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# THE OPEN COURT

Devoted to the Science of Religion, the Religion of Science,  
and the Extension of the Religious Parliament Idea.

FOUNDED BY EDWARD C. HEGELER

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GOETHE  
BY RUMPF

*Frontispiece to The Open Court.*

# THE OPEN COURT

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## GOETHE IN ENGLISH LITERATURE\*

BY ROBERT MORSS LOVETT

TO be all things to all men has not been generally accepted as a counsel of perfection. The implication is usually that of accommodation, voluntary submission, even hypocrisy on the part of the active subject. There is a sense, however, in which such a description implies abundance in the subject, as contrasted with the limitations of those he addresses. All things are too many for the individual everyman. He accepts what he can, and if his grasp is inadequate his gratitude is none the less sincere. This is of course true of the recognition of genius in every age and every land. It is singularly true of the history of the appreciation of Goethe in England. Goethe was himself a changing and developing genius. The progress from *Goetz von Berlichingen* and *Die Leiden des Jungen Werthers* to the second part of *Faust* is one of the most amazing known to us. When to this are added the personal limitations, prejudices, enthusiasms and aberrations of his early English readers, we have in criticism a problem which might be described in mathematics as the functions of a complex variable.

For one thing, most of the Englishmen who read Goethe during his lifetime were not primarily critics but independent men of letters, themselves endowed with creative genius. Scott, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, De Quincey, above all Carlyle, had their own ideas about art and life. With the exception of Shelley, who seems to have understood Goethe by intuition, the truest view of Goethe in England was that of the humble diarist, Henry Crabb Robinson, who spent the years 1800-1805 in Germany, part of the time at Jena, an easy walk from Weimar. There is something of the engaging frankness of the English school boy in his account of a reception: "I had said to Seume that I wished to speak with Wieland and look at Goethe—and I literally and exactly had my

\*Read at the Goethe Centennial Celebration at the University of Chicago, March 8-9, 1932.

desire. My sense of his greatness was such that, had the opportunity offered, I should have been incapable of entering into conversation with him; but as it was I was allowed to gaze on him in silence." Later Robinson had more than one conversation. He had the advantage of his more famous contemporaries in knowing German really well. After his return to England he was indefatigable in urging the merit of the great German on his friends, especially the recalcitrant Lake Poets.

Before Robinson went to Jena, however, Goethe had passed through the first phase of his career in England. That phase began with *Werther*, which, on its publication in 1774, became a European sensation, rivalling *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, bringing reënforcement to the sentimental novel by striking a new and powerful note of *Weltschmerz*, starting anew the discussion of the morality of suicide, and releasing a fountain of tears. *Werther* was translated into English from the French in 1779, and at once received the sincere flattery of imitations, sequels, and parodies, the last of which continued until Thackeray wrote his famous ballad.

At the close of the eighteenth century Edinburgh had a more cosmopolitan culture than London; literary relations were sustained with both France and Germany. It is interesting to note that on April 21, 1788, the famous Henry Mackenzie, author of *The Man of Feeling* and head of the English sentimental school, delivered an address before the Royal Society of Edinburgh, in which he eulogized *Werther*, and also brought before his audience the German dramas of the "Sturm und Drang" movement, including three of Goethe's. It was these, rather than *Werther*, which excited his younger hearers, among whom was Walter Scott. Another youth of Edinburgh, Matthew Gregory Lewis, shortly after went to Germany to explore for himself the treasures of mediaeval romance, of which he was prodigal in the most Gothic of English novels, *The Monk*. He brought back the poems of Wieland, Bürger, and Goethe, some of which Scott, who had meanwhile made some way with the German language, translated, none more superbly than *Der Erbkönig*. It was by translations in Lewis' *Tales of Wonder and Terror* that Goethe became known to the English public as a lyric poet.

