THE LIFE AND WORKS OF FRIEDRICH SCHILLER

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To
Eleanor Allen Thomas
Herzelibe frouwe min,
Got gebe dir hiute und iemer guot!
Kunde ich bas gedenken din,
Des haete ich willeclichen muot.

PREFACE

I have wished to give a trustworthy account of Schiller and his works on a scale large enough to permit the doing of something like justice to his great name, but not so large as in itself to kill all hope and chance of readableness. By a trustworthy account I mean one that is accurate in the matters of fact and sane in the matters of judgment. That there is room for an English book thus conceived will be readily granted, I imagine, by all those who know. At any rate Schiller is one of those writers of whom a new appreciation, from time to time, will always be in order.

I have thought it important that my work, while taking due note of recent German scholarship, should rest throughout on fresh and independent study. Accordingly, among all the many books that have aided me more or less, I have had in hand most often, next to the works of Schiller, the collection of his letters, as admirably edited by Jonas. Among the German biographers I owe the most to Minor, Weltrich and Brahm, for the period covered by their several works; for the later years, to Wychgram and Harnack. Earlier biographers, notably Hoffmeister and Palleske, have also been found helpful here and there.

Of course I have not flattered myself, in writing of a man whose uneventful career has repeatedly been explored in every nook and cranny, with any hope of adding materially to the tale of mere fact. One who gleans after Minor and Weltrich and Wychgram will find little but chaff,

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and I have tried to avoid the garnering of chaff. One of my chief perplexities, accordingly, has been to decide what to omit. If there shall be those who look for what they do not find, or find what they did not expect, I can only say that the question of perspective, of the relative importance of things, has all along received my careful attention. Thoroughness is very alluring, but life is short and some things must be taken for granted or treated as negligible. Otherwise one runs a risk, as German experience proves, of beginning and never finishing.

My great concern has been with the works of Schiller–to interpret them as the expression of an interesting individuality and an interesting epoch. It is now some twenty years since I first came under the Weimarian spell, and during that time my feeling for Schiller has undergone vicissitudes not unlike those described by Brahm in a passage quoted at the very end of this volume. At no time, indeed, could I truthfully have called myself a "Schiller-hater", but there was a time, certainly, when it seemed to me that he was very much overestimated by his countrymen; when my mind was very hospitable to demonstrations of his artistic shortcoming. Time has brought a different temper, and this

book is the child of what I deem the wiser disposition.

For the poet who wins the heart of a great people and holds it for a century is right; there is nothing more to be said, so far as concerns his title to renown. The creative achievement is far more precious and important than any possible criticism of it. This does not mean that in dealing with such a poet the critic is in duty bound to abdicate his lower function and to let his scruples melt away in the warm water of a friendly partisanship; it means only that he will be best occupied, speaking generally, in a conscientious attempt to see the man as he was, to "experience the savor of him", and to understand the national temperament to which he has endeared himself.

This, I hope, defines sufficiently the spirit in which I have written. In discussing the plays I have endeavored to deal with them in a large way, laying hold of each where it is most interesting, and not caring to be either systematic or exhaustive. Questions of minute and technical scholarship, such as have their proper place in a learned monograph, or in the introduction and notes to an edition of the text, have been avoided on principle. Everywhere–even in the difficult thirteenth chapter–my aim has been to disengage and bring clearly into view the essential, distinctive character of Schiller's work; and where I have had to fear either that the professional scholar would frown at my sins of omission, or that the mere lover of literature would yawn at my sins of commission, I have boldly accepted the first-named horn of the dilemma.

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LIVE AND WORKS OF SCHILLER

CHAPTER I

Parentage and Schooling

Nur, Vater, mir Gesänge.

From the poem 'Evening', 1776.

When the Austrian War of Succession came to an end, in the year 1748, a certain young Suabian who had been campaigning in the Lowlands as army doctor was left temporarily without employment. The man's name was Johann Kaspar Schiller; he was of good plebeian stock and had lately been a barber's apprentice,–a lot that he had accepted reluctantly when the poverty of a widowed mother compelled him to shift for himself at an early age. Having served his time and learned the trade of the barber-surgeon, he had joined a Bavarian regiment of hussars. Finding himself now suddenly at leisure, after the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, he mounted his horse and rode away to the land of his birth to visit his relations. Reaching Marbach–it was now the spring of 1749–he put up at the 'Golden Lion', an inn kept by a then prosperous baker named Kodweis. Here he fell in love with his landlord's daughter Dorothea, a girl of sixteen, and in the course of the summer married her. He was at this time about twenty-six years old. He now settled down In Marbach to practice his crude art, but the practice came to little and Kodweis soon lost his property in foolish speculation. So the quondam soldier fell out of humor with Marbach, went into the army again, and when the Seven

