ordinary high-souled man. All the events in the course of his life have left their reflex on his poetry, but the chronicle is uninspired. He denotes an advance in

the development of the lyric by his earnestness, his experiments with metres of various kinds, his enrichment of the vocabulary, and above all, by the example which he gave of a strong, national, patriotic tendency. But at the same time, all but his most fervid admirers must admit that he is frequently flat, his epigrams reveal little wit or pointedness, his odes lack colour and distinction. Like so many of the men of the eighteenth century, he was hailed on his appearance as a star of the first magnitude, but he was almost immediately obscured by others of greater and more lasting brightness.

Klopstock's influence upon the group of poets known as the Hain was very great; but, before discussing them, mention should be made of one or two minor writers, who contributed in various ways to the rise of German poetry. **Christian Fürchtegott Gellert** (1715-69) was the most distinguished of the writers of fables, or short narratives of the fable character. His *Fabeln* appeared in 1746. But the influence of his sincere, elegant personality was greater than that of his poems. He was one of Leipzig's most admired teachers, and impressed Goethe in his early university days. **Karl Wilhelm Ramler** (1725-98) wrote odes and cantatas, but his merit lay in the strict rules which he applied to the form of poetry. Even Lessing availed himself of his services as a reviser. But in many of the collections of poetry which Ramler edited he took such undue freedom that even his best friends quarrelled with him. **Salomon Gessner** (1730-88) brought pastoral writing to the height of its popularity with his *Idyllen* (1756). He has the light touch of the Anacreontists and the elegance of his French models. He has all the old

conventions, but he has at the same time the keen eye of the artist. In France these prose idylls were extremely popular. In Germany, too, he took an important part, along with Brockes, Haller, and Klopstock, in the development of a closer contact with nature. The poetry of war, which is sparsely represented in the eighteenth century, attaches itself to the achievements of Frederick the Great. Gleim's *Preussische Kriegslieder von einem Grenadier* (1758) were received with acclamation, and they had the merit, as Goethe remarked later, of springing from and being a reflex of the prevailing sentiment of pride and patriotism. But the best work in this field was accomplished by a man who was both poet and soldier, **Ewald Christian von Kleist** (1715-59). There is something touching in the contrast between Kleist's gentle, elegaic nature and his fate—he fell in the battle of Kunersdorf. He had begun under Gleim's influence as an Anacreontist; then he fell under the spell of Thomson's "Seasons," which he sought to emulate in a poem of which only the first part, "Der Frühling," was completed. Then the war claimed him, and he addressed to his comrades in arms the famous "Ode an die preussische Armee!"

"Unüberwundenes Heer, mit dem Tod und Verderben
in Legionen Feinde dringt,
um das der frohe Sieg die güldnen Flügel schwingt,
O Heer, bereit zum Siegen oder Sterben."

One cannot help comparing Kleist's poetry and fate with those of Theodor Körner, and indeed we shall not meet these bold patriotic tones again till we come to the poetry of the War of Liberation in the nineteenth century.

The programme of the Hain poets, to cultivate

religion, virtue, feeling, and an innocent wit, was derived from Klopstock. Part of it sounds like a reproof of the Anacreontists, and still more of Wieland, whom they cordially hated. The society was formed in 1772 by the brothers Miller, Voss, Hölty, and Hahn, under circumstances of remarkable "Schwärmerei" and sentimentality, which Voss describes in one of his letters.[1] Still more amusing were some of the meetings of this poetical union. "We celebrated," writes Voss, "Klopstock's birthday gloriously: a long table was set and adorned with flowers. At the top was an empty armchair for Klopstock, and on it rested his complete works. Under the table lay Wieland's 'Idris' in fragments. The spills were made out of Wieland's writings. Boie, who does not smoke, had also to light up and stamp upon the 'Idris.' Then we drank Rhine wine to the health of Klopstock, and the memory of Luther and Hermann. We spoke of liberty, with our hats on, of Germany, the songs of youth, and you can fancy how! Finally, we burned Wieland's portrait and his 'Idris.'" It is remarkable how often in the history of German poetry we meet with these societies, and in this, as in most, it was a case of "much cry and little wool." The best work was done by men who had only a slight connection with the original society. **Heinrich Christian Boie** (1744-1806) had founded in 1770 the *Göttinger Musenalmenach*, and this publication became the organ of the Hain. It was destined to play a great rôle in the development of the German lyric, for Bürger, Goethe, Lessing, and Klopstock were among the contributors. Boie

[1] See Witkop, i. p. 219

himself is poetically of no importance. **Johann Heinrich Voss** (1751-1826) was the soul of the union, and he has made his fame secure by his admirable translations of Homer and by his idylls, in which he has succeeded in throwing off much of the unreality of the old pastoral poetry. The lyrical genius of the group was **Ludwig H. C. Hölty** (1748-76). His career was cut short by consumption at the age of twenty-eight, but he had already written a considerable amount of poetry. He tried the ode, the ballad, the idyll, and the elegy. Joy in country life, the moon, the nightingale, longing for love, nearness to God, and calm anticipation of death are his favourite themes. The ballads are not serious or impressive. In form Hölty is more lucid and tuneful than his model, Klopstock. In his lighter poems, on subjects like wine, joy, the wisdom of enjoying life, Hölty reverts to the Anacreontic, and has thus given us some of his happiest songs. His appreciation of nature is warmer and more directly expressed than in the older school :—

"Noch tönt der Busch voll Nachtigallen
Dem Jüngling süsse Fühlung zu ;
Noch strömt, wenn ihre Lieder schallen,
Selbst in zerriss'ne Seelen Ruh !
O wunderschön ist Gottes Erde,
Und wert, darauf vergnügt zu sein !
Drum will ich, bis ich Asche werde,
Mich dieser schönen Erde freun !"

Shortly after its inception the Counts Stolberg, Christian and Friedrich, joined the Hain, and added to its standing. The former is best known for his translation of Sophocles, while the latter is more important as a lyricist. He is a forerunner of the

romantic in his love of Catholicism and mediævalism. He anticipated Heine in his poetry of the sea, a theme which few German poets celebrated before the nineteenth century. His "Lied eines deutschen Knaben":—

> "Mein Arm wird stark und gross mein Mut
> Gib, Vater, mir ein Schwert!"

is his best-known poem.

Closely connected in sympathy with the Hain poets was the Holstein writer, **Matthias Claudius** (1740-1815). He too came under the influence of Klopstock. He called himself "Der Wandsbecker Bote," from the name of a provincial paper which he edited for four years. He led a happy, pious, useful life, with his hens and goats and cows, his peasant wife and twelve children in patriarchal simplicity. With his homely wisdom and sunny optimism, he made a considerable name as a writer. The poetry, though wonderfully harmonious, direct, and simple, is, however, not a high type of art. His most beautiful poem is that "Abendlied," which in its melody and elegaic sentiment reminds us of Paul Gerhardt:—

> "Der Mond ist aufgegangen,
> die goldnen Sternlein prangen
> am Himmel hell und klar;
> der Wald steht schwarz und schweiget,
> und aus den Wiesen steiget
> der weisse Nebel wunderbar."

In the truth and directness of his attitude to nature, in the spontaneous expression of his emotions, whether he be moved by joy or sorrow, Claudius approaches the simplicity and immediateness of the Folksong, but he has also the tendency, the reflection,

and some of the stiffness of the school of Klopstock. He began consciously to imitate the popular tone, and that was at once fatal. But a number of his poems, "Christiane," "An den Tod," "Abendlied eines Bauersmanns," and the lines "Heute will ich fröhlich, fröhlich sein," are admirable. His Rheinweinlied, "Bekränzt mit Laub den lieben vollen Becher," and his Weihelied, "Stimmt an mit hellem hohem Klang," are still favourite songs for social gatherings. The latter is the best expression which we possess of the patriotic bardic enthusiasm so characteristic of the Hain.

Gottfried August Bürger[1] (1747-94) is connected with the Hain, through Boie, who proved a most valuable friend and adviser to this unhappy poet, and published in the *Musenalmenach* for 1774 his famous ballad "Lenore." Otherwise Bürger is an independent writer, free from all the tendencies of the Hain. Unfortunately, for a man of Bürger's temperament, he was compelled for most of his life to live in very straitened circumstances, as an official in a village near Göttingen, later as an unsalaried teacher in the university of that town. About his great mental gifts there can be no doubt; he was a good linguist and was conversant with the poetry of France, with the lyrics of Parnell and Prior, with Spanish and Italian. But he was a sensualist by nature, a fact which rendered his married life a miserable failure. His connection with the Klotz circle in Halle during his student days had much to do with his later excesses. But the fact remains that Bürger was a rebel against convention and morality, a rebel through

[1] W. von Wurzbach, *Bürgers Leben*, Leipzig, 1900.

weakness and not strength, for ever and anon he is overwhelmed by despair, filled with ideal longing, but eventually sinking back into his natural self. Such a nature, unguided for any length of time by any moral or æsthetic principle, was bound to affect his poetry, for the best that a lyrical poet can give us is, after all, himself. Not that poetry need have a moral tendency, but the instability of Bürger's character, the lack of restraint, the failure to recognise any such things as virtue and resignation, his contempt for classical traditions and forms, his extraordinary egoism prevented him from ever attaining a clear view of the essence of art and beauty. His best lyrics were inspired by Molly, the younger sister of his wife, with whom he fell violently in love. "Elegie" is an example of his strength and his weakness. The lines are polished; there is distinct lyrical sweetness in some of the conceptions, others are nothing less than revolting. The general purport is conveyed in the lines:—

"Freier Strom sei meine Liebe,
Wo ich freier Schiffer bin!
Das Gewoge seiner Triebe
Wallt dann ruhiger dahin."

In the ballad Bürger's peculiar talents found a much more suitable sphere for their activity. His great achievement was "Lenore," which is in many respects the most striking ballad in German. From the very first stanza, with its dramatic question—

"Lenore fuhr um Morgenrot
Empor aus schweren Träumen:
'Bist untreu, Wilhelm, oder tot?
Wie lange willst du säumen?' . . ."

he grips the imagination of the reader, and retains it

by the vividness, rapidity, and realism of the delineation. The theme is based on the popular tradition of the dead bridegroom rising from the grave to fetch his bride. We find this theme treated, for example, in the Scottish ballad, "Sweet William's Ghost," but the latter falls far behind Bürger's poem. Bürger has given the event an historical setting at the end of the Seven Years' War. He has added the dramatic motive that the maiden has brought her fate upon herself by her longing to die, and her refusal to accept heavenly consolation. Bürger had heard a country girl sing the refrain :—

"Der Mond, der scheint so helle,
Die Toten reiten so schnelle;
Feins Liebchen, graut dir nicht?"

He may also have known the general theme from some Low German ballad, but the great merits of the poem are his own—the magnificent command of language, the striking climax in the dialogue between Lenore and her mother, the dramatic entrance of the rider who may be the returning lover or the spectre Death, the great skill in the description of the ride, at first distinct and modulated, then wild and indefinite :—

"Wie flog, was rund der Mond beschien,
Wie flog es in die Ferne!
Wie flogen oben über hin
Der Himmel und die Sterne!"

Very skilful, too, is the delineation of the change in the maiden, from tenderness and joyful compliance to awe subdued by love and confidence, and from that to terror in the presence of death: "O weh! Lass ruhn die Toten!" If exception be taken to anything

in so brilliant a piece of work, it must be to the last few stanzas, where the transformation of the rider to a skeleton with scythe and hour-glass, and the dance of the howling spirits round the graves, are too fully dwelt upon to be anything but gruesome. Much as we admire the poem, we cannot compliment Bürger on the self-admiration expressed by him in a letter to Boie, on 12th August 1773: "Now I am finished with my immortal 'Lenore'! Is it possible that the mind of man can invent anything so fine? I am astonished at myself, and can scarcely believe that I have made it." Bürger's mode of composition was slow and painful; he was most frequently inspired by other poetry. In regard to "Lenore" he had derived valuable suggestions from Herder. "O Boie, Boie, what a delight," he writes, "when I found that a man like Herder said concerning popular and nature poetry, with more clearness, just what I had long vaguely thought and felt. I think that 'Lenore' should in some degree correspond to his doctrine." "Lenore" is not Bürger's only ballad of note. He reveals admirable humour in "Der Kaiser und der Abt," imagination and force in "Der wilde Jäger." Mention should be made also of "Das Lied vom braven Manne," "Der Bruder Graurock und die Pilgerin," "Die Weiber von Weinsberg," and "Des Pfarrers Tochter von Taubenheim!" With these pieces he raised the German ballad to a new level; he gave it vitality, dramatic interest, an imaginative background, and that connection with the songs, legends, and superstitions of the people which is perhaps the most valuable, as it is the most popular, element of his work. Nowadays one must regret Schiller's merciless criticism of Bürger's poems. It was well

meant, but it came too late, three years before Bürger's death. Schiller was right in his main contention that Bürger lacked ideality, and that the aim of all poetry should be truth and beauty. But to Bürger such advice was useless. He could never rise to an æsthetic ideal till his whole personality was changed, nor could he ever aspire to the poetry that should be practised by pure hands. What Schiller failed to see was the clear fact that Bürger had great gifts as a naïve realistic singer for the people. In a ruder, less cultured age he might have developed into a great poet, moulding the feelings, the mythology, and the folklore of his age into simple popular poetry. But he failed to realise his proper calling; mentally and morally he is constantly in conflict with the current of his time, so that his career presents a strange picture of success and failure, of genius occasionally triumphant but never able to maintain itself for long.

We have seen the value which Bürger attached to Herder's theories on popular poetry, and it is time to consider this remarkable man and his connection with the development of the lyric. **Johann Gottfried Herder** [1] was born in 1744, studied in Königsberg, began to issue his critical writings in 1767, and from 1776 to his death in 1803 continued to be one of the literary forces in Weimar. In 1773 he contributed to the *Blätter von deutscher Art und Kunst* a paper entitled "Auszug aus dem Briefwechsel über Ossian und die Lieder alter Völker." It had been written earlier, and the new ideas which it contained had already been communicated by Herder to Goethe

[1] E. Kühnemann, *Herders Leben*, Munich, 1895.

in Strassburg. He opens with objections to the translation of Ossian by Denis into hexameters, and goes on to discuss the origin and character of popular song. Ossian in German hexameters, no matter how fine they may be, is no longer Ossian. Ossian's poems are songs, songs of the people, and the wonderful power of such popular poetry depends on the living, lyrical, and, as it were, dance element in it, on the vivid actuality of the images, the connection and absolute necessity of the content and the emotions, the symmetry of the words, syllables, and sometimes even of the letters, the progress of the melody, and a hundred other things. Poetry must have action, must be action. The beauty of the language in these old poems is due to the fact that the authors had no abstract terms ; there is nothing artificial or premeditated ; the expression is natural, clear, vivid ; they utter directly and exactly what they feel. Nowadays, with the growth of education and civilisation, we no longer see and feel, but think and ponder only. These poems are full of abrupt transitions, but this again is natural, for they spring from the direct presence, the immediate enthusiasm of the senses and the imagination. He mentions "Sweet William's Ghost" as an example, and asks, what could be more boldly sketched, more disjointed, and yet more natural, more according to the manner and character of the people? He goes on to say that the Germans, too, must have possessed such folksongs. "But who is there to collect them? to trouble about them? to interest himself in songs of the people? in the streets, and lanes, and market-places? songs which often do not scan and are badly rhymed? who would collect them and print them for our critics, who can count

syllables and scan so well?" He points out the effect of the omission of the article, and the mute syllable in old English poetry. He laments the decadence of the "Romanze," and hopes that the resuscitation of the beautiful old folksongs may give the German lyric a new future. In the years 1778 and 1779 he issued two collections of *Volkslieder*, translating many from foreign tongues with great skill. In the introduction to the second part he apologises for the field-flower, which makes but a poor show when transplanted to the flower-bed of white paper, and is eyed, plucked, and examined as if it were a flower for show and splendour. He explains clearly and forcibly what he regards as song (Lied). "The essence of the Lied is song, not picture; its perfection lies in the melodious movement of the passion or feeling, which might be characterised by the old apt expression 'Weise.' If a song lacks this, if it has no melody (Ton), no poetic modulation, no continued movement and progression of the latter—though it have images, and composition and prettiness of colours, as much as it may: it is no longer song. . . . Song must be heard, not seen; heard with the ear of the soul, which does not count individual syllables merely, and measure, and weigh, but is carried along by the melodious movement." Herder's own lyrical work is of little importance in comparison with his translations and criticism; no one in the whole history of the German lyric has contributed towards the development of German song to the same extent as he. He revealed new methods, new motives, a new ideal of popular poetry altogether, and at a critical period stimulated creative geniuses like Bürger and Goethe.

CHAPTER V

The Classical Age of German Poetry

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

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

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

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

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

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

Johann Wolfgang Goethe[1] (1749-1832) was the son of well-to-do parents and passed a sunny youth in Frankfort-on-the-Maine. Unlike so many German poets he was, throughout his life, one of fortune's favourites. Bode calls him "der fröhliche Goethe," and this bright optimism was the result of health, comfort, and cheerful society. His earliest poem, "Die Höllenfahrt Christi," shows no particular promise,

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

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

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

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

Zu neuen Liedern
Und Tänzen gibst.
Sei ewig glücklich,
Wie du mich liebst!"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Morgenwind umflügelt
die beschattete Bucht,
Und im See bespiegelt
Sich die reifende Frucht."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

On one occasion Goethe said, "All my lyrics are

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In September 1786 Goethe set out for Italy, where he remained till the summer of 1788. Quite suddenly he tore himself free from the Weimar influences[1] and lived in a new world, a new nature, a new art. J. J. Winckelmann (1717-1768) had been the first to attract attention to Italy as the guardian and keeper of the treasures of antiquity, and now Rome had become the Mecca of art for the European world. Goethe travelled here and there, saw, studied, sketched, discussed art principles with artists of note, Tischbein, Trippel, and Angelika Kaufmann, and revelled in the exhilaration of this bright, artistic Italian milieu. When he returned to the cold North, he was absolutely out of sympathy with the still lingering tendencies of the Sturm und Drang, his admiration for Gothic art had given place to the conviction that in the calm, majestic beauty of antique sculpture he had found the highest ideal of art. In his great dramas, *Iphigenie* and *Tasso*, these new principles bore splendid fruit; but in the lyrical sphere there is less poetry of a high standard. He has curbed his youthful fire, his spontaneous subjectivity, and poems like "Gefunden," "Erster Verlust," "Beherzigung," show a greater tendency to objectivity and reflection. The "Roman Elegies" are the most noteworthy product of this period: in them Goethe excels in statuesque imagery, but the sensual delights of Italian life are painted too boldly for many readers. The "Epigrams from Venice" contain many short poems of note, revealing neatness of expression and freshness of thought.

Goethe's close intimacy with Schiller, which began

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Im Innern ist ein Universum auch,"

or—

"Uns zu verewigen
Sind wir ja da,"

or—

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

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

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

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

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

are difficult to surpass.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

purely from imagination, the movement of the whirlpool :—

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

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

[1] *L.c.*, i. pp. 322, 323.

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

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[1] *L.c.*, pp. 90, 218.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

or the picture of

"der Säule Flimmern
An der dunkeln Taxuswand";

or the coming of the maiden,

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

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

and rich dramatic power, his faculty of making the visions of his mind stand before us as if they were part of nature. Goethe's universality Schiller certainly did not possess; his knowledge was not so wide nor so accurate, his insight into human nature not so profound; compared with his friend, the summer of his artistic maturity was short. But he has great qualities both as man and poet, his sublime view of the duties of man, his lofty striving, his enthusiasm for virtue and humanity. Carlyle[1] was very near the mark when he wrote, "his greatest faculty was a half-poetical, half-philosophical imagination: a faculty teeming with magnificence and brilliancy; now adorning, or aiding to erect, a stately pyramid of scientific speculation; now brooding over the abysses of thought and feeling, till thoughts and feelings, else unutterable, were embodied in expressive forms, and palaces and landscapes, glowing in ethereal beauty, rose like exhalations from the bosom of the deep."

Friedrich Hölderlin[2] (1770-1843) should be mentioned immediately after Goethe and Schiller as the third great lyricist of the classical age. He was born at Lauffen on the Neckar. When two years of age he lost his father, and his stepfather when only nine. He was educated for the Church, but the convictions which he formed in his eager study of philosophy determined him to give up the idea of actually officiating as a minister. His earliest poems reveal the influence of Schiller both in their rhetorical

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER VI

The Nineteenth Century
1800-1848

A period of great achievements in the literary sphere is always of limited duration. Some years of decline must follow as inevitably as autumn takes the place of summer. In the first twenty years of the nineteenth century no book of really international importance was produced; the romantic drama and the novel in particular were in a bad way. But it would be wrong to regard the nineteenth century as being inferior to the eighteenth on the whole. In fact, there is a distinctly higher standard of excellence, and a very much larger number of really gifted writers. No previous century could produce five names which, as a group, rank higher than Heine, Mörike, Keller, Meyer, and Storm. And to these a few more could easily be added: Uhland, Hebbel, Platen, Droste-Hülshoff, Liliencron, whose merits in the lyrical sphere are nearly as great. The century hangs very closely together as a whole; there is a constant and consistent development, and the influence of Goethe is very strong even at the present moment. On closer examination, however, it will be found that three main stages in the movement can be distinguished, from 1800 to 1848, from 1848 to about 1880, and from 1880 to the present day. Within

these periods again there are various clearly defined movements, sometimes of thought, or enthusiasm, or merely fashion: writers group themselves in schools, either owing to similarity of aims, or because they may have a local connection. Such well-known poetical circles are the romanticists, the patriotic poets, the Swabians, the political revolutionaries, the Munich school, the naturalists, and so on. On the other hand the nineteenth century is rich in men of great originality, of strongly marked individuality, who are hardly influenced at all by contemporary currents and traditions.

The romantic movement dominates the first thirty years of the century; in the lyric its influence lingers almost to the end. If we trace romanticism back to its origin, we shall find that it is rooted in the Sturm und Drang, and that it developed strength and consciousness in a number of young writers who objected to the suppression of freedom, the homage paid to authority and the triumph of mediocrity incident to the Aufklärung. It meant the revolt from the purely logical part of Lessing's criticism and the emphasising of the more imaginative elements of the work of Goethe and Schiller. It was not a mere reaction against classicism; to suppose that would be to shut our eyes to the all-embracing character of the movement, and, moreover, the brothers Schlegel, who with Tieck are regarded as the founders of the school, were classical scholars and enthusiasts for Greek culture. If we look at their writings, we see that their aims were ambitious but their idea of how to attain them somewhat hazy. In the *Athenæum* for 1798, the organ of the movement, Friedrich Schlegel says that the new art "shall now mingle, now fuse poetry and

prose, genius and criticism, art-poetry and nature-poetry ; it shall make poetry living and social, and life and society poetical ; it shall poetise wit and fill the forms of art with suitable cultural content of every kind." One thing very soon became apparent, that the new movement meant the overthrow of all established rules. Eagerly they grasped the support of Fichte's philosophy and made the Ego of the artist independent and autocratic in art as in life. Imagination and feeling dominated reason and criticism. The mysticism of the past, the novelty and charm of Oriental poetry became objects of poetical rapture. Inevitably the new movement drifted further and further from the reality of contemporary life, and the political subjection of Prussia engendered a feeling of despair, from which relief was sought in the contemplation of a more glorious past. The ideal age seemed to be that of chivalry, the ideal religion that of the Catholic Church. Not merely the atmosphere and the background, but even the central figures and themes of much of the romantic literature are mediæval. It may be said that the movement thus had the germs of disease in it from the first, for a poetry that loses touch with the present and lives only in the past is bound to become unreal, abstract, and artificial. The artistic freedom which was claimed and taken degenerated into formlessness. This above all is the chief defect of the romantic drama and novel. The best service rendered by the romanticists, apart of course from the enthusiasm which a new movement always awakens, was the collection of the German Folksongs and Volksbücher. Arnim and Brentano allowed themselves considerable liberty with the texts which they published under the title *Des Knaben*

Wunderhorn (1805-1808). But this homage to contemporary taste had not a little to do with the immediate success of the book. Herder's *Volkslieder* had been cosmopolitan in character, the *Wunderhorn* was national, a revelation of the poetical genius of the German people. Like the *Volksbücher* of Görres, it was something to cling to in a period of national depression. It became a song-book for the people and a model for the singers of the nineteenth century. The poetry of Uhland, Eichendorff, Heine, Mörike, Greif, Storm and others is steeped in its influence. The romantic movement also contributed a mass of new motives, images and forms to the German lyric, and is seen at its best in Uhland, Eichendorff, and Heine. In Heine, however, the reaction against the vagueness and unreality of romanticism is equally marked, even in his *Book of Songs*, and later he was to be the leader of a new movement, known as Young Germany. The Young Germans had a strong political bias, but they were equally revolutionary in other departments, such as religion and letters. As far as lyric poetry is concerned, their attitude and aims were unfavourable, they gave a much greater stimulus to the critical journal, the feuilleton, and the daily press. They are the forerunners of the political poets, Herwegh, Freiligrath, Dingelstedt, etc., who flourished about 1840. Thus till the middle of the century there is an easily followed line of development, but there are other contemporary movements, such as the poetry called forth by the War of Liberation which ended in 1815, the resuscitation of romantic tendencies in Swabia between 1830 and 1840; and at the same time some of the greatest talents, such as Droste-Hülshoff and Hebbel, had begun to issue work

which was hardly affected at all by the great movements of the time.

