THE PROSE WORKS
OF
CONRAD FERDINAND MEYER

BY
ELIZABETH WEIR

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Conrad Ferdinand Meyer is perhaps the greatest known master in that limited field of literature known as the historical "Novelle". It is interesting, in studying different biographies of his life, to see how the great crises in his life history are intimately related with the great crises of German political history, for though a Swiss, and born on Swiss soil, it is as a German author that he won his fame. For many years of his life he was a typical neurasthenic, suffering acutely from that we moderns call 'an inferiority complex'.

His biography is interesting to pathologists and neurologists generally, as well as to lovers of literature, for he is a striking example of late development, and it was only in 1870, when he was forty-five years old, that it suddenly dawned on his sceptical fellowtownsmen that 'der verrückte Konrädli', as they called him, was a famous author.

He was born in Zürich, the capital of German Switzerland, on the 11th of October, 1825. The ancestors of both his father and mother had lived in Zürich for generations, and through them he inherited an aristocratic tradition which, for better or for worse, clung to him all his life, and which, imposed upon a nature already too sensitive and retiring, kept him from mingling with the common people, and from sharing in their joys and sorrows, as did his great countryman, Gottfried Keller.
These experiences no great author can afford to miss, and this probably accounts for the fact that Meyer had to turn to the past for his inspiration, instead of finding it in the living present around him.

The boy's early years were quite normal, both at school and at home, and it was only as he approached puberty that pathological symptoms began to show themselves. When he was fifteen years old, he had the misfortune to lose his father, and this 'Todesstosz', as his mother called it, proved disastrous for both of them. The father, a jurist in the service of the city, was so conscientious that he literally worked himself to death. An aristocrat to the core, he had received an excellent classical education, and his fondness for historical studies he passed on to the son. If his father's kindly guidance could have been continued at this decisive period of his life, the son might have been saved later years of suffering, for the mother was entirely too nervous to have the care of a growing boy. His one sister, Betsy, whose influence on him was to prove so beneficent in later years, was five years younger; too young as yet to be of help. The mother was a neurotic, and it is no doubt from her that the son inherited his neurasthenic tendencies.

She was strongly pietistic also, and sought through the consolations of religion to compensate for her own inherent weakness of character. She tried, without result, to influence her son in this direction also, and though they loved each other, yet, as we often say, they 'got on each other's nerves' in a very real sense. It was about
this time that Meyer began to fall behind in his studies. He had a naturally good mind, and had passed a very creditable matriculation examination, but he gradually fell behind the others in his class, who either passed on to higher studies, or got good positions in the world, while 'der arme Konrad' settled down to the life of a regular neurasthenic, passing days in solitude behind drawn blinds, and imagining that the passers-by in the street outside were making derogatory remarks about him, a characteristic neurasthenic symptom. He read every book he could find, especially every history, and it is probable that he then laid the foundation for that historical knowledge which was afterwards to stand him in such good stead. Like his contemporary, Keller, he gave much time to artistic studies, and imagined at one time that he would be an artist, but soon discovered his unfitness, and this only discouraged him still more. When night came he would go out on the lake and swim or row for hours, while his mother and sister waited in breathless anxiety, not knowing if he would ever come back. A year at Lausanne, where he went for a change of air, helped to restore his balance, and it was here that he decided he would be a writer.

His first attempts, however, were failures, and increased his sense of inferiority, the more so as the family were very short of money. No doubt he was a great trial to his mother. At an age when other young men were making money and helping their families, or founding homes of their own, here was her son, buried in useless brooding, incapable of taking any responsibility, and an expense instead of a help.
Her feelings found vent in bitter reproaches, and this only made matters worse. At last he became so ill that in 1852 he was sent to a private asylum at Préfargier to recuperate.

This was the first great crisis in his life. Walter Linden, in his work on Meyer, shows in an interesting manner how these crises are bound up with the literary and historic events of the period. In his second chapter, he calls this period between the two revolutions, that of 1830 and that of 1848 'Die romantische Übergangszeit'. Romanticism, which was at its height about 1830, was gradually dying out, and finally received its death-blow in the revolutions of 1848, which were unsuccessful in the various countries of Europe, and particularly so in Germany. 'Das junge Deutschland' had still some years of wandering in the wilderness before its hopes of political freedom and unity could be realized in 1870. No doubt the young people of that era felt this failure very keenly, Meyer among the others, and sad brooding over that political failure was probably one of the causes of his breakdown in 1852.

Another reason for this breakdown was that Meyer in the first part of his life was a typical romantic, even though his life so far had coincided with the period when romanticism was dying. We can see this romanticism in his love for the historic past, in his fondness for solitude and brooding, and in his preference for the things of the imagination over the realities of everyday life. But a book which appeared in 1844, Friedrich Theodor Vischer's KRITISCHE GÄNGE, had a most deciding influence on his life. As Linden says:
"Was Herder für Goethe, was Kant für Schiller, was ungefähr gleichzeitig (1846-1849) Feuerbach für Keller, das wurde Vischer für C.F. Meyer." 1.

The book strongly attacked romanticism, as being selfish, and advised a return to the realm of antiquity, from which would arise a new form of art, in which form and substance would be moulded together. It also attacked pietism in such a convincing manner that upon Meyer his mother's teachings had no more effect, which naturally helped to increase the estrangement between them. In literature also, where he had hoped to make a name for himself, he now saw how immeasurably far he would have to go to realize the ideals held out by Vischer. All these things resulted in a profound sense of discouragement, from which unaided he could not seem to recover.

His stay of seven months in Préfargier, however, proved a complete success. Under the kindly influence of Dr. Borrell, the superintendent, and his sister, the nurse Cecile, he got a new outlook on life. After this terrible experience, for a nervous breakdown is a terrible experience for anyone, he was content, like a little child, to start at the bottom and work up. His head was no longer in an imaginary world above the clouds. Like the rest of the German people, he used this as a time of preparation for his 'Blütezeit', which was to begin in 1870. Linden calls this his realistic period.

After leaving the asylum, he first went to Lausanne, for he would not risk a relapse into the old life at Zürich. Here he met an old family friend, Louis Vulliemin, the Swiss historian, whose influence

1. Linden 15.
did him a world of good, and whom he afterwards immortalized as 'der gute Herzog' in Jürg Jenatsch. Under this man's influence and that of Pascal, whose works he read at this time, Meyer's mind assumed a decidedly Protestant trend, and to the delight of his mother he became a professing Christian. Here also he gave himself up to that fatalism which the Calvinists call predestination, and which was later to show so strongly in his works.

When he returned home, instead of relapsing into the old brooding solitude, he showed that his cure was real by taking up the first work that came to hand. This was a translation into German of Thierry's Récits des Temps Merovingiens. This is a series of historical tales of the times of the Merovingian kings, and their translation must have been a wonderfully congenial task for the future writer of historical Novellen. He did his work well, and showed a childish delight when he received the money for it, - the first he had ever earned.

However, in spite of the iron discipline of work and exercise to which he subjected himself, the life in Zürich was very depressing, and this was increased by the tragic death by drowning of his mother, which took place in 1856, while temporarily insane. She had insisted upon nursing a relative, who died shortly after, and had brought upon herself a nervous breakdown, so that she had to go to the same asylum at Préfargier where Meyer had been. Her death was quite possibly self-inflicted, and the blow came as a great shock to both Conrad and Betty. Their circumstances were, however, lightened by the fact that
the relative whom the mother had nursed had left them all his money. It was a considerable sum, so they were now placed beyond all danger of monetary worries.

The first use Conrad made of his new independence was to take a trip to Paris in 1857, where he stayed for three months. The visit did him a wonderful amount of good. It brightened his outlook on life and gave him new points of view. The art galleries and historic buildings impressed him deeply, but he was greatly pained by the frivolity of the people, and by the moral depravity of the fair Parisiennes whom he happened to meet. It is rather amusing to hear this serious-minded young Swiss passing judgement on the morals of a great nation after a tourist's experience of only three months. However, this often happens, even in our own day. It is probable, though, that from this visit dates Meyer's decision to become a German rather than a French author. Before this time he had been rather undecided, as he was equally at home in both languages, but now he becomes a German, out and out.

After a short visit to Munich, which proved rather a disappointment to him after the delights of Paris, he and Betty set out together to visit Rome. From now on, the two are inseparable. She becomes his inspirer and helper, his confidante and amanuensis. In German literary history, we can think of a similar relationship between Kleist and his sister, but in English literary history there is only one
companionship of brother and sister that can be compared to it, that of William Wordsworth, the poet, and his sister, Dorothy. And like Dorothy Wordsworth, too, when later on in life he decided to marry, she encouraged him in every way possible, finding her happiness in his, and unselfishly effacing herself when her work was done.

The life in Rome proved for Meyer, as it had for Goethe and other great Germans, an artistic and cultural regeneration. The 'edle Einfachheit und stille Grösze' of the monuments of classical antiquity had their way with him, as they had had with Winckelman before him, and any lingering remnants of romanticism in his soul were swept away before these concrete realities. Beauty of form, expressing beauty of thought, now became his passion. In particular, he was influenced by that great master of form, Michael Angelo, and the formlessness of his romantic period dropped from him like a garment. Even as Michael Angelo, with a few mighty strokes of his chisel, had given form and body to the 'Bibelwort', so will Meyer now seek, with few but deliberately chosen and powerful words, to give form to his ideas. His poetry, which begins to date from about this time, is full of allusions to this Italian journey, and his best-known poem, to English-speaking people at least, 'Der römische Brunnen' is only one of many, with a Roman subject.