Years' War broke out, in 1756, he took the field with a Württemberg
regiment to fight the King of Prussia. He soon reached the grade of
lieutenant, in time that of captain; fought and ran with his countrymen,
at Leuthen, floundered at peril of life in the swamps of Breslau and
otherwise got his full share of the war's rough-and-tumble. From time to
time, as the chance came to him, he visited his young wife in Marbach.
These were the parents of the poet Schiller, who was born November 10,
1759, ten years after Goethe, ten years before Napoleon. It is worth
remembering that he who was to be in his way, another great protestant
came into the world on an anniversary of the birth of Lather. He was
christened Johann Christoph Friedrich.
The childhood of little Fritz unfolded amid conditions that must have
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given to life a rather somber aspect. After the close of the war Captain
Schiller moved his little family to Lorch, a village some thirty miles
east of Stuttgart, where he was employed by the Duke of Württemberg in
recruiting soldiers for mercenary service abroad. This hateful business,
which was in due time to form a mark for one of the sharp darts of
'Cabal and Love', seems to have been managed by him with a degree of
tact and humanity; for he won the esteem of all with whom he had to do.
At home, being of a pious turn and setting great store by the formal
exercises of religion, he presided over his household in the manner of
an ancient patriarch. Between him and his son no very tender relation
ever existed, though the poet of later years always revered his father's
character. The child's affections clung rather to his mother, whom he
grew up to resemble in form and feature and in traits of character. She
was a woman of no intellectual pretensions, but worthy of honor for her
qualities of heart.[1] Of education in the modern sense she had but
little. Her few extant letters, written mostly in her later years, tell
of a simple and lovable character, tenderly devoted to husband and
children. Tradition credits her with a certain liking for feeble poets
of the Uz and Gellert strain, but this probably did not amount to much.
Her sphere of interest was the little world of family cares and
affections. Her early married life had been darkened by manifold sorrows
which she bore at first with pious resignation, becoming with the flight
of time, however, more and more a borrower of trouble.[2] At Lorch her
trials were great, for Captain Schiller received no pay and the family
felt the pinch of poverty. Here, then, was little room for that merry
comradeship, with its Lust zum Fabulieren , which existed between the
boy Goethe and his playmate mother at Frankfurt-on-the-Main.
In after-time, nevertheless, Schiller was wont to look back upon the
three years at Lorch as the happiest part of his childhood. The village
is charmingly situated in the valley of the Rems, a tributary of the
Neckar, and the region round about is historic ground. A short walk
southward brings one to the Hohenstaufen, on whose summit once stood the
ancestral seat of the famous Suabian dynasty, and close by Lorch is the
Benedictine monastery in which a number of the Hohenstaufen monarchs are
buried. Here was the romance of history right at hand, but we can hardly
suppose that it meant much to the child. The Middle Ages were not yet in
fashion even for adults, and little Fritz had other things to think of.
With his sister Christophine, two years older than himself, he was sent
to the village school, where he proved so apt a pupil that his parents
became ambitious for him and sent him to the village pastor, a man named
Moser, to be taught Latin. The child looked up to his august teacher and

resolved to become himself some day a preacher of the word. Not much is known of Moser, but to judge from his namesake in 'The Robbers', where all passions and qualities are raised to the n th power, he must have been a man for whom the reproof of sinners was not only a professional duty but a personal pleasure. The plan of making their Fritz a man of God was eagerly embraced by the pious parents and became a settled family aspiration.

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The boy himself was very susceptible at this time to religious impressions. Sister Christophine carried with her through life a vivid memory of his appearance at family worship, when the captain would solemnly intone the rimed prayers that he himself had composed for a private ritual. 'It was a touching sight', she says in her recollections[3] of this period, 'to see the reverent expression on the child's winsome face. The pious blue eyes lifted to heaven, the light yellow hair falling about his forehead, and the little hands folded in worship, suggested an angel's head in a picture.' From the same source we learn that Fritz was very fond of playing church, with himself in the role of preacher. Another reminiscence tells how he one day ran away from school and, having unexpectedly fallen under the paternal eye in his truancy, rushed home to his mother in tearful excitement, got the rod of correction and besought her to give him his punishment before his sterner parent should arrive on the scene. Still another, from a somewhat later period, relates how the mother was once walking with her children and told them a Bible story so touchingly that they all knelt down and prayed. This is about all that has come down concerning Schiller's early childhood. He may have seen the passion-play at Gm¨
und,
but this is uncertain. In any case it only added one more to the religious impressions that already dominated his life.

