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and

THE ROMANTIC SCHOOL IN GERMAN LITERATURE

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The Romantic movement was not limited to German literature. We see forerunners of this movement appearing in Italy, France, England and other European countries. In Italy Alessandro Manzoni began by translating Burger's "Leonore" and "Wild Huntsman". Later he attacked the classical entrenchments. Walter Scott was the beginner of the movement in England and he, also, translated the above mentioned productions of Burger. Chateaubriand is generally regarded as the predecessor of the French movement.

A little closer look at the English and French movements is interesting. Tho the original impulse to the Romantic movement was communicated from England, the continental movement had greater momentum. It was more critical, learned and conscious of its own purposes and methods than the kindred movement in England. In Germany it was more thoroughgoing. It was not only literary but also religious, and took its stand by the side of aristocracy and privilege. In England, also, there was awakened a new interest in old English literature, and a leaning toward all that is English together with a keen opposition to foreign influence, especially French.

In France the movement was organized, concentrated in Paris, and its outbreak was sudden. Like the English, it was limited to literature and art and did not carry its principles into religion and politics. Victor Hugo says: "Romanticism, so many times poorly defined, is nothing else than liberalism in literature. Literary liberty is the child of political liberty. After so many great things which our fathers have done and which we have witnessed, here we are, issued forth from old forms of society; why should we not issue out of the old forms of poetry? A new people,

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a new art. While admiring the literature of Louis xiv, so well adapted to his monarchy, France will know how to have its own literature, peculiar, personal, and national--this actual France of the nineteenth century to which Mirabeau has given its freedom and Napoleon its power." Further: "What I have been pleading for is the liberty of art as against the despotism of systems, codes, and rules. It is my habit to follow at all hazards what I take for inspiration, and to change the mould as often as I change the composition. Dogmatism in the arts is what I avoid above all things. God forbid that I should aspire to be of the number of those, either romantics or classics, who make works according to their system; who condemn themselves never to have more than one form in mind, to always be proving something, to follow any other laws than those of their organization and of their nature. The artificial work of such men as these, whatever talents they may possess does not exist for art. It is a theory, not a poetry."

In Germany the movement took its beginning in Jena where its doctrines were first published and distributed. The founders and leaders, together with some of its later adherents, were the Schlegel brothers, Ludwig Tieck, Friedrich von Hardenberg, who wrote under the name of Novalis, Achim von Arnim, Clemens Brentano, Baron Friedrich de la Motte Fouque, Joseph von Eichendorff, Adalbert von Chamisso, Heinrich von Kleist, Franz Grillparzer, Ernst Theodore Hoffman, Zacharias Werner, Jean Paul Richter, Wilhelm Hauff, and Karl Lebrecht Immermann, together with many others whose writings were tinged to a greater or lesser extent.

Political conditions exerted a large influence upon literature. Contrasted with those of the Middle Ages with which people began to familiarize themselves, they were pitiable both in the empire as well as in the separate states. A few of the princes

were filled with the best desire to better the social and economic conditions, but they had no thought whatever of changing what was of the utmost importance, the political conditions. The princes, because of debts contracted, threatened destruction to the whole country, and they continued to assume power and to suppress the spirit of freedom handed down as a sacred heritage from generation to generation. To gain money every means was resorted to and every resource exhausted. Men had been sold outright to engage in the American Revolution. The people were, however, not entirely subdued and a reflection of the French Revolution appeared and grew for a time. But its leaders hesitated, the outcry of the people remained unanswered, and thumb screws were again applied. Thus at the end of the eighteenth and at the beginning of the nineteenth century, conditions became more and more deplorable and in all Germany there was hardly any state in which the governing body was concerned about the happiness of its people. The educated class spent all its energy in tearing down old and building up new philosophical systems. Their example led many others to the same condition of inactivity, and the spirit of freedom and national pride was undermined and annihilated.

The united armies of Prussia and Austria in 1791 entered France. The result was disastrous, for Prussia entered into a separate treaty of peace, giving up all its possessions beyond the Rhine and recompensing itself by taking as much from the smaller states. By the treaty of 1801 the entire left bank of the Rhine became French territory. In 1805 Austria united with Russia to stop the progress of Napoleon. Another humiliating treaty followed. Then in 1806 Prussia tried to throw off the yoke. The reward she reaped was the loss of half of her possessions. Germany had now reached its lowest ebb of degradation and any change could not but

be an improvement. This point marks the beginning of the efforts for freedom. The success of this reaction culminated in the war of Liberation.