After his return from Rome, he again worked at translations, this time from German to French, and it was only in 1860, while on a visit to Lausanne, and under the influence of Vulliemen, that he took courage and published anonymously his first volume of poems, BILDER
9.

UND BALLADEN VON ULRICH MEISTER. It had no great success, but from that time on the author had definitely chosen his career, and had begun to work towards it most diligently, realizing that, after all, 'genius is only an infinite capacity for taking pains', or, as the Germans put it, 'Genie ist Fleisz'. In 1864, four years later, appeared the first volume to which he had the courage to put his own name, ZWANZIG BALLADEN VON EINEM SCHWEIZER, still only moderately successful. This was followed, in 1870, six years later, by the ROMANZEN UND BILDER which is still, as Faesi puts it, the work of a good apprentice but no master.

As we can see, his talent had been developing very slowly, but now, in 1870, begins its 'Blützeit'. Inspired by glorious deeds on the battle-fields of the Franco-Prussian war, and by the blood-and-iron policy of Bismark, Germany had at last achieved her political unity, and a place in the sun. In spite of the questionable ethics of his politics, Bismark was Meyer's great hero, whose character he incorporated later on in the chief character of his great historical novel, JÜRGEN JENATSCH. Inspired by the idea of German political unity, he wrote HUTTENS LETZTE TAGE, also in 1870. He himself tells us:

"Der grosse Krieg, der bei uns in der Schweiz die Gemüter zwei- spältig aufgeregt, entschied auch einen Krieg in meiner Seele. Von einem unmerklich gereiften Stammesgefühl jetzt mächtig ergriffen, tat ich bei diesem weltgeschichtlichen Anlasse das französische Wesen ab, und innerlich genötigt, dieser Sinnesänderung Ausdruck zu geben, dichtete ich HUTTENS LETZTE TAGE."

1. Linden (47)
This poem, really a series of lyrics, tells the story of the death of Hutten, a German hero of the Renaissance, who had fought for the unity of Germany, and who had died, an exile from his country, on the island of Ufenau in Lake Zürich. By it Meyer first became known to his sceptical fellow-townsmen as a successful author.

Inspired by his success he wrote ENGELBURG, another poetical romance, which was partly a failure, as he had been in too much of a hurry, but this failure probably induced him to turn his hand to his true 'métier', the historical novelle, and in 1873 appeared DAS AMULETT, the first of a series of inspired historical romances, which only ended with the publication of ANGELA BORGIA in 1892. These will be reviewed in detail in part two, so they will not be mentioned here.

During their life together, Meyer and his sister took many trips, making an excursion almost every summer, usually to some part of Switzerland. During several summers they explored very thoroughly the country of the Upper Engadine, and he afterwards used in his JENATSCH the local color thus obtained. They also visited Venice, and it was to his trip there, and to the inspiration of the art works of Tizian in the Venetian galleries that we owe ENGELBURG.

In 1869, he settled in Küsnacht, a beautiful place on Lake Zürich. No matter how many lovely places he saw on his travels, he always seemed to come back as if drawn by a magnet to the pale beauty of this wonderful sheet of water. About this time, too, he made the acquaintance of the man who was to become his official biographer, Adolf
Frey. If it is an advantage to an author to have someone to play a Boswell to his Johnson, Meyer certainly reaps this advantage to the full, for Frey has done his work most thoroughly, even to giving us a minute account of all the family pets, among them the poet's dog Bozzo. In spite of so much detail, however, or perhaps because of it, the work is most interesting, and is well worth reading by any lover of the author's works.

Meyer's 'Blütezeit' lasted a little over two decades, during which, as a successful author, he realized most of his former ambitions. He had a beautiful home at Kilchberg, not far from Zürich, and was a welcome member of the best society of the place. At the head of this stood François Wille, the retired journalist, the friend of Bismark and Heine, who had entertained under his roof such great men as Wagner and Liszt and the historian Mommsen. Here the Meyers were very much at home, and Konrad used to read to this friendly group many of his stories before they were published, and receive their criticism and advice.

In 1875, Meyer was married to an aristocratic Zürich lady, Louise Ziegler, the daughter of an old family friend, and the marriage, while not romantic, was very happy. We are told that her talents lay rather in the direction of good housekeeping than of literary inspiration, in which his sister had shone, but we are further told that this marriage, more than all his successful literary works, tended to convince his matter-of-fact fellow-townsmen that Konrad had actually
amounted to something after all. Before this time, (and this is one of the disadvantages of having an official biographer, that such things should become public) we are told that Meyer had proposed twice and been rejected. One of these ladies was the beautiful Clelia Weidman, and for her he cherished what was probably the great romantic passion of his life, which was only increased by her early death. Her rejection of him was the immediate cause of his trip to Rome. Both of these rejections were owing to the fact that the author had no settled station in life, and had the effect of increasing his inferiority complex, so perhaps his successful marriage to Louise Ziegler contributed more than we know to that serenity of mind so necessary to an author like Meyer.

His wife was an excellent manager who took from his shoulders the burden of all household worries, and this left him free to devote his days to work. It was work, too, of the very hardest kind, for he felt that he had much lost time to make up. After his former terrible experience, he was always oppressed by a foreboding of the coming of 'that night when no man can work', and truly enough, for him it came all too soon.

After the publication of ANGELA BORGIA in 1892, he was seized with a severe illness, which caused a return of his old neurasthenia, and he had to spend another season in an asylum. After a few months he recovered enough to be sent home, but from now on his creative faculty was eclipsed. He was no longer capable of sustained work, and published nothing further except lyrics, which could be dashed off at a
sitting, and which he continued to compose almost till his death.

The political situation in Germany, too, no doubt had its effect on him. This was the time when the young Kaiser, Wilhelm II, took the power into his own hands and 'dropped the pilot' Bismark. This was the time, too, in the literary world, when realism was dying out and naturalism was taking its place, and Meyer was no lover of naturalism.

The fall of his idol, Bismark, coincides most strangely with Meyer's relapse into his old nervous impotence. However, this last period of ill-health was happier than the first had been. Though constantly busy with new projects, which he had not the power to realize, yet he was always able to look back on what he had accomplished, and that was considerable, for it is not given to every author to be so great in two fields of literature as Meyer had been. After Goethe, he is perhaps the greatest of German Lyricists, and his work in the field of the historical romance we shall study in Part II. His family life was ideal; he had no monetary worries; and the consolations of religion were also very real to him, so it was not as a totally unhappy man that he passed peacefully away in the arms of his wife and daughter on the 28th of November 1896.
In this section only those proseworks will be considered which were published by the author during his lifetime. A few years ago, Adolf Frey published several proseworks of Meyer, which included Petrus Vinea, Komtur, The Dynasts, and others. Some of these are almost complete; others are mere sketches, and are important chiefly as showing the author's manner of working. Though many of these stories are extremely interesting, no attempt will be made here to consider anything but the works that Meyer published himself. In these the chronological order will be strictly followed.

I shall attempt, as briefly as possible, to give a synopsis of each story, giving only those facts which are necessary to show its setting in history, and the teaching the author intended to convey. For, though no propagandist, Meyer is a great moral teacher, and each of his stories has as its essence some great moral truth. There will also be an attempt to sketch the main characters, for Meyer is outstanding as a psychologist. Occasionally he almost equals Shakespeare, and in every one of his works there is at least one character, and sometimes more than one, which seems almost real enough to step out of the page and talk to us.
This story is the first in order of time, and it was here that the author first found himself. Although it bears many marks of a first attempt, as, for example, in the love-story, which is rather weak, nevertheless it exemplified many of the characteristics of his later and greater works. It is short, yet nothing is left out which is necessary to the plot, and the scenes move forward, one after the other, and each evolving out of the other, like a piece of complicated and well-oiled machinery. At the beginning it seems almost too overloaded with historical details to be interesting, but the author soon remedies this defect. It has an excellent ending, which seems to come just at the right place, and to be quite necessary and inevitable.

It is the tale of two German-speaking Swiss youths in Paris in 1572, during the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and it may be described as a study in religious toleration. The real hero of the story, Schadau, is a Protestant, while his friend Boccard is a Catholic. Schadau, who is an old man when he tells the story, has some business dealings with the father of Boccard, his dead friend, and while at the home of the latter, he accidentally sees his friend's amulet in a drawer. This reminds him of his young manhood, and of the strange scenes in which this amulet bore a part. Though it had saved the life of the Protestant Schadau, the believer in predestination, it had failed to protect its owner, who believed firmly in its virtue.
We are taken to Switzerland to the boyhood home of the hero, where he lived with his maternal uncle, for his father had died, fighting as a Huguenot in Coligny's army, and the shock of his death had killed the boy's mother. We see the young hero's worship of Coligny, the great Protestant leader, who is preparing an army to be sent into the Netherlands against the Catholic general, Alba, and his one great ambition is to join Coligny's army.

