MASKS AND MINSTRELS
· · · · OF NEW GERMANY · · ·

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MASKS and MINSTRELS of NEW GERMANY

By Percival Pollard

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Masks and Minstrels
# of New Germany

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I

AN EVENING IN A GERMAN CABARET

SOMETHING after midnight, one springtime of four or five years ago, a friend and I were homing to our quarters in the old Rue de Varenne. It was a wonderful night for a walk from the boulevards to the Left Bank; you could smell faintly the wondrous blend of blossoms in the Elysian Fields, of acrid tar, of mist from the Seine, and many other intangible odors — the smell of Paris when the year is young. Yet my friend was not happy, and refused to believe a certain remark of mine. He was not, you see, in the best of tempers, and though Paris had just been distinctly rude to him, he refused to hear it belittled.

Our evening had been spent, for the most part, at the Marigny. The "revue" in the promenoir had entertained us as much as the "revue" on the stage, which was not saying much. By way of turning our boredom into other channels, my friend insisted upon coffee in one of the many garish places between the Opera and the Vaudeville. He chose one notorious as having nothing to say to Parisians, but only to strangers: Brazilians, Anglo-Saxons or Germans; but who was I to dissuade him? Some people proclaim their familiarity with Paris, yet never discover that the places they frequent are merely the obvious traps for greenhorns. Well, we had our coffee, we listened to the music, and we observed the elaborate females who were more or less professionally present. Then came the incident which ruined my friend's temper, and left him inaccessible to truth.

The bill, when we came to settle, was exactly twice what it should have been. My friend spluttered. The waiter shrugged his shoulders, lifted his eyebrows and presumed Monsieur forgot that it was after midnight, that the music was unusually fine, and that the ladies were present in great numbers. After midnight, for the music, and for the ladies, it was well known, he reminded us, that the prices . . . and so on. My friend made the usual mistake: he tried to take it out of the waiter. "I sha'n't tip him!" he growled, and he didn't. He put down upon the table the exact amount our little platters indicated, and not a sou more. But he had reckoned without his waiter. Trust a Parisian to seize a cue for wit! As we got up, the waiter swept the silver from the cloth with an air for all to observe, and as my friend passed him, bowed low before him.

"Merci, mon prince!" said the waiter, as he bowed, and in that "Mon prince!" was as much sarcasm as any two words in any tongue could hold.

My friend pretended he had not heard; but he had; his desire to dispute with me made that clear. The fact was, he was in a most villainous temper. So that my harmless little remark definitely enraged him. Yet all I said was this; as we were crossing in front of the Opera, into streets that were now silent, deserted, almost dark:

"At this hour, when, as we see, Paris is going to bed, Berlin is just waking up."

A flood, nothing less than a flood, of rage came at me from my friend. There was Montmartre, I must remember; there was the Café du Pantheon on the Boul' Miche', and there were the boulevards — where, as he did not remind me, he had just been robbed. As he raved, we walked, none the less, through streets darker and darker, more and more deserted. Silence was all about us; the noise of our disputing was as a clamor against empty walls.

It was true, my maddened friend to the contrary, that Berlin is of all great capitals the one which is liveliest at night. I thought, as I walked toward the Left Bank that night in Paris, of just such nights, several years before, in which the nocturnal wakefulness of Berlin had come home to me.

Especially I thought of one night, in one of the first years of our new century, when, strolling along the garishly brilliant Leipzigerstrasse at an hour wherein most people are thinking of going to bed, I was struck by an insinuating, fantastically outlined sign: "Zum Klimperkasten."

The words arrested me. Their meaning, if you would have it in English, is, as nearly as possible: "At the Sign of the Hurdy Gurdy." What was going on here, I wondered, "Zum Klimperkasten"?

And then, for answer, there came to me a memory of something I had read some little time before — something of Otto Julius Bierbaum's. Something in which there had been those rarest qualities, a new sensation, an emotion, an awakening to new interests, to charming revelations.

I looked again at the sign; recalled again what, in that earlier day, had happened as a result of a certain first encounter with Otto Julius in a dingy lane of Hamburg; and the next moment I opened the door "Zum Klimperkasten."

That was my first, though not by a good deal my last, experience of a German cabaret.

ORIGINALLY out of the Café, by Genius, the breed of cabarets has shown many forms of bastardy, some amusing, some disgusting. Often merely brutish, as in Aristide Bruant's place in Paris or the old Whitechapel Club in Chicago, and often tiresome, the central idea was plausible: it was a place wherein talent was to improvise itself for the public appreciation. It was for the Minnesingers of our period what once a baronial courtyard was. There were such coffee houses as Will's; you may trace the idea in the François Premier, in Pousset's, and in the Chat Noir. In one country coffee, in another absinthe, in another beer was the tap; the names and externals might change, but the central idea was the same. Whatever in songs, poems, stories, in ballads, in melody or color, had, in this or that smoke-dimmed corner, the odor of the spontaneous — that was the thing!

A little this side of midnight one went to the cabaret. In one case you paid a mark; in another less; another more. In all you had to buy, if you wished to be inconspicuous, a bottle of wine, champagne or a cheaper article. The cheapest Moselle cost 75 pfennigs the half-bottle. In some cabarets you could not order a plain liqueur without having had wine first. The wine was invariably bad; but you did not have to be fool enough to drink it. Smoking was general. You could usually eat some sort of supper; so far was commerce the cabaret's ally that in many cases restaurants were affiliated.

Good humor and good behavior surrounded you. You felt yourself among persons of intelligence and good looks, into whose social standing it was impertinent to inquire. The ladies might not be of the world, but they were of the politer half; though not in uniform, there were plenty of officers visible to the knowing eye. A room scarce as large as a lecture hall. Tables with white napery; long-necked blonde bottles; champagne coolers. A slightly raised platform holding a piano. At the piano a youth, extracting pleasant improvisations, accompaniments to the general laughter and chatter. On to the platform passed, presently, a smooth-shaven person who, pleasantly, in conversational tone, reminded the company that, as they knew, the cabaret was the avenue for publicity of many budding talents; he had the pleasure of introducing Herr Lautensack.

Enter, then, Herr Lautensack, a poet. Yes, no more than that: just a poet. Not necessarily of the slovenliness or shabbiness pretended by certain conventions; no fine eye in frenzy rolling; just a modern poet who, perhaps, went to the same tailor that you did. First he gave a passionate lyric; you heard echoes of Swinburne, Dowson or Symons. . . Then an excursion into pure nonsense, as of Lear or Burgess. . . . Yet always an approach, a definite approach to art. A something that the music-hall of before the Überbrettl' had not known.

The audience applauded the poet as heartily as, some moments before, it had applauded the little Viennese with the soulful eyes who had sung a ballad, the suggestion in which left nothing to the imagination. The public did not get up and leave when the poet appeared. For the poet of the cabaret, like the cabaret itself, had — mindful of the Überbrettl', and mindful also of the champagne — come to the quick perception of immediate art; he entertained, entertained unfalteringly, even where he also shocked or stimulated. Even the poems, impassioned or absurd, had always to have the quick dramatic climax of comedy or tragedy.

The master of ceremonies came and went, introducing singers of chansonettes, tellers of stories, players of piano parodies. His was simply the old, old method of the British music-hall Chairman made more intimate. Always the conversational tone, however; occasional dialogues between platform and audience; the intimacy of a public salon where no laws save those of taste ruled. You heard, perhaps, little that you might not hear elsewhere; but you heard it differently. You felt you had part in a pleasant conspiracy in entertainment. The songs were written by persons present; the composer was the gentleman at the piano; yet the result was profitable as well as artistic; the public bought those songs at the shops; and those writers and composers and performers had the air of being prosperous. Everything was cosy and intimate. Occasionally there were obviously unrehearsed improvisations, however much in the main your sophistication might suspect collusion in some of this intimacy. Sudden choruses of parodic ditties were gravely applauded by the master of ceremonies. Compliments and the reverse ricocheted between the stage and the audience.

The chief novelty, if you came to the cabaret fresh from other climes, was the appeal to the intellect. There was no horseplay. The wit was sometimes broad, but always keen; you could have smiled at it in print. . . . Apply that test to the generality in English, and shudder! . . . Memorable was a parody of the great Erl-King poem, in which the father, riding with his sick child through the Sieges-Allee, sees him die in agony finally when that supreme horror in marble, the Roland von Berlin statue, is reached. Berlin, careless of the imperial taste in art, roared with laughter. At passionate serenades to curdle County Council and Comstock blood, and at much else in the cabaret, Berlin laughed as long, always, as they had both art and entertainment in them.

Here, in short, for amateurs of art and of entertainment, was a distinctly new sensation. Aside from the entertainment, sheerly as such, what was genuinely artistic in the cabaret had come down from the Überbrettl'.

II

THE ÜBERBRETTL' MOVEMENT

The Überbrettl' was a movement for the improvement of the rubbish in vogue in the music-halls and lighter theatres of Germany just before the beginning of the present century. This doggerel, this utter nonsense, this illiterate and unintelligent vaporing, certain rash young poets of Green Germany, Otto Julius Bierbaum at their head, determined to scotch. They meant to replace all that by real lyrics, set to real melodies.

Those young Germans of the later nineties started their Überbrettl'; they wrote their most jaunty verses for it, and the most dexterous of their musical fellows wrote music to the verses; and all this got itself sung, not only on the little stages they controlled, but on the streets of the whole country. What was all this if it was not the Minnesingers come again, the troubadours flaunting their romantic airs in the very halls of the philistine? Once the philistine had been baronial; now he was bourgeois — or as Germany had it then, "Biedermeier"; and the baron of earlier days had been, of the whole crew, the more tolerant of good verse and good melody. But, if the Überbrettl' was to have a hard fight, and win indirect rather than direct triumphs, we can never sufficiently applaud the courage of its leaders.

By the year 1900 they had reached the point where they could print a goodly little volume of the lyrics that were singing themselves all over the land, namely: "Deutsche Chansons," or "Brettl-lieder," as the sub-title went. In twelve months this had sold 20,000 copies. It was in the preface to the original edition of this little collection that Bierbaum definitely expressed the real hope of the Überbrettl' movement; the date was September, 1900. Here is the gist of the little proclamation:

"Art for the music-hall — is that not, you say, something of a profanation? Lyrics and the show business, can those be associates? . . . Well, we are going to try, seriously enough, to put art at the service of the music-hall. We happen to have the notion that all life can be made artistic. Artists, to-day, build chairs that are not only beautiful to behold, but comfortable to sit on. Even so we want to write verses that will be not only for the library but that an amusement-loving people will sing. Applied lyrics — there is our text. . . . Firstly they must be songs you can sing. Nextly, they must delight not merely a cultivated minority, but the average general public that simply wants to be entertained. . . . Just as the Independent Theatres succeeded in raising the wants of the playgoing public, so we hope, by introducing art into the variety-theatres, to better the general taste. . . . Variety-theatres are as much typical expressions of our time and culture as electric street-cars. The townsman of to-day has, if you will permit the phrase, music-hall nerves; only rarely he troubles to follow great dramatic coherencies; he wants change — variety. If, as artists, we wish to keep in touch with life itself, we must count on this realization. . . .

"This idea originally came, I believe, from my friend *Stilpe*. . . . Now we are to lift it from fancy into fact, and no less than friend Wolzogen is to see to that. I count this as no less worthy than the founding, in their day, of the Independent Theatres. . . ."

Here a necessary, if lame, attempt to explain the title Überbrettl'. The final "l" is, as you may know, the endearing diminutive hailing from Vienna. Where the northern German speaks of "Mädchen" the southern says Mädl'." "Die Bretter" are in German exactly what in our own stage parlance "the boards" are; but for the "Brettl'" we have no equivalent; the term covers all lighter forms of entertainment below the "legitimate." Music-hall, variety, café-chantant, and even that mongrel product known as musical comedy, would fall under the title of Brettl'. Über, of course, as all acquainted with the names of Nietzsche, of Richard Strauss, of Bernard Shaw, etc., know, means Super. So from all this you may build a version to suit yourself. An ingenious American promotor of music-halls once coined the term Polite Variety; this German article might be called Artistic Variety. But the safest thing, when once you know what is meant, is to call it simply the Überbrettl'. As that it made history in Germany; and under that banner its legacies of song and music have come down to us.

The Überbrettl' idea flourished into fact in many German towns. There were, to name only a few, the Darmstaedter Spiele as offshoots; and in Munich the "Elf Sharfrichter" gave performances of amazing and memorable distinction. Only in Berlin the climate was too inartistic; the Trianon Theatre went to pieces with a completeness that prompted Bierbaum to a most delightful sort of Farewell, in which occurred the: "This once, and never again!" One of my most cherished treasures is the issue of *Die Insel* in which that Farewell appeared. Later Bierbaum commented on the episode less ironically, and in a way that will help you to understand still more clearly the Überbrettl' scheme. The passage occurs in "A Little Autumn Motor-tour," which now appears in the 1910 edition of the "Yankee-doodletrip."

"In Berlin the Überbrettl' began as a joke, and went to pieces when the joke grew stale. Every effort seriously to realize the truly fine idea of a lyric theatre in music-hall form, was bound to fail there, because the notion of a literary hoax was too closely allied to it. In Munich the idea succeeded, because there the artistic definitely prevailed over the joke of the thing; because a really businesslike management was at the head; and because, more than any town in Germany, Munich enjoys a wise and liberal censorship. The things Frank Wedekind can sing here" (Bierbaum was writing in Munich, in November, 1902), "would be possible in no other German town. More than that: Even if they were allowed, it would be impossible, because of the attitude of the audiences, to consider them as anything but insults. . . . The chief advantage the 'Elf Scharfrichter' have is that the space in which they play excludes a mob; it is a room that is hardly more than a corridor, and holds hardly more than a hundred people. Which preserves just the intimacy necessary to this sort of art. Also the pleasant lack of pretentiousness. Everything primitive, but in the best taste. Hardly anything that smacks of being an 'artistic' turn, yet hardly anything quite lacking in art. . . . They played, for instance, a satiric farce of Paul Schlesinger's, 'The Improvement Society,' full of the most obvious hits at the highest personage of the German Empire, surpassing anything the *Simplicissimus* ever dared. . . ."

BIERBAUM's mention of *Simplicissimus* brings one to emphasis of the fact that it was not in literature alone that Germany in that period was surprising the rest of the world. In art, too, the younger men were effecting a revolution that was no less tremendous. There is not room here to go into that side of the movement; but it is nothing less than pertinent to point out that what the men this book is to emphasize were achieving for an awakening of truly German vigor, for individualism, and above all for irony in writing, their compeers in caricature and in every printed form of art were equaling. *Simplicissimus* became the foremost organ of political and social satire in the world, and *Jugend* the most artistic. The legend of a Germany ruled by uniforms, military or bureaucratic, became hard to discern under a play of wit and criticism in print that no other land in the world surpassed. Than T. T. Heine it would be hard to find a more mordant artist with the pencil, and in no other artist since Dürer has the hard morality of the North found a sterner satirist.

If in that artist you have the Teuton brutality and directness, in the late Von Recnicek you had a grace and charm in the depiction of the feminine and fashionable side of life that made the outlander suppose Germany populated, all of a sudden, with beautiful women with Parisian taste in gowns. That was, it is true, merely his Hungarian instinct for the beautiful imposing itself upon Munich; yet it marked a new stage in German artistic development none the less. Germany had left parochialism and taken to cosmopolitan laughter. What Von Recnicek did for frocks and frills, Thöny did for the uniforms; the one satirized the men, the other the women, of fashion; for in Germany or Austria the man of fashion still does not exist outside of uniform. But if you imagine the backfisch adoration of the officer type still in vogue in this period that the writing and painting men of Germany were introducing, you have only to look at files of *Simplicissimus* or *Jugend* to have your fancy exploded.

The men of *Jugend* are by now great painters, accepted by the world; one need do no more here than name some of them briefly. The fantastic Julius Diez; R. M. Eichler; Feldbauer and Jank, whose horses and soldiers are in the foreground of so many of the Munich exhibitions; Paul Rieth and Adolf Münzer (whose mural paintings make artistically remarkable the new Kur-Haus in Wiesbaden) giving vividly that Gallic note which has for years been passing out through Munich; and the late Leo Putz with his strange tricks of satire and decoration. The application of all this art left nothing to be desired, for in step with all such energetic breaking away from old and stilted caricature and illustration the processes of color-printing in Germany reached what is to-day admittedly the first place in the world.

It were easy to write about what we may call the colored side of this Young German period an entire book; and since I was of those rash mortals who in the days when all this color, all this satire and singing, were new, loved it all, whether it was green, or yellow, or blue, and tried to make others love it, I should like nothing better; but to-day all that may be done is to tell you that part of the history I am recording for you is the history of *Jugend* and of *Simplicissimus.* It was in the latter paper that some of the Bierbaum ballads were first given to the world. And it was in those pages, too, that there appeared, eventually, the most pungent and valuable caricature on the Überbrettl'.

The picture was by T. T. Heine, and showed the two leaders in the Überbrettl' movement, Von Wolzogen and Bierbaum, applauding Schiller in the act of emulating their own activities. "You see, my dear Schiller," they are saying to him, "it's just as I told you: your Song of the Bell will never get right down to the heart of the people until you sing it yourself while balancing a lighted lamp." And so the picture shows him, strumming his accompaniment on a guitar; the other two are watching, Wolzogen's length seated, Bierbaum's slight stature standing, both applauding Herr von Schiller's little act.

DESPITE much ridicule and caricature, and despite the fact that the Überbrettl' itself, as an actual variation upon the music-hall, appeared to perish, many things triumphed and survived from out this delightful plot. The entire present school of Viennese and Munich and Berlin operetta may be traced back to it; there remain to us many poems, much charming music, and even plays. Melodies by Oscar Straus, Victor Hollaender, Paul Lincke, Bogumil Zepler, James Rothstein and others, are still with us, relics of that campaign. It was the bit of popularity that came to his ballads of love and war when they were sung to haunting tunes from these Überbrettl' boards which first set that fine poet, Detlev von Liliencron, upon his feet. There remain, purchasable to-day, the Liliencron collection, the Wolzogen collection, and others, definite series in the musical editions of that day. There are no better chamber-songs than those to-day, in any tongue.

So, though this liaison between literature and the stage did not last, it made history, and left valuable legacies. In imperishable print and score we still retain some charming lyrics set to haunting music. Gems by Heine himself were used in this young romantic movement that he might himself have delighted in; trifles too by that versatile Parisian, Catulle Mendés, were adopted. In all this you could find trace of the great change that was moving over all Continental art.

The incident of the Überbrettl', from the view of mere entertainment, is surely not without its lesson for English and American emulation. Surely we have plenty of talent; surely the artistic taste of our people, toward miming and toward minstrelsy, chief factors in the Überbrettl', has been left long enough to the influence of the money-changers. Could not, as in the German cabaret of the better sort, a little art be wedded to a little commerce, so that neither the public's taste nor its intelligence be insulted? In England something of the Überbrettl' idea has, consciously or otherwise, been developed by Pelissier. In America few efforts in this direction have been made, save such as smacked of fashionable pastime for fashionables. The Überbrettl' aimed at no pink tea elements, no mere fashionable cliques. It was greater than mere cliques. Though dead, it lives; a vital chapter in the history of young Germany.

Alive, too, supremely alive, are those delightful songs. Few enough are the corners on either the English or the American side of the Atlantic where those melodious songs occasionally fall on the ear; yet, if you are minded to tilt at windmills, — to start an Überbrettl' in New York or London, — the way is easy and not far. Just study, first, those songs, that any German music-shop will sell you; those songs that Bierbaum and the others wrote, that Oscar Straus and the others made tunes for. You do not even have to understand the words. There is at least one genius of the tone world who plays those Überbrettl' songs as if she really understood them; she knows no word of German; the language of lyric and of melody are all she needs.

III

ON COLLECTING AND ON MINSTRELSY

If the cabaret and the Überbrettl' furnished the proper amateur of sensation with many new delights, you are not to run away with the idea that these new sensations extended no farther than the province of entertainment. What the Überbrettl' opened was nothing less than the door to the proper understanding of all that is to-day most vital in current German literature.

All these sensations, of those early years and the many since, came to me through my first copy of Otto Julius Bierbaum's magazine *The Island*.

We are all of us, consciously or unconsciously, collectors. Too many of us collect mere money; others devote their most vivid moments to the collection of pictures, of books, or of meerschaums. The wisest of all collectors are those, I think, who concern themselves simply with garnering emotion. They are able to dispense with any such crude capital as mere coin; their chief requisite need be no more than a nose for the naïve. The exact opposite of this happiest type of collector is the incurable sufferer from ennui, who has no longer any ability to discover in himself or elsewhere any emotion whatever.

All this, by way of apology for certain doubtless unfashionable habits of my own. In an age of machinery I still go about the world collecting sensations that have nothing whatever to do with machinery. If Herr Baedeker, or another, dares to sketch a sensation for me in advance, the bloom is off; the music of bellwethers is a noise I avoid. Nor is such selfish search for uncharted emotions without its rewards. Had I not gone, for example, pottering about some dingy lanes in Hamburg, one day when the nineteenth century was gasping out its last months, I might never have found the key to a most illuminating realization. What began, that day, as a momentarily vivid sensation, has broadened out, as the years passed until now that one keen moment is become an appreciation of an entire period of history. The arts have as much to do with the history of peoples as have politics.

Pottering, as I said, about the streets of Hamburg, I found, in what the Germans charmingly call an " antiquarian " bookshop, a set of unbound volumes of a periodical called *The Island* (*Die Insel*). Turning the pages of these loose copies, as they lay casually scattered about the tables, I felt the dawn of a sensation.

The German literature on which I had fed in my youth had been nothing like this; I recalled only a more or less mummified atmosphere in which the works of Freytag, Dahn and Ebers mingled. Which had been as fresh, as racial, as, say, the Lew Wallace chariot-races. I had a sudden absurd vision, as I stood there awaking to a realization of an actual German literature, of General Wallace's Ben Hur and Georg Ebers's Daughter of a King in Egypt marching pompously to the gates of posterity's Parnassus — and having the gate shut in their faces! I turned the pages; I let the welter of new names, new notes in prose, in lyric and in play, surge all about me; at first I caught only the general glamour that shines from youth, from courage, from revival of old hopes, raisings of new banners; gradually there emerged essential necessities: I must carry off with me as many of these volumes as possible, I must begin at the beginning and find out what it was all about, this brave stuff of songs and stories in Otto Julius Bierbaum's *Island*.

To Otto Julius Bierbaum I owe my first enthusiasms, and much of my later knowledge of that transition period in modern German literature which the future will, I maintain, come to regard as the beginning of a New Age. It is in a sort of gratitude to Otto Julius that I shall try to hand abroad the message which unwittingly he began for me in that shop in Hamburg. The mortal part of him can carry no more messages in story, song, or play; he died the second of February, 1910. But the everlasting child in him, the unquenchable minstrel, will go singing on, lifting us always nearer to the sky. He, and the group in which he belonged, were proper troubadours of to-day.

The history of those Teuton minstrels has keen pertinence in England and America. Can we not snatch, from our motors, our machines, and our marts, the brief hours that it will take to listen to these troubadours, and to see how sharply their singing and living have value for our own time, our own peoples, and the peoples to follow us?

Not this nor many books can ever tell you all the new worlds that opened up to me as I read my way through the pages Otto Julius first revealed to me. Songs, stories, men and women, music, plays, and pictures passed before me so vividly that I felt I must come to closer quarters with them. And some of these enthusiasms, which the years have but intensified, I hope to pass on to you. Have but a little patience with these pages, step but ever so quickly through anterooms somewhat crowded, like doctors' waiting-rooms, with decayed literature, and you may be rewarded by a valuable morsel or so.

The valuable, you say, may also be entertaining? Good, you are the one I like. Deliver me from these groaning and grunting rooters after culture! The only reason I like to remember that little anecdote about the Gadarene swine is that I conceive the "steep place" as being a synonym for "culture."

WHAT the group of Germans hereinafter to be considered represented was nothing less than a rebirth, in this most mechanic age of ours, of the spirit of the wandering minstrels of the middle ages. We need not go scholastically into the history of those wanderers, whether troubadours of Provence or students of Germany. But this much is pertinent: the identical bold, vivid, natural, pagan outlook on life that marked those wandering students of the middle ages, marked also the singing of these Germans of the day before yesterday, notably these three: Detlev von Liliencron, Otto Erich Hartleben and Otto Julius Bierbaum. Their singing was the spontaneous expression of youth, of the individual. There was no question of problem, of morals; nature and the ego were voiced as blithely as the lark sings.

You may draw instructive parallels easily enough between that singing of the medieval troubadours and this newer singing. The intellectual torpor in Germany that preceded this lyric awakening was exactly that of the middle ages. Society, after the triumph of 'Seventy, was hypnotized by its own complacent orthodoxy; sheer physical prosperity threatened to choke the inward spirit. Puffed up with its victories in the field of battles, Germany held song and story to be no stuff for robust masculinity, just as America to-day, drunken with a dream of financial supremacy, conceives the arts as mere pawns in the market-place. Teuton or English or American — and there are those who conceive the world's future as sure to be branded with one of those titles! — we all need divorce from the material, as much as ever Luther longed for divorce from Rome. If we do not wish to choke on dust of steel and concrete, we must make way for a lyric or so in our lives. We need minstrels, not mechanics. The latter, like weeds, will always flourish. But minstrels — we pretend their day is done, forgetting that some of their songs will live when all our towers of stone and steel are in the likeness of what once was Baalbek. For there is no more wonderful mystery in the world than the handing down from generation to generation, from folk to folk, of songs, of ballads, often even without aid of writing. The singers die; the streets and towns that knew them may be leveled to the dust; only the song survives.

In Germany, more than anywhere else in the world, the habit of wandering abroad in the world, afoot, in student-days, continues. On any roadside to-day you will meet these young fellows; along the Rhineborders, in the Harz, in Thüringen, Saxon Switzerland, Switzerland, and even Italy. The term "wander-years" is a commonplace in print and colloquial usage; the fact of a period in a young man's life being devoted to faring forth to see the world with hardly any capital save health and a stout pair of legs is as taken for granted as that if you are able-bodied and have not passed the examination for one-year volunteers, you must serve your three years in the army. A knapsack holds all the essentials, which are likely to contain more books than soap; our German lad is not bothered by neurotic notions about sanitation and open plumbing; the world is his oyster, to be opened at the mere kick of his booted toe. So he goes, year after year, generation after generation, upon his wander-years. To "make one's Italian tour" is the dream not only of youth, of art, but of the solid citizen, not to say the philistine. German or English or American, you can be most execrably puritan or philistine, or both, though you race up and down Italy every year of your lives. The proper wandering students, however, were never the ones to enter Venice and sniff at "the drains"; nor did they sit complacently in Florence and regret that there was only one vast square where you could drink Munich beer. They had no money in their purses, no cares; they worshiped the trinity of wine, woman and song, and the world must help them to enjoy that trinity.

In Paris (wrote a fine old medieval monk) they seek liberal arts, in Orleans authors, and in no place decent manners. To-day, where we are material rather than monkish, we still cannot give the German wanderer much praise for his manners; as to the rest, he is more like to seek wine in Italy, women in Paris, and come home with his songs. That Italian wine is more than grape; it is the rare wine of art, without which few German poets have come into their own. Hardly a great German but passed through his Italian period. No Byron or Landor or Shelley loved Italy more than Goethe.

The troubadours of old imparted to posterity no great lessons, solved no great problems. They did not preach. They sang of themselves, their loves, and their lives, naturally and heartily, and in so doing, gave us sketches of their type and their time more vivid than if they had gone to finicky painstaking detail. Exactly so, you are presently to see, have these latterday protagonists of the lyric served their country and their age. As they have been natural, spontaneous, have cut themselves away from quibbles about styles and formulas — turned their backs on phrases like naturalism, impressionism, and the like—they have succeeded, as not before in many, many years, in voicing the real Germany of their time. They were German poets, not poets who happened to write in German.

Besides Von Liliencron, Hartleben and Bierbaum, the most notable of these truly German poets, I shall tell you of other, still younger men, but the essence of the lyric spirit may be found in those three.

It is through those three, also, that you can reach, over an awful gulf of futility and formalism, to the giant, Goethe, with whom died, in 1832, as you may read in all the solemn documents, German literature. Not since Goethe and Heine had the natural and naïve spontaneity of true lyricism come to expression as in Liliencron; and if you would enroll yourself as a proper Goethe-worshiper any time in these last fifteen years, you must have had upon your shelves the Goethe Brevier of Otto Erich Hartleben and the annual Goethe Calendars of Otto Julius Bierbaum. I do not compare any of these three with the giant who dominated German literature a hundred years ago; but I say that much of his raciness of soil, his naturalness in song, lay dead and buried until these men revived it.

SUPPOSE, before we go farther, that we have it out a little upon the lyric note in life. There are plenty of you, I know well enough, who are beginning to tremble lest this become a book about poetry. Now, poetry as a certain set of scholiasts determine it, cannot possibly interest you less than it does me. "That day they read no more" is a line I can misquote from Dante with any disciple of Chautauqua; however little they read of the noble Italian or of many of his stamp, it is more than I have the mind for. I was overdosed with "rosy-fingered morns" in college, and the Homeric has meant laughter to me in all my more sophisticated days. The narrative, cut up into lines of equal length, and arbitrarily begun with capital letters, does not fill me with emotion. The only minstrel who, in this age of print and stereotype, has still logical license to sing his story from generation to generation, is he who does it briefly, musically, spontaneously. Who writes, in short, the lyric.

What matters, in poetry, as in all letters, is the genuineness of the emotion that is reached; rules matter nothing at all; if the song sings itself into your heart, it is poetry. If it does not do that, they can tell you until they are green with despair that the lines have conformed to all the rules of poetry. Poetry for poets is a circle as futile as literature for literates. The solemn dullards who maintain the Olympian attitude, who prate of the academic, of standards, and values, of Isms and Ologies, of the principles of criticism, what blind leaders of the blind they are! All such shop-talk never extends the human interest in literature one iota, one millimetre. Can you see the man in the street, the girl at the typewriter, the unpolished human being in whom taste dwells unknown, being stirred to sudden interest in literature, prose or lyric, by the "literary" phrases of such babbling Brahmins?

No; this lesson in the humanities cannot be learned soon enough: our age needs the lyric, and not alone in poetry. The lyric spirit, and this is what I want to declare to you before you tire too thoroughly of all this matter, can be as vivid in a welltold story, a wellmade play, a beautifully voiced saying, as in a lyric song itself. You can be lyric merely in your unspoilt youth; your unflecked beauty can be a lyric; there can be the proper lyric note in a rose and golden sunset; or in a landscape flecked with autumn voices. Our age is of machinery; steel, concrete and electricity loom and whirl about us; more and more it takes an effort to find the lyric note. Yet, if we would not let our humanity crumble utterly into dull rust under all this machinery, it is just the lyric note we must conserve, must foster. Youthfulness, heartiness, proneness to emotion, all these mean nothing but the lyric spirit.

The true lyric is concerned with primitive emotions. To be lyric is to be as a child. It is to be simple, naïve. Simplicity need not mean inability to discriminate. Simplicity is another name for instinct that has not been spoiled. This makes fewer mistakes than carefully reasoned criticism. My friend Bierbaum saliently remarked once that if the professional critics had had the handing down to us of the popular folk-songs of earlier ages, we would have retained no such beautiful fragments as are the result of the people themselves having transmitted them. Simplicity, he remarked, is possible in the most sophisticated; there is no greater sophistication than that of a Frenchman, yet towards art the French can bring the most naïve of attitudes.

Our souls may be all-too-tired in tune with our age of ennui, and yet in contemplation of the beautiful we can be as children that never question the wherefore of their joy. If sophistication and ennui could conspire to kill the child in us, there would, of course, be an end to all things lyric. We have not yet, fortunately, reached that awful point. And it is the part of lyric art to keep us from ever reaching it.

The lyric, when true to itself, is not objective. The life of the lyric is feeling. Where there is no heart, no feeling, be the rhythm as perfect as can be, there is no lyric. Feeling is not always the same, in all ages; to that extent the lyric is flexible in its fashions. The question whether our time has developed an actual lyric style is still open; the greater question is that the lyric be preserved at all. Goethe, we know, left as legacy a certain lyric style. Heine's melodies for decades rang a little oversweetly in the German air. It was not until the advent of Liliencron on the one hand, Bierbaum on the other, that the heritage was properly furthered. It is to Liliencron that we will first come, since it was he who first gave our own generation the new note that awoke German lyric literature from its long sleep.

About Liliencron, as, indeed, about this whole awakening, much here told comes from Otto Julius Bierbaum. Just as it was his work which first stirred my interest in this whole matter through the *Island*, through another brilliant and sumptuous magazine called *Pan*, in the nineties of the last century, so it was his own poetry, his countless pages of critical appreciation, his novels and stories, that led me farther and farther into the delightful field wherein these contemporaries of his were laying the foundations for the new German literature. He charmed me toward facts, and he lured me into constantly making additions to my collection of sensations.

IV

THE PIONEERS OF GERMANY'S NEW NATIONALISM

German writing, especially in lyric forms, was for something like fifty years after 1832 "mere literature" and nothing more. It had nothing to do with the life of Germany or the Germans. Its sex was neuter; its crest was a fig-leaf rampant on a void. Nietzsche called it a period of European feminism, and Michael George Conrad termed it womanized culture. Its criterion was the young lady at the fashionable finishing school. Her intelligence expended itself on the worship of lieutenants in uniform, and her hair was hanging down her back; but German literature adored every strand of it. What was printed and written was intended sheerly for nice people.

The parallels between Germany and America and England may be drawn endlessly in this detail of a spineless literature following upon a period of militant and material prosperity. After the Victorian era reached its highest point; after the too dear victory over the Boers, English literature, in any fine lyric sense, suffered reaction. The dream of outstripping the world financially leaves Americans with little time to waste upon the arts. They may sign cheques for it, but they scorn to give it a real place in their lives. (Let me remark, here, that it is the people of the United States to whom I refer; their arrogating to themselves the title American is properly punctured not only by the Italian critic, Ferrero, but by the bland inquiry of the average Parisian: "Ah, of the South, or of the North?") Similarly the triumphant German of 1870, forming a new and lusty nation upon cannons and bayonets, was content to feed, artistically, upon pap for babes. The men who had but lately been behind the guns had no time for song or story, the more so as the song and story offered them were of an emasculation only fit for old wives' Kaffee-Klatsches. You cannot blame them much; the spectacle of an able-bodied German reading the *Gartenlaube* would have been as comic as that of a member of the household cavalry sucking his thumb.

What was not mere echo, mere imitation of other imitators, was style without substance. Literature was a matter of phrases and mannerisms; its devotees disputed about technics, and the air reeked with such shibboleths as decadence, milieu, fin de siecle, etc. Modernity, realism, idealism, symbolism, naturalism, and art for art's sake, these words filled the ozoneless air. As for anything actually voicing the German spirit — a spirit as yet only in the making, perhaps, but vivid enough — it did not exist. The jugglers in phrases went abroad for idols to worship. First they looked to France, and there ensued, for prose, for poetry and play, a flood of French and pseudo-French echoes. The positive and realistic prose of De Maupassant and Bourget had much sway in Germany, and you may trace the influence of the former quite close to the present time, through Liliencron, Schnitzler and others. Baudelaire, Verlaine, Mallarmé and Maeterlinck exerted influence on the lyric artists of Germany. After the Frenchmen, came the other nations, the Norwegians and the Russians, eventually even the Irishman, Wilde, the Italian D'Annunzio, and the American Whitman. Not a single German of the period immediately after 1870 was of real European importance in fiction, in the theatre, or in song. A writer's reputation went no farther than the German border. National, social, universal questions were left untouched; parochial family circles might know the names of this or that polite polisher of *belles lettres*, but the world at large never heard their names. The giants were elsewhere, in Russia and Scandinavia, England and France.

After 1881 began a great dying-off of these undersized talents who had succeeded to the great period of Goethe and Heine. In 1885 appeared a pamphlet by Karl Bleibtreu giving warning of a rebellion against these too long worshiped puny idols of German literature. Against the professorial historians who dug about in Roman ruins and offered the result as a German novel; against antiquarian researches into the past; against poetry that reeked of catacombs. The methods of Zola encouraged the young German rebels; the plays of Ibsen had already been performed in Munich and Berlin; and such men as Bleibtreu, M. G. Conrad, Hermann Conradi and the two Harts, Heinrich and Julius, pointed the new paths.

Not one of these men achieved, individually, great things in German literature, but as bridge-builders, pioneers of a more natural and national period they deserve all possible credit. There has been plenty of scorn spilt upon the period of ferment and disquiet which these men inaugurated. Strife and contumely raged as bitterly as in any political campaign. These new men, these youngsters, had not in themselves any quality greater than their realization that the namby-pamby literature all about them must not, should not last. That, surely, was enough. The very fury of their secession fructified the field for the real artistic uplift that followed them.

The rebellion sprang up in many places almost simultaneously, as if from conscious conspiracy. In Charlottenburg, it was the worshiper of Napoleon and Byron, Bleibtreu; in Magdeburg it was Hermann Conradi and Johannes Schlaf, in Paris M. G. Conrad, elsewhere even such journalists as Maximilian Harden and Hermann Bahr took up the rebel cry. The movement for freedom from the old restraints, for the expression of true German youthfulness — in a word, the Green-German movement, as it was dubbed by both its enemies and its friends — spread quickly. Away from all conventions, was the cry, even from the convention of Bohemia, of poetic wigs and flowing ties and velveteen! The rebel cry itself became, eventually, as conventional as the chorus it pretended to despise; that was where these bridge-builders failed; yet their bridge remained.

