

THE
OPEN
COURT

Goethe Centennial Number

JUNE

1932

Vol. 46

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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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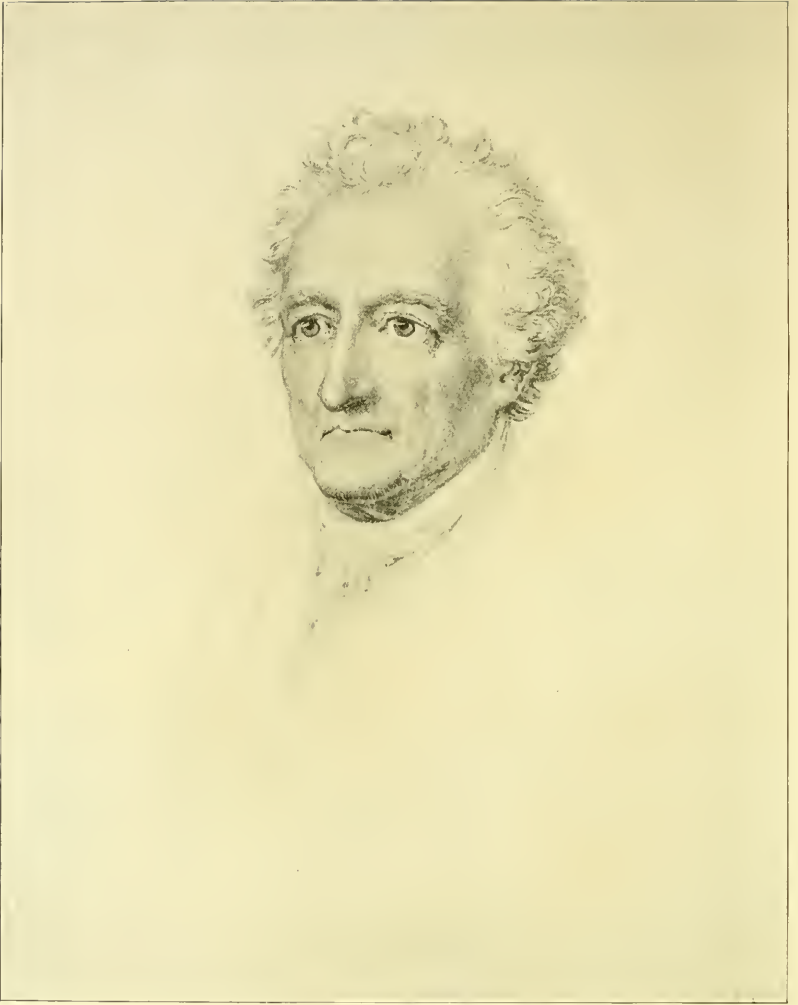
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GOETHE IN 1832
Drawn by C. A. Schwerdgeburth

Frontispiece to The Open Court

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GOETHE CENTENNIAL

ADDRESS OF WELCOME

BY ROBERT MAYNARD HUTCHINS
President of the University of Chicago

I have been asked to welcome you this evening, and if possible to welcome you as Goethe would have welcomed you. My embarrassment is caused by the fact that Goethe spoke German. In that regard I may apply to myself the words that Mephistopheles spoke to God:

“Mein Pathos brächte dich gewisz zum Lachen,
Hätt'st du dir nicht das Lachen abgewöhnt.”

Nevertheless, in greeting you as Goethe would have greeted you, it seemed to me appropriate to begin as Goethe began:

“Ihr naht euch wieder, schwankende Gestalten.”

But this seemed rather less than complimentary. In the effort to find something nice about the company I hit on:

“Die schlechteste Gesellschaft lässt dich fühlen,
Dasz du ein Mensch mit Menschen bist.”

This was even worse. I turned the pages rapidly and came to our slogan for this evening:

“Verweile doch, du bist so schön.”

This applies to the present moment; it applies to you, though I suppose we must then change it to read:

“Verweilen Sie, Sie sind so schön.”

This is a great occasion for the University. We are proud to participate in a tribute in which the whole country joins to the great and universal genius of our age, the man who perhaps more than any other has influenced the thought of modern times. We are proud of the scholars who have worked here on the thought and

poetry of Goethe. We are proud of the contributions they have made. We are proud to share with the city and with the nation in this celebration in honor of "the wisest of mankind."

And as for me, although like all university presidents "Ich bin der Geist der stets verneint," as I think back now to the time when at the age of sixteen I first read *Faust*, I may say in the same school-boy accent that I then acquired:

“Ein Schauer faszt mich, Träne folgt den Tränen,
Das strenge Herz, es fühlt sich mild und weich;
Was ich besitze, seh' ich wie im weiten,
Und was verschwand, wird mir zu Wirklichkeiten.”