The Romanticists

The most important lyricist among the early romanticists was Novalis, or, to give him his proper name, **Friedrich von Hardenberg**[1] (1772-1801). He first came into touch with literary affairs as a student at Jena in 1791, when he made the acquaintance of Fichte, Reinhold, and Schiller. To Schiller he was especially attracted, recognising in him "the higher genius who rules over centuries." Of delicate constitution, finely strung mind, sensitive to new impressions, Novalis was the very man to be carried away by romantic tendencies. He died at the age of twenty-nine, before the romantic movement had fully established itself, and before his own development was ripe. We may say of him, as Friedrich Schlegel said in a different connection, that he might have become anything—or nothing. The turning point in his short career, and the fact that made him a poet was his meeting with Sophie von Kühn in 1794. She was still a girl, unripe, of incomplete education, but the beauty of youth fascinated the poet, and when she died of consumption at the age of fifteen, she was raised by the imagination of the dreamer to a poetical ideal. From his diary we know that for a time Sophie's sudden end formed the object of his constant meditation. He frequently expresses the wish to die and join her in another world. He has a strong faith in a future life, he is deeply religious, the teaching of

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[1] E. Heilborn, *Novalis, der Romantiker*, Berlin, 1901.

the mystics has filled his mind. From this event dates the formation of his artistic conception of life. When he died in 1801 very little of his poetry had been printed. Tieck and Friedrich Schlegel issued his works later, but it is only in recent years that the possibilities of Novalis have been recognised. His novel, *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, remained a fragment, but its tendency is clear. The hero goes out to seek the "blue flower" of romanticism, in other words to find the highest art. There is more finished work in the "Geistliche Lieder" and the "Hymnen an die Nacht," the latter a series of rapturous outpourings of his soul in poetical prose and poetry. In spite of the sadness of his experience and of some of his utterances, Novalis was no pessimist. He found consolation in his solution of life's problems. The present and the future are but one, there is no gulf nor separation, no change. He has no complaint against the present world, it is good, beautiful and free from sin; it is only a part of that other world for which he longs as the abode of his bride and his Saviour. He does not devote himself to philosophy to find a system; his system is already complete, he feels what he wants to believe, and believes what he feels. He has strong leanings to Catholicism, but all dogma and observance, all fears of eternal punishment, all idea of asceticism and repentance are foreign to his nature. His mind is virgin soil, ready to receive whatever seed may fall upon it. His poems do not cover a wide range, thoughts and situations recur, but the lyrical feeling is deep and artistic, the verses uniformly good. His religious ardour and dreamy attitude are seen in the poem "Maria."

"Ich sehe dich in tausend Bildern,
Maria, lieblich ausgedrückt,
Doch keins von allen kann dich schildern,
Wie meine Seele dich erblickt.
Ich weiss nur, dass der Welt Getümmel
Seitdem mir wie ein Traum verweht,
Und ein unnennbar süsser Himmel
Mir ewig im Gemüte steht. . . ."

Other noteworthy poems are "Gern verweil' ich," "Wenn alle untreu werden," and "Wenn ich ihn nur habe." The essential elements in Novalis' poetry are mysticism, Catholicism, and the longing for the future life to be gained by death, and with such a basis, if he had lived longer, he might have become a really great poet.

Ludwig Tieck (1783-1853) is an interesting figure in many literary departments, the drama, the fairy tale, the short story, but in the lyric he is not nearly so consummate an artist as Novalis. He is, among the romanticists, the chief representative of that sentimental adoration of nature in vague language which was afterwards held up to scorn by the opponents of romanticism:—

"Mondbeglänzte Zaubernacht,
Die den Sinn gefangen hält,
Wunderbare Märchenwelt,
Steig auf in der alten Pracht!"

He is a lover of the flowers, the birds, and the sunshine, and was influential in popularising that feature of the romantic poetry which is known as "Naturbeseelung." Here he was the model of Heine. This attitude to nature is peculiarly German. It is different from pantheism, it is not mere personification by metaphor, it has nothing in common with Wordsworth's feeling for natural beauty as

"The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul,
Of all my moral being."

The poet looks upon the units of the inanimate world as his like. They are not employed by him as images or symbols to convey his thought or emotion. They stand apart, speak and act like living beings :—

"Der Schmetterling ist in die Rose verliebt,
Umflattert sie tausendmal,
Ihn selber aber goldig zart
Umflattert der liebende Sonnenstrahl. . . ."

Sometimes Heine uses this style with great effect, but he very soon perceived that such an attitude to nature is apt to become artificial and meaningless. It proved dangerous to the development of the lyric, in that it induced the poet too frequently to suppress his own personality, to step into the background, and let nature alone speak. In Tieck, Brentano, and even Eichendorff, this weakness is painfully manifest. The poems become vague, they lack human interest, and Heine conferred no greater service upon the German lyric than when he restored to it by the irrepressible force of his personality a living human interest and content.

In **Clemens Brentano** (1778-1842) the same want of contact between man and nature, the same "Beseelung" of external objects are to be found. In a poem like "Abendständchen" :

"Hör, es klagt die Flöte wieder,
Und die kühlen Bronnen rauschen ;
Golden wehn die Töne nieder ;
Stille, stille, lasst uns lauschen, . . ."

it is the flute, the fountains, the music that form the

content of the poem: of their influence upon the soul of the listener, of the poet's mood, there is scarcely an indication. The same passivity on the part of the singer appears in "Der Abend" and "Wie so leis die Blätter wehen." In Brentano's case the absence of a subjective interest is due to some extent to the fact that the poems occur in his longer works, and illustrate the moods of certain characters. He excels in the delineation of the sombre aspects of nature:—

> "Wenn der Mitternacht heiliges Grauen
> Bang durch die dunklen Blätter hinschleicht,
> Und die Büsche gar wundersam schauen,
> Alles sich finster, tiefsinnig bezeugt. . . ."

"Sprich aus der Ferne," "Säusle, liebe Myrte," "Wiegenlied," and "Trost" are the best of his poems, but it is not so much to them as to his share in the collection of the Folksongs that he owes his place in the history of the German lyric. The first volume of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, which appeared in 1805, and was warmly greeted by Goethe, was the work of Arnim and Brentano, the second and third volumes being issued by Arnim alone. By their romantic attitude to nature they were led to modernise many of the texts here printed, and it was left to the more accurate scholarship of the nineteenth century (Uhland, Böhme, Liliencron)[1] to edit the poems in their original form.

Josef Freiherr von Eichendorff (1788-1857) was the greatest of the purely romantic lyricists. Born

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[1] L. Uhland, *Alte hoch- und niederdeutsche Volkslieder*, 1844-45; F. M. Böhme, *Altdeutsches Liederbuch*, Leipzig, 1887; R. v. Liliencron, *Die historischen Volkslieder der Deutschen*, Leipzig, 1865-69.

at Schloss Lubowitz, in Upper Silesia, he was educated at Halle and Heidelberg. In Heidelberg the influence of Görres, Arnim, and Brentano was at its height. His poetry is rooted in a strong attachment to the Silesian landscape, amid the beauties of which he grew up to manhood. Like Novalis, he sought to emulate Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* with a novel of his own, *Ahnung und Gegenwart*, which lacks reality and form, but contains some fine lyrics. He fought against Napoleon in the campaign of 1814-15, and then entered the service of the State. In 1821 he published his most successful work, *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts*, a delightfully refreshing story of an easy-going good-for-nothing, who goes through life simply trusting to luck, and is surprisingly successful. Eichendorff was a man of strong practical sense, a soldier and a statesman, and this saved him from the sentimentalism and formlessness of most of the contemporary romanticists. He is lucid and precise in language, simple and delicate in conception. In his verse the forest plays a great part. It is to him a symbol of purity and patriotism, it inspires him to manly virtue, and supports him in his resolutions :—

> "Was wir still gelobt im Wald,
> Wollen's draussen ehrlich halten,
> Ewig bleiben treu die Alten :
> Deutsch Panier, das rauschend wallt,
> Lebe wohl,
> Schirm dich Gott, du schöner Wald. . . ."

He loves it especially in the dim twilight, when the moon rises and spreads her beams over the tree-tops, while the nightingale is heard in the distance. In some of his finest pictures of nature, such as "Nachts," our only regret is that the poet seems to fear to

disturb the calm majesty of the scene by intruding a personal note :—

"Ich wandre durch die stille Nacht,
Da schleicht der Mond so heimlich sacht
Oft aus der dunklen Wolkenhülle,
Und hin und her im Tal
Erwacht die Nachtigall,
Dann wieder alles grau und stille.
O wunderbarer Nachtgesang :
Von fern im Land der Ströme Gang,
Leis Schauern in den dunklen Bäumen
Wirrst die Gedanken mir,
Mein irres Singen hier
Ist wie ein Rufen nur aus Träumen."

There are delicate perception, music, and suggestiveness here, but at the same time a misty vagueness in the sentiments of the poet himself; it is like an echo from the land of dreams. The German love of wandering, an old poetical motive, is well illustrated in the songs, "Wer in die Fremde will wandern" and "Wem Gott will rechte Gunst erweisen." In the poems, "In der Fremde" and "Rückkehr," the emotion springs from a feeling of disappointment, loneliness, and despair on visiting the scenes of former happiness and love. Heine has treated the same motive in some of the pieces of his "Heimkehr." A genuine Folksong in its simplicity and gentle melancholy is "Das zerbrochene Ringlein." The associations of the mill, the disappearance of the maid, the broken ring as a symbol of broken troth, the contemplation of death as the only escape from pain, are well-known motives in the German love song ; they conjure up the atmosphere of simple rustic life, and the unaffected abruptness of the language is in harmony with the theme :—

"Hör' ich das Mühlrad gehen,
Ich weiss nicht, was ich will—
Ich möcht' am liebsten sterben ;
Da wär's auf einmal still ! "

Eichendorff is a thorough romanticist in his love for the mysterious and the supernatural, in his songs of elves and fairies, in his pictures of hermits and pilgrims. He tried to shape the legend of the Loreley, but his ballad is somewhat vague and ineffective. His attitude to nature is frequently unreal and purely imaginative, for example, in a poem like "Sehnsucht," where we receive a vision of mysterious rocky clefts, fountains wrapped in darkness, and palaces in moonshine—a land of longing, not of reality. His themes are well varied, and yet not quite free from monotony in their treatment. There are scenes of farewell and homesickness, of love and faithfulness, the charm of night, and the rustle of the pine trees and the waterfall ; what we seek in vain is a strong personal note, or in other words, the throb of human emotion. He is greatest when something deeply moves his heart, as in the beautiful elegies on the death of his child. There is something of the tenderness and passion of Storm in the lines :—

"Das ist, was mich ganz verstöret :
Dass die Nacht nicht Ruhe hält,
Wenn zu atmen aufgehöret
Lange schon die müde Welt.
Dass die Glocken, die da schlagen,
Und im Wald der leise Wind
Jede Nacht von Neuem klagen
Um mein liebes, süsses Kind."

The simplicity and directness of Eichendorff's style remind us of Goethe and the Folksong, but there is

no trace of slavish copying of these models. Certainly, in this case, the style is the man. He was a clear-thinking, imaginative personality, whose poetry, though not profound enough or sufficiently many-sided to be placed in the front rank, will retain its value as the utterance of a gifted and tasteful singer.

Adalbert von Chamisso (1781-1838) was born in France at Schloss Boncourt, from which he had to flee with his parents on the outbreak of the Revolution. He studied natural science at Berlin, took part from 1815-18 in a Russian voyage of discovery to the South Seas, and was subsequently appointed custodian of the Botanical Collections in Berlin. He formed one of the Berlin group of romanticists, but in him the lucidity of form characteristic of the French genius is united to the deep, warm feeling of the German. As a foreigner by birth, though not by education, he seems to have grasped with unerring judgment what he could learn from Goethe, Schiller, and the romanticists. He made his literary reputation with *Peter Schlemihls Wundersame Geschichte*, the story of the man who sold his shadow, and it was comparatively late in life before he wrote the poems on which his fame as a lyricist is based. "Schloss Boncourt" springs from the vivid recollection of the home of his early boyhood. In the cycle of poems, "Frauen-Liebe und Leben" (1830), he adopts with great success the simple forms of the Folksong, filling them with new ideas and imagery of his own :—

"Seit ich ihn gesehen,
Glaub' ich blind zu sein ;
Wo ich hin nur blicke,
Seh' ich ihn allein ;

Wie im wachen Traume
Schwebt sein Bild mir vor,
Taucht aus tiefstem Dunkel
Heller mir empor."

From his voyage round the world he drew the inspiration which gave rise to his most impressive poem, "Salas y Gomez." It is in terza-rima, and represents the fate and feelings of a sailor shipwrecked on a remote desert island. He has a liking for the narrative poem and objective presentation. Sometimes the subjects are of a somewhat sensational type. "Die Löwenbraut" and "Die Sonne bringt es an den Tag" are examples of a type of poem which just fails to carry that amount of conviction which the ballad should do. "Burg Niedeck" and "Die Weiber von Weinsberg" are better subjects, but treated rather diffusely and didactically. The best of all these ballads is the short poem, "Der Soldat," which is living, strong, and natural:—

"Es geht bei gedämpfter Trommel Klang;
Wie weit noch die Stätte! der Weg wie lang!
O wär' er zur Ruh und alles vorbei!
Ich glaub' es bricht mir das Herz entzwei. . . ."

Chamisso can only be regarded as partly romantic in style and tendency. As a scientist, he was in the habit of looking at things as they are. In his interest in the common people and their needs, as shown by poetical sketches like "Die alte Waschfrau," he introduces a non-romantic and thoroughly modern note.

Patriotic Poetry

The lyrics of Arndt, Körner, and Schenkendorff possess what the romantic poetry of the first

decade of the century lacked, a close connection with the national life. They sprang from a real feeling, the slowly dawning consciousness of the unity of the German people, language, and thought, and the necessity of shaking off the fetters of slavery. But for the common object of hatred, Napoleon, this sentiment might not have developed so rapidly, and the patriotic lyric would have lacked its principal impulse. None of this poetry reaches a high standard, but as a tendency it was invaluable, for it showed that the lyricist should not live alone for the past, but for the present and the future as well. **Ernst Moritz Arndt** (1769-1860) was Professor of History in Bonn, a man of strong liberal and national convictions. His most popular, though by no means his best poem, is "Des Deutschen Vaterland." The repetition of question after question :—

> "Was ist des Deutschen Vaterland?
> Ist's Preussenland? Ist's Schwabenland?
> Ist's wo am Rhein die Rebe blüht?" etc.,

may be due to emotional feeling, but it is tiring and inartistic. The language is smoother and more pleasing in "Vaterlandslied" and "Die Leipziger Schlacht." Arndt's personality carried great weight, but in his poetry we miss the finer qualities, imagination, melody, originality. **Theodor Körner** (1791-1813) reveals more poetical fire than Arndt in the poems published after his premature death under the title *Leier und Schwert.* In particular, "Lützows wilde Jagd" and "Harras, der kühne Springer" have the spirit and swing of the old historical Folksong in them. His well-known call to arms, "Frisch auf, mein Volk, die Flammenzeichen rauchen," is a

spirited appeal, but the enthusiasm flags, and in some of the lines the commonplace and the reflective elements are not lacking. As in the case of Arndt, there is a metallic hardness about the verses of Körner, and they no longer appeal to us as they did to contemporary sentiment. **Max von Schenkendorff** (1783-1817) is the truest lyricist of the three. He has more imagination and less of the clang of arms, more tenderness in his outlook upon nature amid the horrors of war. He has also a profounder conception of the possibilities of German unity. One of his poems, "Muttersprache, Mutterlaut! Wie so wonnesam, so traut!" still lives, and in his other pieces there are many stanzas which rise above the usual level of the poetry of liberation. "Soldaten-morgenlied" is a poem as pleasing in sentiment as in form, and in "Frühlingsgruss an das Vaterland" there are touches of nature which relieve the monotony of the patriotic appeal:—

> "Alles ist in Grün gekleidet,
> Alles strahlt im jungen Licht,
> Anger, wo die Herde weidet,
> Hügel, wo man Trauben bricht. . . ."

Mention should here be made of the "Geharnischte Sonette" of **Friedrich Rückert**, who in other spheres at a later time wrote much better poetry. For the sonnet form is as ill-suited for the expression of this kind of patriotic sentiment as could be imagined. Content and form seem in continual discord, and Rückert's contribution to patriotic poetry is only saved from mediocrity by the vigour and epigrammatic preciseness of one or two lines that occur here and there. Altogether it was not a high type of poetry that the War of Liberation gave birth to, and

it died away as soon as German freedom was achieved. It carried on the lyrical style seen in Gleim's "Kriegslieder," and it will recur again with more artistic success in connection with the war of 1870.

The Swabian Poets

The earliest Swabians stand in close connection with the Heidelberg group of romanticists, they show the same tendencies to subjects drawn from the past, and to the popular forms of the Volkslied. While preserving the romantic traditions, they surpassed their predecessors in vividness of presentation, natural strength, and lucidity. While Heine and the younger generation of poets, strongly interested in political questions, viewed the extravagances of the early romanticists with dislike and contempt, romanticism in a new form was kept alive in Southern Germany. In Kerner, Schwab, and Mörike all that was best in the movement was preserved, and handed on by them in turn to such comparatively recent writers as Storm and Keller. Yet it would be wrong to regard the Swabians as mere descendants of the romanticists. They possess peculiarities and merits of their own which deserve our closest attention. **Ludwig Uhland** (1787-1862), the most distinguished member of the early group, was reared in the learned atmosphere of the small university town of Tübingen, where his father was Secretary to the University, and his grandfather had been a Professor of Theology. He himself became Professor of Literature there in 1829, but in 1833 he resigned his office for political reasons. His life was devoted to three pursuits, poetry, politics, and literary research, and he earned distinction in all three. He began to write at

a very early age, and the great bulk of his verse was composed before he was thirty years of age. He shows practically no development as a lyric poet. His first poems are thoroughly romantic; in not a few of them he indulges in a sentimentality which, contrasting strongly with his practical nature, must be regarded as a yielding to literary tradition. Nuns, monks, harpers, pilgrims, kings, shepherds and shepherdesses, are the favourite figures in these early pieces. Yet the subjects are handled with so much freshness and artistic judgment that we must rank some of these poems, such as "Das Schloss am Meer," or "Die Kapelle," among Uhland's best. His attitude to nature is calm, earnest, almost devotional, but without fervour, his mastery of technique is remarkable at so early an age :—

"Droben stehet die Kapelle,
Schauet still ins Tal hinab,
Drunten singt bei Wies' und Quelle
Froh und hell der Hirtenknab.
Traurig tönt das Glöcklein nieder,
Schauerlich der Leichenchor;
Stille sind die frohen Lieder
Und der Knabe lauscht empor.
Droben bringt man sie zu Grabe
Die sich freuten in dem Tal.
Hirtenknabe, Hirtenknabe,
Dir auch singt man dort einmal."

In poems like this, and there are a number of the same kind, "Des Knaben Berglied," "Der Schmied," "Der gute Kamerad," it is the preciseness and yet perfect plasticity of the picture that we admire, the objective and yet warm personal tone of the delineation. We miss the glow of exuberant subjective feeling, but Uhland makes up for it partly by that in-

definable quality which the Germans call "Stimmung," the imparting of the poet's own mood to the work of art and to the reader. He was a calm but not a cold nature, an affectionate husband but not a rapturous lover. His more intimate feelings are generally veiled by the epic form. He cannot write with the irresistible inspiration of a Goethe, but he could not have caught so effectively the subjective feeling of the third person, the soldier, the smith, the huntsman, or the herd-boy, had he himself not possessed lyrical feeling of the deepest kind. He has the poet's heart, but it is held in check by the head of the scholar. He is shy of intruding the personal note. He prefers to let nature and man speak in diverse forms, as in "Schäfers Sonntagslied," "Jägerlied," "Der Schmied," etc. His poems drawn from nature, especially the "Frühlingslieder" and the "Wanderlieder," are sufficient to establish his fame as a lyricist. Much greater, however, is his merit in the ballad. When we take into account the bulk and diversity of his ballad work, and their uniformly high standard of excellence, we can hardly hesitate to place him first in the rôle of German ballad-writers. There is almost no limit to the variety of his subjects, and he shows great mastery of the various styles of treatment. "Der blinde König" is dramatic and vivid in action as in dialogue. The changing emotions of the old king who can hear and feel, but not see, are splendidly portrayed, while the attendants, moved from timidity to enthusiasm, supply the information which his own sight cannot provide. "Der Wirtin Töchterlein" and "Der gute Kamerad" are in the style of the Folksong, ballads in strong brilliant outlines and adapted for singing. "Der weisse Hirsch" is sarcastic and humorous;

"Schwäbische Kunde" and "Siegfrieds Schwert" are realistic, and appeal strongly to national sentiment; "Des Sängers Fluch" and "Taillefer" revel in detail and ornate imagery, and excel in beauty of language. In "Des Sängers Fluch," one of the masterpieces of German ballad poetry, the contrasts between the venerable minstrel and his son, between the gentle queen and the hard-hearted king, are effectively drawn; so, too, the change in the background, from the smiling beauty of the landscape at the beginning to the shrivelled, curse-laden scene of desolation at the end. The description of the minstrel's song might be applied to Uhland's own art:—

"Sie singen von Lenz und Liebe, von sel' ger goldner Zeit,
Von Freiheit, Männerwürde, von Treu' und Heiligkeit,
Sie singen von allem Süssen, was Menschenherz durchbebt.
Sie singen von allem Hohen, was Menschenherz erhebt."

"Das Glück von Edenhall" is in the same measured epic strain, but remarkably concise and impressive, as every line brings us a step nearer to the final tragedy. As in Uhland's lyrics, so in his ballads there is no development to speak of. The only fact to be pointed out is that his stay in Paris in 1810, when he was studying old French poetry, supplied him with many new subjects for his ballads. But apart from the sentimentality of some of the pieces written before 1807, no one could say that there is any noteworthy advance, from "Der Wirtin Töchterlein" (1809) to "Bertran de Born" (1829), or that "Die Rache" (1810) or "Das Schwert" (1809) is not as faultless in construction and execution as the ballads of later years. Uhland represents the poetry of buoyant enthusiastic youth; he is free from pedantry and reflection, he loves the figures of romance, but he

does not lose himself in Mediævalism, nor does he treat his theme with the ironical superiority which we find in Heine and Brentano. His attitude is naïve and joyous, and no poet of the nineteenth century has been more successful in expressing the life of the past in the terms of modern art. His almost complete silence during the last thirty years of his life is a somewhat rare phenomenon among poets, but if we consider his character and life, the explanation is not far to seek. His early sentimental lyrics, which Goethe laid aside with a feeling of weariness, were due to the notion that poetry was a thing of fancy free from all reality. In the simple straightforwardness of his soul he soon recognised how little he was suited for lyric poetry. His ballads sprang, to begin with, from his warm democratic patriotism ; every vestige of the old traditions, customs, legends which he could recover filled him with enthusiasm, and prompted him to ballad composition. But the political impulse grew stronger than the literary. To politics he sacrificed his professorship, he gave valuable years of his life ; and what Goethe prophesied became true, his poetical activity was destroyed. Poetry cannot live without emotion, passion, rich personal experience, and such things are far from the realm of politics, especially such limited political agitation as was permitted to Uhland in his liberal appeal to the deaf autocracy of Würtemberg. With him poetry was not a necessity of life nor his "highest happiness," as it was to a natural singer like Burns, and it may well be that his democratic zeal, which induced him, for example, to spend even his wedding day in political work, gradually dried up every poetical impulse.

Justinus Kerner (1786-1862) was, like Uhland,

closely connected with the leaders of the romantic school. He knew Arnim, Brentano, and Friedrich Schlegel. After a youth of hardship he succeeded in taking his degree in medicine, and spent the greater part of his life as a doctor in Weinsberg. His hospitable home welcomed from time to time the leading literary men of the time, not only the Swabians, but also Lenau, Freiligrath, Geibel, and others. He was a man of strange temperament: with the warm heart and sunny humour of the Swabian he combined the melancholy of the new era, and, in later life, a morbid interest in spiritualistic phenomena. His poetry is unequal: sometimes he rivals the greatest, but he lacked the critical faculty, and published much that is mediocre. He excels in simple folksongs, which show not only imitative power, but close natural interest in the people. The best known example is "Wanderlied":—

"Wohlauf noch getrunken
Den funkelnden Wein!
Ade, nun, ihr Lieben!
Geschieden muss sein.
Ade, nun, ihr Berge,
Du väterlich Haus!
Es treibt in die Ferne
Mich mächtig hinaus. . . ."

"Der reichste Fürst" is an admirably clear and effective ballad, which celebrates Eberhard of Würtemberg, who can lay his head with security in the lap of any of his subjects. Perhaps the most artistic and impressive of his poems is "Der Wanderer in der Sägemühle." The wanderer is the poet himself, and the melancholy pervading the piece, which describes how he watches a pine tree being cut into planks for

his own coffin, is thoroughly characteristic of Kerner. The introductory lines, the repetition of certain phrases, the simple style of the verse, remind us of the Folksong :—

"Dort unten in der Mühle
Sass ich in süsser Ruh
Und sah dem Räderspiele
Und sah den Wassern zu. . . ."

And yet the art is more conscious, the melancholy profounder, more reminiscent of the age of Lenau, than of the ancient Folksong. Kerner possessed poetical gifts of a unique kind, and the poem entitled "Poesie" shows that he had a deep insight into the essence of true poetry :—

"Poesie ist tiefes Schweigen
Und es kommt das echte Lied
Einzig aus dem Menschenherzen,
Das ein tiefes Leid durchzieht. . . ."

But his eccentricities, such as playing with the fantastic shapes of ink-blots, and keeping his coffin beside him in a room of his house, point to a lack of balanced judgment. This and the want of a sure æsthetic taste explain much that is disappointing in his work.

Three other names should be mentioned here, although their lyrical work is not of the highest—**Gustav Schwab** (1792-1850), **Wilhelm Hauff** (1802-27), and **Karl Mayer** (1786-1870). Mayer has never enjoyed more than a local reputation, and Hauff has written much more important prose than poetry. His historical novel, *Lichtenstein*, was a thoroughly pleasing imitation of the manner of Sir Walter Scott, and he has also given us a few spirited songs, such as "Morgenrot" and "Steh' ich in finstrer Mitternacht."

