

## GOETHE AND THE GERMAN SPIRIT

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**I**N THE period between February 22nd. and March 22nd. the world is commemorating two of its greatest characters. George Washington, the man of action and Wolfgang Goethe, whom your great philosopher Santayana termed the wisest of mankind. How much meaning may be placed in the conjunction of these two names! "This bright reflected glory pictures life."

We are especially grateful in these times of stress and strain to have a community of interest in the possession of great men. Our revered President von Hindenburg led the celebration in honor of your great hero and your country, which has at all times given due recognition to real greatness, is now honoring Goethe everywhere.

As the German representative in this beautiful city of Chicago, I wish to thank first of all the University of Chicago for arranging for my great countryman such an impressive celebration, in which the foremost scholars and artists are participating. It is impossible for me to imagine that a more beautiful task could be assigned to the representative of a foreign country than to be permitted to participate in such a celebration, and to be asked to bear witness before such an audience as this, to his faith in the idol of his country. Therefore, I desire to thank the President of the University and my dear friend, Professor Schütze, with all my heart.

The invitation to address you has been a cause for enriching my life since it induced me again to delve into the works of Goethe. I visited in the course of the year the sanctuaries consecrated to Goethe in the cities of Frankfurt-on-the-Main, Weimar and Leipzig and in these serious times I gained courage and inspiration in the study of Goethe's works and in reading commentaries, such as those by Simmel, Gundolf, Ludwig, Carlyle, Emerson, Santayana, Neville, Brown, and Carus of Chicago, in whose book there is so much deep love for his subject. Still I must beg of you not to expect any new learned discoveries. All I can say is that I bring a deep love for my task and a deep love for my country.

## I. "THE ZEITGEIST."

Man rises to greater heights as the result of the struggle of conflicting polaric forces within him and about him. Thus in Goethe's mind the events of the world were reflected and following this plan we may consider for a while the spiritual world into which he was born, and especially the German world. With this background we may regard characteristic features of his intellectual development. Goethe's conception of our daily and ever-recurring task is to bring harmony in the numerous inner conflicts which threaten forever to tear us apart. Such is the conflict between the poles, Daimon and Genius, between the natural instincts and the intellectual inhibitions, between subjective desires and wishes and our objective experience, between the will and perception, between the *élan vital* and the ratio, between biocentric and logocentric forces, between nature and spirit. Truly, there are no contrasts in us which rule our life or are more important for our progress and our fate. The greater the contrasts, the more difficult it is to bring them into harmony, the more easily does man succumb to faithlessness and inconsistency, the more is the intellectual man threatened in his mind and in his well-being. If the contrasts are reduced to a minimum, so that no problems of any consequence arise, and a man knows without struggle what is right and proper, we call him a Philistine.

With the awakening of self-consciousness these contrasts first create a peculiar dim light which fills our early youth with sentimentalities and introspective torment. Then follows a time in which the impulsive forces predominate, the period of "Sturm und Drang"—later shading off into enthusiastic romanticism, which awakens a desire for active struggle with the outer world. When at the age of thirty, we have been confronted with the hard facts of real life, a sudden reaction frequently takes place; we begin to rationalize and even look back with a certain contempt upon the sentimentality of our younger years. After many years, those favored by fortune, reach the culmination of their powers and are able to bring into certain harmony the daimonic and the intellectual forces within themselves. At the same time they recognize the need for the existence of both currents in the outer world. The slow decline of these forces, impulse and reason, often combined with skepticism or pietism, slowly prepares the end.

This, of course, is theory. Some of us remain children throughout life, some are never young and are precocious and unhappy. Furthermore, external influences encourage or hinder the natural development. Nevertheless the picture I have tried to paint may serve a useful purpose in illustrating the individual spiritual development as being the product of action and reaction. It is all the more useful for our purposes since it enables us to give a plastic representation of the development of the intellectual life of the world at the time of Goethe.

When new ideas make their appearance in the intellectual development of mankind, whether as a result of a new social order or because entirely new strata of the population enter upon a higher level of consciousness, then a new chapter in history is opened. Thus an entirely new intellectual development came with the Renaissance. The individual pushed aside the Medieval concepts, and in place of centralization there came the richness of decentralization. A similar development began, when in the middle of the eighteenth century, at the time that Goethe was born, the middle classes demanded an equal share in a democratic government. They were prepared for this movement by the developments that preceded this period. And today, we experience again a departure from old paths, since masses of people, benefited by education through schools, press, and universal suffrage, have been awakened to higher consciousness especially by the incentive released by the World War. Thus the years 1450, 1750, 1900 seem to be beginnings of new spiritual epochs. These three epochs might be called the spirit of the Renaissance, the Spirit of the Middle Classes and the Social Spirit.