A few years later Lewis was busy finding a publisher for Scott's translation of *Goetz von Berlichingen*. This was not a success, but it put Scott on the trail of mediaeval historical romance which he



followed for many years. *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, his first success, with its slight thread of *diablerie* woven into a pattern of feudal society, is of the same genre. The old harper who sings the Lay, as Scott confessed, was suggested by the harper in *Wilhelm Meister*. Other reminiscences of Goethe appear in Scott's later novels. The description of the battle about Front-de-Boef's castle in *Ivanhoe* is quite similar to that in the third act of *Goetz*; and the revelation of Leicester to Amy Robsart in *Kenilworth* was recognized by Goethe himself as lifted from *Egmont*. He expressed some chagrin at the clumsy transformation of his Mignon into Fenella in *Peveril of the Peak*. When in their old age Goethe wrote to Scott, full of anxiety concerning Lord Byron's fate, Scott was greatly excited. "The Ariosto at once and almost the Voltaire of Germany!" he exclaimed—and how bitterly Carlyle must have resented the description. "Who could have told me thirty years ago that I should correspond and be on something like equal terms with the author of *Goetz*."

Byron also was flattered by Goethe's notice, and made much of a letter which he received from Weimar, at Leghorn, in 1823, although he had to depend on Shelley to read it to him. Byron and Shelley, the new generation of romanticists, had advanced beyond the early "Sturm und Drang" tragedy. To these poets of revolt, the Goethe of *Faust* was the significant figure. Matthew Gregory Lewis, who had acted as liaison officer between Goethe and Scott, fulfilled the same office for Byron. At the Villa Diodati, on Lake Geneva, where Byron and Shelley were staying in 1816, Lewis translated *Faust* aloud. Byron was writing *Manfred*, and although he vigorously denied the influence of *Faust*, it is, of course, unmistakable, especially in the first scene,—as indeed Byron admitted—and in *Manfred*'s speeches. None of Byron's earlier heroes had spoken with an utterance so penetrating, so eloquent. Byron's admiration of *Faust* was whole-souled. Medwin reports him as declaring, "I would give a hundred pounds to have a good translation of *Faust*, and the whole world to read it in the original." He continued to draw upon the masterpiece which he knew so imperfectly, for *Cain* and *The Deformed Transformed*. He wrote to Goethe a charming letter of dedication with *Marino Faliero*, he offered *Sardanapalus* at the same shrine "with the homage of a vassal to a suzerain," and dedicated *Werner* to him "by one of his humblest admirers." For his part, Goethe recognized Byron and

Scott as the two writers next himself in European significance. He spoke of Byron with unfailing enthusiasm, but among the many flowers of compliment there was one thorn: "Sobald er reflektirt ist er ein Kind." Yet one can be glad that in Euphorion, radiant child of Faust and Helena, Goethe had in mind the still young singer who died at thirty-six at Missolonghi.

Shelley had no personal relation with Goethe, and yet he was nearer to him in spirit than any other English poet. Unlike Byron, he triumphantly surmounted the barrier of language. Trelawney describes him at Pisa bent over the text of Goethe, dictionary in hand. "His eyes burned with an energy as terrible as that of the most avid seeker for gold." In a letter to John Gisborne, three months before his death, he wrote:

I have been reading over and over again *Faust*, and always with sensations which no other composition excites. It deepens the gloom and augments the rapidity of ideas. . . . The pleasure of sympathizing with emotions known only to few, although they derive their sole charm from despair, and the scorn of the narrow good we can obtain in our present state, seems more than to ease the pain which belongs to them. Perhaps all discontent with the *less* (to use a Platonic sophism) supposes the sense of a just claim to the *greater*, and that we admirers of "Faust" are on the right road to Paradise.

Shelley had nearly completed a prose translation of the first part of *Faust*—all that was known to him. His renderings of the "Prologue in Heaven" and the "Walpurgis Nacht" were the first in English poetry of any portion, and in a large poetic sense they remain the best. Perhaps he would have completed the translation but for the fact that such an undertaking was expected from Coleridge.

Any casual student of Goethe and Shelley will note certain superficial resemblances between them—their intellectual curiosity, shown in their interest in science, their eagerness for experience, their passion and their suffering. I cannot discover that Shelley read *Wilhelm Meister* or *Wahlverwandschaften*, yet his voice in "Epsychidion" is in unison with Goethe's:

I never was attached to that great sect,  
Whose doctrine is, that each one should select  
Out of the crowd a mistress or a friend,  
And all the rest, though fair and wise, commend  
To cold oblivion, though it is the code

Of modern morals, and the beaten road  
Which those poor slaves with weary footsteps tread  
Who travel to their home among the dead  
By the broad highway of the world, and so  
With one chained friend, perhaps a jealous foe,  
The dreariest and the longest journey go.