THE Darwinian theory of evolution in literature will ever appeal to the didactic; others will continue to maintain that the devil and Dame Chance have quite as much to do with the matter as any logical play of cause and effect. This period of youthful rebellion among the German writers in the latter years of the nineteenth century had, for example, its equivalent in the United States where, during the 'nineties, some young rebels attempted secession from the stereotype of magazine-literature. A fluttering of little pamphlets, in imitation of the English chap-books of an earlier century, tried to stir the reading public into realization of this or that rebellious talent. In San Francisco it was the *Lark*, with Gelett Burgess and Porter Garnett doing most of the blithe singing; in Chicago it was the *Chap-Book*, which two young Harvard men, Herbert Stone and Ingalls Kimball, had evolved in their Cambridge leisure, and which the Canadian poet, Bliss Carman, launched for them to the distress of the conventional majority and the delight of the discriminating few. This present advocate was himself one of those chap-men.

That little American rebellion to all appearances evaporated futilely. You can find no trace of it in what is being written in America to-day. The rebels mostly conformed; others gave it up with a shrug; the fewest continued in the way of obvious public failure, choosing, sardonically, to spell such failure Success. As far as the reading public is concerned, and the conductors of the paramount public prints, that little rebellion is as if it had never been. Its tiny lyric note seems dead in our commercial air. And yet, because I must believe what I wish to believe, I refuse to think it altogether dead. The cart-tail orators prate forever of our Young Nation; is that youth to expend itself in the pursuit of Mammon? No, if we would really hold our youth alive within us, we must let it echo to the lyric note in life, and let mere lucre go. The "pursuit of happiness" which a certain unintentionally comic document declares as the right of all American citizens, is nothing else than a striving in our lives for some few lyric moments.

The German literary rebellion that we were considering held the seed of an actual national renascence of arts. That seed sprang from much ferment, much froth of party strife, and those who fought and frothed deserve a little attention here.

HEINRICH and Julius Hart let the new note of rebellion sound bravely in their periodical the *Berlin Monthly for Literature, Criticism and the Theatre.* Heinrich Hart had already, as early as 1878, sent out a set of songs called "Weltpfingsten," in which he disclosed the same cosmic vastness of conception that he tried to sketch in the "Song of Humanity," published in 1887. The two together published "Critical Campaigns" in 1882, in which they contended manfully for clearing away the old traditions and formulas that held the writing of their country still in chains. They fought for the right of the individual in criticism; for style that should voice personality; for the value of the ego and its impressions. They flung scorn at the effeminate imitators of Schiller. Their critical force did not die with them; it gave eminent courage and example to the younger men who followed.

The Harts came from Münster. Heinrich was born in 1855; Julius in 1859. In 1877 they came to Berlin and began the fight that was to mean so much ink, so much passion, so much poverty. Poverty drove them home again, but they returned again to the Berlin arena, as full furnished as ever with plays, poems and plots against the literary complacency of their time. Their life in Berlin has come down to us in many gipsy legends. The strangest figures filled their bare rooms: bankrupt actors, penniless students, unkempt would-be poets, and all manner of unwashed and homeless geniuses strutted or slept there. They lived there for days or weeks, borrowed and disappeared. Out of the mob of disreputables and thankless ones of those days, some few emerged who later became valuable figures in the new movement. The Harts deserve memory not only for the vigor of their critical campaigns, but for the largeness of their hospitality to a ragged and often only too worthless crew. They themselves did not allow their poetic or critical strength to be sapped by the gipsy life that centred about them. Eventually they moved to Friedrichshagen, where what was known as the " circle by the sea," in which even such as Gerhardt Hauptmann, Hartleben, Halbe, Wedekind, and Strindberg had place, surrounded them. Critically they rose into general prominence; 1887 to 1900 the *Taegliche Rundschau* printed them; then the *Deutsche Zeitung* and then *Der Tag*. Heinrich Hart died in 1906. Ernst von Wolzogen's comedy "Lumpengesindel" — which you may call "Rag, Tag and Bobtail" — has been declared based on the Berlin bohemianism of the Harts, but it would be wrong to judge the Harts themselves by what, in that play, are obvious and gross caricatures.

KARL BLEIBTREU sprang from a family of property and culture. His father was Georg Bleibtreu, of Xanten, in the Rhineland, ranking in the early fifties as one of the foremost historical painters in Germany. Karl was born 1859 in Berlin. His mind ripened extraordinarily soon; in art as in science his accomplishments had both the qualities and the defects of precocity. From the university he journeyed abroad in the world; then settled in Charlottenburg, a suburb of Berlin, for a period of study and almost feverish composition of novels, poems, plays and battle scenes. Of all the ninety volumes that he flung upon the world, nothing remains that need concern us. His

"Dies Irae," published in 1882, was a series of campaign pictures in prose that had success in its day; but it is only through his 1886 pamphlet, "The Revolution in Literature," that he has value for posterity. What he himself wrote was intention rather than accomplishment; his poetry limped after Byron, his prose after Zola. Yet his striving was, always, away from the accepted conventions of his time, and he had in him such ferment of youth and creativeness that he succeeded in furnishing the younger men with courage and battle cries. His intention was to introduce actual modern life into his art, and at the same time to destroy the old idealistic, or pretty-pretty methods of that art. Only his intent remains to us. As in his pamphlet he had declared a youthful revolution, so in *The Magazine*, which he conducted from 1887 to 1888, and in *Society*, 1888 to 1890, he gave a trumpet to the lips of youth. *Society* (*Die Gesellschaft*) had been founded by Michael Geo. Conrad in Munich, and it was he who later carried it on. The success of Hauptmann, determined by the performance of "Before Sunrise" on the Free Stage which the Harts and Maximilian Harden and others conspired to start, marked the moment of Bleibtreu's disappearance from the literary arena. Yet he had helped to build the bridge.

THE youths of 1885 gave freely of themselves in their fight against things as they were. They spilt their enthusiasm and their egos equally. Their enemies accused them of overweening vanity, and Bleibtreu himself, in a moment of rebellion against the rebellion, declared their watchword to be Megalomania. These youths were full of adolescent ferment; unripeness marked their work; yet they ventured their all upon their beliefs; they were willing to suffer for their faith. That faith held to the need for revival of an actually national, Germanic note, for divorce from foreign idols. "The spirit that moves our songs and our stories," wrote Hermann Conradi, in 1884, in his preface to "Dichtercharactere," "is the spirit of revived nationalism."

The title of this book has no adequate equivalent in English, though the dictionary might lead you to suppose "Poetic Characters" to serve the purpose. Dictionaries, however, like statistics, are notorious and abominable liars. The Germans use the word "dichter" in a large general sense that we can only feebly approach by "artist." The "dichter" can work in prose, in play or poetry. The word, for the strictly English comprehension, is only slightly more irritating than "schriftsteller," which we must declare to mean simply "writer" in spite of its formidable wealth of syllables. Unless, that is, you prefer the label " author," which, while it may impress the census-taker and the chambermaid, always makes me shudder. Some words are like motor-cars and diamonds: the wrong people use them.

I ask you particularly to note this digression; the value of this book lies somewhat in its digressions. The facts you may find elsewhere; even I have been able to do that. In a weak moment I undertook to write this book, and what I suffer in consequence, from having to give up, for this interminable space of time, riding across country in the daytime and reading *The Sporting Times* after dark, makes the experience of you, who read, entirely trivial. Do you imagine, however, that such a digression as this is of no pertinence? You are mistaken. It is only as we hold literature to be a slight part of life, that we can retain the proper human charm that shall extend the circle to which we appeal. What is only too much the matter everywhere to-day, — as it was with the most ineffectual of the German youths of the 1885 period, — is that literature is so largely an affair of shoptalk for shopmen. Life is the great thing; literature is merely an incident. Only as one remembers that, can the thing written be vital. Even Mr. Howells, now that Mark Twain is dead, admits this.

One reason why those verdant Germans of

the 'eighties were in themselves so ineffectual — though in handing on the torch, they were effectual enough! — was that they were more concerned with programs than with performance. Julius Hart, in a preface to his verses "Homo Sum," announced the new lyric note as keyed to an objective treatment of life, singing single impressions rather than typical ones. That objectivity again became, in the program of Hermann Conradi, a reflection of external things upon the mirror of one's own soul; paradoxically, subjectivity was reached. All the extremes of poetic intention lay in Conradi's above named volume, which contained also verses by Wilhelm Arent, John Henry Mackay, Maurice Reinhold von Stern, and Karl Henckell.

Conradi died in 1890. He burnt out his life feverishly. He was typical of youth's too furied ferment. All his years were fulfilled with passions; neither calm nor content ever came to him. Dissatisfaction, longing for tangible beyonds, and a brutal tearing of all physical veils from sexuality, marked his career. It was his poems, "Songs of a Sinner," and his stories, "Brutalities," that began the modern German psychology of sex, and pointed the path away from the prudery of the *Gartenlaube* as well as from the cold æstheticism of the professors of science. It was small wonder that he died early, from too much love of living. Yet he too helped to build the bridge. Direct links span from him to the still living Richard Dehmel.

Hermann Conradi was born in 1862, of Magdeburg parents. Most of his schooling was in that town, though he finished it in Leipzig. He followed the poetic anthology, "Moderne Dichtercharaktere," with his own stories, "Brutalities," in 1887, and the next year plunged into serious philosophy in Munich. Nietzsche came into his world, and the turmoil in him responded fiercely. His soul writhed between pity and passion, from the tragedy of all humanity to the futility of the ego. His nature, always at war with itself, came to exemplify literally the words of Nietzsche: "I tell you, you must have chaos in you, if you would give birth to a dancing star!" But in Conradi nothing was ever created out of that chaos. In 1889 he went to Würzburg to take his degree as doctor of philosophy. The authorities of Leipzig prosecuted him for blasphemies and immoralities found in his novel, "Adam Mensch," and before conclusion of that trial, 1890, at the age of twenty-eight, he died. He had gone the gamut of artistic sensation and belief. He began idealist, concluded brutal cynic. His youth, warm, tender and trusting, felt too deeply the brutalities of the world, and went, in its pain, to the utterest extreme. But his agonies had helped to liberate his generation from many rusty chains. As a psychologist he went deep; his dissecting knife went sharply into creatures and causes; and his later pessimism clarified his outlook and even enabled him to see himself without distortion. Futile to speculate, now, upon what he might have done had he lived. He carried on the fire; that was enough.

Two other contributors to that anthology cannot be slighted, though they have shaped their art to such hard formalism as is the direct opposition to the natural lyric spontaneity in appreciation of which this book is written. These are Arno Holz and Johannes Schlaf.

For years these two worked together. The rhythms of Holz fulfilled more accurately than any others the somewhat vague programs of Henckell and Conradi. He joined those others, the Harts and Bleibtreu, but he refused to share their somewhat chaotic passions. His art was constantly expressing itself more coldly, more scientifically. He tried experiment after experiment, announced program after program. No Nikola Tesla ever declared more formulas than Arno Holz; he treated versification with a skill and a sure application of onomatopoeic method, to delight Maxim or any other scientist. If poetry can be written like that, with conscious deftness of technique, upon set theories and formulas, Arno Holz must be ranked as a poet.

There is no denying that he is a fine artist. He, at least, survives of all those Green Germans as something more than a builder of bridges. He remains a creative craftsman, with a place assured in the German literature of to-day.

The program was always paramount with Holz. His collection of verses, " The Book of Time," 1885, exposed an unusual skill in craft, and also the craftsman's theories about his art. Those theories he elaborated specifically in 1891 in his " The Nature of Art and its Laws," and in " Revolution of the Lyric " in 1899. He declared the need for new lyric forms to suit the new forms of life itself; he declared words, as words, to be the fittest media, rather than arbitrary rhymes and modulations that controlled words. In his " Phantasus " volumes he evolved poetic forms for his theories, and the results cannot but interest us, who recall Whitman, Henley and even the eccentricities of Stephen Crane. Of late years Holz has produced but little; yet his work must indubitably be reckoned into the valuable German art of our time. From first to last he has fought valiantly; his theories have never lacked interest, and his ambitions for a lyric regeneration have been fiery with sincerity. Out of those ambitions, his definitions of them, the lyric workman of the future will surely draw profit. His own satisfaction with his position as mere pioneer he admitted in a contribution made some years ago to a symposium upon the subject of the future of German literature, and in a sentence in his own "Revolution of the Lyric"; in the former he believed that the dawn of a new drama was at hand, with Germany leading the way, while in the latter he had given up that belief as far as his own land was concerned, concluding: "The dawn will not be ours. We will have sown the seed; where it will ripen, Heaven only knows." He was content to have been there when the seed was sown.

Compared to what he formulated, and what he actually accomplished, in lyric art, his pioneering theories about prose and the drama are negligible. Yet even there at least one detail must be mentioned. Especially as I have seen no mention of it in any of the books about Gerhardt Hauptmann that our language holds.

Here is the detail: When Arno Holz and Johannes Schlaf were living and writing together, among the volumes by which they blazed a new artistic path was one, dated 1889, called "Papa Hamlet." It was still, despite the rebellion of the few, a period of foreign dominance. Realizing this, Holz and Schlaf elaborated a literary hoax, signing this collection of sketches and tales with the name Bjarne P. Holmsen, and prefacing it with some pages of an alleged translator, Dr. Bruno Franzius, who told of the life and work of the Norwegian, Holmsen. The trick worked. Success, and the most conflicting welter of critical opinion, came to "Papa Hamlet." And — here comes the comedy of the thing, and the detail that is of actual value in following the progress of modern German letters — it was this book, and the following play, "The Family Selicke" (performed on the Free Stage in 1880), that gave Hauptmann the impetus to write his "Before Sunrise." These technical experiments of Holz and Schlaf were what moved Hauptmann himself to steer away from the conventions of his time. "Before Sunrise," when first it appeared, was dedicated to Bjarne P. Holmsen.

As Hauptmann and others accepted the new formulas, the reason for the farther alliance between Holz and Schlaf ceased. Happiness or material success does not seem to have come to either of these men. Fate dealt unkindly with both in personal ways. Holz once averred, in 1896, that he could write no more; but his "Phantasus" volumes, most expressive of his new lyric devices, have since disproven that plaint. It is a fact, however, that for his 450-page "Book of Time" he received the sum of five dollars.

Holz was born in 1863. His versification first followed the familiar strains of Geibel and Heine, and only later he evolved his rebellious creeds. The years with Schlaf were 1887 and 1888. Johannes Schlaf was born in 1862, near Merseburg. Magdeburg saw his first schooling, his first itch for ink. He became, with Hermann Conradi, one of the young radicals of that town. He studied further in Halle, and Berlin, and then threw all studies overboard to join his ways with those of Holz. Yet it was only after loosing himself from the latter that he reached, lyrically, something like a natural, spontaneous expression of self and of his race. The volumes "In Dingsda" and "Frühling" have Whitmanesque touches upon the note of the ego; but there is a note, too, of new nationalism that insures him a place in the new literature of Germany. Quite lately, his stories, "Der Prinz" and "Am Toten Punkt," have brought him into front rank as novelist.

IF we pass the names of the journalists who also had share in this path-blazing — pausing only long enough to mention Maximilian Harden, born in 1861, in Berlin, who was actor before he was journalist; whose career, for readers of English, is bound up with a certain criminal prosecution that caused, not so long ago, a distinctly unpleasant set of disclosures to taint the German air; and whose prose (in his own periodical *Die Zukunft*, and more succinctly in his volume of character-studies called "Köpfe" (Heads), 1910, forceful sketches of the foremost European figures of our time) gives him rank in any gallery of militant men of letters of the type of Kipling and Shaw — we come finally to the name of Michael Geo. Conrad. He, more than any of the others, spanned the older period to the new. He, more directly than the others, fostered that poet who best was to lift the new German lyric note, the note of the new Germany. Let us admit him negligible in his creations. He was the godfather of the future; that was enough.

He was born in 1846, the son of a Frankish peasant. At sixteen he left home to become a teacher; he studied philosophy; saw something of the world; lived in Switzerland and Italy. Accident brought first Nietzsche's work, then Nietzsche himself, across his path. He turned writer; went to Paris; worshiped Zola; stayed in Paris until 1882, returning then to Munich. He had share, in 1885, in founding *Society*, which became the banner of the new generation. Among those who rallied about this banner were Max Halbe, the dramatist, Von Wolzogen and Bierbaum. Bierbaum once said that if ever a history of Green Germany came to be written, that would also be a history of *Society*, and the first chapter would have to be headed: Michael Georg Conrad. It was his sympathetic and forceful direction that determined the entire new movement. It was he — and at last we come to the first of the men this book is to try and lure you into appreciating — who first gave space to the lyrics of Detlev von Liliencron. Bierbaum teaches us what manner of man Conrad was: despite his years a comrade to all the younger men whom he encouraged, a constant stimulus to young ambitions, a flaming sword for friends and against foes, mincing nothing, stopping at nothing, full of fierce hates and loves; just the man for a set of young rebels. Surely fame should accrue to the great editor, as to the artist; to Henley, who discovered talented men, as to Henley, who wrote "In Hospital." Conrad led these youngsters on, and they never looked on him as other than one of themselves. Even so Liliencron, himself of an elder generation, was the first to give the present generation an actual vivid renewal of such a national note in German lyric literature as had not been heard since 1832.

V

DETLEV VON LILIENCRON

Not until Detlev von Liliencron came was there a revival of an actual note of truly German nationalism. No such naïvely singing soul had been heard since Goethe. Only Verlaine, in France, equalled him in lyric spontaneity. He was utterly a German; he lived as a German; he put that life directly into his songs and his stories. He lived first, wrote afterwards; the note of life, of actual experience illumines his every line. You forget, reading him, any question of craft, just as he himself forgot it, to all appearance. Only nature — the German nature, the German scene, the life of himself, a German — had anything to teach him; he followed in no footsteps, obeyed no formulas.

He was soldier, huntsman, cavalier, country magistrate first; he lived his life vigorously and variously; literature was a last resort. You never smelt literature in what he wrote; what you smelt was life; the blood and powder of battles, the soil of his northern lands, the glitter of uniforms; always life, life. Few men, anywhere, led a life more full of color; few put more of that color into their writing. He spanned the gulfs from the swagger officer to the vagabond; from the magistrate to the infidel; from the rank feudalist to the soldier in liberty's cause; from the balladist of wedlock to the egoistic Don Juan; from a birthright of Danish allegiance to a supporter of the Prussian standards. He lived at top pressure; it is for that reason, when he came, late in life, to express his experience in words, those words went straight, full pressure also, to the mark.

THE need for keeping literature quite incidental to life itself is something that cannot too often be declared. The point of view, or the actual expression through art, which sets life subsidiary to literature, results in nothing but "mere literature." This dealing in definitions, in explanations, how futile it all is! The moment, for example, you can put your finger upon a fine bit of singing stuff, and say why and how it charms you; that moment the charm is off. That, I hope, is one mistake I will avoid in this present book. If I tell you that I found this or that song lilting in my memory for days, or weeks or years, I will be no such fool as to spoil your chances of catch-ing my enthusiasm by dissecting the charm. As well dissect gossamer and star-dust!

Is there something about the profession of poetry — the intention was not ironic, yet for American consumption the phrase's irony remains! — that tends to relegate life into a mere medium for literature? All too few are those who resemble Liliencron in the variousness of his life and the naturalness of his work. Against many sorts of poets I have known — one sort, for example, which goes to the extreme of literary convention by talking to all women as if they were merely eyebrows for an unborn sonnet, and by frequenting those places in the world where other romantic souls once lived and loved; another, which could not see in any garden either trees or flowers or grass, but only a fog of ego and of phrases — I have known all too few who, like Liliencron in one place, like Ernest McGaffey in another, were men first, poets afterwards.

FROM the mummified antiquarian period of German literature, resulting, as we have already seen, in a hue and cry of rebellious youngsters, the step to the naturalism and nationalism of Liliencron is made by way of Richard Wagner and Friedrich Nietzsche. The poet Wagner, and the poet Nietzsche, not the musician or the philosopher. Wagner first used actually German national material, and Nietzsche developed to courage and accomplishment all the young Germans of his time.

While Nietzsche's philosophy has by now been most thoroughly made available for English appreciation — most intelligently and fascinatingly, I think, through Henry L. Mencken — his literary leadership has been insufficiently recognized abroad. He was poet first, philosopher only as a result of it. What Hauptmann did for the German drama, Nietzsche did for the lyric. He taught his time to look into its own soul and be satisfied therewith; he taught the greatness of the German soul; he taught the uselessness of the old existing formulas; he pointed the way to the culture of beauty, the exploitation of the individual impression. His influence was on every lyric artist of his day. On none more directly than on Liliencron. And the influence of these two, Nietzsche and Liliencron, is, consciously or unconsciously, part of the equipment of every living lyric artist in Germany.

FRIEDRICH VON LILIENCRON — for he used Detlev only as a pen name — was of an old Schleswig-Holstein family, that had been raised to baronetcy by the king of Denmark in 1829. He was born in 1844 in Kiel. The lust for soldiering came on him when he was still a boy, and eventually he was to find himself leading the life of barrack and campaign in grim earnest. He was quartered in no less than sixteen different garrisons. For Prussia he fought in 1866, in Bohemia, and in '70 in France; he was wounded in both campaigns. His wounds and his debts found him, after the Franco-Prussian war, unable to continue his military career; he retired with the rank of captain of infantry. He went to the United States, and lived through several years of poverty and suffering. Returned home again, he opened an old box of letters; came upon an old battle picture, and a surge of emotion made him scribble some verses on the back of the picture. Those were his first verses. He settled near Hamburg as a country magistrate, but gave that up in 1887, and definitely commenced author, moving to Munich. Again, however, his northern acres called to him, and he returned to Hamburg, Altona, and Kellinghuysen. His life was a constant battle against odds; poverty pinched him relentlessly; life was everything to him, and he lived it always to the full, no matter what the cost. He held, above all else, his independence dear. Even when, after much effort on the part of his friends, and, indeed, at far too late a day, the German emperor was induced to grant him a pension.

So far the bare sketch of the sort you may now find in the Who's Who of every modern land. Let us humanize the sketch a little with some remarks of his own, from what he once contributed about himself to M. G. Conrad's magazine *Society*.

"My boyhood years were lonely ones; the shadow of Denmark was on them. I gathered little from all my schooling; only history fascinated me, as it still does to-day. Mathematics, still a closed door to me, embittered my earliest years. My joy was in the open, the fields. A day with dog and gun, in wood, field or thicket, remains to me as the only sort of day worth living. Soldiering had always been my dream, but I had to go to Prussia to make it come true. I had the luck to be tossed actively about in my years of service; I saw seven provinces, seventeen garrisons; I came to know my country and my countrymen. Eighteen hundred and sixty-four to 1865 I saw the last Polish rising, and then came the wars with Austria and France. Oh, those glorious years as a young officer! The good friends and comrades; the fine acceptance of duty and service, the subduing of self! . . . I was thirty years old when I wrote, accidentally, my first poem."

And here this detail, of special interest to Americans:

"My mother, Adeline Sylvestra, born Von Harten, came from Philadelphia, where my grandfather was a general in the American army. He was, though not half so old in years, one of the last, closest friends of Washington."

THIS was a real, entire man. Not one-sided, one-ideaed. Not simply soldier, not just a sporting squire, not just a lovelorn troubadour. He was all those things and more. To-day they read him in barracks, because he told war-stories as no other German of his time, and because as a barrack-room balladist he ranks well with Kipling; and they read him in the boudoir because when he sings of love it is not a love of frills and fancies, but a love of flesh and blood. He gave you, always, the tone of a large, all-comprehending, love of life. And this, in a Prussian officer, was no slight thing. That education, that routine, does not favor the tolerances. Nor does the education, the routine, the life, of a country squire.

I know, for I have seen the others. I came within an ace of being a Prussian officer myself. If a grandam of mine had had her way, you might have been spared these present pages. A far-seeing old lady, you may say? Well; yours the regret, then; mine, none the less, the continued rejoicing. For I remember always, as against Liliencron, the amazing exception, an own uncle of mine, the type.

Crack officer in a crack regiment of cavalry; one of the handsomest men, with his fair, waving mustache, his blue uniform of dragoons, that you could lay eyes on anywhere. Lucky, too; tossed into the Franco-Prussian war straight from his very first garrison; honors and advancement crowding on him in the earliest years; commandeered to the great General Staff in Berlin; sure of all the rewards that can come to any officer in time of peace. But as for a larger view of life than the barracks, the mess-table, the soldiering life in war and peace, it was utterly to seek in him. His life was as ruled as a schoolboy's copybook; the mechanics of the German military system were all that had passed on to his intelligence; his conventions of conduct were as narrow as the Regulations for Recruits. Humanity, life, existed for him as mere pawns in a great military scheme of precision. The extraordinary thing was that even when he put off the uniform, retired into prosperity and the abominably ill-fitting clothes that German civilian tailors have so fully the secret of, the uniform's habit of life and thought still ruled him.

He was the type. The best of them are like that. Even so, conforming to stiff conventions, purblind to the larger life of to-day, it was that type which for decades ruled the imagination of all the girls in Germany. The maiden with her golden tresses, and the officer with his glittering epaulets; these two dummies ruled, until quite lately, the life and the literature of that land. But their day is done. The ladies themselves have gone to the other extreme. "Anything," said a charming young person to me in Wiesbaden only the other week, "but a German officer! Far rather an Englishman, or an American!" None so cruel as the ladies when they cease to love!

The country squire, too, whether in Prussia or England, is, as a type, narrow to a degree. Remember Galsworthy's "Country House," and Sudermann's "Es War." Note the grim, wooden-headed, closed ranks of the agrarian members of the imperial parliament of Germany; there you have the type of the Pommerscher Junker. Those, too, I know; I was brought up among them. Bismarck was the supreme instance of that type; his hugeness of intellectual bulk imposed all the vices and the virtues of that type upon his own time, his own people.

As a great humanist, Liliencron is the glorious exception from this generality of officer and country gentleman. It is as humanist, finally, that posterity will give him his greatest renown.

THE natural note in the poems of Liliencron startled an audience that had long been accustomed to weak dilutions of what, in Goethe and Heine, had been genuine sentiment. The lyrics of the day were written in lavender water. With the publication of his "Adjutantenritte" (Rides of an Adjutant) and the following volumes of verse, the discriminating few found that a new man had come to be reckoned with. Here was war in all its color and dirt and tragedy; here was nature at first, not third or fourth, hand; here was love as it had come to life and song in the arms of a flesh-and-blood girl, not a lay figure patterned upon the formulas of other poets. The real poet writes life as he sees it and lives it; not as the accumulated documents of the centuries tell him he should see it and live it. Liliencron proved, in his very first volumes of verse — he was, as we know, already more than thirty years of age; he had no youthful fermentations about craft and art to bother him! — that he was an entire man, a proper poet. He wrote as he lived, passionately, vividly. Here were no echoes of other men's inky emotions. Here were an evident love for his kind, a keen sense of beauty, a realization of his own soul's oneness with all nature, a somewhat melancholy irony, and, above all, a robust masculinity. Reading him, one forgot the petty discussions that had been raging up and down the sterile field of German verse; forgot whether he was idealist or realist, impressionist or naturalist. He was a man; he sang as a man.

The circles of milk-and-lavender were naturally ruffled by the appearances of this new poet. They called him a noisy swashbuckler with vine-leaves in his hair. But to-day those ruffled circles are forgotten, and Liliencron lives, not only in his own work, but in the present generation of German writers, which owes to him whatever it has of the masculine, the national and the natural.

To readers who do not read German it is impossible to convey a notion of the graphic swiftness of movement in the early military verses of Liliencron. The musical and dramatic values of short words, and even of syllables, are used most effectively. Sharp, staccato strokes seem to cut out for us slices of breathing, glowing life. Note these stanzas from the martial "Rückblick":

"Zügel fest, Fanfarenruf,
Donnernd schwappt der Rasen.
Bald sind wir mit flüchtigem Huf
An den Feind geblasen.

"Anprall, Fluch und Stoss und Hieb,
Kann den Arm nicht sparen,
Wo mir Helm und Handschuh blieb
Hab ich nicht erfahren."

and the peculiarly beautiful lines, notable for a surpassing vividness compressed into the briefest terms ever yet attempted, I think, in any tongue:

"Sattelleere, Sturz und Staub,
Klingenkreuz und Scharten,
Trunken schwenkt die Faust den Raub
Flatternder Standarten."

Since Mr. Kipling sang rather of the barracks and departments of peace, than of war, I do not know where to look in English for equivalents to the qualities Liliencron showed in his prose and verse versions of war. In the war stories of Ambrose Bierce you will, I think, come nearest to the color and the irony in this German. He gives us the glitter of the sun shining on the cavalry charge, and he also gives us the eternal irony of things, just as did Bierce in his picture of the splendid horseman riding splendidly and futilely across a bullet-pelted space; just as did Tennyson when he sang of the mad charge at Balaclava, and just as did Bernard Shaw when he declared in "Arms and the Man" that what made a certain cavalryman's ride into apparently sure death possible was not heroism but the fact that his horse was running away with him. The irony of things was constant in Liliencron, but it was an irony tinged with melancholy, with pity. Never more so than in such lines as these, describing just such a cavalry advance as we have had in mind just now:

"Hör ich nicht plotzlich vor mir,
Weit hinter dem Getreideschlag,
Schwach wie aus einem Tälchen steigend,
Den Vorwärtsmarsch?
Mein Stock pendelt nicht mehr;
Ich recke mich,
Um über die leis im Winde
Spielenden Halmspitzen zu schauen.
Und, keine Täuschung mehr,
Uber den spielenden Halmspitzen,
Glitzern blitzende Helmspitzen.
Immer deutlicher klingen
Die türkische Trommel,
Die Becken,
Die Tuben,
Voran, auf milchweissem Hengst,
Den purpurne Ziertroddeln umtanzen,
Der spanischen Schritt geht
Wie der Gaul im Künstreiterzelt,
Führt der Oberst.

"Und, eine einzige Linie,
Folgt sein Regiment:
Im Gleichschritt,
Ein wenig hörbarer
Den linken Fuss setzend,
Im Takt der Musik,
Vor den Füssen
Das wachsende Brot;
Hinter den Füssen
Das zerstampfte Brot,
Die Wüste.
Schrecklich sind der Kriegsbestie
Zerkauende Kiefer;
Aber nie werden sie ruhen,
Solange der Menschen "verfluchte Rasse"
Die schöne Erde bevolkert.
Nur vorwärts Grenadiere!
Kein Zagetreten!

> Ihr verteidigt das Vaterland!
> Uber euren aufgepflanzten Seitengewehren,
> Im rücksichtslosen Angriff
> Schwebt die Siegesgottin,
> Hinter ihnen her zieht schnell der Friede.
> Doch ach, ist sein Triumph
> Der Triumph ewiger Dauer?"

Now, as sheer pictorial music the fragments I have quoted would stamp their author a great natural talent in any company. In the four-lined stanzas we are made to see the tightened reins, hear the call of the trumpets and the thunder of the hoofs. The shock against the enemy's front, the curses and the slashings, the sudden numbness of the arm, the loss, never noticed till afterwards, of helmet and glove. Then the brief summing up: empty saddles, dust, collapse; blades that cross and clash; and then the reeling victor's fist, waving his captured pennant. In the longer extract, we are made to share with the looker-on from behind the corn. First the far faint horn sounding the advance; next, above the shining, golden corn, the shining, golden helmets; the drums, and the fifes growing plainer and plainer. The colonel at the head; his snow-white stallion stepping high as if he were a circus horse; the whole regiment, in solid, single line, following, in even step, the left foot just a touch more audible, in time with the music. Growing grain before them, ruined grain behind them. Ah, the hideous, greedy jaws of the devil of war, that will never cease from grinding as long as this accursed human race of ours lives on this lovely earth! On with you, grenadiers! No hesitating! You are your fatherland's defenders! Above your arms the goddess of war sails in the sky; and in your wake flies triumphant peace. But oh, that triumph, is it a triumph that will last?

THE only poet who in English achieved similar effects of direct sensation, who seemed to cut slices straight out of the actual and serve them to you lyrically was William Ernest Henley, whose "In Hospital" verses have much that both for manner and matter are close to the battle-piece last quoted.

Of Liliencron's military songs the most popular was always his "Die Musik Kommt," which is as if you said "Here comes the band." No wonder that in the days of the Überbrettl' it was hummed and sung all over Germany. I shall here only sketch these stanzas for you. They describe, in syllables that actually set your feet to marching, the passing of the regimental music. First we hear the cymbals, then the great horn, the piccolo, the drums, the flute, and all the other instruments; and then, in all his finery of glittering sword and uniform, the captain. And then, again, the other officers.

To each a merry, graphic stanza. Then the privates; the whole regiment; their solid steady step shaking street-lamps and window-panes. And then the girls. Their heads from windows, doors and alleys; their eyes so blue; their hair so golden; they look and look and look, and — gone is the music! The wonderful, sweetly, human, truly lyric last stanza defies my clumsy touch:

> " Klingling, tschingtsching und Paukencrach,
> Noch aus der Ferne tönt es schwach,
> Ganz leise bumbumbumbum tsching,
> Zog da ein bunter Schmetterling,
> Tschingtsching, bum, um die Ecke? "

Can you not hear the very diminuendo of drum and cymbals, see the stream of gay color getting fainter and fainter? Until at last you, too, wonder: Was that a colored butterfly went, zing, boom, round the corner?

IT was the mood of the careless cavalier, in which such a song as " Bruder Liederlich " was written, that gained Liliencron the worser sort of " wine, woman and song " reputation in the ranks of the dying opposition. I wish I could give but the gist of that ballad of a gay dog who fought, and drank, and loved, wherever, whenever he could; who found a girl for his delight, and gave her much delight for hers; but, like the fickle cavalier he was, grew tired, and sent her on her way; and — wished to God he had her still, and wished to God he could forget, and "Pass the wine, and — shuffle the cards!"

But it is futile to do other than quote him in the original, and since space forbids that, the briefest reviews must serve. He sang as much of love and of nature as of things martial, and, whatever he touched in his singing, you forgot manner, and heard the matter of it going directly into your heart. The ability to express the individual impression was peculiarly his. You felt, always, that it was a battle he had seen, a girl he had kissed, of which he sang to you, not of some lithographed melodramatic moment or some model Daphnis or Chloe. In his "Nach dem Ball" you can almost smell the violets, see the tired eyes of the little countess sleeping on his shoulder.

The actual tone of life, that was what he always gave us, and it was because he was always more the lover of life than anything else. He was the first artist in almost two generations who was not a mere literary man, but man. The literary man never showed through his work; here was nothing of the abstract academician to whom all things human are vile; here was a plain, hearty German personality: an officer, baron, country gentleman, with all the peculiar qualities and defects of his class.

This was so plain, so simple an individual, so genuine a character, that he was more inclined to apologize for babbling of his emotions in verse, than of parading himself as poet. Those who had immediately preceded him had twittered politely of love in the abstract; he confessed in rhyme his love for a definite lady. They had set up wax figures and asked us to admire them; Liliencron, out of actual experience, out of life, simply and sweetly sang to us, and it is to the credit of the present generation that, before he died, they had come to know the difference between his spontaneous singing, with its living reality, and the pumped-up pattern-mongering of his predecessors.

BEYOND the poetry Liliencron's work expressed itself in several volumes of drama, and short stories. Those of the latter which deal with his army experiences are to be counted with the best in that sort anywhere, with the pictures of war that De Maupassant in France, Verestchagin in Russia, and Bierce in America, have produced. In a posthumous collection of his stories that I happened on in Nieder-Lahnstein, on the Rhine, just about a year after his death, I found one called "Der Alte Wachtmeister" that made me think sharply of the late Henry Irving in Conan Doyle's play of

"Waterloo." In the same volume, which was called simply "Letzte Ernte" (Last Harvest) was another story, of tragedy unrelieved by any "happy" ending, that gave a vivid picture of the North Sea's last devastating invasion of the Dutch dikes. I recall this story particularly because its conclusion parallels that of the Liliencron story that I consider his most characteristic bit of prose. This was one in the collection of "Kriegsnovellen" (War Tales) which ended with an unusual dramatic surprise.

A German division is in French territory; the officers are quartered upon the chateau of the local French magnate. The German general asserts his commanding rights by paying the most constant court to the daughter of their host, *Fanchette*. The little subaltern, whose name this story carries, has no more food for his own adoration of *Fanchette* than unlimited opportunities of noting his general's monopoly of the young lady. Comes an actual skirmish; the chateau is fired on; takes fire; is instantly beyond saving. All escape, save *Fanchette*, whose form appears suddenly at an upper window when the whole house is a furnace all about her. First to make for the desperate rescue is the general himself; a rifle bullet catches him before he has gone three steps; catches him and kills him. Then into the blazing breach goes the little subaltern. His arms seize *Fanchette*, as she sways, half-fainting at the window. There is still time to save her. And then, instead of dragging her to safety, his lips devour with mad kisses her throat, her lips, her eyes, her cheeks — until, with a crash, the roof, a very torrent of flame, crashes upon the two, mingling flame with flame, passion with passion.

It is that story of "Portepeefaenrich Schadius" that makes me think that Liliencron was right in averring as he often did to his friend Bierbaum, that he had the talent for drama. As far as actual stage success goes, however, Liliencron is not to be reckoned a dramatist. A certain actual public acclaim did, on the other hand, come to him by way of the Überbrettl' movement, already referred to. Several of his ballads and lyrics were sung into the popularity of the street, as well as of the library, in this fashion; and a definite start to his never more than slight prosperity was thus given him. He was one of the ten poets eventually chosen to represent the literature of this movement in the little collection of "Deutsche Chansons," published in 1901; the others were O. J. Bierbaum, Richard Dehmel, Arno Holz, Frank Wedekind, Ernst von Wolzogen, Rudolf Schroder, A. W. Heymel, Ludwig Finckh, and Gustav Falke.

