

ON THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF SCHILLER.

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THERE is not a man in the whole history of her literature of whom Germany is prouder than of Schiller the poet. His great popularity is not limited to his native country, but it extends wherever poetry, truth and noble aspirations are valued as a principal means of raising the greatness of man.

Johann Friedrich Schiller was born on the 10th of November, 1759, in Marbach, a little town belonging to the kingdom of Würtemberg.

The romantic scenery of his native country, Suabia, and the impressions which his noble soul received from his tender-hearted mother, were the first influences which kindled in the boy a fire of inspiration for the good and beautiful, which afterwards shone so resplendent from the radiant mind of our great poet. When six years old, the fond and kind Moser, minister of the Suabian village of Lorch, instructed the boy in the Greek and Latin languages. Schiller speaks later with great affection of his master; nay, he gives him an everlasting monument of remembrance in his first drama, "The Robbers," wherein he introduces him as the kind, conciliatory "Pastor "Moser."

At the removal of Schiller's parents to Ludwigsburg, then the residence of the Duke, the growing boy was placed in the grammar-school of the town, where, under the superintendence of the head master, Jahn, he made considerable progress in all the various branches of knowledge, but particularly in Latin. It seems as if, here, the relationship between master

and pupil was not based on affection, for when, after a while, his scholastic superior received another situation, and Schiller, as the best Latin scholar, was chosen to welcome the newly appointed master "Winter" with some friendly words, it is said that he expressed himself in the significant terms, "We pupils "hope that *Winter* may favour us with a delightful *Spring*."

When fifteen years old, in 1774, he entered the "Karls-Schule," an Institution which, founded by the worthy Duke Charles Eugène, prepared its pupils gratuitously for all the higher professions of life, Theology excepted. Here he devoted himself to the study of Law; but, finding it too dry and uninteresting for the high and imaginative flow of his soul, he very soon relinquished this study to choose, in preference, the profession of his father, viz., Medicine. About this time Lavater, the celebrated physiognomist, visited the school for the purpose of practising his theories upon the pupils. In doing so, the learned man found all the propensities of a villain upon the noble brow of our embryo Poet.

It is said that the pedantic and narrow-minded discipline of the Karls-Schule, based, as it was, upon military regulations, unfavourably impressed itself upon the youth, and not only tended to make him *gauche*, stiff and ungraceful in his external appearance, but also laid an early foundation for that grave and melancholy feeling which, in after life, so often pervaded his soul. We do not believe in these assertions; on the contrary, we think that the firm, exact and military tone of the Institution was quite suited to frame and discipline the poetical digressions of his youthful imagination, and to call forth that manly, independent character which, at a later period, ornamented his life; for the very Karls-Schule, which took under her discipline the genius of a Schiller, nurtured, a few years later, under her training influence the artistic skill of a Dannecker and the scientific talent of a Cuvier. In this Institution Schiller pursued his medical

studies with zeal and perseverance. He wrote a dissertation on the connection between the animal and spiritual nature and, to prevent his mind from being entirely absorbed in his professional duties, he read, in his leisure hours, the works of Shakespeare, Rousseau, Plutarch, Lessing, Goethe and Shubart. The impressions which he drew from these works penetrated to the very core of his lofty spirit and, as the constraint under which he was still kept in his military prison-house became more and more unpleasant and irksome to him, he resorted to the fresh springs of his poetical genius, and poured out all the uneasiness of his heart in his first dramatic work, "The Robbers."

It is said by Macaulay, "No man can be a poet, or even enjoy "poetry, without a certain unsoundness of mind," if anything that gives so much pleasure ought to be called unsoundness.

We do not know whether Macaulay is right in regard to the "fine frenzy" which he ascribes both to the reader and to the poet; but he is undoubtedly right if we apply his words to Schiller's first dramatic attempt, "The Robbers." "The Robbers," placing before our minds two brothers of opposite characters,—Charles, open, bold, hot-headed and prone to great passion; Francis, sly, cunning and capable of assuming the most perfect form of base and vicious hypocrisy,—is a Tragedy which, notwithstanding the great success it met with, contains in its structure and idea the youthful exaggerations and immature reflections of an inexperienced youth. We can easily imagine that a noble nature like Charles may be led away by slander and intrigue; but we can never suppose that a character like his could take a fancy to form a band of robbers, nor do we believe in his exaggerations when he says "that two men like himself could ruin the whole edifice of "the moral world."