The conviction that Germany had reached its highest point of development in political life, in literature and art during the undivided sway of Catholicism, caused the Romanticists to regard this as the nearest and necessary cause of such prosperous conditions. They firmly believed that by restoring Catholicism, the fatherland would again achieve a similar greatness. Their vision was not true, however, for they lost sight of the evils of Catholicism which caused the Reformation. It was, however, characteristic of the Romanticists, this optimistic view which saw only the good things and overlooked the bad. The philosophic and poetic views of the Romanticists resulted in the deepest mysticism, and since they regarded every phenomenon of nature as a revelation of God, they drew the conclusion, by no means logical, that God reveals himself only in a symbolic manner, and that religion must be nearest God, lead most directly to Him, which is richest in symbolical representations. This view which must necessarily lead to Catholicism, found in Frederick Schlegel its real champion.

Literary taste had degenerated. Goethe's mind worked in a sphere above the people. Schiller was occupied with work to which the public had no access. They were therefore left to the entertainment of men who were indifferent to fatherland, freedom, and honor. In their writings, the masses sought to forget the hardships of the present. This literary taste caused the Romanticists to turn for relief to the Middle Ages. Toward the end of the century Goethe and Schiller also had tried to combat the degeneration of the literature and literary taste. This they did with so much bitterness and at times also injustice, insulting men of high respect,

that they did not succeed in guiding the trend of literature. The Romanticists are deserving of great appreciation for combating this degenerate literary tendency. It is true that their efforts were not able to counteract it entirely, but their influence was evident among the youth who were particularly inclined to mysticism.

Still more beneficial was their activity in awakening the people from their political indifference. By constantly pointing to the Middle Ages and its glory, they kindled in the youth a living longing for a spiritual and political regeneration of the fatherland. It must be admitted that the later uprising of the German youth against the French was in the main^{ly} due to the inspiring influence of the Romanticists. They also stimulated the study of German history, language, and literature of the Middle Ages which later exerted such a powerful influence upon all development and education.

Two of the founders of Romanticism, the Schlegel brothers, acquired their aesthetic views from their study of the Greeks, and they also built upon the teachings of Goethe and the artistic philosophical researches of Schiller. They separated from the latter because he tried to reconcile the ideal with reality, and they even went so far as to deny his poetic talent. Further, they demanded unbridled freedom for the poet. Schiller maintained that only thru art is freedom attained. He understood by freedom the voluntary and conscious submission to the everlasting laws of nature and morality. Those² regarded freedom as being absolute noninterference from every law, so that one's every action as poet is good and his highest law. Thus Schiller taught the most beautiful propriety, while Friederich Schlegel in his "Lucinde" announced the religion of passion. So they also freed themselves from any definite artistic form.

The patriotic side of German Romanticism developed chiefly after the battle of Jena, which resulted in the complete subjugation of Germany. It looked backwards with a longing for past glory. This longing produced Arnim and Brentano's collection of folksongs. Songs of prophetic character followed and urged on to action until they became songs of war and victory. Then, to be sure, they lost their Romantic character thru their realistic qualities. Such writers were Körner and Arndt. The mystic side was developed all the more by this backward gaze.

The people had been working for internal as well as national freedom. After the War of Liberation they were disappointed in their hopes, for promises were violated or only partly fulfilled. In other lands at this time, right and freedom seemed to have been gained. Therefore their disappointment was all the greater. The rulers were the friends of the Romanticists because they championed Catholicism, the spirit of which enabled them to disregard the demands of the people. The Romanticists were openly on the side of the rulers, and this aroused the ill will of the German people, particularly that of the younger element. While they gained some favor among the rulers, they assumed such a hostile attitude toward the people and their needs and wishes that they daily lost influence and finally separated themselves almost entirely from them.

Ludwig Uhland and Heinrich Heine were very influential in combating the Romantic school. Uhland sought to reconcile the school with the present by turning their gaze forwards instead of backwards. He heralded the Schwabian School. Heine's poetry was characterized by simplicity, and yet he gained the highest poetic effect. Thus his poetry reacted upon the tangled web the Romanticists wove.

Dreamy, unintelligible poetry was characteristic of the Romantic School. They substituted individual caprice for moral

lwa; they glorified the flesh and were openly hostile to progress; they sought the land of the supernatural and the miraculous.