Circumstances arise which make it necessary for Schadau to leave home, and he decides to go to Paris to try to realize this ambition. He takes farewell of his uncle, a kindly old visionary, whose chief function in the story seems to have been to imbue the boy with his own Calvinistic belief in predestination. On the way, he is delayed by a storm just before entering Paris, and has to take refuge in an inn. Here he meets for the first time his countryman, Boccard, and also Gasparde, the girl who is to become his wife, along with her guardian, Chatillon. The conversation around the inn table is very amusing. Boccard acquaints the company with the virtues of his amulet, which has saved his life as a child, and we have an interesting debate on predestination, in which the young Schadau firmly believes.

Arrived in Paris, he seeks out Coligny, and finds the way smoothed out for him, probably through the intervention of Chatillon, so that he becomes at once Coligny's secretary. Here he meets the king, Charles IX, who is also a great friend of Coligny, and he realizes, in the vacillating character of that miserable boy, on what a slender thread of
safety the lives of the Protestants in Paris are hanging. Just now it is Coligny who has the influence over him, but tomorrow it may be someone else. We realize, too, that the queen-mother, Catherine di Medici, hates Coligny, and is jealous of his influence over the king her son.

Then Schadau goes to visit Chatillon and Gasparde. He is struck by the resemblance of Gasparde to Coligny, and learns that she is the daughter of Dandelot, Coligny's dead brother. The character of Gasparde is rather colorless and unconvincing, and here Meyer shows his apprentice hand. She seems almost to throw herself into the hero's arms.

From Chatillon's window, which looks into the church next door, they listen to the fiery preaching of Father Panigarola, a historic character, by the way. He is inciting the minds of the Catholics against the Protestants, another device by which Meyer shows us the burning volcano over which the Huguenots in Paris were living. As the people are leaving the church, Gasparde is insulted by a man in the street below, and she calls upon the hero for protection. On his way home with Boccard, whom he has met by chance, he encounters this same man and is insulted by him. A duel is fought, in which Boccard acts as his second, and the opponent, although an expert swordsman, is killed. It is here that his life is saved by the amulet, which Boccard has, unknown to him, slipped into his breast-pocket. Though he says nothing of the duel, Gasparde recognizes him as her rescuer. They become engaged, and later on we learn that this engagement meets with Coligny's approval.

Then comes the eve of St. Bartholomew. Schadau has
returned from a business trip outside of Paris, only to find that Coligny has been attacked and nearly killed a couple of days before. He goes to see him and finds the queen-mother there visiting him. He is doubtful of her innocence in the matter, though he can hardly believe that a guilty person would go to pay a friendly visit to the victim, whom she has tried to kill. There is no doubt as to the king's grief, but how long will it last?

He goes to see Gasparde, and finds there the author, Montaigne, who is trying to persuade Chatillon and Gasparde to fly with him to his country-home in the south of France. Then a messenger comes to bring Schadau and Gasparde once more to Coligny, whom they find at the point of death... He wishes them to be married at once and has a clergyman in waiting to perform the ceremony. In the meantime Chatillon refuses to escape with Montaigne, and the latter goes off regretfully, reproaching him for his laziness. Meyer's characterization of Montaigne is excellent, and historically true to life.

When Schadau is leaving, Gasparde takes his loaded pistol from him. Through a ruse of Boccard's, he is imprisoned for the night in the Louvre. At first he thinks his countryman has betrayed him, but later on he finds it is to protect him from the massacre of the Huguenots which is to start that very night at midnight. Though confined to Boccard's room he is able to look out of his window over the swiftly-moving Seine, and we have an unforgettable picture of the queen-mother and her two sons standing on a balcony overlooking the Seine, awaiting the signal for the massacre to begin. Then a gunshot is heard and the trio
disappear. The tableau is most dramatic. Thus early in his career do we find Meyer adopting a device which he was to use freely in his later works.

Soon sounds of agony are heard everywhere, and corpses begin to float down the Seine. We have no general description of the massacre except through its effect on this one person, who is a prisoner in his room, but our imagination supplies the rest. It is a favorite and most effective device of Meyer's to show a complex historic event through the medium of its effect on some particular individual, which, of course, makes for simplification and economy.

In the morning, through Boccard's agency, Schadau is allowed to go to the aid of his wife, after changing clothes with one of the guard. They hurry to the house just in time to see Chatillon thrown from an upstairs window on to the pavement, and to see Gasparde desperately defending herself with the aid of Schadau's loaded pistol. She is rescued and is carried fainting from the room in her husband's arms, while his friend clears the way through the mob. But in the street, a shot from the same pistol that Gasparde had just dropped kills the gallant Boccard, in spite of his amulet. Such are the strange workings of fate.

Schadau and Gasparde have to leave his body to the care of his faithful servant, and hurry on to the gate. There, through the good offices of Schadau's old fencing master, they are allowed to escape, and they finally reach Switzerland and safety, only to find that the good uncle has died leaving to Schadau all his property.
The whole story is a powerful plea for religious toleration. One of the most attractive characters is the Catholic, Boccard, who is almost a second hero, and we are made to feel the futility of two such people hating each other on account of a difference in religion. The horrible massacre shows how monstrous may be the results of religious fanaticism. This is symbolized in a striking dialogue between the river-gods of the Seine, imagined by Schadau during his dreadful imprisonment. Such symbolism is another device frequently used by Meyer to make his teaching more clear. It occurs again and again in his works.

Walter Linden calls this Novelle a 'Lehrlingsarbeit', or an unripe attempt, but nonetheless it is a powerful story, and shows us that the author has his tools prepared for the greater works soon to follow.

(2) JÜRG JENATSCH, 1876.

The next story is a master-piece of historical writing and is his one great novel; the others are all 'Novellen' or 'Short Stories'. It may be called a study in patriotism, for that is the keynote to the character of the hero. The scene of the story is laid in "Die Lande der drei Bünde" which form today the Swiss canton of Graubünden. It is a watershed for three rivers, the Rhine, flowing north into Lake Constance, the Inn, flowing northeast through the valley of the Engadine, and eventually into the Danube, and the Adda, flowing south to
Lake Como in Italy. The country is extremely mountainous, and the control of the passes made by these rivers through the high Alpine valleys was eagerly sought by both France and Spain, during the time of the Thirty Years war. The little republic, moreover, stood in the way of a complete territorial union between the two allies, Spain and Austria. These things alone were enough to cause strife, and to them was added the religious question, the struggle between Catholic and Protestant which raged everywhere all through this war, and nowhere more fiercely than here.

The Catholic party in the little republic, under the leadership of Pompeius Planta, favored the Austro-Spanish alliance, while the Protestant party under Jürg Jenatsch, Blasius Alexander, Casper Alexius and others, sided with France, which offered them better terms, for the Catholic Richelieu, though sternly suppressing Protestantism in his own country, for political reasons aided it outside of France. Such was the stirring historical background which Meyer used for this great epic of patriotism.

Meyer had, as we have seen, made several excursions to Graubünden, so the local coloring is quite exact. The story is divided into three rather unequal parts. In part one we are introduced to the hero indirectly, through the medium of a school friend of his, Herr Waser from Zürich, who is on his way to Graubünden on a holiday trip to visit his old friend, Jenatsch, now the Protestant pastor in the secluded village of Verbenn. At the summit of the Julian Pass, he meets unex-
pectedly Pompeius Planta, the most powerful aristocrat of the canton.
Pompeius, hated by the Protestants for his activity in the Spanish cause, has been outlawed by the Protestant ministers, who are now all-powerful in the Government. He has been driven from his castle at Riedberg, and a price set on his head, yet that has not prevented him from coming back to the country to conduct his only daughter, Lucretia, a dark-eyed, half-grown girl, to a convent in Italy. The conversation of the two men soon turns to their mutual acquaintance, Jenatsch, who is most vehemently cursed by Planta, before he and his party ride away.

Left alone after this strange encounter, the thoughts of Herr Waser go back to his school days in Zürich, where he and Jenatsch had been boys together. He remembers the unusual bond which had existed between the little aristocrat, Lucretia, and the poor pastor's son, Jürg, the great passionate overgrown boy.

On picking up his portfolio, Waser finds scrawled on it in a childish hand, evidently that of Lucretia, "Giorgio guardati" (George take care). She obviously has known of some danger threatening her friend, and has taken this way to warn him. Waser decides to push on with all haste. However, he has to spend the night in the pass, and the one inn there cannot give him accommodation. Through a ruse, however, and unknown to the landlord, he makes friends with the old woman in the kitchen, and gets her bed for the night. He is awakened from his sleep by the sound of conversation in a room near by, and, finding a crack in the door, he overhears a conversation which is partly unintelligible to him,
but which seems to concern some massacre about to take place. Too soon he learns that it is the massacre of the Protestants in Jenatsch's valley, which the two men are planning. They turn their heads, and to his horror he finds that it is Planta and his nephew, Robustelli.

Realizing that this mischief which is brewing will involve his friend, he hurries on next morning, accompanied by the half-witted Augustino, as guide. This boy he learns to be the brother of Jenatsch's wife, and bears a fanatical grudge against her for turning Protestant. Arriving at Verbenn, Waser is welcomed with open arms by Jenatsch, whom he finds engaged in the very unpastoral occupation of sharpening his sword, and by Lucia, his extremely beautiful wife who, though gently efficient, never utters a single word. Jenatsch seems extremely proud of her.