His foe and brother, Francis, is no other than the highest degree of wickedness in the abstract. We specially say *in*

the abstract, as it is scarcely possible that there can exist on earth a *concrete* nature, endowed with all the malicious propensities of a character such as Francis. There are a great many beautiful passages in this tragedy which deserve our attention. We have selected two of them, proceeding from the mouth of Charles, to show the noble thoughts which animated his soul. The one is an exclamation, beginning with the words, "Why should man succeed in what he learns from the ant, and fail in that which assimilates him to the gods?" The other is a confession of remorse at the life he leads,—“My innocence, my innocence! See, all are gone forth to sun themselves in the glad rays of spring! Why must I alone imbibe the pains of hell from the joys of heaven? All so happy, so united by the spirit of peace! The whole world one family, and one Father above all, and I alone banished from the ranks of the pure! For me, no sweet name of child; for me, no fond glance of love; for me, no embrace of a beloved friend! I sink into the grave of destruction, leaning on the feeble reed of vice, amidst the flowers of a happy world, a howling Abaddon!”

The publication of "The Robbers" and its first performance in Manheim, where Schiller went to witness its reception on the stage, without having permission from the Duke (his benefactor), in whose service he was appointed military physician, drew upon him the displeasure of his patron, who not only placed him under military arrest for a fortnight, but also prohibited him, in the strictest terms, from ever again appearing before the public with his poetical productions.

Schiller would gladly have submitted to every privation and every punishment, provided that he only obtained permission to diffuse the treasures of his intellect through the world and to link his fame with those who will ever be named, both by contemporaries and posterity, with admiration and reverence. "The god-like gift of genius," which had all the power to make

him happy and through which he was to win the laurel wreath, now became to him the source of torture and martyrdom,— “condemned never to slake his thirst, though ever in sight of “the alluring fountain.” Our poet could, therefore, no longer tolerate the heavy weight laid upon the wings of his poetical soul and, as he could find no other outlet by which to escape from a position so distasteful and disagreeable to the sacred calling of his inspired breast, he severed, by a flight to Manheim, the ties which had hitherto bound him to his benefactor, the Duke Charles Eugène.

Here it was, in Manheim, that he first met his most stern and severe teacher, adversity. Lewes, in his *Life of Goethe*, says, “he (Goethe) never knew adversity. This alone must “have necessarily deprived him of one powerful chord which “vibrates through the life of genius. He never knew the gaunt “companionship of want, whispering its terrible suggestions. “He never felt the necessity to conquer for himself breathing-room in the world ; and thus all the feelings of bitterness, “opposition and defiance, which perplex the struggle of life, “were to him almost unknown and taught him nothing of that “aggressive and practical energy which these feelings develop “in impetuous natures.” It was otherwise with Schiller who, in Manheim, disappointed at the unredeemed promises of his influential friend Dalberg, suffered the utmost want and severest trials for the maintenance of his physical life. But, in the midst of this tempest, tossed about upon the troubled sea of need and privation, the skilful mariner directed his tender barque to the lonely village of Oggersheim where, under the mild influence of nature and the warm sympathies of his musical friend Streicher, he composed his second tragedy, “The “Conspiracy of Fiesco in Genoa.” With this piece, representing the downfall of a heroic nature carried away by the absorbing idea of unbounded ambition, Schiller opened the first series of his historical dramas which, at a later period,

immortalized his name and genius. "Fiesco," notwithstanding the inaccurate delineations of the various characters, is one of the greatest of the poet's works and must take its place amongst the best productions of German dramatic poetry.

