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Published monthly by

THE OPEN COURT PUBLISHING COMPANY
337 EAST CHICAGO AVENUE
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Subscription rates: $3.00 a year, 35c a copy. Remittances may be made by personal checks, drafts, post office or express money orders, payable to The Open Court Publishing Company.

While the editors welcome contributions, they do not hold themselves responsible for unsolicited manuscripts.

Address all correspondence to The Open Court Publishing Company,
337 East Chicago Ave., Chicago, Illinois.

Entered as Second Class matter March 26, 1887, at the Post Office at Chicago, Illinois, under Act of March 3, 1879.

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Printed in the United States of America.
GOETHE IN 1832
Drawn by C. A. Schwerdgeburch

Frontispiece to The Open Court
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 gewis 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 läszt 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 schoolboy accent that I then acquired:

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