Dreams, somnambulism, mystery, adventure, enchantment, subjectivity, the horrible, individualism, Catholicism and idealization of the Middle Ages, these qualities were woven into their productions.

An epic poem is a narration of events outside of the poet. Its view is retrospective. It is the view of an age. That epic is best which exhibits the primary and universal virtues of human character--bravery, truth, and affection.

In a lyric poem the emotional purpose is at its height. In pure lyric, narration and reflection are lost in personal feeling. It also has a more musical form than any other poetry because of its high emotional value. In lyric poetry we also find displayed many unusual turns of the metrical art. As a means of expressing emotions of the individual, it voices feelings as manifold as the infinite possibilities of personality. It voices all emotions--love, fear, joy, doubt, pity, anger, hope, devotion. The great poets of every age have almost always felt some impulse to express individual feeling and have given vent to their feelings in lyric poetry, even tho they may have shown greater talent in other forms of literature.

The drama combines what is highest and most characteristic of epic and lyric poetry. Like the epic, it must tell a story. Unity of effect, fine judgment as to determining points of narration, is as imperative in drama as in epic. The story goes on in the words of the actors themselves. In their moments of impassioned action, there is abundant opportunity for that direct expression of personal feeling characteristic of lyric poetry. But if the writer intrudes his own personality, he gives his work a too lyrical and subjective character which is inconsistent with the highest dramatic quality. Drama must develop independent characters. Their

motives must be reasonable. The hero must accomplish something.

In drama it is an unpardonable sin to make us pity when the characters are vile, love when they are noxious. The drama should be moral, sweet, healthful, inspiring, should help the public by setting before it images of faith, hope, and love rather than doubt, despair and infidelity. It is nobler to tell us that life is better than it really is, than to tell us it is worse; to remind us of the joy of living is better than to tell us of its weariness.

The theme, also, is important. The stage should reflect life not as it is but as it ought to be. The theme must be satisfactorily developed. The march of the soul in its struggles with fate is always a powerful theme. The motive must be clear and convincing. The motive and purpose should not be delayed. Every line, scene, act, and character ought to lead up to the final outcome.

It naturally follows that the Romanticists were more successful in lyric poetry than in the other forms. Their intense subjectivity at once eliminates the possibility of making a success in the writing of epic poetry. Some of the Romanticists succeeded to some extent in drama. Grillparzer and K aeist are the only ones really worthy of mention. The character of Romantic poetry was anything but conducive to good drama, while the very nature of lyric poetry made its form suited to the outbursts of this School.

The chief service of the Romantic School rests not upon the value of their productions, but upon their influence upon intellectual life. To them we trace the sciences of archeology, mythology and philology, the new impulse in the science of history, new life in German painting and music. Another great service is the opening up of the poetry of all nations to the world. They translated from Dante, Tasso, Calderon and Shakespeare, together with

many others of lesser note. They delved into the learning of Greece, India, and Persia. We further owe to them the impulse to the study of early German life and literature. Their influence upon the political life of the time has been mentioned already.

In drama the Romanticists sought to represent inner life, not thru action and deeds, but they rather represented it in its fullest dependence. This tended to destroy the character of drama. They seemed unable to rise above the idea that mysterious powers rule the world and lives of men, and since they thot to recognize in the all powerful fate of the Greeks just such a mysterious power, they made this power the motive in all their dramas, whose characters appear utterly lacking in willpower. Thus developed the fate--tragedy in which man is pitted, not against man, but man against a higher power, fate. The actions of the characters are represented not as the result of good or bad impulses, but as the unavoidable effects of material causes. They sought to conceal the lack of ideas and clearness and depth of thot in flowery language. Unnatural figures of speech often wraps up the simplest thots in an almost impenetrable obscurity.

August Schlegel was not very talented nor very rich in original ideas. He lacked poetic and critical productivity, but his reproductive power was excellent and unusual. This extended not only to the contents but also to the form, yet he did not lose sight of the needs and demands of his own language. His translations of Dante, Caldron and Shakespere are considered excellent. He enriched his native poetry with a number of new metrical forms, and also succeeded in reproducing the peculiarities which characterize the southern languages, the easy movement, the wealth of rhyme, the charming verse form and its euphony. In form his own efforts are finished masterpieces, rich in musical effect, and of a charming

style of language and versification.