During the Renaissance the explosive force of individualism which had been freed, at last, from the chains of ecclesiastical authority, led to a romantic attack upon everything in the world as well as outside, and brought about the creation of a new transcendental conception of the universe based partly upon the natural sciences and mathematics, and partly upon new religious dogmas. The practical effect, however, was to inflame the masses to carry on the cruel wars of religion.

This again brought about a reaction which caused the world to demand a Reign of Reason. Instead of religious and philosophic dogmas concrete facts were demanded. Beginning with the end of

the seventeenth century there began in England a rationalistic study of man himself, of his soul and the forces within him.

This period like all others began to decay and ended in the scepticism of the rococo and the pietistic movement. A new epoch began when the middle classes gaining power demanded, in place of dry rationalism, natural and practical ideas. This movement began with Rousseau and lasted 150 years. As usual, we find in the beginning sentimentality and introspection, but soon the demand for new freedom resulted in the downfall of the social organization of the day. Unfortunately adequate substitutes were not immediately created and one had to employ the methods of the era of rationalism.

In Europe Herder was the man who, during the haziness of the ideals of the "Sturm und Drang" period first of all outlined definite aims for the following romantic period. He substituted a constructive belief in the totality of the world and of national community instead of the more analytical tendencies of the rationalists. With him there began the most important contribution made by the epoch of the middle-class spirit, which had the tendency to unite the individualism of the Renaissance with romantic nationalism. This set up new aims and created new enthusiasm everywhere, most of all in Germany.

Just at this time, at the break-down of the old spiritual epoch and the dawn of the new one, during the time of unheard-of spiritual and material eruptions, there lived the wisest of all Germans, Wolfgang Goethe, who within himself united a world of marvelous harmoniousness. In his last days the stormy romanticism of the period began slowly to subside, most slowly in Germany. The hard facts of life began to predominate and for a period of about sixty years we have, so to speak, a "materialistic rationalism." History was studied, as never before, in the hope of finally discovering the system of reason. The belief prevailed that the world would be rationalized and the enigma of the Universe solved.

After 150 years the epoch of the middle classes gradually became decrepit. The *fin de siècle* atmosphere of 1900 showed the same symptoms as did the period of the rococo of about 1750. The end was not far off.

America was an exception. The youthful, somewhat primitive conceptions of the new immigrants continued to furnish a new impetus, a new youth, a new romanticism, a new faith in the power

of the "I will." In the eastern part of the country there were to be found analogies with aging Europe. But the country as a whole up to the time of the World War seems to have been endowed with happy, though stormy, youth.

Since the Russian revolution of 1905 and the Great War, the world seems again to be living in a spiritual period not unlike that of Goethe's younger days. No one can say whither we are going and, therefore, it is all the more interesting to learn how the German Goethe acted under similar circumstances.

## II. THE GERMAN SPIRIT

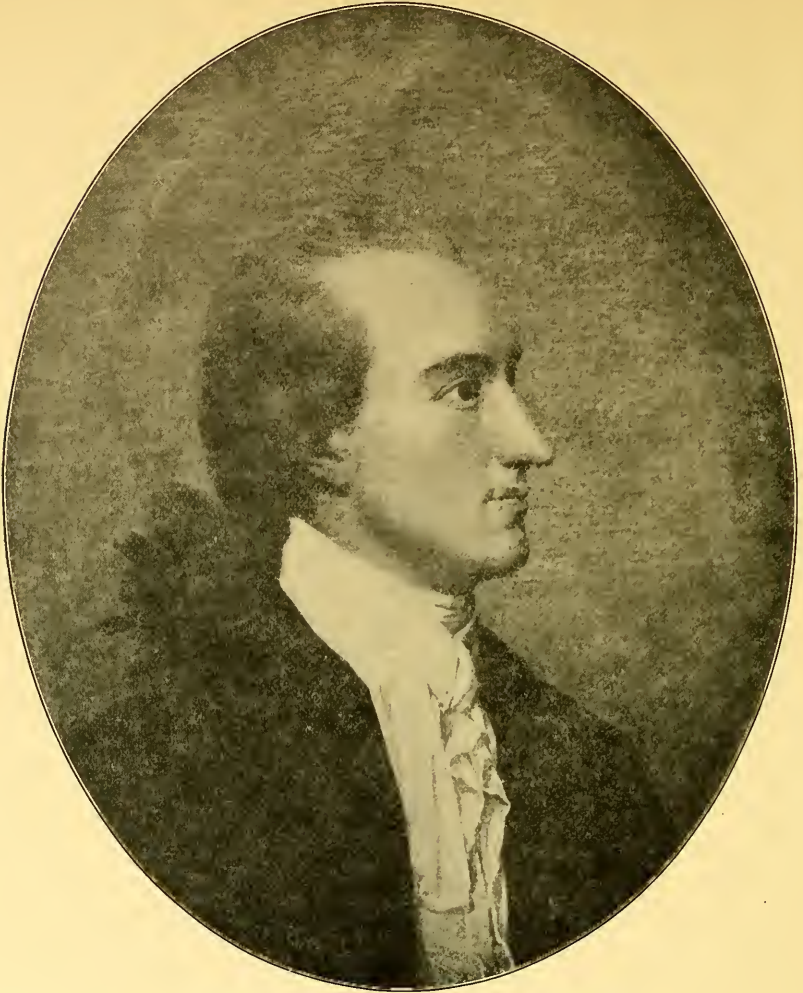
How did the German spirit develop up to the time of Goethe?