Toward the end of the year 1766, having exhausted his private resources at Lorch, Captain Schiller applied for relief and was transferred to duty at Ludwigsburg, where the family remained under somewhat more tolerable conditions for about nine years. At Ludwigsburg he began to interest himself in agriculture and forestry. In 1769 he published certain 'Economic Contributions', which exhibit him as a sensible, public-spirited man, eagerly bent upon improving the condition of Suabian husbandry. In 1775, having become known as an expert in arboriculture, he was placed in charge of the ducal forests and nurseries at Castle Solitude, and there he spent the remainder of his days in peaceful and congenial activity. He died in 1796.

For the impressionable Fritz one can hardly imagine a more momentous change of environment than this which took him from a quiet rural village to the garish Residenz of a licentious and extravagant prince. Karl Eugen,[4] Duke of W¨
urttemberg, whom men have often called the
curse, but the gods haply regard as the good genius, of Schiller's youth, came to power in 1744 at the age of sixteen. The three preceding years he had spent at the Prussian court, where Frederick the Second (not yet the Great) had taken a deep interest in him and tried to teach him serious views of a ruler's responsibility. But the youth had no stomach for the doctrine that he was in the world for the sake of
W¨
urttemberg. Having come to his ducal throne prematurely, through the influence of the King of Prussia, he began well, but after a few years shook off the restraints of good advice and entered upon a course of

autocratic folly that made Württemberg a far-shining example of the evils of absolutism under the Old Régime. Early in his reign he married a beautiful and high-minded princess of Bayreuth, but his profligacy

soon drove her back to the home of her parents. Then a succession of mistresses ruled his affections, while reckless adventurers in high place enjoyed his confidence and fleeced the people at pleasure. To gratify his passion for military display he began to raise unnecessary troops and to hire them out as mercenaries. In 1752 he agreed with the King of France, in consideration of a fixed annual subsidy, to supply six thousand soldiers on demand. The money thus obtained was mostly squandered upon his private vices and extravagances. On the outbreak of the Seven Years' War the French king demanded the promised troops; and so it came about that the Suabian Protestants were compelled, in defiance of public sentiment, to make war against their co-religionists of Prussia. In the inglorious campaigns which followed, the Duke of Württemberg cut a rather sorry figure, but criticism only exasperated him. He promised another large body of troops to France, and the men were raised by harsh measures of conscription. The Estates of the duchy protested against this autocratic procedure, and, as Stuttgart sided with the opposition, the duke determined to punish his unruly capital by removing his court to Ludwigsburg, where an ancestor of his, early in the century, had founded a city to match Versailles and serve the express purpose of a 'Trutz-Stuttgart'.

The removal of the court to Ludwigsburg took place in 1764, three years before the Schiller family found a home there. From the first a purely artificial creation, the little city had been going backwards, but it now leaped into short-lived glory as the residence of a prodigal prince who was bent on amusing himself magnificently. The existing ducal palace was enlarged to huge dimensions and lavishly decorated. Great parks and gardens were laid out, the market-place was surrounded with arcades, and an opera-house was built, with a stage that could be extended into the open air so as to permit the spectacular evolution of real troops. Everything about the place was new and pretentious. The roomy streets and the would-be gorgeous palaces, flaunting their fresh coats of yellow and white stucco, teemed with officers in uniform, with blazing little potentates of the court and with high-born ladies in the puffs and frills of the rococo age. Here Karl Eugen gave himself up to his dream of glory, which was to rival the splendors of Versailles. He maintained a costly opera, procuring for it the most famous singers and dancers in Europe, and squandered immense sums upon 'Venetian nights' and other gorgeous spectacles. For all this barbaric ostentation the people of Württemberg were expected to foot the bills. 'Fatherland!' said his Highness, when a protest was raised on behalf of the country, 'Bah! I am the fatherland.'

Here it was, then, that the young Friedrich Schiller got his first childish impressions of the great world; of sovereignty exercised that a few might strut in gay plumage while the many toiled to keep them in funds; of state policies determined by wretched court intrigues; of natural rights trampled upon at the caprice of a prince or a prince's favorite. There is no record that the boy was troubled by these things at the time, or looked upon them as anything else than a part of the