SUCH a poet, such a natural, spontaneous singer, had, naturally, no easy path before him in a world as conventional, as womanistic, as philistine as that upon which his voice first fell. They said it was wine, not art, that sang in him; they called him a regimental light-o'-love. But the time came when every other young poet dedicated his first fruits to Liliencron, who, himself — and that was the gist of his secret! — was at sixty still the unquenched youth. And, at long last, came a pension from the emperor, in whose character, by the way, determined flattery might discover a trait or two of Liliencron. That, to be sure, would explain the imperial appreciation as no more than a sop to self-esteem. All the first efforts to interest potentates and powers in the man who as soldier and singer had done so much for Germany, failed. Liliencron, disgusted, wrote to Bierbaum, after one of those failures: "An English baronet or an American pork king would be less ignoble than that. . . ." To the poet, even more than to our average, you see, distance lends enchantment; it is just as well this poet's belief in foreign captains of industry was never put to the test. That first, unsuccessful, effort was made in the days of *Pan*, the sumptuous magazine which Bierbaum dominated. Count Harry Kessler drew Count Kuno Moltke's attention to Liliencron's straitened circumstances, and the latter put the case before the emperor. But for neither him, nor the similarly situated Ernst von Wildenbruch, was the time ripe. Time and again this great poet, to whom posterity must always date back the modern revival of literature in Germany, lived daily on a couple of eggs, some milk, some coffee, and a little grog, meted out to him by the generosity of a long unpaid landlady.

He had the soldier's and the minstrel's scorn for money. He drank it up with his friends, and he scattered it with his kisses. In his loves, he was no whit the aristocrat that he was in every other moment of his life. In his writing he was as much the singer of the ego and its experiences as was Nietzsche; but when he went among the girls his romantic nature played him the most fantastically democratic tricks. He saw a princess in a chambermaid, and many a scullery wench served his muse in lieu of a countess. Well; these things are not so astonishing to the person who recalls his Theophile Gautier. Once, in Munich, Liliencron did actually engage in an affair with a lady whom he persuaded himself was a princess; as a matter of fact, she was only a lady-in-waiting. But these are merely trifling details in the figure of the man; I cite them only to prove, once again, the inextinguishable child in him.

Liliencron expressed, as no other since

Goethe, the oneness of nature and the individual. He brought freshness and genuineness into a land that had forgotten both.

LILIENCRON died the 22d of July, 1909. For the memorial services held the 6th of October of that year in the Artists' House in Dresden, Otto Julius Bierbaum wrote some beautiful words of which I am now to try to give you a notion:

" Assembled here in memory of Detlev von Liliencron, we are gathered together not in the sign of death, but the sign of life. . . . Liliencron not only fulfilled his individual activity, but fructified the whole wide field in which he worked. He lives not only in his works, he lives on in the spirit of all modern German art. We can cry, with the French royalists of old: Liliencron is dead, Long live Liliencron! . . . Not that with Liliencron passed the master of any school, or that he set up any poetic formulas for posterity; to assert that would be an insult to his very personality and admission of inability to appreciate his work. With Nietzsche Liliencron had the greatest influence on the poetic energies of our time; but that was no influence of one who invented new systems. He had the faculty of carrying his own personal force over upon others, of stimulating others to be their most natural selves. He had, in the highest degree, that 'virtue of giving,' Nietzsche's own: the gift of giving himself. . . . The human genius in Liliencron was greater than its poetic expression. But for that, we could have put Liliencron into line with such as Byron. . . .

"Let us not classify or catalog. Liliencron is still too close to us, for us to determine his place among the immortals. But he *lives;* so much we feel sure of, now that his mortal part has left us. It is an artist's death that reveals for us, mysteriously, as with a sudden illumination, whether indeed we possess of his any lasting heritage, or whether he simply gave us, from time to time, fragments that entertained us for those moments. . . . So it was we realized, as we heard of Liliencron's death, that not just this or that work of his would go on living, but to a certain extent he himself in his entirety. Time will doubtless discard this or that book of his, in which his real essence did not properly lie (as, for instance, in his last novel), but the unique phenomenon Liliencron, in which the personal is as characteristic and valuable as the artistic, will not be easily expunged.

"All efforts to retouch for this or that purpose the picture, the autobiography of Liliencron, must always fail. The wonderful and unique thing about him is that, compact of apparent opposites, he was so complete. . . . It would be as futile as fatuous to exalt in Liliencron only the patriotic soldier, and evade the fact that there was a good slice of Bohemia in him: much light-heartedness, and a certain lack of scruples. But it would be unjust to be blind to the grave depths that were under all this lightness. . . . It is easily intelligible why the most known and best beloved of his poems are those that voice the joy of living. Yet he was never a mere merry dog; he always held life to be combat rather than pleasaunce, and few men were so constantly mindful of death's eternal vigil everywhere. Yet that was not the result of his having looked death in the eye upon the battlefield: it was not the soldier, but the poet Liliencron, who knew so wondrous much of death. Twice in one poem in his earliest book of verse you find the line, 'One of these hours thou diest,' and more than once he repeated that to me, as we came out of the Rathskeller, and looked up at old Peter. When in my presence he first saw the snow-capped chain of the Alps, he exclaimed: 'That confounded old fellow there with the death's-head and the long beard is winking at me. "Isn't your time about up, my lord baron? Time you let *me* kiss you?"' Then he asked me the name of that mountain. When I replied at a venture: 'Perhaps it's the Wild Emperor,' the name sent him into ecstasies, and he never afterwards addressed the mountain as anything but Your Majesty. Many years later, in Hamburg, he reminded me of it all, concluding with ' A veritable death's head he had.' It would not have disturbed his fancy in the least had I told him that it was not the Wild Emperor at all.

" Who knows Liliencron's verses knows how familiar the picture of death was to him. He saw him in the eyes of the coursing greyhound, saw him as a fashionable viveur with a monocle, saw him as a skeleton wrestling with an ape for a laurel wreath, saw him as gravedigger, saw him as commodore with a clay pipe in his mouth, saw him as a Viennese fop — saw him everywhere and always as the great change-artist of life. . . .

" No, this was not a mere merry dog. His call was a battle call; not only joy, but grim determination was in it. . . . And we must not forget who fought against him in his battle. To use his own phrase, it was His Excellency the Philistine. Not that Liliencron himself did not have his touches of philistinism; he had not been so complete a man, so complete a poet, had he lacked appreciation of that side of life. . . . But he did not let His Excellency down him. It simply came to this: the ' ironist of life ' — a trait of Goethe that was his from the very start of life — led him occasionally to wear a mask in the presence of His Excellency. Liliencron's letters, when they are published, will show how completely he was what Goethe called a Nature. And that the philistines despise.

"Well for us that this nature has passed on into German poetry! Well, that this dead man lives! . . . None so encouraged us to be of the living, and so taught us to love the living, as Liliencron.

"That, before all, we will keep of him: the living!"

VI

OTTO ERICH HARTLEBEN

Otto Erich Hartleben was one with Liliencron in his succeeding most with military subjects, though he did not there draw from actual experience. In worship of Goethe, as expressed in his " Breviary," he was close to Bierbaum, and slight though his actual artistic achievements were, the best of them were such naturalness as the old Privy Councillor would have liked. Chiefly, Hartleben was an artist who tried to please, to make you smile. He was the troubadour as much in his anecdotes — his short stories were seldom more than elaborated anecdotes — as in his verses; he improvised charmingly, inconsequently, for the general delight. It cannot be said of him, as of Liliencron, that anything survives from him; but he unfailingly gave pleasure while he lived. And he remained, from first to last, amazingly the child, as you shall see. The man, the temperament, interest me, at any rate, even more than the work he did, which, at best, was of the most fragile texture.

Beyond the German borders nothing of Hartleben's was strong enough to pass; his greatest success, the military comedy "Rosenmontag," though performed on Irving Place, in New York, had no appeal to other than the German intelligence.

Hartleben's right among the troubadours rests chiefly, I think, upon his absolute devotion to the practice of Martin Luther's trinity. Wine, woman and song very literally fulfilled his life. He sang truly enough from actual experience of the wine-cup and the ladies; upon that detail of genuinely expressed experience he was one with the crew of young radicals of 1885 in their revolt against the namby-pamby tunes of the interim poetasters. It was, indeed, his too great passion for drinking the cup of life, not to say the actual wine-cup, to its dregs, that brought him so early to his grave. He died February 11, 1905, at forty years of age.

Hartleben was born the third of June, 1864, in Clausthal, in the Harz Mountain region of Hanover. His parents were from a generation of small government officials. Even at school humor and irreverence were his most definite marks. He was to study law in Berlin and Tübingen; he even came to the practice of criminal law in Magdeburg; but then he could stand it no longer; he determined upon the career of pen and ink. He wrote that decision to his grandfather, who had been making him an allowance. The old gentleman was sore troubled; literature and poverty had always been identical terms to him. "He thought he would influence me through my love of ease, and wrote thus: 'Yes — but — if you want to go to Berlin and go in for writing, I'll not send you three hundred marks a month any longer, but only one hundred — if you want to risk that . . .?' Well, I risked it." In Berlin he was quickly in the radical current, a member of the Friedrichshagen circle, mentioned earlier in these pages. He came often to Munich, and one of the most vivid sketches of him at that time has been given us by Hermann Bahr, the Viennese journalist and playwright, with whose name and work, at long last, the English peoples have, within this twelvemonth, become so familiar.

"Coming to Munich in the month of March," wrote Bahr, "you will one fine day find the whole town, usually so easy-going and leisurely, suffering from the greatest excitement. That is the day the season's brew of Salvator beer is tapped. . . . That day the good citizens are all in haste and hurry, anxious, nervous lest they miss something of the great occasion. The other side of Munich, the artistic side, also feels the emotion. . . . It streams to the railway station, to await the train from Berlin, because it knows: to-day they tap the Salvator, therefore to-day Otto Erich Hartleben arrives; that is nothing less than a custom of the country. When the Berlin train steams in, one of the windows shows a massive, jovial gentleman, resembling a typical elderly student out of the *Fliegende Blaetter*. He alights; his greetings have a certain hurried and impatient heartiness; valuable time is going on — time in which one might be at that noble brew. Not until he is on the spot itself, his pince-nez removed so that his devotions may be disturbed by no vision of mere mundane things, raptly and solemnly sipping the dark and gentle nectar — not until then does he unbosom himself to friendship. Then it matters little what he says; his emotions just stream from him loud and unchecked."

His health eventually forbade continuation of his too great joy in living. He moved to Salo, on Lake Garda; built a villa there, and meant to make it a rallying point for German art, but died too soon for that.

Wine and sunshine, the sunshine of success, and of the love of women, were everything to this troubadour. Upon wine and sunshine, interpreted literally, he once declared himself philosophically, with an ingenious and yet romantic rationalism. Upon the question why the sun did its business so much better south of the Brenner Pass than north, he declared to Bierbaum, that the difference was in us, not in the sun. Virtue was not in the wine itself, but in the " grace of the South "; a mystic phenomenon that came to all who, having obeyed the kindly invitation of the sun, had shaken the dust of conquering Germany from their shoes. Which is not unidentical with Nietzsche's " innocence of the South."

IN his art Hartleben, as we have seen, was at first a rebel with the other rebels. His career showed a gradual weakening of the radical in him, an acceptance of things as they were, of the success and comfort to be had from them. He was one of the best anecdotists that ever lived; he had the most intimate charm in tale-telling; he was a pleasant, entertaining fellow who buttonholed you and amused you with his own adventures. But he never passed beyond the sphere of entertainment. His talent for caricature and parody never hurt the victims much; he always gave his readers the notion that not they, but the other people, were his targets. He drew you to the closest intimacy, so that you listened, fascinated, to his anecdotes about himself and — the others. It was this solution of his personality into his work that gives his career value.

Personality is seldom permitted intrusion into what is to-day written in English. If it were, we might have something else than a Barmecide feast for Brahmins.

Hartleben's satire was essentially German. In his earliest days he satirized the old romantic conception of poetry and poets; proclaimed that the razor and clean clothes were as necessary in Bohemia as in Philistia. Under his satire he felt, too, the mystery and melancholy of life; the romantic and the antique fascination of Italy were to have for his later life as great appeal as they had for Goethe in one generation and Bierbaum in our own; but for the most part he was content to fuse that mystery and melancholy in wine. His greater emotions rarely came to artistic expression. He tired easily; played dilettante; sold his artistic birthright for a mess of royalties. There was not much art in his comedy "Rosenmontag," but it became one of the great hits of its year, 1900, and brought him a considerable fortune, as such things go in Germany. Nor was there anything of experience in that play; only when experience went into his verse or his stories did they have artistic value.

His youthfully insurgent spirit, so soon to disappear, was vividly expressed in two stanzas written in Berlin in 1885:

"Die jubelnd nie den überschäumten Becher
Gehoben in der heiligen Mitternacht,
Und denen nie ein dunkles Mädchenauge,
Zur Sünde lockend, sprühend zugelacht —

"Die nie den ernsten Tand der Welt vergassen
Und freudig nie dem Strudel sich vertraut —
O sie sind klug, sie bringen's weit im Leben. . . .
Ich kann nicht sagen, wie mir davor graut!"

Which, that you may gather its gist, if letting the poetry in it escape, might be rendered:

Who never held the flowing cup on high
In holy midnight's merriest din;
Who never felt a laughing woman's eyes
Move them to laughter and to sin;

Who never let the solemn world go hang;
Whom none e'er called "Poor, careless Dick!" —
Oh, these are wise, they will go far in life. . . .
I cannot tell you how they make me sick!

That was to be the note of his lyric art. The best of his singing did follow that note. There were valuable social pictures like the "Konfirmationskleid"; and the early "Gottvertrauen zum Bayonett" had excellent and hearty satire in it. He contrasts the affectation for the antique idols of art with the conditions of domestic and civic morality in Germany, and repeats his "put your trust in bayonets" in most delicious irony. The opening stanza, too, repeated his insurgent scheme of song:

"O Muse! — Ja: ich liebe meine Muse.
Es ist ein schönes Weib und jung an Jahren!
Nicht allegorish und abstract confuse,
Sie schaut mich an mit Augen braun und klaren.
Sie redet zu den Männern in her Blouse,
Wie auch zu denen die auf Gummi fahren,
Und trägt nicht blaue Strumpfe, sondern keine,
Denn sie ist stolz auf ihre weissen Beine."

Which charming hit against the ineffectual spinelessness that the men of 1885 tried to abolish, I have put into this lame English:

> My Muse! — Indeed I love her with a passion
> To suit her lovely figure and her youthful years!
> She has no allegoric, abstract fashion
> Of loving, and her eyes can fill with real tears;
> She is for those who work, and walk, as well as
> For those who ride on rubber all their life. She begs
> To wear nor blue, nor hose at all — to tell us
> How finely proud she is of her white, well-formed
>   legs.

LYRICALLY, Hartleben went farthest in intention rather than performance. His song seldom went beyond mild emotional evocations of Heine. Even in such a piece of description as that of the fortress of Franzensfeste, on the Brenner descent into Italy, "the gate of spring," as the poet called it, there were touches of the banale.

He tried paraphrases from the French, rendering some of the Pierrot poems of Albert Giraud with considerable virtue. But it was not until he wrote his "Story of the Torn-off Button" that he had popular success.

It is hard, in considering this and the other elaborated anecdotes that display him as tale-teller, to imagine a reputation being based on them. The prevailing short stories in German must indeed have been stilted, rococo, or sexless, if such thin fun as this could win acclaim.

It was, once again, undoubtedly the hearty masculine note that did the trick. The robust forthrightness in these tales is undeniable; they have the air of the smoking-room story but slightly pruned for polite usage. There is an insufficiently known Englishman, Arthur Bimstead, who writes just like that — perhaps better! — for the *Sporting Times* in London. And I dare say the London Olympiad would pretend never to have heard of him. Such are the amusing contrasts in literary fortune. Allow me, pertinent to this apparent digression, to point out again what happened to German literature when the academical, professorial, too-too literary cliques tried to exclude nature and humanity from it. You can no more say of literature in general, than of poetry in particular, what it is, or what it must be.

What lifted the just mentioned story into vitality was its sketch of the heroine, *Lore*. A light-living, fun-loving type, such as every large urban centre has in thousands. No morals to mention; much skill in managing men; a born liar, with a gift of deluding herself as well as the others. An arrant little snob, but childishly naïve about it. You may find the type at many a telephone or typewriter or manicure-desk in New York; in many of the boundary provinces between domesticity and the half-world in any modern capital. Schnitzler gave us the same type in the heroine of "Abschieds Souper," which Charlotte Wiehe played to English audiences in French as "Souper d'Adieu."

She dowered all her male friends with titles; just as the little soubrette in America turns her "toughest" admirer into "a swell guy from Wall Street," and the little French cocotte persuades herself that the most obvious rasta' from Brazil is a Russian grand duke.

Into what he wrote of *Lore*, in one story after another, though least of all in the play he contrived of her, Hartleben put so much naïve self-confession that the result had all the effect of the most intimate revelation. Indeed, it would be hard to equal Hartleben as a prattler. He just went yarning on, in the cheeriest, jolliest way; his little stories were full of piquant little scenes, essentially redolent of the German frankness in many things that we pretend hesitations about; and his irony played wittily with many an idol cherished both in Philistia and Bohemia. He was of those who invented the "Serenissimus" type, that has now for many years contributed to the laughter of all who understand the German tongue. "Serenissimus" is the type of divinely stupid potentate or official, whose intelligence is even smaller than his kingdom. All the too rigid conventions of official and professional classes moved Hartleben to his satire.

CURIOUSLY enough, it was in the theatre, for which he did not have nearly so spontaneous a gift as for tale-telling, that the greatest success came to Hartleben. In none of his plays did he utter such genuinely experienced emotions as in his stories. Undoubtedly the formal necessities of the theatre irked his spirit. Nevertheless, despite the lesser sincerity of his work for the stage, it was that which lifted him out of obscurity as artist.

True to his type — truer then than when success came! — the first time he wrote in stage form it was a burlesque. A burlesque on an Ibsen play. It was performed once, privately, by college students. In his next play, "Angele," performed in 1890, Hartleben voiced the then beginning period of throwing off old moral scruples, of exalting the ego, of listening to Nietzsche. The play shocked the old moralities, while the foyer of the theatre was full of young women congratulating the author; in those contrasting lights you had the temper of the time in Germany. In his two next plays, "Die Erziehung zur Ehe" and "Die Sittliche Forderung," Hartleben proceeded with the program of unmorality. He took an idea of Sudermann's and changed the morality until it became what most would call immorality.

Only in "Hanna Jagert" did he reach anything like really vital comedy. This was, artistically, his high point. Here he gave way neither to caricature, as in his earlier pieces, nor to sheer theatricals, as later. At first the piece, the characters in which move through socialism to aristocracy, through an apparent unmorality to a fine tolerance of the accepted moralities, was forbidden by the Berlin censor, and did not come to performance until 1893, at the Lessing Theatre. Two vital realizations figure in the comedy: that the idea of socialism can have permanent appeal only for humanity in the mass, while for the fully developed individual there can be no other philosophy than an egoistic one, emancipated from all scruples of religion or morals. This was only one of the many plays of that period written under the sign of the sage of Zarathustra. Its conclusion, however, admitted that a development, a perfection of the human ego, could only come, after all, through an acceptance of a law as old as the centuries; through that complete fusing of one soul with another which is the finest triumph of the monogamic system. The reason "Hanna Jagert" reached a higher plane of art than the other pieces by Hartleben, is that it held not merely artistry, but experience. He himself had made the traverse from socialism to individualism, from the radical disciple of the Vorwärts leadership, to intellectual anarchy.

Of his other plays, which displayed more and more mere theatricals, need be named only "Abschied vom Regiment" and "Rosenmontag." Both have proved effective on the stage, and the latter obtained the Grillparzer Prize and made its author's fortune. It became, as such things go in Germany, a sensation comparable to that of "Alt Heidelberg," the success of which undoubtedly had impelled Hartleben, by this time a cynic acceptor of things as they were, to say to himself: Oh, if that's the sort of thing they want, I can give it to them!

The one-act piece, "Good-by to the Regiment," was artistically higher than "Rosenmontag." Neither can have much to say to English or American minds, because based on hard and fast conceptions of military and cavalier conduct that seem absurd to us. The final tragedy comes sheerly as a result of the hero's realization that — he has broken his word as an officer and a gentleman! A reading of Schnitzler's famous little monologue, "Lieutenant Gustl'," will give you more clearly than anything else the state of mind in which the German or Austrian officer regards his own word of honor. In the middle of the merry carnival air of Rose-Monday Hartleben's hero and heroine die together, and the comedy of music, of uniforms, of military glitter and gaiety, ends on the grimmest note of tragedy. Heinrich Leopold Wagner, a friend of Goethe's youth, had written a play in 1776 with a similar central idea; but Hartleben gave it the skilful touches of theatricalism, of militarism, of contrast between the worlds of mufti and of regimentals, that gained for it popular acclaim. It was first performed in 1900 and remains on the German boards to this day.

SURPASSING in value both his artistic intentions and performances, was Hartleben's personal, living expression, in himself, in his life, of that which, despite the sore mismouthing that our mob gives the phrase, we must call the artistic temperament. His life ranks with the lives of many other of the vagabond natures of other times and other countries. Though such an individual note need not be taken as a type, yet in the fact that through all his divagations from convention Hartleben remained essentially German, you may see what a change has come over the Teuton character in general since the day when our armchair philosophers referred to it as "phlegmatic" — and let it go at that.

NOTHING that has been written or imagined concerning the possibilities of what we call the "artistic temperament" and the German simply "temperament," surpasses for sheer naïveté the actual case of Otto Erich Hartleben. Not the novels of George Moore, not the "Brichanteau" of Claretie, nor the "Beloved Vagabond" of Locke, nor the "Kraft-Mayr" of Von Wolzogen, nor, most modern instance, "The Concert" of Hermann Bahr.

Life, it is true, has always made literature look timid. Verlaine opened the gulf that may lie between the devil and the angel in one man far wider than did the story of "Dr. Jekyl and Mr. Hyde"; Oscar Wilde's life was even more frightful than that of his pictured Thos. Griffiths Wainewright; and there are plenty of other such cases. If in Verlaine the saint constantly opposed the sinner, what the case of Hartleben opens up is that of the imperfectly monogamous disposition of the male human.

To imagine a greater, finer tolerance than that of the wife in "The Concert" is hard. That play settled in the German countries the reputation from which Bahr had suffered all his career, of being, like most of the other Viennese, merely clever. As journalist, critic, in almost every capacity of the literary and dramatic craft he had proved himself skilful, adroit and penetrating; but the colder men of Northern

Germany still denied him the qualities of sincerity, of greatness. Now that in "The Concert" he has shown such grip of vital human things, such talent not only for sketching character but for letting the intelligence and simplicity of real life take the place of old formulas of conduct that never existed outside the theatre, and such a genius for realizing the greatness to which a wifely soul can rise, it should be useless for even his former detractors to deny him consideration. The play, as we know, approaches its second season on the German stage; when I saw it this last September in Wiesbaden it was already an accomplished success; in New York it was produced in October, 1910, to become at once the event of the season, and England is to see it very soon.

It is to be presumed, then, that the attitude of the wife in that play toward the genius to whom she is married is by now fairly familiar to the English peoples.

Realizing that he is nothing but the eternal child, she has not only patience but pardon for his waywardness, his love-o'-women, much of which is indeed nothing but a sort of infantile greediness for sweets, a fondness for flattery. Still, the fact remains, and becomes the crux of the play, that he does go philandering after other women, and that at last it reaches a point where the wife has to bring him up with a sharp turn of the actual, and make him come definitely to decision between his wife and the other woman. She does again what every wise woman knows, and Barrie knew, to be the only thing to do in such a case: she lets her husband and the other woman bore each other stiff. A little physical jealousy is put in play, too; the genius is allowed to watch his wife adopting, with the other woman's husband, exactly his own tactics of free love. Not a new situation, but never before, perhaps, used with such frank, such human acceptance of the terms of modern intelligence. Percy Mackaye used exactly the same device of the two shifted couples in his burlesque "Anti-Matrimony."

Nothing is more disheartening than the mollusc-like clinging to theatricals in the mind of the average citizen. About Barrie's play, as about Bahr's, the opinion of the man-in-the-street remains thus: "Say, ain't that a little far-fetched? I don't see me letting my wife go off that way!" If I have heard that once, I have heard it a hundred times. These good people continue to apply to all human circumstances the rules, not of common sense, but of melodrama as pictured by the conventional theatres and the yellow newspapers. They might even go so far as to declare, these dear, good slaves of convention, these livers not of their own lives but of lives as they think others thought they ought to be lived, that the heroine in "The Concert" is an impossible person. A charming woman, we admit — one fancies them saying — but of course it would be humanly, femininely impossible to do what she did. It cannot occur to them, if they deny her actuality, that they are belittling the grand possibilities of a woman's heart, the possibilities, indeed, of the human being. Nothing is more foolish than to say that this or that human action is impossible; to the human soul, even more than to modern science, nothing is impossible.

I will admit, however, that until I came across the actual instance for which I am asking your interest now, I had underrated a wife's capacity for patience and for pardon. Each of us whose observation of real life leads to consideration of real problems came long ago, I do not doubt, to Barrie's conclusion and to Bahr's; but few, I venture to think, ever equal in their most optimistic fancies the height of tolerance to which Frau Selma Hartleben reached.

The detail of Hartleben's relation to womankind is what now concerns us; it is upon this relation that much ink — a deal of it plentifully dosed with gall — has been spilt in the last two years, from 1908 to 1910. His casual dalliances quite aside, it appears that there were paramountly two women in his life, his wife and another. As result we have friends of both rushing into print with proofs, with volumes of letters. The whole controversy was a little distasteful.

In 1908 appeared a small volume of "Letters to His Wife" that started the opposition into activity. As result came, in 1910, a volume called "Letters of Otto Erich Hartleben to His Friend." It appealed to me from a window in the German town where, last summer, I was making my inquiries into the lives and works of the little group of newer Germans to which Hartleben belonged. The pages themselves, however, appealed not at all; the whole dispute that they were published to foster took on unpleasant lights. The fact that he was married to Frau Selma, and at the same time loved Frau Ellen Birr, we might accept as a fact, just as, unless we are clogged with convention, we accept man as something less than an angel, imperfectly faithful, casually monogamous. Unpleasant, however, were the tone adopted by those who published these letters to "his friend," and the revelation in the letters themselves of Hartleben's ability to write himself down a most silly ass.

It is true, declared the faction of Frau Ellen, that he was married to Selma, but you know perfectly well that he lived with her before he married her, and he only did it in a weak moment of wishing to right her too hazardous position in the world. His love of comfort and ease meant so much to him, that he continued living with his wife long after he had ceased to love her. It was to Frau Ellen that all the later years of his life belonged, it was to be undisturbed in her society that he bought the Villa Halcyone, at Salo, on Garda. So on, and so on, the Ellenites. They declare that the "Letters to His Friend" were in collection and preparation, meaning no harm at all to his lawfully wedded Selma, when, in 1908, appeared the "Letters to His Wife" containing so many references to "the other woman" that it became necessary to clear the air. Clearing the air seems to have meant an insistence on all the things in Hartleben's life that might as well have been allowed to rest with that life itself.

Sherard's "Life of Wilde" is the only similar triumph of tactlessness that I know of in recent years. And the letters themselves, as I said, detract from the chance of taking Hartleben seriously. He has, for example, the trick of signing himself "Your little Erich," which for a large, able-bodied man, is essentially silly, even when we have allowed for the average silliness — to our view — of the one-time usual German sentimentality.

The volume was, in truth, an unusual triumph of unintended disenchantment. It contained, over and above the tactless, or sentimental, or silly, or inane letter-press, photographs galore, not only of Otto Erich himself, but of this inamorata of his, Frau Ellen.

These pictures brought the beholder, of any nationality save German, once again face to face with the astounding gulf between the German appreciation of beauty, and their application of it to their own bodies. To put it plainly: most Germans think, and even fashion, beautiful things, and, doing so, look like the very devil. The moment the detail of beauty approaches their own externals, their concern for it seems to disappear. The clothes of both the men and the women appear to have been wished on while the fire-alarm was ringing desperately. If you have the faintest real humor and sense of proportion in you, it is nothing less than puzzling to listen to a German lady discourse upon the beauties of landscape, of the arts, the while she herself is a blot upon that landscape, an offence against all art. Let us not use the dread word, consistency, for it is too dear to the narrow pharisaic intelligence. The word is, rather, misinterpretation. These people would pretend, no doubt, that the human body is an incident, and the clothing of it mere artless necessity; that what matters is the beautiful soul. Which is nonsense, as the Greeks knew of old. The really fine sense for beauty has not always the patience to inquire whether a beautiful soul indeed lives behind this or that ugly or unkempt habit.

SOME years ago, having reached ozone again after a season of the airless Berlin theatres, I evolved the theory that any art which moves eternally in dead air, unventilated, breathed over and over, must presently perish as do all creatures that can no longer breathe. This absence of real freshness was just what kept German literature between 1832 and the late 'eighties dead as any mummy; it is just such circling about in a dead centre of commercialism hedged about by merely literary pretensions that prevents in America any fresh spontaneous personality coming to popular utterance. The German theatre has too long asked us to consider vital problems while it gave us devitalized air to breathe. Similarly, these good people asked us to go with them on the road to beauty and to art, but to avoid noticing that in their own persons they outraged both.

A certain delightful and unconscious aristocrat of my acquaintance — the North American Indian is the only native American aristocrat — who daily teaches me the primitive humanities and complexities of the female mind, has a concrete expression for the occasions, rarer on the American side, when one's sense of the fitness and beauty of things and people is outraged. Comes a female faced like a threat, clothed like a disaster; or, again, a fair-faced damsel hung in draperies as with clouds, more suited to the frame of studio or boudoir than of fresh air and sunlight; and my friend of beauty says, with a mocking eye at me: "I'll bet she *writes!*" And, all too often and too lamentably, the thing is true. We ourselves but rarely, it is true, possess this type; in Germany it is national.

This is not to exclaim against expression of the individual in clothes as well as on canvas, in words or melody; but it can be done beautifully and quietly, without outrage to the general tone. Mere eccentricity, mere variation from the mass, is nothing; nothing is easier. Distinction can be achieved, the ego voiced, in bodily externals, without disturbing the current of fine and fashionable life by anything more than its sense of our triumph. A man can do this, and stay apparently within the decrees of his sex's fashions; a woman can do it equally. To be individual, within those restraints, is far more difficult, takes far finer art, than to be merely lawless.

All Germany forgets this. I can remember the time when, sitting in what was then still simply Kroll's, in Berlin, if a beautifully gowned young person entered, all Berlin muttered: "Aber so zieht sich doch kein anständiges Mädchen an!" ("But — no decent girl would wear a dress like that!") Things are to-day a little better, but not much. Germany as a nation, like England as a nation — for the ladies who get their gowns in Paris are a small London minority — still holds that for a girl to be slovenly clothed, to wear abominable woolly "tailor-mades" obviously patterned in the dark, to be, in short, either attired for comfort regardless, or shaped like a cook, is to keep flaming high the torch of virtue. Germany, indeed, goes even farther; even its vice, where it is most national, arrays itself in the garb of the most virtuous cook that ever brewed beer-soup.

So, I repeat: it was a pity they printed Frau Ellen's picture in the volume intended to prove that she was first in Otto Erich Hartleben's affections. It only made all his sentimentality the more absurd. It left more unimportant than before the wonder of his bigamous affections. In the arts, such situations can be beautifully clothed; but when the personages are actually so quenching to our sense of the beautiful, how the deuce can we be romantic about it all? Hartleben himself, before his health gave way, was a fine enough figure of a man; but not even that figure could stand the revelations of his silliness through these letters.

No breach-of-promise case in the public prints of England or America ever held sillier writings. As for the lady they were written to — well, let us not be ungallant, or as tactless as her friends, Dr. Fred B. Hardt and the rest. Let us say, simply, that she was, that she looked, very, very German.

All that these letters told us, as of value to a picture of Hartleben, added but slightly to our knowledge of masculine temperament. He married; later he went back to his first love, and he pouted vastly when the wife's patience sometimes showed the strain. He protested, time and again, that the accident of his passion for his wife having cooled, and that for another keeping the youth and ambition astir in him, should not be made to wear the faces of sin, and wrong, and torture for him. We learn that when he collapsed in December, 1900, after the "Rosenmontag" première, Ellen and Selma sat together by his bedside. A picture astonishing enough to the puritan mind! At the end of 1902 he and Ellen moved into the villa on Lake Garda, where most of his last stories, plays and verses were composed. From the Vienna première of "Im Grünen Baum zur Nachtigall" he returned, November, 1904, sick unto death, to Venice and to Ellen, to die, in February following, in his villa by the lake. Nothing, in all this, adds to any wish to like Hartleben as a man. He wrote love-letters sillier than the average; he was as selfish and as bigamous as the average; differing only in frankly practising what most only feel. Nothing else about him moved one here. About the woman — nothing.

WHAT a contrast to all this detraction, more effective because unintentional, was the little volume, "Mei Erich," in which Frau Selma Hartleben told a few simple little anecdotes that reveal to us the real genius, the real eternal child, in this man! And here it was, through these little incidents caught casually out of an artist's life, that we came to see the supreme height of patience and of pardon that the female soul can touch. Nothing in literature, as I have said, surpasses what this little book of a short hundred pages discloses; and surely life itself can equal it but seldom.

Here was restored to kindliness and charm the picture that had been so stained. Here was a Hartleben who was simply all child, with all a child's naughtiness, irresponsibility, charm. A man who could fare forth, with another, into the broad world, even as far as Tunis in Africa, with money enough for six months, spend that in two, and trust to luck for all else. Something, some one, would turn up, to settle bills; and something, some one, always did. A man who was constantly bringing home stray, unwashed, graceless vagabonds and trying to help them. There was one such case, recited here, in which Hartleben failed signally.

A soapless, homeless creature named Hille tempted Hartleben's educational instincts; he bought him a trunk, linen, etc., saw him bathed, barbered, and finally rented a lodging for him. Then, lending him a pack of books from his own house, where they had spent the evening, he sent him forth, satisfied that he had made out of a vagabond a homekeeping youth. Three days later, on the street, with the same pack of books under his arm, the same by now filthy collar, the same unshaven face, Hille meets them. Hartleben shouts at him: "Where from? Haven't you been home at all?" And Hille said gently: "You see, Otto Erich, the fact is: I couldn't find my lodgings, and so — I went for a little walk." "And where did you sleep?" "Oh, on a bench, in the Thiergarten. One sleeps quite comfortably there." Erich gave up his job as reformer.

But his naïveté about money and about men was nothing to his naïveté about women. And here comes the amazing part of it all, the part that, as I said, makes even Bahr's version of the possibilities pale. I wish I could translate these little anecdotes *in toto* for you; every word in them belongs to the most valuable, the most intimate revelation of man and of woman that any life-story has ever given us. We see the man's childish simplicity, his little egoisms, his kindness; we see the woman reading him like a book, knowing all his signs, all his most absurd whims. She knew when he sighed and moped he had something to confess; and some of the things he confessed may be astonishing to puritans, but to men and women of the larger world the only astonishment can be in regard to the wife's attitude.

Once when he had just spent a delightful evening shocking a respectable Woman's Club in the provinces by choosing for his reading a number of his most dangerous anecdotes, he handed his wife a sheaf of love-letters that had been sent him by adoring damsels; one of them asked him to wear a rose as sign of his agreeing to a rendezvous; he gave it to his wife and bade her wear it, so that the young lady might see which way the wind lay.

Another time he confessed to her that he had taken pity on a likely looking girl he had met in the street, and wanted his wife's advice and aid. He painted the encounter charmingly: the charming girl, the little episode of a gust of wind displacing her hat, of his picking it up. Her fresh young face — not a year over sixteen! He took her to supper, and she told him her tale of woe. We know those tales of woe;

but Hartleben seems always to have been ingenuous. He not only listened, but sent a messenger over to his wife for five dollars. . . . "Your note," said Frau Selma, as he confessed, "distinctly said: for something pressing!" "Well, it was something pressing. Listen: She is an orphan, from the provinces, a Miss Von Burg. Her people had money; but she was unhappy at her guardian's, and a young man eloped with her, here to Berlin, and left her without a penny. . . . You see, if we don't help her, . . . " Enough; the thing, now, was for Frau Selma to call on the young lady and make sure that she was what she had represented herself to be. She never failed the great big boy in these things; she went, and she had the other's fairy-tale put into its proper light soon enough. Yet, even then, she made an effort; she asked the girl to come and live with Erich and herself, to begin all over again; the girl said the landlady would not give up her trunks; never mind, let those stay, as long as she herself came; those could be fetched later; the girl agreed to come on the morrow. She never came. The prospect of a regular orderly life appalled her; that was all. "Too bad, too bad," muttered Otto Erich. "I suppose I'll never learn."

There was nothing he did not tell his wife.

He told her of the little factory girl in

Rome, for whom he had to buy clothes before he could be seen out with her; and how, somehow, those clothes, though far simpler, had cost so much more than his wife's. He wondered if she wasn't in jail by this time; she was such a little thief. Thief? Yes; he always had to watch her when she sewed buttons on for him; she knew he carried his money in his waistcoat pocket. She was always wanting to sew buttons on for him. And of course he wouldn't tell her that he knew what she was after; why spoil her little pleasure?

He told her what was behind the misspelt and ungrammatical letter which, on an occasion when his affairs demanded her doing that for him, she had opened. This letter announced that the undersigned, " Your Emmy," had, with her chum, duly rented the room he had promised to pay the rent of; said he could meet her at the bridge that night with the money; sent him kisses and respects, addressed to " Lieber Ehrig siser Schaz," the atrocity of which I will not attempt to betray.