From the time that the German people appear in history, forces of decentralization have been powerful. This has enriched the intellectual life of the nation but has prevented a united front toward the outside world. In a sense this is even reflected in the German landscape, which shows continuous change and no natural center. Obviously, the German is meant to be an individualist.

The Germans became protestants. Luther, the mouthpiece of one part of the nation, destroyed the strongest bond of union the state had, the common church. He was perhaps one of the most characteristic figures, in his splendid blending of daimon and intellect. Deeply moved by the new dogma he declared beyond all opportuneness and true to German type: "I cannot do otherwise." Luther furnished for his people a common language by means of his translation of the Bible. But he could not prevent the princes from taking advantage of the centrifugal tendencies inherent in Protestantism. The result was terrible civil war in which the German people for thirty years killed each other for the sake of liberty of conscience and religious belief. No one can comprehend the German and the German spirit both in its strength and its weakness who has not grasped the reasons for the effects of this terrific tragedy. Wars of religion took place everywhere in Europe but only in Germany were they fought with the bitterness and the endurance characteristic of the Thirty Years War.

The numerous German princelings whose independence was guaranteed by France and Sweden in 1648 gave a grotesque aspect to the whole German situation. Absolutism reigned supreme all over Europe and those dictatorships, as we should call them today in the

case of France and England, created large unified and strongly organized states that proceeded to divide the world. But, in Ger-



GOETHE IN 1779

Painted by G. O. May

many, the numerous princes, with some laudable exceptions, used their unlimited power for selfish purposes!

To the German subject was left only his "Weltanschauung." This gave birth to the magnificent German music. When we lis-

ten to the melodies of Johann Sebastian Bach, the most eminent of this German family of composers, we still can hear therein the deep-rooted grief as well as the touching, religious submissiveness to the fate of those times. For the German the outer world receded. He did not participate in the work of organizing non-European regions such as India and America; he had little part even in the attempt of English philosophy to rationalize the world. There is no plastic art of any kind in Germany in those hundred years of suffering. In a certain sense Vienna and Berlin, Austria and Prussia, however, formed exceptions to the general conditions.

When in the tenth century the increase in population forced Germans to emigrate, they turned to the old ancestral seats of the Teutons, between the rivers Elbe and Vistula, abandoned a thousand years before. Here these pioneers composed of all-German tribes, brought about an amalgamation of tribes, a "melting-pot," not even, to this day, granted to the Germans on the west side of the Elbe. This colonial population uniting in itself all Germans was named rather senselessly Prussia after a small, remote tribe. The not very numerous Slavs were assimilated. Hard work had to be done on the sandy plains, swamps, and virgin forests. This had a marvelous educational influence on these German men. It freed them from their introspective viewpoint. The dangers of colonial life, endless struggles of all kinds, taught them the blessing of organization, the limitation of individualism. In the Hohenzollern family able rulers were found. The entire unheard-of force of the puritanical spirit unfolded its wondrous workings. The courts of other German states, boasting a civilization of French culture, looked with contempt upon the calloused hands of the eastern German pioneers, the Prussians. Older culture is always inclined to look with disdain upon a younger one. Thus there may have been times when New York regarded Chicago in this light, yet you certainly would not like to give up the "I will" spirit of Chicago any more than we could spare the awakening energy of Prussia.