The reception of this piece by the public and the press was not so favourable as that of "The Robbers;" and again, as want and privation stepped in to cloud his imagination and noble soul, the poet accepted the invitation of a widow friend, Frau Henrietta Wolzogen, with whose sons he had studied at the Karls-Schule, to spend some time upon her estate, at Bauerbach, in Thuringia. In this secluded place Schiller enjoyed that tranquillity of soul so necessary for the healthy development of spiritual life. The delightful and romantic scenery around impressed him with all the charms of nature; his mind expanded more and more at the contemplation of the great beauty pervading the universe; and, in order to show the different spirit prevailing through harmonious nature and discordant society, he completed, in this lovely place, his third tragedy, "Cabal and Love." In this work he endeavoured to prove that littleness of soul will always be defeated by greatness of soul. He was the first who was bold enough, in this production, to claim that nobility of soul should always have the preference over nobility of birth; notwithstanding the fact that society, in most instances, acts in opposition to principles proclaiming such an important law of humanity.

The publication of this play again drew upon him the attention of Dalberg who, in a flattering note, recalled him to Manheim for the express purpose of appointing him his theatre poet. In a country like England, where theatrical performances are not generally sanctioned by the people, such an appointment might be easily undervalued; but, in Germany, where the stage is considered as a medium through which the moral and national spirit is strengthened, and where, centuries ago, the great Luther himself approved of

religious, social and school dramas, re-echoed at the present time by the learned historian Gervinus, who asserts the theatre to be "the proper constitutional edifice for the realm "of poetry," such an appointment as theatre poet was both an honourable and a much coveted vocation.

Schiller, like Shakespeare under similar circumstances, not only acquired, through this office, a practical knowledge of theatrical life, but he also improved his ideas of the stage, and formed, by personal acquaintance, or by written correspondence, some of those alliances which have shed so much lustre on the hallowed name of friendship. As the sensitive poet, however, could no longer stand to battle with the arrogance of vain actors and actresses; and, as his dramatic taste was greatly at variance with the performances exhibited upon the Manheim stage, he very soon quitted an engagement which had so often put him in torture when witnessing the degradation of his poetic ideals. He left Manheim for Leipzig and, soon after his arrival in this city, entered into a bond of friendship with Körner, which union, forming a new tie of affection, contributed much to the completion of his earthly dreams. Encouraged by Körner and his amiable wife, Schiller finished at Dresden his celebrated "Don Carlos," a drama in which the poet places the youthful and noble-thinking Don Carlos in opposition to the blind and bigoted ideas of his father, Philip II of Spain. When this stern and unfeeling monarch ventured to marry the very princess to whom his son was affianced; and when, afterwards, he endeavoured to engraft, by sword and Inquisition, his religious fanatical ideas upon the Protestant spirit of his people in the Netherlands; then the loss of his own son and the emancipation of the Netherlands from the Spanish yoke showed him how dangerous it was to violate the rights of individual man and to offend the public spirit of a country by interfering with its religious convictions.

The most attractive character in the play is the Marquis of Posa who, closely united by ties of friendship to Don Carlos, is placed between father and son in order to impress, upon the former, not to sever affection and intellect from its natural growth; and, upon the latter, not to squander away the blessings of intellect and affection in passive idleness and morbid sentimentalism. One of the finest scenes of this drama is that in which Posa speaks to the king in favour of expansion of intellect and freedom of thought,—

“ By the Almighty Power !
 “ Restore us all you have deprived us of,
 “ And, generous as strong, let happiness
 “ Flow from your Horn of Plenty. Let
 “ Man's mind ripen in your vast Empire ;
 “ Give us back all you have taken from us,
 “ And become, amidst a thousand kings,
 “ A King indeed ! ”