Schwab followed the model of Uhland in his ballads, but even in the best of them, "Das Gewitter" and "Der Reiter und der Bodensee," the content is somewhat sensational and undramatic. In the latter poem everyone must admire the vivid description of the ride over the snow-covered plain, but the sudden death of the rider when he discovers that he has unwittingly crossed the lake fails altogether to impress the reader. So, too, in "Das Gewitter," the appalling catastrophe, for which there is no poetical justification, leaves us cold. It is not a human drama, but merely a calamity.

The Passing of Romanticism

We have seen in Chamisso and even in Eichendorff, in spite of their devotion to romantic themes, certain tendencies to a more modern style of poetry based upon the experiences of life. This movement became stronger and stronger, until in certain writers it culminated in opposition and revolt. Heine is a romanticist, but at the same time he did more than any other to break the prevailing tradition. Platen's opposition was of a totally different kind, but equally strong. At the same time there were many stragglers in the romantic movement, and as they stand nearer in spirit to the early school, it may be advisable to consider them before discussing Heine and Platen. **Wilhelm Müller** (1794-1827) was one of the most gifted. He was born in Dessau, studied in Berlin, took part in the War of Liberation, travelled in Italy, was for a short time a teacher, and thereafter librarian in his native town. He was the father of Max Müller, of Oxford. He was only thirty-three

years of age when he died, but he had already written a great deal of verse, and much of it still lives. He made his name by the "Lieder der Griechen" (1821), followed by "Neue Lieder der Griechen" (1823), but apart from one or two pieces like "Alexander Ypsilanti auf Munkacs" and the interesting poem, "Byron," these pieces are not remembered so much to-day as the others in which Müller reveals himself as the son of the people. Heine expressed the opinion that he was frequently more successful in his folksongs than even Uhland. The *Gedichte aus den hinterlassenen Papieren eines Waldhornisten* appeared in 1821, and here we find almost all the themes and styles which Müller subsequently varied, without much noteworthy improvement. There are love songs in the favourite Folksong style, songs of wandering, of country life, songs of farewell, regret, home-sickness and loyalty, in simple language and agreeable verse. "Wanderschaft," "Wohin," "Ungeduld," "Die böse Farbe," and "Das Hirtenfeuer in der römischen Ebene," are among the best. Occasionally new motives are introduced, as in the graceful poem, "Der Ohrring," but they are thoroughly in the style of the Folksong. His convivial songs are not so successful. Such a theme is apt to become trite, and Müller seldom rises above the ordinary Anacreontic strain. He is the author of a few good ballads, "Der Glockenguss zu Breslau," "Die Sage vom Frankenberger See bei Aachen," "Die Schärpe," "Der Totgesagte," all of which treat subjects of the romantic type with the lucidity and realism of Uhland. In other poems, "Vineta," "Die Braut," "Die Bräutigamswahl," there is a curious mingling of romance with reflection.

The greatest of his songs is "Der Lindenbaum." Schubert's melody is, of course, inseparable from the words, but at the same time we must give Müller due credit for the beautiful sentiment of the poem. Much is suggested by a few hints: the German love of home, the cherished associations of the lime-tree, the burden of life, the soft whispering of nature's consolation, and the subdued but confident anticipation of final rest beneath the rustling trees :—

"Am Brunnen vor dem Tore
Da steht ein Lindenbaum;
Ich träumt' in seinem Schatten
So manchen süssen Traum.
Ich schnitt in seine Rinde
So manches liebe Wort:
Es zog in Freud' und Leide
Zu ihm mich immer fort. . . ."

This is true folk-poetry—simple language, short sentences, disjointed and yet harmonious, a song that will live in the love of the people for all time.

Friedrich Rückert (1788-1866) has already been mentioned as a patriotic poet, but that is only one sphere of his great productivity. In his youth, in Italy, during the tenure of his Professorships of Oriental Languages in Erlangen and Berlin, he wrote unceasingly. His importance lies not so much in his originality or poetical power, as in the stores of thought which his Oriental studies enabled him to introduce into German in a popular form. Hammer-Purgstall, who inspired Goethe's "West-östlicher Divan," was also instrumental in interesting Rückert in the Orient. In emulation of Goethe he wrote his *Östliche Rosen*, among which one at least of his best poems is found :—

"Du bist die Ruh,
Der Friede mild,
Die Sehnsucht du,
Und was sie stillt.
Ich weihe dir
Voll Lust und Schmerz
Zur Wohnung hier
Mein Aug und Herz. . . ."

His most ambitious work was the *Weisheit der Brahmanen*, a collection of didactic and epigrammatic poems in Alexandrines. More lasting and artistic work is to be found, however, in the lyrical poems, which show us the man of geniality in his love, his home-life, his interest in children. He issued many cycles of poetry, the two most noteworthy of which are *Agnes' Totenfeier* and *Liebesfrühling*. The latter contains about three hundred pieces, very unequal in merit, and even in the best numbers, "Du meine Seele, du mein Herz," "Ich liebe dich, weil ich dich lieben muss," there is a preponderance of reflection over lyrical feeling. The way in which the ideas are heaped together, without developing the one from the other, is suggestive of the craftsman rather than the artistic genius. The sonnet is a favourite form with Rückert, but he has tried nearly every other stanza that he encountered in his studies, among others the ottava, the ritornelle, the Siciliane, the ghazal, and the four-lined Persian stanza. His success in these borrowed forms cannot be called brilliant. A good deal of Rückert's verse is wooden, though the seriousness of the man and the weight of the content prevent it from being trivial. Apart from his services as an innovator in form, he will live as the author of a few poems which stand out above the rest — "Die

Gräber von Ottensen," "Der alte Barbarossa," "Aus der Jugendzeit," "Chidher," etc. The Barbarossa ballad, written between 1814 and 1817, is one of the most effective expressions of the early German longing for national unity.

Franz von Gaudy (1800-1840) was, like Rückert, a voluminous writer. Short sketches, songs, narrative poems, and ballads flowed from his pen. He helped Chamisso in the translation of Béranger, an author who afterwards served as a model to the political poetry of Germany. Gaudy's own work is witty, sentimental, and trivial. The "Kaiserlieder," which celebrate the rise, greatness, and fall of Napoleon, form his most solid achievement. In other poems he shows himself as the skilful imitator of Eichendorff, Heine, or the English ballad. Occasionally he was able, as in "Buccleugh, Lord von Branksome Hall," to attain to a fairly high standard.

Julius Mosen (1803-1867) deserves mention among the ballad-writers of this period. One poem of his, "Andreas Hofer," on the execution of the hero of Tyrol, has become a favourite Folksong. Equally spirited and fresh in treatment are the other patriotic poems, "Der Trompeter an der Katzbach," and "Die letzten zehn vom vierten Regiment." His epic and dramatic work is not of great importance. Mosen is a typical poet of the period in his combination of the traditions of romance with the contemporary and equally romantic enthusiasm for Poland and Greece.

While Müller, Rückert, Gaudy, and Mosen did not possess the originality to create a new movement, and simply followed the traditional groove, the appearance

of **Heinrich Heine**[1] (1797-1856) was to form a turning-point in the history of the German lyric. Born under romantic traditions, and inclined to romanticism by the force and trend of his imaginative gifts, he was nevertheless compelled, at an early period in his development, to experience the dissonance between romantic imagery and the hard facts of life. Much as he loved the moonshine, the flowers, the stars, and the bright glance of love, he felt so keenly in his sensitive soul the disabilities of his Jewish birth, his incapacity for practical business, and the sting of disappointed love that he could not help exclaiming :—

> "Wie sehr das Zeug auch gefällt,
> So macht's doch noch lange keine Welt."

This feeling of contrast, this clashing between the roving imagination and the keen intelligence grew to a conviction that romanticism was, if not unreal, at least one-sided, and this is the explanation of Heine's satire upon poetry and the idealistic conception of life. The irony which startles us at the close of some of his poems may not always be artistic, it is frequently a mannerism for which he had examples in Jean Paul and even some of the romanticists like Brentano and Chamisso. But it is a genuine attitude and not a pose, for it reflects exactly Heine's standpoint to his predecessors. With his remarkable gifts as a song writer, Heine could have produced and did produce the highest poetry of which romanticism is capable. But he was not content to rest there. He let in the real light of day, and with mischievous glee watched

[1] J. Legras, *Henri Heine poète*, Paris, 1897. W. Bölsche, *Heinrich Heine*, 2nd ed., Leipzig, 1892.

the fairy shapes and phantoms of romance wither and dissolve before it. And to subsequent lyric, if not to his own, this was a great service. As George Eliot said, Heine is not an echo, but a real voice, and though the voice is sometimes harsh, or bitter, or unpleasantly discordant, it is like every real thing in this world worth listening to, and certain it is, that no lyricist of the nineteenth century has exercised such influence upon subsequent singers.

The details of his upbringing and education are of interest, for they entered largely into the making of the poet. The Rhineland, which was the home of his youth, and his early contact with French culture under the Napoleonic era, bulk largely in his poetry. The free thinking of the rector of the Düsseldorf school and his own fruitless attempts to accommodate himself to a mercantile career, permanently influenced his outlook upon things. The trend of his favourite reading, books like *Don Quixote*, *Gulliver's Travels*, Uhland's *Ballads*, and the fantastic tales of E. T. W. Hoffmann, even the amusements of his leisure, such as his acquaintance with the executioner's daughter Josepha, are faithfully mirrored in his early verse. A wealthy uncle, Salomon Heine, of Hamburg, supplied him with the means of studying at a university, and in Bonn, August Wilhelm Schlegel encouraged him to write and translate, while at the same time he gave him valuable hints on literary form. Göttingen only contributed to awaken the slumbering satirist, but in Berlin he found himself in the chief literary centre of the time. He was received in literary salons where Goethe, Byron, and Scott were admired, he met the leading writers of the day and very soon made a name for himself among the

younger writers. The *Gedichte* which he published in 1821 have many faults, but the genuine poetic vein which runs through them was recognised by no less a critic than Immermann. They consisted of dream pictures, songs, ballads, and sonnets. The burden of the song throughout is disappointed love, based on Heine's experiences with Josepha and his cousin, Amalia Heine. The style is coloured by the "Schauerromantik" of which Hoffmann was the conspicuous representative. The language of the "Dream Pictures" especially is burdened with archaisms, traditional phrases, and mannerisms from the romantic school, the treatment is frequently melodramatic. Two poems stand out conspicuously among the rest, the ballads "Belsazar" and "Die beiden Grenadiere." The former was written in emulation of Byron's "Belshazzar" and differs from the easy flow and reflective abandon of that poem in being vigorously dramatic, concentrated in the barest but most dazzling outlines, composed with an eye to antithesis and vivid effect. "Die beiden Grenadiere," a tribute to Napoleon, is one of the greatest ballads in the German language. It begins calmly in the true epic tone, telling of the return of two veterans broken in spirit by the Russian campaign. The dialogue in the concise rapid style of the Folksong enhances the interest, as they express their feelings when they hear of the capture of the Emperor. A reminiscence of the grim fatalism of the old Scottish ballad "Edward" is skilfully brought in :—

> "Was schert mich Weib, was schert mich Kind,
> Ich trage weit besseres Verlangen ;
> Lass sie betteln gehn, wenn sie hungrig sind—
> Mein Kaiser, mein Kaiser gefangen !"

Then the language becomes more impassioned, the rhythm more rapid and sonorous, as the grenadier fervidly expresses undying admiration for the Emperor and fidelity till death and after :—

"So will ich liegen und horchen still,
Wie eine Schildwach' im Grabe,
Bis einst ich höre Kanonengebrüll
Und wiehernder Rosse Getrabe.
Dann reitet mein Kaiser wohl über mein Grab,
Viel Schwerter klirren und blitzen ;
Dann steig' ich gewaffnet hervor aus dem Grab—
Den Kaiser, den Kaiser zu schützen ! "

In 1827 Heine issued in the *Buch der Lieder* the best poems which he had published in various periodicals and books up to that year. The first portion, "Junge Leiden," corresponds roughly to the *Gedichte* just discussed. In the second, the "Lyrisches Intermezzo," he treated once more, but in a much more artistic manner, the subject of his love. The springtime of hope, rising doubts, betrayal, disappointment, and the winter of despair form the basis of a garland of love poems which as a collection have never been surpassed. Apart from the melody, grace, and original beauty of individual poems such as "Auf Flügeln des Gesanges," "Die Lotusblume ängstigt," and "Ein Fichtenbaum steht einsam," we are impressed by the skill displayed in the grouping, in the variation of metre, and the consequent absence of monotony in the sixty-five pieces devoted to so narrow a theme. The third section, "Heimkehr," retains the same features and introduces new ones, a bitterer indignation and a more biting irony. There are more poems of a general character, and the satire is directed not only against the fickleness of

womankind, but the world as well, and the poet's own folly in falling in love with his younger cousin, Therese. The second poem of this group is the beautiful ballad, "Die Loreley," in which there is at least the suggestion of a comparison between his own position and the boatman, whom the beauty of the maiden draws inevitably to his doom. The grouping is again excellent, the various sections being connected by poems of an objective ballad character. Here Heine first introduced poems of the sea, which he had visited for the benefit of his health. They all reach a high standard of originality and power, while two in particular, "Du schönes Fischermädchen" and "Auf den Wolken ruht der Mond," may be singled out as beautiful examples of melodious verse, delicate sentiment, and fine construction. The love poems reveal extraordinary variety of style and sentiment. There is the irony of pessimism in "Die Jahre kommen und gehen," sweet tenderness in "Du bist wie eine Blume," the tears of mocking laughter in "Wer zum ersten Male liebt," something very like blasphemy in "Ich träumt', ich bin der liebe Gott," poetry of sensual pleasure in close proximity to romantic idealism. Everywhere the strong personal note, the individuality of the man revealing itself at its best and at its worst. The greatest poetry in the book is to be found in the last two sections, "Die Harzreise" and "Die Nordseebilder," for here in presence of nature, with its majesty and soothing consolation, the poet forgets his malady and his querulous complaints. Nature now reigns supreme. There are few poems in the language like "Bergidylle," in its quaint combination of vivid realism and romantic imagery, in the plastic figures

that dwell in the cottage amid the pines, in the beauty of individual verses where the language seems to bring the action immediately before our senses :—

"Und die Kleine flüstert leise,
Leise, mit gedämpftem Laut,
Manches wichtige Geheimnis
Hat sie mir schon anvertraut. . . ."

The special feature of the "Nordseebilder" is the unrhymed irregular verse, a new medium for Heine, in which he shows his well-known metrical skill in suiting the rhythm to the movement of the waves, the tossing of the ship, the sinking and rising of his own emotions. Ossian and Homer have contributed to the style, in regard to the colouring, the sea effects, and the grandiose compounds coined by Heine to beautify his lines. Like Byron, Heine had a deep love for the sea ; he felt its influence upon body and soul, and these poems are brighter and more buoyant than the previous ones. How he has caught the spirit of the waters, their music, movement, force, and mysteriousness, we may see from lines like the following :—

"Und die weissen, weiten Wellen,
Von der Flut gedrängt,
Schäumten und rauschten näher und näher—
Ein seltsam Geräusch, ein Flüstern und Pfeifen,
Ein Lachen und Murmeln, Seufzen und Sausen,
Dazwischen ein wiegenliedheimliches Singen."

He rises above his own petty cares, and would fain question the waves on the riddle of life, the origin and destination of man, but he receives no answer :—

"Es murmeln die Wogen ihr ew' ges Gemurmel,
Es wehet der Wind, es fliehen die Wolken.
Es blinken die Sterne gleichgültig und kalt
Und ein Narr wartet auf Antwort."

The *Buch der Lieder* as a whole lacks manliness and spirituality, there is much in it that will offend a fine æsthetic temperament, but yet there is a strange magic in this poet's song. No collection of lyrics has made such an impression beyond the borders of the Fatherland. With a word or a line he reminds us of the Folksong, of Goethe, or Byron, he plays upon our ear with many a borrowed note, but he has made what is alien his own, and placed it in a new setting, inseparable from the expression of his personal experience.

Heine's second collection of poems, *Neue Gedichte*, appeared in 1844. The author was now living in Paris, where he felt himself in congenial surroundings and beyond the reach of the Prussian censorship. For the most part, these poems were published between 1833 and 1844, and reflect the new atmosphere in which the poet lived. The first group, "Neuer Frühling," retains most of the qualities of the "Lyrisches Intermezzo," melody of verse, nature symbolism, dainty conception, and imagery. There is little irony, no great depth of feeling, but a lightness and grace which have made some of the pieces, such as "Der Schmetterling ist in die Rose verliebt," extremely popular as songs. Some of Heine's more seriously inclined critics talk slightingly of this kind of verse as being merely "jingle," and lacking in earnestness and depth. But the taunt is unjust. Nature, too, in these aspects, the sporting of the sunbeams, the flutter of the butterfly, is not profound, but light, graceful, and beautiful. And German verse is none too rich in the bright playful type of lyric which is so plentiful in English from the Elizabethan age onwards. The second group contains a few poems of great beauty, especially "In der Fremde"

and "Tragödie," but the great bulk is addressed to the beauties of the Paris boulevards, the dethroned queens of his heart. Gutzkow advised Heine not to publish these poems, a piece of very sound advice, which Heine carefully considered, but did not follow. The "Romanzen" are more pleasing in tone, though there is a lack of concentration of action in most of them. The "Zeitgedichte" are too personal, much of the satire upon contemporaries is unjust, and the point of the wit is lost after the lapse of time. As a whole the *Neue Gedichte* fall far short of the *Buch der Lieder*: there is much less poetry, and a great deal more cynicism and frivolity.

In 1851 Heine issued a new collection of poems under the title *Romanzero*, which was received with great enthusiasm. In the last few years the poet's view of life had changed considerably; he speaks of his conversion, and claims credit for consigning to the flames many poems of which he no longer approved. Most of the pieces are objective in form, broader and richer in colouring than those of the earlier collections. The ballad, "Azra," is an exception in brevity and epigrammatic conciseness. Certainly themes like "Der Schelm von Bergen" and "Das Schlachtfeld von Hastings" do not lend themselves to brief treatment, but Heine revels in epic detail, and leaves less to the imagination of the reader than was his wont. In spite of the ballad form a strong personal note pervades the whole. We get a picture of the poet's bitterness and anguish of soul, his proud *grandezza* and brilliant intellect, his human sympathy and keen insight into life. The fortitude with which Heine bore his painful bodily weakness is one trait at least which has excited the admiration of every biographer,

and these poems testify that while the body gradually grew more and more helpless, he retained his freshness and buoyancy of mind, his wit and humour to the last. Life had become very earnest to him. In the last poems, notably those addressed to his friend and nurse "Die Mouche," there is little flippancy or irreverent laughter. Regret, admiration, passionate and despairing love, pain, and gratitude have seldom been expressed so touchingly. There are many critics who do not care for the sudden changes of mood in the early poems, from romanticism to cold sarcasm, from delicacy to harsh irony, and who, in their uncertainty as to the genuineness of the poet's utterance, look upon these last pieces as the greatest which Heine has written.

August Graf von Platen-Hallermünde (1796-1835) is one of the lonely figures in German literature. He very soon lost all sympathy with romanticism, he has nothing in common with the Young Germans, he quarrelled with Immermann, Heine, and Raupach, and rather links on to the classical movement of the eighteenth century in his love for Italy, and his careful cultivation of form. The "Ghaselen," which appeared in 1821, show his interest in the Oriental work of Rückert. In 1824 he was able to satisfy his dearest wish, to visit Italy and bask in the sunshine of the antique world. The "Sonette aus Venedig" reveal him as a man of fine æsthetic taste, of warm poetical temperament, and a master of language. The beauty of the modern city is veiled with a gentle melancholy for its glorious past:—

> "Venedig liegt nur noch im Land der Träume
> Und wirft nur Schatten her aus alten Tagen,
> Es liegt der Leu der Republik erschlagen,
> Und öde feiern seines Kerkers Räume."

In 1826 Platen resigned his commission and settled in Italy. He attempted the drama, and looked upon his satirical comedies as his best work—work which he fancied might rival Aristophanes. But his lyrical pieces are more vital and enduring. Free from all literary imitation, in the immediate contemplation of Classical and Renaissance art, he perfected that chaste beauty of style and grandeur of language which is his great merit. Some of his poems seem to strike the reader as cold, but he was a man of deep feeling and serious contemplation, as poems like "Wer wusste je das Leben recht zu fassen" and "Ich möchte, wenn ich sterbe" clearly show. Longfellow translated one of his most finished poems, "Wie rafft' ich mich auf in der Nacht." Few of his lyrics will ever be popular in the ordinary sense of the word. But at least two of his ballads, "Der Pilger vor St Just" and "Das Grab im Busento," have earned that distinction. The former describes the entrance of Charles V. into a cloister after his abdication, the latter tells in beautifully balanced lines of the burial of Alarich in the bed of the Busento. There is masterly command of vowel and consonant effects in the long lines:—

"In der wogenleeren Höhlung wühlten sie empor die Erde,
Senkten tief hinein den Leichnam mit der Rüstung auf dem Pferde;
Deckten dann mit Erde wieder ihn und seine stolze Habe,
Dass die hohen Stromgewächse wüchsen aus dem Heldengrabe.
Abgelenkt zum zweiten Male ward der Fluss herbeigezogen;
Mächtig in ihr altes Bette schäumten die Busentowogen. . . ."

Platen struggled hard, but failed to express himself fully and intimately in his lyrics. It is only since the publication of his *Tagebücher* in 1896 and 1900

that the strange story of the man's inner life has become known. Repelled by the roughness and routine of army life, he had withdrawn from life altogether. He read ceaselessly, mastered language after language, but sometimes even this failed to satisfy him. The beauty of thoughts and words seemed at times a poor substitute for life, and the consciousness of this drove him to despair. But where was he to find life? Not in nature, for scenes of wild grandeur did not appeal to him. He could exult in the contemplation of works of art by human hands or relics of ancient splendour such as his beloved Venice presented to him, but the scenery of the Alps did not move him. He worshipped beauty ardently; a fair face, a beautiful figure filled him with rapture, but the very idea of possession was abhorrent to him, and he was obsessed with the contrast between beauty of form and inner soullessness. He had most frequently found it so, and hence his aloofness from women, his growing asceticism, his detachment from all that men commonly regard as life and experience. There remained the possible consolation of religion to a sensitive, high-souled man like Platen, but religion without beauty was to him inconceivable; to him beauty was religion, and it failed to give him satisfaction and peace of mind. Frequently he regretted his loneliness, but that was like finding fault with his own nature. Nothing in this world would have contented him for long. Gradually he lost contact with life and contemporary history; he lived in the past, in his own world of thoughts and ideals, and it is this absence of a real living content and experience that is most characteristic of his polished odes, with their austerity of artistic idealism.

The Austrian Lyricists

From time to time German poetry has been enriched by the genius of German-speaking peoples beyond the boundaries of the Empire. Lenau and Grillparzer are the most prominent among the Austrians, Keller and Meyer among the Swiss. In the nineteenth century in particular, and especially at the present day, German letters owe a very great deal to the rivalry and originality of this art, which is so novel and independent in its whole spirit and atmosphere, and yet so thoroughly akin to the sentiment of Germany as a whole. The Austrian poets of the first half of the century are marked by one prevailing characteristic, their pessimism, and Lenau is the noblest exponent of this attitude to life. **Nikolaus Niembsch von Strehlenau**[1] (1802-1850) wrote in one of his letters that his collected works were his life, and he might have added that his years were spent with one object in view, the realisation of his poetical ambitions. His poems are a genuine reflection of his melancholy temperament, but he had this in common with Heine, that he knew the source of his greatness, and kept open, as Paul Heyse says, the wounds that caused his suffering and supplied him with the material of his art. Born in 1802 in the little Hungarian village of Ctatad, at the age of five he lost his father, the light-hearted, unprincipled Franz von Strehlenau, and was brought up in straitened circumstances by a doting mother, whose excitable temperament, strictness of principle, tenderness, and melancholy had much to do with the moulding of the character of her son. A private education, in which music

[1] L. Roustan, *Lenau et son temps*, Paris, 1898.

figured largely, was probably not the best training for a boy like Lenau: little attempt was made to develop the qualities of self-reliance, perseverance, and practical sense. In the year 1819 he entered the University of Vienna with a view to studying literature and philosophy. One of his friends, Seidl, tells us that no idea of entering upon a career seemed to trouble him; he was like a guest at the table of learning, and as a matter of fact he passed in turn from arts to law, from law to agriculture, from that to law again, and from law to medicine. An unfortunate love affair with a girl who proved unworthy of the poet deeply wounded his pride, and the tendency to dwell upon his sorrows is reflected in a verse which bears upon this episode:—

> "Was einmal tief und wahrhaft dich gekränkt,
> Das bleibt auf ewig dir in's Mark gesenkt."

The death of his mother added to his grief. His health gave way, and he had to betake himself to the Austrian Alps to recuperate. The visit not only gave him new health and vigour, but opened his eyes to the beauty of the hills. In 1831 he travelled to Stuttgart to arrange with Cotta for the publication of his poems. He was warmly received by the Swabian poets, and the time which he spent in their midst proved favourable to his lyrical development. A new love inspired him, to the graceful and cultured Lotte, but the poet's fatal irresolution and distrust of self prevented the consummation of a closer tie. He had not the courage, as he said, "to enshrine this heavenly rose in his dark breast." To his friends' surprise he suddenly declared his intention to emigrate to America, which he regarded as a land of hope and freedom. "I require America for my development," he wrote,

and was determined to sacrifice everything to poetry, to "crucify himself even, if only a good poem might be the result." "He who does not risk everything for the love of art is not her serious devotee." The experiences in America were rich in inspiration, but disappointing in every other way, and within a year Lenau was back in Vienna. He returned to find himself famous, as the poems which appeared during his absence had made a deep impression. Their beauty of form, their depth and earnestness, the originality and even daring in the personification of nature, their delicacy of conception, showed that a new poet of great merit had arisen. Interest was increased by the complete novelty of the landscape portrayed, the Hungarian pustas, and by the vivid delineation of the wanderers, gypsies, and recruiting officers who seem so closely bound up with the scene. Over all lay like a veil the poet's melancholy, the sentimental but genuine expression of a joyless yet ardent and noble temperament. The imagery of these poems is often strikingly original and effective:—

> "Und der Baum im Abendwind
> Lässt sein Laub zu Boden wallen,
> Wie ein schlafergriffenes Kind
> Lässt sein buntes Spielzeug fallen. . . ."