August Schlegel rendered no mean service by his study of oriental languages. He deserves the credit for first having recognized the "Nibelungenlied" as the work of a whole age. He first revealed its gigantic proportions.

Freedom even from moral law, a justification of free love, finds its champion in Friedrich Schlegel's "Lucinde". This is a novel in form, but it lacks both plot and character development. Activity is here pictured as the source of all suffering. Idleness, on the other^{hand}, is the existence to seek. Here he says: "The more divine man is, the more fully does he resemble the plant. The plant of all forms of nature is the most moral and the most beautiful, and the highest and most perfect life is reached by simply vegetating." Frederick Schlegel is fond of concealing apparent depth of thought in hollow phrases, euphonious words, and neat rhyme. He championed Catholicism. He inclined toward mysticism, and lyric poetry lay nearest to his great poetic talent with its depth of feeling and wealth of thought. His poetry is dreamy and unintelligible. He is one of the best, if not the best type of the Romantic School.

Ludwig Tieck, when we except Novalis, was considered the most talented member of the School. His musical and euphonious verse fitted him particularly for a lyric poet. Some of his best lyrics are "Herbstlied", "Der Mensch Frühling", and "Kunst und Liebe". The early period of his activity as a poet and the last years are far from being as thoroughly Romantic as the period intervening. With Frederick Schlegel he cooperated in the translation of Shakespeare. He called attention to the literature of the South; he made a study of the life and literature of the Middle Ages and of the older German drama; he revived the old and almost forgotten

"Volksbücher".

Tieck's relation to nature was not that of one trying to disclose the everlasting and unchangeable relation between man and nature, but that of one trying to discover new and wonderful relations. His poetry is often full of presentiments and mystic dreams. He regarded our interest in nature due to the fact that every flower and every tree seems to be a friendly being. Many an idea occurs to a person at the sight of the sea or of a plant which is not actually a part of the thing seen, but exists only in the soul of the onlooker.

Tieck's inclination toward the supernatural and the miraculous is clearly shown by his novel, "Heinrich von Ofterdingen". In this novel there is not a single act of free moral endeavor, not a single character appears whose will power would be equal to any decisive test.

Conscious activity was obnoxious to Novalis. To him a dreamy existence was the only reality. Therefore he discarded the belief in the all-embracing and all-prevailing moral law, and replaced it with a superstitious belief in the divineness of individual caprice and fancy. Therefore, he founded the true object of poetry in the representation of the miraculous and the irrational; therefore, he reviled the Reformation and glorified the Jesuits. He fled from the infidelity and frivolity, as he called it, of modern times to the fairyland of fantastic Mediaevalism. He is really the best lyric of the older Romantic School. "Hymns to Night" attest his genius.

We pass by the rest of the Romanticists without a closer view of their work and turn our attention to Heinrich von Kleist.

He was born of an noble but poor Prussian family in 1777. All the inconveniences of rank were his, and the only career

open to him was that of the army. He was orphaned at eleven, and educated by a young clergyman in Berlin. It was at sixteen that he entered the army. He was influenced by the modern thought of Kant and Rousseau, and his inclinations to study made him a stranger to his associates. As his ideals he saw the knowing of truth and the acquisition of wisdom. In the first he sought to perceive the purpose of man in this life and the life hereafter. To him wisdom was the process of training, enableing man to work intelligently for the furtherance of this purpose. Conscious dimly of his own potentiality, he resigned from the army after having served as ensign in one campaign. He wanted to study. This step was a daring one, for it was contrary to established custom to abandon a career once chosen, and Kleist bade fair to make a success as an officer.

Kleist matriculated at the University of Frankfurt-on-the-Oder, devoting his time to philosophy, mathematics and the classics. He lived a very sober life, entirely occupied with his own ardent, introspective thoughts. In an awkward, pedantic way he attempted to educate his sister and to cultivate the mind of his fiancée so that she might really understand him. Wilbrandt has characterized him as a man of gloomy dissatisfaction and cynical reserve, of vivid imagination, inclined to brooding and dwelling upon everything painful, and to overpowering outbursts of emotion. We have said that he was poor. This led him to secure ^{an} unimportant position in the civil service which he lost after the battle of Jena. It was at this time that his genius was developed. He studied Kant, and in his own words we see what he derived: "If all men had green glasses for eyes, they would be compelled to think that all objects were green, and they would never be able to decide whether the eye showed them things as they are, or whether it did not add something which does not belong to the things but to the eye. Thus it is