There was an almost complete intellectual breakdown of the nation which, overwhelmed by the sorrow of the times, was looking for consolation in pietism; at some courts and commercial centers, such as Frankfurt and Leipzig, remained the unreal glamor of French imitation; and there were scanty remnants of the old German magnificence in Vienna, and the first rays of a

new light from Prussia. That was the German world which the spirit of Goethe awakened to consciousness.

And yet the German dynamic forces were smouldering under cover when, in the middle of the eighteenth century, the enthusiasm of the storm period called for new romanticism, the German sorrows disappeared with one stroke, German spiritual life throughout the entire country suddenly awakened in the desire for a new freedom. In the German of princely allmightiness and arbitrariness the movement as a whole remained, in contrast to France, practically a literary one. Only on the stage the emotions were realized, whose manifestations were denied in real life. The princes alone were rich, the enlightened ones among them knew how to attract enthusiastic men of letters.

Just as Frederick the Wise after the Diet of Worms had brought Luther to the Wartburg near Eisenach and thereby made possible the utilization of the Protestant movement for the benefit of the Princes, so his magnanimous successor, Karl August, gathered to his court the literary men, who because of common poverty were dependent upon royal protectorship. Thus he soon made a true servant of the state even so fiery a spirit as Schiller. Undoubtedly that was not premeditated politics; conditions in general brought about this result naturally. Weimar reached a zenith of German spiritual life never again to be attained.

### III. GOETHE'S PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

#### 1) *Goethe's inner melody: Daimon and Genius.*

During the storms of the times and while the German spirit precipitously awakened out of its distress, chaos, and helplessness, how did Goethe's daimon and genius adjust themselves to the work of the day, to the finally so perfect achievement of the great philosopher. The interaction between these two poles at first paralleled that of the outer world. He answered the sentimental epoch in him and in the world with *Werther's Leiden*; the "Storm and Stress" with *Goetz* and *Clavigo*, the gigantic *Prometheus*, *Egmont*, and the *Urfaust*. But in spite of the strong spell of his daimon, that caused him to exclaim in his thirty-seventh year in Rome:

From craving to enjoyment, thus I reel  
And in enjoyment languish for desire.



nevertheless we feel an element of poise. It is hardly storm and stress, it is already the anticipation of romanticism with a moderate relationship between emotion and intellect.

He had early in life raised the struggle of these forces into his consciousness. The self-analysis of the age had helped him. He soon realized that both poles are indispensable to man's happiness: d a i m o n, emerging from the depths of unconsciousness, giving impulse to life and, in our surrender to nature and love, carries us—as Wagner says, to “unconscious, highest delight,”—g e n i u s, proceeding to ever wider understanding and knowledge leads to the other pole of happiness. The reciprocal effect of these two forces developed in Goethe to a strong and wonderful degree. The daimonic pole is first nearer to his heart. He scorns the *Zweckmensch*, the pure intellectual man. However, the *Gefühlsmensch* becomes less important to him as he grows older although he never sells himself to the world of teleology. To bring them to a totality “united in flaming fusion”, as Professor Schütze translates it, becomes the goal of his life. The rational period of his life begins in his twenty-seventh year. From his desire to check the daimonic forces within him there is born his early longing for the classical form. The universality of his intellectual ardor was tremendously increased.

But only in the tender romance with Minna Herzlieb, whom he learned to love at the age of fifty-six, he came close to a beautiful harmony of his sensual and spiritual forces, which permitted him to contemplate the outer world more freely than before.

When seven years later, he meets the charming poetical Marianne von Willmer, he appears to us as the Olympian, removed from all earthly confusion and living in pure beauty, but untiringly active. Whilst the storm of the Wars of Liberation raged outside with loud romanticism, he flees into the quiet of Persian poetry, not to quiet the daimon in his breast, but to avoid the thunderstorm outside.

The end of his life is most characteristic. During his whole life, he had sought true form and had strayed into strange worlds. He finally realized that permanently proceeding beyond the form is life itself. At seventy-two years of age he declares that it is always necessary, to re-create the created so that dangerous rigidity be avoided.

2) *Goethe's World-View (Weltanschauung). Subject and Object.*

While daimon and genius were the two musical strings in Goethe's life, that daily had to be tuned anew, so that a clear melody would be the result, the ego and the world, subject and object, emanated from him as from a fundamental unity. To the god-like human being of the religious Middle Ages, the outside world was something entirely strange, part educator, part tempter. The English rational philosophy had finally doubted the intellect and thereby the reality of the outside world. "No matter, never mind," was the popular jest over Hume's result. Kant had examined the mental instruments of conception of the human race with German thoroughness and had encouraged a critical attitude toward the outside world. This contrast presented no problem to Goethe, at least not in the beginning: Naught is inside, naught is out. For the inside is without. Nature has neither kernel nor rind, it is everything in one. The "zusammenbrennende Ganze" within him corresponded to the totality, the complete unity of the world. Just as to Parmenides knowledge seemed only possible through complete identity with the comprehended, so Goethe felt:

Were to the sun not kin our eye,  
They ne'er could see the sun's fair beam,  
Lay not in us a power divine,  
Of the divine how could we dream.