Or again:—

> "Der Himmel blitzt, und Donnerwolken fliehn,
> Die lauten Stürme durch die Haine tosen;
> Doch lächelnd stirbt der holde Lenz dahin,
> Sein Herzblut still verströmend, seine Rosen."

He possesses a unique gift of effectively expressing his own momentary feelings in the terms of the material world:—

"Hier zünd' ich nachts mein Herz zum hellen Feuer
Des Schmerzes an und starre stumm hinein."

On the other hand, his description of the life of outward nature excels in boldness of personification :—

"Am Himmelsantlitz wandelt ein Gedanke,
Die düstre Wolke dort, so bang, so schwer.
Wie auf dem Lager sich der Seelenkranke,
Wirft sich der Strauch in Winde hin und her.
Vom Himmel tönt ein schwermutmattes Grollen,
Die dunkle Wimper blitzet manchesmal,
—So blinzen Augen, wenn sie weinen wollen—
Und aus der Wimper zuckt ein schwacher Strahl.
Nun schleichen aus dem Moore kühle Schauer
Und leise Nebel übers Heideland ;
Der Himmel liess, nachsinnend seiner Trauer,
Die Sonne lässig fallen aus der Hand."

These pensive aspects of a new landscape, this incomparably vivid picturing of the scene, was both novel and unmistakably beautiful. As one would expect from the bent of his mind, he prefers the monotonous, colourless plains, the moors and swampy valleys to the brighter, more exhilarating scenes. The "Schilflieder" are an example of what he can make out of a seemingly uninviting theme. For purely lyrical qualities, music, and beauty they would be difficult to surpass :—

"Auf dem Teich, dem regungslosen
Ruht des Mondes holder Glanz,
Flechtend seine bleichen Rosen
In des Schilfes grünen Kranz.
Hirsche wandeln dort am Hügel
Blicken in die Nacht empor ;
Manchmal regt sich das Geflügel
Träumerisch im tiefen Rohr.

Weinend muss mein Blick sich senken
Durch die tiefste Seele geht,
Mir ein süsses Deingedenken
Wie ein stilles Nachtgebet."

Lenau is not always so subjective as he is here. There are altogether impersonal pictures of life, such as "Die Heideschenke," "Der Polenflüchtling," and "Der Postillon." Again, in the poems which were suggested by the scenes and episodes of the American tour, new subjects were introduced, bringing vividly before us, in poems like "Niagara" and "Der Indianerzug," the things that appealed to the poet himself. One of the best is "Sturmesmythe," a description of the oncoming of a storm at sea in the spirit of the old mythology.

Even after his return from America Lenau did not adopt any definite profession or line of work. He studied religious and philosophical questions, but with no special plan or aim. The long poems on "Faust," "Savonarola," and "Die Albigenser" were meant to express his mature thoughts on religious and historical problems in objective form. But they fail through lack of clearness, concentration, and dramatic characterisation. The subjective passages, however, contain some fine though sombre poetry. The lyrical poems of this period became from year to year more unrelieved in their grey austerity. Lenau's outlook upon life was becoming hopelessly dark, he himself more and more unhappy and restless. Finally, in 1844, financial worries and unfortunate attachments unhinged his mind, and he died in mental darkness in 1850. Among the later poems the most noteworthy are the ones written for Sophie von Laroche, the friend and confidante of the poet. Their background

is the leafless forest in late autumn, the thunder rolling above the tree-tops, the impetuous and destructive floods, the rushing rain, the mists, and the dark night as it enshrouds the landscape, the mouldering decay of summer flowers and all things beautiful. The poet has lost hold of life and love, he has not the courage of initiative, his attitude is one of passivity and hopeless resignation, as he sees what might have been pass for ever beyond his control.

Christian von Zedlitz (1790-1862) was destined for the Church, but he himself preferred the army, and later in life he served the State as Metternich's literary helper, writing articles in the press in support of the minister's policy. In 1828 he published the "Totenkränze," a series of elegies at the graves of famous personalities like Napoleon, Wallenstein, Byron, Tasso, and Laura. In 1832 he issued a collection of poems which included ballads, songs, occasional poems, sonnets, and canzones. In the ballads he shows his dependence upon Uhland, both in language and in the choice of themes. Not only the characters, such as the knight, the ferryman, the messenger, but also the situations which he represents—a scene at the window of a castle, the sunlit battlements looking down upon the Rhine, a king amid his people on the shore of the sea, a prisoner pining for freedom and love—reveal Zedlitz as a faithful follower of the romantic tradition. But this does not preclude him from manifesting both skill and originality in the delineation, especially in the poem "Der Gefangene." His most original and artistic poem is "Die nächtliche Heerschau," which describes in vivid and powerful language how the soldiers of Napoleon rise from their graves at midnight to be reviewed by the Emperor :—

"Nachts um die zwölfte Stunde
Verlässt der Tambour sein Grab,
Macht mit der Trommel die Runde
Geht emsig auf und ab. . . ."

In his occasional poetry there is little of interest, although he reveals in all he writes considerable mastery of lyrical form.

Anastasius Grün (Graf Auersperg, 1806-76) was likewise inclined to the themes and style of romanticism. In politics he was a bitter opponent of the Metternich regime; he attacked it boldly in the *Spaziergänge eines Wiener Poeten*, which appeared anonymously in 1831. In this respect, Grün is a forerunner of the school of political poetry which flourished in the fourth decade. His sympathies were well known, but his high position offered him adequate protection. His writings, which were not numerous, reveal him as a warm-hearted, enthusiastic, and liberal-minded man. The lyrics suffer from too much reflection, which betrays itself in the search for quaint or remote images, and the form of the poems is not free from hardness and stiffness. There are exceptions, though they are somewhat rare in Grün's poetry. The most noteworthy is the song, "Das Blatt im Buche," where he has succeeded in rivalling the simplicity and sweetness of the Folksong:—

"Ich hab' eine alte Muhme,
Die ein altes Büchlein hat,
Es liegt in dem alten Buche
Ein altes, dürres Blatt. . . ."

Grün was a friend of Lenau, and his introduction to the latter's works is, for insight and sympathy, a model of what such introductions should be.

Ernst von Feuchtersleben (1806-49) should also

receive mention as an Austrian lyricist of genuine though modest talents. His fame rests on a semi-popular medical book, *Zur Diätetik der Seele*, but he is remembered also as the author of the fine but melancholy lines, "Es ist bestimmt in Gottes Rat."

Mörike and the later Swabians

Eduard Mörike (1804-75) is the greatest of the many distinguished Swabian poets. Mommsen called him "the last rose of romance, blossoming in Swabia's most secret vale," but he has none of the vagueness or sentimentality or mannerisms of the romantic school. His songs come very near in spirit to the Folksong, but he drew his inspiration not from books but from the landscape and the people of his native land. Like the rest of the Swabians he was unaffected by the propaganda of Young Germany, in fact he stands in strong contrast to them in almost every point. He was, as Treitschke said, "ein zeitloser Dichter," a man of innate originality, who would have written as he did no matter under what conditions and in what age he had appeared. He was born in Ludwigsburg, as the son of middle-class parents. In 1817 he lost his father, and through the influence of his mother, who was a daughter of the manse, he entered the convent school at Urach, with a view to becoming a minister. The poem, "Besuch in Urach," was inspired by a visit in later life to this home of his youth, which he celebrates as "meines Lebens andere Schwelle, meiner tiefsten Kräfte Herd." From 1822 to 1826 he was a student of theology at Tübingen. The most important episode in this period was his meeting with Maria Meyer, whose mysterious character and wanderings awakened the poet's interest and love.

She is the gipsy of *Maler Nolten* and the subject of the poems entitled "Peregrina," the third of which is beautifully worded:—

> "Warum, Geliebte, denk ich Dein
> Auf einmal nun mit tausend Thränen,
> Und kann gar nicht zufrieden sein,
> Und will die Brust in alle Weiten dehnen. . . ."

Soon the poet was convinced that his affection was misplaced, and this disappointment made him draw into himself and live in a world of his own, finding consolation in the works of Tieck, Hölderlin, Jean Paul, Goethe, Fouqué, and Ossian. From 1826 to 1834 Mörike acted as vicar in a number of villages, but he found no satisfaction in his work. "Alles, aber nur kein Geistlicher," he exclaimed. He tried editing, but was even less successful at that. For four years he was engaged to Elise Rau, but there was no deep understanding or attachment, and they drifted apart owing chiefly to Mörike's desire to give up the ministry. In the meantime, he was working at his novel *Maler Nolten* and some of his best lyrics appeared in the *Morgenblatt.* In 1834 he was appointed to the charge of Cleversulzbach, and the next nine years were, on the whole, the happiest and most productive of his life. He had time on his hands and could indulge in his day-dreams, in loving observation of nature. His *Gedichte* appeared in 1838, a modest-sized volume, for writing was a thing he abhorred. He was shy by nature, troubled by ill health, and afraid of publicity and binding duties. For fifteen years he was a teacher of literature in the Katharinenstift in Stuttgart, and the last nine years of his life were spent in retirement. To the end he remained the same kind, childlike,

somewhat hypochondriac character, the unpractical dreamer, and he passed away, as Keller said, "as quietly as a mountain spirit leaving its usual haunts."

The range of Mörike's poetry is not wide; he was neither a profound thinker like Goethe nor a passionate singer of love like Heine. But in his own sphere, the life and landscape around him, he sang with unexampled simplicity, sweetness, and truth. He felt intimately and expressed effectively the charm of nature as he saw it with his own eyes. In daily walks through the woods and meadows he felt gloriously at ease, far from the hard facts and duties of life. He does not give us a brilliant picture of Swabian scenery, for he lacks the plastic power of Lenau. It is the half-hidden beauties that he revels in, the sunrise on the hill, the modest flower, the voice of the rustling water, the delicate shade of the rose, the hum of the bee, the gold glimmer of autumn tints, the sweet perfumes of wood and valley, the footprint of the bird in snow, the mist-veiled morning, the lonely flower in the wintry churchyard. There is nothing commonplace in his observations, for he looks behind the veil into the depths of nature's wonders. He has beautiful poems on spring, and the interesting personal note is never absent:—

"Der Sonnenblume gleich steht mein Gemüte offen,
Sehnend,
Sich dehnend
In Lieben und Hoffen.
Frühling, was bist du gewillt?
Wann werd' ich gestillt?"

At the same time he gives rein to his imagination, even to reflection, till the poetical mood enshrined in the poem is fully developed:—

"Ich denke dies und denke das,
Ich sehne mich, und weiss nicht recht nach was:
Halb ist es Lust, halb ist es Klage;
Mein Herz, o sage,
Was webst du für Erinnerung
In golden grüner Zweige Dämmerung?
—Alte unnennbare Tage!"

He loves the mysterious and the romantic; he sees the land of Orplid, and describes it as vividly in "Weylas Gesang" as he does the features of real nature. He is a master of language, yet his style is absolutely free from artificiality and straining after effect. In the shorter pieces, "In der Frühe," "Um Mitternacht," "Er ist's," there is marvellous word-painting: he seems to catch the very music and movement of nature. In the treatment of the supernatural or the delicately naïve, as in "Schön Rohtraut," he challenges comparison with the greatest, but in the realistic ballad, such as "Der Feuerreiter," he lacks clearness and dramatic power. He has the romanticist's love of the far-off and unreal, as his "Schiffer- und Nixenmärchen," his "Elfenlied," and "Die Geister am Mummelsee" show. From the romanticists he adopted the sonnet, although this form is not the most suitable for his peculiarly wayward genius. Perhaps he is greatest in those songs which reveal the very soul of the common people. "Das verlassene Mägdlein" is beyond doubt a masterpiece of form and delicate suggestiveness:—

"Früh, wann die Hähne krähn,
Eh' die Sternlein verschwinden,
Muss ich am Herde stehn,
Muss Feuer zünden.
Schön ist der Flammen Schein,
Es springen die Funken;

Ich schaue so drein,
In Leid versunken.
Plötzlich, da kommt es mir,
Treuloser Knabe,
Dass ich die Nacht von dir
Geträumet habe.
Thräne auf Thräne dann
Stürzet hernieder ;
So kommt der Tag heran—
O ging' er wieder."

It is hardly right to call this a Folksong. The central figure, the scene, and the general theme are certainly well known in the old Volkslieder, but there is something in the closely-knit narrative, the individual poetical touches, and the epigrammatic conclusion which is suggestive of art rather than *naïveté*. There are not a few poems of the same kind, "Jung Volker," "Agnes," "Der Gärtner," and "Die Soldatenbraut," where Mörike's poetical insight into the feelings of the people is only equalled by his mastery of form. He is also a humorist. The same man who could give exquisite expression to strong religious feeling and resignation in poems like "Gebet" or "Denk es, o Seele," who sensitively shut himself away from every disturbing influence and prayed to be left alone—

"Lass, o Welt, o lass mich sein !
Locket nicht mit Liebesgaben,
Lasst dies Herz alleine haben
Seine Wonne, seine Pein, . . ."

yet looked out with sunny smile upon the foibles of mankind, and hit them off neatly in many a poem, such as "Scherz," "Abreise," "An meinen Vetter," and the "Märchen vom sicheren Mann." Another aspect of Mörike's genius is revealed in the idyll, a form of

poetry particularly well-suited to his minute observation and love for the little things of life. There is an unobtrusive charm and *naïveté* of attitude in "Der alte Turmhahn," where the weathercock, which has been dethroned from its lofty position on the village spire, describes the life of a country minister as it views his activity from the stove in his study. It is unpretentious art, but convinces by its simple truth to nature. And above all, it is thoroughly Swabian. Mörike is not nearly so well known in this country as he deserves to be, and the average English reader has to go out of himself before he can appreciate this thoroughly German art in its simplicity, sentimentality, and intimateness. Goldsmith is probably the nearest approach to it in English. He is as humorous and playful, but not so truly lyrical. The other idylls, "Haüsliche Scene," "Ländliche Kurzweil," "Die schöne Buche," are equally admirable in their mellowness of wisdom. Long before his death Mörike had been warmly appreciated by contemporaries, but his last years were clouded by ill health and a none too happy marriage. The sunshine of his nature, however, did not fail: in the course of an uneventful life he spread his sunny radiance around him and gilded with poetical touch, as few have succeeded in doing, the drab and sombre features of German village life.

Of much the same character as Mörike's was the poetry of the Swabian, **J. G. Fischer** (1816-97), who carried on the traditions of the school till near the end of the century. His life was spent in teaching, and his poetry, which is calm, tender, and reflective, mirrors his experiences and observation of the landscape and village life which he knew so well. Nature and love

are the two chief themes, and his song is as fresh and melodious at eighty years of age as it was in the poems of youth. He was quite as naïve as Mörike, but he did not possess his imagination, his directness of vision, his quaint humour, and knowledge of the human heart. But he had great metrical skill, genuine poetical feeling, and the gift of symbolical presentation. Some of his poems, such as the well-known "Ans Ziel," attain to a really high standard :—

"Gestern ein Rieseln
Im weichen Eise,
Heute ein Bach
Auf der Frühlingsreise,
Gestern ein Kind
Mit Schleif' und Band,
Heute Jungfrau
Mit Festgewand :
Wohin?—wer weiss?
Und wem der Preis?
Frage die Biene
Wohin sie fliegt,
Frage die Hoffnung
Wo Eden liegt."

Two other Swabians may be discussed here, though their tendencies are quite different from the traditional ones of the Swabian circle, and they are also in no way related to each other. **Wilhelm Waiblinger** (1804-30) was one of the many poets who were inspired by the Greek War of Independence. But his most important work, consisting of sketches, novelettes, and poems, was written in Italy, which he had made his home. Here he came into touch with Platen, who assisted him financially, but did not altogether approve of his poetry. His "Lieder des römischen Carnevals" gave a fairly successful picture

of the revelry at this season in the sunny south, and scarcely merit Platen's reproach that they breathe "eine ganz faunische Brunst." Waiblinger wrote with grace and fluency: his "Lieder der Untreue" certainly gave promise of an original and happy vein of poetry, but misfortunes and poverty brought his career to a premature end. **Karl Gerok** (1815-90) has been one of the most popular hymn-writers of modern Germany. He was, to begin with, a son of the manse, his whole life was devoted to the ministry, and all his poetry is religious. The first collection, entitled *Palmblätter*, was issued in 1857, and the *Pfingstrosen* followed in 1864. Here we find fluent paraphrases of Biblical texts and didactic meditation on sacred subjects of every kind. It is lyrical, for behind it all we feel the earnestness of the man, but it is uninspired. Occasionally it is superficial and in bad taste. The last objection applies in particular to his parody of Goethe's "Kennst du das Land." He loathes philosophy and science, and has a tilt at the Higher Criticism and the Darwinian theory. In one or two poems of the ballad type, "Wie Graf Erbach lutherisch ward," "Das Kind des Steuermanns," "Tannhäuser," and "Todesreise," he rose out of his narrow groove and produced more lasting work. Even in the purely religious poem, in spite of his smoothness of verse, he compares unfavourably with the hymn-writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Droste-Hülshoff and Hebbel

Writers of strong individuality are seldom influenced for long by literary tradition or fashion. More usually it is their fate to be copied by a host of admiring

followers. But neither Hebbel nor Droste-Hülshoff was sufficiently popular during the first half of the century to inaugurate a school. In their case it was left to posterity to discover their merit. **Annette von Droste-Hülshoff** (1797-1848) prophesied in fact that she would find a public fifty years after her death. And she is now recognised as Germany's greatest poetess, and one of the most original writers of the century. She was born in Schloss Hülshoff, in Westphalia. No stirring events seem to have entered into her early life. The restrictions of class hemmed her in; her nearest relatives lived in a much narrower world than she was satisfied with. On her father's death in 1826 she removed with her mother to Rüschhaus, where the life was still more solitary. She was thus thrown back upon her own resources, and developed a surprisingly rich mental life of her own, sustained by wide reading and reflection upon problems of science, religion, history, and social life. In 1830 she became acquainted with Levin Schücking, a young scholar and writer. He was seventeen years younger than the poetess, but her attachment to him was very great, as some of her letters prove. He brought her out of herself, opened up for her the avenues to a larger world and to the public. On the other hand his sentiments were Radical, hers Conservative, and much that came from his pen was bound to wound her deeply. To him we are indebted for Annette's extraordinary productivity in the year 1841, as she had jestingly wagered that she could write a volume of poetry within a few weeks, and did so. But when we wish to penetrate deeper into Annette's soul life, to try to solve the problem of her personality, we are met with insuperable difficulties.

She was extremely shy and reserved, but by no means a cold nature. Some of her poems glow with enthusiasm and passion. Even Schücking seems to have been baffled by her inscrutableness. She writes with the tenderness of a lover, "Do write to me often, my talent rises and sinks with thy love; what I become is due to thee and for thy sake. . . . It seems to me, if I could see thee for only two minutes every day —O God, if only for one moment—that I would sing so beautifully that the salmon would spring from the Lake of Constance, and the sea-gulls would perch upon my shoulder." But she looked upon him rather as an adopted son, and when he became engaged, she sent him the "full blessing of one who will cherish for you all the unfailing love of a mother, as long as there is a breath of life in her body." She herself died at a comparatively early age, unmarried. Ill health troubled her later years, and to this was added much mental doubt and affliction. She clung to the old forms of religion and tradition, she hung with fervour on the old aspects of Westphalian life, and now the man who had widened her view of life openly scoffed at all these things which she held sacred. She had no longer the strength of body to rise above this struggle, and passed away, a brave but broken spirit. Her early poems, "Das Geistliche Jahr," are religious, and show the development of Droste's personal faith. The great bulk of her later work, however, is of a different nature. It was written mainly in South Germany, on the Lake of Constance, where she stayed with her brother-in-law, the German scholar, von Lassberg, but the ideas and motives had been collected before, and reflect the landscape, customs, and life of Westphalia.

Like Mörike, Droste-Hülshoff requires to be patiently studied. Her work appears at first sight crabbed and difficult to understand. It is not adapted for singing, nor will it be appreciated by a wide and superficial public. But her language, though it lacks grace and softness, is remarkably virile and idiomatic. The lines stand there as though hewn hastily out of granite. What she has to say is worth hearing, and she says it with great originality and force. She sinks herself in the contemplation of the Westphalian landscape, brings it before us in realistic colours, with no trace of reflection or sentimentality. In a poem like "Im Moose," she seems not merely in touch with, but actually a part of, nature as she throws herself down upon the mossy bank and listens to the sounds around, drinking in the perfume of the flowers of the heath. Every limb is motionless, even thought is silent; she has become a thing of sense, alive to the gentlest sound, the gnawing of the caterpillar on the leaf, the fall of a withered twig, or the beating of her own heart. Thus she penetrates into nature's most intimate relationships:—

> "Als jüngst die Nacht dem sonnenmüden Land
> Der Dämmerung leise Boten hat gesandt,
> Da lag ich einsam noch in Waldes Moose.
> Die dunklen Zweige nickten so vertraut,
> An meiner Wange flüsterte das Kraut,
> Unsichtbar duftete die Heiderose."

Sometimes she dwells with a healthy realism on the minutest details; at other times she merely suggests, and passes over what to the common eye is most apparent. Shortsighted by nature, she seems to have relied upon the sense of hearing, for the sounds of the world around her occupy a greater place in her poetry

than is usually the case. We find this apparent in a poem like "Die Mergelgrube," where she hints at what she cannot see, or in "Durchwachte Nacht," in which she describes how she lies awake, alive to every sound without and every passing mood within, to the various images which her restless mind conjures up as the clock strikes hour after hour :—

"Wie mir das Blut im Hirne zuckt!
Am Söller geht Geknister um,
Im Pulte raschelt es und ruckt,
Als drehe sich der Schlüssel um,
Und—horch, der Zeiger hat gewacht!
S ist Mitternacht."

For a time Droste-Hülshoff was uncertain of the proper medium for the expression of Westphalian life. She tried prose sketches, and wrote a short novel of great realism and psychological truth, *Die Judenbuche*. In "Die Schlacht im Loener Bruch" she has given us one of the few notable epics of the century. She also wrote many ballads, but they are unequal both in the interest of the subject and in form. She was averse to careful pruning and smoothing of the verse, once it had received its first form. "Let them be as they are," she said to Schücking on one occasion, when he spoke of the advantages of clearness and melody. In not a few of the ballads the narrative is spoiled by diffuseness, and the shorter ones, such as "Der Knabe im Moor," "Der Schlosself," and "Die Vergeltung," are usually more effective. In all her work, in poetry or prose, she is a strong and healthy realist, one of the earliest "Heimatkünstler." She brought new life into the short story and the lyric, but the circle of her admirers was too small during

her lifetime, and for long afterwards, to enable her to exercise the influence which the merits of her work would have led us to expect.

Friedrich Hebbel (1813-63) is one of the most original and profound of German writers. The dramas and the *Tagebücher* however, constitute his great achievement. His thoughts on literature and art have exercised a remarkable influence upon the nineteenth century. He was born at Wesselburen, in Holstein. The first thirty years of his life present as hard a struggle as any poet ever had to face against dire poverty and the lack of education. Hebbel did not come out of this trial untarnished. His treatment of Elise Lensing, on whom he was for a time financially dependent, was not heroic, but we must admire the indomitable perseverance of the man, his confidence in his genius, and the steady perfection of his culture. The King of Denmark helped him with a pension, he was enabled to travel, and Paris, Rome, Naples awakened in him new ideals, new longings for beauty. "In life and art," he wrote, "beauty becomes more and more a necessity to me." The representation of his first plays in Berlin helped to spread his fame, but it was in Vienna that the turn in his fortunes came. He married the famous actress, Christiane Enghaus, and settled down to a life of comfort and productivity. His lyric poetry belongs to his earlier years. In later life he turned more and more to the epigram. Even his early poems are not expressions of immediate experience, but rather reflections springing from conviction and emotion. He is always thoughtful, frequently melancholy. The titles of the poems, "Gebet," "Nachtlied," "An den Tod," "Requiem,"

"Leben," are characteristic. He is particularly fond of the calm eventide and the consecration of night :—

"Und von allen Sternen nieder,
Strömt ein wunderbarer Segen,
Dass die müden Kräfte wieder,
Sich in neuer Frische regen
Und aus seinen Finsternissen
Tritt der Herr, so weit er kann,
Und die Fäden, die zerrissen,
Knüpft er alle wieder an."

The circle of themes is not wide, and they are usually too weighty, too sombre to be turned easily into graceful and attractive form. His lines are smooth enough, but neither the subject nor the form has any of that elegance or sweetness that make poetry linger in the memory. Even where some beautiful aspect of nature has supplied the inspiration, he is not content to give us merely an objective picture, or even to dwell much upon the influence of the vision upon his own sensitive mind. He seems by temperament and bent of mind to pass always from the individual to the general, from the concrete to the abstract. Perception is with him only the first step towards lyrical reflection. The short poems, "Herbstbild" and "Sommerbild," are examples, and it is even more striking in the somewhat longer pieces, "Abendgefühl" and "Die Weihe der Nacht." Of Hebbel's ballads, "Das Kind am Brunnen" is one of the most attractive in conception and execution. It shows how a child, gazing at its own image in a well, is saved from the danger of drowning by the flowers which it drops. The alluring image to which it has beckoned, and which beckons in reply, is dispelled by the happy intervention of the children of nature. "Der Knabe

in Moor" is more dramatic, but is inclined to be gruesome in its effects. He himself was immoderately proud of the romance, "Der Liebeszauber." "Das ist die Krone von allem, was ich gemacht habe," he said, but the poem is diffuse and the form not free from harshness. Hebbel's place in the German lyric is not a high one, nor can it be said that he exercised much influence upon the development of this form. But his poems are interesting for their own value, and as the expression of the lyrical feelings of one of the most thoughtful of German poets.