Both Goethe and Shelley began as extreme romanticists and both experienced the chastening and classic influence of Italy. M. Carré in his thorough and illuminating study, *Goethe en Angleterre*, points out the influence of *Faust* in the lyric fourth act of *Prometheus Unbound*, in the "Ode to Heaven," and in the Prologue to *Hellas*; and he bids us wonder whether Shelley by "one of the surprising intuitions of genius did not foresee the yet unexpressed thought of Goethe," whether Prometheus "who would drive out the phantoms of ignorance and bring to earth the great law of tenderness," who is himself set free by wisdom and by love, does not anticipate "the serene and optimistic solution of the Second Part of *Faust*."

The first wave of Goethean influence in England was attributable to *Werther* and the romantic dramas; the second, to *Faust*; the third to *Wilhelm Meister*. This *Bildungsroman*, or novel of culture, is aptly described by Carlyle's title: *The Apprenticeship of Wilhelm Meister*. Like *Faust*, *Wilhelm Meister* was in Goethe's mind for many years before the publication of the first part, *Meister's Lehrjahre*, in 1796. Its immediate reception in Great Britain was unfavorable. Few could read it, and except for Crabb Robinson it found no admirers. It was brought into English life and letters nearly thirty years after its birth by one of the most singular alliances in the history of literature, that between Carlyle and Goethe.

It has already been noted that Edinburgh was a center of German studies. Carlyle entered the University of Edinburgh in 1809, to study for the ministry. An increasing revulsion against the faith of his fathers led him to consider other openings into life, and it was while toying with the natural sciences that he learned German from a fellow student in order to read works on geology in that language. He read *Faust* in 1820, and wrote his essay for the *New Edinburgh Review*. He read *Wilhelm Meister* the next year, and the impact of the book upon him was overwhelming.

"I had at length after some repulsions," he wrote in his *Reminiscences*, "got into the heart of *Wilhelm Meister*,

and eagerly read it through; my sally out, after finishing, along the vacant streets of Edinburgh, a windless Scotch-misty Saturday night, is still vivid to me. Grand, surely, harmoniously built together, far seeing, wise and true. When, for many years, or almost in my whole life before, have I read such a book?"

With his mind fixed on becoming a man of letters and marrying Jane Welsh, Carlyle began to make serious use of his German studies for the English market. He wrote the *Life of Schiller*, but the more immediate appeal of Goethe as a master of life could not be denied. In 1822 he passed through the crisis which he has described in *Sartor Resartus*, in which he swung from the depths of "The Everlasting No" through "The Centre of Indifference" to "The Everlasting Yea." In his account of that tremendous conversion, written ten years later, he pays tribute to "the wisest of our time" and quotes frequently from the book of his wisdom; but of greater weight as evidence of influence is the outpouring of his admiration for Goethe in letters to Jane Welsh. In 1823 he signed a contract for the translation of *Wilhelm Meister*, which appeared the next year.

In spite of the fact that Carlyle recognized Goethe as the highest type of the man of letters, a supreme master of life, he found *Wilhelm Meister* hard going. The approach to life through the theater, of all the arts that with which Carlyle had least sympathy, bored him. The development of personality through free relations between men and women shocked him. His feeling for Goethe wavered frequently on this side idolatry. He wrote to James Johnstone:

There is poetry in the book, and prose, prose forever. When I read of players and libidinous actresses and their sorry pasteboard apparatus for beautifying and enlivening the "moral world" I render it into grammatical English—with a feeling mild and charitable as that of a starving hyena. The book is to be printed in winter or spring. No mortal will ever buy a copy of it. *N'importe!* . . . Goethe is the greatest genius that has lived for a century, and the greatest ass that has lived for three. I could sometimes fall down and worship him; at other times I could kick him out of the room.

When the task was finished and he wrote the preface, his doubts assailed him anew. He adopted a humbly ironic tone toward his public, recognizing that *Wilhelm Meister* was a new kind of fic-

tion. His preface served warning that "To the great mass of readers, who read to drive away the tedium of mental vacancy, employing the crude phantasmagoria of a modern novel, as their grandfathers employed tobacco and diluted brandy, *Wilhelm Meister* will appear beyond endurance weary, flat, stale and unprofitable."