This alliance with totality is endangered, however, if we desire to fill the world with external purposes, if we do not adapt ourselves to the "divine laws" within us, if we do not follow the law, under which we have started our life course. Thus the ego, our innermost voice, rightly perceived, becomes our final regulative element. To Goethe the process of life is not, according to Simmel, directed from the goal, is not teleology. To him the process of life is growth from the very roots, the happy development and realization of our natural faculties—it is entelechy.

His idea of God has its inception in his deep-rooted confidence, that the world is most beautifully arranged, that the principal thing is to listen to the innermost voice and trust in nature.

The All-embracer,  
All-sustainer,  
Holds and sustains he not  
Thee, me, himself?  
Lifts not the Heaven its dome above?

Doth not the firm-set earth beneath us lie?  
 And beaming tenderly with looks of love,  
 Climb not the everlasting stars on high?  
 Do we not gaze into each other's eyes?  
 Nature's impenetrable agencies,  
 Are they not thronging on thy heart and brain,  
 Viewless, or visible to mortal ken,  
 Around thee weaving their mysterious chain?  
 Fill thence thy heart, how large so e'er it be;  
 And in the feeling when thou utterly art blest,  
 Then call it, what thou wilt,—  
 Call it Bliss! Heart! Love! God!  
 I have no name for it!  
 'Tis feeling all;  
 Name is but sound and smoke.

And yet his philosophy of life was purely subjective, a belief! Later in life he told of his joy in expressing the inner world, before he knew the external one. Before that, however, he had confessed: "From within no man can learn his inner being." In other words he is thoroughly conscious of this preponderant subjective adjustment to the world. He justly blames the philosophy of his time for such an attitude. That is admirable self-knowledge, for nothing is quite as difficult as criticism of our own "pure reason," as a critical analysis of our relations to the outer world.

But for a long time his efforts on behalf of reality of the outer world are unsuccessful. When the outside world becomes too loud, too intrusive, he flees into the world of beauty, the classics, his scientific studies, Persian poetry and to the beloved woman. Naturally he follows with interest the happenings about him, as behooves the Minister of State. But the inner enthusiasm, which he values so highly for all knowledge, fills him only in his art, in his great discoveries in the field of natural science. In advanced years the desire for an overbridging of this discrepancy between his world and the reality becomes stronger in him. The conception of unity (*All-Einheit*) had for a long time deceived him. In 1817 he said that it is equally harmful exclusively to obey experience or the idea alone and unreservedly. It is necessary to strike a medium between both. The progress toward reality coincides in him with the growing concentration upon the practical deed. The *Leitmotif* in our struggle with the outer world, can no longer be the romantic laws within us nor can it be outward purposes, but it must be "the demand of the day." By such a development in his advanced years, Goethe guides

the world over new paths. To be true to type was and still is the highest commandment. Confident of an inner law Luther had spoken: "I cannot do otherwise." In German philosophy before and since Goethe, from Kant to Fichte and Nietzsche, the a priori, deductive idealism, the inner law, the conscience, the belief in the inner feeling, in short, the subject predominated. With the exception of the Marburg School, Germany, up to the present time, has almost no leading philosopher whose teachings emanate from the object, such as England developed in Bacon, Locke, Hobbes, and Hume, such as France developed in Montaigne and Voltaire. The youthful German subjectivism has undoubtedly released great powers in the German nation who, without being aided by nature and history, and without ever having been able to call a world-empire such as the United States, England, Russia, and France, its own, has nevertheless given mighty impulses to world-events and, alas, has met with many a bitter disappointment.

The aging Goethe pointed beyond the hitherto existing subjective ties of the German and prepared a way for a new relationship between subject and object. The German spirit did not follow quite as willingly as it had the more adequate, more youthful, more subjective attitude of Goethe.

### 3) *The Individual and the Community*

Goethe's conception of the totality of the ego as an integral element of the totality of the Universe established for him the direct connection, the communion of the ego with the Infinite. If in this relation, after a word of Gundolf, "all conflicts of the ego could find their meaning and their solution in the universe," then relation to fellow-man could not but appear as of minor importance. Consequently in social life the individual would range first and stand isolated; the idea of association, of community coöperation would step aside.