world’s natural order. It is a long way yet to President von Walter.
The house occupied by Captain Schiller at Ludwigsburg was situated close by the theater, to which the duke’s officers had free admission. As a reward of industry little Fritz was allowed an occasional evening in front of the ’boards that signify the world’. The performances, to be sure, were French and Italian operas, wherein the ballet-master, the machinist and the decorator vied with one another for the production of amazing spectacular effects. People went to stare and gasp–the language was of no importance. It was not exactly dramatic art, but from the boy’s point of view it was no doubt magnificent. At any rate it made him at home in the dream-world of the imagination, filled his mind with grandiose pictures and gave him his first rudimentary notions of stage effect. We are not surprised to learn, therefore, that in his home amusements playing theater now took the place of playing church. Sister Christophine was a faithful helper. A stage could be made of big books, and actors out of paper. When the puppet-show was outgrown, the young dramatist took to framing plays for living performers of his own age,–with a row of chairs for an audience, and himself as manager and protagonist.
Christophine relates that her brother’s fondness for this sort of diversion lasted until he was thirteen years old. In the mean time, however, his chosen career was kept steadily in view. He was sent to the Latin school, from which, if his marks should be good, he might hope to advance in about five years to one of the so-called convent schools of Württemberg. After this his theological education would proceed for about nine years more at the expense of the state. The Ludwigsburg school was a place in which the language of Cicero and the religion of Luther were thumped into the memory of boys by means of sticks applied to the skin; Fritz Schiller was a capable scholar, though none of his teachers ever called him, as in the case of the boy Lessing at Meissen, a horse that needed double fodder. The ordinary ration sufficed him, but he memorized his catechism and his hymns diligently, fussed faithfully over his Latin longs and shorts, and took his occasional thrashings with becoming fortitude. On one occasion we hear that he was flogged by mistake and disdained to report the incident at home. Religious instruction consisted of mechanical repetition insisted on with brutal severity,–a mode of presenting divine things that must have contrasted painfully, for the sensitive boy, with his mother’s simple religion of the heart. When it is added that he was often nagged and punished by a too exacting father, we get a not very sunny picture of our poet’s boyhood. It is told,[5] and it may well be true, that he was subject to fits of moodiness, in which he would complain of his lot and brood gloomily over his prospects. Nevertheless a schoolmate[6] has left it on record that Schiller as a lad was normally high-spirited, a leader in sports as well as in study, and very steadfast in his friendships.
While at Ludwigsburg he read from the prescribed Latin authors, making the acquaintance of Ovid, Vergil and Horace, and in time won

praise for his facility in writing Latin verses. Some of his school exercises have chanced to be preserved. The earliest, dated Jan. 1, 1769, is a Latin translation in prose of some verses which seem to have been supplied by his teacher for the purpose. The handwriting and the Latin tell of faithful juvenile toil and moderate success–nothing more. Nor can we extract much biographic interest from the later distichs and carmina which he turned out at school festivals. Such things have

flowed easily from the pen of many a bright schoolboy whom the bees of Hymettus failed to visit.
According, to Schiller's own testimony[7] his earliest attempt at German verse was made on the occasion of his confirmation, in April, 1772. On the day before the solemn ceremony he was playing about with his comrades in what seemed to his mother an all too worldly frame of mind. She rebuked him for his unseasonable levity, whereat the youngster went into himself, as the Germans say, and poured out his supposed feelings in a string of verses so tender and soulful as to draw from his amazed father the exclamation: 'Fritz, are you going crazy?'
After such a beginning we are not surprised to learn that German poetry made its first strong appeal to him through the pious muse of Klopstock. His earliest more ambitious note is heard in a 'Hymn to the Sun', written in his fourteenth year. It is the note of supernal religious pathos. In rimeless lines of unequal length he celebrates the glory of God in the firmament, soars into celestial space and winds up with a vision of the last great cataclysm. All this is sufficiently Klopstockian, as is also the boyish dream of an epic about Moses, and of a tragedy to be called 'The Christians'.
But the time came when our young psalmodist of Zion was to be pulled out of his predetermined course and made to sing another song. Were the overruling powers malign or benevolent? Who shall say, remembering the Greek proverb that a man is not educated save by flaying? Let us not pause to speculate; but proceed as quickly as may be across the interval that separates these innocent religious effusions from the opening of a great literary career with the cannon-shot of 'The Robbers'.
About the year 1770 Duke Karl began to undergo a change of heart. Wearying at last of life's vanities and frivolities, the middle-aged sinner took up virtue and philanthropy, as if to show mankind that he too could be a benevolent father to his people. The new departure was due in part to the political success of the Estates in curbing his extravagance, but rather more, no doubt, to the personal influence of his mistress, Franziska von Hohenheim. This lady, whose maiden name was Bernerdin, had been given in marriage as a girl of sixteen to a worthless Baron von Leutrum, who misused her. Escaping from him with thoughts of divorce in her mind, she went to visit friends in Ludwigsburg. Here the inflammable duke fell in love with her, and, after a not very tedious resistance, carried her away to his castle. This was in 1772. Her divorce followed soon after, and she remained at court as