“ Renounce the mimicry of god-like powers which levels us to nothing. Be, in truth, an image of the Deity himself. One pen-stroke now, one motion of your hand, can new create the earth, can grant us liberty of thought. Look round on all the glorious face of nature—on freedom it is founded. See, how rich through freedom it has grown ! The great Creator bestows upon the worm its drop of dew, and gives free-will a triumph in abodes where loose corruption reigns. O ! devote yourself to your own people's bliss ; restore the prostrate dignity of human nature, and let the subject be, what once he was, the end and object of the monarch's care, bound by no duty but a brother's love ; and, when mankind is to itself restored, roused to a sense of its own innate worth, when freedom's lofty virtues proudly flourish, then, sir, you have made your own wide realms the happiest in the world. Would you, alone, in Europe, fling yourself down before the rapid wheel of destiny, which rolls on in its incessant course, and seize its spokes with human arm ? Vain thought ! Already thousands have your kingdom fled in joyful poverty. The honest Burgher, for his faith exiled, was once your noblest subject. See ! with a mother's arm Elizabeth welcomes the fugitives, and Britain blooms in rich luxuriance from our country's arts.”

The publication of this drama was hailed with general approbation. A great many eminent men, and amongst them Wilhelm von Humboldt, expressed themselves upon it in the most laudatory terms.

Schiller, flattered by the reception with which it was greeted, and afterwards cherished by the quickening and elevating voice of true friendship, composed, in these hours of happiness, his celebrated “ Hymn to Joy,”—a hymn, which has dispelled from many afflicted souls the dreary clouds of darkness in

which they were enveloped. This Hymn, "god-like spark," was set to music by several composers and, according to Paleski, Beethoven, in his ninth symphony, illustrated this idea. "When the music, languishing before the loving sensations in the master's heart, struggled to find speech and expression, it could find none more powerful than joy—"god-like spark!"

Animated by these feelings of joy, Schiller left Dresden for Weimar, thinking, in this metropolis of intellect, to enter into closer relationship with Goethe, Wieland and Herder, who resided there, and thus to attract the attention of the Duke, Karl August, who had lately conferred upon him the title of councillor and was known to be the friend and protector of poets and other literary men. But, unfortunately, on his arrival in Weimar, the Duke and Goethe had started for Italy; Wieland, of whom he had heard so much, displeased him by the light and frivolous tone of his conversation and writings; but Herder, a struggling nature like himself, possessing a stern and dignified demeanour, attracted him by the manliness, power and originality of his ideas. Schiller went often to hear Herder preach and said his sermons always pleased him more than any he had ever heard; but, though here he felt a great attraction, yet, in general, the social and intellectual atmosphere in Weimar did not quite come up to his previous expectations. The stiff court etiquette and aristocratic demeanour of all with whom he became acquainted had diffused a spirit of coldness and formality through the domestic life of the most distinguished families in the town. On this account he went to Rudolstadt and there engaged himself to a young lady, Lotte von Leugefeldt, whose deep affection afterwards shed so many happy moments over his gloomy and chequered life. Schiller felt more than any one else the pure joys of a tranquil home-life. In his letters to Lotte he confesses his delight at seeing the seeds of joy and love still living uninjured within his heart, to

ripen into blossoms by the warmth of her affection. But there was one thing which marred the happy anticipations of his future, the thought of his inability to "maintain a wife." "To be entirely happy," he writes to Lotte, "I must live in a condition free from care and anxiety and not depend on the productions of my brain." On this account Schiller was anxious to find a more lucrative position and as, in the meantime, the "Revolt of the Netherlands," an historical work of his, was published, Goethe availed himself of the occasion to secure to the poet a professorship of history at the university of Jena. This appointment led to his marriage and to a life of domestic felicity of which he, at a later period, says, "When I am overwhelmed with occupation it makes me happy to know that my wife is near me and that her love and care hover around me. The youthful purity of her soul and the fervour of her love inspire me with a degree of peace and harmony which, in my hypochondriacal state, it would be otherwise impossible for me to attain."

Schiller threw all the fire of his soul into his historical lectures, he attracted the students by the magic power of his heaven-born countenance and by the flow of his eloquence and, in order to allow his thoughts a larger scope for reflection and development, he penetrated with all the zeal of a scholar into the profound philosophy of Kant. A severe illness, the forebodings of painful and severe sufferings which, at a later period, terminated in his death, interrupted his philosophical studies; but, fortunately, the loving devotion of his wife, the calmness of his mind impressed with philosophical ideas, and the close intimacy with his friend Wilhelm von Humboldt, who, with his classical spirit, introduced him to the rich intellectual treasures of the ancients, were potent means to promote his gradual recovery and to call forth again in him that powerful animation of soul which found its best expression in his poetical creations.