Political Poetry

The poetical lyrics which attained to such popularity between 1840 and 1848 had a twofold origin and aim. In the first place they owed their origin to the efforts of the ministry of Thiers to turn the public attention in France away from domestic politics to hopes of conquest on the Rhine, and aimed at securing and maintaining the honour and territorial integrity of Germany in opposition to the ancient enemy. The prevailing sentiment found expression in Nikolaus Becker's song, "Sie sollen ihn nicht haben, den freien deutschen Rhein!" In this respect the poetry of the fourth decade joined hands with the patriotic poetry of 1814. Ernst Moritz Arndt, for example, took part in both movements. The most famous song of the period, though it was really thirty years later when it attained its greatest popularity, was Max Schneckenburger's "Die Wacht am Rhein." In the second place, and to a still greater extent, this poetry was directed towards obtaining representative government and a greater degree of freedom in Germany itself.

Since the overthrow of Napoleon this feeling had been gathering strength; it found expression in the Burschenschaften formed by young and ardent disciples of liberty, and in the literature of Young Germany. But the policy of Frederick William III., influenced as it was by Metternich, had been absolutely unsympathetic, and when in 1840 Frederick William IV. ascended the Prussian throne, new hopes were kindled, only to be disappointed once more. The great merit of the political lyric was that poets now took a keen interest in the life of the nation as a whole. Poetry became, as the Young Germans had desired it to be, a living force. Its weakness lay in the fact that the treatment tended to be monotonous, and many of the lyricists paid more attention to popular effect than to artistic finish. Rhetoric took the place of sentiment, bombastic threats and vain promises stifled true poetry. Like all art which pursues one exclusive tendency, it appealed principally to its own age, and rapidly lost interest and value.

Georg Herwegh (1817-75) was born in Stuttgart, and studied originally for the Church. He also devoted some time to law, but soon deserted this also. The well-known *Gedichte eines Lebendigen* appeared in 1841. Shortly after this he was received in audience by Frederick William IV., but his irreconcilability soon led to his banishment from Prussia. A great part of his life was spent in Switzerland and France, but old age found him again on German soil, in retirement at Baden-Baden. Herwegh was a born agitator. The "Schlusslied" is not altogether characteristic, but it shows to what lengths he seriously urged the agitators to go: no bride was to wed, no priest to pray, no drinker to enjoy his wine while the

Fatherland continued in mourning. He was angry at the conciliatory methods of others: men like Dingelstedt, Freiligrath, Platen, and Geibel had to endure the lash of his satire and scorn. He was certainly a good hater, and the "Xenien" leave nothing to be desired in that respect. Still he possessed many of the gifts of a true poet, warmth of feeling, imagination, an interesting personality, and a graceful style. He feels himself in the rôle of a trumpeter who must awaken Germany from her slumber, and he devoted his life to the cause of freedom of speech and action. Occasionally he is a blind partisan, unjust in his criticism of men and events, but that does not touch the literary value of his poetry. It is virile and spontaneous in poems like "Der sterbende Trompeter," "Reiterlied," "Rheinweinlied," delicate and tender in "Der Gang um Mitternacht" or the beautiful elegy:—

> "Ich möchte hingehn wie das Abendrot
> Und wie der Tag mit seinen letzten Gluten
> —O lieber, sanfter, ungefühlter Tod!—
> Mich in den Schoss des Ewigen verbluten."

In the second part of the *Gedichte*, published in 1843, there is more bitterness: he will have nothing to do with half measures. He attacks the kingship, and declares himself an out-and-out revolutionary. "Die deutsche Flotte" is interesting as an early expression of the idea that Germany's future lies upon the sea. Herwegh might have produced good work in other fields, but there were, he said, enough ballads for idle people. Such work he regarded as a betrayal of the cause. Thus from choice he remained a political poet and nothing more, but in this sphere he occupied, according to contemporary opinion, the highest place.

Ferdinand Freiligrath (1810-76) is better known in England than many German poets of much greater merit. He lived for a long time in London, and his best poems have been translated by his daughter.[1] His poetry is as manifold as the vicissitudes of his life. The revolutionary lyric represents only one phase of his development. He was destined for a commercial life, and began his career in Soest and Amsterdam. This brought him into contact with the sea and seafaring people, his imagination was fired, and he began to describe events and scenes in distant lands in extravagantly rhetorical language. Where he strives to be realistic and dramatic he frequently fails, as in the verse :—

> "'Ein Reitertrupp!—der Aga der
> Eunuchen, Jussuf!'—'Bringt ihn her!'—
> Jussuf, der Neger aus Dar Fur,
> Reicht grinsend ihm—die seidene Schnur"

But the splendour of the imagery and the rhythmical swing of poems like "Der Löwenritt," "Der Mohrenfürst," "Der Schwertfeger von Damaskus," and "Nebo," carry the reader along, and blind him to the absence of poetical feeling and true dramatic action. In other poems, like "Die Auswanderer," reflective but beautiful, and "Die Tanne," he shows a warm interest in the poor, and genuine love for nature :—

> "O stilles Leben im Walde!
> O grüne Einsamkeit!
> O blumenreiche Halde!
> Wie weit seid ihr, wie weit!"

Till about 1840 Freiligrath was content to walk in the paths of the romanticists, of Byron and Victor

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[1] Kate Freiligrath Kroeker, in the Tauchnitz series.

Hugo. But Herwegh, who reproached him for taking a pension from the king, and Fallersleben brought him over to the revolutionary camp. Inexperienced in politics as he was, and gifted with a vivid imagination, he became the most violent of them all. *Glaubensbekenntnis* (1844), *Ça ira* (1846), and the *Neue politische und soziale Gedichte*, are the most noteworthy collections of his political lyrics. After being arrested and acquitted he came to London, where he spent the next sixteen years. When he returned in 1866 it was to find a new Germany, to experience and celebrate the great conflicts which were to pave the way for German unity. His poem, "Die Trompete von Vionville," is the best piece of work inspired by the events of 1870. Other excellent examples of the warlike lyric are "Hurra Germania," "Freiwillige vor," and "An Wolfgang im Felde." Another aspect of Freiligrath's genius is seen in his translations from English and French. No other German poet has been so successful with renderings of Burns. Longfellow's "Hiawatha" is well translated, but the peculiar charm of language in "The Ancient Mariner" he has not succeeded in reproducing. He wrote also a good deal of occasional poetry, and some of these pieces, such as "Im Teutoburger Walde" and "Für die Töchter," reveal to us, even better than the exotic and political lyrics, the charming personality of the man. His warmth of heart and lovableness are pleasingly expressed in poems free from all tendency, "Ruhe in der Geliebten," or the well-known lines:—

"O lieb', so lang du lieben kannst!
O lieb', so lang du lieben magst!
Die Stunde kommt, die Stunde kommt,
Wo du an Gräbern stehst und klagst. . . ."

There is much divergence of opinion among critics regarding his work. The early descriptive poetry has enjoyed great popularity; even gruesome pictures like "Das Hospital Schiff," have been described as "fine" and "characteristic." But it is a question whether the occasional poetry does not bring us nearer to the man himself, and will live longer than either the political lyrics or the unreal pictures of lions, desert sands, and Moorish princes.

Franz Dingelstedt (1814-81) took part in the revolutionary movement with the *Lieder eines cosmopolitischen Nachtwächters* (1840), but when prosperity smiled upon him, he turned his back upon politics and had a brilliant career as an essayist, sketch-writer, and director successively of the theatres of Munich, Weimar, and Vienna. In his political poems he shows more wit and cleverness than poetical inspiration. It is in pieces of a general character, "Die Weser," "Am Grabe Chamissos," or "Auf einem Kirchhofe in der Fremde," that his art is most pleasing.

Another of the political singers, for a time at least, was **Hoffmann von Fallersleben** (1798-1874), whose *Unpolitische Lieder* (1840) cost him his professorship in Breslau. He possessed in a high degree the art of writing songs which caught on, lacking though they were in individuality and depth. Among his most popular compositions are the poem—

> "Treue Liebe bis zum Grabe
> Schwör ich dir mit Herz und Hand . . ."

the national song, "Deutschland, Deutschland über alles," and the beautiful lines, "Zwischen Frankreich und dem Böhmer Wald." The great bulk of his

poetry deals with subjects which appeal to the common people, love, spring-time, child-life, wandering, hunting, revelry, and patriotism. In his life and poetry he bears a resemblance to the ancient Spielmann. Occasionally, as in "Abendlied," the expression of the poet's appreciation of nature is beautiful and refined :—

"Abend wird es wieder
Über Wald und Feld
Säuselt Frieden nieder
Und es ruht die Welt, . . ."

but commonplace stanzas are frequently met with, as the last one in the poem just quoted. Some of his best work is found in the "Wiegenlieder" ("Die Ähren nur noch nicken," "Schlaf, mein Kind, schlaf ein"), and in the group entitled "Kinderleben" ("Ein Vogel ruft im Walde," "Alle Vögel sind schon da"). The "Soldatenlieder" are somewhat loud, when they do not consist merely of repetition of traditional motives, and the songs of joviality, as in the group, "Kirmess," are unenjoyable, at least on paper. Sometimes Fallersleben reminds us of Walther von der Vogelweide and Neidhart von Reuenthal in his general tendencies, but he has neither the depth and delicacy of the one nor the healthy virility of the other.

Robert Prutz (1810-72) was born in Stettin, and educated at Berlin, Göttingen, and Halle. He aimed at a university professorship, but his ultra-Liberal views stood in the way. In 1848, on a change of ministry, he received a call to Halle, where he remained till 1857. But owing to the secret and open hostility of his colleagues his position was none too comfortable, and he resigned his post in order to devote himself to writing and lecturing. He made his name as a

political poet. His first volume, the *Gedichte* (1841), contains a few songs and ballads, but the poems that then attracted attention are just those that now make little appeal to us. One of the most noteworthy of the political pieces is "Zum Kölner Dombaufest," in which he exhorts the King of Prussia to complete not only the Cathedral but also the edifice of German freedom of speech and constitution. His best poetry is to be found in the later collections, *Aus der Heimat* (1858), *Herbstrosen* (1864), and *Buch der Liebe* (1869). The ballads, such as "Bretagne," "Der Renegat," "Die Oceaniden," and "Allerseelen," are much above the average in fluency of verse. Lines like the following—

"Leis' o leis! der Abend dämmert, süsse Nacht, o sei willkommen,
O du Balsam der Geschlag'nen, o du Schützerin der Frommen!
Leis' o leise! löst den Nachen, nehmet Angel und Gerät,
Täuscht die Späher, täuscht die Wächter:—in die Wogen zum Gebet!"

are characteristic of his fluency and grace. In his love-poetry Prutz occupies a midway position between Heine and the poetry of to-day. Stanzas like "Frühlingsliebe" show unmistakable evidence of Heine's influence, but he is more erotic, more materialistic even than Heine. On the whole, however, he is free from coarseness, and occasionally, as in "Erinnerung," delicate in conception and artistic in form. Some of his best pieces are "Die Liebe schreibt," "Das Wort," "Hat dir die Rose nicht gesagt?" and "Hast du je einmal geliebt." In such poems he stands directly in the line of development from the "Book of Songs" to the erotic poetry of the present day.

In addition to the poets discussed there were a number of minor writers who made a name for themselves by political poetry: **Karl Beck** with his *Gepanzerte Lieder* (1838), **Moritz Hartmann** with *Kelch und Schwert* (1845), and **Gottfried Kinkel** with his collection of *Gedichte* in 1843. Geibel, too, should be mentioned here, though he can be more fully and properly discussed in a later chapter in connection with the Munich school.

Poets of the Transition

Near the end of a distinct literary age there are always a few poets whom it is difficult to classify. They point both forwards and backwards, but their inclination either in the one direction or in the other is not nearly pronounced enough to justify us in calling them forerunners of the new age or degenerate descendants of the old. The traditional tendencies do not attract them, and in most cases they have not sufficient inventiveness to strike out in new paths. They occupy neutral ground, and sometimes in their own little kingdom they reveal a charming individuality.

August Kopisch (1799-1853) is such a typical figure, a good-natured humorist, clever and amusing, but by no means a genius either in poetry or painting, the two arts in which he sought to excel. His best work is contained in the group of narrative poems entitled "Scherz und Ernst." In a country where humour is not strongly represented in literature, poems like "Samson," "Das Krähen," "Der Schneiderjunge von Krippstadt," "Maley und Malone," "Die Brautwerbung," and especially the amusing account

of "Wie Frau Abel sich ein Ei holte," are heartily welcome. Among his ballads and national poems those of a playful or sarcastic character, like "Die vexierten Frösche," or "Friedrich des Zweiten Kutscher," are extremely well done. Of the serious pieces, "Die Notglocke," "Das Negerschiff," "Blücher am Rhein," "Die Mühle am Arendsee," portray with skill events and personalities characteristically German. He is fond of the mysterious, and shows extraordinary knowledge of the ways of the "kleine Geister" that enter into fairy tale and child-life. The onomatopoetic description of the Heinzelmännchen's work in making the Bürgermeister's coat is ingenious and admirable. Of the "Weinlieder" the humorous pieces, such as "Est Est" and "Die Perlen im Champagner," are again the best. The love poems are conventional, but wonderfully smooth in versification:

"O komm in mein Schiffchen
Geliebte, daher!
Die Nacht ist so still und
Es leuchtet das Meer.
Und wo ich hin rudre
Entbrennet die Flut,
Es schaukelt mein Nachen
In wallender Glut.—
Die Glut ist die Liebe,
Der Nachen bin ich:
Ich sink in den Flammen,
O rette du mich."

Robert Reinick (1805-52) was also a painter as well as a poet. He possessed facility in language and metre, wrote sentimental love songs, romances, lusty drinking songs with success, but shows a total lack of originality, idealism, and higher poetical feeling. Poems like "Der Strom" and "Im stillen

Grunde" show his sympathy with early romanticism. His religious tendencies kept him apart from the Radical movement. In a few poems like "Kuriose Geschichte" and "Der verliebte Maikäfer" there are traces of genuine humour, but the ballads, with perhaps the exception of "Die Monduhr," are conventional and thin.

Friedrich von Sallet (1812-43) also showed great command of metre and language in his poems of nature, of love, of reflection, and in his legends and ballads. "Abendstille" and "Wellentraum" are the best of the love poems, "Fortdauer" of the reflective pieces. The most of the ballads lack concentration and dramatic movement. "Ziethen" is an exception, while "Der Gefangene" is really a series of elegaic reflections called forth by the vision of a rose-leaf which the wind has blown against the window of a prisoner's cell. Of the spirit and life of the genuine ballad it has nothing.

Hermann von Gilm (1812-64), who was born in Innsbrück, published several collections of poetry, which revealed him as a pleasant and graceful singer, without any great originality. In the "Tyroler Schützenlieder" there is the fresh note of the hills, freedom, hunting, and war. In poems like

> "Es blüht die Welt, ich bin allein im Zimmer!
> Das junge Saatfeld schwimmt im Sonnenlicht, . . ."

he sings spontaneously of the pure joy of nature. Occasionally the form is weak, and rhymes such as "hier, Geschirr" are not uncommon. The "Jesuitenlieder" made a great sensation, and as far as bitterness and sarcasm are concerned they could not have been excelled. The "Sophielieder" contain his most

pleasing work, and one of the pieces, "Allerseelen," shows how even a minor poet can sometimes rival the greatest—

"Stell' auf den Tisch die duftenden Reseden,
Die letzten roten Astern trag' herbei
Und lass uns wieder von der Liebe reden
Wie einst im Mai.
Gieb mir die Hand, dass ich sie heimlich drucke,
Und wenn man's sieht, mir ist es einerlei ;
Gieb mir nur einen deiner süssen Blicke
Wie einst im Mai.
Es blüht und funkelt heut auf jedem Grabe
Ein Tag im Jahre ist den Toten frei ;
Komm an mein Herz, dass ich dich wieder habe,
Wie einst im Mai."

In Gilm's style and attitude to nature we notice reminiscences of Eichendorff and Heine. There is genuine poetry in the sonnets, "An eine Rovetanerin," but the ballads of the author lack interest and imaginative force.

K. P. Philip Spitta (1801-59) achieved great popularity with collections of religious poetry, *Psalter und Harfe* (1833 ; 51st edition, 1885), and a second series under the same title (1843 ; 35th edition, 1883). A critical examination shows clearly that the fame of these pieces was not merited either by originality of content or beauty of form. They are mostly paraphrases of Biblical texts and stories. It is difficult to find anything new to say on such subjects, unless they are treated with freedom and imagination, and this gift Spitta did not possess. It is only rarely that we see glimpses of the poet's interest in nature, which is surely inseparable from poetry of this kind. Sometimes lines occur which remind us of the mystics :—

"Wie selig ist, vor Augen ihn zu haben,
Mit ihm zu reden jetzt und allezeit,
An seinem Zuspruch Herz und Sinn zu laben . . ."

The style is faulty; rhymes like gelassen, Strassen; kann, getan; ist, fliesst; preist, heisst, are much too common. In a poem like "Nach dem heiligen Abendmahle" the thoughts are prosaic and crudely expressed, while the rhymes show extreme poverty of invention.

Betty Paoli (Betty Glück, 1814-94) was born in Vienna, and acquired, in the capacity of travelling companion and teacher, a wide culture and a genius for friendship. Her first collection of poems appeared in 1841, and was an immediate success. One of her warmest admirers in modern times is Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, who speaks of the "strength" and "fire" of the lyrics, which a friend of her own once said should only be read on bended knees. It is rather the sweet, genuine sentiment of poems like "Dunkle Einsamkeit," the tender womanliness in pieces like "Wandlung," or the delicate imagery of "Genügen," that will appeal to the modern reader. It is not strong or passionate lyric by any means, but skilful portrayal of the humble experiences of life, love, nature, and friendship that we find in her poetry. There is generally a tinge of pensive melancholy. She emulated the art of Droste-Hülshoff, but in the latter there is a stronger intellectuality, more elasticity of mind, and a greater command over the technique of the lyric. The poems of friendship, "An Ada," "An Helene," etc., show Paoli at her best. They are free from flattery and true to the rules of art. Those of a reflective character, "Die Tugend die ich meine," or "Das befreiende Wort," and the epigrams do not rise

above mediocrity. Paoli, however, knew her limitations, and did not attempt too much. Her work is a pleasing record of her life, and proved a source of great pleasure to her many friends.

The most gifted of this independent group of lyricists was **Moritz Graf von Strachwitz** (1822-47), who died at the early age of twenty-five. He is sometimes associated with the political poets, but he had little in common with them. He had no sympathy with the "Schreier und Schreiber" as he called them. On the other hand, he was interested in history and in distant lands, which brings him near in spirit to the Munich school. His merits as a ballad writer are beyond dispute. No less an authority than Fontane had the greatest admiration for the ballad, "Das Herz von Douglas," which relates how Lord Douglas attempted to carry the heart of King Robert the Bruce to the Holy Land. Strachwitz uses the old English ballad metre with vividness and spirit. There are many suggestive lines which, by their epigrammatic force, at once mark the poet of more than ordinary talent :—

> "Es hat, wer Schottland bändigen will,
> Zum Pilgern wenig Zeit."

Or—

> "Kurz ist die schottische Geduld
> Und lang ein schottisch Schwert."

But Strachwitz displayed equal mastery of other forms. A group of poems like "Rolf Düring," "Herrn Winfrieds Meerfahrt," "Hie Welf," "Die Jagd des Moguls," and "Helges Treue," so varied in subject and in form, shows great promise, and justifies us in regarding Strachwitz as an important link between

Uhland and Fontane, that is, between the old romantic ballad and the more realistic style of the modern ballad. Apart from the ballad, too, there are lyrical pieces among Strachwitz' poems, "Meeresabend," "Gebet auf den Wassern," and "Böses Gewissen," which reveal genuine inspiration and power.

CHAPTER VII

1848-1880

A. Munich as a Literary Centre

The political agitation, in which poets like Herwegh and Freiligrath had played a leading part, culminated in the revolution of 1848. But the movement, as soon as it revealed itself in action as opposed to vague threats and longings, was easily quelled ; many of the agitators sought safety in exile. Public interest was soon directed to greater issues by the Holstein question and the national wars which were looming in the distance. People became tired of a civic discord which seemed to lead to nothing, and for a time at least internal strife was stilled before the prospect of a national struggle. Thus the year 1848 is a turning-point in German history, and the new attitude at once became reflected in literature and art. We notice a distinct reaction, on the one hand, against the tendencies of Young Germany, on the other against the hard and dry political poetry of the fourth decade. Even men who had written such lyrics with the greatest zeal could not but realise that a new age had come, and consequently Geibel, Prutz, and many others turned to new fields. The poetry of the next thirty years followed two main currents. The group of writers whom the Bavarian king attracted to Munich

reverted to classical and romantic traditions. They pursued art for art's sake, and aimed at perfection of form as their highest ideal. Geibel and Heyse were their acknowledged leaders. They enjoyed great popularity, and were in fact regarded as the hope of German letters. Modern criticism has, however, not agreed with contemporary opinion, and has pointed to the serious lack of content in their smooth verses. Their attitude to life and to nature was superficial, and the poetry of the present day does not link on to them, but to a number of men of real genius, Keller, Meyer, Storm, and Groth, who had begun to write about the same time, but did not enjoy such immediate popularity. They must be considered in a separate section. In spirit they are the followers of Droste-Hülshoff, Immermann, Gotthelf, and Auerbach; their poetry is realistic, and is rooted, like Mörike's, in the natural surroundings of the artist. In contrast to them the Munich school lived in a literary metropolis, and lost their individuality and their interest in the landscape and the home. History and literary tradition, rather than actual life, formed the subject of their reflection. It was a fatal fact that, of the poets whom Maximilian II. gathered round him, not a single one was born in the Bavarian capital. The tendency to yield to conventionality was consequently very great, and it was almost irresistible for a second reason, that all those who formed the school, or came into contact with it, were men of talent but not of genius.

Emanuel Geibel (1815-84) was born in Lübeck, and studied Classical Philology in Bonn and Berlin. He spent some time in Greece, in the house of the German ambassador, and received in 1842 a pension from the

King of Prussia. In 1851 he was called to Munich. His earliest poems appeared in 1840. Here he sings chiefly of spring-time, wandering, and love in the traditional manner of the Romanticists. The form of the poems, which is uniformly smooth and melodious, was their most striking feature. Reflection predominates over lyrical feeling. One of the brightest poems is "Der Mai ist gekommen." Many pieces are of a narrative character, like "Sanssouci," "Im Grafenschlosse," and "Der Zigeunerbube im Norden." The political poems, "Türmerlied," "Friedrich Rotbart," etc., in which the poet prophesies the greatness of future Germany, and calls for preparation, are the strongest numbers in the collection. In 1841 appeared the *Zeitstimmen*, and in 1848 the *Juniuslieder*. Here we see his attitude to the political agitation. He strongly supported the claims of Germany in the Holstein question :—

"Wir wollen keine Dänen sein,
Wir wollen Deutsche bleiben."

Very soon, however, Geibel began to plead for conciliation, and he thought that poetry, above all, should be in the service of beauty and goodness. His non-political poetry showed no advance upon his youthful work. There are exceptions, like the stirring ballad, "Des Deutschritters Ave," but otherwise the reader has a feeling of weariness and emptiness when he lays down this large collection of what are, after all, only poetical trifles. Much better lyrical work was revealed in the *Neue Gedichte*, which appeared in 1856. There are still reminiscences of Heine and Eichendorff in the "Lieder aus alter und neuer Zeit," but many pieces show originality and fine lyrical feeling,

"Unterwegs," "Schwerer Abschied," and "Wanderers Nachtlied." We note, however, a tendency to generalise and reflect upon the features of nature—there is an absence of clear effective imagery. The greatest poems in the book are those of an objective character. "Der Mythus vom Dampf" is too like an essay in verse, but "Gudruns Klage," "Volkers Nachtgesang," and "Der Tod des Tiberius," are magnificent pictures which, though not convincing in their historical truth, excel in brilliance of colouring and beauty of form. In the *Gedichte und Gedenkblatter*, published in 1864, the ballads, "Schön Ellen," "Bothwell," and "Die Nacht zu Belforest," again prove that Geibel's best work was in the epic sphere. Of the songs in the book, the tenth and eleventh numbers of the "Jugendlieder," and the graceful poem:—

> "Ach du fliehst vergebens
> Was dich härmt und kränkt, . . ."

are the most noteworthy. During the wars with Austria and France, Geibel was awakened to an interest in current events, and forced out of his narrow groove. His *Heroldsrufe* (1871) contain some of the best poetry of this class. He sings not only of victorious achievements in poems like "Der Ulan," "An Deutschland," and in the stirring lines:—

> "Nun lasst die Glocken
> Von Turm zu Turm,
> Durch's Land frohlocken
> Im Jubelsturm, . . ."

but he has also enshrined for ever in poetical form the national feelings of awe, anxiety, patient courage, and determination which the crisis called forth. Geibel's last collection of poems, *Spätherbstblätter*, re-

vealed no new features. In ballads like "Wittenborg," "Die Goldgräber," and "Hochstädt," he is still more effective than in the lyrics. The latter contain lines of regret at the passing of youth, but these are blended with notes of contentment and peaceful resignation. He has lived to see the victory of his country, and the unity of the empire for which he had longed and worked.

Paul Heyse was born in 1830, in Berlin, studied Classical and Romance Philology there, went to Italy to study art, and found here his æsthetic ideal and the motives of many of his short stories. For a writer of such industry and imagination he has written comparatively few lyrics. The "Jugendlieder" are pleasing and graceful, but the themes themselves and the treatment are not very striking. In poems like "Mondlied" there are touches that remind us of Eichendorff, but on the whole Heyse is free from imitation. His neat workmanship and mild worldly wisdom are seen in the characteristic poem :—

"Dulde, gedulde dich fein !
Ueber ein Stündlein
Ist deine Kammer voll Sonne. . . ."