As so often on occasions of this sort, it was over some food and drink at Kempinski's, in Berlin, that he made his explanation. On his way to Berlin he had paused in Leipzig, long enough to visit an old tavern of his student days. And there he had got into conversation with a couple of likely looking serving girls.

One of them sighed as he said he was bound for Berlin. "Ah, Berlin — that's the only place! They know how to value one there. But here . . . The boss is a beast, makes us polish and scrub all forenoon; the customers never let up, and there ain't no tips. But Berlin . . . ruffles and laces . . . and the fine gentlemen, ah, Berlin!" It occurred to him as a good joke to let the old innkeeper whistle for this couple when he came next morning, to have them take French leave. "Girls, come on to Berlin; I'll pay your tickets, and your room for the first month — but it mustn't cost more than thirty marks — so sharp five-thirty at the station; leave the rest to me." He even put them into the dining-car; fed their joy at being able to drink bubble-water at so many miles an hour; and drank innumerable times the old innkeeper's health.

"And now this letter, Erich?" asked his wife.

"Why, don't you see, now she thinks she has to do the tender; she can't imagine that I meant to get her that room, without wanting anything for it. . . . Yes, I'm going to the rendezvous; I promised that; but you needn't be jealous. . . ."

His wife merely laughed, and asked only this:

"Aren't you ever going to be sensible? You, with your forty years, still playing jokes like that!"

"Oh, well, you see . . . you see, I'm just naturally an old donkey."

AND now to the two gems of these brief sketches, that give so sharply the picture of the man. One of these is so short, so exquisite in all the finer sense, that I must try to give it to you word for word. It is called "The Aluminum Keys," and it goes thus:

"One day Professor L., to whom I had gone in my anxiety over severe pain from which I had been suffering, told me I must undergo an operation. I was to send my husband to him. I asked the doctor to forego an interview with Otto, who would only be upset, and would be of no help to me; in any event my husband was going to Munich in the next few days, and the operation could take place in his absence. The professor would listen to nothing of that, and insisted on the visit. So I delivered his message, and next day Erich went to see him.

"When he returned, he was all broken up and in such despair as I'd only seen him once before in his life. His misery and tears were heart-breaking; there was hardly any soothing him.

"I assured him he was borrowing trouble, that it wasn't as bad as all that, and all would be right again in no time, — and the man who, a moment ago, had appeared to be breaking down under his weight of woe, grew calm as a child that has cried itself out, and hardly had my last words died away, when he was peacefully asleep.

"Next day he took me to the hospital. When at parting he saw my pleading look, he understood, without words, and said, in an injured tone: 'How could you think anything like that of me, my dear; you really need not worry. Particularly — how could you think it of me? — now, when you are ill!' He became almost angry — and kissed me time and again.

"When the operation was happily over, word was sent to him, and on the instant he sent to my bedside a poem, out of the deeps of his heart, to the deeps in mine. As soon as he could, he came to see me; he was so happy, in such tender mood, that the tears kept streaming down his cheeks.

"While drying these tears there fell from his pocket with his handkerchief two keys — immediately in front of my bed. The next moment I had seized the situation; I could bring no word to my lips; I only looked at him sadly. As he picked up the keys, he said: 'How you *do* notice everything, every least little thing; I can do what I will . . . be as careful as anything . . . you always get on to it, no matter how I try.' '. . . Really too tactless!' 'Oh, please, you mustn't get excited . . . it really isn't my fault. It was she who put the keys in my pocket, when I wouldn't take them, so that I could come at night without bothering — and to think they had to fall out just here, in front of your bed . . . just my rotten luck again!'

"With that, he pocketed them again, and as I still remained speechless, he grinned at me like a mischievous boy, and said:

"'You know, they don't hurt the trousers at all; they're quite light . . . aluminum!'

"And to this day," concludes Frau Selma, "those keys lie on my desk."

I PUT that bit from the life of a man and a woman with the most wonderful in that sort that history holds. By its light you can understand all the heroes and victims of temperament, and can see that life alone, and not its literary chronicles, achieves the pinnacles.

YET, though it add nothing to our affection for this overgrown selfish boy, another last tale remains to tell from the tiny post-obit. Once again, we are told, his wife saw the well-known symptoms in him. At long last he gasped his trouble out: "I have a child!" As she sat aghast, he added, "Yes . . . that is . . . they say I'm the father." "And aren't you?" "H'm; well . . . that's just it . . . that's what you're to decide!"

"I? My God, how can I . . ."

"Yes, you." And at last the load flowed off his mind. "Yes, you. You go to Munich with me, find an excuse to visit the girl, look at the baby, and if you find that it's mine, then — then we'll adopt it and bring it up."

"And if it's not your child?"

"Then I'll pay, but nothing more."

To make it brief: she did go and see the little seamstress in Munich, and took a look at the fair-haired, blue-eyed child, with the somewhat broad cheek-bones, a characteristic of Erich; it might well enough be his child. To his entreaties that she try everything to get the child from its mother she interjected only this, that tells much of his character and hers: "You're doing the disposing again, Erich. Have you ever so much as asked me if I *want* the child?"

"But, my dear, that's understood; you always do what I want."

Well, they got the child, though under protest from the mother, who, all the four or five years that they had the little one, threatened to come for it. When "Rosenmontag" brought its author into the limelight, the mother finally did come up from Munich, and, her extortionate demands being refused, took the child away. And Selma Hartleben concludes, quite simply, and sadly: ". . . And so the child that we had loved and fondled for years was torn from us — just as it was in its first bloom. To lose that bloom, perhaps, in other, meaner conditions. Erich got over it quickly; other incidents were crowding his life; but I got over it very — very slowly."

What can one add to such a chapter as that? Comment were fatuous.

A CHILD, naughty, mischievous, but loving, coming to tell all its joys and troubles to some little mother, that was Otto Erich Hartleben. And the little mother was Selma, his wife. No wife ever sketched an overgrown boy more clearly than she has done in her "Mei Erich." The boy who, when they played the piano too abominably in the flat upstairs, could not work, but gleefully seized Frank Wedekind's appearance to sally to Kempinski's; the boy whose handkerchiefs always wore other initials than his own; the boy who could be so good, and at his wickedest never seemed horrid to her — that was the boy she gave to posterity in her little book. That book, this entire incident, belongs in the forefront of the history of human temperament.

It is as an example of temperament, of the eternal child in man, rather than as creative artist, that Otto Erich Hartleben has place in any adequate account of the newer German literature.

VII

OTTO JULIUS BIERBAUM

1

If in Detlev von Liliencron we saw a nationally German spirit revived through his heroically naïve interpretation of life, and in Otto Erich Hartleben the naïvely childish possibilities of the German temperament somewhat arrestingly proclaimed, it was in Otto Julius Bierbaum that the absolutely typical Teuton minstrel definitely reappeared. Here, attuned to our own time, was again the very air of Walther von der Vogelweide himself, and, even more peculiarly, that of Neidhardt von Reuenthal.

But I must not burden, here at very first, with mere commentaried chatter, that gay and gracious spirit. What I would have you do, if possible, is to catch some share of the delight in him that I have had these several years. The wealth of sensations he has lent me, how shall I spell them for you? I see the map of my years dotted with many happy accidents of travel; none happier than where they brought me another Bierbaum book. This one in Hamburg; the "Irrgarten der Liebe" on the Potsdamerstrasse; the "Deutsche Chansons" in Eisenach; "Stilpe" aboard the *Graf Waldersee;* the "Sentimental Journey in a Motor Car" in Wiesbaden; and a delightful edition of his early Carnival Plays in Munich the very week that he lay in Dresden dying.

For never again, in the flesh, will that blithe spirit sing to us; I feel the loss, I assure you, as of a friend, a man who gave me many, many moments of delight. There went, in him, a charming human creature, who had started happiness in many human breasts; it was his finest quality that one thought of him humanly, rather than as mere man of letters. Though I had never seen him, I felt, that Carnival of 1910, that I had suffered in his death the death of somewhat of my own youth. To find a new book of his, hear a new song, follow a new play, was to keep quick those eager sensations that spell youth. Never again may just that spirit of discovery come. . . . "Never again" — that was a word of Bierbaum's too, and in a quick sketch of the memory it leads to, I hope to arrest your attention, so that you may have patience for the later, soberer, elucidations.

"NEVER again," said Otto Julius when disaster swamped his little Trianon Theatre under the railway arch in Berlin. Ten years ago, as near as need be. He had tried to give the populace the ballad that would stand print, set to the music that would lift itself into the street upon the lips of the listeners. He had tried to bridge the gulf between literature and the music-halls. He had failed. The public still wanted, as it has always wanted, platitudinous doggerel, and A-B-C music. But he was a humorist. He smiled his "This once, and never again!" and turned to other things. Always something new, something different. He was a modern. You might not have thought him a German at all, if you had in mind the conventional figure of the German scholiast, or the anti-macassar virtues of the *Gartenlaube.*

He was one of the few interesting, arresting figures in contemporary art or letters. The picturesque adventurers of the day are not many; no matter what range of insular, continental or American arts you sweep. Bernard Shaw is become a convention; Whistler and Mansfield are gone. Youth, alas, is so soon faded. The adventurer of to-day becomes the obese banker of to-morrow. The buccaneer and the butterfly conspire to become taxpaying citizens. Ah, yes, alas; but there was always, until just the other day, Otto Julius!

For years I hugged to myself the joy he gave. Whenever I came near serious discovery of him to our English worlds, I always concluded: No; let the blind be happy in their blindness. Now, after all, in gratitude perhaps at the greatness of the gifts he gave, I am giving away the secret of much joy.

Yet only, at first, hinting, sketching. Just as, in his own famous novel, "Stilpe," he sketched an entire movement in modern German culture. The solemn folk will tell you that "Stilpe" is an ineffective piece of work; you will, if you are worldwise, retort that no book which forecasts actual episodes and characters in the development of German public entertainment can be ineffective.

And then the poetry! Many volumes of it. It was the poetry that first held me. One is not ever young; the first fine delight in Swinburne is hardly regained. Life in our hard world leaves little room for enjoyment of the lyric moods. Is it the stress of the world, or the decline in lyricism? Whatever the reason, the fact was patent: the lyric moments that stuck in the memory were all too few. A line or so of Aldrich's or Dobson's, of Carman, of Joaquin Miller, of Hovey; what else? If you recall more, you are more fortunate than I. The Lyric Muse, remember, I am harping on; she happens to be the only lady of the lot who interests me — as I have said before. It was she, that Lyric Lady, who had so perfectly taught music to Otto Julius. You are aware, I trust, that if you would acquire most faultlessly the Parisian accent, you must take a French sweetheart. The Lyric Lady must have loved this German singer well.

How spell the delight the first dip into his verse gave me? Heine, Verlaine, Dobson and Gilbert; some touch of all was there, and something singularly individual, something starkly Otto Julius. For a mark, for a quarter of a dollar, you could buy more joy, in Bierbaum's collected "Der Irrgarten der Liebe," of some four hundred pages, than you could buy in our English language for four times that sum. Who, in England or America, would buy poetry in paper binding? What book of verse in English, whether paper, cloth, or plush *à la* Hubbard, has ever sold to the extent of over forty thousand copies in four or five years? Will you pardon the digression, into figures, away from poetry? It was necessary for your understanding of how cheaply the finest lyric sensation of recent years came to me. Otto Julius was by then no mere stranger to me; the years of the *Insel*, of the *Bunte Vogel*, and of *Pan* were still green; so when this charming pocket-piece called "Love's Maze" called to me from a counter in the Potsdamerstrasse, I took the vast financial risk; I spent a quarter of a dollar.

Millionaires, who compute profits in mere figures and paper and metal, have not the faintest conception of the profit I have had from that quarter of a dollar. Hardly a mood, gay or dim, but has its echo in this little volume. That there was more than mere versification, more than mere charm, or wit; more, indeed, than mere music, was proved by the fact that during the years when the Überbrettl' movement reigned in Germany, a half hundred or so of the briefer of these lyrics were set to music by the best of the younger composers and sung in the halls, the halls that once, under the railway arches — ah, well, never again, never again. . .

Ah, if only about Bierbaum himself, I could always let the man himself tell the story! A little something autobiographic he did occasionally give us, and with a brief of that we may try to make clear our picture of him.

He was born, he told us in one whimsical record, June 28, 1865, in Lower Silesia. The vice of versification lured him from his earliest years. To such an extent did he give way to it that, spurning, as he did, pecuniary profit as the chief end of man, he forfeited the esteem of all the good burghers and bureaucrats who had his fate at heart. His utter lack of principle was still more fully shown when he forsook his poetic last, and went philandering about with novels, stories, librettos, ballets, travel-books, fairy-tales, and goodness knows what else. The rumor of wickedly large salaries paid him for editorial work threatened to ruin him; as did his account of a trip to Italy in a motor-car; only sworn testimony that those were stage salaries, and that he went a-motoring at another's expense, saved him. He never hoped to escape the disgrace which the death of the Trianon Theatre and the birth of the Überbrettl' attached to his name in the public mind.

Of great modern men he preferred Dostojewski, Nietzsche and Gottfried Keller. He preferred T. T. Heine to Max Klinger. He never missed an Offenbach operetta if he could help it. Nor would he willingly miss the newest books of Liliencron, Dehmel and Wedekind. Religiously, he rested upon this text of his own: "Keep the mob at a distance, for it prevents you getting into your own heaven!" And the finest wonder of the world for him, not only because it was his wife's home, was Tuscany. . .

To that merry little chronicle of his own — which many passages in his books of travel and criticism enlarge, and from some of the opinions in which he appears, through his later volumes, to have changed — we may add some few sober details. His first schooling was in Dresden, and all his first youth a most wretched period, on which he could never look back without shuddering. Leipzig was the nearest approach to a home he knew. He studied in

Zürich, in Leipzig, and finally in Munich; philosophy and law were his courses, but he learned Russian and Persian also. Then for two years he studied Chinese in Berlin. Financial disaster overtaking his parents, he had, at this time, 1891, to leave his studies, and undertake the care of his parents. He went to Munich as a free-lance in literature. For two years of constant work he lived not far from the Lake of Starnberg, near Munich. In 1893 he moved to Berlin, where for six months he edited the *Free Stage.* Then, with several others, he founded the splendid magazine, *Pan.* Eighteen hundred and ninety-five to 1898 he lived in Castle Englar in South Tirol; then again in Munich, in Fiesole, and in Pasing near Munich. He died February 1, 1910, in Dresden.

FOR sheer variety in craft, if for nothing else, it would be hard to surpass the achievements of Otto Julius Bierbaum. He wrote for the light stage and the serious stage; he wrote the loveliest little plays to music, pantomimes, and serious tragedies; he wrote a novel that started a revolution in public entertainment; he edited innumerable epochal periodicals; and, above all, was always alert for what was new, what was national, what was full of youth in all the arts. It was he who first in German literature went aggressively into the arena for such painters as Boecklin, Von Uhde and Stuck. He knew that the real genius of Germany lay nearly a hundred years away, with Goethe, and his Goethe Calendar is another gift he gave us. His prose was of an intimacy, and a spontaneity all too rare in any language; his travel-volumes are especially rich in disclosures of the man, the thinker in Bierbaum; so that he is the only sort of travel-companion people of intelligence care for; he is charmingly discursive. In some of his later stories and novels he had his stilted and tiresome moments, so that "Prinz Kuckuk," for instance, interests some people more because it is obviously a study of actual personages, than because of its intrinsic value. It is no secret that the poet, Alfred Walter Heymel, is supposed to have been portrayed in "Prinz Kuckuk."

Bierbaum, the poet, has contact with Liliencron surely enough, and owes him much, and though even something of Hartleben may resound faintly in his very earliest work, it is Otto Julius Bierbaum who combines in his lyric style the tradition of all German lyricism. You may trace Matthias Claudius in him, as you can the old Minnesingers. He built upon the metric manner of Goethe; he showed sentimental elegance akin to Heine's. More than any man of his time, by Liliencron's grace, did he express purely Teuton sentiment, utterly stripped, for perhaps the first time, of its absurdities, its sentimentality. He sang the simplicity, the might, the sentiment of his nation. Essentially his voice was the voice of his immediate time; modern Germany is more fully and finely expressed in Bierbaum than anywhere else. He approaches Liliencron in this: that his living and his singing reach virtue through simplicity; he departs from Liliencron in this: that while the gaiety of Liliencron has mostly the serious sombreness of the North behind it, Bierbaum's gaiety even where it deepens towards melancholy retains always the quality of gracefulness.

Grace, charm, these are wonderfully Bierbaum's qualities. Let us avoid labels; but this much is pertinent: in his point of view of life, Bierbaum was impressionist; in performance he was stylist. And what artist of sorts is anything else? The world is what one's individual eye sees it; after that, one writes as — one *has* to write! To pretend anything else is to be either knave or fool. Bierbaum lived and loved; and then sang. He served his own hard apprenticeships; played plentifully the youthful ape after this and that style; but what he became, what he remains for our eternal appreciation, is the most typical troubadour of his country in his time. He expressed experiences in verses so musical that reading them one felt them to be the spontaneous loosing of pent-up melodies.

From time to time certain children of the dark calling themselves scientists trouble us with diagrams of what constitutes, to the fog they call their minds, poetry. Against their criminal meddling with what they cannot understand I would put a brief line or so from the last book of Bierbaum's published before his death, "The Yankeedoodletrip." They are about the lyric. . . .

"The lyric! A matter of course for young folks, since it is like breathing for them. . . . Only, there are very few really young people in that age when artistic firmness of hand is joined to sentiment. What Goethe calls the absurdity of the lyric, is the childish. The two purest lyric spirits of the Germans to-day, Martin Greif and Max Dauthendy, are both sheer children intellectually. Rilke, on the other hand, with his uncanny genius, is a prodigy. . . ."

The final reference is to Rainer Maria Rilke, whose verse, for sheer technical adroitness, is perhaps the most remarkable in Germany to-day. In material he has much the monastic manner of the late Francis Thompson.

On another occasion Bierbaum learned from one of the people themselves — those German people who read him because he sings the essence of themselves for them! — a nobly primitive concept of a lyric. She was a nursegirl who shared a compartment in the train with him. She had confessed to him that she liked to read verses better than anything else, and she showed him a book into which she had copied all her favorites. She had not put in the names of the authors; an inconsequent detail to her. He looked at her scrapbook, and blushed to himself, for he found himself represented by no less than a dozen specimens. And so they went on chatting; he was quite sorry when the train got to Munich. For she had explained to him, most politely, how verses must be in order to please her. As thus: They must be just as if one might have said it so oneself, only much more beautiful; and they must be so that a tune ought to go with them; and they must have "heart" in them, either "awfully" jolly, or "awfully" sad. . . .

Well, exactly upon that nobly simple formula were the lyrics of Bierbaum. If to me or to you they seemed to hold a mood for every mood of ours, what would they not hold for Germans? Small wonder that they bought those little books, that they sang those songs! Exactly so would they like to have said it themselves; and no more beautiful than that could they imagine it. Bierbaum was the minstrel for them.

The scholars, the Brahmin wardens of the world's culture, may say what they will, the "great poetry" which they would have us hold paramount, is not what was meant by the shrewd fellow who said he'd rather write the people's songs than their laws. Songs for the people were exactly what Bierbaum wrote. There was music in his matter and in his manner; it was inevitably singing stuff, and the people did actually sing it. The best of the younger composers of the day set the lines to music, and presently all Germany was humming aloud the songs of this minstrel.

Here it becomes necessary to forestall two obvious objections. Firstly the objection insistently issuing from the Brahmins that if Bierbaum appealed to the people, his verse must indeed have been sorry stuff; do we not know what trash the people like, what atrocities of "Laugh and the world laughs with you," of "Ostler Joe" and all the rest? Against this it is to be pointed out that the people, the average, in Germany is a very different aggregation intellectually from what it is with us. We are, of course, in no event considering an illiterate mob, but the middle-class majority which, in America, patronizes the best-sellers of fiction, and, in England, subscribes to Mudie's. Now, bitter as this truth is, the fact remains that good conversation — conversation on a tone of all-round culture, of education, if you like; conversation disclosing the specialties of none, the completely furnished intelligences of all — is possible to-day chiefly among Germans and Russians. Americans can never talk long without falling back on money; France runs to women; England runs to sport.

The subject is too large for this present page; yet the difference between what "the people" means in the German case, and in our own case, when we are considering reading-matter, must be insisted on. The sneer of our Brahmins falls to the ground. Were any other fact needed — facts, alas, still appeal to so many unillumined minds! — it would be the one already referred to: Bierbaum's "Irrgarten der Liebe" sold its forty thousand copies in four or five years. When you can show any equivalent to that in English, I will pretend patience with the Brahmin attitude towards "the people."

Will the Brahmins, by the way, pause long enough from their attitude of being blind to the true virtues of proper minstrelsy, to consider the question whether the publicity that Shakespeare wrote for in his own time and place was not exactly that of the music-hall? Or will they let some merely readable writer discover that question to the world? The stage that Shakespeare wrote for was exactly such a stage for the people as these newer German balladists wished to revive.

Secondly is the objection: Oh, this was doggerel for the music-hall, was it? Now, we all recall Emerson and his "jingle man" condescension to Poe. The Brahmins are consistently afraid of music, because they seldom possess an ear. Which brings us, on the cue of the music-hall, to that part of Bierbaum's career as militant minstrel, which was to become part of the history of entertainment in Germany at the turn of the nineteenth into our present century. The history, in short, of the Überbrettl', which has already been briefly sketched in the beginning of this book.

2

THE Überbrettl' had its real beginning in Bierbaum's novel "Stilpe."

Than "Stilpe" no more terrible picture of unscrupulous journalistic genius exists in English. It owes nothing to the "Scenes de la Vie de Boheme." You could not read it and ever again have patience for the timid piffle with which too many writers have cloaked the "artistic temperament." Here, in "Stilpe," was nothing less than a dissection of a soul on its way to hell, by way of modern journalism.

Stilpe was not the keyhole type of journalist, that the circulation-mad newspapers in

English breed. He was always concerned with the arts; it was as critic of those that he exposed his shameless unscrupulousness. The novel tells us of *Stilpe's* youth and formative years; over which we cannot now linger. Suffice to say they left him without honor, scruple, sobriety, or any single decent principle of life. He went in for poetry; exploded the most appalling bombs of eroticism; and appeared presently as critic. He became the terror of the artistic community; his pen, steeped in vitriol, was of a facility unequaled. But his excesses in dishonesty became too obvious; he went just once too far in blackmail and outrageous licentiousness of malice; and his critical star fell to earth.

It depends, you see, upon surroundings; in one place, if you are too dishonest, as *Stilpe*, you perish; in another, if you tell the truth about the theatre, or literature, — if, in short, you are simply honest, syndicates of managers and publishers see to it that you perish. Since the case of the late Nym Crinkle, can one recall a New York critic whom the suspicion of dishonesty has injured?

Outlawed from the critical circle, *Stilpe* determined upon a new sensation. At first it was to be a new periodical; to contain all the last words in artistic scandalousness. But on that came the tremendous suggestion that an artistic Varieté would be still more striking. And on that page of the novel "Stilpe" begins an outline sketch for what later actually became the Überbrettl' of Germany. In form of the most ironic satire the whole program is unfolded for us by *Stilpe* himself; that exaggerated fictitious program was but slightly departed from when the scheme was really attempted. And the tragic picture of *Stilpe* himself appearing in the "halls" as a serio-comic is nothing less than a foreshadowing of certain chapters in the actual career of the actual Frank Wedekind. "Stilpe" was published in 1897; the so-called Biedermeier period of Germany has no more extraordinary specimen of satire and prophecy.

Let me try to give you fragments of *Stilpe's* own notions of what the new Literary Music Hall was to be. What had been first suggested in the fumes of a drunken orgy, expanded finely in the only slightly soberer light of day. *Stilpe* had not, by then, been sober for years. (His career makes such a book as Stephen French Whitman's "Predestined" the palest of *palimpsests.*) We find him at his desk, in the reek of liquor, smoke, and perfumes of stage dressing-rooms; he was in the first fury of plans for the "Momus" Theatre, as it was to be called. Thus he planned:

"Yes, yes: all art, and all life, to be born again, by way of the music-hall! . . . Into our net we'll drag everything: painting, rhyming, singing, and everything that has beauty and the joy of life in it. What is art to-day? A tiny, twinkling spider-web in a corner of life. We will spread it as a golden net over the whole people, over all life. For to us will come all those who up to now have been avoiding the theatre as anxiously as the church. And though they come only for a bit of entertainment, we shall show them that which they all lack: the true gaiety that illumines life, the art of the dance in words, tones, colors, lines, gestures. The naked joy in loveliness; the wit that takes the world by the ear; the fantasy that juggles with the stars and rope-walks on the whiskers of the Cosmos; the philosophy of harmonious laughter; the hurrah of a soul in pain . . . ah, we shall work in life itself as did the troubadours! We shall bring a new Culture dancing into the world! We will give birth to the Superman in our halls! We will stand this silly world on its head; crown the indecent as the only decency; raise nudity in all its beauty on high again before all the people. . . . Ah, the things we will make the solid citizens (Biedermaenner) of Germania do, when once we put this new spirit into them . . ."

Again, *Stilpe,* when it became a question of attracting an actual "angel" for his scheme, came closer to earth. Thus:

"Look at the theatres! Empty! Look at the Wintergarten (the hugest music-hall in Berlin)! Full. One dying; the other blooming. . . . The day of the theatre is done . . . Just as the theatre, once an annex of the church, loosed itself and found a form suitable to its period, so must the art of to-day emancipate itself from the theatre and decide upon the form that the taste of our time has determined: the form of the music-hall! Both are ripe for decline: the theatre because it is too clumsy, too heavy, and too immobile for the dram-drinking appetite of our latter-day art-lovers; and the present music-hall, because it does not know how artistically to express all the nervous desires and emotions of our time. Let us found a music-hall based on art in its broadest interpretation. . . ."

The plot ripened merrily. The newspapers sneered and caricatured; *Stilpe* had feverish struggles with his poets, his dancers, his artists of every mentionable and unmentionable sort. Especially his poets enraged him; they would, would hand him lyrics! Who was to sing lyrics? His hall wasn't going to be a reading-circle. One of his poets sneered at *Stilpe's* rage: "Of course, comic songs, that's what you want. Well, get Stinde then" (Julius Stinde, typically a humorist of the Biedermeier period, who wrote harmless pages fit for the softest bosom of the most blameless families. *P. P.*), " or that Mr. What's-his-name, that fat German beersoak, Mr. — yes, that's it, Hartleben, that Pilsener-Goethe; he'll be just what you want. He's the chap; the uncle of all German poetry; he's the chap for you. . . ." (Many years afterwards, Bierbaum admitted that he and Hartleben had been both friends and foes; though he thought, had Hartleben lived, they might have stayed friends.)

The poets could rage as they would, *Stilpe* was not to be moved from his decision to avoid the too too literary. " I've been appointed," he declared, " to amuse Berlin into artistic life, but not to bore it with literature. The object of our Hall is to do away with the last vestiges of interest in all this literature of yours. We want to make the people of Berlin truly æsthetic. There are still people here who read books. That's got to stop. There's more of the lyric in the lace drawers of my soubrettes, than in all your printed works; and when once the time is come that I can let them dance without any drawers at all, even you will realize that it is superfluous to write any other verses than those sung on our stage. Beautiful clothes, beautiful arms, busts, legs, gestures — those are what count. Evolve dances for me;

create pantomimes; solve me the problem of emancipation from tights — those are the things I need. And if you absolutely have to write verses, don't forget they must be sung by beautiful girls whose corsets do not embrace the void. . . ."

In spite of all of which the Momus Music Hall went promptly to smash. As music-hall it was still too artistic; as art it was still too music-hally. All the old and many new enemies of *Stilpe* helped to turn the first-night into a riot and a fiasco. The backers of the venture got rid of *Stilpe;* the Hall was put in charge of a manager of the old type; and *Stilpe* took the profits paid him for breach of contract, and spent it in riotous living.

When next we hear of him, he is enacting an amazing foreshadowing of certain scenes later made actual by Wedekind; he is performing at one of the cheaper popular music-halls in the suburbs. He gave a most brilliant, arresting, grotesquely realistic bit of music-hall art. It was as if he put the whole tragi-comedy of his own life before the audience; put himself outside of it, beyond it; and grinned at it, at the public, and at himself. He came out as a besotted, filthy, ragged thing of the gutter; a thing that had once been a great poet. If you can conceive a combination of Verlaine and Whisky Bill appearing at the Grand Guignol in caricature of himself, it was something like that *Stilpe* was doing. He maundered, as he grabbed a cigar-butt out of the gutter, that he, too, had been a great artist once; then he suddenly flung invectives at the mob, at the audience, called them blind hounds that did not know genius; cursed them, and reviled them — until the audience roared in applause. And then, to complete the picture, this sodden ruffian hanged himself in full view, flinging mordant mutterings from him, as he tied the noose. A ghastly show was this that *Stilpe* gave. . . . And one night, he hanged himself in earnest.

THROUGH many curious artists and their brain-children, through Villon and through Wilde, Wedekind and *Stilpe*, you may trace the thin red streams of vice and music flowing together. "For each man kills the thing he loves." *Stilpe* had loved only Art and himself.

No more terrible descent into hell, by way of the literary temperament, has been painted in our time. If Henry Harland and W. J. Locke, in English, let their ironic prose play lovingly about the merely charming qualities in certain immortal vagabonds of life, Otto Julius Bierbaum in *Stilpe* once and for all revealed the mordant tragedies. Nor could you call its most fantastic, most grotesque pages exaggerated.

Wedekind has himself lived out many moments of *Stilpe's* career, and in some of the pages which he wrote about journalism, as, for instance, in his play "Oaha" (1909), he was even more bitter than *Stilpe.*

What gives the novel "Stilpe" its permanent value, however, is its accurate prophecy and program for the Überbrettl'. As we have seen, it was not many years after the flamboyant and obviously satiric pronunciamento of *Stilpe* that a group of the younger German artists did actually undertake such a scheme.

3

OF the many delightful lyrics which thrilled through the Überbrettl' and which, as has been said, set to haunting melodies, still linger here and there for our delight, Bierbaum's are the ones I must try to have you appreciate. For these, as I cannot too often repeat, first started me upon this inquiry into the sources of the new blood coursing through German art; and these remain imperishably for the world's delight.

Once, I vowed that next to the man who tried to explain the lyric the biggest fool was he who tried to translate it. A Maxim explains in hundreds of pages what poetry is; another discusses: What Is Art; and so the limits of folly fade daily. If, now, I betray this fine artist, Bierbaum, who has most gracefully been the minstrel of most of modernity's moods, I can always fall back upon that eternal prop of all immortal fools: I mean well. You who read, if you do not know German, conspire to my folly; it is to illumine your opportunity to enjoy Bierbaum that the coming crimes occur. Perhaps my awful versions of the lovely intangible ballads of Bierbaum will force you to learn German; then you will see the full extent of my massacre, and then, indeed, I will have accomplished the great thing, for you will be able to enjoy him in the original, no matter how much you despise his translator.

The note of sheer melody was not all that Bierbaum had, or he could not so typically have voiced the sentiment as well as the gaiety of his countrymen. Yet artistic melody is what is so rare in the world of lyric expression, and it was just that note in him which simply cried aloud for musical setting. Song upon song in that part of his "Irrgarten der Liebe," called simply "Lieder," has been sung all over Germany, and if I have chosen this one or that one it is not because they are better than their fellows, but simply because I found myself able to transfer some tiny hint of their charm into English.

To contrast such a ballad as "Rieke im Manöver Singt," for instance, with Liliencron's "Die Musik Kommt," is to see at once the difference between the two personalities: Bierbaum never allowing melancholy to oust the grace of his expression; Liliencron's eternal sadness of the North flinging always something of a shadow over his merriest pretensions.

Dozens of these Bierbaum songs have been sung; and just the singing quality in lyrics is as impossible to impart as it is to define. There was hardly a mood of truly German sentiment that he did not sing, and always with charm, never with absurdity. If I love one ballad better than another it is " Der Alte Orgelmann Singt: " in which the quick grace, the spontaneous gaiety and mischief remain as intangible as star-dust, yet some notion of which you may still glean from this version, which I call " The Old Hurdy-Gurdy Man Sings ":

Oft enough, when I was young,
Love and I've together sung
Youth's chief song: Philandering,
Best prerogative of Spring.

Now a boudoir heard the song,
Now a garret. Never long,
Never tiresome is Love's game
When your partner's ne'er the same.

So we lived our student days,
Gay and careless of our ways
So they led us to the girls. . . .
Wisdom hath no greater pearls.

Now, oh, Lord, I'm gray and old;
Youth is gone; my fires are cold;
Not a monk, prepared to die,
Is so harmless now as I.

And of all those lovelorn rhymes
Hardly one remains that chimes
Mourning bells above the sod
Where once Youth and Beauty trod.

Sadly now this crank I turn,
While my tears, hot, bitter, burn;
And the airs all seem to say:
See this sinner, once so gay!

And when I'm too tired to churn,
Then it's yon old wench's turn:
Laura, once the toast of town,
Now a hag in ragged gown.

She, too, played the very deuce,
Living fast and loving loose;
Now she plays the piper fair,
Strumming ditties over there.

Young folks, take advice from me:
Sane and safe your loves must be;
Health and strength should be your dower
Intact to the marriage hour.

Marriage-beds alone should be
Ante-rooms to infancy;
Youthful license costs one dear:
See me, wheezing chestnuts here!

For no marriage hurts as hard
As to be a gutter-bard;
Hurdy-gurdies and their wage
Are no port for one's old age.

Now, however, one tries to give you hint of the singing spirit in this stuff, contemplation of the result makes for despair. From the very opening lines,

"Einst in meinen Jugendjahren
Hab ich Liebe viel erfahren . . ."

to those peculiarly individual stanzas equivalent to the fifth in my version:

> "Von dem ganzen Lie-la-lieben
> Ist kaum ein Gedicht geblieben
> Das erbärmlich klagt und klingt
> Und Erinnerungen singt."

and to the eighth:

> "Sie auch hat es toll getrieben
> Mit dem gottverfluchten Lieben,
> Darum, hör es, Publikum,
> Dreht sie das Harmonium."

one might as well attempt to weigh the romance of a summer moon.

Again there is the "Lied des verlassenen Lehmann's" with its delicious humor and its inevitable melody, which even to the ear unacquainted with German must be apparent from such stanzas as:

> "Ich hab ein schönes Mädchen
> Gehabt;
> Das hat mich mit viel Liebe
> Gelabt.
> Ach Gott, wie war sie niedlich,
> Oh, Gott, wie war sie nett!
> Ich kaufte ihr aus Rosenholz
> Ein Himmelbett.
>
> "Ich kaufte ihr auch Kleider
> Und Schuh;
> Die Unterröckchen machten
> Frou-frou.
> Sie war, beim Himmel, sauber
> Und reizend anzusehn,
> Es konnte mit ihr jeder Prinz
> Zum Tanze gehn. . . ."

This, like half a hundred others, was sung all over Germany, to a most catchy air. The humor, the melody and the charm all fade in adaptation; yet must you be given a hint of the whimsies in it. Suppose we call it "The Forsaken One's Song."

A most delightful damsel
Was mine;
She taught me love was more than
Divine.
Good Lord, she *was* so lovely!
Oh, Lord, and such a queen!
I bought for her a mission bed,
And stained it green.

I bought her many dresses
And shoes.
Her skirts all made most charming
Frou-frous.
There was, by heav'n, no neater.
Young person near or far;
She could have danced with any King
Of Kandahar.

And then love turned me crazy,
For soon
I took her to the parson's,
I — loon!
She never did forgive me
That I misjudged her so:
She left me for the first best man
That asked her to.

That was the very devil,
I swear!
I tore in rage my whiskers
And hair.
That scoundrel now has those frou-frous
I bought that faithless queen;
He even has the mission bed
That I stained green.

You think I ought to curse her?
Oh, no!
Why curse a rose for be-
Ing so?
She simply was for marriage
Not talented at all;
Love's varieté just chanced to be
Her little all.

So may she to the devil
Go spin,
I do not give a farthing
Of tin;
I'm watching from the stalls here
Who all the others are:
No less than five she's had so far —
Hallélujah!

The note of regret enters often enough, of course, as in the "Musterknaben Kläglich Lied," with which the first edition of the "Irrgarten" opened:

"Manchen Wein hab ich getrunken,
Manchem schönem Kinde bin
Ich verliebt ans Herz gesunken;
Jetzt geht alles nüchtern hin,
Abgezirkelt, abgemessen,
Und das ist des Liedes Sinn:
Ach, vergossen, ach vergessen!"

The sense of which we may attempt thus, as "The Good Young Man's Lament":

Of wine I've had my fill and more,
And many a lovely maid has lain
With my heart knocking at her own heart's
door —
But now all's sober, safe, and sane,
Measured by rule like so much cotton,
And — here's the wherefore of this song's
refrain:
Wasted! Gone, forgotten!

Goblets brimmed with purple wine,
Bosoms bared to shame the snow,
Lovelorn, liquor-laden, — mine
All of pleasure's fiercest glow;
Mine the right to ride upon
Rapture's highway here below. . . .
All forgotten, wasted, gone!

Solitude's now mine o' nights;
Emptily my cellars gape;
Never to the old delights
Can my spirit find escape; —
Virtue's signboard has been pasted
On my door. Behold the crepe:
Gone, forgotten, wasted!

Shall I never more know rapture?
Never more find dreams in drink?
Out upon you, Virtue! You have wrapt
 your
Thongs so tightly that I shrink
From the halo that's my lot.
Saints are sour old chaps, I think!
Wasted! Gone! Forgot!