About this time Schiller and Goethe became fast friends ; topics of mutual interest formed the subject of an animated correspondence between them and led to that genuine friendship which brought all their sterling virtues and eminent talents into inseparable union. Goethe alludes to this happy intercourse in one of his letters to his friends, saying, "It was " a glad spring to me, in which all seeds shot up and gaily " blossomed in my nature." The first fruits of this alliance were Schiller's letters on the æsthetic education of man, in which he points out that "it is the duty of man to embellish and " invest his existence with the graceful and the beautiful, for, " while they reconcile external nature to our inward percep- " tion, they are our true deliverers from the dominion of the " senses, which they do not, indeed, subvert, but place in " affinity to that of the spirit." Moreover, as both the poets joined in publishing a literary paper, called the "Horen," and, as Schiller's idealistic and Goethe's realistic nature are the only two directions in the human mind which, in their mature development and union, lead to perfection ; so they strove to effect a reconciliation in their poetical life between the contrasts of reason and sensuousness, nature and culture, ideality and reality. But, when their efforts to expand the educational standard of the nation met with no encouragement, when they saw that the tastes of the multitude were depraved and the literary opinions of professional men without greatness of judgment or depth of sentiment, they relinquished the publication of the "Horen" in order to reappear before the public with a poetical Almanac, in which they, in short satirical epigrams, called "Xenien," made a deadly onslaught against everything that was common, prosy, superficial and unpoetical. Through this warfare they offended a great many second-class talents ; and men like Nicolai, Lavater, Reichardt and Schlegel for a long time smarted under the wounds which they received. At this period, animated by his historical work, the "Thirty

“Years’ War,” Schiller began to compose his greatest dramatic production, “Wallenstein.” In this play the poet places his hero between the two absorbing ideas of human passion, revenge and ambition. The great soldier who won so many battles for his Emperor was, after his first brilliant and successful campaign, ungraciously dismissed by his sovereign at the Diet of Regensburg; and when, later on, after several defeats of the imperial regiments, he was again requested to place himself at the head of the army, he willingly followed the voice which called him back to his former dignity and rank, but not without the firm determination to revenge himself for the insults he had suffered. Yielding to his ambitious spirit he led over his army to his enemies, the Swedes, thus purposing to emancipate himself from the Emperor and become royal master of Bohemia. These feelings of ambition were nurtured in Wallenstein by his strong belief in the stars, those types of fatality, as proved by the following observations of the Duchess, his wife:—

“When his ambition was a genial fire, not that consuming fire which now it is, the Emperor loved him, trusted him, and all he undertook could not be but successful, but, since that ill-starred day at Regensburg, which plunged him head-long from his dignity, a gloomy uncompanionable spirit, unsteady and suspicious, has possessed him, and turned his heart and best affections to all those cloudy sciences which have never yet made happy him who followed them.”

But, as it often happens that the very means through which we sin are the instruments by which we are punished, so it was in this instance with Wallenstein. He pretended to advocate, when with the Emperor, the petition of his ambitious General, Butler, soliciting his sovereign to confer upon him the title of Count, but, in fact, he dissuaded him from doing so; and when this request, through Wallenstein’s double-dealing, was refused by the Emperor, and the petitioner at a later period was informed of the faithless conduct of his great protector, ambitious Butler, hurt in his innermost feelings, turned his whole heart into one

expression of revenge towards his deceptive friend and, afterwards, became the principal cause of his destruction. Thus we hear him exclaim,—

“The Duke was ever a great calculator, his fellow men were figures on his chess board, to move and place as his game required. Other men’s honour, dignity and good name did he shift like pawns, and made no conscience of. Still calculating, calculating still, and yet at last his calculation proves erroneous.”