the duke's favorite mistress. He presently procured for her an imperial title, that of Countess Hohenheim, and after the death of his duchess, in 1780, he married her. She was not beautiful or talented, but she possessed amiable qualities that made and kept her the ob ject of Karl's honest affection. She knew how to humor his whims without crossing his stubborn will, and she chose to exert her influence in promoting humane enterprises and leading her liege lord in the paths of virtuous frugality. On the whole, the people of Württemberg, who had suffered much from mistresses of a different ilk, had reason to bless their ruler's fondness for his amiable 'Franzele'. She was not unworthy to sit for the portrait of Lady Milford.
An educational pro ject, the founding of a school which later came to be known as the Karlschule, marks the beginning of the duke's career in his new rôle. He began very modestly in the year 1770 by gathering a

few boys, the sons of officers, at his castle called Solitude, and
undertaking to provide for their instruction in gardening and forestry.
This Castle Solitude was itself an outcome of the same lordly mood that
had led to the removal of the court to Ludwigsburg. It was situated on
a wooded height some six miles west of Stuttgart. Here, by means of
forced labor and at enormous expense,–and this was only one of many
similar building enterprises,–he had cleared a site in the forest and
erected a huge palace which, according to the inscription over the
door, was to be 'devoted to tranquillity'. But how was a prince to
enjoy tranquillity without the necessaries of life? In a short time a
score of other buildings, including an opera-house and a barracks, had
sprung up about the castle in the woods, while an immense outlying
tract had been converted into a park with exotic attractions in the
style of the time. Here, then, was need of expert forestry–whence the
opening of the school as aforesaid. Once started, it became the duke's
special pet and pride. His immense energy had found a new fad–that of
the schoolmaster. He was bent on having a model training-school for the
public service. In his own house, under his own eye, he proposed to
mould the future servants of the state like potter's clay. In this way
he would have them as he wanted them. To provide the clay for his
experiment he began to look around for promising boys, and thus his eye
fell on Friedrich Schiller. Summoning the father and making some
gracious inquiries, he offered to provide for the boy's education at
the new school. The anxious captain, knowing that divinity was not to
be on the program at Castle Solitude, sought to evade his sovereign's
kindness by pleading that Fritz had set his heart upon the service of
the church. The reply was that something else, law for example, would
no doubt do as well. Resistance to the earthly Providence was not to be
thought of by a man in Captain Schiller's position; and so the step was
taken which deprived some Suabian flock of a shepherd and gave the
world instead a great poet.
It was on the 17th of January, 1773, that schoolboy Schiller, with
disappointment in his heart, said farewell to his tearful mother and
took his cold way up the long avenue which led from Ludwigsburg to

Castle Solitude. According to the official record he arrived there with
a chillblain, an eruption of the scalp, fourteen Latin books, and
forty-three kreutzers in money. Soon afterwards his father signed a
document whereby he renounced all control of the boy and left him in the
hands of his prince.
The school at Solitude had now come to be known as the Military
Academy, and well it deserved its name. The duke himself was the
supreme authority in large matters and in small. The nominal head,
called the intendant, was a high military officer who had a sufficient
detail of majors, captains and lower officers to assist him in
maintaining discipline. Under the eye of these military potentates the
´el`eves , as they were called,–for the official language of the school
was French,–lived and moved in accordance with a rigid routine. They
rose at six and marched to the breakfast-room, where an overseer gave
them their orders to pray, to eat, to pray again, and then to march
back. Then there were lessons until one o'clock, when they prepared for
the solemn function of dinner. Dressed in the prescribed uniform,–a
blue coat with white breeches and waistcoat, a leather stock and a
three-cornered hat, with pendent queue and at each temple four little
puffs,–they marched to the dining-room and countermarched to their

places. When his Highness gave the command, Dinez, messieurs , they fell to and ate. From two to four there were lessons again, then exercise and study hours. At nine they were required to go to bed. There were no vacations and few holidays. Visits to and from parents were prohibited, and letters sent or received had to be submitted to the Intendant. Books of a stirring character were proscribed, along with tobacco and toothsome edibles, and quarters were often searched for contraband articles. Whoso transgressed received a 'billet', which he took to headquarters. Punishments were numerous, if not very severe, and were sometimes administered by his Highness in person. The duke wished his prot´eg´es to regard him as their father, but his system tended to the encouragement not so much of honest gratitude as of rank sycophancy. On occasion he could be very gracious and condescending,–would take the youngsters into his carriage, give them fatherly counsel, box their ears, suggest sub jects for essays, offer himself as opponent at their disputations, and so forth. He was very proud of showing off the school to visitors. His birthday and Franziska's were festal occasions, at which he would distribute the prizes in person and allow the winners, if of gentle birth, to kiss his hand; if commoners, to kiss the hem of his garment.