You can, I think, out of even this feeble echoing, catch something of that in Bierbaum's singing which made his period come to realization that in him the spirit of the old German Minnesingers had come again. If in the main it was the voice of his nation that sang in him, now and then we come upon airs that belong to this or that peculiar province of it; as, for instance, in the "Jeannette" songs from the charming "Washermaiden's History," where the robust romance of student days in Munich is more charmingly set forth than anywhere else in German writing. Indeed, those scenes may well be set beside the similar beauty-pages in Hewlett's "Little Novels" where the Italian girls make so much color and music as they wash the clothes in the river. For your serious moods there was stuff in plenty in this little volume; whether you were, with the author, an admirer of "Rosen, Goethe, Mozart," or cared to express this or that philosophy, this or that sophistication, this or that naïveté. For me, always, the utterest delight will lie in the unrhymed "Hoher Besuch," though I realize clearly that it appears to go against my belief that melodious lyric singing is the only excuse for poetry. But those lines, addressed "To the fair Unknown" are as graceful as anything of Dobson's, and the picture of the Unknown that Von Recnicek drew when the poem first appeared in *Simplicissimus* completes for me many memories and emotions that do not fade.

Before we turn away from this man's singing, which most adequately expressed the Germany of to-day, we must mention with something of a smile, in which Bierbaum would be the first to join, the lines called "Der Lustige Ehemann."

> "Ringelringel rosenkranz,
> Ich tanz mit meiner Frau,
> Wir tanzen um den Rosenbusch,
> Klingklanggloribusch,
> Ich dreh mich wie ein Pfau."

Which, mere happy nonsense as it is, can be given in equally absurd terms:

Ring around a rosebush,
I dance me with my wife;
We dance around the rosebush;
Klingklangglorybush;
We spin like tops through life.

The world that's somewhere round about
May stand upon its head;
We do not give a tinker's curse!
No, if the world would disappear,
We would not care a red!

It was this song which came, later, to haunt Bierbaum like a bad dream. It had been set to music, and a special dance arranged for it; and Germany took it to its lowliest heart. There is an amusing passage in the "Yankeedoodle-trip," published just before Bierbaum died, telling of how in the train a man fixed Bierbaum with his gaze and then began to whistle the "Lustige Ehemann" incessantly. He had seen the author's portrait somewhere, and he was determined to let him know that he knew him. And the conversation that resulted, in which the stranger complimented Bierbaum by comparing him to a certain music-hall favorite of the day, was nothing less than delicious for the reader, though it drove Bierbaum to change his compartment. "You have just such a funny face as Otto Reutter," allowed the stranger, and Bierbaum said he ought to wait until he, Bierbaum, was really doing his best. And he got out, wishing he had never written those lines.

Even out of that little incident, we may draw a comparison; where is the balladist in English whom a casual stranger in a train would recognize?

4

MENTION has already been named of the happy faculty Bierbaum had for artistic as well as human enthusiasms. No man of letters of his time did more to further all other artists in Germany who, like himself, were engaged upon severing old and hateful bonds. For sculpture, painting and music he came, time after time, into an arena filled with ancient enemies. Even without considering, specifically, his many valuable Monographs on Artists, we find the variety of his appreciations written into his lightest ware, his verse. Dedications are to such as Franz von Lenbach, Meier-Graefe, Arno Holz, Von Wolzogen, Franz Blei, Peter Behrens, Max Dauthendey, Hugo Salus, Hugo von Hoffmansthal, T. T. Heine, Gustave Kahn, Hermann Bahr, Paul Scheerbart, Franz Stuck, Liliencron, Hartleben, Felix Mottl, Fritz von Uhde, Hans Thoma, Richard Strauss and many others. Producing so many songs as he did, it was inevitable that some of them should be on rococo or baroque formulas; some of them were merely clever versification of cosmopolitan philosophy; but in the residue there was, as we have seen, so much gold that the bits of tinsel may easily be forgiven.

As novelist Bierbaum latterly veered towards a style, as in his stories,—some of them adapted from the French of Gustave Kahn,—which sacrificed spontaneity and most of the essential charm of his personality. Out of his collected tales published under the title "Sonderbare Geschichten," the memorable ones are still those witty fragments that he had sent forth many years before, as the "Annamargreth" and, particularly, the "Muthige Revierforster."

Hartleben himself never wrote a more delicious anecdote than this. The delicacy of its satire had not the faintest trace of malice in it, so that even if the still living Prince Regent of Bavaria had read the yarn he could not have done other than laugh at it. Bierbaum's skill in sheer craft is singularly discovered in this story; to set down in the most graceful and unobjectionable manner an incident which in bald recital could never have left the smoking-room was nothing less than a triumph. The manner in which the courageous gamekeeper solves the situation that has been embarrassing the entire court and nonplussed all the courtiers, is nothing less than masterly, and as long as memory serves me, the gamekeeper's speech, beginning: "Wie wär's denn, meine Herrschaften . . ." and His Majesty's recognition of the good man's quick and homely wit, benignly expressed in his: "Ja, meine Herren, das Volk, das Volk! . . . Es ist eine schöne Sache um das Volk! . . ." will remain to keep laughter alive.

APART from his triumphs as a troubadour, it is in his capacity as an ironist of life, an observant traveler through nature and through art, that Bierbaum is highest. It was under him that all the green and yellow youthfulness of other tongues was brought into Germany; his *Insel* first told about Walter Pater, and Ernest Dowson, and Beardsley, and Wilde, and Arthur Symons, to mention only a few English artists out of a larger international crew. Wherever he went (and he came to renew in middle-age the habitual wander-years of all German students) he found the fine and individual points of landscape, manners, and the arts. Wherever there was fighting to be done for the cause of youth and youthful art, there Bierbaum led. You have only to turn the pages of *The Island* again to see that. It was in 1899, with Alfred Walter Heymel and R. A. Schroeder, that Bierbaum started that magazine, and to hint the international scope of it you will find in it work by Vallotton, by Nicholson, in pencil, and by Gustave Kahn, Ernest Dowson, Arthur Symons, H. G. Wells, Oscar Wilde, and many others in pen. A little collection from *The Island* came eventually to be issued in pocket-form as "The Island Book" (Insel-Buch), and it is interesting to-day to note therein work by Detlev von Liliencron and practically all those other minstrels already named in my pages; the prologue to Wedekind's "Earth Spirit" (Erdgeist); and a characteristic poem by Rainer Maria Rilke. That was in 1902, and to-day — as you are presently to find — it is to Rilke that the formal art of German versification is admitted to have reached its deftest point to-day. Nothing that had art in it was foreign to Bierbaum.

ABOVE all, as traveler, and teller of tales of travel, he told you what was best of all: himself. You went, as you read those charming pages of his in the "Sentimental Journey in a Motor Car" and the "Yankeedoodletrip," a-journeying into his own personality, and that, at last scale of all, is the greatest test, and the completest failure or fullest triumph of all. The great men of letters have all done that: Stevenson, Lamb and Montaigne might pretend to lead us into this or that region of fact or speculation; what they really gave us was an intimate excursion with Stevenson, Lamb and Montaigne. Bierbaum is of that fine company. In all his work there was a real personality; it showed nowhere so much as in his monographs on this or that artist, and in his many pages of travel.

A troubadour, singing his own country and his own soul; a traveler initiating us into his own vigorous personality; that was Otto Julius Bierbaum, and it is just such men, and conditions to permit their success, that English letters need. The country that arrogates to itself a democratic title is the last to allow liberty to the individual in art. Such a career as Bierbaum's had been impossible in America.

While in the two paramount volumes of travel by Bierbaum we are ostensibly motored and guided from Germany over the Brenner Pass into Italy, down it and across it, and over the St. Gotthard home again; then several times led from Florence to Munich and back again, a-foot, a-car, and a-train; and eventually made partakers of one of those collectively conducted Mediterranean cruises so familiar to American globe-trotters; the real excursion, the real joy is always the intimacy with Otto Julius that the journey gives.

If travelers the world over would only read those pages! Not that they contain new truths, but that they so thoroughly emphasize the old one that journeys' ends are the journeys themselves; that not to arrive, but to enjoy, is the object of travel. Bierbaum in his "Sentimental Journey in a Motor Car," which was his first volume in that sort, never tired of hitting that pedal. Since his mode of travel, by motor car, was then (1902) still uncommon, he had what might have seemed a hard task to any other than a poet and a fine humorous spirit, namely, to instil sentiment into the record. The result remains a triumph of art to this day; with Octave Mirbeau's description, "La 628," of a tour into Belgium and Germany, this is the only book about a journey of this sort that ranks as serious art; there is nothing in English to compare with these.

If we may not go through Italy with Goethe, let us do it with Bierbaum. Often enough, too, the latter points reverently to the greater poet and philosopher's footsteps and the illumination that he gave. I cannot stop to hint the thousand charms of this book, its delightful ironic reflections upon the ways of English and American travelers, in Rome and Venice and Florence; its sarcasm at the expense of the inartistic efforts to modernize such towns as Florence — pages that would delight my friend, and Florence's best friend, Riccardo Nobili, who so vigorously has fought these abominations in his town! — and its most romantic extraction of sentiment from even the most unlikely places; — to do that would be to come near to translating the whole book. His page upon the immortality of Rome, despite its ruins, as the heart of all our modern culture, should be read by all. There is a page upon the insufficiently distributed talent for leisure that might serve as warning to many of us now upon the verge of nervous prostration.

There are illuminating allusions to the Italian Carducci's popularity, to Richard Dehmel, to German sculpture — Bierbaum declared Hellmer's Goethe in Vienna, and the Hillebrand fountain in Munich to be the finest specimens in the German countries — and to Munich, which, after many years and places, always took first place in the author's heart. "With all its defects, the most artistic German town," he wrote, "the town of artistic youth, the freeest town, the town of the freshest air, in ozone and art."

Of all the many glimpses of himself and his sincerities as a craftsman, I must at least take this fragment (from page 79 of the 1906 Marquardt edition):

"I see more than ever, all these shibboleths and 'tendencies' are of no account: each of us can win to his artistic heaven in his own way, so only he has sincerity and force. Ancient or modern — all that matters nothing — as long as the thing itself is genuine. . . ."

(Pursuit of this volume in a paper edition is in itself one of my pleasantest memories. A penitential period spent in lifting the heavy "boards" of English and American books long ago drove me to the point where I avoided that type elsewhere whenever I could. But this particular Bierbaum book eluded me for years; indeed, it was so popular that edition after edition was exhausted, after it first appeared in 1903. Not until last summer in Wiesbaden did I find a copy of the 1906 paper edition, to which much kindred matter had been added, and a new title: "Mit Der Kraft, Automobilia" applied. My return to the dear old Vierjahreszeiten Inn with that soiled but uncut volume under my arm was a triumphal procession that every true collector of sensations will appreciate.)

EVEN more than in that first travel volume do we glean from the last book published before his death vivid glimpses of himself. Whether he is expressing his reasons for loving Venice more than any other town in the world, or telling a few home truths about the traveling ways of his own countrymen or the voices and manners of Americans, or exclaiming again against the vandalisms committed in Florence under the banner of modernity, it is always Bierbaum who most interests us in it all. Italian towns, he reminds us, are feminine: Rome is a stern matron; Naples a cosmopolitan cocotte; Venice a Lorelei set over the Adriatic; and Florence — just a lovely, lovely lady. One or two fragments from the vast store of riches in this volume, "Die Yankeedoodlefahrt, und Andere Reisegeschichten," I would extract for you.

This, on D'Annunzio: "Every sort of megalomania is his. Without it he would be nothing but a brilliant decorator. One may say that in him megalomania takes the place of genius."

This, on a new undertaking of the painter, Franz Stuck, "No theme for tricksters, but for a proper heavyweight of art. And as his artistic biceps are on a par with his physical, I do not doubt that it will be a work full of power, and also of beauty," must inevitably recall what George Moore wrote of Whistler, how his art might have been otherwise had his physique been more robust.

On one feature of the abominable modernizations in Florence, this: "Thos. Theodore Heine (the caricaturist) touched the 'modern' palaces of Florence in his peculiar telling way when he put this question to Otto Erich Hartleben, as they were passing some of those monstrosities, 'Tell me, Herr Hartleben, these are *artificial* palaces, aren't they?'"

The ruins of Baalbek called forth this: "Again and again I had to think of Nietzsche. This world of ruins would be the proper temple for his Zarathustra, and this air the proper atmosphere for his spirit. To read him here — what an experience!"

Of Dostojewski: "As in Baalbek Nietzsche appeared to me, so in Jerusalem Dostojewski. And if I tried to figure to myself the Nazarene himself . . . always he appeared to me in the furrowed features of the great Russian; but more youthful, more erect, more passionate . . ."

Finally there are the passages that reveal the author himself. He is revealed in his love for Italy, his regret for the Italianization of Tyrol south of Bozen, his affection for the beauties that line the Brenner Pass, and his enduring passion for Tuscany. There, in Fiesole, in the Villa Bardi, surrounded by memories of Arnold Boecklin, he spent many of the happiest of his later days. Between Fiesole, over Florence, and Pasing, outside Munich, he found not only the artist but the humanity in him best comforted. His wife was of Tuscany, and charming are all the countless allusions to her scattered through this last travel-book of his.

For years before the end, Bierbaum's health had been none of the best. Full-bodied though he was in build, he would seem to have suffered from nerves as much as any American. We should, to be sure, remember that there are no longer any national or provincial boundaries to either diseases or art. Exactly what these young men of Germany have accomplished, in song, and play, and pictures, is to remove old parochial limitations, to make their work international. When I say, then, "as nervous as any American," I do but repeat an old formula for the comprehension of those not yet fully alive to the internationalism of the physical and spiritual modern world. About nerves and artists Bierbaum had made this admission, as lately as 1907, in "Leaves from Fiesole" (Blaetter aus Fiesole):

"Of artists I have known only three who are not nervous: Stuck, Gulbransson, Liliencron."

No need to explain Stuck or Liliencron here. Gulbransson is one of the most remarkable of the latter-day artists who have made German caricature take international rank. His portraits of his contemporaries rank with the work of such men as Léandre, or La Jeunesse, or Max Beerbohm.

If a chapter on neurasthenia is possible as a delight, Bierbaum's is that chapter. It was in that chapter he recommended several curative employments, the most charming of which was: "Listen to old music. Mozart will always bring reason into you. To be unhappy while listening to Mozart, — that would be too shameful!"

In the pages on Tyrol we get much of the real O. J. B. It was in Castle Englar — none saw the fun of calling that old ruin a castle more than our author himself! — that he spent much of his later life of actual creation. He wrote in "From Fiesole to Pasing":

"Englar, the pinnacle of my poetic sins. There I wrote no less than two novels, three volumes of stories, a large monograph on art, and two stout Annuals full of verse and prose — to say nothing of lesser stuff."

One presumes that "Prince Kuckuk" was one of the novels, and the "Strange Tales" among the stories. It was in those latter volumes that the satire called "Schmulius Cæsar" occurs, of which he was to write later, in 1908, a passage of which followers of arts and crafts should take note:

"Venice was not itself for me that time; the Naager family was lacking. . . . Having painted that good-humoredly caricatured portrait which you will find in my fantastic satire, 'Schmulius Cæsar,' it will be only fair if presently I publish a serious chronicle of the Naager family. That would be in form of a monograph on Franz Naager, the strongest and richest decorative talent of our time. . . ."

That monograph Bierbaum did not, as far as we know, live to write.

Delightful are all those passages in which Bierbaum makes fun of the impression of dignity that his externals managed to create. The passages on the humor of being called "Professor" cannot but appeal to all Americans who have heard the titles Major, Colonel, Judge, etc., bestowed in return for a piece of silver. His page upon the good Dame Staffler, of Bozen, who insisted on calling him Professor, is full of the most charming comedy. In the same town of Tyrol lived a good woman who gave, each year that Bierbaum stepped into her shop, a new addition to the population; it was she who inquired of him:

"And has the professor any children?" He had to admit: No. "But of course," she answered, "the professor would have no time for that." And he left the shop with a realization that it was possible to look too wise, even for a professor.

The thousands of Americans who are by this time on terms of almost impudent familiarity with the Atlantic would find Bierbaum's story of the journey to Egypt and the Holy Land full of direct interest. It was a German-American steamer, and the opportunities for observing American manners were infinite. His fellow countrymen, too, engaged our author's sarcasm no little; and if I had not loved him before I could do so for nothing else than his condemnation of the insufferable plague of brass-bands on shipboard. Wherever he went, whatever he saw, he voiced the poet and the masculinity in himself, and it is the amalgam of all these fine things that his readers gain. Whether he was with his wife in Monte Carlo, gambling absurdly — that page is one of the happiest he wrote in his last years! — or gazing on the tourist-ridden temples of Egypt, or enjoying the Florentine sunshine, the Italian peasant, or the Bavarian citizen — he was always genial, full of humor, and full of humanity: the essential voice of what was best in his German land.

Physically, also, Bierbaum notably expressed the new Germany that it has taken so long for other nations to realize. Words can sketch external things but faintly; yet may they hint the relation between idea and outline.

Detlev von Liliencron, for instance, physically as well as artistically, typified the paramount military character of his period. He sang of battles, of love and of death and of his country; in his gayest music there was always something of Northern melancholy. Bodily he fulfilled that idea. Had he not been so much a poet, and therefore keen of humor, he had been the typical martinet in uniform. The strong

Northern countenance, the waving mustache made even the short stature of him seem commanding. He was the officer in glittering uniform long after he had become a country magistrate, and he retained many of the personal mannerisms of the officer. He used those mannerisms, indeed, often enough as a mask in places where the air of "literature" became too wanton for his taste. He looked the soldier. Short but erect; fierce of visage — they used to paint his mustache dipping into winecups, but that was largely a libel! — he was the Prussian officer at a time when all Germany worshiped at that shrine. In Hartleben, on the other hand, we have the mixture of the good-natured, ease-loving German citizen and the bohemian. Hartleben was tall, and until he was puffed up with too much food and drink, good-looking in a graceless sort of way. Here was the slippered ease of the average burgher; but it was a burgher who had gathered from all the far coasts of Bohemia the liberties, licenses, and recklessnesses there in vogue.

In Bierbaum, finally, as he looked and lived, you might find much of the German type of to-day. From England and from France influences had worked subtly into the national character, as well as into its art; the Prussian bourgeois persisted only in the notions of inobservant aliens. Something of Gallic grace, something of international tolerance had swept away old parochial limitations of spirit. Bierbaum's stocky, stout stature; his round good-humored face; his short-sighted eyes always behind pince-nez or spectacles; his carelessness of externals, and triumphant charm of personality, held many of the essentials of what to-day is best in his countrymen. German to the core, he had the genius, in his person as in his work, of stripping the old German characteristics of sentimentality and shabbiness of their absurdity; he was a German who was also a man of the world; he had the ironic view of life that the elder parochial Prussians had not; he saw the faults of his own place and his own people as well as those elsewhere; neither church nor state awed the individual paganism of modernity in him; he could laugh at emperors and shatter idols in all the robust vigor of the barbarian ancestors of his race, but he did it with the new grace and wit that was never before, but is to-day, typical of Germany. Until the last years Bierbaum wore a tiny stubby mustache; whether so, or clean-shaven, he looked to the general eye the more professorial, we do not know; to the properly seeing eye he looked, always, an open, frank, and humorous soul.

IN a fragment of autobiography that Bierbaum wrote late in life may be found much to supplement what we already know of him. His publisher, Geo. Müller of Munich, announced this fragment, "Midway" (Mittwegs), as the beginning of an exhaustive *curriculum artis* that Bierbaum had under way and meant to publish in the course of the year 1909. It remains a fragment, yet from it we may complete our picture of the author.

HE told, therein, of the realistic poetry that followed an impassioned love-affair in his thirteenth year; how he wrote verses to the sunburn on his lady's nose. If that was not realism, what was? At any rate, the itch to express himself in song seems to have been in him from the earliest years. He thought lyrically. Some of his friends, he vows, thought like district attorneys. That led him to reflect: "The born artist has something of the adventurer: the drift toward liberty, away from the fetters of society, is as strong in him as the drift toward a world of fancy. He who has it not in him to stake his all on Zero, will hardly become artist. In spite of which artists can easily enough become philistines. . . ." The first definite influences on him came from the two Russians, Gogol and Turgenieff, to whom he remained true to the end. The diary that he kept in those passionate, sensitive teens of his, was by his side when he wrote "Stilpe." There, surely, is a detail as illuminating as the light later shed by the whole history of the Überbrettl', and of Frank Wedekind. The nearest approach to an original for *Stilpe* was, however, a certain fellow student of Bierbaum's in the town of Wurzen, where he went after the Leipzig period. Though for fifteen years Bierbaum was to be a lyric singer, it was the anti-romantic realizations he drew from that *Stilpe* model which kept him from entirely drowning in the lyric wave. At the age of twenty he was a republican in politics; that, he reminds us, was for the youth of that period as much a matter of course as for the twenty-year-old of to-day to be a disciple of Nietzsche. The Alps and the chance to study Russian called him to Zurich, for he was determined to learn Russian, having just read Dostojewski's "Raskolnikow." It was that book which left him immune to the influence of Flaubert and Zola; and at the very last he was able to say:

"To this day Dostojewski counts for me as the greatest creative genius of our time next to Nietzsche."

Unfortunately, he continues, among the things he had learned at college was not how to be studious. His effort to learn Russian was at first a failure because he was more interested in the personalities of his teachers, male and female, than in what they taught. He was an observer and dreamer; he had no intention of becoming a writer, yet he was dreaming and living both imagined poetry and actual experience, and all this came, in later years, into his work. That half-year in Zurich held the richest of his dreaming days, and it was a reservoir which he had not nearly exhausted when he wrote this fragment that lies before me. In that dream were mingled all manner of ghosts: Madame Adele, and la belle Chinoise; Gottfried Keller and Arnold Boecklin; nymphs seen from the old hotel Bauer au Lac, and the great god Pan rustling in the shadows. . . . Life never again held such vivid dreams for him, and never again were mere dreams and idleness to come again to such rich fruition. . . .

THAT Bierbaum's career, short as it was, was rich indeed, these pages have, I trust, shown. As poet, story-teller, playwright, critic, and, in short, as an artist interested in every phase of life, he had made himself felt more than any of the younger men of his generation, and he had more than any other expressed Germany.

Although the very year he died there was issued a brief history of German literature (Heinemann's, Leipzig) in which his name does not even occur, the summer after his death, on the other hand, a little volume of selections from his work appeared in the Reclam edition, sure haven of what the plain people of Germany have made classic; for ten cents, for sixpence, this slight essence of O. J. B. was thus put before the populace. The scholiasts of his own time might be the last to admit him to high place; the German people had put him there long ago, when he sang for them, sang their lives and their loves, sang for them their Germany.

In him, more than any other of our time, the new Germany, the Germany that the rest of the world is but slowly discovering, found full expression. In that Germany parochialism is disappearing before internationalism, flavors of the Gallic mingle with robust and homely satire, grace of manner join with forthrightness of matter. His irony was of his time and his race; he was the first to show his countrymen how to be ironic gracefully.

In the last volume published before his death were announcements of two forthcoming books of Bierbaum's: a novel to be called "Die Paepstin" (The Female Pope), and a sumptuously illustrated edition of his "Lovely Maiden of Pao" (Das Schoene Maedchen von Pao) for which that wonderfully interesting artist, Franz von Bayros, was to do the pictures and decorations. Whether "Die Paepstin" will ever appear it is still too soon (I write this ten months after his death) to say. To mention here the representative books has been my effort, but for complete bibliography I have not tried.

IT has been hard, throughout, to attempt anything like judicial calm, or a sober arraying of mere facts. It was not in such way that he had sung his way over all Germany, until Germany had found its singing self again, and it was never in such way that he had affected me. He had been of those before whose spell one is content to waive all the damnable heritage of sophistication and cavil that the centuries have brought. He had given me sensations, stirred emotions, and voiced them for me. How is one to transmit those emotions to others? One had need be as lyric a magician as Otto Julius himself was. How is one to explain to others what it was in this man's singing which brought one to the point where (as Bliss Carman put it, before he ceased trying to be for us what Bierbaum actually was) one was content to

> " . . . let my heart grow sweet again,
> And let the Age be damned . . . "?

Whys and wherefores, fortunately, elude the most prosy analyst of emotion. All that can be done is to say: This man moved me.

There are, in life and literature, gloriously enough, moments when only passion, only whim, only instinct, or perhaps even only prejudice survives triumphant. So only it be unconsciously engendered, inborn from generations of fine taste, or builded on long since assimilated arts and truths, the individual instinct for the noble impressions of life and of literature can be the only true guide. Whether it was personal whim, personal instinct, or sheer luck that first led to the delight in Bierbaum is inessential; in the aftercount all was justified, and from the feeling of having known a charming singer came realization that the charming singer was the most typical of his country's living men of letters.

That we are no more able to say "living" brings me to my final confession of inability to transmit emotion. The feeling of loss that came with news of his death is not easily passed on. It was, as I have said, in this year's Carnival. In Munich, most artistic of all towns, that period is still full of casual and whimsical fantasy, rather than of municipally "arranged" artificialities to lure tourists. In Munich I was holding carnival; snow, song, dance, merriment and masquerade whirled the days away. The carnival liaison between the burgher element and the art element in Munich was fascinating to observe. And just then I saw a tiny volume in a window near the Karlsplatz, a little pocket-edition (1904) of the two carnival-plays that Bierbaum had written for performance by the students and the artists of the town; the title, untranslatable: "Zwei Münchener Faschingsspiele." You may imagine with what joy I made the little book my own, and found once again (I did not know that it was to be for the last time in his life) the note of the renewed spirit of the Provençal troubadours, and of wandering students carrying medieval Latin songs abroad into the world. For the very first of these little plays was called "German Folksongs," and its performance that year of 1904 may be counted as something more than merely a record of how Munich celebrated carnival when the twentieth century was young; it remains also as proof that in Bierbaum not only carnival, not only Munich, but the spirit of the old Minnesingers, the spirit of modern Germany, found embodiment and voice.

Within the week that saw me pocketing the little book and adding it to my fund of carnival joy, I had talked of Bierbaum to his publisher, Herr George Müller, who somewhat non-committally had told me that Otto Julius lay ill in Dresden. And again within the week, carnival still gay in Munich — the Munich and its carnival he had loved so well! — Otto Julius

Bierbaum died, February 2d, this year of 1910.

But we can say, as he himself had but shortly before said of his friend Liliencron, that though the mortal part of him is gone he lives as surely as before. Mortally he may sing for us never again, but the singing that he gave us lives. If when the news came to me I felt that I had lost a friend whose hand I had never touched, though I had seen it; that we had all lost what was mortal in one of the most charming minstrels of the age; I also felt that the essential in him was still with us, and that I could truly call: "Auf Wiedersehen!" to his spirit.

THAT he lives, and will live even more sturdily as the years pass, there will not much longer be need to contend; even those who tried to put him among the mere lightweights of letters — because, of course, he entertained you, above everything; and the narrow souls who attempt authority, since they can do nothing else, always froth fiercely against writing that is readable! — are beginning to admit that he was the first of the moderns to be a real German. Even this year's winner of the Nobel prize, Paul Heyse, at one time in the opposition against all the modernists, came to admit the talent of this man.

Whether such a career as Bierbaum's will ever be possible in our tongue is doubtful as long as those who dominate the situation make it almost impossible for individualism and irony to exist. Bierbaum himself had to fight against the stagnation and stupidity that the scholiasts imposed as the literary dogmas of his day, but he had, eventually, the support of a public that applauded his balladmongering and came to respect all his activities. Even in England such men as Bernard Shaw, Max Beerbohm, and Gilbert Chesterton have had to live down the national prejudice against a man of letters daring to be entertaining, to be ironic, to be himself. In America you may be entertaining, but you must be innocuous withal; if you tell ironic truths, declare your personality — pagan, philosophic, humanistic or whatever it may be that is not petticoated or puritanic — in this or that artistic medium, you risk being disdained by the merchants in control. To do in America what Bierbaum did in Germany: to write ballads for singing in public, to break a lance against every ancient formula to be found; that was to court disaster. Some tried it; there were reckless lads who scattered pamphlets abroad in the land, and sang songs — also in the 'nineties; is it possible that Youth has been asleep ever since? — and started Independent Theatres; they gained by all this nothing but the lasting resentment of the offended Olympians in theatre-land and book-land. Those who were shrewd played the game, thereafter, as the merchants in charge wanted it played; if they wrote ironically, it was about people and things not American; if they introduced anarchs of art into their pages, the anarchs were European ones; if they appreciated individualism, it was not American individualism, but that of Stirner, or Strindberg, or Henri Becque, or any other great egoist, or melomaniac. So these were distant enough, it was safe to laud them and use them as buttress to one's own reputation; but to have courage for one's own personality, that was nothing less than suicidal.

To attempt suicide, then, to sing as one must, to fight all the stale and hateful old intolerances that plague our letters, to declare the beautiful wherever one sees it even if it be in what the overgoodly decry, to assail the ugly though it appear with the seal of all the orthodox, — this is what must be done if we are ever to have men of letters of the stamp of Bierbaum, and not mere merchantmen, mere peddlers.

I know of only one book of minstrelsy in America that sold, against the nearly fifty thousand of the "Irrgarten der Liebe," into something like three thousand copies, yet even that proves every point I have made in this chapter, for it was just popular singing stuff.

The people, to whom literature for literates has no appeal at all, bought it, careless what the authorities might call these songs, so only they voiced their own emotions, painted their own places, and made the world a little melodious for them. Against this minstrel type the Andrew Langs of literature fulminate; they have no patience for even the reckless rhyming of a Byron. It is such lack of patience, of tolerance, that narrows the scope of literature every now and again, in this land and that, until it has as much appeal to the populace, to the nation outside of scholiasts and snobs, as have to-day the deliberations of Venetian doges.

It was Bierbaum's genius to be artist as well as balladmonger; what he voiced for his country and his period he so sang that it remains unblemished for posterity.

VIII

A FEW FORMALISTS

Before passing on to those whose work has put the modern German drama into a position of international influence, let us consider briefly some lyric craftsmen who, coming from the same sources as those most typically German singers we have been considering, are now in more formal ways continuing along the path first blazed in the 'eighties. Having done with those, there are two curiously eccentric emanations from the Variety-style that, as we have seen, formed a phase of Bierbaum's career: one, the most versatile and various entertainer of his time: Ernst, Freiherr von Wolzogen; the other, the most bizarre expression of drama in our time: Frank Wedekind. Through the latter, we shall pass to other dramatists with whom our day must reckon.

It has already been pointed out that consciously or unconsciously there is not to-day a lyric poet in Germany who does not trace back to the line Nietzsche-Liliencron. The line branched in many directions. It gave us those spontaneous voices of Germany for the Germans already sufficiently emphasized in this book; and it also gave us, to mention the most essential in our present contention, Richard Dehmel, Stephan George, Richard Schaukal, Max Dauthendey, Rainer Maria Rilke, and Gustav Falke. If I find their more conscious singing, in artistry, not so truly in tune with the idea of Minnesingers, of troubadours, or even border balladists, they none the less deserve record in even the most prejudiced account of modern German lyric song.

For the sake of the obviousness of the contrast against the spontaneity of the singer last considered, Bierbaum, let us begin with Stephan George. If Bierbaum was ecstatic, George is static; if Bierbaum's style was the style of humanity, George's is that of the cloister. Since we must, in approaching this poet, deal in some of those labels which never find a sticking-place on a proper minstrel's lyre, let us say that he is formalist, an artist in decorations. With him it is manner more than matter, and he has the effect of manner, which Bierbaum in his most rococo moments seldom had. Here is the antithesis of all natural and social thinking and feeling; here is the setting into the symbols of poetry the aristocratic eclecticism learned from Nietzsche, without his vastness of comprehension. We have already referred to Arno Holz and Johannes Schlaf. The reaction against naturalism in lyric form found its leader in George.

If others tried always to come as close as possible to expression of actual feeling and actual experience, George was concerned only with the form and the frame of his verse.

Even here you might find a line back to Goethe in his later period, the period of Helena and the West-Oestliche Divan. George's attitude was that of being poised not only over emotion itself, but also over himself under the influence of an emotion. He was not concerned with an actual world; his poems are like mystic gardens swaying above our solid earth. They are above sex and above society. Where in Bierbaum life and love of life seemed to have reached melody as spontaneously as the lark reaches it, George gives us outlines and pictures akin to the antique legends of Boecklin, the etchings of Max Klinger, the medieval fantasies of Thoma or the vast winged creatures of Sascha Schneider.

The eulogists of George have always, of course, pointed out that he had nothing to say to those who asked of a lyric that it seem to express their own unschooled emotions. That it was possible to do that, yet be as fine a stylist as any, we have seen in the case of Bierbaum. But we must admit that Stephan George has striven always for beauty, for his interpretation of the beauty of poetic art. He has never stood still; never been content with repetitions of old phrases for rhyming emotions often too facile. All his art has been an avoidance of that in mere balladry which deprived it of the right to survive.

If natural expression is a happy accident, decorative art is well considered design. If you would defend the decorative artist, you may argue that his conscious embroidery of beauty upon the outward form of life is very acceptable in an age when appearances are often ugly enough. Aubrey Beardsley, the English pre-Raphaelites, and Stephan George are all expressions of revolt against the too, too natural. George is eminently stylist.

Arno Holz had outlined the program. In his own style he had thrown over all forms but new ones of his own. His notion of free verse came at a time, 1893, when French free verse was already well under way and discussion. Holz remains the prophet, the program-writer, perhaps, but Stephan George, who was not himself so much theorist as a deducer of theories from his own technical achievements, became the first great instance of sheer style in modern German verse. Holz upset old forms; George renewed them to the highest possible point of artistic technique. Smoothness of rhythm, of metre, and, in a word, of all externals, is his paramount quest.

We have, as result, the mood's intention, rather than the mood itself. Of an actual emotion there cannot be even a question. Unless we are to suppose an audience so sophisticated as to feel emotion from the spectacle of that self-contained and self-consuming steady flame which in George represents his all of passion.

One of his typical notes is in such a poem as "The Mask," in a sufficiently representative volume, "The Carpet of Life, and Songs of Dream and Death" (Der Teppich des Lebens, u. s. w.). The title alone tells you his decorative view of life. There is even a story of Henry James's that enforces the point. "The Mask" reminds me of nothing so much as the art of the late Ernest Dowson in England, and of Wilbur Underwood in America. It is an effort to paint the color and the tragedy of carnival, the wrinkles under the mask; but we get only the effect of the intention. The words depict the room swaying in the dance of the silken puppets; the fever that burned beneath one mask, whose wearer saw amid the whirling of the others that Ash Wednesday was close at hand. . . . The words were there, but of a real carnival note there was nothing. Liliencron or

Bierbaum might not so carefully have catalogued and outlined the room and what it held; but they would have given us its essence.

The case of Stephan George, stylist, and little else, leads to the belief that the development of national and super-national German literature can in no way be influenced by him. He is almost a reversion to the æstheticism of that neuter period against which the men of the 'eighties rebelled; though he is far beyond them in artistic skill. His Hellenism is sexless, anæmic, so refined that it is sterile. Life is a carpet of wonderful pattern and strange figures for him; but there is not, in all that conception, any procreation, not even of poetry. His poems about men and women might as well be about marble. He stands outside of his period, and his own people; his is an isolated case of rare individual accomplishment; yet the fact that this period, and the German people, find him voicing, even in that elaborate lyric etiquette of his, something of their own, has its value for us who are trying to watch the fading of parochial lines from national character.

Stephan George was born, 1868, in Bingen on the Rhine. He traveled in England, Switzerland, Italy, France and Spain; studied in Paris, Munich and Berlin. His own Rhineland has seen most of his summers; Munich or Berlin his winters. His books of verse include:

"The Year of the Soul" (Das Jahr der Seele), 1898, "The Carpet of Life," 1899, and "The Seventh Ring" (Der Siebente Ring), 1907; besides a number of translations — and here you have a key to his artistic attitude! — one being a rendering (1901) of Baudelaire's "Fleurs de Mal," others being versions (1905) of poems by Swinburne, Rossetti, Jacobsen, Verhaeren, Verlaine, Mallarmé, Regnier, D'Annunzio and others. It has been pointed out that George's German sometimes sounds like translated German, even though its purity, as German, is without blemish. There we have, recurring, the trend to mystification that comes to every stylist. I recall Bliss Carman once telling me in defense of certain opacities of form then showing in his style, that if he could write in a foreign tongue, he would. There we have the same desire that Stephan George's foreign-sounding yet impeccable German style discovers.

That negation of the obvious which entered the world of European sensibility with the work of Schopenhauer and of Wagner, and came forth again through Nietzsche and Dehmel, can also be seen in Stephan George. Life, to him, is a tapestry as of Gobelin, and there is as much blood in it. Bloodless and sterile, this art of Stephan George can have no successors. For those who are conceiving the German poetry and the poets of the future one must look elsewhere. Yet it would be hard to find an artist more perfectly fulfilling all those essentials of externals which the professional critics and expounders of poetry demand. If poetry could be produced according to their formulas, Stephan George would be a considerable poet.

IT is in Vienna, always keen in appreciation of externals and etiquette, that Stephan George stands highest. Mostly Viennese, indeed, were the contributors to *Art Pages* (Blaetter für die Kunst), which affords a fairly clear idea of the way the Nietzsche influence exerted itself upon the mere words with which the writers of that time were clothing their thoughts. First physical impressionism, then psychic impressionism; finally complete reaction from the naturalists: a welter of mere phrases. It was phrases which these men, Stephan George at their head, put above everything else. Karl August Klein was the publisher of *Art Pages*, and among the contributors were, of those whom I am to mention at all, Hugo von Hoffmansthal, the dramatist, and Max Dauthendey. *Art Pages* appeared from 1892 to 1904, most sumptuously printed; it circulated to all intents privately. There, again, you have the exclusive nature of this sort of art.

