

## MISCELLANEOUS.

### A BREATH FROM NIRVANA.

BY H. BEDFORD JONES.

I gripped the coverlet in pain, and there  
Death's fore-word came to me. I saw the great  
Ineffable, the nameless glory-state  
That waited on my soul, and loomed so fair  
Across the Void; the angel-throngèd Stair  
Leading unto the Throne, the sun-streamed Gate—  
These lay before me, seeming but to wait  
Death's final kiss, within my heart a prayer.  
"Now come, sweet Death, and close this Heaven-pact!"  
Then sudden fell a light across the sun,  
And I—I shrieked and died; for, heavenless,  
My sundered spirit thro' the Nature Fact,  
Cast unto fragments, joined within the One  
And All, the *Universal Nothingness*.

### SCHILLER'S SKULL.

Goethe has written a poem on the contemplation of Schiller's skull, and it is well known that the great German poet kept this skull on his desk before him in constant commemoration of his beloved friend. The skull was dug up from the Grand Ducal mausoleum where Schiller's body had been placed soon after his death. In 1826, twenty years after Schiller's death, the mausoleum had to be rebuilt so as to make room for more bodies, and at that time the Mayor of Weimar, Carl Leberecht Schwabe, selected this skull, fully convinced that it was the skull of the great poet, and some highly respected physicians confirmed him in this view. In the meantime the suspicion grew stronger and stronger that the skull could not have been that of Schiller, and that Goethe had wasted his reverence on the relics of a lesser man.

Prof. Hermann Welker, an anatomist of Halle, was led to this conclusion from a number of corroborating circumstances. There is a death mask of Schiller made in plaster of Paris, and also a plaster of Paris reproduction of his skull, made before the great poet's body was deposited in the mausoleum. The mask is still in the possession of the Schwabe family, the descendants of the Mayor of Weimar. Both casts differ from the skull which was in Goethe's possession, and are positive evidence that it can not be genuine.

Dr. von Froriep, a native of Weimar, took a deep interest in the question and has finally succeeded in discovering the genuine skull of Schiller. He

searched the Weimar archives and learned from Herr G. Schnaubert that the current opinion that all the bones found in the mausoleum were buried in the northeastern corner of the cemetery was based on mere gossip and had no



GOETHE CONTEMPLATING SCHILLER'S SKULL.

foundation. Archives disclosed the fact that no remnant of the dead bones had ever been removed from the mausoleum, and that therefore Schiller's skull ought to exist still in that vault of the mausoleum where it had been originally deposited, which was known under the name *Kassengewölbe*. Dr.

Froriep acquired the permission to dig in this place and discovered at a depth of three meters a great collection of human bones covered with debris of old walls and rubbish, among them fifty-three well preserved skulls, and in addition fragments of other skulls so as to make the complete number of bodies between sixty and seventy. In continuing his digging he discovered half a meter lower a number of bones with the skull which he could identify as that of Schiller. It was difficult to identify the bones or to distribute them to the several skeletons to which they belonged, for they were well arranged in a kind of classified order, the skulls heaped together in one place, the jaw-bones in another and legs and arms somewhere else so that it would be difficult to identify the bones of different individuals.

It was well known that Schiller's teeth were very regular, and that only one, the second upper molar on the left side, was missing. This information is well attested by Schiller's servants and in general also by other people who were intimately acquainted with the poet, and proves that the jaw-bone discovered by Professor Froriep must be that of Schiller himself, especially as the lower jaw belonging to this skull showed a perfect set of sixteen teeth regular in formation and position. Further, there was an undeniable agreement with both the death mask and the plaster of Paris cast of Schiller's skull. The skull shows a broad forehead although not unusually high, a weak development over the eyebrows which is so strong in the Neanderthal skull, delicate nasal bones but rather high so as to indicate the aquiline formation which was one of the poet's prominent features.

Professor Froriep recently submitted his discovery to his colleagues at the Anatomical Congress which met on April 22 to 24, 1912, at Munich, and there was not one voice which contradicted the argument.

We learn that Professor Froriep will publish a book on the subject which will contain photographic reproductions that are expected to be fully convincing of the truth of his contentions.

P. C.

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### THE LIFE OF AUGUST BEBEL.

August Bebel's autobiography (*My Life*, University of Chicago Press, Price \$2.14 postpaid) is a human document of remarkable significance. It gives a first-hand report of the rise and growth in Germany of the Social Democratic party. Though Mr. Bebel has been the leading spirit in this important political and economic movement for the half-century of its existence he looks upon it as in any case inevitable and upon himself as "a willing helper at a birth of whose origin he is entirely innocent." He goes on to say:

"Into the rôle of an assistant at a historical process of evolution I was thrust by the conditions of my life and as a result of my experience. Once driven into the movement that originated in the sixties of the last century among the German working-classes, it was my duty and my interest, not only to take part in the conflict of opinions born of this movement, but also to examine the ideas which were then newly emerging, and as judiciously as I could to decide for or against them. It was thus that in the course of a few years from being a convinced and decided opponent of socialism I became one of its most zealous adherents...and so I shall remain to the end, as long as my strength is left me."