The "Reiseblätter" are mostly impressions gathered in the south, light, playful, or humorous pieces, with songs of a popular character, such as "Lied von Sorrent" :—

"Wie die Tage so golden verfliegen,
Wie die Nacht sich so selig verträumt,
Wo am Felsen mit Wogen und Wiegen
Die gelandete Welle verschäumt,
Wo sich Blumen und Früchte gesellen,
Dass das Herz dir in Staunen entbrennt :
O du schimmernde Blüte der Wellen,
Sei gegrüsst, du mein schönes Sorrent."

Like most of the members of the Munich circle, Heyse could write melodious songs for the people. In the group entitled "Margarete" there are Anacreontic tendencies, but deeper sentiments are not absent. The death of his wife and of his son Wilfried called forth some of his most impressive poetry. In the "Sprüche" the polish and neatness of style so characteristic of the man are turned to good account. He translated poems from Italian, Spanish, and Provençal, he handled the Ghasel and the terza-rima with skill, and wrote interesting sonnets on the poets of his choice, Eichendorff, Storm, Keller, Mörike, and Geibel. His poetical epistles to friends show the same virtuosity. Among the "Vermischte Gedichte" are pieces of considerable merit, like "Das Tal des Espingo" and "Das Testament des Alten," in the latter of which the old man's attitude to youth is portrayed in beautiful words:—

> "Und er senkte das Kinn auf den Busen tief,
> Und der Diener entschlief;
> Die Nacht wob dichter den Schleier.
> Zum festlichen Mahl hebt keiner die Hand,
> Und die Kränze duften umsonst an der Wand,
> Stumm hängt an der Säule die Leier. . . ."

Heyse's lyric is free from reflection and rhetoric; on the other hand, it is not profound or remarkably original, but is simply the graceful and genuine expression of a pleasing individuality.

Friedrich Bodenstedt (1819-92) made his reputation with one collection of poetry, the *Lieder des Mirza-Schaffy* (1851). Had the book appeared simply as a new collection of lyrics, and not under the specious form of Oriental poetry, it is questionable

if it would have attracted so much attention. The author had lived in the East, and he has succeeded marvellously—for those who do not know the Orient—in throwing an atmosphere of imaginative charm over his German commonplaces. Certain well-veiled allusions to contemporary questions only made the poems more interesting. As lyrical poetry it leaves the reader absolutely cold, though it is by no means monotonous or tiresome. The form is good, though not always equal. Rhymes like "Sinn" and the preposition "in" occur, and there is one strange simile, where the red-stockinged legs of a dancer are compared to pillars of fire. The best of the pieces are the poems, "Gelb rollt mir zu Füssen der brausende Kur" and "Wenn der Frühling auf die Berge steigt," and in both cases the refrain is used with effect. Bodenstedt translated from Russian and English, wrote books of travel and dramas, but to his contemporaries he remained nothing more than the author of "Mirza-Schaffy."

Martin Greif (Friedrich Hermann Frey, 1839-1910) was the only Bavarian in the Munich group, for he was born in Speyer. After serving for ten years in the army he devoted himself to literature. His first collection of poems appeared in 1868. He was never very popular, and the verdict of critics upon his work varies much, owing probably to the fact that his poetry is extremely unequal. He had no critical faculty himself, and amid heaps of poor work one has to search for the few pieces which reveal genuine artistry. For example, among the hundred and ten odd "Lieder," with which his collected poems open, ten might be found worthy of a select anthology—poems like "Im Lenze," "Schattenleben," "Am

Brünnlein," "Glück," "Der Wanderer und der Bach." Many of the other pieces are spoiled by weak rhymes, limping rhythm, and triviality of content. In the large group of "Naturbilder" there are one or two faultless poems, as for instance :—

"Nun störet die Ähren im Felde
Ein leiser Hauch ;
Wenn eine sich beugt, so bebet
Die andere auch.
Es ist, als ahnten sie alle
Der Sichel Schnitt
Die Blumen und fremden Halme
Erzittern mit."

The lyrical mood of the poet is symbolised by the clear, concise, and beautiful picture from nature. The appeal is direct and effective. But Greif has few poems where his art is so successful as here. Frequently he simply describes, that is, copies nature in the same superficial manner as a photographer would do it. The images lack soul, or they are obscure or unimportant. He is an observer and recorder, but has not the strong original personality of a great poet. In the "Stimmen und Gestalten" there are again a few good pieces, notably "Besuch," one of the few poems in which the least trace of passion is to be found, and in addition, pleasing lyrics such as "Das treue Paar," "Der Unzufriedene," "Die Verlassene," and "Das Ringlein." The "Balladen und Mären" lack conciseness and dramatic interest, but a few of them, like "Der stumme Kläger," "Das Mahl ohne Brot," "Rhätischer Grenzlauf," and "Das klagende Lied," should be excepted from the condemnation which some critics have passed upon the whole group. Greif's models were Goethe, the Folksong, Mörike,

and Uhland. He has some of their simplicity and delicacy, but he has not the imaginative strength and vivid touch of a really great poet.

Friedrich Graf von Schack (1815-94) was a diplomat who travelled widely, studied art, and having much time on his hands, wrote a great deal of poetry. His greatest service to posterity was the collection of the pictures for the Schack Gallery in Munich. His most ambitious work was the epic, "Die Nächte des Orients," a vision of the history and culture of the East during many ages. He published several collections of minor poetry, *Gedichte* (1867), *Weihgesänge* (1875), and *Lotosblätter* (1883). In all he reveals the dangers of virtuosity. With his fine artistic temperament he felt intimately the charm of nature in her many forms, and of the novel scenes and lands which he visited, and with the fluency which was the curse of the Munich school, he wrote it all down as in a poetical diary, lightly and superficially. The thought and imagery are not new, only the setting is different, and the spark of divine fire is almost invariably lacking. The themes of his love and nature poetry, "Das erste Liebeswort," "Mainacht," "Heimkehr," "Morgenlied," "Herbstgefühl," etc., have been treated a hundred times by others, and Schack has nothing new to say, no neat fancy or striking image to brighten the old tale. The ballads, with the exception of "Das Bahrrecht" and "Die Königstochter," are diffuse and reflective, while the pictures of distant lands which bulk so largely in his work, "Auf dem Nil," "Aus Sicilien," "Aus der Sierra Nevada," "Frühling in Griechenland," are dilettantic exercises in verse, comparable to the photographs and souvenirs which the interested tourist brings home from his wanderings.

Schack possessed artistic sense and poetical skill, but little originality or genius.

Hermann Lingg (1820-1905) studied medicine and became an army doctor, but, on his health giving way, he settled in Munich, where Geibel obtained a pension for him, and introduced him to the public. He has the same interest as Schack in history, mythology, and the life of distant lands. He shows remarkable power of imagination in transporting himself into historical scenes and situations, not only in the epic, "Völkerwanderung," but in numerous historical poems like "Attilas Schwert," "Trasimen," "Pausanias und Kleonice." Or he follows with realistic pen the progress of the black death in "Erzittere, Welt, ich bin die Pest." He does not philosophise, but makes the past live, so keen is his insight into the human motives and so sure his descriptive touch. But Lingg is more than a historical poet. Many of his lyrics are in close touch with nature, and with the problems of modern society as they appealed to him in his own experience. He has the great gift of ennobling even the commonplace. His nature poems have something of the rare charm and noble melancholy of Lenau:—

> "Jeder Lufthauch ist versiegt,
> Auf dem tiefen, stillen Weiher,
> Nur die Wasserrose wiegt
> In der Dämm'rung ihre Schleier.
> Wolken hüllen Stern an Stern,
> Alles ruhet schlummertrunken,
> Nur ein Blitzstrahl leuchtet fern,
> Sterbend ins Gebirg versunken."

The picture is objective, but permeated with subjective feeling which reveals itself in the aptness of

every word, the melody of the lines, and the composition of the whole. Geibel did not exaggerate when, in the introduction to Lingg's *Gedichte* (1853), he said, "This is the necessary utterance of an original poetical nature." The motive of love and longing is beautifully treated in a poem like "Lied," where the girl wakens from her dream to the conviction that she must die and give place to another :—

"Ja, ich werde sterben müssen,
Eine andere wirst du küssen,
Wenn ich bleich und kalt,
Eh' die Maienlüfte wehen,
Eh' die Drossel singt im Wald ;
Willst du mich noch einmal sehen,
Komm', o komme bald !"

Though Lingg is none too well-known, poems like this will live, for they have the human note and the deep sympathy with common life which were somewhat rare in the Munich school.

The Swiss poet, **Heinrich Leuthold** (1827-79), was also introduced to the public by Geibel in his *Münchener Dichterbuch* for 1862. He had previously experienced a youth of privation, trying successively law and teaching, and had at that time settled in Munich to earn a living by journalistic work. He was the most ardent, but at the same time the most ill-balanced, temperament in the Munich circle. His passions, misfortunes, and tendency to melancholy ended in insanity in 1877. His countryman, Gottfried Keller, published his poems in the following year. They excel in beauty of form. The themes are varied, some being rich in imaginative elements, like "Roman" and "Die zerfallene Vigne," others realistic or humorously reflective, as "An einen jungen Freund "—

"Nimm dieses Leben nicht zu ernst
Recht spasshaft ist's im Allgemeinen. . . ."

There are brilliant pictures of distant scenes in the manner of Schack and Lingg, songs of wandering and joviality; in short, as Keller said, the book contains the whole story of a human destiny. Sometimes the situations may be conventional, but there is a touch of fancy or neatness of phrase which saves them from being commonplace. "Blätterfall" is an example:—

"Leise, windverwehte Lieder,
Mögt ihr fallen in den Sand!
Blätter seid ihr eines Baumes,
Welcher nie in Blüte stand.
Welke, windverwehte Blätter,
Boten naher Winterruh,
Fallet sacht! . . . ihr deckt die Gräber
Mancher toten Hoffnung zu."

Julius Grosse (1828-1902) was another of the journalists who stood in close relation to Geibel and Heyse. He has a long list of works to his name, tales in prose and verse, dramas, epics, lyrics, and ballads. But there is nothing in them which rises above the mediocrity of the family magazine. Of the other writers who stood in more or less close relation to the Munich coterie, the most interesting are **Wilhelm Hertz** (1835-1902), **Otto Roquette** (1824-96), **Julius Wolff** (1834-1910), **Josef Viktor von Scheffel** (1826-86), and **Rudolf Baumbach** (1840-1905). Hertz excelled as a translator, teacher, and imitator of the literature of the past; Wolff and Baumbach were interested especially in the Middle Ages. The *Spielmannslieder* of the latter contain the well-known song, "Keinen Tropfen im Becher mehr." Roquette and Scheffel wrote a few popular songs, the former

"Die Tage der Rosen," the latter "Alt Heidelberg, du feine" and "Das ist im Leben hässlich eingerichtet," but in the lyric pure and simple their importance is not great, certainly not so great as in the sphere of the epic in prose and verse.

B. The Growth of Realism—Storm, Keller, Meyer, Groth, and Fontane

In the Munich poets we missed to a large extent the intimate contact with nature, and with life. "Art for art's sake" is all very well as a formula. It may be maintained that it was the correct attitude at the beginning of this period. The political lyric of the fourth decade had narrowed the range of poetry, had, one might say, reduced the lyric to a mere instrument of persuasion. Geibel and his friends were perfectly right when they revolted against this tendency, and proclaimed the mission of the poet to be the search after beauty. But in their glorification of the scenery of distant lands, in their aloofness from the life around them, and in their cultivation of beautiful form at the expense of content, they had, in a different way, but quite as much as their predecessors, reduced the lyric to a mere shadow of its old self. With the great lyricists of the early half of the century, Heine, Lenau, Mörike, Droste, they cannot for a moment be compared, and the legitimate successors of these poets are to be found among men whose popularity at first was overshadowed by the Munich school, but who to-day are recognised by all to be head and shoulders above them. In Storm, Keller, Meyer, and Groth the German lyric is rooted more and more in the personality, the home, and the

natural surroundings of the artist. It is a strong, luxuriant, native growth, not an exotic flower transplanted to German soil. Storm's lyric is intimately connected with the land of his birth, its colouring is that of a definite locality, its characteristic is the poet's warm attachment to the Schleswig associations. Keller and Meyer are "Heimatkünstler" to as great an extent, especially in their poetry of nature. Klaus Groth has gone a step further, and given us not only the colouring and atmosphere of the Ditmarsch country, but its dialect as well. Any attempt to group men like these together would be farcical, because their very greatest characteristic is their individuality and originality. But in all of them we see a clearer realism, a growing interest in nature and life as these things presented themselves to their eyes and experience. Only one of their predecessors, Droste-Hülshoff, regarded nature with the same steady gaze, and painted it with the same mixture of enthusiasm and epic objectivity, free from all romantic motives. Thus the new lyric excels, like that of Droste, in sincerity and reality, in freedom from rhetoric and affectation. And as the men who now appeared possessed in some cases quite exceptional mental gifts, their poetry also merits our attention for its depth, its humour, and insight into human life and history.

Theodor Storm (1817-88) was born at Husum in Schleswig. School instruction failed to awaken his interest, but he was deeply impressed as a boy by the surroundings of his home, the heath, the marsh, and the lonely strand. At the University of Kiel he became closely attached to the brothers Mommsen, with whom he issued the *Liederbuch dreier Freunde*,

The forty poems contributed by Storm show us that Goethe, Eichendorff, and Heine were his earliest models. In 1847 he returned to his native town, married, and settled down to the practice of law. But the period of early married happiness, when "die Kinder klein und klein die Sorgen Waren," did not last long. On the field of Idstedt and round the fortifications of Friedrichstadt, Schleswig and Holstein had lost their independence, and Storm was a bitter opponent of Denmark.

"Sie halten Siegesfest, sie ziehen die Stadt entlang,
Sie meinen Schleswig-Holstein zu begraben.
Brich nicht, mein Herz, noch sollst du Freude haben,
Wir haben Männer noch, wir haben Knaben,
Und auch wir selber leben, Gott sei Dank."

It was only on condition that Storm would submit to Danish authority that he could continue to practice in Husum, and for a man of his sentiments this was impossible. In 1853 he received a legal appointment in Potsdam, but the "official beauties" of Potsdam only made him long more and more for the calm, lonely charm of Husum. Heiligenstadt, to which he was transferred, was more to his taste, but the home-sickness, so characteristic of the man, was too deeply rooted to be ever completely overcome. At length in 1864 Schleswig-Holstein was wrested from Denmark, and Storm gladly embraced the opportunity of returning to his native place. In the following year he lost his wife. The cares of a large family and the affection which he and Dorothea Jensen already cherished for each other induced Storm to marry again, and "Frau Do," as she was called by the poet and his friends, brought sunshine and happiness again into his home. Thus the course of Storm's

life seems smooth and unruffled, but as recent publications show,[1] there were strong undercurrents and mental conflicts which might easily have meant shipwreck but for Storm's innate nobility of mind, unselfishness, and self-control. His reverence for old associations and traditions, his breezy humour and kindliness, admirably balanced his subjectivity, his passion and freedom of thought. There is no more lovable personality among German poets, and this, combined with his artistic gifts, is what has enabled him to enrich, as few have done, the lyric poetry of the nineteenth century.

Alfred Biese tells us that according to the consensus of opinion in Germany, Storm's greatest work is in the short story. He certainly merited the popularity which he acquired with *Immensee*, *Aquis Submersus*, and *Der Schimmelreiter*, but he regarded himself as essentially a lyric poet. "All the passion and rude strength," he said, "all the character and humour I may possess, have left their mark principally on my poems." Nearly all the stories spring from a lyrical impulse, and some of the earlier ones are in a dreamy, reminiscent tone not free from sentimentality. Most English students find a prolonged spell of Storm's "Novellen" singularly depressing, while the poems have the opposite effect. In consequence, in this country at least, we are inclined to the opinion that the best that was in Storm, his sense of beauty, his warm-hearted love, his humour and strong common sense have been more happily expressed in his verse

[1] W. Herrmann, *T. Storms Lyrik*, Leipzig, 1911. P. Schütze, *Theodor Storm*, Berlin, 3rd edition by Lange, 1912. Gertrud Storm, *Theodor Storm*, Berlin, 1913.

than in his prose. As Robertson has aptly expressed it, the Novellen revert to romantic traditions and already "begin to show signs of age." Of his lyrics this could hardly be said. Storm has celebrated in the first place the quaint charm of Schleswig-Holstein, the yellow strand, the grey sea, the softly waving grass of the sand dunes, the beat of the waves on the shore, the cry of the lonely seagull. This landscape is for Storm more than the very breath of his nostrils, it is the motherground of all his emotions; it fills his soul and speaks to him with mysterious voices. He dwells upon its chilly bareness, its dull grey in grey, the heavy mist that lies upon the housetops, the monotonous sigh of the wind and the roar of the sea, yet to him it is all in all:—

"Es rauscht kein Wald, es schlägt im Mai
Kein Vogel ohn' Unterlass;
Die Wandergans mit hartem Schrei
Nur fliegt in Herbstesnacht vorbei,
Am Strande weht das Gras.
Doch hängt mein ganzes Herz an dir,
Du graue Stadt am Meer;
Der Jugend Zauber für und für,
Ruht lächelnd doch auf dir, auf dir,
Du graue Stadt am Meer."

Besides this nature poetry there are more passionate tones, of young love, of happy married life, of the cruelty of destiny when the grave closed over his wife. The absolute sincerity and sweetness of sentiment fascinate us; we are spellbound by the harmony of form and content in poems like "Hyazinthen," "Trost," "Schliesse mir die Augen beide," or the elegy, "Das aber kann ich nicht vertragen." The

language is as simple as that of the Folksong, there is no reflection or rhetoric, the words reproduce the thoughts which are naïve, tender, and pregnant with feeling. Few can transport themselves so completely into the world of others and write lyrics which represent not the poet's emotion but the sensations of the character portrayed. Examples are the well-known poem, "Meine Mutter hat's gewollt," and the song of the Harfenmädchen :—

"Heute, nur heute
Bin ich so schön ;
Morgen, ach morgen
Muss alles vergehen !
Nur diese Stunde
Bist du noch mein ;
Sterben, ach sterben
Soll ich allein !"

In the anthology which Storm issued in 1875, *Hausbuch aus deutschen Dichtern seit Claudius*, he gives an interesting opinion of what the lyric should be. "Just as I wish," he says, "in the case of music to hear and feel, in plastic art to see and feel, in poetry I desire, if possible, to experience all three simultaneously. A work of art, like life, should affect me directly and not through the mediation of thought. The most perfect poem seems to me to be the one in which the effect is to begin with one of sense, from which the mental effect naturally follows, as the fruit develops out of the blossom. The weightiest thought, though it be expressed in the most elegant verses, has no justification in poetry, and will lie like an unused treasure by the wayside, if it has not first passed through the soul and imagination of the poet and there received warmth and colour

and, if possible, corporeal form. In its effect the lyrical poem should be at once a revelation and a deliverance!" These words express aptly the nature of Storm's lyric. In the best sense of the word it is self-revelation in song. It is a noble, manly, thoughtful personality that reveals itself in poems like "An meine Söhne" and "Oktoberlied." He is so thoroughly optimistic, the world of beauty is to him "so gänzlich unverwüstlich." He has no religious poems, there is nothing in his work bearing on the transcendental, but his view of life is far from materialistic. He loves the mysterious; to him it is a felt element in the life of things around him, in the tokens of a half-banished past, in his own mental experiences. It enters into poems like "Waldweg," "Sturmnacht," "Abseits," and "Sommermittag." His playful humour is turned to good account in "Knecht Ruprecht," "Engel-Ehe," "In Bulemanns Haus," and "Von Katzen." An altogether different note, warning, inspiring, strongly patriotic, is heard in the poems which refer to the struggle between Prussia and Denmark for Schleswig-Holstein. Thus, in spite of the small compass of Storm's poetry, little more than one hundred pages, there is no lack of variety. The early poems of the *Liederbuch* were not reprinted in the final edition. He was a strict critic of his own work, and has given us nothing but what is of the highest merit.

Klaus Groth (1819-99) is a thorough representative of the "Heimatkunst." He was the creator and the most distinguished writer of Plattdeutsch poetry. His life was uneventful. The son of a Ditmarsch miller, he gathered in his youth the impressions which later constituted his poetry. The landscape, the daily

life, the traditions and history of his North-German home—that is the basis of his work. By diligence and energy he rose from the position of clerk to that of schoolmaster, and after *Quickborn* (1852) had made him famous, he received an appointment in the University of Kiel, where he remained till his death. A second *Quickborn* was issued in 1871. He also published a collection of High-German poems, *Hundert Blätter* (1854), but his chief claim to our attention rests upon his Low-German work. Here he endeavoured to portray his own people, their thoughts, feelings, and experiences, and the poet himself is one of the circle. It is realistic art, and the dialect is a necessary part of it. It possesses a *naïveté*, a truth in regard to the representation of humble life, which a translation into High-German cannot preserve. Like Burns, whom he warmly admired, Groth built upon the old songs of the people, and he has succeeded in making some of his poems, "De Duw," "Voer Doer," into genuine Folk-songs. In another type, which is intimately associated with the Folksong, namely, his songs for children, he has been equally successful. The nature poems, "Dat Moor," "Abendfreden," "Das Dörp in Snee," "As ik weggung," are conspicuous for their fullness of human interest. They are not mere pictures into which nature alone enters; with the land, the heath, the moor, and the meadow, the men and other living creatures that form a part of them and the poet's personal experiences are harmoniously blended. "Min Jehann" and "Min Port" are two of the most artistic of the lyrics. In the former, which is addressed to his brother, he writes of the past, and expresses the loneliness and sadness of old age. "Min Port" is

the garden-gate through which wife and children, friends and relatives, have gone out and in. As he hears it shut, memories grave and gay return to him with overpowering force, but chiefly the sadness of solitude and the prospect of death are here expressed :—

> "So ward se still und stiller, min Port,
> All, wat mi leef, geit rut un blift fort.
> Bekannte to vel, jümmer weniger Frünn,
> Un endlich bliv ik alleen hier binn. . . ."

In his narrative and ballad poetry Groth draws upon the history and folklore of Holstein. The best known pieces are "Hans Iwer," "Graf Rudolf von de Böckelnborg," "He wak," and "Ol Büsum." They are remarkable for their grim reality, almost gruesomeness. They excel in brevity and boldness of outline, while the vividness of detail is astonishing; for example, in "Hans Iwer," where the few suggestions of landscape accentuate the delineation of the mental trepidation of the milkmaid who meets the werwolf and breaks the spell. The same graphic power is particularly effective in the description of Ol Büsum, an island swallowed by the sea, where the church-spire rises from the sand like the warning finger of a human hand.

Gottfried Keller[1] (1819-90), the greatest of Swiss writers, was born in Zurich. He lost his father at an early age, but his mother contrived by hard work and economy to give him a good education. When twenty years of age he went to Munich to learn

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[1] F. Baldensperger, *G. Keller, sa vie et ses œuvres*, Paris, 1899. A. Köster, *Gottfried Keller*, 2nd ed., 1906.

painting, but in two years he returned, convinced that he had chosen the wrong profession. Then came the years of idleness, followed by self-doubt, self-analysis, and unhappiness, when it was only in the lyric that he found relief and a means of expressing his changing moods. The first of these poems were published by his friend Follen in 1846. In 1848 he received a scholarship which enabled him to go to Germany for purposes of study. He worked in Heidelberg and Berlin, and it was an altogether different man who, in 1855, returned to his native Zurich. He had written in the meantime *Der grüne Heinrich*, a charming subjective novel; from lyric poetry he had turned to epic delineation, and issued in 1855 the first collection of short stories upon which his great reputation is founded. The lyrics, therefore, represent what is little more than an episode in his development, for the great bulk of them were written between 1842 and 1855, and before the end of this period Keller's natural tendency to epic narrative had asserted itself. Many of Keller's supreme qualities are not in evidence in this period, above all, his humour and pathos, for these qualities grew from his knowledge of life, and Keller, as a shrewd observer and wise thinker, was only in the process of development. Nor must we expect to find, in place of mature wisdom, the passion and exuberance of youth, for love seems but lightly to have touched his early manhood, and he was destined to pass through life without the inspiration to be derived from a woman's tenderness. He had difficulties, too, with the lyrical form. He copied Heine, Freiligrath, and Herwegh, but his lines remained hard and unmelodious. We find that he was in the habit of sketching out a poem

in prose and then putting it into verse. He lacked the spontaneous fluency of the song-writer and the virtuosity of those who excel in difficult forms like the sonnet and the ghazal. He is best where the poem gives in simple language a definite and clearly outlined picture. However, no matter what may be the shortcomings of Keller in regard to form, the content is so virile and original that his work demands our closest attention.

The *Buch der Natur* contains his most effective lyrics. It is full of joy in nature, but of a peculiarly pensive kind. He loves to contemplate the night, the glow of the stars, the rainy day; it is the sombre effects that appeal to him, the mist creeping over the mountain paths, or veiling the waterfalls, the trees heavy and damp with rain. Lenau, too, had loved those melancholy effects, and found in them the artistic symbol of his pessimistic moods. But Keller observes them from an altogether different standpoint: from his melancholy he draws strength to meet the ills of fortune. Pensive reverie is, in a temperament like Keller's, the antecedent of action, not of passive despair :—

> "Ich aber, mein bewusstes Ich,
> Beschau das Spiel in stiller Ruh,
> Und meine Seele rüstet sich,
> Zum Kampfe mit dem Schicksal zu."

Even with the prospect of death before his mind he can still exclaim—

> "Trinkt, o Augen, was die Wimper hält
> Von dem goldnen Ueberfluss der Welt."

The "Waldlieder" contain some fine poetry,

especially the first piece, which describes the moaning and creaking of the forest in a storm—

"Und nun sang und pfiff es graulich in den Kronen, in den Lüften,
Und dazwischen knarrt und dröhnt es unten in den Wurzelgrüften.
Manchmal schwang die höchste Eiche gellend ihren Schaft alleine,
Donnernder erscholl nur immer drauf der Chor vom ganzen Haine!"