To Hugo von Hoffmansthal we will come

later. About Max Dauthendey's work I have little to tell you. I know that he was born the 25th of July in Wurzburg. Tales of Asiatic life in a collection called "Lingam" I have read, and found notable more for style than matter. A play of his dealt with the philanderings of Catherine of Russia. He has also achieved some humor, notably the ballad of "The Lady and the Gramophone," which is such delightful nonsense as to atone for much mere stylistic prose and verse. His most typical verse is in "Weltspuk," in which the pictorial is attempted in a richly decorative manner, and invested wherever possible with a sort of pantheistic spirit. The poet's intention there, as in "The Winged Earth" (Die Geflügelte Erde), 1910, was to survey all earthly things from the pinnacle of Parnassus and paint the cosmic view; whether the intention reaches the reader as an actual effect is doubtful.

In Rainer Maria Rilke the stylistic attitude of modern German poetry reaches its most perfect form. Bierbaum appreciated him, as he appreciated so much that was fine; a Rilke poem on "The Three Holy Kings" appeared in the *Island* magazine, and in his "Yankeedoodletrip" Bierbaum wrote this, as touching the point of view from which he, O. J. B., would regard the town of flowers, Florence, were he seeing it for the first time in his life at twenty years of age:

"I might see it, as some ten or twelve years ago Rainer Maria Rilke saw it when he wrote to me about it: in white on pale blue paper. But I am afraid R. M. R. himself would no longer see it like that to-day . . ." (He went on to denounce the modernization of the Florentine streets and palaces.)

Rilke sounds the monastic, mystically religious note as well as the aristocratic and the intentionally obscure. You may find in him the German equivalent to much in the mystic and monastic tone that has appeared in many Catholic countries, and to what Francis Thompson did in England. His view of life turns always into himself. The artist, he declares, is only he who has within himself something deep and rare that he cannot share with the world. He avoids the obvious as a nun avoids the world and its pleasures. There is eroticism in Rilke, but it is the eroticism of a cloistered garden where Parsifal walks in white silk, and where tall lilies listen to the annunciation of Mary. I recall single poems of his printed in *Jugend* in the last few years, that were as if some of the most blasphemous ideas of the late Francis Saltus had been treated by a monk whose asceticism had the gorgeous hues of an old missal. There is a prose book of his that bears the title: "Of the Almighty, and others." (Vom lieben Gott, und andres.) The conclusion of his poem "Fate o' Women" (Frauenschicksal) runs thus: "She simply grew old and went blind, and was not precious and was never rare." That prose version of mine is not more removed from the presumed pattern of poetry than Rilke's original. In his poem "Sacrifice" (Opfer) he refers to "the altar that your hair has lit, and that your bosom gently crowns." Even these lines may give you a notion of the strange remoteness of this poetry.

Rainer Maria Rilke was born, 1875, in Prague, of an old and noble line. A lonely, musing childhood. At ten, his parents separating, he went into a military training-school and for five years endured the tortures of an education that applied the same level to all temperaments. Neither there nor in the several colleges that he tried after 1894 did he find what he sought. In 1896 and 1897 he was much in Munich; went thence to Berlin and ventured a little into literary circles, but soon retreated into his inborn anti-social habits of life. The poet was already awake in him; the many journeys that he now began stirred him still further. Florence and Fiesole and other Tuscan towns were of especial revelation to him. Still sharper was the impression which Russia made on him. For long he lived amid the vast loneliness of nature with a certain set of artists in Worpswede; his prose volume, "Worpswede," 1903, is an appreciation of that period and those artists. From the Worpswede band he turned to that vast solitary figure, the greatest in modern sculpture, Auguste Rodin. Secluded from the outer world, he lived close to Rodin in Paris, and acted as a sort of secretary to him. "He taught me everything," he declares, "that I did not know before, and all that I knew he revealed to me through his own placid and self-contained life, his sure and impenetrable solitude, and his tremendous concentration upon himself." Rilke wrote of the great sculptor in his volume "Auguste Rodin," 1903. The other great influence on Rilke was the Danish writer, Jens Peter Jacobsen.

The titles of Rilke's books tell the story of the ecclesiasticism that distinguishes him as poet. He has never seen life save through stained glass. Note this, for instance: "The Book of Hours; of monastic life, of pilgrimage, of poverty and of death." In his earlier verses the symbolism of Romish doctrine appears as an influence; gradually comes sympathy with older mysticisms, and even with such emotionalists as Chopin and Schumann; eventually he reaches his individual, personal note of monistic pantheism. In his "Book of Pictures" (Buch der Bilder) the Rodin influence can be found. That book is perhaps his highest achievement.

For sheer technical skill, modern German verse has gone no farther than Rainer Maria Rilke. His poetry remains noteworthy if we would understand the various facets of the modern German soul. That soul, it cannot too often be pointed out, is no longer parochial. The wave of religious mysticism that we may trace through French and English thought and feeling in our own time — need one mention more than the novels of Huysmans, of George Moore, of John Oliver Hobbes; the poetry of Francis Thompson? — swept through Germany also, and found welcome and acceptance there.

It is with definite purpose that emphasis is here given the poetry of Rilke. There are plenty of other talented Germans in this vein of letters to-day, with whose names the most careless study of the subject will familiarize you — Hugo Salus, Schaukal, Franz Blei, etc., etc. — but Rilke typifies for me the farthest point in sheer skill which has so far been reached by these men.

These perfect artificers may sway other poets, they can never sway a people. Their continuing experiments in new and strange devices of form, and style; their calm impersonal reaching toward new perfections in externals, may interest a community of literates; they can never sing for and to humanity at large anything of its own passion, anything of the world's ecstasy.

IX

RICHARD DEHMEL

THAT we may close with a return to what in living German verse most vitally carries on something of the minstrel's note, let us come to Richard Dehmel, who survives from the day when Nietzsche first moved German literature to new paths.

Returning, briefly, to that little collection of "German Chansons" which Bierbaum first put out in 1900, we find, besides Dehmel, several lesser singers who must be mentioned here because the singing note distinguished them as much as mere form marked those whom we traced from Stephan George to Rilke. They were: Gustav Falke, Ludwig Finckh, A. W. Heymel, and Rudolf Schroeder. The last named has already been referred to as one of the founders of *The Island*. Finckh had the manner of a charming courtier; his ballads were aristocratic, rather than German. Schroeder was æsthetic even in his merriest nonsense, and his grotesque ballads for the Überbrettl' were compared to decorations by Beardsley.

Heymel was the expression of youthful unrestraint and impudence; a portrait-caricature of him exists in " Prince Kuckuk," as has already been pointed out. He visited America a few years ago; as, also, did Von Wolzogen late in 1910. In Gustav Falke, born, 1853, in Luebeck, we touch that combination of merry minstrel and conscious expounder of a self-questioning ego most strongly typified in Dehmel.

From Liliencron to Falke you come along the line of least resistance; Falke's drinking song, " Twenty Marks " (Zwanzig Mark), is of the true note of bibulous balladry in the more wine-bibbing troubadours whose Carmina have come down to us from the middle ages. To contrast against that side of Falke such a poem as " At the Masked Ball " (Auf dem Maskenball) is to see the range of his sentiment. To contrast, again, the atmosphere of his masquerade against " The Mask " of Stephan George is to see how the natural note surpasses always the posturings of the most precious artificers.

IN Richard Dehmel we find almost every color in the rainbow of modern German character. It is he alone, after many earlier storms and stresses of thought and sentiment had found lodgment in him, who was strong enough, having known and felt the influence of Nietzsche, eventually to follow the latter's injunction: "Be what thou art!" and to forsake him.

Nietzsche's great poetic genius was as a fire that lit, that sparked to other fires, the youth of an entire period, an entire continent. You will not more clearly see the difference between passion and ice than if you compare Nietzsche with the American Emerson. The one a great Slav, full of power and passion and the ecstasy of poetry, sweeping like a prairie fire over the European peoples. The other an icy Puritan, affecting only a small parish of disciples, a narrow circle of the cultured, in a country which, by the very slightness of its cultured minority, needed more than any other some flaming passion, some world-devouring Napoleon of emotion. The pictures are still true to-day: Emerson and his kind were parochial; Nietzsche was continental.

There is, just here, a vast problem that looms upon us, were we not now concerned only with song and story and play. All that to-day pours into the United States is Slav. Is the Slav to repeat, there, his history as one continent's bulwark against another?

Nietzsche, whose genius in words — aside from his philosophy, which was a mere emanation of his poetry — affected a continent, was of Slav blood. He grew up in the Romanic, humanist spirit.

In every direction he revealed the impassioned fanaticism, and the colorful sensuousness of the Slav. His was the truly Romanic delight in the outer emblems of enchantment, in the sheer music and resonance of words. German characteristics never touched him but faintly; his proper nature, and the nature of that all-intoxicating poetry which he gave his time, was Romanic, Slav of the Slavs.

Richard Dehmel was too truly German to feel more than passingly the influence of even the great Nietzsche, the Slav.

RICHARD DEHMEL was the eldest son of a gamekeeper. He was born in 1863 in Wendisch-Hermsdorf, near the Spreewald, within easy distance of Berlin. (The Spreewalders, it may be remarked, retain to this day — as much as is possible in a tourist-harried world — in their tiny space of a few square miles, all the characteristics of a nation.) These "men of the Mark" consider Berlin as an alien monster in their borders. Dehmel had his first schooling in Kremmen, his next in Berlin. In those early years he was already unorthodox, and was soon in conflict with the orthodox schoolmasters of Berlin. He moved, for the completion of his studies, to Danzig. From the autumn of 1882 he studied philosophy and natural science, working his way meanwhile by editing provincial, and even sporting, newspapers. In 1887 Leipzig made him Doctor on account of an essay upon Insurance. From then until 1895 he was secretary of a German underwriters' association. In that bureaucratic air he learned much self-control. There, too, he published his first volumes of verse. After seven and a half years in official harness, he determined to devote himself entirely to his art, and freedom for it. He wrote no poetry of sorts before he was twenty-two, and artistic control came to him, so he once admitted, only with twenty-four years of age; he was thirty-two when he finally retired from his office. He went to live in Pankow, near Berlin. In 1899 he separated, amicably, from his wife; with her, Paula Dehmel, he had published a book for children called "Fitzebutze." With his second wife, he spent two and a half years traveling in Italy, Greece, Holland, Switzerland, and England, and eventually came to live in Blankenese near Hamburg.

DEHMEL, as artist in thought and expression, passed through many periods. Just as you find in him the minstrel note that, melancholy, northern though it is, found him a prominent place among the balladists of the "German Chansons," and also find in him huge problems of passion, of sex, and of society in the large; so you may trace in his career as artist many transformations, before the complete and individual character appears.

In his first books Schiller and Heine still dominate, though Conradi and Nietzsche already appear; the influence of Liliencron eventually triumphs. His real storm-and-stress period is expressed in his volume " But Love " (Aber die Liebe), 1893, which flames and smoulders with passion. Here is the brooding and the shame of adolescence, the tears, the agony and the ecstasy of a man's awakening. Love is an abyss of melancholy for him at first; out of his struggle in that abyss he comes with something of recognition for its finer sides. In " But Love " some have seen influences from Strindberg and Przybyszewski. Dehmel attacks the sex relations with all the fury of a northerner's passion. Then came poems, plays and fairy-tales, all marking Dehmel's progress, his thought upon the great vital man-and-woman problems of life. He worked in all forms; in the strictly lyric, in the larger lyricism of the epic, of the allegory, the novel and the drama.

In 1903, at forty years of age, all of Dehmel thought and art, that had so long been in ferment, went into its final melting-pot. He even took most of what he had published up to then, lyric, dramatic and epic, and remade it in tune with his new self. The jagged edges that still remain from that tremendous effort to make uniform what had marked the whims and passions of young manhood have their interest as proving the futility of this sort of rewriting.

Dehmel's passion, what some have declared his eroticism, is saved from the merely physical by its prevailing humanistic virtue. There is something northern, something intellectual, spiritual, always at back of it. He goes upon all the ways of love that he may find at end of them some new key to the great riddles of sex and life. He has the passion to observe life, the passion to live, and the passion to declare life; he has no reservations, nothing human is vile for him; he would conceal nothing, but would make noble and beautiful even the darkest places of the soul. He has the passion for truth, too; truth as he sees it; whether he always succeeds in making the reader see it as truth is another matter.

Say what they would against Dehmel's inability always to express as greatly as he felt, his essential Teutonism was undeniable. He was never Don Juan without being also Faust. His eroticism was of the north; he put his cosmic problem in the form of a love-story; while the more southern, Romanic writers, fashioned their love-stories to seem cosmic problems. One would rather not believe that this side of Dehmel, rather than larger, finer things in him, has made other countries, especially France (through the *Mercure de France*, in the summer of 1910, to cite one sufficient proof), stamp him the most vital German poet of our day.

He paints for us such Venus Transformations as surpass for erotic color and boldness most of what has been done in that sort; at the very opening of his " But Love " he sketches himself for us in the outlines of a " Bastard," product of a female vampire and of the God of Light, compelled eternally to strive upward out of a slough of despond toward the fairer gleam; yet we must ourselves be perverse to find perversity in him. The sombre philosopher is always behind his fieriest voluptuousness. He fights the fight of freedom, of sex, of society; he questions the old formulas, the old compulsions of society, of wedlock; all the old repressions of the individual rouse him. The individual, Richard Dehmel, whom, throughout, he sought to free to finest expression of his own self, his own character, was none the less the individual of many deep ancestral tendencies, many old Germanic qualities. He followed the great Slav's mandate: " Be who thou art! " and he came to express more forcibly than any other in his time and tongue all the vaster questions of the human race: marriage, society, and the rights of the individual.

So powerful is the stuff in Dehmel's work, that the art of its expression comes only secondly to consideration. Yet it is gradually being recognized (especially now that the French have pointed in that direction) by many who hitherto stressed only the thinker, that the artist is also considerable. It may remain true that the thinker often seems to obscure the artist; Julius Bab (who has written the finest of the German appreciations of Dehmel) recalls Leo Berg's remark that Dehmel "loves like an analytic philosopher, and philosophizes like a lover." In other words, his passion is seldom without artistic self-consciousness.

As artist it was the lyric words of Schiller, the lovely outlines of sonnets by Michael Angelo that first seemed the pinnacles of poetry to Dehmel. Only gradually the strong suggestion from Liliencron led him to express himself and his own thoughts, his own life. That rebellion of the 'eighties so often referred to affected Dehmel toward the search for a naturalistic, realistic symbol which eventually he attempted in his "But Love" of 1893. That book paints the crisis in his thought as in his form. He moves from apparently free verse to utter formlessness, from translations of foreign style to the first efforts in a final expression of simple and sincere personality. In his search for a style of his own he transmuted the old

Italian, Cecco; the modern Spaniard, Zorilla; the Pole, Ujeski, and the Chinese Li-tai-po; and particularly those French singers, each most typical of his time, Villon and Verlaine. The strongest influence of all, in that period, came from Strindberg; not only poems, but stories and dramas of Dehmel reeked with that northern bias.

Not until 1895, in "Leaves of Life" (Lebensblaetter), did the individual simple style proper to his thought and his intentions appear. In tracing Dehmel's style through its tentative periods to its eventual discovery of the poet's proper voice, Julius Bab found the case typical of that trend away from the musical and toward the pictorial which he declares a distinguishing feature of latter-day German writing. So that what in earlier years had kept to the musical idols which Schiller and his imitators worshiped, now went over into the similes of Max Klinger's etchings. (I mention this comparison largely to prove that this trick of confusing and mingling the arts of literature, painting and music has its devotees in Germany as well as London and New York; it is one of the favorite tools with which the more shopworn of the modern world's critics ply their trade.)

The keynote of Dehmel's thought and art is in his line: "To laugh, bleeding with wounds, — that is living!" He felt always the great deeps of woe and passion in the world; he strove always to express them. He strove always to express the tragedy of the individual seeking to justify itself relentlessly in a relentless world. He tried to force the whole agony and glory of the cosmos into his work. Here, for instance, is a free version of a poem of his which voices his own outlook:

" And man would be happy here on earth — Do you know, how that may come? " — " Man, it is thyself that thou must train — Which most will read: Man, from thyself thou must abstain! — Beware of all such folk. — There's many a man has trained himself — But did he build a real Self? — No man yet won to God — Who feared God's devils and their rod." — " All deeps of passion I would sound — And drain the whole world dry of it — And though I died for it! " — " For not above oneself — And not outside of self — But in oneself — Almightiness awaits the man so great that he can bear it. . . ."

Against the accusation of immorality in Dehmel's work it is to be pointed out that in some five hundred poems perhaps ten voice brutally the brutality of human sexuality. Dehmel once ironically informed those who invariably judged him by just those ten specimens, that he had finally made matters easier for their peculiar senses of taste and smell by arranging all those verses into the " Transformations of Venus " so that they need no longer search through all his many volumes in order to find them and enjoy them.

THAT a tremendous singer of the most passionate individualism which modern German literature has known should also, for his lighter minstrelsy, have been counted among the balladists of the " German Chansons " is significant of the place which that Young German period must ever have in the history of that literature. It nullifies at once the argument that these were but light gentry. No more gigantic intentions were ever in any man's work than in Dehmel's. Yet Dehmel, too, wrote the charming stuff for children in " Fitzebutze "; wrote the lovely lyric of the " Fruehlingskasper "; wrote that song " Toilette " which has at once the spiritual grace of passion and its disregard of shame; and wrote, finally, that bit of music and irony, " The Twelve Moral Innkeepers " (Die Zwoelf Sittsamen Gastwirte). This ballad paints for us the poet Liliencron, and the man Liliencron, so deliciously that it is with the memory of it still warm that this effort to appreciate Dehmel might best be closed.

The young Richard Dehmel owed a good deal to Detlev von Liliencron; something of that he repaid in " The Twelve Moral Innkeepers ";

and in the later enlarging fame of the older, larger Richard Dehmel, with his brooding, moralizing, northern passion, there is still something that starts memories of the Prussian officer, the poet, Liliencron.

X

MERE ENTERTAINMENT

If Richard Dehmel passed on to a point where he became the most internationally recognized thinker and poet of his day, there remain from the Young German period, or have sprung up since, many pleasant artists, who, if some might call them but entertainers, should none the less be mentioned here. Chief of these, and far more than a mere entertainer, though suffering from mere entertainment's reputation, is Ernst, Freiherr von Wolzogen. Before we return, through him, to the Überbrettl', and with him to the present day, let us briefly list some of those other writers of our time.

In Germany as elsewhere you can hardly throw a stone to-day without hitting a novelist. On Sudermann you may find so much elsewhere that I do not burthen this book with him. Carl Hauptmann's novel, "Mathilde," must be mentioned. One year Gustav Frenssen's "Joern Uhl" was the most discussed story in Germany; another it was something of Hermann Hesse's. Seekers after entertainment in Germany read

Heinz Tovote for a superficial reflex of sophisticated boredom (historically he has value only in having appeared at the same time as Hermann Bahr); George, Freiherr von Ompteda, for education in military and civil snobbery; Von Schlicht for stories in humorous treatment of army life; and Thomas Mann for careful painting of genre. In "Dead Centre" (Am Toten Punkt) and "Prinz" Johannes Schlaf again tried to write the great novel that Germany, with all its neighbors, annually awaits.

There are humorists in plenty. Peter Rosegger (born in 1843) painted a certain peasant region inimitably. Such serious persons as Fritz von Ostini and Ludwig Fulda have not disdained sheer humor. One of the most amusing writers in this sort, mostly in versified form, is Fritz Oliven, whose pen name is "Rideamus." Librettos of his for Oscar Straus' music include "Die Lustigen Niebelungen" and "Hugditrich's Brautfahrt," and over his rhymed pamphlets, "Willi's Werdegang," "Berliner Baelle," "Die Erfindung der Sittlichkeit" and many others, Germany has been laughing for the last ten years, "Willi's Werdegang" having sold to the eightieth thousand.

Paul Scheerbart, born, 1863, in Danzig; Karl Henckell, born, 1864, in Hanover; Rudolf Presber, 1868, in Frankfurt; Hanss Heinz Ewers, 1871, in Duesseldorf, and Theodor Etzel must be mentioned as prominent humorists to-day. Etzel and Roda Roda are issuing a library of the World's Humor, the first volume of which, "Laughing Germany" (Das Lachende Deutschland), enables one to choose what is best in the fun of the moment. Hanns von Gumppenberg has parodied Heine, Bierbaum, Liliencron and others. To Roda Roda I mean to recur when the Viennese are reached, at close of this book.

Short stories abound, but I recall little that was memorable save some bizarre things by Gustav Meyrink, and the curiously skilful pages of erotic cynicism signed Marie Madeleine. If, instead of mentioning scores of other German women writers, I choose this one, I do so fully aware of the general critical effort to ignore her. Every country has its poetess of passion, who, as often as not, is shoddy as well as shameless. Germany has them in plenty; Marie Madeleine is the only one I find remarkable.

WE have only to recall the French verses attempted by an American girl, Natalie Barney, in 1901, to realize such phenomena as international. In her "Portraits-Sonnets de Femmes" this girl of twenty, new-world bred, contributed to the curiosities of literature a volume which for precocious neuroticism, eroticism, or whatever you wished to call it politely rather than truthfully, cannot easily be expunged from the record. That you may see how constantly, at the period we have been contemplating, namely, the last decade of the nineteenth and the first decade of the twentieth century, the artistic diversions of England, France and Germany conspired to a sort of trio, both in serious tendencies and occasional aberrations, suppose we regard momentarily the American type of Marie Madeleine.

IN "Portraits-Sonnets de Femmes" we had a girl of twenty confessing such worship of her own sex, so passionately, as to remind equally of Lesbos and the Marquis de Sade. She wrote in French, because, as she declared, English had been too much with her to retain aught of sentiment; hers was abominable French, but it was enough to impose upon the half-educated fashionables whom, primarily, she wished her book to startle. She cited Stuart Merrill, Vielé-Griffin and others of her own sex; prattled uncannily about free verse, and asserted that she sometimes fancied her soul to be the tomb of some dead French poet. We are, all of us, tombs of one thing or another; some of us are tombs of dead hopes; others use bromides before breakfast. Neither the precocity of her pose nor its originality need impress us; her

French was not good enough to lead us to suppose her English much better. Such a precocious girl of twenty should have remembered what a one-time impertinent young man had confessed long before:

"With all this I did not learn French. I chattered and felt intensely at home in it; yes, I could write a sonnet or a ballad almost without a slip, but my prose required a good deal of alteration, for a greater command of language is required to write in prose than in verse. I found this in French and also in English." (How these currents do flow parallel throughout the world! Shaw not only said, but went far to prove the same thing, when he dashed off a copyright version of "The Admirable Bashville" in verse because it was so much easier and quicker than decent prose.) "For when I returned from Paris, my English terribly corrupt with French ideas and forms of thought, I could write acceptably English verse, but even ordinary newspaper prose was beyond my reach."

What should be noted is the matter of her verse; this was so perverse, even if imitated rather than felt by its author, as to put her, if not for performance, at least for intention, into the ranks of those who in English, French and German so worshiped sex, passion or erotomania as to reach an unusual height, if not in art, then in abnormality. I have taken the trouble, that you may the better understand such feminine emanations — which do not differ much whether they appear in one country or another, England, America, France or Germany — to turn into almost decent English some of the Natalie Barney French, which is often, simply as French, indecent enough.

Her sonnet to "The Lady of Slumbering Desires" exposes an uncanny virgin worship in this poetess of passion:

I would leave out all carnal rhymes
That well might wound your opal soul
By the thick cloud of their male passion.
Yea, I would love you, yet not bruise your
 wings.

Hymns to your virgin beauty I would sing;
Set up a cult for you beyond the world;
Wrap you in lilies, incense and wax tapers.

A vestal I would be, and your fair whiteness
Should suffer not the troubling lips
Of lovers, nor of charming women.

Might we not be excused if some of these suggestions left us a little sick? Next, let us try the sonnet to "La Princesse Lointaine":

Pure as a child's gaze is thy body;
Thy voice is sweet as an Æolian harp,
And lulls my heart t'ward ancient Greece;
Thy song's fine ecstasy makes Sappho live again.

Did yonder pale immortal have the accent
Of thy so pagan, clear and sapphire eyes,
The fairness of thy Lesbian skin,
Where thy breast's tips watch lovelorn?

Before the stirring charm of thy tired gait
Nature bows down, and love pleads for thy mouth —
Thy mouth that chants thy sterile state.

Thy body is a flame wherein all priestesses
Must throw the flower of their pure youth
To keep alive thy immortality.

Only a grim holding on to the thought that this girl of twenty was repeating echoes of what she did not really understand saves us from asking for such stuff as this a medical verdict.

In a sonnet to " Salammbo " occur lines such as these:

Afloat on my desire the memory lies
Of that night when your roseate pallor heard
my passion.
An essence lingers to remind my pain
How all is past; how empty is the altar
Of our so young voluptuousness, where weariness holds sway
Lamenting endlessly your kisses' knell.

. . . .

Upon your tired flesh, and on the golden shaft
That holds your head, there mingle still
The bitter odors of a full-blown flower.

The bitterness of motherhood obsessed this girl of twenty. Even in a poem on " April " is this lament:

And the flower regrets that it loved so much
Since now she feels Summer's fire burning within.

. . . .

Oh sad time when all Nature bears fruit,
When Love lies deformed, in obedience to Matter,
When, after the perfume of vanishing nights,
Life turns to mere prose, and the woman turns mother!

Now all this, fortunately, is nothing but imitation. This young person had saturated herself with what the young artistic swashbucklers, waving formulas and symbols, were doing in France. This is what we must believe if we are charitable. American art of just that period (the turn of the centuries) was peculiarly rich in imitation, and this volume by a girl of twenty only accentuates the point such imitation could reach. Considered more seriously, the incident proves the extent of the influence emanating from France at that time, and spreading over the English- as well as the German-speaking countries.

As an individual instance "Portraits-Sonnets de Femmes" is most clearly explained by recalling a paragraph from a brief bit of autobiography Paul Verlaine once gave us. He told of his reading, at fourteen, Baudelaire. "I devoured the collection without understanding anything; unless it was that 'perversities' (as one says in young ladies' boarding-schools) were in question; . . . these 'perversities' and their sometime nakednesses formed an attraction for my young corruption."

As to my version of the Barney verses I assert only that my English is better than her French.

WHAT distinguished Marie Madeleine from the general run of "poetesses of passion" that marked especially the adolescent nations, America and Germany, was her very real talent for the externals of her art. What there was of erotic, even of perverse, in her matter, was brought into the sphere of real art by the genius in her expression. This applies to her many volumes of stories as to her verse.

Marie Madeleine, it is well known, is the pen signature of the Baroness of Putkamer.

One other woman, Margarethe Boehme, whose "Diary of a Lost Soul" (Tagebuch einer Verlorenen) has been read in more than the German language, is never included by academic classifiers as among the producers of modern German literature. Yet that one book of hers, with its faithful chronicle of a fallen woman's career, should by all human, rather than literary rights, take rank with the vital documents in that sort, with Hogarth's "Rake's Progress," and certainly with such as "Mrs. Warren's Professsion." The fact that one German critic asserted the impossibility of a woman herself immune from vice having written such a book, is proof that besides truth of matter there was compelling art in Margarethe Boehme's book.

I cannot pretend to deal comprehensively with either the women-writers or the main bulk of the mere entertainers in the current literature of Germany. Barring the exceptions noted, the ladies over there have not stirred me, tho' I admit Clara Viebig is quite as great a novelist as Sudermann. Of the entertainers I choose to single out the figure which not only towers above the rest for versatility and for sheer bulk of accomplishment, but also survives to this present day as a giant from the ferment and the flourish of those Young German days which, if we must tell the truth, shine more splendidly to-day than our own time does. The artists of our day, in all the channels of art save the drama, seem of smaller stature than the men my book has been insisting on.

XI

ERNST VON WOLZOGEN

Ernst, Freiherr von Wolzogen, has already been much referred to in my pages devoted to the Überbrettl'. He was prime managerial mover, as well as literary conspirator, in most of the novel enterprises of that time; and it was to him that the memory of those episodes clung longest. Of all the volume of caricature and fun poked at the Überbrettl' and its variations, the most pungent item was that cartoon by Theodor Heine referred to in my second chapter.

We have seen how most of the Überbrettl' poets lived to survive all such ridicule. That campaign for applied art was incidental to greater things in them; just as their own greatness has by now lifted that same incident into dignity and to historic significance in the development of modern German literature. To Von Wolzogen the brand of the Überbrettl' clung most persistently, obscuring, often, the serious and dignified work his versatility was pouring forth.

For sheer versatility no artist of modern times has surpassed Von Wolzogen. Stories, novels, plays gay and plays tragic have poured from him in an incessant stream. He has been actor-manager, poet, composer, novelist, militant minstrel and many other things. In the Überbrettl' period it was he who literally fulfilled the old troubadour simile, chanting himself, to his own music, upon his own instrument, in a theatre of which he was manager, songs which he had written himself. The centuries had reversed the figures a little, that was all; of old a ragged minstrel, a thing of shreds and patches, sang in the marble halls of barons; in this Überbrettl' day of ours was a baron Von Wolzogen singing to such rag-tag and bobtail as might compose a music-hall audience.

Catulle Mendés in France, who could write all things in the world with an almost uncanny artistic dexterity; who was always only an intangible fraction below the master in whatever field he essayed, yet was never master in anything; — if we excuse Von Wolzogen from any such malicious suggestiveness as always ran undercurrent to the subtle art of Mendés, — it is to Mendés we recur when seeking for an equal to the diversity of Von Wolzogen's talent. He has written stories of military life and civil life; there is hardly any department of literary activity in which he has not achieved considerable work. There is no better picture of the Abbé Liszt and the whole musical circle of that time at Weimar than is in his novel "Der Kraft-Mayr." That book outranks many better known volumes in that sort; with the novels of George Moore on music; with Claretie's "Brichanteau," and with Gertrude Atherton's "Tower of Ivory" it is properly comparable. The picture of Weimar is drawn from the inside, and has no such abominable blemishes and carelessness as marred the Atherton book. No Liszt historian will easily avoid Von Wolzogen's sketch as a valuable document. As to the central idea of the overpowering, compelling fascination of the pianist hero, have we not had that again, ten years later, in Hermann Bahr's "Concert," a play now familiar to all of us accessible to the English tongue? I venture to think "Der Kraft-Mayr" Von Wolzogen's most memorable artistic accomplishment.

To pick, from such a vast volume of work as this man's, any preferable items is doubtless futile. Von Wolzogen's series of ballads, often with his own music, can still be bought in the German shops, under the "Buntes Theater" label or many others which flourished in that

Green German time. His "A Fescher Domino," "Das Laufmaedel" and "Madame Adêle" are among the best of the merry and tuneful songs which originated in that movement. You will admit that from such minstrelsy, with all the literal, actual, impersonation of it already mentioned, to the writing of a libretto for Richard Strauss's "Feuersnot" or of the faery spectacle, "Die Maibraut," or of any one of the many serious works in dramatic or romantic form that Von Wolzogen has signed, shows a versatility nothing less than remarkable.

Von Wolzogen is a member of one of the oldest families in Germany, much to the fore in the history of Teutonic culture. He is baron, as was Detlev von Liliencron; and as was Von Recnicek, the Austro-Hungarian genius who gave color and outline (mostly through illustrations printed in the first volumes of Munich's *Simplicissimus*) to so many of the figures in ballads by Bierbaum and by Von Wolzogen himself. Specially memorable were the Von Recnicek paintings depicting Bierbaum's "Hoher Besuch" and Von Wolzogen's "Madame Adêle."

Von Wolzogen lived in Weimar, Berlin and Munich, and in the latter town the idea of the Überbrettl' took him. He was of the Überbrettl' leaders; his were some of the most popular songs and tunes under that banner; but he was never content to play second fiddle or remain subordinately a member of even an Überbrettl' brotherhood, and he branched away from it in many directions of his own. What he attempted in the Darmstaedter Spiele (Darmstadt Plays), for instance, was somewhat different from the music-hall notion of the other minstrels. Into comic opera, too, he branched; and there was hardly any form of art which he did not try, as author, composer and actual manager, to apply to the public entertainment of the people. There was hardly ever a new movement of any sort in the line of light theatric fare wedded to real art without Von Wolzogen being to the fore.

His undying youthfulness as entertainer was shown again as lately as the summer of 1909 when he wrote specially for the open-air theatre in Wiesbaden his play "Die Maibraut." That, in many ways, was his triumphant point of achievement in applying his art to the needs of the immediate. These open-air theatres, as we know, had been spreading about the world for some time. At Orange, in France; in the Arena Goldoni, in Florence, and in many sylvan spots in Switzerland and Germany this return to nature by way of the theatre had been going on. Sporadic cases had occurred often enough before, it is true; I recall a pictorially effective, if artistically negligible, performance of Humperdinck's "Haensel and Gretel" under the trees in Regent's Park, London; and the outdoor versions of "As You Like It," labeled for fashionable purposes "al fresco," had made many an innocent pastoral scene in England and America tumultuous once or twice a year for decades past. But until Maude Adams, in the wonderfully picturesque setting of the Lawn Club's premises in New Haven gave her really artistic realizations of the open air's dramatic possibilities; or until the Bohemian Club of San Francisco gave its annual sylvan play under the redwoods, America was barren in this newest effort to oust the shut-in air of convention from the drama. Still, with the exception of the plays written for those Bohemian Club "Jinks," what was performed under these charming and novel conditions, even in Europe, was mostly antique stuff. The plays I saw, for instance, in the open-air theatre at Hertenstein, near Lucerne, were classics; Grillparzer's "Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen" was probably the most effective of them.

It was Von Wolzogen who first in Europe adapted his art to the new conditions of the natural backgrounds and lights. He wrote his "Die Maibraut" directly for the needs of the open-air theatre in the Nerothal, a sheltered park-like bit of natural rock and greenery just outside Wiesbaden. He applied his craft directly to making the art of the theatre pliable to the new conditions. The men who wrote the pastoral plays for the Bohemian Club in San Francisco hardly attempted much more than mere beauty of rhetorical and pictorial effect. Von Wolzogen wrote a play in which all his skill as dramatist was employed, and the result was not only effective in its color and its illusion, but in its action.

Since Wiesbaden is a town beloved of the present German Emperor, and the natural advantages of the Nerothal wonderful for the purposes of such a play, the success of "Die Maibraut" was considerable.

Whether Von Wolzogen's versatility, his fecundity, endangered the lasting qualities of his art, it is too soon to say, for he is still, as it is pleasant to record here, among the living. It is true that, despite the nothing less than tremendous volume of serious work he has done since the Überbrettl' days, it has been hard to erase in some sections of the German public the memory of him, performing his own compositions, in variety attire. Upon this detail he did not hesitate to declare himself while visiting America and its many German Societies at end of 1910. He resented the inability of certain people in Germany to forget his red silk coat and his blue breeches, and their heedlessness of the forty-odd serious books which held his real self far more comprehensively than the passing flirtation with music-hall reform. He deplored, also, the sort of music-hall performer who latterly abused the Überbrettl' as a label, and did things in its name which were as abominable as what the Überbrettl' had tried to reform. But that does not taint the virtue of the fine idea itself.

Certain autobiographic hints Von Wolzogen gave while in America are of interest to students of his career. His grandfather was teacher of Schiller's children, and later their guardian, and knew Goethe well. His father and grandfather had part in that great classic period of Weimar and Jena. As for the smaller men, those men against whose dominance the rebels of the 'eighties rose, the Geibels, Auerbachs, Bodenstedts and Heyses, Von Wolzogen as a boy saw them much in his father's house, and saw through their small æstheticisms. Von Wolzogen's mother was English, and he admits inheriting from her much of that humor which enabled him to see that just those puny "great men" of the interim period before '85 (sketched in my chapter on Liliencron) were not the men to voice the real, vital, vigorous young German nation.

Von Wolzogen's comedy (1892) "Lumpengesindel" gave the amusing side of such a bohemian household as the Hart brothers conducted in Berlin in the 'eighties; but that play has been considered typical of its author's inability to reach the tragic heights in art, for all its tragedy was futile. In one book, "The Successor" (Der Thronfolger), he paints court circles; in "Ecce Ego," the landed squires; in "The Derailed" (Die Entgleisten), the officers of the German army; and so on. His entertainment was unfailing, and for the sake of that it was easy to forgive him his lack in the serious or tragic qualities. He never bored you, not for one moment in his long life of artistic activity. He had a gaiety of invention, a freshness of execution, that made him, whether he was rhyming you a song to suit some mood of the moment, or was telling a story, or writing a play, or combining all these arts in a theatre of his own, one of the most unfailing entertainers our time has known.

IN this effort to sketch the evolution of German literature out of the revolution of the 'eighties to the present time, Von Wolzogen serves in his living person as a link from that time to this. For earnestness of intention to declare artistically his own time, his own people, his own self, neither Bierbaum nor any of the others surpassed Von Wolzogen; and I think he will be remembered for just that. It is safe to assert his value as one who, in opposition to those æsthetic antiquaries and sexless pundits of before '85, really accomplished something, really put his life into his art, and came to close quarters with reality, with humanity.

His case, again, proves another point, which I have already made: the younger men now coming forward seem of smaller size than the men of the storm-and-stress of the Young German period. Von Wolzogen, entertainer rather than great artist that he is, is still more valuable than these younger men who are again falling into formalisms of art. History, of course, repeats these recessions constantly; and the real impetus from Liliencron and Bierbaum, the two men who most vitally remade German literature in our time, may show itself in the work of a generation beyond our own.