As Carlyle foresaw, British criticism shied at *Wilhelm Meister*, much as in a more recent day it shied at *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* or *Ulysses*. De Quincey found Goethe's novel a mixture of silly mannequins and indecent episodes. Of Mignon he disposed summarily as "a daughter of incest." Jeffrey defended the book against the general censure of its coarseness and immorality, pointing out that it was no worse than *Tom Jones* or *Roderick Random*. He thought the chapter on Hamlet the most eloquent and profound analysis of that character that had been given to the world. He declared pontifically that there were some pages which might have been written in England; tolerantly, that it merited wonder rather than contempt. Amid platitude and bad taste he saw in it marks of "a permanent and universal genius." It remained for Wordsworth, however, to place the seal of British censure on the book. To Robinson he declared that Goethe "had not sufficiently clear moral perceptions to make him anything but an artificial writer." To Emerson he denounced *Wilhelm Meister* as "full of all manner of fornication. It was like the crossing of flies in the air. He had never gone further than the first part: so disgusted was he that he threw the book across the room." On Emerson's plea he promised to look at it again.

In spite of all, Carlyle's translation of *Wilhelm Meister* made its way into English literature, and become a part of it as no translation of *Faust* has ever done. To find a parallel we must go back to the great Elizabethan translations, to Hoby's *Courtier*, Urquhart's *Rabelais*, Florio's *Montaigne*. Matthew Arnold tells us that he read *Wilhelm Meister* with more pleasure in Carlyle's translation than in the original, and this in spite of limitations which no one could have perceived more clearly than Arnold himself. In fact, Carlyle had made *Wilhelm Meister* an English book. It was, moreover, properly the beginning of his own literary career—a broad foundation for the imposing edifice of his later works. His first creative flight was a novel in imitation of *Wilhelm Meister*, *Wot-*



*ton Reinfred* which came to nothing in itself, but furnished the biographical second book of *Sartor Resartus*.

Carlyle's correspondence with Goethe, disappointing as it is in subject-matter, was an immense encouragement to him through dark years. How eagerly the little household at Craigenputtock looked forward to a letter from Weimar and how the sun broke through the clouds when it came! As the accredited representative of Goethe in Great Britain, Carlyle enjoyed a distinction which was psychologically necessary to him, a sort of vicarious enjoyment of greatness until he could become a great man on his own account. He took the lead in rallying fifteen prominent British writers to memorialize Goethe on his eighty-second birthday—a compliment which Germany was to return on his own eightieth anniversary. He was Goethe's ambassador for the distribution of medals to British authors. In due course he translated *Meister's Wanderjahre*, and was urged to undertake *Dichtung und Wahrheit* and *Faust*. He welcomed Helena to England, and at Goethe's death he was the nation's chief mourner.

On the appearance of Carlyle's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, a controversy immediately broke out concerning its merits. De Quincey flatly declared that "this translation does not do justice to the original work—which, however worthless in other respects, is not objectionable in the way in which the translation is so." The controversy has extended to include Carlyle's knowledge of German and his entire conception of Goethe's thought. Carlyle in his preface stated that "Fidelity is all the merit I have arrived at. . . . In many points, both literary and moral, I may have wished devoutly that he had not written as he has done; but to alter anything was not in my commission. . . . Accordingly, except a few phrases and sentences, not in all amounting to a page, which I have dropped as evidently unfit for the English taste, I have studied to present the work exactly as it stands in German." Miss Olga Marx in a study of Carlyle's Translation of *Wilhelm Meister*, (offered as a dissertation for the doctor's degree at Johns Hopkins University), has made a thorough comparison of Carlyle's work with the original, and has indicated a great number of incorrect and inaccurate renderings, many of which were altered in the version of 1839. She gives a list of omitted passages, practically all of which were such as to offend Carlyle's sense of reserve in mat-

ers of sex. As might be expected, Philina is the chief victim of his censorship. One alteration is significant as showing his tendency to give a darker coloring than the original. The first stanza of the Harper's song: "Wer nie sein Brod mit Thränen ass" ends with the line, "Der Kennt euch nicht, ihr himmlischen Mächte," which Carlyle translates, "Ye gloomy powers." In the essay on Goethe in 1828 he changed the adjective to *unseen*, but he did not carry the change over into the 1839 edition of *Meister*.