From this point of view and in accordance with the spirit of the age that lasting problem was solved: Whether on the stage of life, the performance of the artist or the understanding of the audience is of greater importance: It was solved entirely in favor of the artist.

"Personality alone is of purest delight to earth's children."

Thus Goethe sings in *Westöstlicher Divan*. Freedom with equality was the watchword of the time and the accent was on

freedom of the individual. There, in the need for this freedom is the bedrock of German individualism. Externally the individual had to submit to the autocratic forces. All the more, with all the greater love the German guards his innermost possession, his universal intuition, his *Weltanschauung*.

The German's individual peculiarity almost stamping him as being asocial, at the time of Goethe was finding reinforcement in the disastrous separation of the German tribes, in provincialism, in the narrowing want of the then German situation, in the religious conflict, and in the necessity to face east and west, resulting from Germany's two-front position.

A Germany thus torn could not live in spite of all the activity of its intellectual forces. This fact had been made clear to the entire world by France's advancing further and further to the Rhine since that fatal year of 1648 and again by the conqueror and gigantic organizer of power—Napoleon. Germany was in bad need of consolidation, of "security." It looked for and found it in the severe, but now indispensable Prussian organization. The world liked this organization just as little as it was liked by the wonderful and refined spirit of Goethe. Abroad Germany's poets and thinkers were appreciated. Little did the world understand that the hegemony of Prussia was not a matter of choice but a question of life or death. Germany was saved by Prussian military training, based on the willingness to serve, personifying Kant's categorical imperative of duty, bringing the individual within range of the wider horizon of free obedience, together with the newly awakened, strong national feeling which was stirred up in Germany's youth by Napoleon's success.

Goethe's individualism rebelled against the tendencies of this organization. He agrees with Kant, that happiness is not life's highest value, yet he refuses to accept Kant's rigid dogmatism as a moral code in human relations. While Kant is trying to make us submit of our own free will to the despotism of moral law, Goethe's first commandment towards highest and harmonious development of being is adaption of our actions to our natural abilities.

What else is virtue than to find the  
truly appropriate in every situation.

The "purely human" is his moral. Thus the moralist and the artist face each other. But what Germany needed in those times, was the former, the Prussian.

At the age of sixty, still holding on to the conception of Europe as a spiritual unit, he would not approve of national enthusiasm. "How could I," he says to Eckermann about France, "to whom only culture and barbarism are of importance, how could I hate a nation, that belongs to the most cultivated on earth and to which I owe such a great part of my own education. . . . On the whole, it is a peculiar thing with national hatred. You will always find it strongest and most violent in the lowest stages of culture." In spite of his country's singular national position he held to the conception of the spiritual world of art and science as a unit.

And yet he loved Germany with all his heart; he admired its architecture, its paintings, and the powerful mental activity of his time. Goethe is German and the son of his country, not so much out of a national feeling, as by nature. His natural and intuitive individualism was never in any way related to the purpose and design of egotism. In his youth and at the court so opposed to his nature, he did not easily make friends. Sometimes he was marked as being proud and haughty, an attitude which he only assumed as a defence in times of inner uncertainty. The more he finds his own peace, the more appears his glorious kindness, his love for mankind and his willingness to help; thus affirming his own word, that he "who is in harmony with himself, is in harmony with the others." Many are the friends with whom he remains in constant exchange of letters: their number grows with his ascending fame, but they seem to need him more than he needs them.

Yet, in the depth of his heart there is loneliness. Goethe is heir to that peculiar quality of his people. Forever will the urge, the desire of the German soul to gather the universe into its depths, make us overserious and lonely. This feeling bestows the great importance on woman in man's life and vice versa. Goethe and his life's work are incomprehensible without his relation to woman. Woman is forever awakening the creative powers in his soul. Goethe's beautiful and intuitive lyrics and the impersonations of women in his dramas are but the harvest of the life-giving contact with women he had loved.

In order to understand how very deeply German soul-life arises out of the harmony between man and woman and this need for supplementing each other, one has but to read Bismarck's letters to his fiancée and wife and to recall that simple Gretchen at the beginning of her love for Faust, asked him what his thoughts were about

God and religion. Thus, even in the first experience of love anchor is cast in the infinite.