with the intellect. We cannot decide whether that which we call truth is really truth, or whether it only seems so to us. Ever since this conviction has taken hold of my mind, I have not touched a book. I have walked up and down in my room; I have sat by the open window; I have run out into the open air; I have been driven by an inner restlessness into taverns and coffeehouses; I have, to distract myself, visited theaters and concerts; I have even, to dull my feelings, committed some folly; and yet the only thought which, in all this outer turmoil, rose up before my feverish soul was this: 'Thy only, thy highest ideal is gone.' Hoping to find a new purpose in life he began to travel. He recognized the shallowness of life around him, longed for a better day, and sought to find some way to hasten its coming. Since he recognized that it is impossible to know the purpose of life, how could he labor for mankind? The good being unknowable, his efforts might be for the worse and not for the better. This struggle helped to make him a poet. But he was hampered by the overmastering genius of Goethe and Schiller, embittered by the neglect of his contemporaries, and crushed by the ignominy of national disgrace.

He consumed the energy of his younger years in an endeavor to obtain a clear intellectual vision. His gaze was directed, not toward society, state, or fatherland, but inwards to his own feelings and thoughts. But when at last he had almost worked out his spiritual problem and had discovered the true source of his strength, his country was plunged into the disaster of Jena. After it came dishonor, and an ignominious peace destroyed all his hopes for Germany. Altho signs were already appearing of the coming uprising against the foreign yoke, Kleist was destined never to see the glorious outcome of that struggle. Hopeless, but resigned, he fell by his own hand before the national uprising had taken place. Less

than two years after his death the ultimate triumph of Germany had become assured by the victory at Leipsic.

But it was not unhappy love, not hopeless pain because of the disgrace of his native country, but the misjudgment of his merits, the distress and helplessness to which he must submit since there was no hope of aid from the government that caused his suicide. He saw the way to freedom and embodied his ideas in "The Battle of Hernen" and in "The Prince of Hamburg". "More deeply than most of his contemporaries did Kleist feel the agony of an age which saw the creation of centuries sink into the dust; more intensely than most did he suffer the pangs of a search for a new heaven and a new earth; more hopelessly than most did he lose himself in the labyrinthine maze of Romantic speculation and self-reflection; and more clearly than most did he see the way leading out of it." But he found no way of bringing his ideas before the people, and was therefore left impotent to bear his part, in the only way he could, in aiding his country in its distress. This was his despair. We can expect no finished work from him when we consider all that hindered him. And yet he has left some monuments which arouse our admiration, and had he not destroyed all his manuscripts before his death, we should no doubt have had something still better.

Kleist's impulse to become a poet seems to have matured in Switzerland. There he wrote "Family Sch²öffenstein". His chief concern was, at this time, the problem of human life. Into this work he has put his personal observations of German life. Two branches of the family bear the dramatic action. In accordance with an ancient compact, the property of the branch first becoming extinct is to revert to the other. This only leads to misunderstanding and open hostility. Their reason and imagination are so controlled by prejudice that they are unable to see any event in

its true light. They are doomed to extinction. The only one who is unprejudiced is Hohn, and he, the illegitimate, suffers most keenly from the feud. Because of his imaginative, sensitive, morbid and unhappy mood the limitations of his surroundings repulse him, and the sense of his loneliness overwhelms him. In this drama Kleist voiced a protest against the supremacy of the family ideal. This outburst relieved his own morbid feelings, and his next production, "The Broken Pitcher", strikes a happier note. It is one of the truest and most artistic comedies in German literature.

Altho Kleist grew up amid the extravagances of the Romantic School, he was in many ways a realist. He did seek in the realms of fancy relief from the oppressive reality which surrounded him. So upon his most realistic pictures there fall fantastic characteristics. But in all great works of art realistic treatment is combined with idealistic thots. So also with Kleist. Each figure, each event embodied itself before him in its actual form, and what he saw he was able to draw with a firm, sure hand. The characters move with a firm tread; they are robust, living creatures.