IN what I have so far written my main hope has been to stir interest in this revival of true minstrelsy in Germany. It was only through those who were most truly minstrels that you caught the note of new Germany; the others, perfect stylists and well intentioned artists though they might be, voiced little save their own devotion to formulas, and proved little save that oversophistication is as futile in art as in life. As minstrels I believe these Young German singers were the purest singers in any tongue during our generation. If I had to point to anything like an equivalent in English I might find it only in Australia. Only there has English been used in the gay and careless musical minstrel fashion to paint properly the people and the place. The life of the bush, of the larrikin, the tea-billy, the dust, the profanity and the drink, the sundowners and the selectors; all that early life of Young Australia is in the songs of the late Victor Daley and many others whom we may roughly call the "Bulletin school." That may not be poetry as the gentlemen who measure it academically limit it; but it was true minstrel stuff voicing its place and its people.

It is nothing more than right that the Sydney *Bulletin* (which also developed the late Phil May) should be mentioned in this connection. It did for those uncouth yet typical bards of the Australian back-blocks and the bush, just what for the Young Germans here emphasized was done by Munich *Jugend* and *Simplicissimus.* In the earlier volumes of both you will still find the first marginal notes for a history of modern German art and literature. The late Albert Langen of *Simplicissimus* and Geo. Hirth of *Jugend* had their share in this rebirth, and so deserve our recognition.

THERE survives, from the Young German period, still one other militant minstrel besides Von Wolzogen, and it is through him that I pass from minstrelsy proper to the domain of the theatre.

That other is Frank Wedekind.

XII

DRAMA AND WEDEKIND

In the domain of the theatre the importance of Germany is now generally admitted. Those ambitions which the younger Germans harbored in the latter years of the nineteenth century came first in the lyric and comic drama to something of which all the world had to take note. It is not my intention here to go back to Sudermann or Hauptmann, about whom much has already been written in English, and who are not any longer, to my mind, to be counted among the active, progressive forces. It is certain other men, only now, at long last, coming into international recognition, whom I choose to consider typical of the newer German art in the drama.

The Anglo-Saxon world was slow enough in reaching the conclusion that the European drama is most alive in Berlin and the other theatrical centres of Germany. A list of the authors represented in a day or a week of Berlin's theatres, in the latter half of 1910, showed these: Shakespeare, Molière, Goethe, Schiller, Hebbel, Grillparzer, Ibsen, Bjoernson, Shaw, Sudermann, Fulda, Wedekind, Maeterlinck, Capus and Schnitzler. Such listing was, like statistics in general, representative of but half the truth. It did prove the European drama alive in Germany; but it did not prove the German drama alive in Europe. With the exception of Wedekind and Schnitzler, the list contained no names that really belong to the newer German drama of to-day.

If we declare Sudermann greater as novelist than playwright, and Hauptmann to have expended before now both his naturalistic bravado and his youthful romanticism — having, indeed, as an expression of youthful Germany never gone farther than "Before Sunrise" (Vor Sonnenaufgang) — we may also dismiss briefly a few others who, while their work still recurs upon the German boards, do not seem to me vital enough for our present longer contemplation. Max Halbe, who seemed to be making for fine heights as a dramatist, will scarcely live save in his play "Youth" (*Jugend*), 1893. Halbe belonged to the circle about the brothers Hart, and his play "Eisgang" (1892) was done at the Free People's Theatre (Freie Volksbuehne). The production of "Youth," refused by most of the important managers, was so successful as to place Halbe momentarily side by side with Hauptmann. Ever after that Halbe was condemned to hear, as each new play of his was produced, that he had not fulfilled the promise in "Youth." He retired from Berlin to the country, but returned in 1895 to Munich, where he gained fresh courage for new work in play and story, and — what brings him closest to our immediate appreciation here — took part in those many artistic revivals which had Munich as headquarters. In 1895 Halbe started with Josef Ruederer the Intimate Theatre (Intimes Theatre), on the boards of which many of the then climbing writers and composers appeared as public performers; and connected with which were such men as Wedekind, Hartleben, and Karl Hauptmann, Gerhardt's brother.

As you will find Halbe performed often enough to-day in Germany, so will you find Ludwig Fulda. His work has always been distinguished, well-bred, and attentive to form, and it has never been anything greater than that. It has been romantically and rhetorically correct, and it has tried suavely to continue, according to the etiquette of the moment, the traditions and methods of Grillparzer. Fulda did many things cleverly; polished fine-sounding epigrams, and adapted Molière dexterously; but he is not to be counted as among those who in creating anything really national put Germany into the domain of international drama.

There were, further, Ernst Hardt, born in 1876, whose "Tantris the Fool" (Tantris der Narr), a modernization of the Tristan and Isolde story, brought its author some acclaim; Otto Ernst, whose "Flaxmann, Teacher" (Flaxmann als Erzieher) was a sterling bit of characterization from rustic originals, and whose "Youth of To-day" (Jugend von Heute) contained much bitter satire aimed at modern decadents and pseudo-imitators of Nietzsche; Meyer Foerster, whose "Alt Heidelberg" made a great deal of money in England and America as well as in Germany; and Franz Adam Beyerlein, whose one impressive success, "Zapfenstreich" (Taps), is barred from popularity in English countries through its severe faithfulness to German military conditions in barracks and out.

THE playwrights whom I choose to emphasize as most expressive of the modern German theatre — the theatre in which Sudermann and Hauptmann are no longer paramount figures — are such men as Frank Wedekind, Ludwig Thoma, Hugo von Hoffmansthal, Arthur Schnitzler and Hermann Bahr. Very slowly have these names penetrated to English intelligences; yet it is in their work that we may find that which is to-day drawing the attention of the rest of the world to the German theatre.

FOR several reasons, I begin with Frank Wedekind. He has, for one thing, communicated to his dramatic creations the varieté ideas, the music-hall style, so to say, which he brought from those early days, at which we have already had a glimpse, when he appeared upon this or that intimate or independent stage as a performer of his own work. Nextly, it is he who has most practically, most brutally, put upon the stage figures and ideas that were profane or barbaric expressions of the lyric unmoralities in Nietzsche. The line from Nietzsche to Wedekind, from the music-hall expression of artistic personality to Wedekind, is direct and not to be mistaken.

What was theoretically sublime in Nietzsche became the actually bizarre if not ridiculous in Wedekind.

Wedekind chiefly represents complete divorce from all the old man-made moralities. He and his characters are not so much above those moralities, as outside of them. He treats humanity diabolically; there is never any trace of divine pity in him. The music-hall's complete freedom from society's ordinary restraints; its sheerly physiologic interpretation of life; its entire forgetfulness of ethical or moral reasonableness; are all typified in Wedekind's art. All life is for him a music-hall performance. The effects of things move him; causes, morals, old labels like "good and evil," or "the wages of sin," do not move him at all. He is the essential modern expression, through art, of that savage doctrine in nature which orders that the stronger reptile devour the weaker. Doctrine, however, is the wrong word to apply to Wedekind; he is as above doctrines as he is outside of the old humanities. He has in him something of Machiavelli, something of Casanova, and the more satanic egoisms of Nietzsche; he remains a strange, uncanny, isolated, abnormal figure, and is yet, in his very remoteness from all normalities and all moralities, typical of modern Germany's throwing away from old, too long accepted things.

It is Wedekind's "Spring's Awakening" (Fruehlings Erwachen) which first brought him into notice beyond the German borders. That tragedy upon our youth's need for sexual illumination was brutal and melancholy enough; and will never be without its value for our time; yet it is mild compared to some of the other plays from his pen.

MY own first encounter with Wedekind as playwright came in the summer of 1902, much of which I spent in Berlin. Following, as always in those years, the pages of *The Island* as avidly as possible, I came, in the July number, upon Wedekind's "Box of Pandora" (Buechse der Pandora) printed in its entirety. Impossible, to-day, to recall the sensations that stirred in me as I read. Was this a madman, uncannily gifted with a smatter of cosmopolitan tongues, with the very color and gesture of cosmopolitan vice? We moved in an atmosphere of cocottes, confidence men, crooks, women of the streets, and murderers; the closing scene was of a brutality, in its effort to depict a Jack the Ripper at his awful business, which would sicken a police reporter. It was true Wedekind's English in this play was fitter for an American bar in Berlin than for those who really knew the language; but the astounding thing was that he used it at all. If English suited certain criminal realities in his play, he gave you English; just as he gave you French; just as he gave you the grossest medical allusions that no other had dared put into print before him, however much they might occur in life. It became evident, as I read this astounding production, that this was a writer to whom all things human were vile, and nothing was unprintable. The real conversations of male and female savages — of whom so many persist in our times and in the most modern attire — were perhaps for the first time set down by Wedekind. The result was, as it always has been to squeamish folk, unprintable; all real conversation is unprintable.

AN abnormal, an eccentric, Wedekind has always been. He was an eccentric performer, in the music-hall interpretations he gave; he was eccentric as dramatist. Little that was abnormal in pathology of sex, or nerves, or sanity, escaped his treatment as material for plays. He was eccentric, outside of all the elder moral, or critical, or artistic scruples, or even scruples about the public or his own profit. He did not merely satirize his public, as Shaw did; he insulted it, both as playwright and as performer. Neither censors nor jailors lessened the fury with which he imposed his eccentric ego upon his time in Germany. Against the time-serving of Sudermann and the dreamy complaining of Hauptmann, Wedekind loomed as some vast irresistible monster, some Juggernaut that moved ruthlessly on over the blood and bones of the playgoing public. He cared as little for style or form in his plays as he cared for morals. For him, as for Meredith, the "chaos illumined by lightning" of Wilde applies; his dramatic work is more chaotic than any other in our time, and yet has flashes, moments, of genius, that irritate by their very impertinence. He treats humanity as an aggregation of atoms; it amuses him to galvanize those atoms into this or that attitude. He has no cowardices of texts and teachings, no hymns to sing to humanity. We are marionettes for his amusement; that is all.

WEDEKIND's life has been as extraordinary as his work. Indeed, if we would fully understand the one, we must examine the other. They must be taken together, as in the case of Verlaine, or of Wilde. Only, as against the apparent contradictions in those other cases, Wedekind's life and his work have always had eccentricities and abnormalities in common.

He was born, 1864, in Hanover. His father had been a physician in the Orient, one of the rebels of '48, gone to America, and been a pioneer in San Francisco, where he married. Frank Wedekind's mother was of a Wurttemberg family; she had reached San Francisco in the adventuring vagabondage of the stage artist. Wedekind senior made money in land, and returned to Hanover, where Frank was born. The family moved to Lenzburg, where Frank's first youth had its untrammeled way. The passion for writing was his from the first, but his father made him study law in Munich. There, however, he consorted only with artists and players. His studies shifted to Zurich, where with others of his own age he started the so-called Ulrich-Hutten circle, furthering the cause of modernity in literature. To this circle belonged such as Karl Henckell, John Henry Mackay, Otto Erich Hartleben and the two brothers Hauptmann. Wedekind here came first into touch with Strindberg. In 1888, his father dead, Wedekind returned to Munich with his patrimony. Artistic ferment tossed him hither and thither; he went to Paris, and to London, flinging away his patrimony and much of his physical and spiritual health. He learned, then, as Maximilian Harden has pointed out, all the centres of European culture, all the sinks of its perversity and its crookedness. He squandered his money and his beliefs alike recklessly. In 1891 he returned again to Munich, in funds, the old family home in Lenzburg having been sold.

The first editor to recognize Wedekind was Albert Langen, of *Simplicissimus*, who took him on to the staff of that weekly. Karl Heine, of the Leipzig Literary Society, also took up Wedekind, and put on such plays of his as "Earth Spirit" (Der Erdgeist), 1895, "The Tenor" (Der Kammersaenger), 1899, and "The Love Potion" (Der Liebestrank), 1899, in which Wedekind himself played important parts. These were his first successes, both as writer and public performer. An action for lèse-majesté was brought against him about this time; he fled to Paris; but eventually gave himself up, and served a sentence in the fortress of Koenigstein. This episode brought him more notoriety than all he had accomplished in art. Then came the Überbrettl' period, in which Wedekind was active as singer and performer, as has already been told on an earlier page. The variety theatres of Berlin, of Munich, and many other towns knew him. In 1904 he joined the forces of Max Reinhardt at the German Theatre (Deutsches Theater) in Berlin, acting in such pieces of his own as "Spring's Awakening" (Fruehlings Erwachen), written in 1891, "Earth Spirit," and "Hidalla," 1904.

In 1906 Wedekind married Tillie Niemann, an actress, and in 1908 left Berlin to settle again in Munich. The name Wedekind is rich in talents besides that of Frank. His sister Erika is well-known as a brilliant singer; a brother Donald aped Wedekind's career, at least in literature, but lacked Frank's robust physical and mental equipment. Donald wandered in America, retired to a monastery, wrote a weird novel, drifted from editorial desk to music-hall platform, and finally shot himself in Vienna in 1908.

ONLY in some of his first verses will you find trace of an idealistic youthfulness having once dwelt in Wedekind. He began, as Conradi, as Nietzsche, with some yearning for the illimitable beauties that spring seems to conjure in the human soul; the actualities of life appear to have buffeted all those fine fancies out of him at the first touch, and forever. In his later work there is not one single link that binds him to his human kind. Joy of life died in him so young, that he has forgotten that it still exists in others.

What has always been to the fore in his preoccupation with the sexual relation between the sexes is the brutal, the diabolic, in them. His bitter, cynic irony has played about every normal and abnormal gesture of human passion that experience or imagination can conceive. He is the great Denier of our time. He denies morals, denies custom, denies the laws and scruples of society and art. Whether the barriers of nicety and decency — to use words intelligible to the polite! — which Wedekind has kicked down can ever again be put up as permanently as before in art, is a fine question. He denies the ideal, denies even what is.

It was about 1890 that Wedekind came to the front as Denier. He denied and defied the naturalism of Gerhardt Hauptmann. In his first edition, in that year, of "The Young World" (Die Junge Welt) not circulated publicly, he caricatured Hauptmann under the label

"Meyer," referred to naturalism as "a governess" and wrote such lines as this in his Prologue:

"What's in these farces and these tragedies?
Tame and domestic animals, so sweet in manners,
They love a vegetarian diet, and forever purr —
Just like those others, purring, in the stalls:
One hero cannot stand a bit of drink (College Crampton),
Another wonders if he truly loves (Alfred Loth),
The third despairs of all that's in the world,
For five long acts you hear him make complaint (Poor Heinrich)
And not a soul to cut his plaint and throat at once!
The real, wild and lovely animal
You will not see, kind friends, save only — here."

Nothing, indeed, could be farther apart than Hauptmann's art and Wedekind's. Wedekind stopped for no realities; his characters were as chaotic as the dialogue; all was on the abnormal and screaming note of the *affiche* larger than life. The voice was the same in a hundred of his characters, the voice of Wedekind. His caricatures sketched the living, but never filled them with breath. As he has no concern for methods in art, so, too, he never moves you more than some chaotic monstrosity might move you. Yet, like chaos, like all monstrous things, there is something so vast, so inhuman in him, that the world must eventually take note of him.

IT is in the volume "Countess Russalka" (Fürstin Russalka), 1897, that one should look for the first signs of Wedekind's artistic temper. This volume held stories, poems, and pantomimes. It gave some of his earliest, and also some of his most characteristic work.

"Spring's Awakening" will probably live longer than any other Wedekind play. Brutal as it is, it still has a vestige of idealism, of which the later Wedekind retains no trace. It was a children's tragedy of the most awful, this play, and no greater indictment of the folly of letting hypocrisy and shamefulness keep the young of both sexes blind to what sex means has ever been written. In quite recent times this matter of the awakening of sex, of the widespread and disastrous prudery about diseases of sex, has gradually been creeping into publicity in Anglo-Saxon countries. Here and there a medical man courageous enough to tell the truth has brought an indictment against the way adults conspire to pretend diseases of sex as non-existent, and against the way children are brought up in ignorance of sexual functions. Wedekind was the first to bring that indictment through dramatic art.

One of the stories in "Fürstin Russalka" had already outlined the subject of "Spring's Awakening." That interim period of pubescence, when youth is torn between its dread of the unknown and its desires, was the theme which first moved Wedekind in his story of

"Rabbi Esra" in the "Russalka" collection, and later in the play. Nothing could be more awful, more tragic, than the manner in which his play exposes the injustice which parents do their children by letting them stay in ignorance concerning all the body's natural functions. Almost every hypocrisy common in every modern country's attitude toward children is flayed bitterly by Wedekind. One character in an early story declares that she would never have supposed "that one could bear children without having been married"; *Countess Russalka* herself was of the steadfast belief that God had given her parents children because they had been married in church, and not because early in their married life they lived together. *Frau Bergmann* in the last act of "Spring's Awakening" explains to the 15-year-old *Wendla* that the latter has a child, only to have the latter exclaim: "But, mother, that isn't possible. Why, — I'm not married!" Whereon comes her curt reproach: "Oh, mother, why didn't you tell me everything?" and *Frau Bergmann's* reply: "I dealt with you exactly as my dear mother dealt with me." In that latter frightful confession, you have the whole bitter irony of Wedekind's indictment. It is the curse of Yesterday that has put its pall of ignorance upon so many of these danger-spots in To-day's consciousness; in the contrast between that reply of *Frau Bergmann's* and the frightful tragedy overwhelming the children in this play lies the whole difference between the old hypocrisies and the enlightenment for which all our modern world is still too slowly striving. All the mongrel results of half-culture, all the false shame and hypocrisy preventing parent and child from dealing straightforwardly with the truth in things physical, are castigated in this play.

Now that " Spring's Awakening " has, in a translation by Count Robert d'Humiéres (an admirer, one recalls, of Mr. Kipling), been performed in Paris at the Theatre des Arts, and rumors of its production have even been scattered abroad in America, where, too, a printed English version with the sub-title, " A Tragedy of Childhood," is now to be had, one need not now do more than brief the actual plot of it very curtly.

The style of the play, as throughout all Wedekind's plays, is largely in monologue, and rapid strokes of characterization. Nothing is filled in; everything is outline; all the characters, young and old, talk alike, talk sheer Wedekind. We see two boys at school, overhear their frank wondering discussions about sex and its impulses. We see a girl, *Wendla*, whose wonder about a married sister's baby is put off with all the old lying hypocrisies; even after she has shared a hayloft with one of the schoolboys, sheltered from a storm, she knows no more than she did. It is only when *Wendla* dies, in giving abortive birth to that schoolboy's child, that she utters the wail: "Oh, mother, why didn't you tell me everything?" That schoolboy is eventually sent to a reformatory, where the horrible corruption prevailing among his fellows only aggravates his hideous state of mind and body. As for the other schoolboy, he has shot himself because he has found nobody to explain to him what the impulses, the thoughts, the amazements and questionings of the period between boyhood and maturity mean. Upon all this actual hideousness torn from the life and youth of our own time, Wedekind gave us a grotesque, allegorical closing scene, in which the boy *Melchior*, escaped from the reformatory, appears, to utter over *Wendla's* grave the words: "Blessed are the pure in heart." *Moritz*, the other boy, appears, carrying his head on his arm. Ensues a conversation between the quick and the dead, which only deepens the horror, the intensity of bitterness in the whole play. The scene, on the stage, is even more terrible than the closing of Laparra's opera, "La Habanera."

IF in "Spring's Awakening" our modern world first came to realize Wedekind's concentration upon sex, that concentration was to be expressed even more forcibly afterwards. There was, in the children's tragedy referred to, still much of the unquenched idealist in Wedekind; indeed, it was what gleamed through the lines suggesting the bitter way in which the great world of experience had brutally upset the ideal in Wedekind's own youth that gave this play much of its power. The play was applicable wherever old hypocrisies between parent and child still linger; but the most tremendously international creation of Wedekind was to come later, in the character of *Lulu*, the heroine of "Earth Spirit" and its sequel, "The Box of Pandora."

Lulu is of all time, of all climes. She is the Eternal Woman, in whose body the world, the flesh and the devil reign supreme. In the apparent chaos of her contradictory passions are all those eternal femininities that defy the classifications of society or of science. She would give her body to the most brutal ruffian, the while her spirit soared to strange heights of sensuous finesse. She is the elemental female, the essence of her sex. She has the instincts of the primal animal, and these have driven her to cultivate all her qualities to the *n*'th degree in order that she may most fully express, most fully enjoy, her body's possibilities. *Lulu* is the eternal Scarlet Woman of the sectarian's nightmare. She is the lure of the flesh, made doubly potent with a gleam of the most refined culture that modernity can contrive.

Do you know the appalling picture by Felicien Rops, wherein Woman and all she typified to that most ironical artist is shown naked, save for a bandage on her eyes, and guided by a gross and vile pig? From that conception of the dominantly physical in the female human animal Wedekind's conception of *Lulu* differs only in that he does not even bandage her eyes. She goes open-eyed and joyously into that battle of the sexes which to this German dramatist has ever been the paramount part of life.

Lulu was a daughter of the people, who rose thence from one story of society to another without ever completely feeling at home on any *étage*. Literally she was of the people; she knew neither parent; she was of the earth, the "Earth Spirit" truly; its soil clung to her always. First a flower-girl; then adventuress, then a lady in society, she goes always forward upon her single business, that of giving her sexuality one triumph after another over the opposing sex. She deceives this man, ruins another, murders another. She is the eternal temptress; she embodies the everlasting struggle between the sexes; she is untamable, merciless, and seems immortal. In the sequel to

"Earth Spirit" *Lulu* has definitely become a professional general in the bitter war against the male. In "The Box of Pandora" we find her released from the prison to which the murder in the other play had brought her; though free from that constraint, she is now more and more the slave of her own passions and sinks from one phase of courtesanship to another. There is no abomination of vice or extortion to which she does not come, both actively and passively; she exhausts every iniquitous corner of every capital of the world's vice; mires lower and lower, in Paris, and then London; to end, at last, as streetwalker in a London garret, murdered by a Jack the Ripper in one of the most appalling scenes ever written in our time in any tongue.

BESIDES the plays already named there are "Mine-Haha," first printed in *The Island* in 1901, which treats specifically of the physical education of girls, castigating life and conduct in the boarding-schools and colleges for young women much in the "Spring's Awakening" manner; "The Marquis of Keith," wherein a sort of superman, captain of huge fantastic schemes of financial "promotion," stumbles from his eminence over the dead body of a woman who had loved him too well; "Such Is Life" (So Ist das Leben), 1902, in which a dethroned king turns gipsy comedian, plays court fool to his usurping successor, and sees his own daughter in love with that successor's son. About to be exiled so that the two young people may marry, the court fool declares his real kingship, is not believed, and dies in his child's arms with the words: "I abdicate, not as king, but as man." "Such Is Life" is now to be read in an English version; its interest is enhanced by the obviously autobiographic reflections upon Wedekind's own career as artist.

In "The Marquis of Keith" occurred the two aphorisms, typical of Wedekind's outlook: "Life is a toboggan-slide," and "Morality is the most profitable business on earth."

Then came in 1904 "Hidalla," and last January in Leipzig I bought "Oaha," which was issued in 1909, and in September, 1910, the one-act "Mit Allen Hunden Gehetzt" was added to my collection. "Oaha" was in five acts, and depicted, with that revolting brutality which marks this man's work, the conduct and characters in the office of an illustrated satiric periodical of to-day. The gross lampooning of the business of lampooning, so to put it, was as monstrously inhuman as anything Wedekind has ever done. Since in most cases biographical or autobiographical texts have existed for the Wedekind outbursts — all his living and writing have had the character of seismic explosions! — one can only suppose that the methods of such a paper as Munich *Simplicissimus*, on which Wedekind himself began his artistic career, gave " Oaha " its impulse. The contributors, the editors, the manager, the artists, in this " Oaha " concern are all of the usual grotesque Wedekind inhumanity; they have as little regard for the public as for one another. The play takes its name from an awful deaf-and-dumb creature who supplies the " lines " of mordant wit that accompany the world-staggering designs of the artist who has helped make the paper famous. The only human sound this monstrosity, that has to be wheeled into the editorial rooms, can make is something like: Oaha! There, in brief, you have Wedekind in his essential brutality.

As for " Mit Allen Hunden Gehetzt," the title is untranslatable unless we devise some similarity like " At the Last Ditch." This is a hideous little episode of a man who claims from another man's wife her body as bribe against his making public a crime of which her husband has been guilty. The woman notes in her tormentor the signs of a passion so abnormal that she determines to try it to the breaking point; she so shamelessly offers her utterly naked body to him that in the abnormal excess of his passion he shoots himself. There, again, you have the sort of idea that only Wedekind is capable of using as stuff for drama.

Further have appeared a satire called "Censorship"; poems, "The Four Seasons"; "Firework," a few stories; a funeral pantomime in three scenes called "Death and the Devil," and, quite lately, a little prose dissertation upon "The Art of the Theatre" (Shauspielkunst). About this declaration of Wedekind's dramatic theories the critic Alfred Kerr remarked that it proved at least one thing definitely, namely, that Wedekind's effectiveness was part deserved, and partly sheer luck. It is certain that Wedekind, amazing eccentric in the modern drama as he is, can express himself effectively only in that drama, not about it. Nothing of his brutal abnormality, nothing of his isolation away from all humanity, is in what he writes about dramatic construction or about criticism. He is a Juggernaut who flings human puppets hither and thither, but he cannot write about the Juggernaut's wheels.

THE most individual talent of the theatre in our time, perhaps, is this Frank Wedekind, and yet as full of faults as of strength. All his characters talk his own tongue; all utter monologues; there is never dialogue. Everything is sacrificed for a biting cynicism, for a mordant caricature; completeness or balance are never achieved; everywhere the jagged and raw edges of chaotic whims and passions obtrude in his work. In the moment of the deepest tragedy he grins like the most insensate clown; and into his absurdest clowning he infuses the bitterest irony. Even in those lightest moods which he expressed in the ballads he wrote for the Überbrettl's uses, some of which are in the "German Chansons" collection, you will find these contrasts; he is never gay without a sour conclusion.

No artist in our time, or perhaps in any time, has gone farther to the extreme, in revolt from his embittered youth, than Wedekind. If at first his bitterness was a mask to conceal the hurt of his young manhood, it became eventually the man himself, an inseparable part of his ego. That he has been able to make that ego stream so strongly upon the outer world of international art, proves him a dramatic force of truly continental calibre. There are those, of course, who find Wedekind simply the last human word in that degeneration once put into circulation as a phrase for the general abuse; those who murmur of Krafft-Ebing, and of Nietzsche dying in a madhouse. They declare the profitlessness of putting into plays characters and actions which, after all, are not typical but abnormal. They do not deny that such people, such incidents, such life, as are in Wedekind's plays, exist; but they question the value of putting them into play or print. Against which it is to be remarked that even if they only recorded the utterest abnormalities, from the most inhuman standpoint, these plays of Wedekind will have to be reckoned with by the future student of to-day's civilization. In that larger reckoning our abnormalities as well as our normalities must figure.

Students of psychology, moreover, may easily enough illumine the case of Wedekind to suit their theories. To Wedekind, as we have seen, humanity has never been other than atoms under a microscope. To hold humanity under the microscope is exactly the method of the conscious psychologist; he notes actions, causes and effects; he applies his observations, deduces from them; the human machine becomes obvious and simple to him. Wedekind may, then, by some be held consciously or unconsciously to enact the psychologist in his drama; not only to let the atoms move under his microscope, but to let us, the playgoers, watch the very process of psychologic exposition. All this, as I said, if you are able, in what seems to others only chaotic, to find psychology.

Whatever were the first influences upon Wedekind, as Nietzsche, Strindberg, and the French writers, essentially it was his own life that fashioned him to eventual individualism as artist.

If in matter he occasionally tried paths that had been trodden in Scandinavia or France, in manner he was never anything but grotesquely himself; he scorned any pattern whatsoever; his work was nothing but the eruption, the ebullition of his ego and its ideas. Even in matter he surpassed in unscrupulousness and disregard for old shames, old restraints, anything that others had done. By comparison Strindberg's "Fraulein Julie" seems almost dainty, and the pseudo-medical revelations in the novels of D'Annunzio seem packed in saccharine rhetoric.

LET me end this glimpse at Wedekind by harking back to that Rops sketch which so vitally gives the playwright's essential attitude toward woman. That same picture outlines a curious preoccupation which runs through everything he ever wrote. Preoccupation, namely, with the human body, especially the human body's gait and gestures.

Wedekind's intense joy in the body is as pagan as that of the Greeks, but expressed far more in terms of literal physics. For him there is no veiling the essential thing itself by phrases about a "human form divine," "antique boy-worship of the Greeks," or even the allusiveness of a Gautier declaring that "a woman who has wit enough to be beautiful has wit enough." In him no tenor murmurs about "fair boys" who are "lovely as Antinous." He goes straight to the rude core of man's delight in woman's body. If he himself declared once that "life is a toboggan-slide," we must, as we examine his paramount obsession, declare that in him the cult of the human body is chiefly expressed in intense devotion to woman's every gesture, every motion of her gait. *Prince Escerny* said of *Lulu:* "When she dances her solo, she becomes drunk with her own beauty, with which she is in love up to the ears!" To Wedekind, as to Heine, the real Song of Songs in this our day is the song in a woman's form.

Through the most grotesque situations that occur between the extraordinary people in his plays — noblemen, trapeze performers, adventurers, cocottes, and school children — the idea that only in a perfect body can the perfect spirit dwell rings out. The girl *Hidalla,* after all the years she has spent in seclusion with many other girls in that strange educational institution pictured in "Mine-Haha," recalls of her fellows nothing, nothing save their — gait. Not Felicien Rops himself has expressed the sheer animality of the female form as has Wedekind; the Belgian could not get the flowing vividness of motion into his strokes that the German has put into his prose. The case of *Hidalla* is nothing but a girl's education in worship of her own body. The gradual dawning in her of appreciation for the suavity of her limbs, of "that joy which came to her as the consciousness of her own body came to her, and which found vent again in every slightest gesture," is typical of this trait in Wedekind's art. Even in early verses in the "Countess Russalka" collection was the line addressed to a girl: "Your irresistibility is in your legs . . ." and in the "Galathea" ballad (German Chansons) he declared that he "Yearned to kiss your knees, Spelling as they do temptation. . . ." Of gait and rhythm in the body we find this in "Mine-Haha": "A person's walk is not an accidental thing. It depends directly on the way the body is built. . . . Human gait has its rhythm that is not to be expressed in words, that can only be felt. From this rhythm you may easily reconstruct the entire body."

This instinct for bodily rhythm Wedekind put among the vital attributes of his elemental female, *Lulu*. The rhythm of her own body moves *Lulu* to a very passion, a need, for dancing; if for one evening she fails to give her dance, she admits: "I dream all night that I am dancing, and next day every bone in me aches." Her body excites not only in others but in herself, "the maddest excitement." One, a poet, praises her body thus: "Through this gown your stature is as a symphony to me.

These fine ankles are as a Cantabile; this ravishing curve, and this knee, are as a Capriccio; and this the mighty Andante of voluptuousness. . . ."

As we remember the emphasis on these qualities in body and gait that runs through all Wedekind writes, those early "Pantomime Dances" in the "Fürstin Russalka" volume come more and more to express Wedekind's real attitude toward life. That attitude is one of inhuman disdain. Before his cynically distorting mirror he lets all life pass; all are equal before that ironic reflector. His relentless determination to fling his figures about into frightful and abnormal postures, detracts from our ability to feel anything of his as a complete work of art. Wedekind is as chaotic as Nature herself; there is no notion absurder than that Nature is logical or artistic in the petty sense. The sheerly profane expression of Nietzsche's most inhuman egoism is Wedekind. Humanity has moved his pity as much as it has moved Vesuvius when that volcano was in eruption.

To further his conception of all life as an expression of the body, either for brutality or beauty, he has sacrificed not alone casual characters and types in ordinary human society, but most of the actual men and women whom he has known in the flesh. There is hardly a play of his that has not some gross, hideous version of a real and well-known personage. What makes all this the more frightful is that some truth is in even the most brutal of Wedekind's apparent distortions. Have we not heard, for many years, the sententious: "In the most civilized, the most sophisticated of us, dwells still the primal brute, the savage. But no man dares proclaim the real thoughts and words of that brute part of us." That is just what Wedekind has dared to do: he has laid bare all the brute in normal, as well as in abnormal mankind. If he has gone to the other extreme — has refused to see that in us human creatures there is also something beside the brute — he has none the less perfectly fulfilled the old artistic law that you must always, to bring your point home, tell not only the truth but more than the truth: you must exaggerate. Wedekind has exaggerated the brutal qualities in us, until he has made us shudder. He is eccentric and perverse; the tragic comedian of the abnormal; whether he is genius of psychology or only genius of chaos, he has gashed the irremediable savagery of our time, surviving through centuries of so-called civilization, so deeply upon the theatre and upon literature that he may survive when time-serving photographers, or complaining idealists, are forgotten.

XIII

LUDWIG THOMA'S "MORAL"

LUDWIG THOMA is another whose first fruits were given the world through *Simplicissimus*. As playwright Thoma comes into our reckoning here through his one comedy, of the year 1909, called "Moral." His reputation had chiefly been that of humorist, and his stories, sometimes as brief as anecdotes, sometimes of novelette size, have been largely concerned with the peasant and burgess characters of Bavaria. He was born in Oberammergau in January, 1867. Some of his collections of short stories, as "Lausbubengeschichten," are nothing less than famous in Germany, and have sold tremendously. Than the humor and vivid characterization in such a book as "Kleinstadtgeschichten" (Tales of Small Towns) I know little finer in the entire "village" province of literature.

But the three-act comedy "Moral" is what gives him title to rank as a dramatist deserving international appreciation. This comedy in three acts goes, in the same field, as deep as Shaw's "Mrs. Warren's Profession," but it is lighter, more truly stuff for laughter. No country where hypocrisy or puritanism prevail as factors in social and municipal conduct should be spared the corrective acid of this play.

The scene opens at the house of *Beermann*, who is the president of the local Society for the Prevention of Vice. All the local pillars of society are gathered together in festive companionship; there are card play and gossip.

Out of the talk at the card-tables emerges this essential bit of news: the police have just arrested a lady whose hospitality has been somewhat notorious, but whose patronage has been of the most distinguished sort. As one of the guests at *Beermann's* puts it, "People have been in the habit of relaxing their too tense morals a bit in her house. I suppose the police had to see that the grown-up children with bald heads and whiskers were protected from that." *Beermann* grows more nervous as the conversation goes on. Some one remarks that the police are likely to get into trouble over the thing; because "one mustn't shake the foundations of the people's belief in the privileged classes. That is one of our most cherished possessions. . . . This case is peculiarly dangerous, because this lady kept a diary, and that diary has been seized." *Beermann* can play cards no longer, he begins to pace about, and finally asks the woman's name. "Ninon, Ninon d'Hauteville" they tell him, and he, more shaken than ever, asks: "And you say she kept a diary?" so that his wife wonders: "What concern is it of yours?" and the act closes on his retort:

"Am I president of the Anti-Vice Society, or am I not?"

The second act takes place in police headquarters. There are scenes between various officials, contrasting the rigorous demands of bureaucratic officialism with the demands of that unwritten law protecting "those Higher Up." These scenes apply in every country alike. Then comes the woman *d'Hauteville*, protesting against the infamy of her arrest. She is full of darkest hints. "If you only knew who it was that had to hide himself in the wardrobe when they were searching my place! If you only knew!" The police think to browbeat her by telling her they have her diary, so they do not really need her further confession. They press her to tell the name of the person who hid in the wardrobe, to point it out among the other names in the book. She laughs and declares some of her guests were of such degree that they came incognito, and even incog. their names were not set down. The police accomplish nothing in their interview with her.

Beermann arrives in great excitement, to protest against having the contents of the diary made public. Public morality, he declares, demands that such disclosures be avoided; there might be most estimable fathers and husbands in that list; whole families might be made unhappy, and so on. The police officials fancy he has come to congratulate them, as president of the Anti-Vice Society, on their energetic action against the *d'Hauteville* person. They tell him not to be anxious; the diary will not be made public except in court, when this case comes up. *Beermann* protests more than ever. Ensues this bit of dialogue:

Beermann: It's not the police's business to provoke such a huge scandal as this. It shakes the people's respect for us.

The Police Official: These are the gentlemen (tapping the diary) who provoked the scandal.

Beermann: That's not a scandal if one of us lets himself go a bit on the quiet. It's not a scandal until you go shouting it out for Tom, Dick and Harry to hear. . . . I tell you, this thing mustn't be done!

The Police Official: Mr. Beermann, all honor to the humane idea that evidently prompts you. Still, you must admit that we are only acting on behalf of those classes you have in mind.

Beermann: No.

The Police Official: I say yes. Two weeks ago the best people here started a Society that insists on the need for greater strictness toward immorality.

Beermann: Toward immorality among the lower classes, where the thing too easily becomes license. As president, I suppose I ought to know what we wanted.

. . . . (He returns to this in a later speech) Last night, as I was thinking about what a disaster this thing would be, I asked myself the question, Which is the more important: To have morals, or to have people believe in our morals?

The Police Official: And you found no answer?

Beermann: Oh, yes, I came to the clear conclusion that it is far more important if the people believe in our morals.

The Police Official: You didn't need a Society for that.

Beermann: All the more. Being moral is something I can manage in my room by myself; but there's no educational value in that. The important thing is to declare one's moral convictions in public. That works beneficially upon the family, upon the state.

The Police Official: I must say that side of it hadn't occurred to me.

Beermann: Just consider: it's the same with morals as with religion. One must always give the impression that there is such a thing, and each must believe that the other has it. Do you suppose there would still be such a thing as religion, if the church dealt with our sins in public? She forgives them in silence; and the state too ought to be as shrewd as that.