Far more important is the question of Carlyle's understanding as revealed in his later writings of Goethe's thought. In 1830 he published the essay called *Characteristics*, which is properly the beginning of his original work. There the salutary doctrine of action is set forth: "The end of man is an Action, not a thought." In *Sartor Resartus*, four years later, the lesson of Lothario in *Wilhelm Meister*, "How precious, how important seems the duty which is nearest me," is expanded by Teufelsdröckh " 'Do the Duty which lies nearest thee,' which thou knowest to be a Duty! Thy second Duty will already have become clearer." Again the discovery of Lothario—"Here or nowhere is America" is glossed through thus by Teufelsdröckh: "The situation that has not its Duty, its Ideal, was never yet occupied by man. Yes here, in this poor miserable, hampered, despicable Actual, wherein thou even now standest, here or nowhere is thy Ideal!" The enlargement of the idea of activity is defined by Jarno in *Wilhelm Meister*: "It is advantageous for him (man) to learn to lose himself among a mass of men, that he learn to live for the sake of others, and to forget himself in an activity prescribed by duty. It is there that he first becomes acquainted with himself, for it is conduct alone that compares us with others." Teufelsdröckh responds: "Our works are the mirror wherein the spirit first sees its natural lineaments."

Goethe would not have accepted Action in Carlyle's sense, as a moral absolute, superior to thought. It is pointed out to Wilhelm Meister that each is necessary to the other. "There are few who at once have thought and capacity of Action. Thought expands, but lames; Action animates but narrows."

On another subject Carlyle undoubtedly wrested Goethe to his own uses. The reason for Carlyle's hatred of happiness is obscure. It was partly an inheritance from the Calvinism which he had renounced as a formal creed; it was partly irritation at the Utili-

tarian "greatest happiness principle"; it was partly his own bodily suffering, which he rationalized into a human necessity. At any rate, he seized upon the passage in Book VIII of *Wilhelm Meister* in which Jarno, describing further the Society for Education, says that they discarded those who came seeking a sort of recipe for comfort, directions for acquiring riches, etc. This and the brief passage in the *Wanderjahre* concerning the "Sanctuary of Pain" seem to have been the basis for the eloquent passage in "The Everlasting Yea": "What Act of Legislature was there that *thou* shouldst be Happy? A little while ago thou hadst no right to *be* at all. What if thou wert born and predestined not to be Happy but to be Unhappy?... Close thy *Byron*: open thy *Goethe*." But on opening Goethe what do we find? That in the society described by Jarno the formation of character was the chief concern, and that "none were advanced to the rank of Masters but such as clearly felt and recognized the purpose they were born for, and had got enough of practise to proceed along their way with a certain cheerfulness and ease"—qualities in which Carlyle was not supreme. The Sanctuary of Pain in *Meister's Wanderjahre* was a part of aesthetic training, far removed from Carlyle's "Worship of Sorrow" which implies a moral penance.

The corrective of the vice of happiness for Carlyle was renunciation—*Entsagen*. In *Sartor Resartus* he attributes to the "Wisest of our time" the sentence "It is only with Renunciation (*Entsagen*) that Life, properly speaking, can be said to begin." Professor MacMechan in his careful notes on *Sartor Resartus* confesses himself unable to find this sentence, but suggests one from *Dichtung und Wahrheit*—"Our physical as well as social life, morals, customs, worldly wisdom, philosophy, religion, indeed so many accidental events, all call us to this: 'that we should renounce.'" Clearly renunciation to Goethe was a limitation of choice among many opportunities in the interest of the direction of life and art. Its essence appears in the motto: "In der Beschränkung erst zeigt sich der Meister." It is again an aesthetic principle, and of course moral in that sense. Renunciation as a value in itself he would have repudiated. We cannot imagine Goethe increasing his fraction of life in value by lessening his denominator rather than by increasing his numerator; and the quotient of Carlyle's equation, unity divided by zero gives infinity, would have seemed to him



meaningless, a quantity incommensurable with anything to be found in the actual.