"The Broken Pitcher" was inspired by a picture which hung in a room where Kleist used to meet with his friends. This work represents village life with all its limitations. Kleist here shows up the pettiness of human life surrounded by the selfish aims of a humdrum existence. Here a village justice sits in judgment upon a crime which he has himself committed. This drama does not represent action which develops before our eyes, but Kleist takes this as already completed and then gradually unfolds it, while he wraps the whole up in a trial in court. The justice is disturbed during an evenings visit with a farmer's daughter whom he seeks to win by threats. He has to leap out thru the window, and in so doing, breaks a pitcher, loses his wig, and is severely injured. Eye is

unwilling to confess to her mother the identity of the culprit and allows her to think that it was her lover Ruprecht. When he pleads not guilty the mother swears out a complaint against him before the justice with whom Judge Wilhelm is just then holding inspection. The justice, who is in reality the accused, in trying to place the blame on another, throws more light on the tangled circumstance, until his own guilt is proved without a doubt.

The characters are here drawn very clearly and true to life; every description and event is made most probable, and altho the action does not progress since almost the whole is a trial, yet it all has the appearance of action. The language is beautiful and the dialogue is lively and proceeds naturally. Franke says of the realism of this drama: "It entirely lacks restfulness and serenity, there is something fierce and breathless in it, there is burning under its surface a violent hatred of sham and deceit, a grim desire to unmask the illusions of life."

Kleist had become convinced of his powers as a poet. He expected to produce a masterpiece at once. This tragedy was to reveal the whole grandeur of man's battle with fate. The vain efforts to satisfy his lofty ambition of doing some good deed for mankind is the theme. He read to Wieland a few scenes from his "Robert Guiscard" and the old poet's admiration knew no bounds. Kleist was highly elated, for he hoped to surpass even Goethe. But he soon became disgusted. He was disturbed again and despaired of his powers. Thus he exclaims: "Hell gave me my half talents, heaven bestows a whole talent or none." He burned Guiscard and all his papers. Only a fragment remains. The years following the disaster of Jena were the most productive.

Fate was a dominant note in Kleist's philosophy. By no effort of his will could he break away from it. In all his works this inner succession of events appear. It is not fate as a force from without, but as a power from within, placed there at birth, relentless, from which there is no escape; even the struggle against it is only a part of the predestined plan foredoomed to defeat. So Kleist struggled, so his characters struggle. There is, however, this difference: They win a spiritual triumph, none ends as he ended. The men could not follow the path the poet pointed out. The characters of his dramas are involved, by no fault of their own, in tragic situations. In "Katchen von Heilbronn" it is love represented as an irresistible possession of the soul that takes the form of fate. "No cruelty nor insult can shake Katchen in her childlike devotion. So in the underlying motive of "Penthesilea", in which the whole genius of Kleist is revealed, the heroine is relentlessly impelled to kill the man she loves. In the "Prince of Hamburg" fate takes the form of discipline and obedience. The prince secures his spiritual triumph by recognizing at last the justice of the death sentence and by urging its execution. In "The Battle of Hermann" fate is embodied in the exuberant joy that now all other considerations may be laid aside, and that pitiless vengeance may be exacted. Kleist firmly believed in the ultimate overthrow of French domination.

Penthesilea symbolized Kleist's idealism. As queen of the Amazons she wages war on both Greeks and Trojans. The holy ordinance of the Amazons decreed that each must conquer in battle the man that was to be her husband. As love is represented as a mania which has taken hold of Katchen in "Katchen von Heilbronn", so also here, the character of the love which Penthesilea feels for Achilles is such a passion, but here it takes the form of cruelty. Where other

women have said they love so violently that they could eat the object of their love, Penthesilea actually does so. She has fallen into the hands of Achilles, but she grieves and despairs altho he makes her believe that she has won. She learns the truth, however, Then Achilles, with intent to allow himself to be defeated, challenges her to single combat. Almost unarmed he goes forth to meet her. She wounds him with her arrow, urges her hounds on him to tear him to pieces, and together with them she tears him with her tooth and nail. Brought to her senses and realizing what she has done she sinks into his arms in death.

Kleist has put into the mouth of Penthesilea his own despair at not being able to complete his Guiscard and thus reach the highest pinnacle of fame. He recognized and had the strength to admit that human life and eternity had baffled his philosophy and poetry. He openly confesses his failure and in "Penthesilea" he took leave of his great dramatic ideal: "I have done the utmost that human strength could do; I have attempted the impossible; I have staked all on a single throw; the die which decides is cast. I have to confess that I have lost." The defeat at Jena served to arouse Kleist's patriotic feelings to the utmost, but first he closed his account with the past with the three works "Michael Kohlhaas", "Amphitryon" and "Penthesilea". The first marks the end of his humanitarian day dreams, the second the end of his metaphysical problems, the third the end of his aesthetic theories.