In opposition to these two men, stimulated by ambition and revenge, the poet places before our eyes two other characters of a higher and nobler cast, characters which, in the person of Max Piccolomini and Thekla, combine in their thoughts and feelings the purest sentiments of love, truth and honor. The sterling principles of Max’s soul are revealed to us in his reply to his father, saying, “O! hadst thou always better thought of men, thou hadst then acted better; curs’d suspicion, unholy, miserable doubt; to him nothing on earth remains unavenged and firm who has no faith.”

Placed between his love for Wallenstein’s daughter, Thekla, and his pledged honour to his Emperor and Fatherland, Max tears himself away from the arms of love to follow the call of honour, strengthened in this resolution by the words of Thekla,—“Being faithful to thine own self, thou art faithful, too, to me. If our fates part, our hearts remain united.” We cannot better eulogise the character of Thekla than in the words of her own father, when he says, “Come here, my sweet girl, seat thee by me, for there is a good spirit on thy lips; a voice of melody dwells in thee which doth enchant the soul.”

The incessant mental labours which kept up a continual excitement in all the organs of his body exercised a fatal influence on Schiller’s hitherto delicate health. He was several times prostrated on a bed of sickness, and it was only owing to the unremitting care of his loving wife and sympathising friends that the sparks of life were so often

rekindled in him. Besides this, the pressure of household cares, occasioned by pecuniary embarrassment, cast many melancholy clouds over his lonely hours. Too sensitive and high-minded to reveal his straitened circumstances to the world, and too proud and independent to receive assistance from his friends, the poor poet fed the vulture of poverty in his consumptive breast. In such moments of mental and physical prostration he resolved, by various peculiar means, to raise his drooping spirits. It is said that the sight of crimson curtains animated his genial spirit. Goethe also tells us the following remarkable fact relating to our poet's life: he (Goethe) one day said to his friend Ekermann, "I called on Schiller and, not finding him at home, I seated myself at his writing table. I had not been seated long, when I felt a strange indisposition steal over me, and I nearly fainted. I did not know to what cause I should attribute this wretched state, until I discovered a dreadful odour issuing from a drawer near me. On opening it, I found, to my astonishment, that it was full of rotten apples; meanwhile his wife came in and told me that the drawer was always full of rotten apples, because the scent was beneficial, to Schiller and he could not live nor work without it." However, the germs of death, although deeply seated within his feeble body, did not prevent him from continuing his poetic labours. Soon after he had finished his "Wallenstein," his genial soul created the beautiful tragedy of "Mary Stuart." Schiller has been accused of showing too much sympathy in this tragedy with the heroine Mary Stuart, and it has been said that, in consequence of this favour, he became the advocate of religious principles which were foreign to his Protestant conscience. We could never understand how such imputations could be cast upon a man whose numerous writings were never biased by dogmatism or creed, but contain the purest expressions of sympathising humanity. We

should rather say that, through the fall of Mary Stuart, and her Roman Catholic principles, the poet placed himself on the side of Elizabeth, the enthusiastic defender of Protestant rights and convictions.

Indeed, it is absurd to accuse Schiller of having religious sympathies of a partial character; he, like every genuine poet, stands above all contending principles; and, if his sentiments were too strongly expressed in Mary's favour, he only shows, by this predilection, the compassion he has for a human being, so nobly constituted, falling by her weakness and impetuosity of heart. This weakness is evident from her own confession, in the following lines:—

“ The long atoned crime arises fresh
 “ And bleeding, from its lightly covered grave.
 “ My husband's restless spirit seeks revenge;
 “ No sacred bell, no host in priestly hands,
 “ Dismiss it to the tomb. I did not murder him,
 “ But it was known to me; I suffered it,
 “ And lured him with my smiles to death's embrace.”

Her impetuosity is revealed to us in the ensuing scene with Elizabeth. Instead of using the language of moderation, Mary gives full vent to the passionate emotions of her heart, insults her inveterate foe before her minion and thus precipitates her own ultimate fate. Thus we hear her exclaiming,—

“ My sins were human, and the faults of youth.
 “ Impulse of heart misled me. I have never
 “ Denied or sought to hide it. I despised
 “ All false appearances, as became a queen.
 “ The worst of me is known, and I can say
 “ That I am better than the fame I bear.
 “ Woe to you when, in time to come, the
 “ World shall draw the robe of honour
 “ From your deeds, with which the arch-hypocrisy
 “ Has veiled the raging flames of lawless court life.
 “ Virtue was not your portion from your mother;
 “ Well know we what it was which brought
 “ Her head upon the fatal block.”