The next day the two men make an excursion to Fuentes on the Italian border. Here a large fort has been built by the Spaniards and garrisoned strongly, a thing that every good Protestant in Graubünden looks upon as a threat against their freedom. They are not admitted to view the fort, as they had hoped, so they go on to a little inn on the shores of Lake Como, and have lunch in the hotel-garden. Here we are first introduced to Duke Rohan, who is afterwards to play a prominent part in the story. Like a true dramatist, Meyer brings on all his important characters early. Rohan recognizes from his dress that Jenatsch is a Protestant pastor, and the two are courteously entertained by him till his departure. We get the impression of a most engaging personality.
He appears very much interested in the conversation of Jenatsch, who betrays a surprising local knowledge of the country, and thus the way is prepared for their acquaintance later on. Here we have the sort of paradoxical contrast in which Meyer delights, the peace-loving soldier, Rohan, and the war-like man of peace, Jenatsch.

As the two friends wend their way homeward, the talk turns on Lucretia, and we learn why Jenatsch has turned from his early love to marry Lucia. Marriage with Lucretia would have been impossible under the existing conditions. His face darkened as he answered shortly:

"Zu Anfang... Das Kind hat gelitten. Es ist ein treues festes Herz... Aber soll ich die Fesseln eines Kindes tragen? und dazu einer Planta... Torheit... Du siehst, ich habe ein Ende gemacht." 1

On their way they are met by a Catholic priest hurriedly riding towards them on his mule. It is Father Pankrazi, a most humane and lovable man. It is quite noticeable how Meyer, in spite of his strong Protestantism, often introduces an attractive Catholic character, such as Boccard in the Amulet, and others whom we shall meet later. As Jenatsch says of him:

"Wären unsere Kapuziner alle so gute Bündner wie er, und so witzige Gesellen, man hätte sie unbehelligt gelassen." 2

The priest in great excitement warns them of the massacre about to take place, and urges them to fly for their lives. But Jenatsch will not leave his wife behind, and they hurry homeward, the priest accompanying them. When they reach home Jenatsch finds there two of his

2. Ibid 69.
colleagues, Pastor Fausch and Pastor Blasius Alexander, both historical characters. The former is ruefully fingering a hole in his hat, made by a gun-shot. This incident is decisive for him; he has had enough of danger, and will renounce his pastor's office. Jenatsch decides, but for very different reasons, to do likewise.


In the meantime, at the urgent entreaty of Father Pankrazi, and much to Lucia's relief, they make hasty preparations for flight, but before they can leave, the beautiful creature is shot dead, as she stands before a lighted window. Alexander rushes out and shoots the murderer, whom he finds to be none other than her crazy brother, Augustino. But the mob of murdering fanatics is already beginning to beat down the front door of the house, as they escape by the back way, after first setting fire to the place. The picture of Jenatsch fleeing through the glow of the flames of his burning dwelling, the dead Lucia in his arms, is most vivid, another example of Meyer's fondness for dramatic pictures. It reminds one of Virgil's picture of Eneas fleeing through the flames of burning Troy, with his father Anchises on his back. One feels that something dreadful must inevitably happen after that.

"Waser konnte trotz der Gefahr der Stunde den Blick nicht verwenden von diesem Nachtbilde sprachlosen Grimms und unversöhnlicher Trauer. Er musste an einen Engel des

1. Jenatsch 73.
"Gerichts denken, der eine unschuldige Seele durch die Flammen trägt. Aber es war kein Bote des Lichts, es war ein Engel des Schreckens." 1

When Waser parted from Jenatsch after Lucia's funeral, his only words were, "You will yet hear from me."

Shortly after this, the Spaniards, led by the two Plantas, Pompeius and his nephew Rudolph, poured over the land from Fuentes. Pompeius, the outlawed, went back again to his castle at Riedberg, but was not there long when a murdering band, led by Jenatsch and Alexander, broke in and killed him in cold blood, beating him to death with an axe. Then they rode defiantly through the country calling upon the people to arm against their country's foes. They met with a ready response, and wonderful deeds of bravery were done, with Jenatsch always to the fore. But the enemy was too strong. Thousands of them were captured and executed; others fled. Waser, safe in his home at Zurich, heard the news of the martyrdom of Blasius Alexander at Innsbruck. He had been faithful "even unto death". Later, he was visited by Jenatsch himself, who had come to ask asylum for the night. He had given up hope of freeing his country for the present, and was on his way to take service with Count Mansfield, one of the Protestant leaders in the Thirty Years war. The hearts of the people seemed dead, for the coming Thirty Years war was already casting its shadow. And so ends part one, with Jenatsch an exile, and the Catholic party everywhere victorious.

Part two opens after a lapse of some ten years, and the scene now changes to Venice. Pastor Fausch is at present a pastrycook

1. Jenatsch 80.
with a little shop facing on the Grand Canal and quite near the Cathedral. In this little wine-shop, which is all prepared for the reception of guests, we learn from the conversation of Wertmüller, Duke Rohan's secretary, that his master and party are at present visiting the cathedral, and will come in later. Then Jürg Jenatsch bursts in, and we learn that he has been fighting in distant Dalmatia, but, hearing that Richelieu has decided to send a French army under Rohan into Graubünden to free it from its Spanish oppressors, is determined to take service under the Duke. Without orders from his superior officer, Grimani, he has returned to Venice. He has also been so unfortunate as to kill his own colonel in a duel, in self-defence, it is true, but he has thereby rendered himself liable to imprisonment or death, should Grimani seize him before he puts himself under Duke Rohan's protection. As soon as the Duke leaves the cathedral, Jenatsch manages to secure an appointment for that evening.

And now Lucretia Planta appears on the scene again. She has also come to Venice to seek the aid of the Duke. Since her father's murder, she has been an unhappy exile in the house of her uncle in Milan, but now she has come to beg for re-instatement in her own castle at Riedberg and for justice to be done upon the murderer of her father. She has gained the ear of the Duchess, who pleads her cause before the Duke in an eloquent speech, strongly reminiscent of the Corneille manner, then in vogue. In a most natural way, the author causes this speech to be overheard by Jenatsch, who has just come to keep his appointment with the Duke. Rohan promises her his aid in restoring her to her home,
but he advises her to leave her vengeance to God, for the tender hand of a woman should not be stained with deeds of blood.

Just then Jenatsch most dramatically steps forth, acknowledges himself to be the murderer of her father, and offers his bosom to her avenging knife. Placed in such a position, Lucretia can only hesitate. She cannot bring herself to kill the man whom she still loves, even though her father's blood flows between them, and yet it is her duty to avenge her father. One would almost think that Meyer had borrowed the motive from the CID. By all the customs of the time Lucretia is in duty bound to avenge her father, and here is her chance, but she cannot strike the fatal blow. It is a most affecting scene, and the women leave the room in tears.

Then the Duke talks business with Jenatsch, and agrees to take him into his service. Owing to his experience as a soldier, and his intimate knowledge of Graubünden, the Duke expects to find him a valuable ally, and he is ordered to come to the palace at once, after first going back for his baggage and his servants. But he has not gone out of sight of the Duke's palace, when he is waylaid and kidnapped by the spies of Grimani, within sight and hearing of the Duke, who is standing on the balcony.

The next day the Duke sends for Grimani and demands Jenatsch's release. The astute Venetian puts in a most eloquent plea to be allowed to keep Jenatsch in prison, or to get rid of him quietly.

"The man is a dangerous adventurer", he says, "absolutely without conscience or scruple. He will make use of you
"as long as you serve his purpose, and then ruthlessly betray you when you have served his turn. You will live to thank me if I get rid of him for you now, and live to rue the day if I grant your request, and let him go free."

However, the Duke insisted, and Grimani released him from prison.

In the warning of Grimani here, we have a parallel to the warning of Lucretia in Part One, and there is another similar warning scene in Part Three. This is an early example of that symmetry which was so characteristic of Meyer's style, and which we shall meet often in his later works.

After events prove that Grimani was right, and no doubt the author uses this incident to show the mysterious workings of fate, which led the Duke, in spite of himself, to take the very man into his service, who was afterwards to prove his undoing.

When Part Three opens, we find Lucretia back in a convent near her old home, though her castle at Riedberg is not yet open to her. The nuns, under sister Perpetua, wish to make her their Abbess, but she cannot bring herself to take the veil as yet. We learn from her meditations that the Duke has sent her home from Venice under the escort of his faithful Wertramüller, and her own servant, Lucas. On the way, they have succeeded in rescuing Jenatsch from a party of Spaniards, who had taken him prisoner. A second time, Lucretia has had the chance to avenge her father, but she does not take it. Her love for Jenatsch is not the only reason. Perhaps some instinct of patriotism advises her that here is the only man who can save her country. They travel together for several days, till at last they reach the shores of a little
mountain lake, which first reminds them that they have at last reached home. In their eagerness the two hurry forward alone, and sit on the shore of the lake to await Wertmüller and the servant. They stoop to drink, and Lucretia produces a silver cup which Jenatsch had given her as a child, and which she has always kept. Then there is a very affecting love-scene. Jürg’s old love for Lucretia has flamed up again into an intense passion and he bitterly regrets his murder of her father as a ghastly mistake, an error of his hot-headed youth. However, Lucretia cannot consent to marry her father’s murderer, no matter how much she loves him. Just then the others come up and the scene is over. Soon thereafter she is reinstated in her old castle at Riedberg.