In fact, the difference between Goethe and Carlyle was deeper than these comparisons indicate. John Stuart Mill notes it as "one of the characteristic prejudices of the reaction of the nineteenth century against the eighteenth to accord to the unreasoning elements in human nature the infallibility which the eighteenth is supposed to have ascribed to the reasoning elements." Of this opposition of instinct or intuition to reason, Carlyle was in the front rank. His essay, "Characteristics," begins with a rhapsody upon the Unconscious. "The healthy know not of their health but only the sick." "The truly strong mind is nowise the mind acquainted with its strength; here as before the sign of health is Unconsciousness." "The healthy Understanding is not the logical, argumentative, but the Intuitive: for the end of Understanding is not to prove and find reasons, but to know and believe." Now Goethe in his "Sturm und Drang" period would perhaps have assented to this, but surely not the Goethe of *Wilhelm Meister*. There the effort is not to depreciate one element at the expense of the other, but to keep a balance between them. Wilhelm Meister's development, like his creator's, is constantly away from the vague, chaotic, romantic, toward the clear, the organic, the classical, which are the fruits of consciousness.

In the final year of his formative period Carlyle was growing away from Goethe and falling more and more under the influence of Fichte. From him he drew more precisely his concept of the divine idea revealed in nature and in human history. From Fichte he gained his view of the hero, the unconscious, intuitive vehicle of divine power. And in Fichte he found the frantic nationalism to which Goethe's cosmopolitanism stands in such large and luminous contrast. When Carlyle came to assemble his portraits of Heroes he found no place for Goethe, for Goethe was unthinkable in that gallery.

And yet after all, M. Carré is probably right in thinking that it was fortunate for English literature that Goethe should have as his chief apostle in Great Britain so national a figure as Carlyle. He was preeminently fitted to disarm the characteristic prejudices of the English. If his reasons for accepting Goethe in some respects exceeded, and in others fell short of, the truth, these could

be corrected. The main fact was that he did accept him—that his eloquence and enthusiasm carried Goethe far beyond the region of hostility and detraction, into that of appreciation, and made him a citizen of the republic of letters in England as Shakespeare had become a German citizen. No one but Carlyle could have done that.

The influence of Goethe on English literature continued through the nineteenth century in two streams, one of poetry, one of prose; the one springing from *Faust*, the other from *Wilhelm Meister*. The first has been traced by M. Carré in his *Goethe en Angleterre*, to which I must again express my obligation. The variations of the Faust theme which he notes are the *Paracelsus* of Browning, the *Festus* of Philip James Bailey, and the *Dipsychus* of Arthur Hugh Clough. Of Clough, a word should be said because more than the others he was indebted to Goethe, not only for literary inspiration, but also for spiritual guidance. Clough was of the generation at Oxford which listened to the voices recalled by Matthew Arnold in the introduction to his lecture on Emerson, the entrancing voice of Newman, the puissant voice of Carlyle, and "a greater voice still, the greatest voice of the century... the voice of Goethe." When Clough resigned his fellowship at Oriel, because he could not take orders in the Church of England, he gave the world, not an *Apologia*, but the long vacation pastoral, *The Bothie of Tober-Na-Vuolich*, written like *Hermann und Dorothea* in hexameters, and embodying with genial fervor, the lesson of daily efficiency. Elspeth is the Dorothea of the Scotch Highlands in whom Philip finds a model for women.

Yes, we should see them delighted, delighted ourselves in the seeing,

Bending with blue cotton gown skirted up over striped linsey-woolsey,

Milking the kine in the field, like Rachel, watering cattle,

Or, with pail upon head, like Dora beloved of Alexis,

Comely, with well-poised pail over neck arching soft to the shoulders

Comely in gracefullest act, one arm uplifted to stay it,

Home from the river or pump moving stately and calm to the laundry;

Ay, doing household work, as many sweet girls I have looked at, Needful household work, which some one, after all, must do,

Needful, graceful therefore, as washing, cooking and scouring,  
Or, if you please, with the fork in the garden uprooting potatoes.—