Amphitryon is modeled after Moliere's drama of the same name, but it is far from its equal. This is the story. During Amphitryon's absence, Jupiter assumes his form and visits the former's wife Alcmena who believes the God to be her husband. Amphitryon returns. He is confused with Jupiter, and Soias with Mercury. This naturally leads to many comical scenes. When the true state of

affairs is finally disclosed, Amphitryon has to console himself that there is nothing dishonorable in such a relation to Jupiter.

In "Michael Kolhaas" Kleist shows us what a master he is in prose narration. This is a tale of popular rebellion of the sixteenth century, a plea for larger human liberties, for enfranchisement of the instincts from the code of conventions and the formalities of law, a tragic tale of straightforwardness warped by injustice. It moves before the reader with the stern voidness of an actual event. Kolhaas' keen sense of justice, at first a virtue and a guaranty of good citizenship, makes him at last a rebel and a scourge. It is a very realistic story, but this ordinary horse-dealer is at heart an idealist carrying with him a picture of an impossible world in which absolute justice prevails. His acts are the inevitable outgrowth of this ideal. It is a strong objective story told with great simplicity. The characters triumph by their own force. Without the slightest provocation some of Kolhaas' horses are detained by the Baron von Trouka. After establishing the groundlessness of the detention Kolhaas reclaims the horses only to find that thru overwork, starvation, and ill treatment they have been almost ruined, while the protesting groom has been beaten nearly to death. After carefully convincing himself that there is no other means of redress he invokes the law in his own behalf. But the law sides with the criminal and the highest courts of the land spurn his complaints. His wife dies from injuries received while trying to redress the wrongs of her husband. Then he settles all his affairs, makes his will, and disposes of his children. Now he is ready for revenge. After years of murder and destruction equaling the terrors of a civil war, his horses are restored in good condition, the baron is sentenced to prison. Kolhaas willingly suffers the fate of a rebel

and as he lays his head on the block, he is joyfully conscious that justice has been done.

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"Kätchen von Heilbronn" fails to attain poetic perfection because Kleist takes life and art too personally. He has a deep interest in everything problematic vitally affecting himself. So also here he continues to assert the personal factor. This is the most subjective of his last dramas. The heroine is evolved from Kleist's subjective need, i.e., from his desire for the love of a woman so completely forgetful of self as to sink her entire personality in the object of her love. The subjective source of Kätchen's character and her relation to her lover are responsible for serious defects in this drama. An obvious defect is the solution of the plot: The discovery that Kätchen is the illegitimate daughter of the Emperor. Kleist makes labored efforts at making the revelation of this imperial descent of his heroine acceptable and plausible. Kätchen, the grand-daughter of Theobald, the armorer, who has brought her up as his own daughter, is the daughter of the Emperor, who seduced her mother without revealing his identity. When Kätchen had become a young lady, she was seized with a wonderful love for Count von Strahl; she follows him everywhere, although he mistreats her almost inhumanly in order to keep her out of his way, for he is on the point of marrying Kunigunde of Thurneck. She, too, pursues Kätchen cruelly who [?]unconsciously escapes the traps set for her, and when the Emperor finally recognizes Kätchen of whose existence he had not known till then, the Count marries her.

On the whole the drama is successful, but the connection of the different parts is not close. The treatment is not uniform, for the scenes in which Kätchen appears are favored with the author's

most loving touches. Love is represented as a mania. "When Kätchen of Heilbronn sees Count Walter von Strahl for the first time, she drops everything she is carrying, food, wine, and glasses, and, pale as death, with faded hands, falls at his feet as if she had been struck by lightning. The Count speaks a friendly word to her. Presently, from a window, she sees him mounting his horse to ride away. In haste to follow him, she jumps from the window, thirty feet high, onto the street, and breaks both her legs. Barely recovered from six weeks fever, she rises from her bed, collects a small bundle of belongings, and deserts her home to seek the Count and follow him in blind devotion from place to place, led by the rays which shine from his face and twine themselves round her heart like a five-stranded cord. She wanders after him, her bare feet bleeding on the stony roads, her scanty skirt fluttering in the wind, a straw hat her only protection against the heat of the sun and the pelting of the rain. Thru mountain mists, across desert tracts scorched by the sun, thru the darkness of the thick forest, she follows, like a dog on its master's track; and she who was accustomed to lay her head on soft pillows, disturbed by each little knot spun inadvertently by herself into the thread of the sheets, now, when night comes, sleeps in the Count's stables like the meanest servant, sinking exhausted upon the straw spread for his horses."