In the meantime the armies of Duke Rohan have been advancing into Graubünden, driving out the Spaniards as they went. Everywhere Jenatsch has proved his efficiency, both as soldier and as councillor, till at last he is almost indispensable to the Duke, and has become his right-hand man and trusted confidant. At last the time comes for the Duke to fulfil his promise to Jenatsch and withdraw his French armies from Switzerland, for the Spaniards have everywhere been driven out. But Cardinal Richelieu has no intention of keeping faith with the Huguenot Rohan. He has only used him as a tool, and now casts him aside. He refuses to let the French army withdraw and thus free Graubünden, which, according to his plan, must become a Catholic country and a dependency of France.

The poor Duke is broken-hearted. When the news comes to him, he is an honored guest at the home of the Swiss historian,
Fortunatus Sprecher, at Chur, and it brings upon him a serious illness. He sees his own future endangered through the machinations of the wily Cardinal, and his honor threatened, for the people have trusted his word, and both he and Jenatsch have pledged their personal fortune to make up the pay of the soldiers, which Richelieu has allowed to get in arrears.

Jenatsch apparently takes the news of Richelieu's treachery very quietly, but here comes the turning-point of his life, the point to which all the rest of the story has led up. Nothing - no other loyalty - can be allowed to stand in the way of his overwhelming passion - patriotism. While seeming to remain the friend and confidant of the Duke, he goes over to the Spanish side and starts negotiations with them. He sends Lucretia Planta as ambassador to the Spanish commander at Fuentes, and her embassy is successful. The Spaniards will agree to every condition that Jenatsch demands, if only they can be revenged on the French, and drive them out of the country.

The only one who suspects treachery is Wertmüller. Unusually intelligent, and the soul of loyalty to his general, he has been spying upon Jenatsch, and comes upon a piece of evidence which would have convinced any ordinary man. He seeks to warn the Duke not to trust Jenatsch, (the third scene of warning in the story), but the eyes of the Duke seem blinded by fate; Jenatsch explains everything away; and Wertmüller can only grind his teeth with rage.

Meanwhile Jenatsch has been using his tremendous influence with his countrymen, and with the armies of Rohan, and they are all ready to go over to the Spanish side. Only when the Duke is surrounded
and taken prisoner does he find that Jenatsch has betrayed him. Jenatsch demands that he sign a paper pledging himself to lead his French armies out of Graubünden at once, or he will be responsible for the civil war and the loss of life that will follow. At first the Duke refuses to sign, but at last consents, in order to avoid bloodshed. After he has signed comes the news that Richelieu has again changed his mind, and will take the French armies out of Switzerland, but it is now too late. Jenatsch is too deeply involved with Spain, and besides he will not trust Richelieu any more. The Duke also has given his pledged word, and like the man of honour that he is, he will keep it, even to his own hurt.

There is an affecting scene when the people bid farewell to their good Duke. They appreciate his beautiful character even though they have betrayed him and gone over to Spain, and when he leads his armies out of Chur, their leader for the last time, there is hardly a dry eye. He takes service as a private soldier in the Protestant armies in Germany, and shortly afterwards comes the news of his death.

Jenatsch has apparently fulfilled his heart's ambition, the independence of his country - but the hour of his Nemesis is near. To help secure Spanish aid, and to render himself more eligible in the eyes of Lucretia Planta, he has renounced his religion and become a Catholic. But in spite of this we see that the Spanish commander is afraid of him and is already plotting his death, and Rudolph Planta, Lucretia's worthless cousin, suspecting that she is too partial to Jenatsch, determines to take her father's vengeance into his own hands.
Jenatsch feels himself, however, at the height of his powers. He has freed his country, though at a fearful price, - his own good conscience, - and he does not propose to step aside now. After gaining so much, to what can he not attain? He will even win Lucretia in the end, though she has told him, "There will never be a wedding at Riedburg". But he is playing for his own hand now and not for his country, and fate is against him. As long as he could plead patriotism, he was allowed by fate to do his work. But now his work was done, and instead of being a saviour to his country, he has become its menace.

In honor of Jenatsch, and to celebrate the freedom of their country, the citizens of Chur have decided to give a masquerade ball in the town-hall. But Rudolph Planta and Lucretia's old servant, Lucas, who has kept the axe that killed Pompeius Planta hidden in a trunk all this while, are on the road to kill him. Lucretia, at Riedberg, sees the empty trunk and suspects treachery. She follows them to Chur, it is a stormy night, with the same high wind blowing as on the night when her father was killed. Note here how Meyer makes nature sympathize with the passions of men.

The news has just come of the death of the good Duke, and Fortunatus Sprecher reads the news to the people assembled in the Hall of Justice. The best people of the town decide to go home, feeling that a celebration is out of place after such news. Jenatsch, however, insists on having his fête, and this proves his undoing. The rabble file into the hall, and Jenatsch, standing before the statue of Justice, with Lucretia by his side, is attacked and mortally wounded. Lucretia,
rather than allow him to be killed by these treacherous foes, takes up the faithful axe dropped by old Lucas, and he smiles at her as she gives the final stroke that puts him out of pain.

This story had to be narrated at some length, both because it is the longest that Meyer wrote, and because it is perhaps one of the best historical novels ever written. The conception and execution are alike masterly. From the immense mass of material at his disposal, the author has chosen only what was necessary, and has welded and unified it into a living whole, just as his favorite artist, Michael Angelo, out of a mass of dead stone, could, with a few bold strokes, carve an almost living statue. In his well-known lyric on the great sculptor, he has him say:

"Umfasst, umgrenzt, hab' ich dich, ewig Sein Mit meinen grossen Linien fünfmal dort: Ich hüllte dich in lichte Mantel ein Und gab dir Leib, wie dieses Bibelwort." 1

When drawing the character of Jenatsch, Meyer undoubtedly had his great contemporary, Bismark, in mind, for not only were both men gigantic figures as if carved from iron, but there was, in 1870, the same lawless patriotism in the founding of the German Empire, that went to the founding of the Bünden Confederacy in the seventeenth century. The characterization is masterly. Everything leads up step by step to the betrayal of the Duke and the Apostasy of Jenatsch. In striking contrast to the latter, the courteous and Christ-like character of 'Der gute Herzog'. We are meant to deplore the hero's lack of loyalty, and yet, in spite of that, he is an attractive personality. His patriotism

almost atones for everything, and the ordinary moral standards do not seem to apply in his case. In fact, for him, the author seems to give credence to the Jesuit maxim that 'the end justifies the means', when he makes his friend, Waser, say:


This last/delicately ironic thrust at the smug Philistinism represented by Waser, willing to profit by the results won by a man like Jenatsch, though unwilling to accept any responsibility therefor.

(3) DER SCHUSZ VON DER KANZEL, 1878.

This story, Meyer's one and only comedy, was written during the happiest period of his life, just after his marriage, when at the height of his powers and his fame. A few years sooner or a few years later, he could not have written it. It is evidently more or less of a "tour de force", an attempt, and quite a successful one, to show that he was capable of rivalling his great contemporary, Gottfried Keller, in his own field. In this novelle, he has succeeded in a most unique way in picturing the inhabitants and the scenery of his native

36.

Zürich Lake. Here he has truly held 'a mirror up to nature' for we can almost see before our eyes the people he describes, their beautiful surroundings, and their peculiar point of view.

It is a sort of sequel to JÜRG JENATSCH, and it is necessary to read them together in order to get a complete understanding of the comedy involved in the character of Wertmüller, the hero of DER SCHUSZ VON DER KANZEL. We have here a wonderful piece of character-drawing, consistent all the way through, from the time the hero is introduced to us as a child, travelling with his tutor on Lake Zürich, to where we find him in this tale, a man of sixty, on the eve of departing for the military campaign, which is to be his last.

First we have a description of the imperious little fellow signalling the boat to stop. Then we realize the precocious cleverness of the young scamp, when he shows by a pert interruption that he has caught the meaning of his tutor's long Latin speech in which plans for his future are mentioned.

"Ja, der Berbi divini musz mit," rief hier plötzlich der kleine Kobbold, der den Gegenstand der Unterhaltung erraten hatte.
"Aber vorher muss er mich alle Sprachen lehren, dass ich in allen kommandieren kann."
- "Was willst du denn eigentlich werden, Rudolf?" fragte Herr Waser, um die Blösze, die der Magister sich gegeben, zu decken.
- "Ein General," rief das Bübchen und sprang von der Bank, denn eben war man durch das Wassertor des Grendels gefahren, und legte jetzt vor der Schifflande an."

This is our introduction to a most extraordinary character. We have seen him already as Duke Rohan's secretary, fundamentally brave, kind-hearted and loyal, but with a tongue that continually gets him into trouble.

1. Jenatsch 87.
That is one reason why the Duke would not believe him when he tried to convince him of Jenatsch's treachery.