The second stream is that of the novel of apprenticeship to life, which Miss Suzanne Howe has followed in her exhaustive and interesting study, *Wilhelm Meister and His English Kinsmen*. The quest has always been a leading motive in fiction, from the romances of chivalry to the picaresque tale, from the progress of Bunyan's Christian toward eternal life, to the pilgrimage of *Wilhelm Meister* in search of the good life on earth. Miss Howe shows how generally the apprenticeship pattern was followed in England during the nineteenth century. Carlyle's own disciples, John Sterling and Charles Kingsley, offered examples, the latter varying the theme by choosing in Alton Locke a proletarian hero. George H. Lewes attempted the same form before writing his monumental *Life of Goethe*. Benjamin Disraeli and Edward Bulwer, beginning their literary careers a year or two after Carlyle's *Meister* was published, both adopted the pattern, and continued to return to it. Bulwer in the introduction to *Ernest Maltravers* notes that: "In *Wilhelm Meister* the apprenticeship is rather that of theoretical art. In the more homely plan that I set before myself, the apprenticeship is rather that of practical life." It is surely a strange delusion that could see in *Ernest Maltravers* a closer approach to life than in *Meister*. George Meredith knew his Goethe from his early school days in Germany, and was moreover of the great school which saw in consciousness the important element of life, and in the application of intelligence to human affairs the only fruitful way of dealing with them. Some of Meredith's lines have the ring of Goethe's maxims: "Never was earth misread by brain," and "More brain, O Lord, more brain!" Meredith too practised the apprenticeship novel in *Richard Feverel* and *Evan Harrington*.

Miss Howe does not include *The Way of All Flesh* among the apprentice novels, perhaps because Butler had so definitely a militant purpose. It seems to me, however, a perfect example of the transposition of the theme from a milieu of culture to one dominated by science. Clearly Ernest Pontifex and Wilhelm Meister have the same problem: to escape from the commonplace, to break through constricting environments, clerical or commercial, and to become freemen of the world. To *The Way of All Flesh* is due the re-

vival of the apprentice novel in our own century, in Maugham's *Of Human Bondage*, in Walpole's *Fortitude*, in Beresford's "Jacob Stahl" trilogy, in Wells's *New Machiavelli*, in Swinnerton's *Young Felix*, and how many others! in which the hero, of no greater personal distinction than Wilhelm Meister, whom Carlyle called a milksop, by experimenting with life, by trial and error, succeeds in developing character sufficient to stand against the blows of fortune, and in fitting himself to his environment, in the spirit of Lothario: "Here or nowhere is America."

Rather oddly, M. Carré neglects the truest and most powerful exponent of Goethe in England in the later nineteenth century—Matthew Arnold, to whom he gives but a scant page. Arnold revered Goethe above all his masters except Wordsworth. In his letters and essays references to Goethe are almost as frequent and in a way more intimate than to the English poet. Although Arnold was but ten years old when Goethe died, and probably never heard his name in the austere household of the Master of Rugby, he came to have a personal feeling for the older poet, an unexpected vein of sentiment in one whose affections were narrowly domestic. From Rome he wrote to his mother of seeing the graves of Shelley and Keats, "and—what interested me even more—that of Goethe's only son. . . . The short inscription must certainly have been by Goethe himself. How I feel Goethe's greatness in this place!" In his gaily-larded youth he wrote to his wife that he had caught a glimpse of Mlle. von Arnim, "the daughter of Bettina, Goethe's friend, who is said to be as charming as her mother. . . . very handsome and striking looking." Again, when nearly sixty, he speaks of returning from the Alps by way of Frankfort, "where I want to have another look at the house where Goethe was born."

These touches of sentiment aside, however, the doctrine of Arnold was that of Goethe, modified for the palate of the British Philistine. Indeed it was specifically designed to correct the false readings of Goethe by Carlyle. To the latter's praise of activity as an absolute good in itself Arnold replied that we should not be so bent on acting and instituting as to forget that "acting and instituting are of little use, unless we know how and what we ought to act and institute." To Carlyle's extreme Hebraism Arnold opposed Hellenism. There can be no doubt which of his disciples Goethe would have approved. Arnold's conception of culture as

the pursuit of our total perfection is one which Goethe would have accepted, although the means—"getting to know the best that has been thought and said in the world"—would seem to him too narrowly literary.