A modern reader will be very ready with his criticism of these educational arrangements. The constant and petty surveillance, the deliberate alienation of boys from all ties of home and kindred, the systematic training in duplicity and adulation, were certainly not well calculated for a school of manhood. Schiller himself, after his escape from the academy, was wont to speak very bitterly of the education that he had received there. Nevertheless the school had its good points, especially after the removal to Stuttgart, in 1775. Here it became a

combination of university (minus the theological faculty) with a school of art, a school of technology and a military academy proper. Several of the professors were inspiring teachers who made friends of their students. The fame of the institution brought together promising young men from all parts of Germany and from foreign parts; and several of them besides Schiller attained distinction in after-life.[8] There was thus intellectual comradeship of the very best kind. And there was much freedom in the choice of studies.

But the solid merits of the academy were the growth of time; in the beginning it was, for Schiller at least, mere chaos and misery. The boy grew rapidly into a lank, awkward youngster for whom the military discipline was a great hardship; he never got entirely rid of the stiff gait and ungainly bearing which resulted from these early struggles with the unattainable. Frequent illness led to a bad record on the books of the faculty. In 'conduite' he made but a poor showing, and he was several times billeted for untidiness. In Latin and religion he got along fairly well, and in Greek he actually took a prize toward the end of the year 1773. But the Greek which procured him this distinction hardly went beyond the rudiments and was mostly brought with him from Ludwigsburg. For mathematics he had but little talent. His bitterest trial, however, came with the law studies which he was obliged to take up in his second year. A dry sub ject, a dull teacher and an immature, reluctant pupil made a hopeless combination. And so he got the name of a dullard. During the whole of the year 1775 it is recorded that he was at the foot of his class.

Two bits of writing have come down to give us a glimpse of the boy's mind during these two years of helpless floundering. A detestable

practice of the school authorities required the pupils to criticise one another in moral disquisitions. On one occasion the duke gave out the theme: 'Who is the meanest among you?' Schiller did his task in Latin distichs which have been preserved. They show a healthy feeling for the odiousness of the business, but he cleverly shifts the responsibility to Dux serenissimus , who must of course know what is good for him. Then he proceeds to depict one Karl Kempff as the worst boy in school,– defraudans socios, rudis ignarusque ,–but he hopes that the wretched sinner will yet mend his ways and become worthy of his gracious prince's favor.

In a much longer prose document he portrays the characters of some two score schoolmates and finally his own. He begins modestly with a deprecatory address to his most gracious sovereign, without whose wise order he would never think of setting himself up as a judge of his fellows. The portraits are amusingly ponderous in style, but their substance is very creditable to their author's head and heart. Toward the end he burns more incense to the duke: 'This prince who has enabled my parents to do well by me; this prince through whom God will attain his ends with me; this father who wishes to make me happy, is and must be much more estimable to me than parents who depend upon his favor.' He

frankly confesses his own shortcomings: 'You will find me', he writes, 'often overhasty, often frivolous. You will hear that I am obstinate, passionate and impatient; but you will also hear of my sincerity, my fidelity and my good heart.' He owns that he has not thus far made the best use of his gifts, but he pleads illness in excuse. His gracious prince knows how eagerly he has taken up the study of the law and how happy he will be some day to enter the service of his country. But, he ventures to insinuate, he would be very much happier still if he could serve his country as a teacher of religion.

The divinity was out of the question, but relief was at hand. Toward the end of 1775, having come to terms with the Stuttgart people, Duke Karl transferred his academy to more commodious quarters in the city. A department of medicine was added and Schiller gladly availed himself of the duke's permission to enroll in the new faculty. His professional studies were now more to his taste and he applied himself to them with sufficient zeal to make henceforth a decent though never a brilliant record. His heart was already elsewhere. For some time past he had been nourishing his soul on forbidden fruit,–books that had to be smuggled in and were of course all the more seductive for that very reason. With a few intimates–Scharffenstein, the Von Hovens and Petersen–he formed a sort of literary club which read and discussed things. What they read spurred them to imitation and to mutual criticism. Presently they commenced sending their productions to the magazines. Schiller began to indulge in pleasing dreams of literary fame; and with this new-born confidence in himself there came, as his health improved, a firmer step, a more erect bearing and an increased energy of character. To be a poet by grace of God was better than the favor of princes.