"Man hat euch das aufgebunden, Wertmüller", pflegte er zu scherzen, "um eure Argwohne gleich das stärkste Gewürz vorzusetzen. Und, gestehet nun, Ihr verdient etwas für eure böse Zunge." 1

In appearance he is not bad-looking, though rather undersized, but what he lacks in size, he makes up in bravery. Towards the end of the Jenatsch-story, we have hints of a romance between him and Amantia Sprecher, the beautiful daughter of Fortunatus Sprecher, at whose house the Duke was staying in Chur when the betrayal took place. She is a great admirer of the Duke and likes Wertmüller because of his loyalty to his master. He is a confirmed freethinker, and his tendency to make sport of sacred things and to 'hocus-pocus', as Waser calls it, has got him into bad odor in Zürich. But Amantia says of him:

"Was mir den Lokotenten wert machte, war seine Treue an dem edeln Herzog Heinrich. Da hat er sich als echten Kavalier gezeigt, neben dem verräter, Georg Jenatsch, der mir trotz seines gewinnenden Wesens, immer wie ein böser Geist vorkam, wenn er über unsere Treppen zum Herzog hinaussprang." 2

We are not told that the marriage actually took place, but can infer it through a few words from Rahel in the new story, where we are told that Wertmüller's wife longed for some Spanish buns, such as were baked in Baden. Wertmüller promised her gallantly to get the buns and rode off. The next day she received the buns and a note stating that he had gone to the Swedish camp. They did not meet again for many a long day.

Wertmüller's wife is now dead, and he has realized his boyish ambition to become a general. He is back again at Mythikon, the

home of his childhood, after many campaigns in which he has evidently
gained wealth and honor. He must have been in the Orient too, for he
has brought back with him a Moorish servant, Hassan, whose performances
with a speaking-trumpet are setting the natives by the ears. Wertmüller
has also the reputation of keeping a Turkish lady in the corner-room of
his house, where she looks out over the Lake, and ogles the passers-by.
Though he has only been home a week, the place is in an uproar with his
practical jokes, and many of the people think he is in league with the
devil himself.

We make Wertmüller's acquaintance through Pastor Pfannenstiell, an attractive young fellow, and a typical parson, who shies from
a loaded gun. He has, however, written a treatise on the Odyssey and
dedicated it to the General. This pleases the old gentleman who is also
quite a scholar, possessing an excellent library, and Pfannenstiel is
invited to stay with him for the night. Then he explains to the General
why he has come. He wishes to accompany him to the wars as army-chaplain.
The General, however, flatly refuses, telling him he is quite unfitted
for such an office, and advises him to stay near his native Zürich Lake,
where all the church-spires show that this must be a perfect Canaan for
pastors. By questioning he learns that the young man has been curate
for his cousin, the pastor of Mythikon during the last summer, and he
has fallen in love with Rahel, the pastor's daughter, and the General's
own god-child. At first Wertmüller thinks that Pfannenstiel has been
refused by Rahel, but when the girl comes herself, a little later, he
sees that the two young people love each other, so he determines to do a
little match-making, and make two people happy before he goes.

Rahel takes the General aside and reproaches him for leading her father to forget his duties, and thus get into trouble with the elders of his congregation. Her father is a good old soul whose favorite occupation, however, is hunting, not preaching, and whose fondness for dogs and guns has many times got him into trouble. This makes Rahel very unhappy, and she says to the General: "Why you'll even have him shooting off guns in the pulpit next." This gives the General an idea for a practical joke, which, if it goes off as he plans, will make the two young people happy, for Rahel confesses that she loves Pfannenstiel, chiefly because he is so different from her father, and would never worry her by forgetting his pastoral duties, as her father does every day.

The General then begins to lay his plans, dismissing Rahel by telling her that he intends to go to church himself the next morning. She suspects a joke, but says nothing, knowing that the old General loves her and really wishes her well. He has promised her that she and Pfannenstiel shall be betrothed the very next day.

That evening the General and Pfannenstiel have a most interesting conversation, in which he is shown an edition of the Odyssey that had once belonged to Jürg Jenatsch. Pfannenstiel drops it, as if it smelled of blood. He has been brought up to look on Jenatsch as in league with Satan himself. No doubt Meyer introduces the incident to show us the reputation which the apostate had among his countrymen, some thirty-five years after his death.
After a restless night, it is late when Pfannenstiel wakes. The air is full of the sound of church-bells and the sun is shining over the heavenly-blue lake. The General has gone to church. The description of the community wending its way to church is most masterly. One feels that Meyer is describing his own 'Gemeinde'. The General is constantly greeted by the people as he goes along the road. They know he is an old free-thinker, who hasn't the slightest intention of being converted, so they take his church-going as a compliment to themselves. He has timed his arrival to within a minute or so of church-time, and goes in to see his cousin in the parsonage next door. Here he pulls out a small gun of beautiful workmanship: "Yours", he says, handing it over. The old pastor is interested at once, and they both go out to the garden to shoot at his private target, but he finds the trigger too stiff to pull. The General takes it again, shoves it in his pocket, and promises to have it repaired. The old pastor, though, will have his gun at once. He is afraid that if the General takes it away he will never see it again, so he gets it back. This time it is not the same gun, however, but its mate, loaded with powder, and with the trigger in perfect order. By now, the bells have stopped ringing, and it is time to go in to church, so he slips it into his pocket and goes up to his pulpit. The General gets the only vacant seat in the church, where he has a good view of the pulpit.

Then follows a vivid description of the church service and the singing of the hymn, together with a most life-like sketch of old Krachhalder, the elder. The General notices, however, that his cousin
keeps his hand in his pocket, and smiles once or twice when he hears a click. After the singing of a particularly noisy hymn, the pastor starts his sermon, and has just said, "Praise God with a loud noise", when the gun in his pocket goes off with a bang. That the congregation is shocked is putting it mildly. However, the brave old pastor recovers himself, and goes on with his service right to the end.

The two cousins meet in the vestry after the service. The poor pastor, with tears in his eyes, upbraids the General for his share in the trick, for he knows that his time as pastor of this church is now up. The elders will never countenance such sacrilege. And soon the grave-faced elders file in, headed by Krachhalder. There is evidently going to be some plain talking. The General, however, takes matters in his own hands. He takes out his will, and offers to read them some extracts from it. As Krachhalder had been talking to the General the day before about leaving a certain piece of property to the church, he is of course quite interested, and they all listen eagerly. The General then reads: ITEM ONE: my estate with hunting-lodges, hounds, armories, weapons, etc, to be left to my cousin, the pastor, provided he gives up his office of pastor in favor of Pfannenstiel, who is to marry Rahel, the pastor's daughter. ITEM TWO: Pfannenstiel is to become pastor of the church in Pastor Wertmüller's place. ITEM THREE: The land which the church has been wanting is to be left to them unconditionally, provided that, as a community, they agree never to mention again the shot from the pulpit. The whole occurrence is to be as if it had never happened.

Of course all are more than willing to agree to the
conditions. "We would be nit-wits if we didn't", says Krachhalder grimly.
The only difficulty is to keep complete silence about the shot, for the
General says he will withdraw his bequests, if anyone ever mentions it
again, and, if anyone talks about it after he is dead, he threatens to
come back and haunt them. But Krachhalder agrees to see that no one
talks. "And what about the women?" asks the General. "We men will
answer for them", they all reply meaningly.

Then Rahel and Pfannenstiel are found sitting together
outside in the garden, and they are called in and betrothed, just as the
General had promised the day before. He has had his little joke, and
has made his dear ones happy before going away the next day on the campaign
from which he was never to come back, for not long afterward they hear
that he is dead.

Some critics say that this story is a failure, and possibly
it does not stand comparison with Keller's robuster comedies. The
character-drawing, however, is excellent and the whole thing is a little
work of art. It is a pity the author has not left us more like it.
We have here the true small-town atmosphere, which is the same in a
Canadian village as on Lake Zürich, and in the twentieth century as in
the seventeenth. We feel that we ourselves have known just such
characters as the author depicts. Meyer must have himself gone to a
church like the one he describes, and been acquainted with characters like
Krachhalder.
This story, though called a "Novelle", has almost the proportions of a novel, and shows that Meyer now has complete mastery of his tools. Any traces of an apprentice-hand, such as one finds sometimes in the AMULET or JENATSCHE have here vanished, and only the finished artist appears. Most English readers consider this his greatest work, probably because its theme is the one with which they are most familiar, as it treats of a subject in English history known to every school-boy. The author here takes two well-known historical characters, Henry II of England, and his Chancellor, Thomas à Becket, and, using history merely as a background, he gives us a great psychological character-study, unsurpassed in literature. What does the author intend to do here? Does he merely give us the story of a conversion, of a life 'made perfect by suffering', or does he give us a study of revenge in its most refined form? Each one who reads the story will have to decide this matter for himself, for Meyer has purposely made the character of the hero 'mehrdeutig' to use a German word for which it is difficult to find an exact equivalent in English.

It is interesting to read what the author himself has said about the matter. In a letter to Lingg he said:

"Rächt sich Thomas Becket und wie? Er ist zu vorsichtig, und vielleicht zu edel, um seinen König auf gewöhnliche Weise zu verraten. Er verhält sich passiv 1) aus Frömmigkeit, die aus dem Gefühl seines Elends entspringt, 2) aus Klugheit und Fatalismus zugleich, 3) aus der ungestümmten Ahnung, die Stunde der Rache werde kommen. Aber er schwebt über dem König wie ein Geier. Da gibt ihm dieser eine furchtbare Waffe in
Again, in a letter to Friedrichs on the same subject (Becket's revenge) he says:

"Inwiefern diese eine beabsichtigte oder eine durch die Verkettung der Umstände herbeigeführt ist, darüber kann das Gefühl des Lesers schwanken." 2

In a letter to Luise von François he says:

"Der Heilige ist absichtlich mehrdeutig." 3

To represent this ambiguity of character was Meyer's problem, just as it was Shakespeare's problem in HAMLET, and who shall say he has not succeeded as Shakespeare did.