Occasionally we encounter harsh lines, such as "Der Märtyrer blass Gebein," or strange comparisons like "Und der Bach schreit wie ein Kind." The sonnet, for example, where he compares the snow-covered earth to a corpse, and the sun to the watcher by the dead, surprises rather than convinces. The most beautiful poem in the cycle is that strange, symbolic vision of imprisoned beauty, the picture of the mermaid beneath the ice contained in "Winternacht"—

"Mit ersticktem Jammer tastet sie
An der harten Decke her und hin,
Ich vergess das dunkle Antlitz nie,
Immer, immer liegt es mir im Sinn!"

The group, "Erstes Lieben," suffers from vagueness and the absence of the personal note. In "Trauerweide" there are some striking lines, but the conclusion is so obscure that the reader has to regard it as he would a riddle. The poems entitled "Alte Weisen" are in traditional style, and are Keller's nearest approach to popular song-writing. "Ich fürchte nicht Gespenster" is both original and artistic. Keller's personal temperament, his shyness and exclusiveness, his fear of being disturbed by unwelcome visitors,

are expressed in the interesting poem, "An das Herz":—

> "Willst du nicht dich schliessen,
> Herz, du offenes Haus,
> Worin Freund und Feinde
> Gehen ein und aus. . . ."

He complains of the arrogance, selfishness, and indifference of men, and prefers to open his heart to nature in all her moods.

In poems of a narrative character Keller is more at home than in the pure lyric of feeling. The whole tendency of his mind was towards epic portraiture, to revel in detail and realise the picture in its minutest aspects. "Lebendig begraben" is such an exercise of the epic imagination, a description of the sensations of being buried alive. "Feueridylle" is a vivid picture of a burning farmhouse, with wonderfully good touches, humorous or pathetic—the destruction of the apple tree, for example, or the picture of the farmer who rescues the Bible from the flames, thinking it to be his cashbook. There is delightfully coy humour in narratives such as "Stilles Abenteuer" or "Wochenpredigt." But the humorous is akin to tragedy and sympathetic pity in "Waldfrevel" and "Das Köhlerweib ist trunken." The good influence of a mother's training is the theme of "Jung gewohnt, alt getan," and the story is well developed without being too didactic. There are many other notes to Keller's lyre. He can be denunciative and satirical, as in "Jesuitenzug"; he can be sharp and ironical, as when he hits off American divorce customs in "Die Ehescheidung." Here and there the influence of contemporaries is momentarily seen, that of Freiligrath in "Schlafwandel," which gives us a

picture of the Foreign Legion in the desert, or of Heine in the series of romances entitled *Der Apotheker von Chamounix*. Keller's tendency to pass from subjective to objective delineation is seen in the fine poem, "Sommernacht," which is characteristic of his art :—

> "Es wallt das Korn weit in die Runde
> Und wie ein Meer dehnt es sich aus ;
> Doch liegt auf seinem stillen Grunde
> Nicht Seegewürm noch andrer Graus :
> Da träumen Blumen nur von Kränzen
> Und trinken der Gestirne Schein.
> O goldenes Meer, dein friedlich Glänzen
> Saugt meine Seele gierig ein."

So far the poetical picture is steeped in subjective feeling, but the next three stanzas are absolutely objective. He pauses in his reflection, and proceeds to tell the story of a beautiful old custom, how in the villages of his youth the young men assembled secretly at midnight to harvest the corn of the widow and the orphan. Such a transition is also characteristic of his development as a poet, and it is exactly in the description of such scenes from old Swiss life that he is unsurpassed in the short stories of later years. Another curious feature of his lyric is the superiority of the long lines over the shorter ones. In the poem, "Ein Tagewerk," he succeeds in the first part in attaining his artistic end : line and stanza give him scope for the expression of his temperament in a half-meditative, half-didactic representation of events ; in the second part, on the other hand, he gives the impression of being cramped, like a big-limbed rustic in a society dress. In fact, he needed a more expansive instrument than the lyric to express

what was best in him, and he found it in the prose Novelle.

Conrad Ferdinand Meyer (1825-98) was, like Keller, a native of Zurich, but, unlike Keller, he belonged to a wealthy family, and remained all his life an aristocrat, who was more interested in history than in the social life around him. He was forty years of age before he found his vocation, and it was principally between 1870 and 1890 that he wrote his novels and stories. When he did awaken to consciousness of his literary gifts, he worked assiduously to make good the wasted years of youth, and polished his work laboriously till it satisfied his fastidious taste. Thus Meyer's poetry is that of a man whose youth is behind him, who has triumphed over passion and formlessness; he appears to be equally master of his feelings and of their expression, calm, critical, and wise. Like Keller, he was essentially an epic genius: the purely lyrical poems do not fill many pages, and a great number of them are not lyrical in the usual sense of the word. The first section of the poems is entitled "Vorsaal." Here we find pieces which reveal very great variety, but they are rarely of a personal character; even such a subject as "Die toten Freunde" cannot induce the poet to throw off his reserve and reveal to us his intimate feelings. On the other hand, he is more at home in dealing with such a theme as "Der Schöne Tag," which tells us of a bathing accident. The language is faultless, and the whole picture remarkably concise and vivid. The supernatural is sometimes introduced, the elves dancing, the fairy retarding the criminal's boat, but these spirits are mere symbols. There is none of that intense interest in the fairy world, none of that

realistic presentation of the unreal, which fascinates us in Goethe and Bürger. "Hochzeitlied," with the haunting refrain, "Geh und lieb' und leide," is the most lyrical of these pieces. Meyer seems to hold himself in check, he prefers to express his feelings indirectly through some external event, or the picture of a scene which may be in harmony with his mood, but he is not always successful in making the symbolism clear. His lyrical sketches reveal perfect technique, but they are sometimes so objective that we can feel no personal enthusiasm over them; the artist himself has no glow or passion, he stands aside like a disinterested spectator. In the second section, entitled "Stunde," nature predominates. Here Meyer shows that he has a good eye for colour and a fine descriptive touch. It is a pity that he is so sparing of the personal note. One of the most beautiful poems is "Schwüle":—

> "Trüb verglomm der schwüle Sommertag
> Dumpf und traurig tönt mein Ruderschlag—
> Sterne, Sterne—Abend ist es ja—
> Sterne, warum seid ihr noch nicht da? . . ."

The whole situation seems to foreshadow death. The poet tells how he seems in the gathering gloom to hear a voice which calls to him from the deep. At last a star shines out, breaking through the darkness and the spell which held him. He prays that this light may never fail him. "Lenzfahrt" is another interesting poem, for it tells us of the poet's constant regret for the wasted years of youth:—

> "Verscherzte Jugend ist ein Schmerz
> Und einer ew' gen Sehnsucht Hort,
> Nach seinem Lenze sucht das Herz
> In einem fort, in einem fort."

The third section, "In den Bergen," is devoted to impressions of Swiss landscape. Many of the poems begin with a definite event, "Als ich jüngst vom Pfad verirrt war," or "Ich bin den Rhein hinauf gezogen." But there, in most cases, the subjective element ceases. Meyer describes rather what he actually sees than the impression which the sight makes upon him. If the reader has imaginative gifts to conjure up the scene, good and well; if not, it will inspire him with no emotion. Meyer loved his native land, but it was not in his nature to be effusive:—

"Nie prahlt' ich mit der Heimat noch,
Und liebte sie von Herzen doch."

"Gemälde," "Die Zwingburg," and "Die Rehe," are pictures of life in the hills, but they are not so interesting as the few poems like "Die Vision," "Reisebecher," and "Die Schlittschuhe," where the object viewed calls up memories of the past, and, as it were, forces the poet to give utterance to his own feelings. The two weakest sections in the lyrics are "Reise" and "Liebe." Travel-pictures require to be brightened by personal reflection, even though they are not presented in lyrical form. Meyer loves to stand before a statue or a picture and describe it in verse, as in "Die Narde" and "Ja." When there is an indication of the poetical mood, as in "Die gegeisselte Psyche," or when the picture is symbolical of life in general, as in "Der römische Brunnen," we are able to follow him in his shy suggestiveness. But there are other pictures which leave us cold, because there is nothing for the imagination to grasp, and even the understanding is frequently baffled by the mere description of something which the eye has not seen. In the group of love poems he sings of a love lost in boyhood,

of affection for mother and sister, but beyond this there is no flash of passion, no ray of sunshine or gay humour. We must pass to the last four sections of the book, to the ballads and epic narratives, to find Meyer's lasting work. He is undoubtedly one of the three or four great ballad-writers of Germany. His materials are derived principally from that period which was so rich in men of power and originality, the Italian Renaissance. In style, too, he departs from the traditional manner of the Old English ballad, which had been so much imitated in Germany. His poems are the result of consummate art, but the art is so faultless that we do not feel its artificiality. "Die Füsse im Feuer" is a beautiful piece of work, and as unlike the traditional ballad as possible. It deals with the experiences of a French knight in a Huguenot castle, where on a previous occasion he had tortured the chatelaine because she would not reveal her husband's hiding-place. Overtaken by a storm he has sought refuge here, and been kindly welcomed. Gradually it begins to dawn upon his mind that he has seen the coat of arms, the pictures, and the fire-place before :—

"Verdammt! Dasselbe Wappen! Dieser selbe Saal!
Drei Jahre sind's . . . Auf einer Hugenottenjagd. . . .
Ein fein halsstarrig Weib. . . . 'Wo steckt der Junker?
Sprich!'
Sie schweigt. 'Bekenn!' Sie schweigt. 'Gib ihn heraus!'
Sie schweigt.
Ich werde wild. Der Stolz! Ich zerre das Geschöpf. . . .
Die nackten Füsse pack ich ihr und strecke sie
Tief mitten in die Glut . . . 'Gib ihn heraus!' Sie schweigt.
Sie windet sich . . . Sahst du das Wappen nicht am Tor?
Wer hiess dich hier zu Gaste gehen, dummer Narr?
Hat er nur einen Tropfen Bluts, erwürgt er dich.——
Eintritt der Edelmann. 'Du träumst! Zu Tische, Gast., . . ."

The children recognise him at once, and, struck with fear, refuse to say grace. The stranger retires to his room pursued by anxiety, but the morning dawns bright and clear. It has brought grey hairs to the host, but he has conquered his lower nature and leaves vengeance to the Lord. It is in dealing with a subject like this, where the touches of outward nature may be blended with the delineation of mental conflicts, and where there is occasion for concise and graphic description, that Meyer excels. Another sonorous ballad is "Der gleitende Purpur," where the language and the manner of presentation are masterly. "Die verstummte Laute," "König Etzels Schwert," "Mourir ou parvenir," "Bettlerballade," and "Mit zwei Worten" are also noteworthy ballads. Other poems celebrate historical events and persons, Pope Julius, Cæsar Borgia, or Michael Angelo. "Das Heiligtum" is an effective description of how Cæsar's strength of will overcame the superstition of his Gallic soldiers. In these historical pictures Meyer shows great mastery of form. He was not a deep thinker. He refused to be carried away by lyrical emotion; he was too shy and careful of his utterance to let feeling have free vent. But when it is a question of giving life and actuality to a scene from the past or sketching in vivid outline the character of some man of genius, Meyer possesses unrivalled gifts of imagination and poetical presentation.

Theodor Fontane (1819-98) was born at Neuruppin, in Brandenburg. He was the son of French immigrants. He earned distinction in three distinct spheres—the ballad; the description of lands, customs, and campaigns; and finally in the realistic novel of Berlin life. In the ballad he was inspired by

Strachwitz, by Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, and Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. He travelled through England and Scotland, and his descriptive essays show how fully he had studied the spirit, life, and traditions of the country. He translated freely into German such well-known ballads as "Chevy Chase," "Barbara Allen," "Lord Atholl," "Sir Patrick Spens," and poems like "The Flowers of the Forest" and "The Burial of Sir John Moore." His own ballads are drawn principally from three sources. Of the Norse group, "Gorm Grymme" and "Swend Gabelbart" are the best. In the English section we meet such well-known poems as "Hastingsfeld," the impressive and warmly patriotic "Archibald Douglas," and pieces which deal with modern events, "Das Trauerspiel in Afghanistan" and "Die Brück am Tay." The latter deals with the Tay Bridge disaster. It opens and closes with scenes reminiscent of the meeting of the witches in "Macbeth," and gives a vivid and touching delineation of the catastrophe. Nature in conflict with man, that is how Fontane has pictured the event, which he illuminates and renders doubly interesting by the purely human touches, the expectation of the parents, and the proud confidence of their son who is driving the engine. The group of German ballads is noteworthy for the effective portraiture of men like Schwerin, Der alte Dessauer, and Der alte Ziethen. "Wo Bismarck liegen soll" is a tribute of admiration to the great statesman. Fontane followed the traditional ballad style—simple, effective language, swinging rhythm, and dramatic treatment of the theme. He reveals masterly power in the way in which he can

give plastic shape to the dim and the mysterious, without at the same time losing the charm of vague unreality. His lyrical and epigrammatic poetry falls far behind his ballad work. Some of his sketches of society failings are clever. His sarcasm is sharp and keen as a rapier, but it is not poetry of a high class.

Felix Dahn (1834-1911), Professor of Law successively at Würzburg, Königsberg, and Breslau, carried on the tradition of the historical ballad, drawing his subjects especially from Teutonic history. From his numerous pieces at least a dozen could be selected which are admirable in spirit and in form. "Die Mette von Marienburg," "Die Gotenlieder," "König Harald Harfagr," "Hagars Rache," "Der Königsbron in Dunsadal," "Vom kühnen Minstrel," and "Ralf Douglas und Lord Percy," would be among the number. But other pieces fall far behind these: "Odhins Weisheit," for example, only shows the inadequacy of alliterative verse as a modern form, and lines like "Zu heiss die Hitze, zu dunstig der Dunst," in "Der letzte der Kimbern," are unnatural and harsh. The lyrical poems lack distinction. The verse is frequently poor, and the thoughts prosaic. "Ein Canon" is one of the more successful pieces. The section entitled "Patriotisches" celebrates men like Moltke and Bismarck and the events of the Franco-Prussian War, but as patriotic poetry it falls far short of that of Geibel and Freiligrath.

Wilhelm Jensen (1837-1911) took as his model Storm, both in the novelette and in the lyric. In fact there is something in his whole attitude to nature, and especially in his clinging to the past, that reminds us of the Husum poet. He issued

in 1897 a collection of his best poems with the title *Vom Morgen zum Abend.* Here he sings of the changes of the seasons, the aspects of nature, bird life and plant life, in melodious tones. Love, marriage, children, domestic joys and cares form the burden of his most tuneful songs. There are also poems of travel and wandering, optimistic, reflective, and diffuse. Many pieces spring from recollection or from musings on the conventions of life, true morality, and the feelings of old age. The prospect of death, which Jensen viewed as "Ein herbstlich Warten auf das eigene Sterben," is an ever-recurring theme. Most of the lyrics have a warm personal note; one of the best is the fine poem, "Am Sarge Theodor Storms," but Jensen's circle of interest was the narrow one of the literary artist. The great bustling world of business and politics and modern social controversy does not enter here. He wrote easily and gracefully, but far too much. The shorter poems are the best; of the longer ones few will survive, partly owing to the lack of conciseness and careful workmanship, partly because they are already, as it were, detached from human life in general, and shadowy in outline.

Ferdinand von Saar (1833-1906) was born in Vienna just about the time when Lenau, his model, had reached the summit of his powers. He entered the army, but quitted it after the campaign of 1859, and devoted himself to literature. His lyrical production is not great in extent, and uniformly sad in tone. His interests are fewer than Lenau's; he is more monotonous, and has far less command of lyrical technique. In a poem like "Trauer" there is not a ray of brightness. Sleeplessness, the diffi-

culty of success, the rarity of good fortune, self-blame, the torment of life, these are the thoughts that make up the poem. However delicate and tender it may at times be, Saar's mind is not a normal one. There is a total lack of humour in many situations where it seems inevitable, and the pessimistic close of such poems strikes the reader as ludicrous. It is strange that Vienna should have given Germany its lightest comedies and its saddest poetry. There is a fatalistic tone in "Ultima Ratio," an almost unkind bitterness in "Auf ein tanzendes Mädchen," and confused logic in the polemic against women's rights, "An die Frauen." The unnaturalness of his attitude to nature is revealed by a poem like "Die Kuh." His view of the future of German poetry, as expressed in "Nänie," is without a ray of hope. The most pleasing lyrics are those in which he expresses his love for the bare autumn aspects of nature, the mist-covered valley, the cold breath of the winter wind, and the delicate shades and tints of the trees. Here he approaches most nearly to Lenau, but he has none of Lenau's power of sketching human figures that give life to the picture. Of the "Bilder und Gestalten" the best are "Der Eisenbahnzug" and "Der Schäfer." Probably his most successful poem is "Der Arbeitergruss," which bears the stamp of actuality upon it. He wrote love poems, too, with veiled passion, but here, too, resignation predominates. Even in the Novellen the most of the characters are of delicate organisation, thin-blooded victims of ill fortune and weak will.

CHAPTER VIII

The Lyric Poetry of To-day

The Franco-Prussian War marks the beginning of a new era in German history, but its influence upon literature was chiefly indirect. The patriotic poetry to which the war gave rise was not of much importance. The really great movement in German literature during the last forty years, the rise of the naturalistic school, began to make itself felt about 1882, and it owed its inception to a variety of causes, of which the war was only one, and by no means the most important. The influence of foreign writers like Zola, Ibsen, and Tolstoi was very considerable, especially in the drama and the novel, but even though these authors had simply not existed, the naturalistic movement in Germany was bound to come. Everything was already moving in that direction. The tendency of contemporary philosophy (the Positivists), of natural science (Spencer and Darwin), of psychology and of theology was to make men look facts in the face and set down exactly what they saw. In the drama and the novel Anzengruber is one of the most important pioneers, for his art was based upon keen observation of the life around him. But the most weighty element in the new art was contributed by social conditions. The remarkable advance of German industry after the war of 1870 led to the

concentration in large centres of thousands of people, many of whom came from the country, and were now cut off from all local associations. Men began to feel, to discuss, and to write about the contrast between labour and capital, between great wealth and the grind of daily toil and poverty. Especially when Bismarck introduced legislation to alleviate the ills of sickness, accident, old age, and infirmity, the public conscience had been awakened, and statesmen recognised that the weal of the State depends on the virility of all its members. To a movement of such human interest poetry was of course extremely sensitive, it stirred the imagination, and awakened sympathy and enthusiasm. A new mine of literary subjects and motives was discovered—Germany at work, the captains of industry, the varied interests of the middle classes, and the "short and simple annals of the poor." The tendency of poetry may be most vividly illustrated by a reference to contemporary painting. Hauptmann and Sudermann regard life from the same standpoint as naturalists in colour and form like Leibl, Liebermann, and Uhde. These painters reproduced what they had seen; not a shape which nature had to reveal but possessed its value in their eyes, and their gaze was directed chiefly to the lowly haunts of man and life in its simplest aspects. Naturalism, however, being one-sided, could only dominate art for a time. With Arnold Böcklin and Max Klinger there entered into painting a new joy in beautiful colour for its own sake, a more imaginative and sometimes fantastic representation of nature, the triumph of humour and symbolism, a dionysiac joy in dance, revelry, and sportiveness. Böcklin does not copy nature either in regard to outline or colour, he bodies it forth as he

sees it in his mind's eye. It took a long time before Böcklin was duly appreciated, but his final triumph was all the more decisive and influential. Similarly, when in the beginning of the last decade of the century Gerhardt Hauptmann, who had won his spurs by strong and sometimes repulsive representations of life in the naturalistic manner, began to produce imaginative, allegorical, and symbolic work like *Hanneles Himmelfahrt* and *Die versunkene Glocke*, the partisans of naturalism were at first shocked and confused. But since that time the two tendencies have lived on side by side. Hauptmann himself returned to naturalistic drama. Naturalism, in fact, cannot die, it must remain an element in modern art. But there is room also for other styles, for the play of imagination, for symbolic representation if the artist prefers it, for the unfolding of the inner soul of the artist in whatever manner is most suited to his peculiar genius and the message which he has to proclaim. In this connection Nietzsche's example had far-reaching influence. It is now fully recognised that he was no philosopher in the usual sense of the word, but a poet, a prophet of quite remarkable gifts. He stood in opposition to Socialism. It was not the people as a whole, but the individual of genius that formed the object of his solicitation. Likewise he condemned conventional religion and morality, because they were rigid and unchangeable. They have grown, he said, and they will pass away to make room for a higher ethics. Nietzsche must be discussed more fully further on, for his influence on the modern lyric was unusually great. Here it may suffice to mention that it was about 1886 when Nietzsche's teaching, proclaimed in a language of infinite beauty and fervour,

began to take Germany, especially young Germany, by storm. It was new thought, brilliantly original, the criticism of conventions was trenchant, and the outlook upon a new world painted with glowing optimism.

In a period so rich in social changes, and so fertile in new ideas, it is not surprising that many poets should confuse tendency with art, and go to extremes in one direction or another. Only the very greatest avoid such dangers in all literary periods. If we take a comprehensive glance at German lyric poetry since 1880, the first thing that strikes us is the extraordinary number of poets with something more than a local reputation. In Bethge's *Deutsche Lyrik seit Liliencron* there are nearly a hundred names, and in Benzmann's *Moderne Deutsche Lyrik* there are at least eighty more who are not mentioned by Bethge. Certainly not more than a third of the smaller number can hope for immortality. The most of them were born between 1850 and 1880, the greatest of all, Detlev von Liliencron, was born in 1844, and is thus the leader in years as well as in influence. Besides him there are four or five of outstanding originality and power, and perhaps twenty who, from a historical point of view, might be placed in the second rank. From the remaining writers we occasionally get poems of remarkable sweetness or strength, but it is here that the tendency mentioned above, the extremes, the elements of the new art, reveal themselves. Naturalism can give rise to beautiful poetry—Thomas Hood is an example in English—but it can also be very unpleasant. We find in German poetry hard prosaic rhythms, words and phrases chosen from the vocabulary of everyday life, pauses and parentheses, sounds

and sentiments, that grate upon the senses of the reader, and we object to them because they are supposed to be natural and are chosen for effect. Then there is the licence and laxness in substance and in form of those who falsely imagined they were following the banner of Nietzsche. Eroticism can be beautifully treated, as it has been by Shelley or by Dehmel, but there is an unnatural amount of it in modern verse. Among the symbolists there is at times extraordinary vagueness, words that may suggest anything or nothing, a tendency to pose, to adopt a contemptuous, aloof kind of attitude to the world in general and the reading public in particular. But enough of criticism! There is also much true art in the poetry of the present day. There are new triumphs of rhythm, novel and pleasing effects of rhyme, subjective feelings of great beauty that come to us like a revelation, ballads worthy to rank with those of Fontane, travel sketches, tones of every kind, a good deal of weakness and nervous depression, but side by side with it plenty of joy in life and buoyant optimism, laughing humour, and impressive pathos.

Ada Christen (Christine Friderik, 1844-1901) is a characteristic figure of the new period. She sings of the temptations and the misery of the poor: deep sympathy is the keynote of her poetry, but the tones are harsh. In her eagerness she overshoots the mark, and is unjust to mankind in general. An example is "Am Teich," a theme similar to "The Bridge of Sighs," but inartistic in execution:—

"Als eine Hand den schönen Leib
Mit Haken an sich riss—
Der rohe Hauf das tote Weib
Ein gottverdammtes hiess."

The sentiment is bitter, and the rhyme far from good. But Christen's *Lieder einer Verlorenen*, which appeared in 1868, struck a new note full of earnestness and candour. With her we may associate two contemporary poetesses of equal fervour and kindliness, but less poetic power, **Alberta von Puttkamer** (*b.* 1849), and the Roumanian queen, who writes under the name of **Carmen Sylva** (*b.* 1843).

Detlev von Liliencron[1] (1844-1909) was born in Kiel, and spent the most active years of his life in the army. In no less than seventeen garrisons he had opportunities of studying the life of the soldier, and he also fought in the wars of 1866 and 1870. On account of wounds and debts he resigned his commission and went to America. But his prospects did not improve, and he returned to his native land, where he received an official post as administrator of the island of Pellworm. Later he was registrar in Kellinghusen. In 1887, tired of the restraint of official duties, he resolved to devote himself to literature, and with varying success and many a hard struggle against poverty he continued to delight an ever-increasing public till his death. His last years were somewhat lightened by the help of friends and a pension from the Emperor. Liliencron was thirty-nine years of age before he published his *Adjutantenritte* in 1883. There followed *Gedichte*, 1889; *Neue Gedichte*, 1895; *Poggfried*, an epic poem, 1896; *Bunte Beute*, 1903; and a number of spirited short stories in prose, with a few much less successful dramas. Liliencron's influence at the end of the century is like that of Heine at the beginning. Both revealed the charm and influence of

[1] H. Spiero, *D. v. Liliencron*, Berlin, 1913.

a strong personality. But Liliencron was a finer, healthier, more German nature than Heine. His work is free from tendency, insincerity, and posing. He delights in life, in his profession as a soldier, his interest in his neighbour is keen and sympathetic. He is a thorough North German in his love of Holstein, the long dykes, the calm but sullen, ever-threatening sea, the brown heath of his native land. There are few more interesting personalities in German literature; and while he was not free from blame himself, it must fill every lover of poetry with regret that many of Liliencron's days were rendered miserable by the schemes and demands of creditors. His letters, the editing of which he left to his friend Dehmel, reveal the man as he really was, even more fully than his poetry, and form most fascinating reading. Liliencron excelled in ballad and narrative poetry. Some of these pieces deal with the past, like "König Ragnar Lodbrok" and "Pidder Lüng," but they have a distinctly modern colouring. The very first lines of "König Ragnar"—

> "Das war der König Ragnar,
> Der lebte fromm und frei.
> Er trug gepichte Hosen
> Wie seine Leichtmatrosen,
> Die riechen nicht nach Rosen,
> Das war ihm einerlei, . . ."

reveal a humorous, happy-go-lucky style of treatment which is novel and refreshing. Whatever subject Liliencron took up, he could not but impress it with his own personality. "Bellevue" is the description of a ride through the forest: horse and pointers are graphically pictured: the poet reaches a high point from which he seems to see the whole world in the

enjoyment of peace. But the clouds of war arise, parliamentary debate, international strife, here and there a neglected genius exemplifying the tragedy of life. He turns away with the thought of withdrawing from the world. He has given us touching episodes from his experiences in war, poems like "Tod in Ähren," "Unter den Linden," and "Wer weiss wo?" in vivid and striking language:—

> "Auf Blut und Leichen, Schutt und Qualm
> Auf rosszerstampftem Sommerhalm
> Die Sonne schien.
> Es sank die Nacht. Die Schlacht ist aus,
> Und mancher kehrte nicht nach Haus
> Einst von Kolin . . ."