What a lesson this scene teaches to all those who, in critical moments of life, give unbridled license to their tongue.

The academic atmosphere in Jena, with its learned but prosy professors, and the noisy and unpoetical life of wild pleasure-seeking students, no longer pleased the poet, whose nerves were irritable and excited and whose soul was yearning for congenial recreation and elevating impressions. For this reason, about the year 1800, he removed from Jena to Weimar, in order to live in the vicinity of intellect; to enjoy daily intercourse with Goethe and enliven his dramatic genius by often witnessing theatrical performances on the Grand Ducal Stage.

About this period the whole world was startled and interested in the second Prometheus—Napoleon, who, by the power of his military genius, not only smothered the raging flames of revolution, but also carried his sword into foreign countries. Schiller, anticipating, perhaps, in his prophetic mind, that the successful warrior might lead his troops for purposes of conquest into the sacred soil of his native land, favoured his nation, at the right hour, with two dramatic works. These were the "Maid of Orleans" and "William Tell," which, both in their spirit and tendency, fostered and awakened amongst the German people a spirit of the purest patriotism and contributed much, at a later period, to drive away the foe from the sacred home-steads of the people.

We do not fully enter into the historical facts and events upon which the "Maid of Orleans" is based. We only observe that, at the time when France, split into two parties, the Orleanists and Burgundians, lay prostrated at the feet of England; and Orleans, the last stronghold, was about to surrender itself to its foes, a peasant girl (Joan of Arc), inspired by a holy impulse, placed herself at the head of the dismayed army, raised the siege of Orleans, defeated the enemy and crowned her sovereign, Charles the tenth, at Rheims. Schiller made use of these historical materials to create from them the most interesting tragedy of modern times.

The love of country, so powerfully kindled in the maiden as to claim her whole devotion to warlike purposes, places her in conflict with her womanly mission, which consists in spreading out the blessings of peace, love and affection over the world.

Warlike propensities and womanly sentiments, however noble the cause may be, are so naturally opposed to each other that, where the one reigns, the other must necessarily take to flight. This we learn from Johanna and Montgomery, where the former, not yielding to the request of the young Welshman, to save his life, justifies his approaching death with the following words :—

Montgomery : “ O ! by love's sacred all-pervading power,
 “ To whom all hearts yield homage,
 “ I conjure thee ; I left behind a bride,
 “ Beauteous as thou, and rich in blooming grace.
 “ O ! if thyself dost ever hope to love ;
 “ If in thy love thou hopest to be happy ;
 “ Then ruthless sever not two gentle hearts,
 “ Together linked in love's most holy bond.

Johanna : “ Of love's bond, by which thou dost conjure,
 “ I know nothing, nor ever will I know
 “ His empty service. Defend thy life, for
 “ Death does summon thee !

Montgomery : “ It is hard in foreign lands to die unwept.”

If the Maid of Orleans had remained faithful to her vow, to renounce all earthly pleasures and to devote herself entirely to her patriotic work, she might have carried out her great and stern mission in harmony with those principles which she at first acknowledged. However, nature cannot part from itself. At a second encounter she meets the English officer Lionel, whom she is just going to kill when, on gazing into his face, she is seized with a sudden and deep-felt love which induces her to spare the enemy. This weakness sets her at variance with her mission. She loses the purity of her patriotic sentiments ; and, being taken prisoner for the holy cause she defended, dies, uttering the words, “ Brief is the sorrow, endless is the joy.”