The question of the relation of sexes, so near to our hearts and so important in the judgment of another nation, is the one that is most difficult to decide. Maybe this is the reason why criticism is always putting it in the forefront! It seems to me, that in this matter we share the fate of the French people, whose very fine family life is little known abroad, but made all the more conspicuous by those French novels, the world loves so much to read. As to Germany, the current belief is, that the German woman has been confined to kitchen and nursery and on the whole has not emerged out of the state of being a housekeeper for her husband. Permit me to consider this conception a big mistake, even though you may believe me biased.

To the subjective German, the comrade of his life and his home are next to the center of his existence and of a very definite importance. For the German man and woman the home is not as much the "castle" as it is the "world." To devote herself to this world of her home is not considered by the German woman as a degradation and as cutting her off from life, nor does the husband value her part as taking charge of an unimportant duty. On the contrary, everything that life may bring in beauty and lasting value, is preserved in the home and particularly cultivated by the women. Granted that professional activity of women has changed many things, yet the ideal will remain to create in one's home a world of personal atmosphere, to make it an expression of one's conception of life and beauty, to establish firm ground against the uncertainties of the external world. It bears witness on the side of matrimonial and home life of the peculiar inner law of life in the German.

Up to his old age and as long as he was living, Goethe longed for such a companion in his life and for such a wife. Fate denied him the adequate wife. Behind all the loving care with which he had furnished his big house in Weimar one can feel in the almost too gorgeous rooms the loneliness, which often drove him back into his quiet and simple study.

Of all women, the one nearest to him was Frau von Stein, learned, severe, the knowing and understanding wife of the Grand Equerry von Stein. She undoubtedly was the most fitting companion of his Genius and Weltanschauung. He submits to ten years

of a relationship, infinitely satisfying to his spiritual ego, but tragically painful to the man who loved her.

Wouldst thou define exactly what is fitting,  
Thou shouldst apply, methinks, to noble women  
Where moral order reigneth, women reign,

thus speaks the voice of this spiritual unity in *Tasso*. But even so, in old age he states that besides Shakespeare, Lida, as he called her, had given him most.

When on his return from Italy, tired of everlasting longing, he marries Christiane Vulpir's, it is his Genius who now has much to renounce. Still, to the union with her we owe such tender verses as "Found," that are so close to nature; and to her also we owe the delightful "Roman Elegies."

Infinitely delicate is Goethe's love; never a Don Juan, never a seducer—always beseeching and thanking—often supplicating in vain, yet never embittered, we see him surrounded by the enthusiastic affection of the womanhood of his day.

Let by this glance, let by  
a pressure of your hand reveal  
the inexpressible.

In the pure bosom doth a yearning dwell  
Its grateful aspirations to devote  
Unto a higher, purer, unknown being  
Seeing the ever-nameless then revealed.  
We call it: Piety!—such pious feeling  
I share when in her presence.

The tenderness of his feeling and his action is apparent when one recalls, that in three instances he gave his pure and deep love to women, who already were bound, without creating tragedies, without cruelly wrecking connections, without even hurting the third one. Such tenderness coupled with reliability and frankness, can hardly be surpassed. In cases where development threatens to become too much for him, he silently withdraws. A model in respect and consideration for the happiness of others.

Throughout his life woman remains the most precious part of his existence. "External womanhood leads upward and on!" ends the drama of his life. It is the inspiring force.





GOETHE AND FRITZ VON STEIN

4) *Goethe the bard of Evolution. (To be and to Become.)*

We have seen how Goethe's German-dynamic life was filled with a constant striving for inner and outer harmoniousness of life, how he always when the equilibrium, the highest form seemed to be reached, offered life new goals, new forms. Thus he passionately experienced the problem "to be and to become," "Repose and Motion"—the problem of romantic times; it is the special problem of the religious as well as romantic German. Even today in these stirring times, we are again and again terrified by the fear of the senselessness of movement, of the strife and flurry, and seek peace and composure in eternal values. Yet we cannot remain for a long time aloof from the tremendous rhythm of our days!

The thought of evolution, visualized by the medieval religious conception as the refining process of the soul and later by Leibniz in the development of the Monad, now was transferred by Goethe to the totality of nature. "That which is fertile alone is true" we hear from the aging Goethe. This word with its onward implication seems quite modern and reminds us of William James: "The true is the expedient." And yet between these two similar utterances there is a great characteristic difference. Goethe sees the impulse of evolution preponderantly in the subject, in the adaptability to one's disposition. Darwin, Spencer, James see it primarily in the will to adapt oneself to the object, to the outer world. The disciples of one conception will never be able to understand entirely those of the other until they are fully conscious of the different, as it would seem to me, typical starting-points.