"Der Heidebrand" is strong, not only in the delineation of the action but in the weaving of motive, the revelation of the character of the old woman whom vengeance drives to crime. The four beautiful stanzas of "Erwartung" remind us of the early Minnesang. "Krieg und Friede" is one of the poet's finest achievements. He gives us two scenes, the glorious blossoming landscape with wild roses everywhere, and the sharp clash of modern infantry, and contrasts the two with great skill and effect. Truly it is a many-sided poet who reveals himself in these various pictures of life, and in every one of them we have the certainty that he has seen and felt keenly what he portrays. It is the poetry of real life. He is light and humorous in "Bruder Liederlich" and "Das Gewitter," inclined to be sombre in "Ein Geheimnis"; while he is often playful, there is not seldom a sore heart beneath the smiling face, in poems like "Auf der Kasse" and "Mein Spazierstock." He has an extraordinary fund of animal spirits. A lament scarcely passes his lips

but its bitterness is immediately smoothed away by a humorous remark. Yet he is not superficial. There are tender lyrics like "Wiegenlied," wonderfully fine pictures of the heath and the woodlands that he loved so well, verses in honour of the army and the Emperor, to whom he was passionately devoted. Take him all in all, Liliencron is a true poet of great originality, strength, and charm, beyond doubt the most noteworthy lyricist at the end of the nineteenth century.

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) was born in the same year as Liliencron, but while the latter is the poet of actual life as it presented itself to him, Nietzsche is the dreamer, the revolutionary, the rhapsodist, whose language breaks into poetical rhythm in spite of himself. *Also sprach Zarathustra* is a series of poems in prose, the work of a man of great freshness of mind and imagination, a record of emotions rather than logical thoughts. He destroyed many of his poems, but sufficient remain to entitle him to a high place among modern poets. The loneliness of the man, his longing for love and true friendship, break forth in poems like "Vereinsamt," "Nachtlied," and "Aus hohen Bergen." "Wohl dem, der jetzt noch Heimat hat," he exclaims; friends are gone and early hopes have never ripened, but he does not give way to despair, his strength and buoyancy assert themselves. The poem to the Mistral and the short, effective "Das trunkene Lied" are songs of triumph, in dithyrambic language which many a modern poet has attempted to imitate. The vivid pictures, "Dem unbekannten Gott," "Der Herbst," "Die Sonne sinkt," remind us in their enthusiastic fervour and the blending of emotion with nature

imagery of some of the poems of Hölderlin. In other pieces, like "Venedig," he represents pure nature with lyrical sweetness and suggestiveness :—

"An der Brücke stand
Jüngst ich in brauner Nacht.
Fernher kam Gesang :
Goldener Tropfen quoll's
Über die zitternde Fläche weg.
Gondeln, Lichter, Musik—
Trunken schwamm's in die Dämmerung hinaus. . . ."

The form of Nietzsche's lyric is as various as the poet's mood. It depends on the inspiration of the moment. The rhythm is free and unconventional, and in this he has been copied by very many of the modern singers. But he has proved a delusive model. The stops, abrupt transitions, parenthesis and exclamations which exactly express his excited emotions, are with him under the perfect control of the artist. In his imitators they are mere artifice, not nature.

The Swiss writer, **Karl Spitteler** (*b.* 1845), has shown in epics and minor poetry an original, earnest, and profound spirit. He is inclined to allegory and didactic suggestiveness, but is always artistic and restrained. The legend, the ballad, and the philosophical lyric have all been successfully attempted by him. **Ferdinand Avenarius** (*b.* 1856) has published collections of poetry marked by fine artistic sense, but lacking in distinction. He has rendered far greater service, indeed quite unique service, to modern art by his distinguished paper, the *Kunstwart.* **Gustav Falke** (*b.* 1853) began under the influence of Liliencron and Meyer, but his later work is of a much quieter, gentler nature. He is a painstaking observer of nature's moods, some-

what in the manner of Mörike, but without the latter's originality. His best work springs from the domestic emotions, one of his finest pieces being dedicated to his mother, "Die feinen Ohren":—

"Du warst allein,
Ich sah durch's Schlüsselloch
Den matten Schein
Der späten Lampe noch.
Was stand ich nur und trat nicht ein?
Und brannte doch,
Und war mir doch, es müsste sein,
Dass ich noch einmal deine Stirne strich
Und zärtlich flüsterte: Wie lieb ich dich. . . ."

Falke is a musician by profession, and all his poetry shows great finish and feeling for melody. He is usually bright and optimistic; especially good are his pictures of life in narratives of a didactic or kindly humorous kind, such as "Der törichte Jäger" and "Die treue Schwester." In a poet like **Prinz Emil von Schönaich-Carolath** (1852-1908) we see the transition from the older to the modern school of poetry. In his *Dichtungen* (1883) and *Gedichte* (1903) there are pieces which remind us of Heine, Platen, and the exotic poetry of the Munich writers. His merits are principally merits of form. He wrote easily, but he seldom rises above the middle line of achievement, at least as far as the treatment of the content is concerned. But there are a few vivid and melodious pieces in the style which Liliencron later perfected, such poems as "Carmen," "Lied der Ghawâze," "Altes Bild," and "Künstlerroman." **Peter Hille** (1854-1904) was in form and tendency a disciple of Nietzsche, a dreamer, a restless spirit of fine sensitive temperament. He inclined to

aphorisms and symbolical representation of nature, as in the beautiful "Waldesstimme." **Isolde Kurz** (*b.* 1853) is more richly gifted. She has spent a great part of her life in Italy, and found there the inspiration for her Novellen and many of her poems. Her *Gedichte* appeared in 1889, and *Neue Gedichte* in 1905. They reveal imagination, graphic power, fine restraint, but at the same time passion and deep feeling. In poems like "Nächtliche Meerfahrt" and "Serenade auf dem Meer" she shows the true poet's command of musical, onomatopoetic language. To this power of expression she adds the vivifying touch of fancy, so that pictures like "Aegypten," "Wegwarte" really live before our eyes. There are touching poems of longing and regret, "Du fuhrst gleich einem Stern aus Norden," "O dass die Liebe sterben kann," and "Nächtlich war's am stillen Weiher." Under the title "Asphodill" we find a series of beautiful elegies, varied, artistic, and worthy of a place beside those of Eichendorff and Storm, of whom they occasionally remind us. The most noteworthy of these pieces are "Nun bist du eins mit der Natur," "Die erste Nacht," "Lethe," "Ein Schatten du," and "Ein Grab im Winter." It is a rich original mind that has created this poetry, an intellect ripe in wisdom and guided by a sound artistic sense.

Many of the poets just discussed are still actively engaged in literary work, but they were all born before 1860, and in consequence their mental development may be regarded as fairly complete. The same can hardly be said of the younger school, like Dehmel, Dauthendey, and Ricarda Huch, who are not yet fifty

years of age, and upon whom only a tentative verdict can be passed. A characteristic figure of the period is **Hermann Conradi** (1862-90), a stormy, erratic talent, who made his name with the *Lieder eines Sünders* in 1887. He was nervously overstrung, mentally and physically a weakling, who died by his own hand. Associated with him in the somewhat pompous publication, *Moderne Dichtercharaktere*, were **Wilhelm Arent** (*b.* 1864) and **Karl Henckell** (*b.* 1864). Both are reformers, both aim at being, above all, "modern," but their artistic powers are not equal to their ambitions. **Arno Holz**, who was born in 1863, is a more noteworthy figure, a serious critic and stimulator. When he moves in traditional grooves, in ballads like "Een Boot is noch buten" and "So einer war auch er," he is true to life and at the same time poetical. But his naturalistic efforts, the glaring pictures of social life in great cities, are much less satisfactory from an artistic point of view. His experiments with prose poetry and irregular rhythms and stanzas in "Phantasus" are not free from arbitrariness and trifling. He is an impressionist, and the affected disregard of rules of form is occasionally successful in producing the effect which he aims at. Two of the most influential spirits of this age, genuine seekers after a new art, were the brothers **Julius Hart** (*b.* 1859) and **Heinrich Hart** (*b.* 1855). Their critical work, especially the *Kritische Waffengänge*, was of much more importance than their lyrics. Another revolutionary spirit is **John Henry Mackay**, who was born in Greenock in 1864, but educated in Germany. He is known as the poet of anarchism, and the friend and biographer of Max Stirner. Most of his work is, however, tendency lyric,

in which reflection, phraseology, and argumentation outweigh the purely poetical element. He generally chooses subjects of a Socialistic type, but he is too much of the journalist. He has lost rather than gained ground in later years, the more clear it has become that his work is lacking in permanent artistic value. The most noteworthy feature of all these poets is their keen interest in the social life around them and their endeavour to find a new style to express their feelings. But only in the case of one, **Richard Dehmel**, can it be said that the chaos of turbulent youth has given place to a more balanced and harmonious view of life. Above all, he is the only one whose poetical gifts seem capable of subduing and adequately expressing his wealth of experience in the world of passion, or thought, or action. He was born in 1863, the son of a forester in the Spreewald. The naturalistic movement, Nietzsche and Verlaine, have at various times influenced his mind. His first volume of poetry, *Erlösungen*, appeared in 1891, and it was followed by various other collections, *Aber die Liebe*, 1893 ; *Lebensblätter*, 1895 ; and *Weib und Welt*, 1896. His collected works were published in 1906, and the best of his lyrics are to be found in the *Ausgewählte Gedichte*, 1901. Since the death of Liliencron he is the most vigorous and skilful of German lyricists. He has many bitter opponents, who object to his work as immoral and pathological. It is both—to a small extent. The most apt description of his art has been given by himself in the sentence where he speaks of Nietzsche as "ein zweifelnder Zergliederer gewohnter Seelenregungen," and of himself as a "gläubiger Zusammengliederer ungewohnter." That is to say, Nietzsche is a

sceptical analyser of common soul emotions, he himself an orthodox synthetist of unusual ones. This, at any rate, is his favourite field. He is a naturalist of mind, an observer and portrayer of the passions, ambitions, longings, and sentiments of his own heart and of the heart of man. The lowest and the highest instincts and emotions, sensuality and spirituality, love of beauty and interest in what is ugly, are strangely compounded in Dehmel. His candour is astounding, but it is relieved by the fact that he is not a grovelling but a soaring nature, a man who may fail but who will derive fresh strength from his errors, a man almost who requires the experience of the lower to raise him to a higher ideal. He approaches the world as a student, to whom nothing is revolting or unimportant, but he does not cling to the dust or portray evil for sensational reasons. On the other hand, it can hardly be maintained that he has risen very high spiritually, or that he has enriched ethical thought or advanced original solutions of social and sexual problems. Judged from a purely literary standpoint, many of his poems are worthy of the highest praise. There are admirable pictures of social life like "Vergissmeinnicht," "Die Magd," "Vierter Klasse," "Erntelied," and above all, "Der Arbeitsmann," who has his joys in many things, wife, children, bread, clothing, sun, moon, and rain, and whose only want is time, only time. There are numerous love poems, overflowing with passion, "Nachtgebet der Braut," "Drei Ringe," "Aus banger Brust." "Drei Ringe" is a poem of recollection, the romance of light and love, regret and pain, associated with the rings on the poet's finger. "Aus banger Brust," if we compare it with a poem like Schiller's "Erwartung,"

shows the great difference between the classical and the modern tone: there calmness and restraint, here impatience and overwhelming passion. The lines have a chasteness of melody which contrasts with and accentuates the oppressive atmosphere of desire:—

"Die Rosen leuchten immer noch,
Die dunkeln Blätter zittern sacht;
Ich bin im Grase aufgewacht,
O kämst du doch,
Es ist so tiefe Mitternacht.
Den Mond verdeckt das Gartentor,
Sein Licht fliesst über in die See,
Die Weiden warten still empor,
Mein Nacken wühlt im tiefen Klee;
So liebt' ich dich noch nie zuvor! . . ."

In all these poems of love there is another element which has rarely been pointed out, but which seems to me to be the glory of Dehmel's poetry, his description of nature in her various moods. We see it in "Drei Ringe," as the recollection of the home of his youth, and in "Notturno," where the music of nature, the tones of the violin, and the poet's emotion are wonderfully blended. He has the same vivid touch as Liliencron, but greater delicacy and skill. "Manche Nacht" and "Aufblick" are typical in their conciseness and warmth of feeling:—

"Wortlos sitzen wir im Dunkeln.
Einstmals rauschte hier ein Strom,
Einstmals sahn wir Sterne funkeln.
Ist denn alles tot und trübe?
Horch—: ein ferner Mund—: vom Dom—:
Glockenchöre . . . Nacht . . . und Liebe."

A poem like "Die stille Stadt" has something of Storm's elegiac sweetness, but it is free from imitation.

On the whole, Dehmel is an original poet of great merit, and a combative spirit with an ardent love of beauty and an insatiable hunger after the highest happiness. He is also a conscious artist, who in second and third editions has recast, almost beyond recognition, the less perfect work of his youth.

No greater contrast to Dehmel could be found than **Hugo Salus**, who was born at Leipa, in Northern Bohemia, in 1866. He made his name with *Ehefrühling* (1899). He is one of the most productive of modern poets, clothing in graceful language ideas, anecdotes, events, and emotions of every kind. His songs of love and marriage are inclined to sentimental triviality. Yet he is always neat, light, and coquettish. His manner is not free from affectation, but it is counterbalanced by lovableness and charm. **Max Dauthendey** is of the same light, graceful school. He was born in Würzburg in 1867, has travelled widely, and became first known as the author of *Reliquien* (1900). There are reminiscences of Liliencron and Nietzsche, but they are very faint reflections of a power denied to Dauthendey. He lacks depth, and his lines are not always musical. He is at his best in bright suggestive pictures from nature like "Winde quälen die Bäume," "Die Luft so schwer," and "Winde fressen im Birkenlaub." A fervent lover of beauty, he is of the spirit of the Minnesingers, delicate but not free from eroticism, generally clear and restrained in expression. The following lines are characteristic—

"Stille weht in das Haus,
Fühlst du den Atem des Mondes,
Löse dein Haar,
Lege dein Haupt in den Blauschein hinaus.

Hörst du, das Meer unten am Strand
Wirft dir Schätze ans Land ;
Sonst wachsen im Mond Wünsche, ein Heer,
Seit ich dein Auge gesehen, ist die Mondnacht
wunschleer."

Ricarda Huch, who was born in Brunswick in 1864, has won distinction in the lyric, as a novelist, and in literary criticism with her works on the Romantic School. Her first volume of poetry appeared in 1891, the second in 1907. In the fullness of her mental life and the depth and earnestness of her character she is a worthy successor of Annette von Droste-Hülshoff. She is on the whole more fluent, more candid, more erotic than Droste. The theme of love is scarcely touched by Droste, and it plays a great part in the lyrics of Ricarda Huch. Her *Liebesreime*, a collection of poems in ottava-rima, show depth and variety, but the sixty-two pieces are unequal in form. She gives us intimate pictures of the seasons, as "Vorfrühling" and "Herbst," which combine keen observation with originality of sentiment. She is not so successful with historical themes like "Salamo," "Saul," "Phidias." The plastic power is wanting to give the figures distinction and make them live. In poems of a general character, on longing, death, strife, ambition, friendship, and happiness, she has a more skilful touch. Among the best are "Beschwörung," "Du," "Sehnsucht," "Verstossen," "Vergangenheit," "Erinnerung," and "Unersättlich." The last is a prayer for fullness of life :—

"Gib mir ewiger Jugend Glanz,
Gib mir ewigen Lebens Kraft,
Gib im flüchtigen Stundentanz
Ewig wirkende Leidenschaft.

Aus dem Meere des Wissens lass
Satt mich trinken im tiefem Zug !
Gib von Liebe und gib vom Hass
Meiner Seele einmal genug. . . ."

Two other poets should be mentioned here, **O. E. Hartleben** (1864-1905) and **O. J. Bierbaum** (*b.* 1865). Both are clever versifiers, slightly superficial, but humorous and optimistic. Hartleben's best work consists of prose sketches, in which he has scope for his humour; his lyrical poetry, *Meine Verse* (1895) and *Von reifen Früchten* (1903), is thin and disappointing. Bierbaum called his first collection *Erlebte Gedichte* (1892). The title is none too well chosen, for poems of experience they are not, as a rule. There are jovial songs of love like "Jeannette," humorous reflective pieces like "Liebenswürdiger Rath und Antwort," songs of joyous Viennese life like "Fasching." Bierbaum is an enemy of all gloom and narrowness. His style is noteworthy for the number of new compounds, "Ein Stechschrittvolk, Paradetrampelvolk." Frequently they are far from being artistically effective. In his subsequent collections of poems, such as *Irrgarten der Liebe* (1901), Bierbaum has shown little development. He is frequently amusing, frequently trivial. There is plenty of cleverness, but little of that higher beauty which marks the genuine poet.

Concerning the youngest German lyricists, those born since 1870, no attempt at a characterisation can yet be made. One might as well try to estimate Goethe by his *Leipziger Lieder* or Schiller by his *Anthologie*. Most of them are still in the thirties,

an age at which men like Liliencron and C. F. Meyer had hardly begun to write. Sometimes, of course, a poet begins young—Uhland is an example—and strikes almost his very best and characteristic note at once. It is all a matter of conjecture, and the purpose of the present treatise will be served if a few remarks of an explanatory kind are made regarding those who appear to have distinguished themselves by the novelty or sweetness of their early work. Something should be said of **Stefan George** (*b.* 1868), the founder of an exclusive school of poetry, whose work was, to begin with, issued in the privately circulated *Blätter für die Kunst.* George is an opponent of naturalism, of traditional styles of every kind; he claims simply to be a worshipper of beauty. In expression he is restrained, seemingly vague and cold, mystical. He does not sing spontaneously like the natural lyricist; he stands over the sentiment, surveying it as it is presented. Therein lies the novelty and the limitation of his art. It cannot possibly appeal to a wide audience. Indeed he has no desire that it should. The form is smooth and tuneful, but numerous obstacles are placed in the way of the reader. The order of words is frequently strained, rhythms of unusual melody occur, there is no punctuation, no capitals, a new and baffling type is employed, partly for appearance, partly to compel the reader to study the text slowly and carefully. There is no reason to decry George as a mere poser or a decadent. The poems are suggestive, they awaken feelings, but they do not tell us anything, they baffle interpretation. On the other hand, this art cannot be freed from the charge of pronounced artificiality.

There is more satisfaction to be derived from the poetry of **Hugo von Hofmannsthal**, who was born in Vienna in 1874. He is akin to George in his æsthetic aloofness from the world of actuality and in his worship of form, but he is more natural and musical in expression. He often uses the dramatic form, but his work is still in spirit lyrical. He is the characteristic representative of a new romanticism, which has none of the old figures and mannerisms. His art springs from genuine emotion and a poetical conception of life. "Der Tod des Tizian" is a picture of the great master in his last hours, his surroundings, the feelings of friends and models, in beautiful lines full of delicate but plastic imagery. Hofmannsthal can conjure up a scene that is not real and yet lives. He borrows from nature, but the artistic use of the details is his own. In "Idylle" he delineates with a few touches the various characters and their view of life. The hardness of actuality is smoothed away; the poem reads like a beautiful suggestive vision. He speaks to us through the feelings only; there is no intellectual appeal. He is an artist in form, but he is more: there is spirituality and life in his work, as we see in his "Terzinen" and the "Ballade des äusseren Lebens." He has the dramatic instinct, and that is a great gain to his lyric. The "Gestalten," though they represent moods rather than figures, are clearly rendered and thoroughly lyrical. Some of the short pieces, particularly "Drei kleine Lieder" and "Die Beiden," are models of grace and conciseness.

Rainer Maria Rilke (born in 1875 in Prague) has shown a promising development in his two most important lyrical collections, *Buch der Bilder* (1902) and *Neue Gedichte* (1907). At first thin and over

delicate, lacking in weight and vigour, he has become more plastic, more expressive, without losing any of his charm of verse and mystical pantheism His lyrics have an original and finely musical quality of rhythm. In poems like "Mondnacht" he appeals to the musical sense even in the imagery. He prefers to complete his poetical pictures by sounds and suggestions rather than by concrete outlines. His muse has no interest in the great affairs of actual life; it responds only to the most delicate touch. His association with Rodin explains the growth of more plastic forms, but he is still chiefly the dreamer, the mystic, the listener to the faint music of the spheres.

Hermann Hesse, who was born in Calw in 1877, has shown both in the novel and in the lyric that he has a keen eye for the beauty of nature and great power of expression. But he is depressingly pessimistic and passive in his attitude to life. His poems tell of home-sickness, fits of melancholy, and the hard struggle of life. Now and then, as in "Ich log," the purely sensual joy in existence breaks forth, but even in the love poetry resignation is the prevailing note:—

> "Ich will ja nicht, dass du mich liebst,
> Will nur, dass ich dich nahe weiss
> Und dass du manchmal stumm und leis
> Die Hand mir gibst."

He is a lover of music, especially the violin; he exults in wild beauty and in the bright scenery of Italy; he depicts with great insight and sympathy the struggles and trials of early boyhood.

Richard Schaukal (born in Brünn in 1874) is a prolific writer of verse, the best of which is to be found in the *Ausgewählte Gedichte* (1909). The themes are serious—religion, happiness, nature, life.

There is little brightness; it is usually of grief and pain, or the desire for rest from strife and longing that he sings. Strange images sometimes occur, as "Wenn der Jasmin sein weisses Lied singt," and the poetry on the whole lacks distinction and personality. Some of the "Bilder," such as "Alte Schlösser" and "Die Sklavin spricht," though over-burdened with ornament, are more effective, but others again, like "Der Page," "Goya," "La Duchesse de . . .," are objectionably erotic. It is with a feeling of relief that one turns from this sweet poisoned perfume to the strong, healthy ballads of the Göttingen circle. **Lulu von Strass und Torney** was born at Bückeburg in 1873 and has made her reputation with the *Lieder und Balladen* (1902) and the *Neue Lieder und Balladen* (1907). Here we link on to the ballads of Strachwitz and Fontane, and the treatment is usually adequate and impressive. "Die Nonne" is a fine picture of a human soul pining with longing and regret, and there are other excellent pieces, like "Eva von Trott" and "Hertje von Horsbüll." **Agnes Miegel** (born in Königsberg in 1879) first showed her power of treating very various themes in melodious verse and with deep poetical feeling in her *Balladen und Lieder* (1901-4). She, too, has drawn upon the old English ballad and Fontane, and reveals a thorough grasp of this literary form in poems like "Agnete" and "Agnes Bernauerin." Both of these writers are surpassed by **Börries, Freiherr von Münchhausen,** who was born in Hildesheim in 1874, and is the most distinguished ballad writer at the present time. His *Balladen* (1900) were warmly received, and subsequent publications, like *Juda* (1900) and *Ritterliches Liederbuch*

(1904), have not disappointed his early adherents. There is an aristocratic flavour about his ballads; the old motives of stern kings, fair pages, martial heroes, and the clang of combat fill his pages. But there are new themes too, full of interest and vitality. "Der Fischer von Swendaland" may be gruesome, but it is effective. "Der Totspieler" is one of the best. It is a likely theme—a pastor who refuses to play at the request of his patron, because his last son sleeps in the room behind him. Two others, when recovering from serious illness, he had "played to death." In his gratitude to God he had put his whole soul into the hymn, "Nun danket alle Gott," and caused the children to rise and dance behind him in their sleep. The delineation of the terror-stricken father, the mighty tones of the music, and the light, elfish movements of the naked feet are wonderfully vivid :—

"Da schlag ich wie toll in die Tasten,
Hilf, allmächtiger Gott :
Umsonst ! Immerzu
Meines Knäbleins süsse
Weiche blosse Füsse
Tanzen ohne Ruhe
Durch die Stube—dort und hier
Immer hinter mir . . . !!!"

The ballads on Biblical subjects, like "Die Hexe von En Dor," are not so successful as those on historical and romantic themes, like "Der Marschall" and "Halfdan, Ragnars Sohn." In these he seems to return to the old traditions of the ballad writers, but in others he is quite as modern in tone as Fontane or Liliencron. Young as he is, he has already contributed not a few pieces to the lasting treasure of ballad poetry.

When the history of the lyric poetry of this age comes to be written twenty, thirty, or forty years hence, it may well be that the youngest lyricists, like George, Rilke, and Hofmannsthal, stand rather at the beginning of a new epoch than at the end of an old one. Many things point that way—their originality, the new romanticism, their interest in music, their suggestive quality, the invention of new melodies and forms. We have mentioned only a few, but there are many others working hand in hand with them or following slightly divergent paths, Hans Bethge, Wilhelm von Scholz, Karl Busse, Margarete Susmann, Franz Evers, Alfred Mombert, Christian Morgenstern, Stephen Zweig, and Ernst Lissauer. There is every reason for an optimistic outlook. The history of the lyric looks back over six centuries of storm and stress, but it points inevitably forward. While men and women are young in love and joyous faith, while they delight in all that charms the ear and eye, and strive with hopeful hearts to rise above themselves and find an utterance for their ecstasy in musical song, so long will the lyric bloom and find sympathetic adherents; even if this age should not be permitted to see the great lyricist, we may be sure that the future will. No one can predict his coming, for the origin of song is always a mystery.

"Wie in den Lüften der Sturmwind saust,
Man weiss nicht, von wannen er kommt und braust,
Wie der Quell aus verborgenen Tiefen,
So des Sängers Lied aus dem Innern schallt
Und wecket der dunklen Gefühle Gewalt,
Die im Herzen wunderbar schliefen."

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