As in the AMULETT, it is a story within a story, or a 'Rahmenerzählung', the tale being put into the mouth of Hans the Bowman, who, as an old man, gives his reminiscences, not merely as an onlooker, but as one who actually took part in the events he describes. This method of telling the story gives an air of probability obtainable in no other way, and allows the author to ascribe to the failing memory of an old man any discrepancies in time or place that may occur. So intimately bound together are the two stories that neither is complete without the other; and the old Canon Burkhardt, whose eager curiosity leads Hans to tell the story, seems as real and lifelike as any other character in the piece.

1. Maync, 180. 2. Ibid. 180.
3. Ibid. 181
45.

Very rarely does Hans fail to keep to his role of simple eye-witness, who tells in his own direct way what actually happened to himself. He is a Swiss, one of Meyer's own countrymen, and of noble birth, though his family has fallen on evil days. Driven by desperation he commits a murder, and has to fly for sanctuary into the arms of the church. Here they attempt to make a monk of him. He learns to read and write, and knows Virgil by heart. But the monkish life is not for him. He runs away, and having failed both as a knight and as a monk, he turns to a common calling for a livelihood, and yet one that has much to do with knights and nobles; he becomes a bowman.

To perfect himself in his chosen calling he goes to Granada in Spain, where he learns the secrets of the bowmaker's art, as taught by the Arabs. He also becomes familiar with the Arabic language and with the Koran, and learns the story of Prince Moonshine, whom we soon guess to be none other than Becket himself.

Then, having learned his trade, Hans goes to England to find work, and finds it with a Saxon smith who makes armor for the knights of the court, the Normans. Hans falls in love with Hilda, the flaxen-haired daughter of the smith. It is through Hilda's story of the Saracen woman who found her English lover by the aid of only two words 'London' and 'Gilbert' that we learn the romantic story of Becket's Saracen mother and Saxon father, and this strain of foreign blood is intended by the author to have an important bearing on the character of the hero.

But poor Hilda is suddenly kidnapped one day by one of the Norman knights in Becket's entourage, and the despairing father pleads on
his knees before the all-powerful Chancellor for justice. Here for the first time we meet this Chancellor, the hero of the story, with his pale dark beauty and gorgeous trappings. In spite of his being a Saxon with foreign blood in his veins he has become 'the glass of fashion and the mould of form' to the young Normans about the court. His words, his dress, his mannerisms are imitated, and his influence there is unparalleled. But he either cannot or will not help the poor smith, and the latter's words as he turns away give a warning of the coming tragedy, a sort of Wagnerian 'Leitmotiv' that will recur soon.

"Schade, Pfaffe, dass du kein Kind hast, das dir ein Normanne verderben kann."

Becket's horse gives a sudden start, as if he had unwittingly pricked it with his spur, and the procession moves on. A few days later, the humiliated Hilda is returned to her father, who plans to marry her to one of his kinsmen. There is no longer a place here for Hans, and he must seek a new situation.

A clever invention of his in the art of bow-making leads him to seek his fortune at the court. He is favorably received by the king, and becomes a member of his household, and eventually his own particular body-servant. So, in the most natural manner in the world, the framework is bound up with the main story, and Hans is now in a most favorable position to see and hear what he is years later to relate.

We have now an extraordinarily clever contrast in character-study between the king and his chancellor. One might perhaps object that it is too clever by far to be the work of a simple Bowman like Hans, but he gives it so naturally, that it lends an air of even greater
probability to what he says. We feel that he must have actually seen what
he is relating, for apparently he isn't clever enough to have invented
such a story himself.

First there is the king, the personification of physical
vitality, with his gigantic frame, his blazing blue eyes, and his bluff
hearty manner. He is subject to sudden rages, and is terrible in his
anger, though at other times very approachable, and a born leader of men.
As Hans tells his story, we cannot help admiring and sympathizing with
him to some extent. His opposite in every respect is the inscrutable
Chancellor, strong in intellect though slight in body, refined and
spiritual, upon whom the king is entirely dependent in his business affairs.
Though Henry admires him tremendously, yet he considers him as his tool,
for has he not made him, a Saxon, the chief man in the kingdom, and
given him all his wealth.

The other characters are more lightly sketched, but none
the less sharply individualized. There are the king's four sons, very
unattractive all of them, with the exception of the third son, Richard,
the favorite of his father, and of the Chancellor. There is also
Bertrand de Born, whose manner of hating is compared and contrasted with
that of Becket. Lastly there is Queen Eleanor, formerly the divorced
wife of the king of France, and 'worse than any witch in the kingdom.'
As she is described, one can almost forgive the king for being unfaithful
to her, though she has brought him as dowry many broad lands in
France. She herself is unfaithful to the king, yet she follows his
amours with jealous hatred and vengeance, so we have a presentiment of
what is going to happen later on, when the king finds and falls in love
with Grace, the daughter of the Chancellor.

This is the chief episode in the story, the shovel which,
as Hans says, digs the grave of both king and chancellor, and is as
follows: On a hunting trip one day the king gets separated from his
party, and, followed only by Hans, he comes suddenly upon a romantic
Moorish castle in a remote part of the forest. He announces himself and
enters to find a beautiful young girl, scarcely more than a child, with
whom he becomes infatuated. For several months he and Hans make secret
visits to this castle, though Hans has never entered or seen the lady.
He imagines she is some light o' love that Becket has concealed there,
and thinks it rather a good joke that the king should supplant him.
Only at the end, when an emissary of Eleanor is on her track, and the king
tries to take Grace with him out of the country for safety, does he
learn that it is the only child of the Chancellor, whom the King has
ruthlessly despoiled.

In the meantime, Becket has also learned of his child's
danger, and he places a guard over the castle till he can have her
removed to safety. In his last conversation with her, which Hans overhears,
we get a glimpse of the contempt he has for the King and his impure court.
Hans, acting for the King, attempts that night to kidnap Grace and her
nurse, but she dies, struck by an arrow from one of her own father's
bowmen. Hans escapes with difficulty and tells the King what has
happened.

Henry is terribly shocked and grief-stricken, but does not
see that he is in any way to blame. Accustomed to the satisfaction of every lust, he has only done, as he sees it, what he as king had a perfect right to do, and he has hopes even yet of being reconciled again with Becket, and all going on as before. To this end he sends Hans with a letter to Becket, whom he finds bowed in grief before Grace's body, which lies in state in their private chapel. The description of this chapel, and the mourning father, is very striking, and, through Hans, we get an insight into Becket's real feelings toward the king, which helps to explain his actions later on.

This is the climax of the piece, from which, as in a drama, the action begins to descend. We feel that things can only go from bad to worse between the King and his Chancellor, after such a happening as this. Yet, strange to say, the Chancellor does not take his revenge at once, as any ordinary man would do. Hans expects it, and despises him as a supine coward for not taking it. But Hans does not understand Becket's oriental ideas of kingship. Just as Grace fell a victim because her oriental training made it wrong in her eyes to resist a king, so Becket cannot do anything against the King while he is still his Chancellor.

However, he withdraws from his duties step by step. He refuses to teach the King's sons any longer, and they at once fall to fighting among themselves. He still busies himself with state affairs, but his face, to quote Hans, is as if 'a dead man sat at the table'.

On one occasion the two men were talking together under an oak-tree. Becket has warned the King never to give him over to a greater master than himself, for he must perforce serve the greatest. The
King jokingly threatens to make him Archbishop of Canterbury, as a diplomatic stroke against the Pope, and Becket flinches, as if suddenly struck by a new thought. Perhaps it is then that his idea of revenge is born. When the news of the death of the old Archbishop of Canterbury comes, Becket's conversation with the King is a masterpiece of clever dialogue. Here is what Meyer himself says of it:

"Orientalisch nachtragend, ich will nicht sagen rachsüchtig, aber doch (gegen Laster und Gewaltat) fein-grausam. Er spielt mit dem König von Anfang bis Ende, wie die Katze mit der Maus."  

Henry at length forces on him the appointment as Archbishop, which he accepts with apparent reluctance, and the conflict begins. Henry has given him over to a greater king than himself, the King of Kings, and now Becket's supreme allegiance is to his new Lord.

The different steps in his conversion are portrayed for us with masterly skill. He first gives up his chancellorship, on which occasion there is a strikingly symbolic episode - the cracking of the great seal of England. Then the beauty-loving pagan, who before did not scorn to accept gifts and honors from a king whom he despised, now becomes the self-denying ascetic. It is not that he was irreligious before, for he had an almost Christian horror of bloodshed and suffering, which was centuries ahead of his dark and bloody age. But in many ways he was more pagan than Christian. He was pleased to hear a text from the Koran quoted over his child's dead body. And that child during her lifetime received no Christian teaching, and no Christian symbols decorated her tomb.