M. Carré complains that Arnold lacked artistic sense. It is true that his great inferiority to Goethe appears in his lack of sensitiveness to the fine arts other than literature, and his consequently limited view of the artist's character. Yet in his essay on "A French Critic of Goethe" he corrects M. Scherer's unfavorable view of *Goetz von Berlichingen*, and defends the lyrics from the charge "that Goethe has corrected and retouched them until he has taken all the life out of them." His own lyric poetry shows evidence of the spell cast by Goethe. What moved him most in *Wilhelm Meister* as translated by Carlyle was the poetry, the eloquence, especially of the Youths' dirge over Mignon. His acceptance of Goethe excluded only the Second Part of *Faust*.

It is true, Arnold emphasized in Goethe what he thought his age chiefly needed. He found Goethe "the greatest poet of modern times, not because he is one of the half dozen human beings who in the history of our race have shown the most signal gift for poetry, but because....he was at the same time, in the width, depth and richness of his criticism of life, by far our greatest modern man." He adopts Goethe's own verdict on his work of liberation: "'Through me the German poets have become aware that as man must live from within outwards, so the artist must work from within outwards.'" He adds "Goethe's profound imperturbable naturalism is absolutely fatal to all routine thinking: he puts the standard, once for all, inside every man instead of outside him: when he is told, such a thing must be so, there is immense authority and custom in favor of its being so....he answers with Olympian politeness, 'But is it so? is it so to me?'" This is a principle which Arnold learned from Goethe, and which appears in various forms in his writings: for example, "Culture is an inward working" and "the secret of Jesus" is that "the Kingdom of Heaven is within you."

To Matthew Arnold, Goethe was the physician of an age of disillusionment, of uncertainty, of revolution which threatened to become dissolution. This is the character which he gives him in the "Memorial Verses":



When Goethe's death was told, we said:  
 Sunk, then, is Europe's sagest head.  
 Physician of the iron age,  
 Goethe has done his pilgrimage.  
 He took the suffering human race,  
 He read each wound, each weakness clear;  
 And struck his finger on the place,  
 And said: Thou ailest here, and here!  
 He look'd on Europe's dying hour  
 Of fitful dream and feverish power;  
 His eye plunged down the weltering strife,  
 The turmoil of expiring life—  
 He said: The end is everywhere,  
 • Art still has truth, take refuge there!

It is noteworthy that Arnold, lacking artistic sense as he did, was the first Englishman to call attention to the predominantly aesthetic quality of Goethe's teaching.

It is through a survey of what English writers have found in Goethe, of what he has meant to them, that we can come to a conception of what we find in him today, of what he means to us. To the Romantic poets he was the liberator, triumphantly setting the truth of human experience against the constraining and deforming weight of custom and tradition. And surely no need is greater today than freedom—freedom from what Arnold calls "routine thinking" in the old commonplaces of respectability, possession, partisanship, nationalism—the superstitions of an order that passes. To Carlyle, he revealed the stimulating power of action, especially social action. We find the lesson of Goethe uttered once more in the words of our leading American philosopher: "Shared activity is the greatest of human goods" and "There is no mode of action so rewarding as concerted consensus of action." But to Carlyle he was more than this. He was "the supreme poet who reveals to us glimpses of the unseen but not unreal world, that so the Actual and the Ideal may again meet together, and clear Knowledge be again wedded to Religion, in the life and business of men." To Arnold he was the critic of life, pointing the way to the harmonious development of the individual, to the application of art to life, to the healing of society and the nations through culture—the universal organization of conscious intelligence and good will.

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Today we commemorate the death of Goethe. It is fitting that the last words should be those of Carlyle, written one hundred years ago.

And now we turn back into the world, withdrawing from this new-made grave. The man whom we love lies there: but glorious, worthy; and his spirit yet lives in us with an authentic life. Could each here vow to do his little task, even as the Departed did his great one; in the manner of a true man, not for a Day, but for Eternity! To live, as he counselled and commanded, not commodiously in the Reputable, the Plausible, the Half, but resolutely in the Whole, the Good, the True:

“I'm Ganzen, Guten, Wahren resolut zu leben!”