For some time, however, the youth's effusions gave little evidence of a divine call. His first poem to get into print was the one entitled 'Evening', which appeared in Haug's Suabian Magazine in the autumn of 1776. In irregular rimed verses–the rimes often very Suabian–we hear of sunset glories producing in the bard a divine ecstasy that carries him away through space. Then he returns to earth and hears in the voices of evening a general symphony of praise. It is still the Klopstockian strain of magniloquent religiosity, tempered somewhat by the influence

of Haller. In 'The Conqueror', a poem published in 1777, the
Klopstockian note is still more audible. The form is a pseudo-antique
strophe such as Klopstock often used; the substance a rhetorical
denunciation of military ambition. The most awful curses are imprecated
upon the head of the ruthless 'conqueror', whose badness is portrayed in
lurid images and wild syntax that fairly rack the German language.[9] No
wonder that editor Haug cautioned the young poet against nonsense,
obscurity and exaggerated metatheses.

Nor is there much more of promise in the few occasional poems that have
come down from Schiller's salad days in the academy. One of them was
inspired by a visit of the emperor Joseph, whom our poet glorifies in
strains almost too fervid for utterance.[10] The other two are birthday

greetings to Franziska von Hohenheim–effusions of 'gratitude', as it is
called. The gratitude purports to come, in one of the poems, from the
´ecole des demoiselles , which Franziska had founded as a feminine
pendant to the academy. Schiller's verses, truth to tell, sound like
rank fustian. The duke's mistress is glorified as a paragon of virtue.
'Her sweet name flies high on the wings of glory, her very glance
promises immortality. Her life is the loveliest harmony, irradiated by a
thousand virtuous deeds.' And so on. As poetic spokesman of the girls he
pours out those 'Elysian feelings' which he supposes them to cherish
toward their kind and virtuous 'mother'.

There are two or three extant school orations which likewise exhibit
him in the rˆole of a fervid eulogist. The rhetoric of them is very
highfalutin, and the flattery would be nauseating if one did not
remember that it was largely a matter of fashion. Custom required that
a prince be addressed in the language of adulation, and nothing in that
line was too extravagant for the taste of the time. As for Schiller, he
had got the reputation of an orator and he only did what was expected
of him as the public representative of the school. Nor should we think
too harshly of the duke for encouraging the foolishness, since he too
only conformed to the custom of the Old Regime. At the same time it is
a pleasure to learn from certain well authenticated anecdotes that he
and his ´el`eves did not always live in a fool's paradise of
sycophancy. There is a story, vouched for by Weltrich, to the effect
that Schiller, who had acquired fame as a mimic, was one day asked by
the duke, with Franziska on his arm, to give an impromptu specimen of
his powers by imitating his sovereign. The youth hesitated, but after
some urging borrowed the duke's cane and proceeded to examine him. As
his Highness did not answer well, Schiller exclaimed: 'Oh, you are an
ass!' Then he took Franziska's arm and began to walk away with her.
Serenissimus looked on with mixed emotions, but only said: 'Come now,
leave Franzele to me!'

The young Schiller was nothing if not intense. When an emotion took
possession of him it set him on fire, and the expression of it was like
the eruption of a volcano. Toward the end of his course at the academy
he had a misunderstanding with his dear friend Scharffenstein, with whom
he had sworn eternal brotherhood. The result was a long letter of wild
expostulation in this vein:

What was the bond of our friendship? Was it selfishness? Was it
frivolity? Was it folly? Was it an earthly, vulgar, or a higher,
immortal, celestial bond? Speak! Speak! Oh, a friendship erected
like ours might have endured through eternity.... If you or I had
died ten times, death should not have filched from us a single hour!
What a friendship that might have been! And now! Now! What has