To all intents and purposes, the constituent parts of the old empire had become French dependencies. Political intrigues and selfish ambitions of German rulers made concerted action impossible and no true sense of patriotism was awake and active in the nation at large. Political bondage was the inevitable result. But this condition did not embitter Kleist toward the people. He searched their hearts and there awoke in him a fellowfeeling for his oppressed

countrymen such as he had never experienced before. In them he saw the salvation of Germany.

At the time of Napoleon's invasion of Austria, Kleist had desired that an example of patriotism would be set by the King of Prussia which would result in the awakening of the national spirit both in the common people and in the princes of Germany. In his new drama he tried to show that what Germany needed was such an unselfish prince, a leader like Herman, the Cheruskan prince, the liberator of ancient Germany from the yoke of Rome. With almost historical exactness Kleist transferred the political jealousies of his own time into the period of his dramatic story. The energetic, self-facing patriotism of Herman^m joins issue with these forces and wins the victory. Kleist's prophecy was fulfilled. Six years later in the Wars of Liberation, the issue, stated dramatically by Kleist, was met by the Germans. When the whole country is at stake personal ambitions count for nothing in the eyes of Herman. Unity among the princes of the realm requires the suspension of all intrigues looking toward the political power of one. And Herman himself sets the example by frankly avowing the necessity of making Marked head and leader of the union. Through his voluntary guarantees of faith, he wins over a jealous political adversary to the national cause.

Kleist here pays tribute to the importance of the people. He says: "Unless, before departing, I can enflame the hearts of the Cheruskans with a hatred for the Romans so fierce that it shall throb thro'out all Germany, my project fails." The center of interest is a national, not an individual will realizing itself.

Kleist recognized and embodied in his drama, "Prince of Homburg", the ideal of national life, that coordination of individual effort makes for the greatest good to the state. Further,

he believed that true loyalty consisted in honoring and manfully supporting the ideal of state represented in the person of the ruler. Not servile submission to his judgment, nor adoration because of his high station. Thus we see a storm of conflict raised when the elector obstinately adheres to his decision that the Prince must die, but as soon as they recognize that his action is wholly governed by considerations of state, they submit to his will.

The dramatic action is based on somnambulism. The young cavalry leader commits an unpardonable breach of discipline; at the height of battle he advances his forces contrary to orders and gains the victory. The Elector sentences him to death. At first the hero imagines that this is only a matter of form, but, when he recognizes that it is dead earnest, the fear of death grips him and he loses all self-respect and self-control. He is willing to renounce everything to save his life. Then the Elector calls upon the Prince to judge his own transgression. If he himself considers the verdict to be unjust, he is to be free. This is the means whereby the Prince recovers his senses and admits the justice of the penalty. He submits and asks for death. His willingness to make his own desires subservient to the good of the state is his salvation, and he is pardoned.

This drama was not destined to be placed before the people at that time. During the lifetime of the poet his last two dramas were neither staged or published. The failure to gain a hearing finally caused his despair. The last tie that bound him to life and its activities snapped asunder when his last drama was rejected by the court theater. To be excluded from participating, in the only way he felt himself competent, in the course of events, to have the impossibility of speaking to his people in the hour of their need brought home to him like irrevocable fate, this was more

than his sensitive nature could stand.

His final struggle in Berlin against the disfavor of the king, against the chicaneries of censorship, the breaking up of his circle of friends, hastened the rash step which ended his life. In "The Last Song" he gives vent to his heartache:

"Along the horizon's craggy heights,
Lie piled the thunderladen clouds of war.
The lightnings flash their vague uncertain glare,
Wayfarers seek the sheltering roof of leaves,
And like a stream, to howling torrent swelled,
Bursts over its banks with wild tumultuous roar.
Destruction's flood, unloosed and unrestrained,
Comes surging down on everything that is.

With fiercer hand the bard sweeps o'er the chords,
Lures forth the mighty swell of melody.
The battle-cry of patriots he sings,
But not an ear to listen to his song.
And as he sees the banner of the times
Come marching on unfurled from gate to gate,
He ends his song and fain with it would end.
With streaming eyes he lays his lyre down."

A few months later the restless heart was stilled forever.