Beermann eventually manages to steal the diary, in which, of course, his name is with all the other respectable fathers of families in the place. The police president arrives to give all his underlings a vigorous raking-over for lack of tact in dealing with the *d'Hauteville* case. The person who hid in the wardrobe turns out to be the Highest Personage in the land, that Man Higher Up — to use the terms of the American politically controlled police — whom it is everybody's business to protect at all hazards. The police has everlastingly put its foot into a most dangerous mess; the problem eventually is how to hush up the *d'Hauteville.* It is she who finally dominates the entire situation. Upon her depends the safety and peace of the whole community. She can shatter, with a word, all the family happiness, and all the popular trust in the governing classes. The thing to do is get her out of the place. For that, a large sum of money will have to be paid to her as indemnity.

That sum is furnished by the president of the Anti-Vice Society, *Beermann!*

THE pertinence of Thoma's play to every modern capital of hypocrisy is obvious. We have only to recall such cases as the Metropolitan Opera House refusal to present Strauss and Wilde's "Salome" in New York; Mary Garden's inability to play that same part in Chicago, in 1910, owing to police prevention; and the many amazing exhibitions of stupidity that London's County Council has given since first Mrs. Ormiston Chant attempted her crusade against the music-hall "promenades." The pertinent remark of M. Dalmores, in the Chicago episode just named: "This police chief, he does not clean his streets, yet he thinks to find filth in opera!" deserves, for its shrewdness and its truth, to be recorded and remembered. Then there was the police chief in New Haven who stopped "Mrs. Warren's Profession," yet did not some years later, 1910, have wit enough to discover an attempt to play an almost literal version of the essentially French farce, "Vous N'Avez Rien à Declarer?" until all Yale had nearly died of joy. All such police interference is so delightfully satirized in "Moral" that the hearer or reader's laughter is likely to oust, for a time, the realization of the serious indictment the play brings. Thoma, the while he entertains us so vividly, goes into the problem of the "profession of Mme. d'Hauteville" (as we may, for this, call it), and of the Men Behind, the Men Higher Up, so deeply that no ironical critic of modern life can afford to miss this document: the comedy "Moral."

Since "Moral" first appeared, at end of 1908, it has been played constantly in Germany. It surely deserves appreciation elsewhere. One of the many Play Societies that make somewhat timid trials of this or that bit of new drama in London gave a version of it one Sunday night not long ago; from the published comment one gathered that the English adaptation must have been more than usually uninspired by either taste or wit. Since "Moral" Thoma has returned again to his humorous depiction of peasant life, and before I left Wiesbaden last September people were roaring in laughter at his newest farce, "First Class" (Erster Classe). But it is through "Moral" that Ludwig Thoma comes into the ranks of those who have swung the German drama up to where it deserves the world's attention.

XIV

VIENNA'S ESSENCE: SCHNITZLER

In approaching, from the easy point of Munich, whose jovial, genial, artistically sophisticated, yet rustically spontaneous spirit Ludwig Thoma expresses so admirably in everything he writes, some dramatists who stand for Vienna, it is essential that we dwell a moment upon certain most illuminating conclusions to be reached by studying the map of central Europe. That map is full of revelation in what it tells us of the effect of climate on temperament.

Temperament! Far better the curt German elision of the word "artistic" from this phrase; surely few other phrases, not even those which include the word "bohemian," are by now so abominable to people of fine taste! The German irony is simpler, briefer. When a lovely damsel trips it too merrily down the primrose path of dalliance the Germans shrug her case away in few words: "Das Mädel hat Temperament!" They put, in short, these forthright Germans, this quality of "temperament" into the same clause with that which brings so many "actresses" into the police reports of American newspapers. How went the blithe refrain of the merry jumble of melody and mockery they had half a dozen years ago or so at the Metropol Theater in Berlin:

"Man muss patent sein,
Voll Temperament sein,
So 'n bischen tra-la-la, la-la, la-la, la-la . . ."

That was in a piece called "The Men from Maxim's," which rivalled for boldness the "revues" which Paris applauds annually at such theatres as the Marigny, and elsewhere. Those same annual spectacles at the Metropol, in Berlin, were as expressive of Germany's utter abandonment of old parochial restraints in all the arts of entertainment, as were the Überbrettl' and all the literary manifestations we have been considering.

Despite the abominable associations of the word "temperament" we must, as before in Hartleben's case, use it here in tracing, on our map, the influences of climate, of soil — soil in the large sense implying heritage from centuries, implying birth and breeding. Whether you have observed it or not, you have, with some few casual digressions, been wandering steadily south with me. Liliencron, for instance, was our point of departure from the north. Coming from what was then Danish territory he remained to the end, through all his fine romantic lyric minstrelsy, the Prussian officer. In his most jovial carol sounded the northern melancholy. Dehmel, though he seemed erotic, was philosopher in his passion. Sudermann, again, was at his best, was most directly expressive of himself, when he was describing the lives of the "Pommersche Junker," the agrarian aristocrats of the most northerly and easterly provinces of Germany. Relentless earnestness was the note of even his most humorous pages. Sudermann is never really gay. In "The Song of Songs" (Das Hohe Lied) it was the tragedy of "temperament," not its sparkle, that he stressed. It was not until one came to southwestern Germany, to Bavaria, to the Rhineland, that the real care-free minstrel spirit of the newer German spirit came to expression.

Here the Past obtrudes once more. From the primary collection of medieval minstrelsy of which we have knowledge, the "Carmina Burana," now in Munich, it is clear that the bulk of Wandering Students' songs of love and wine originated in Bavaria and the Rhineland. Where they originated, then, as you have seen from these pages of mine, they came in our own time to their most effective revival. Almost any Bierbaum ballad might, for its essential, pagan, spontaneous flavor, appear, without impertinence, in the "Carmina Burana" collection.

In Bavaria, and thereabouts, the really Teuton joyousness has always been at home; and in our day Munich has definitely come to express most clearly all that in Germany's arts is most racial, most characteristic, and, therein, most worthy of international regard. The same racial flavor, the welding of artist with son of the soil, is in Bierbaum and Thoma.

Wherever they may have been born, most of these men found, at one time or another, their most stimulating atmosphere in Munich. Even in the abnormal, eccentric Wedekind the genial artistic air of Munich found its welcome; it was in Munich, among the "Hanging Judges" (which I choose as fairly indicating the "Elf Scharfricher"), that Wedekind gave the Überbrettl' public some of his most astounding and insulting performances; his only moments of something like merry minstrelsy were Munich moments; and it is to Munich that he has always returned. It is this bit of German soil that has most developed all the natural, spontaneous, singing spirits of the past, and of to-day. Those whose craft has been greater than their nature have been here or there; the real heart of artistic Germany beats most freely in Munich. The Prinz-Regenten Theater for music; the Kuenstler Theater for plays; Germany has nothing much finer to show than those. May we not even suppose that the first of the world's stage-directors, the greatest of its really creative theatric producers, Max Reinhardt himself (only David Belasco in America approaches this man in practical genius for the theatre's externals), may some day forsake Berlin and move to Munich?

FOR sheer craft, versatility, lightness of touch and temper, we go to Vienna. For years the northern Germans sneered at Viennese talent; they declared it was never more than merely clever; it never went far or deep. They refused to take it seriously. "Mere literature!" they said of it, refusing to consider it as properly creative, permanent, vitally reflective of life. Power and genius were denied the Viennese. Grace, charm, style — yes. The northern Germans, it is true, forgot, in these detractions, that grace, charm, and style — lightness of touch, as well as depth of feeling — were also in those giants from the Rhineland, Goethe and Heine. (Always, you see, the great German singers, have come from that region near the Isar or the Rhine!)

Not Paris itself has more delicacy in treatment of the indelicate than Vienna. That is as true of life as of literature; there are those who say that it is true of love also. In all the etiquette of art Vienna knows no rival. The northerners declared it manner and nothing more. They pointed out that in every expression of the north-German spirit (they impressed Nietzsche, the Slav, into this argument of theirs!), in Liliencron, Conradi, Hauptmann, Dehmel, Stephan George or Wedekind, individual or even eccentric as it might seem, something of a racial northern style remained, to keep them sweet for posterity. In Vienna, on the contrary, there were simply a number of very exquisite artificers, formalists, mannerists, who would be remembered no longer than last year's fashion in frocks. Feminists, in short — that was the concluding verdict the northerners passed upon the Viennese.

The man who did most, in practice and in program, to develop these same stylistic niceties of the modern Viennese writers, was also the man who eventually suffered most keenly just that belittling which the more solemn northerners for years sent southward: Hermann Bahr. The irony of fate was eventually to direct a Bahr play into such international success as had not in our time come to any other play in German. "The Concert," as has already been indicated in my chapter on Hartleben, has emphasized more than any other modern play the dominant position of the German stage. With the work of Bahr, however, I prefer to conclude, rather than begin this quick sketch of Viennese accomplishment.

THE Austrian drama of to-day is typified in the work of Arthur Schnitzler. In his work were all those qualities which marked the contrast between the Viennese temper and the German. Where Berlin insisted on truth, at the expense of beauty, Vienna preferred beauty to everything else. As in its court and its lesser circles Vienna stands for all the aristocratic refinements, so the gestures and tones of the most sophisticated intelligence, of the most patrician outlook, are the paramount concerns in Viennese art. All these gestures, tones, and points of view have been simply the proper appointments for the lovely women, the sensuous music, and the enchanting cuisine for which Vienna has long been rightly famous. All that rises out of that air has had fascination, grace, insinuation and intrigue. Neither tremendous passion nor tremendous problems have stirred, to all appearances, those polite artists of Vienna. Passion might be there, but what was to be artistically expressed was, rather, the witty or ironically mournful surfaces of passion. Under the almost diabolically clever flippancies in dialogue there may be tragedy; but neither in life nor art is it good form, in Vienna, to let so middle-class an article as tragedy appear naked.

All these essentially Austrian qualities were markedly in Schnitzler. The ironies and mockeries in a sort of twilight land of love engaged him time and again. Reading him was to realize that not even Paris takes "sweethearts *and* wives" more for granted than Vienna does. The rest of the toast, you may remember, goes "May they never meet!" In most of Schnitzler's plays and stories the prevailing question is just how to be off with the old love, and on with the new. It would be hard to imagine any variation in this large problem that this writer has not elaborated. I do not think either Marcel Prevost, or Henri Becque has gone farther into the finesses of the philandering mind.

My first vivid appreciation of the dramatist Schnitzler came some years ago when his "Liebelei" was played at the old Irving Place Theatre with Agnes Sorma in the leading part. How many, out of all the plays seen in a lifetime, contain anything at all to keep them quick in one's memory? But the sensations "Liebelei" gave me have lived through a welter of other plays; there was something in the tragedy of the forsaken sweetheart, when she learns her lover has fallen in a duel about another woman, in her words (I quote at a venture from that early memory!): "Was bin denn Ich gewesen?" there was even something so haunting in the absurd refrain of the barrel-organ beneath the window where she sits alone, awaiting the lover who does not come — that I have never since had overmuch patience with those pretending that in the sheerly intellectual brilliance of the Viennese there was no real depth, no heart. "Liebelei" has been attempted in English on both sides of the Atlantic. In England, at end of 1909, it was called "Light-o'-Love," a distinctly better title than "The Reckoning," under which label it was played in New York at the Berkeley Lyceum with Katharine Grey in the part Sorma had played. This New York performance in English I saw, and while it had merits, it failed altogether in passing to the audience that twilight blend of melancholy and gaiety which informs the original. Only an English Schnitzler could, I am convinced, adequately render the essential Schnitzler charm, his power of insinuating both laughter and tears.

Always, in the Schnitzler plays, we move among delicate, amusing and intriguing love-affairs. No grim questions of right and wrong are allowed to assail us. How, most smoothly, most politely, most delicately, is this lover to say good-by to that sweetheart; or how is this lovely lady to inform her cavalier that she is tired of him — to all appearances we are never witnessing problems any deeper than those. We move in a realm of beauty; ugliness is never allowed to obtrude. Neither He nor She ever vows constancy; as long as the romance lasts, until the bloom of novelty and wit is off, in short; there is no more in these little love-affairs than that. The etiquette of the *liaison,* in short, is nowhere more charmingly expressed than in Schnitzler.

What in "Liebelei" was green, in this dramatist's later plays ripened to a far surer intellectual effect. In his cycle of one-act plays collected under the title "Anatol" we find him, I think, at his most essential. Here is crystallized that viewpoint of the man-of-the-world and the witty sentimentalist which distinguishes Vienna aristocracy. Some of his one-act pieces have been performed in English, as "The Green Cockatoo" and "Literature." Charlotte Wiehe and other actresses have given "Abschieds Souper" as "Souper d'Adieu" in French. There is no cleverer one-act piece in any language than this. In spite of several longer plays, novels, etc., existing from Schnitzler's pen, his talent has found its fittest expression in the one-act drama. For just an episode, for the perfectly graceful exploitation of just one mood, his talent has sufficed. There are hardly any moods, whims or caprices in that twilight-land between passion and philandering, which he has not analyzed delicately for our diversion. He is supremely the analyst of light love. To read him is to understand the wit and the inconstancy, the politeness and the unscrupulousness, of the Viennese soul.

If Von Wolzogen invented the label "das süsse Mädel" — the "dear girl," who may be married, or may not — Schnitzler invented the type. It is she who recurs in all his pages. To enjoy the moment, that is all she asks. She has all the qualities of a Viennese waltz: "Sentimental gaiety, smiling mischievous melancholy — peace and content stream from her to you — if you bring her a bunch of violets, there is a tiny tear in the corner of her eye." For Schnitzler the essential is always make-believe of one sort or another: playing at love, playing at death, playing at comedies. His materials are slight, but he uses them with finesses of artistic grace and charm that give them dignity and distinction. He voices Vienna and its refinement, as well as the simpler sentiment of the Austrian people.

Though Schnitzler seldom goes beyond the eternal duel between Her and Him — at the most he lets his witty lightnings flash about the eternal triangle which perpetually emphasizes the imperfectly monogamous nature of our kind — the dialogues he supplies for that duel are not easily surpassed for sheer cleverness; not even the Parisians are more skilful than he in the verbal scintillations of light love.

His long novel on the problem of the Semitic element in Austrian society, "Der Weg ins Freie," has been generally praised, and went into more editions even than his famous "Lieutenant Gustl'," but I found it somewhat tedious. If it proved that Schnitzler could keep up, so to say, a strong head of steam for more than a mere novelette, or one-act play, it proved his essential talent still in the quicker expression of a single mood. Where I have found him most delightful, most vocative of all the essential Viennese qualities, has been in such a cycle of episodes as "Anatol," or in "Comtesse Mizzi." He has never gone farther than that; the last-named play, indeed, of 1909, is an exact return to the "Anatol" manner of 1893; none of his divagations away from that manner has been of great artistic importance.

Reading "Comtesse Mizzi" as I did, last year, in one of the most delightful of those older German inns which it was the fashion to call The Four Seasons, namely, the one in Wiesbaden, where I was surrounded by princes and counts and their womenkind from all the corners of Europe: Russians, Bulgarians, Hungarians, Slavs, Poles and the Lord knows what else; where the "living fast and loving loose" (to quote my own version of Bierbaum) atmosphere of remote aristocracies reached, eventually, even the most anarchic nose — I realized with peculiar vividness the accuracy of Schnitzler's ironic strokes. What could be more delightful, for instance, than the visit, to *Count*

Arpad and his daughter, of that *Lolo*, the lady with whom the *Count* has had a lifelong affair, who is now about to marry a well-to-do burgher in Vienna? What could be more charming than the attitude toward *Lolo* of *Mizzi?* What more moving than the embrace the latter has for *Lolo*, in a sort of tender appreciation of what, in mere comfort and solace, the latter has been to her father? How, in face of such magic as Schnitzler's, shall one come to utter such words as " immorality " or " shattering the foundations of society "? No, no; our good physician knows his Austrian society better than we do; he is content to heal its body and dissect its soul; he knows better than to try more than that.

Yet, by his very charm Schnitzler does carry danger. His eroticism is far more insidious than the brutalities of Wedekind. His pictures of the patrician fastidiousness in amatory etiquette which characterizes peculiarly the last and staunchest stronghold of aristocracy in the modern world, Vienna, are so enchanting that they lure us toward licentiousness far more temptingly than do the ruffianism and the grimaces of the author of the " Countess Russalka." One countess against another, you have between *Countess Mizzi* and *Countess Russalka* the essential difference between Schnitzler and Wedekind. Nothing Wedekind has written is more devilishly perverting to an unrestrained imagination than that other cycle of Schnitzler dialogues, "Reigen," between which and "Anatol" his art is bounded.

No writer of the first rank in any language has surpassed the ingenuity with which in "Reigen" the suggestion of the unprintable is welded into most brilliant conversations. "Reigen" expresses the last word in Schnitzler's erotic cynicism; it contains his mocking philosophy of life, which, as aforesaid, is all the more infectious through its faultless manner. In "Reigen" are ten dialogues; and I need do no more than tell you that the cycle of what most would call illegitimate eroticism is made into a perfect circle thus: the first conversation is between a wench and a soldier; the second between the soldier and a chambermaid; the next between the chambermaid and a young gentleman; the next between the young gentleman and a young married woman; the next between the young married woman and her husband; the next between the husband and "das Süsse Mädel" (Let us leave the phrase in its Viennese form!); the next between the "Süsse Mädel" and a poet; then between the poet and an actress; then between the actress and a count; and lastly between the count and the wench of the first page in the book. A vicious circle, literally; each episode, you are to know, ends in just one and the same way; from which you may gather how clever the dialogue must be to make this book possible for circulation even in Vienna. No lesser artist could have contrived to make this book survive the hideous fleshliness under all its specious flippancy. Schnitzler was never more diabolically clever than in "Reigen," never more the mouthpiece of the utterly unmoral viveur's philosophy. Not Flaubert's *Emma Bovary* herself communicated more insidiously all the subtle poisons in human passion. Sheerly physical eroticism could hardly be more illusively cloaked in diverting words.

The people who have been wont to think German a clumsy medium for finesse should learn otherwise from Schnitzler. French has done nothing subtler than he with his Viennese temper and his quick ear for the very note of Vienna, whether of the palace or of the street. Appreciation of Schnitzler has come slowly for English peoples, chiefly, I hold, because the witty essence of his lines has evaporated, time and again, in unintelligent translation.

If Schnitzler is to-day one of the keenest analysts of the sophiscated modern soul, in man or woman, we must remember that behind his art as writer there has always been the disenchanting wisdom of the practising physician. Schnitzler was born in 1862 in Vienna. His father was a doctor; he studied medicine, and took his degree in 1885, seeing active hospital service from 1886 to 1888. Since then he has an extensive private practice in Vienna. Besides his collection of one-act plays, "Anatol," 1893, "Der Grüne Kakadu," 1899, "Lebendige Stunden," 1902, and "Marionetten," 1906, most important of his works are the drama, "The Call of Life" (Der Ruf des Lebens), 1905; the novels, "Frau Bertha Garlan" and "Der Weg ins Freie;" such short stories as "Dämmerseelen" (Twilight Souls) the (1909) one-act comedy, "Countess Mizzi," and the huge drama (its cast of parts so large as to be a mob!) "The Young Medardus," 1910. His monologue, "Lieutenant Gustl'," which most succinctly and dramatically expresses the implacable dominance of "the word of an officer and a gentleman" in Austrian affairs, has been referred to in an earlier chapter, in its relation to "Rosenmontag" and other essentially military plays.

FROM Schnitzler's vivid sketch of the Austrian officer's philosophy in "Leutnant Gustl" to another brilliant and penetrating miniaturist of the same subject, the writer calling himself Roda Roda, is a logical step. Although Roda Roda has never pretended to be anything more than a brilliant entertainer, his skill in the elaboration of the anecdotic is not below that of Hartleben's, and in his military sketches he has opened up an entirely new region. The region, namely, of those more or less Slav borders of the Austro-Hungarian empire where the German language, if existent at all, is curiously mutilated. Of the life of garrison, and campaign, and peasant, in those provinces where for centuries certain professedly uncivilized borderers have been Europe's bulwarks against Asia, Roda Roda has given us many sparkling and penetrating pages. If you would understand that curious amalgam of races and beliefs, Turks, Mussulmans, Jews, Slavs, Bulgarians, Croatians and what not, Roda Roda will at least fascinate you with the richness of its romance. In volume after volume of stories and anecdotes he has mined for us in that field.

I recall one story especially, "Der Rittmeister" (The Major), in the collection happily called "Rum, Tobacco and Accursed Love" (Der Schnaps, Der Rauchtabak, und die Verfluchte Liebe), which dissects human courage so keenly, that it should rank with what Bernard Shaw and other iconoclasts have done in that direction. There is more humor in Roda Roda than in Schnitzler, when it comes to army life and the citizen life that surrounds it; though the intentions are slighter throughout, though merely anecdote or fable often hold his little bit of comedy, as entertainer he does not fall far behind the Viennese master.

As playwright Roda Roda first came into general notice through the episode, just about a year ago, of his comedy, "Feldherrnhügel," being stopped by the Viennese censor. In this play he (in collaboration with another) put much delicious satire against that obstinate woodenheadedness in the mere externals of routine which obtains more in the Austro-Hungarian than any other army system in the world. If you would have a notion of what Feldherrnhügel means, you must understand that in the great army manœuvres — and if possible in battles themselves — the general and his staff choose some slight eminence, some rise in the ground, from which to survey and direct operations. Feldherr is the general commanding; Hügel is hillock.

Whether in his stories or plays Roda Roda is ironically sketching the Austro-Hungarian in camp, in garrison, or merely in love, he is equally arresting. Besides "Feldherrnhügel" his play, "Dana Petrowitsch," deserves mention, and from the Servian he has translated Branislaw G. Nuschitsch's one-act piece, "Knez od Sembrerije."

Roda Roda is another of those now prominent talents first fostered by *Simplicissimus* and *Jugend.* His name is, or was, Sandor F. L.

Roda, and he was born April 13, 1872, in Pussta Zdenci. He served as officer in a regiment of Croatian artillery, but left the army to devote himself to writing. Pussta Zdenci was part of a huge Slavonic estate that Roda's father managed. Before he entered the army he studied law a little in Vienna. Of late years he has lived in Berlin, and is now of Munich. His pen name of Roda Roda has been duly sanctioned by the government.

In Roda Roda we reach, in our course down the map of the German countries, the farthest Oriental borderland. He alone has opened up for our entertainment and enlightenment that curious welter of peoples, traditions and customs, part Teuton, part Slav. His pen sketches Ruthenians, Dalmatians, and Turks with equal vividness. He gives us the Austro-Hungarian aristocrat, civil or military, and he also gives us the peasants, the peddlers, and the usurers, always to be found near great camps or great estates. Of the semi-German, semi-Slav Orient in Europe, Roda Roda is the foremost portrayer. There is not a language, not a dialect of those regions that he has not mastered in order to add this province to German literature.

XV

HUGO VON HOFFMANSTHAL

What is most exquisite in the æstheticism of Vienna found its finest expression in Hugo von Hoffmansthal. In Stephan George, as we have seen, the Rhineland had given an artist whose aim was, above all, to be artistic; in Vienna a somewhat similar attitude toward nature, elevating the orchid, so to say, above the rose, had marked Felix Dörmann. These æsthetes, whom the rest of the world came to consider typical of Viennese art, were engaged in fusing wherever possible all the artifices of all the arts for the enrichment of their own medium. Artistic art was their end and aim. To experience art, rather than life, was their wish.

Sheerly as an æsthetic rhetorician Hugo von Hoffmansthal is nothing less than remarkable. He has succeeded in writing a German line as musical as one of D'Annunzio's, with whom he has inevitably to be compared. His words are full of all color, all music, all line, of all, in short, that may be merged from all the other arts. Form, outline, words; those are his all.

Neither invention nor creation are his. He chose to work in the drama, and the world has come to know him as dramatist, yet he has never been more than an artist in rhetoric who sought the form of drama.

Von Hoffmansthal was born, 1874, in Vienna, of well-to-do people. At seventeen he wrote his first dramatic poem; at nineteen he wrote his play, "Death and the Fool" (Der Tor und der Tod), which he signed "Loris." Hermann Bahr first took "Loris" to be a Frenchman using German; then, having been assured he was an Austrian, he insisted he must be some diplomat, of about fifty years of age, long resident in one of the foreign embassies. Upon which there appeared, one day, this nineteen-year-old youth, Von Hoffmansthal, proving to be "Loris." He had already absorbed most of the arts, domestic and foreign, of his period, and all those commingled in his pure and precious verse. His first work, "Gestern" (Yesterday), was published in 1891, when Germany was full of Independent Theatres, of influences from Ibsen and others. Upon all those influences, all those revivals of a new nationalism Von Hoffmansthal deliberately turned his back, searching out, for his artifices in words, the channels of ancient myth and history that had engaged the antiquarians of the futile period which followed Goethe's death. What distinguishes him from those other futilities is his extraordinary genius for making German verse beautiful. All the world by now knows his versions of " Elektra " and " Œdipus." Through the music of Richard Strauss the former went farther than most tragedies in verse, yet " Œdipus and the Sphinx " (as the full title runs), 1906, is the greater piece of workmanship.

Exquisite taste and feeling for beauty mark this writing. In his words is the intoxication of music, and of melancholy — that Viennese melancholy which is also in Schnitzler. Colors and forms move him more than does human passion. The past and its allure; strange, rare and precious, alien things; these stir him. The Venice of bygone ages; medieval Florence; the Vienna of semi-Oriental Empire days; all periods rococo and baroque rejoice his lyric moods. His words haunt you, like music; but you find, when the melody is still, that there was, after all, nothing but words, words.

Poems short and long he wrote in great numbers. Some of them he called " dramatic," but they were seldom other than exercises in rhymed virtuosity. Dominantly Von Hoffmansthal is poet and philologist. The beauty of his language sometimes threatens to intoxicate himself as well as his readers. Such patrician perfection of style has never before been reached in German as you may find in even his earliest "Yesterday," and his later "Ballade des Auesseren Lebens" (now to be had in his Collected Poems, 1909). In that ballad's title the poet expressed his entire attitude; the externals, the embroideries, of life are what have interested him. Only once, perhaps, in "Tor und Tod," did he come near to something of actual inner experience, when he told the tragedy of an æsthete's life, who "in joy of art had lost the joy of life, who did not use his art to enrich and ennoble his life, but lived in art alone."

He voiced the pathos of his own art in these lines:

> "Ich hab' mich so an Künstliches verloren,
> Dass ich die Sonne sah aus toten Augen,
> Und nicht mehr hörte, als durch tote Ohren:
> Stets schleppte ich den räthselhaften Fluch,
> Nie ganz bewusst, nie völlig unbewusst,
> Mit kleinem Leid und schaler Lust
> Mein Leben zu erleben wie ein Buch, . . ."

certain essentials of which may be given: "So was I lost in artifice, that only with dead eyes I saw the sun, and only heard with deadened ears; eternally I am accursed . . . to live my life as if it were a book. . . ."

In sheer diction, sheer lyric form, Hoffmansthal is unsurpassed. He is Goethe's *Homunculus:* the æsthete of complicated soul, precociously a genius. A virtuoso in words, but never giving you the voice of humanity. The problems of soul he chooses are age-old legendary ones; the subjects for him are the same the antique poets took, he embroiders them anew, until for the clinging beauty of the newer vine-leaves you can no longer see the ancient tragic tree. His is a triumph of Viennese verbal confectionery applied upon material as old as the centuries. His is the absolute final point to be reached in mere beauty, mere literary skill. He has added nothing to the Sophocles stories he modernized, save artifice. When he tried to be dramatic without aid of his enchanting versification, in his prose play, "Christina's Heimreise," 1910, he failed completely; that episode proved, had it been necessary, that as dramatist he has never had proper inspiration, however lovely he has been as poet. As to his newest poetic libretto, to Strauss's "Rosencavalier" it is still too soon to judge.

The loveliness of Von Hoffmansthal's German defies translation. Arthur Symons' version of "Elektra" gives us much, yet misses much. Loveliness, fastidiousness, whimsicality — these essentially Viennese qualities have been most beautifully expressed by Von Hoffmansthal. The charm of Vienna is in its outer, not its inner life. Yet it is too soon to say, though so far he has shown no advance in art, his style having been as perfect at nineteen as it is to-day, what this poet may not yet do. He is only thirty-six now. One provincial theatre in Germany has already inscribed on its proscenium arch these names: "Goethe, Schiller, Hauptmann, Von Hoffmansthal." This much at least is sure: in a medium far less filled with inevitable music, he has already equalled for sheer beauty of style and diction the Italian D'Annunzio.

XVI

BAHR AND FINIS

HERMANN BAHR was the leader, long ago, of all those forces which were gathered together as "Young Vienna" (Jung Wien); he most suffered from the "merely clever" label applied by the northerners; and it is he who has finally written the play through which Viennese drama has most completely won international recognition to-day.

One of those pioneers of Green Germany referred to in an earlier chapter ventured the prophecy that through drama the revival of art in his country would first come to general recognition. If we consider them as apart, it was Young Vienna rather than Young Germany that eventually accomplished that feat. Hermann Bahr's play, "The Concert," for humanity, for actual grip of life and character, has accomplished, in immediate popular acclaim abroad, more than anything of Sudermann's or Hauptmann's. Among other things it has brought to Vienna the curiosity and cupidity of English and American managers.

For operetta, in this century or that, Vienna has often enough been the lodestone of the world. Franz Lehar's "Lustige Witwe" had so world-wide a triumph that ever since then an army of theatrical agents has been camped in Vienna eager to buy everything lest even the most infinitesimal chance of profit escape. To the ironic observer this state of things has been full of material. Nowhere are people more imitative than in theatrical affairs. If A has written a success, then it is better to ask A to write another than to depend on one's own taste to discover B; if the town of C has produced a musical triumph then the thing to do is to lie in wait there for what it may next do, rather than to try what may have been composed under one's very nose!

In the first years in which I was annually adding to my appreciation of these masks and minstrels of New Germany, I never ceased wondering at the blindness of English and American managers in not realizing the value of this or that German or French operetta or play. In the years since Lehar wrote his "Merry Widow" my wonder has rather been as to what manner of persons those were whom our managers appointed to watch the German theatre. Their only motto seems to be: Buy everything, lest something escape! Buy, above all else, accomplished successes. To know a great play by its intrinsic merit is not the part of these gentlemen. We may expect, presently, some fearful and wonderful performances in our theatres as a result of the sleepless activity of our theatrical agents in the various continental capitals, especially Vienna. For the success of Bahr's "The Concert" (furthered in America by a fellow-countryman, equally skilful as actor and adaptor, Leo Ditrichstein) has now taught the "box-office" intelligence that not only operettas, but comedies and other specimens of "legitimate" drama are to be discovered in Vienna.

"The Concert's" story has already been adequately mentioned in the chapter on Hartleben. This play definitely gained for its author what all his rich and varied previous accomplishments had failed to bring him: the complete and serious appreciation of his own country. It broke down utterly the old sneer which he had heard all his working life, to the effect that, like all else of Vienna, he was supremely clever — and nothing more.

If I close my book with Hermann Bahr, it is also through him that we can return to the very beginnings of all this youthful ferment in Germany. Hardly any rebellion, movement or enterprise in all this period was without Bahr as one of the leaders. He has been the journalistic and artistic chameleon of his time. His have been the appreciation and encouragement that spurred most of the talent contemporary with him. That you may feel this side of him fully, let me cite this one detail, which, if you have read this book with anything like care, should impress you:

The dedication of Bierbaum's "Stilpe" (1897) runs "To Hermann Bahr — in heartiest admiration."

Bahr was born, 1863, in Linz. Versatility marked him early; at school he was beginning to write, and even thinking of the stage as a career. He went to college in Vienna, Graz and Czernowitz, finally finishing in Berlin. There he joined the naturalistic art movement of Arno Holz. Eighteen hundred and eighty-seven he returned to Austria to serve his military period; then he fared forth into the world of art, of travel, of life. Eighteen hundred and eighty-eight found him in Paris; thence he journeyed into Spain and Morocco; returning to Berlin in 1889, an accomplished citizen of the world, versatile in all the tricks of journalism and art. There was no new note, no new undercurrent of intellectual enterprise that he did not discover quickly and join. He became editor of the *Free Stage* magazine, which printed his first novel, "Die Gute Schule" (The Good School). Eighteen hundred and ninety-one he visited St. Petersburg, the next year he came to Vienna to enter upon the important business of introducing there all those young hopes and ferments of Green Germany that he had found in Berlin. He stirred up Young Vienna into enthusiasm for a really national Austrian literature; he made the Café Griensteidl, and several other coffee-houses, rallying points for his flock. Among his followers were "Loris" (Hugo von Hoffmansthal), Arthur Schnitzler, Richard Beer-Hoffmann, Felix Dörmann, and Peter Altenberg.

For years Bahr was known abroad rather as critic of the theatre and kindred arts than as creative artist. He was critic first of the *Deutsche Zeitung*, then of *Die Zeit*, then of the *Neue Wiener Tageblatt.* His appreciations and enthusiasm spurred countless young artistic energies, notably those of the Viennese actors, Mitterwurzer and Kainz (who died a few months ago), of the philosopher, E. Mach, the painter, Klimt, the decorator, Olbrich, and the poets Stifter and Stelzhamer. By visits to Paris, London and Italy he kept his comprehension wide. Always he was in the forefront of international appreciation and discovery. He always knew the books, or plays, of the hour before anyone else did.

In his own work he was a change-artist of amazing versatility. Just as he could feel everything, so could he himself express everything. Change, change! that was his constant motto. As a journalist he could prove everything, without believing anything. He was a mummer in literature; there was no part he could not play. His ego was fluid. It had many changing faces, the faces of Zola, Taine, Manet, Ibsen, Strindberg, Marx, Huysmans, Maupassant, Maeterlinck, Baudelaire, Puvis de Chavannes, Nietzsche, Raimund, la Duse, Goethe, Klimt, Sada Yacco and all her country's artists. Through all his changes, his enthusiasms for this or that artist or movement, one passion only remained constant in him — though in 1906 he renounced even that! — the passion for Austrian nationalism in art.

Always, until he wrote "The Concert," the world refused to take him seriously. They called him typical of the degenerate insincerity, the unstable emotions, of his country. He complained, once, "If they hand us a compliment, they never do it without also making an excuse for us. One wishes they would treat us more harshly, if only they would take us more seriously." That was the world's attitude toward Hermann Bahr and the Young Vienna he stood for. You could not blame the world, perhaps, for thinking Bahr an artist in everchanging attitudes, since he himself, in one of his most cynically journalistic moods, had called himself an "agent of literature." He seemed to express all the neurasthenia and feminism inherent in Viennese art. Yet none realized and warned against those very qualities more than he. He not only appreciated, but analyzed, was introspective as well as farsighted.

The critic's desk, said the others, was Bahr's place, not life itself; the sofa, and not life itself, was the place for his disciples. He typified not art, but only activity. In his fever to be ahead of the fashion, he ran after it. Through the countless changes it had to undergo, his own ego lost its own identity. His style became such fluid journalese that it became as unindividual as it was unreadable. He became resigned to the passing of what had once been upon his time and his country's art a great influence. He was burnt out, written out. . . . And so on, and so on, Bahr's detractors had been writing him down in the contemporary chronicles, until it seems somewhat malicious of him to have confounded them with "The Concert," through which the whole school of Viennese drama takes a place in international acclaim which it has not enjoyed in our time. It is not too much to say that in this success returns for the Austrian stage a reflex of the golden age of Grillparzer.

While, up to this recent triumph, Bahr's most serious creation had been considered his novel, "The Good School," he had worked frequently in drama. His plays include "Josefine," "Der Star," satire of theatrical life in Vienna, "Die Mutter," which tried to out-Wedekind Wedekind, "Der Athlet" (The Athlete), "Wienerinnen" (Viennese Women), "Der Meister" (The Master), done in America at the Irving Place Theatre in 1910, "Die Andere" (The Other Woman), and "Der Apostel" (The Apostle) produced with no little success in Petersburg. Also there was the play, "The Yellow Nightingale," in which some people found an obvious travesty of the character and methods of Max Reinhardt, the internationally famous stage director of the Deutsche Theater in Berlin. The episode of the foisting upon German audiences of the "yellow nightingale" an allegedly famous Australian artist, actually only a Hungarian; the burlesque of Berlin stage conditions; were, as always, admitted to be clever and amusing, but nothing more. People still continued, though Bahr wrote volumes of criticism, novels (his newest, 1910, being "O Mensch") and short stories, to declare that as a man of letters he had the gestures of a journalist, as journalist the gestures of a man of letters — that he was effective, in short, only in his gestures.

The chronicle of Hermann Bahr's career as it exists in most of the more solemn German documents, will now have to be revised. It will have to be admitted, as graciously as possible, that "The Concert" proved him more than merely clever or amusing, but possessed of an understanding of and sympathy for human character that lift him into the front rank among contemporary dramatists.

. . . .

IF you have come with me so far, you have seen how secessions and ferments, working up through the Überbrettl' in one place, and the Young Vienna movement in another, eventually produced an actual and valuable tale of achievement in the literature and drama of that Germany which we may still justly call Young. If personal prejudice may seem to have gone for as much in my book as careful appraisal in a scale of critical justice; if this be, in fact, only a record of individual adventures in modern German story, song and play; yet I venture to think you will, in feeling some of my own emotions, or even in taking issue with some of my opinions, gain from these pages a little enthusiasm for the subject.

That enthusiasm can be communicated, that a new interest in a new subject can be stirred, by any of the conventional literary formulas, I have never believed. Only as we ourselves have vividly felt this or that sensation in life or the arts, can we pass such sensation on. What this book has tried to convey is the personal impression of one who believes in only individual taste and appreciation. That personal impression is to be summed up once again and for the last time, thus:

German literature may in this century flower in this direction or in that, it will always be in the soil fructified by those I have here emphasized that you will find its roots.

Christmas, 1910.

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