What induced Schiller to put the highest ideals of patriotism in the breast of a woman we do not know. It was, perhaps, his intention to place before his nation, after they had witnessed so many representations of false patriotism in the French Revolution, a pure, virgin-like example of real national grandeur in the Maid of Orleans. But, again, thinking that the feelings of patriotism cannot excite such a powerful and idealistic expression in the heart of a woman as it does in that of a man, he composed his last and most attractive work, "William Tell." In this drama, he proclaims the triumph of individual liberty over all the machinations of tyranny. Moreover, it seems to us as if he, through this production, intended to impress upon his countrymen the truth that every national idea gains the victory over inimical obstructions by unity and strength of purpose. But, for the accomplishment of these great aims, it is necessary that every country should possess women imbued with the spirit of Gertrude, who exclaims,—

"Many a time, as we sat spinning, in the winter nights, my sisters and myself, the people-chiefs were wont to gather round our father's hearth, to read the old imperial charter, and to hold sage converse on the country's weal; then, heedfully, I listened, marking well what, or how, a wise man thought, a good man wished, and garnered up their wisdom in my heart."

And, in union with this spirit of Gertrude, the patriotic spirit of all times stands in need of men impressed with the beautiful words of Attinghausen,—

"Deluded boy; despise the land that gave thee birth?
 "The day will come, when thou, with burning tears,
 "Wilt long for home and for thy native hills.
 "O! potent is the spell that binds to home.
 "No, no, the cold false world is not for thee;
 "In the foreign land, with thy true heart,
 "Thou wilt for ever feel a stranger amongst strangers."

With this drama Schiller concluded his poetical career. His feeble body was entirely exhausted by his mental labours and excitement; he needed stimulants to keep up his shattered constitution; and yet, often in the midst of the most painful sufferings, his great and genial soul dwelt in soothing meditation

upon the love of his wife and family and upon new poetical conceptions with which his teeming mind supplied him so abundantly.

Under the influence of some alarming symptoms Schiller entered the spring season of 1805, when, on the 6th May, a rheumatic fever threw him on a sick-bed, from which ruthless death released him on the following day. A few hours before he expired he expressed his desire once more to see the setting sun. The curtain was drawn aside and, gazing with cheerful and serene countenance, he thus bestowed on Nature his last farewell kiss; vernal breezes wafted his immortal soul to the shores of the infinite spirit, beyond the confines of this terrestrial world.

I must crave your pardon for having protracted my paper to an unusual length; and yet, notwithstanding this, I have only given you a scanty and meagre sketch of the Poet's Life and Works. I have not mentioned to you his romances, ballads and songs, which will live for ever in the heart of every German. Amongst these songs none stands higher than the "Song of the Bell," in which the poet, according to the Latin motto, "*vivos voco, mortuos plango, fulgura frango*,"—I call to the living, I lament the dead, I control the lightning,—describes, in poetical and refined language, all the joys and afflictions of toiling man. Everything that beautifies the life of hard-working man,—as home-happiness, love of liberty, moderation and piety,—sounds in pleasant accents on our ears. German critics have very often compared Schiller with Raphael, the great painter. No artist, they say, has painted the human face with a grace and majesty like Raphael's, and no poet has endowed the soul of man with such celestial charms as Schiller; as the spirit of physical beauty rests upon the works of the one, so the spirit of moral beauty pervades the poetry of the other.

We fully assent to this opinion and, by force of it, we

strongly advocate the study of Schiller's works in houses and families where it is the desire of parents to awaken in their children a love for sound principles and refining ideas. Some passages from Schiller far out weigh all that modern rubbish and exciting literature which we so often find in the hands of our youth and maidens ; besides, if life be more than an existence spent in common pursuits and trivial aspirations ; if it be a divine gift, containing in its substance the joys and blessings of humanity, then, we do not know any man who has given these ideas a more congenial expression than Schiller the poet,

“ Who digged and delved through light and gloom ;
 “ And digged and delved till he found a tomb.”

With this we conclude the life of our immortal bard, whose endeavours tended to invest the heart of man with the charms of love and harmony ; and who, at the commencement of this century, drew from his melodious soul the elevating words,—

“ To the heart's still chamber, deep and lonely,
 “ Must thou flee from life's tumultuous throng ;
 “ Freedom in the land of dreams is only,
 “ And the beauteous blooms alone in song.”