Ultimately, in contrast with the Asiatic desire for Nirvana, for final rest, the Teuton tribes, the Germans and the Anglo-Saxons, separated from one another since the great migrations, meet in ex-tolling the man of action:

Wisdom's last fruit, profoundly true:  
Freedom alone he earns as well as life,  
Who day by day must conquer them anew.

This is a thought, which might easily have been credited to Washington. It seems to me that these two—Goethe and Washington—as well as their two nations arising out of different surroundings and historical backgrounds, nevertheless have common ultimate goals. I have now been exactly five years in this beautiful country of yours and while I note many differences of viewpoint, never-

theless I am continually impressed by the common devotion to activity and progress.

So Goethe, born in a Germany that was torn asunder beyond all hope of reunion, became the bard of evolution for a dynamic Germany and for humanity, which steadily surged on in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. So he made his own peace with a world, which kept moving onward.

Undoubtedly the example and the success of active Prussia contributed much to this development in Goethe. To the Germany of poets and thinkers Goethe was—in spite of his rejection of the loud romanticists—the awakener. Just as Faust did not find greatest happiness in the tumultuous enjoyment of life, not as a clever servant of Princes, not in devotion to beauty, but in practical work and action for his people, so the Germany of Weimarian beauty had to give precedence to the efficiency of Potsdam, if it desired to take an active part in the construction of the world.

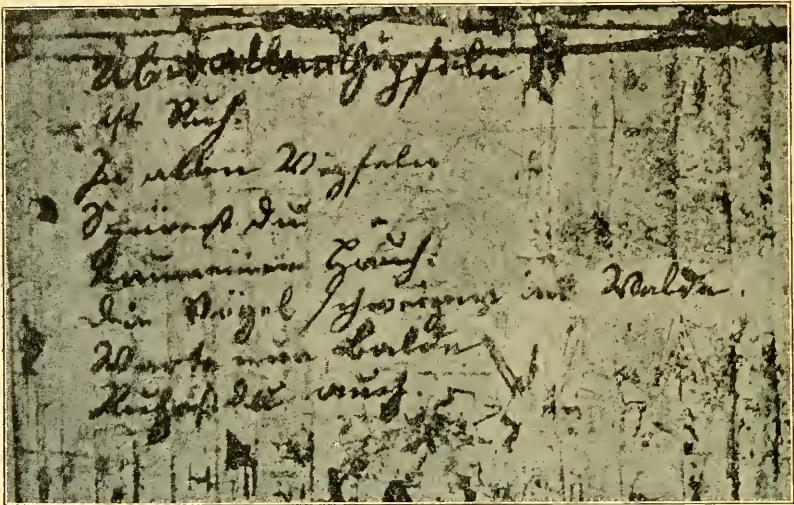
The Renaissance had shattered the belief that our life in this world is of importance only as a preparation for the life to come. It resulted first in a period of unrestrained license and later developed into the *ora et labora* of the Puritans which made the struggles for attainment in this life also acceptable to God for the life hereafter. Rationalism then endangered even this theory and left life empty and void. Rousseau then created by his devotion to the "*Sein*," to nature, the possibility of invert contentment. To all of those, who face religious questions with longing but, again and again, with the feeling "*Ignoramus*," our life here suddenly received through Goethe a new, independent meaning, without dimming our vision of the hereafter and that is: devotion to and co-operation in the development of this world.

In spite of the realization of the need for untiring effort, Goethe's soul, as well as our own, demands at all times the other pole of earthly law, namely peace and immersion into eternal nature: "Be happy in the totality of Life," he tells us. Find happiness and consolation in the knowledge that you belong to nature and her indissoluble entity, that you follow her eternal growth and decay.

A few days after his thirty-second birthday, torn between his passion for his beloved Charlotte von Stein and the great artist, Corona von Schroeetter, and disappointed by the artificial life in Weimar, he inscribed a few short verses on a lonely hunting lodge

high up in the forest of Thuringia. On the day before his sixty-fifth birthday, in the midst of the storm of the Wars of Liberation, he renewed them.

And on his eighty-second and last birthday, while the ceremonies in connection with the unveiling of a bust of himself took place down in Weimar, he again sought that now autumnal forest. Alone he sat there, gazing over the tops of the trees far into the distant country, finding peace and quiet in the unity with eternal nature. And again he read those verses:



GOETHE'S POEM IN THE HUNTER'S LODGE

O'er all the hill-tops  
 Is quiet now,  
 In all the tree-tops  
 Hearest thou  
 Hardly a breath;  
 The birds are asleep in the trees.  
 Wait! soon like these  
 Thou, too, shalt rest.