become of it?... Hear, Scharffenstein! God is there! God hears me
and thee, and may God judge!
And so on for six mortal pages, octavo print. The modern cynic will
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smile at this ecstatic cultus of friendship, but let him at the same
time recall the saying of Goethe that what makes the poet is a heart
completely filled with one emotion.[11]
It is now time to glance at the really important phase of Schiller's
youthful development–his reading. While his native Suabia, just then
rather backward in literary matters, was still chewing the cud of pious
conventionality, a prodigious ferment had begun in the outside world.
What is called the 'Storm and Stress' was under way. The spirit of
revolt, which in France was preparing a political upheaval, was abroad
in Germany, where it found expression in stormy or sentimental plays and
novels,–works composed on the principle that everything is permissible
except the tame and the conventional. The productions of these young
innovators differed widely from one another, but they had a common note
in their vehement would-be naturalism. There were over-wrought pictures
of daring sin and terrible punishment; novels and plays laying bare the
mis`ere of the social conflict; tragedies of insurgent passion at war
with conventional ideas; of true love crossed and done to death by the
prejudice of caste. And so forth.
How much of this literature fell into the hands of Schiller at the
academy can not be told with perfect certainty, but it would seem that
very little of it escaped him. He read and was deeply touched by
Gerstenberg's 'Ugolino', with its horrific picture of the agonies of
starvation. He read the early writings of Goethe, of Leisewitz and of
Klinger, and was touched by the woes of Miller's Siegwart. In 'Emilia
Galotti', with its drastic comment upon the infamies of princely lust,
he saw the sub ject of court life in a light very different from that in
which it habitually appeared to the carefully guarded pupils of the
Stuttgart academy. He became acquainted with Ossian, and the shadowy
forms of the Celtic bard, big with their indefinable woe, increased the
turmoil of his soul. Probably he read Rousseau more or less, though
direct evidence of the fact is lacking. At any rate the air was
surcharged with Rousseauite feeling. Certainly he read Plutarch and
Cervantes, and along with all these came Shakspere,[12] to whom he was
introduced–in the Wieland translation–by his favorite teacher, Abel.
The effect of this reading upon the mind of Schiller was prodigious. It
changed the native docility of his temper, weaned him completely from
his seraphic proclivities and carried him with a rush into the
mid-current of the literary revolution. There came a time when the young
medical student, faithfully pursuing his routine and on festal occasions
spouting fervid panegyrics of the noble Karl and the divine Franziska,
was not altogether what he seemed to be. There was another Schiller,
burning with literary ambition and privately engaged in forging a
thunderbolt.
Two dramatic attempts preceded 'The Robbers'. The first had to do with
Cosmo dei Medici; the second, called 'The Student of Nassau', was based
upon a newspaper story of suicide. Both were destroyed by their
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disgusted author, in what stage of progress we do not know. Still he was
not discouraged; the tragic drama was clearly his field and he might
succeed better the next time. But where to find a sub ject? His
perplexity became so great that, as he said later, he would have given
his last shirt for a good theme. Finally, in the year 1777, his friend

Hoven drew his attention to a story by Schubart that had lately been published in the Suabian Magazine ,–a story of a father and his two dissimilar sons, one of them frank and noble-minded but wild, the other a plausible moralist but at heart a scoundrel. Schiller took the hint and began to write, his interest being no doubt increased by the miserable fate of Schubart, who was then languishing in the Hohenasperg as the helpless victim of Karl Eugen's pusillanimous tyranny.[13]

Just how much progress was made with 'The Robbers' in the year 1777 is not known; probably not much, for Schiller soon decided to drop his literary pursuits for the present and devote himself closely to his medical studies. Perhaps he may have hoped by hard work to finish his course in four years instead of the expected five. At any rate he now bent to his toil and allowed the play to lie dormant in his mind. In 1779 he submitted a thesis on 'The Philosophy of Physiology', but it was judged unfit for print. The professors condemned it variously as tedious, florid, obscure, and, worst of all, disrespectful toward recognized authorities such as Haller. In these judgments the duke concurred. He found that El`eve Schiller had said many fine things and in particular had shown much 'fire'. But the fire was too strong; it needed to be 'subdued' by another year of study.

It has usually been assumed by Schiller's biographers that in his intense longing for liberty he was embittered by this disappointment, and that in his mood of wrath he now took up his neglected play and poured into it, hissing hot, the whole fury of his quarrel with the world. There is, however, no evidence that he really hoped to win his release from the academy in the year 1779, or that the thesis just spoken of was regarded as a graduation thesis.[14] Neither his own letters nor those of his friends indicate that he was angry at being kept in school another year. Probably the critics have made too much out of this factor of personal disgruntlement. Schiller was a poetic artist, and his first play is much more than the wild expression of a plucked student's resentment. Nevertheless it is only natural to suppose that his proud and ambitious spirit chafed more or less under the requirements of an academic routine that his manhood had outgrown. That he succeeded after all, at the end of the year 1779, in capturing a number of prizes and received them in the presence of Goethe and the Duke of Weimar, who happened just then to be visiting Stuttgart, could do but little to sweeten the bitter dose that had been prescribed for him.

He now set about the preparation of a new thesis, and in the intervals of his professional occupation he worked with feverish energy upon 'The Robbers'. To gain time for writing he would often feign illness, and

when the duke or an inspector surprised him would hide his manuscript in a big medical treatise kept at hand for the purpose. A few comrades who were in the secret eagerly watched the progress of his work and vociferously applauded the scenes which he now and then read to them. One of these comrades has left it on record that in the excitement of composition Schiller would often stamp and snort and roar.–And thus it was, in the stolen hours of the night and driven by the demon that possessed him, that he bodied forth his titanic drama of revolt. It was virtually finished during the year 1780. In after-time Schiller reasoned himself into the conviction that art must be 'cheerful',[15] but very little of cheerfulness went to the composition of 'The Robbers'. It was the disburthening of an oppressed soul that suffered horribly at times from morbid melancholy–the chicken-pox of youthful genius. A letter of

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