1. Faesi 86.
But his suffering changes Becket, not all at once but gradually, till at last he is a truly converted man. He becomes content to let Henry’s punishment await the vengeance of God. His own dealings with a treacherous knight, Falconbridge, are meant to symbolize God’s dealings with Henry. When the King asks him why he did not unmask the traitor sooner, he says:

"O Herr, wozu? Alles Ding kommt zur Reife, und jeden ereilt zuletzt seine Stunde." 1

He cannot bring himself to love the King, and the sharp-sighted princes know it. But his hate, if hate it can be called, is not like that of Bertrand de Born. It gradually becomes the hatred of the Christian for the sin rather than for the sinner. But before this state of mind can come, many changes have to take place in the former Chancellor. He gives up all his old pomp, and becomes a real bishop, the champion of all the poor and oppressed in his diocese. Formerly the sight of suffering was hateful to him, but now he becomes familiar with it. His conversation with the crucifix, overheard by Hans, symbolizes this. The image of the suffering Christ had formerly sickened him, but now he can sympathize with Christ’s sufferings, for he too has suffered.

The grossly materialistic king cannot understand this conversion at all, and at first he thinks it all a joke. For him

"Das hochheilige Evangelienbuch gehört auf eine perlengestickte Altardecke und hat nichts zu tun mit dem Weltwesen und der Wirklichkeit der Dinge." 2

But when the Archbishop refuses to become his tool, or to give up any of

1. Der Heilige, 136. 2. Ibid. 166.
the rights claimed by the Church, the King feels himself betrayed and
his anger knows no bounds. Becket is banished from England and goes to
France, where he wanders in poverty from abbey to abbey, while his poor
Saxon protégés at home are in despair.

Then Henry, prompted by revenge, does a very foolish thing.
He has his eldest son crowned by the Archbishop of York, - a direct attack
on the prerogative of Becket, who at once retaliates by excommunicating
the Archbishop of York. Henry's two eldest sons go to France and head
a rising against their father. When Henry hears of it he becomes so
abject in his rage that he disgraces himself before the servants, and
his son Richard and Hans attempt to take matters in their own hands.
They both go disguised to France to meet Becket and persuade him to a
reconciliation with the King. Their meeting and the parting under
a pillar of the cloister surmounted by a hideously grinning gargoyle,
is most skilfully told, and we have here another instance of Meyer's
symbolism. Becket agrees to give Henry the kiss of peace, and Henry,
when he hears the news, goes with all haste to France.

When Becket is face to face with the King, however, he
cannot bring himself to kiss the lips of the man who has ruined his
child. But he conquers his feeling of disgust and says that, if Henry
will grant justice to his oppressed Saxons, and inaugurate the rule of
Christ in his kingdom, not only will he give him the kiss of peace, but
he will become his chancellor again, and help him to carry out his task.
He knows his own powers, for he says: "I am still the cleverest of mortals!"

But the King's Norman followers are becoming impatient,
and he feels that Becket is pressing him too hard. He bursts into a rage and they part as foes, Henry forbidding Becket on pain of death ever to set foot again in England.

The ride back over the gray snowy plain, in which nature seems to harmonize with the misery of humanity, shows Meyer in one of his most characteristic moods. Here Richard leaves his father, never to see him again, and Henry goes on to Rouen to hear mass and spend Christmas. While at the Christmas festivities, word is brought to him that Becket, in spite of his bann, has crossed the Channel, and is once more back in Canterbury. Again the King bursts into a rage, and once more does a very foolish thing. He taunts his knights, who are at the table with him, with eating his bread and letting his enemies triumph over him. Four of them accept the challenge and at once set off for Canterbury. Hans, when the King has recovered from his rage, insists that for his own reputation he cannot afford to make a martyr out of Becket. The King sees the force of this and commissions him to go with all speed to England, to put the Archbishop under royal protection.

Hans gets to Canterbury as soon as the murderers and finds Becket at table in his palace, surrounded by his priests. He offers the Archbishop the King's protection, which he refuses to accept. He seems to welcome the approach of death, Hans thinks, and he taunts Becket openly with the fact that he wants to become a martyr, so that the King's soul might be lost. The way in which he turns against Hans seems to justify the reproach in part at least, and Hans says:

"Ich war betrübt und mehr noch ergrimmt, dass Herr Thomas, der
Then the bell rings for service in the Cathedral, and they all go in, stopping before the high altar. They trust to the sanctity of the place for their defence, but the murderers are restrained by no law of sanctuary, and Becket is foully murdered and his band scattered, in spite of the fact that Hans tries in vain to defend him.

After the murder of the Archbishop, the story is virtually ended. The King scourges himself before Becket's tomb, but even this does not appease his wounded spirit, for just then the news comes of the defection of the King's favorite, Richard, and we are told that "Herr Thomas auf seinem Grabsteine lächelte."

Soon Becket becomes venerated as a saint, and his relics perform miraculous cures. Finally Hans decides that it will be better both for the King and himself, for him to leave the King's service.

In London, he visits Hilda again, and finding her very ill he tries to cure her with his handkerchief dipped in Becket's blood, but the touch only causes her to die suddenly. According to Hans, the Archbishop is revengeful even in death.

Then Hans goes back to his old home on the Rhine, marries and settles down and becomes a respected citizen, carrying on his old trade as a Bowman. He has almost forgotten his old life, till a chance

1. Der Heilige, 224.

2. It is interesting in this connection to read in the papers recently that the soul of Becket is reported to have visited his old room in the Tower of London, and to have destroyed a radio-set which was installed there. It seems as if Hans estimate of him might be right, after all.
meeting with Rollo, the King's former armorer, brings him news of the King's death. His heart was broken by his sons' successful rebellion, and he died without the rites of the Church. According to Catholic teaching his soul was lost.

The sudden barking of Tapp, Hans' poodle, heralds the arrival of company, and Hans starts up to go, but the old Canon insists on his staying overnight. The story has so excited him that he is afraid of bad dreams, so to quiet him, Hans stays. Thus the framework rounds the story out. The whole is so skilfully told that it is hard to believe it a mere work of the imagination.

It is pleasant to learn that the tale was received with approbation by Meyer's countrymen, and for it he received in 1880 the honorary degree of Doctor of Philosophy, conferred on him by the University of Zürich, his native City.

(5) PLAUTUS IM NONNENKLOSTER, 1881.

Like DER SCHUSZ VON DER KANZEL this story is in a comic vein. As, after the completion of a heavy work like the Jenatsch, the author seemed to relax by publishing a comedy, so now, after the almost equally heavy HEILIGE, he gives us this work in a lighter vein. Like DER SCHUSZ VON DER KANZEL, it, too, has a paradoxical title. Who would expect to hear a shot fired from a pulpit, or find a copy of an author like Plautus in a nunnery.

The comic in this story has, though, a strain of bitterness in it which is absent from the other. It is also a 'Rahmenzählung'.

Poggio, a cultured gentleman of the time of the Italian Renaissance, tells the story to a group of his friends, gathered round the table of the celebrated Cosimo di Medici in Florence. As he relates in a half-comical, half-bitter vein, his story of the finding of an old manuscript of the Roman poet Plautus, in a nunnery many years before, he paints his own character at the same time, and, when contrasted with the character of Gertrude, the novice, the peasant heroine of the story, he does not stand the comparison well. He is now the Secretary of the Florentine Republic, but was formerly secretary to five popes. As a high official of the Catholic church, he has been appointed as delegate to the Council of Constance in Switzerland, where he takes a leading part in the election of a new pope. Yet in spite of that he is a real "Renaissanzmensch", an out and out free-thinker, who makes sport of religion. We feel that it is probably his own fault, if his sons have caused him trouble. With such a father how could they be anything but selfish?

Poggio, however, hides his pain under a smiling mask and is the life of the company. Someone mentions jokingly his 'Fazetia', a comic work which he has written, and suggests that he must have even better stories untold, than are found in that book, so he agrees to give the company one of these 'Fazetia inedita' as he calls it. There are really two stories bound up together, the tale of the finding of the manuscript, and the story of Gertrude, the novice, a fine example of German loyalty. The subject of conscience in all its different manifestations was always a favorite one with Meyer, and this story is one of a number in which
the subject is treated.

Like other cultured gentlemen of the Renaissance, Poggio was always on the look out for copies of ancient manuscripts, and in Constance he has got wind of a very ancient and valuable copy of the Latin comic author, Plautus, which is to be found in a nunnery near by. He has talked too much, though, and someone has given the abbess a hint as to the value of her treasure, so he knows that without a ruse of some kind it will be difficult to get her to part with it. However, in spite of the impending papal election in Constance, he hires a mule and sets out to visit the convent, in the hope of getting even a look at the manuscript.

On the way he notices the sad face of his Swiss mule-driver, Hans, and being really rather kind-hearted when it does not interfere too much with his pleasures, he soon learns that Gertrude, the man's fiancée, is to take the veil the very next day. Hans is at a loss to understand why she should take such a step, for he is sure that Gertrude loves him, and would rather marry him than become a nun. He is planning to be present when she takes her vows, and bid her farewell.

Soon they reach the convent and find a crowd gathered in front of it, around a huge cross, which the strongest of them can lift only with difficulty, and, after carrying it a few steps, they all fall under its weight. Yet, the next day Gertrude is to carry that same cross, alone and unaided, for the Holy Virgin will help her. For centuries this has been part of the ceremony when a nun took the veil, and never once has the Holy Virgin failed to do her part. Poggio, the free-thinker, suspects a hoax, especially after he has seen the old abbess.
Meyer has made of her the chief comic figure of the piece. She dances around like a witch, and acts as if she had taken too much of the wine which is flowing rather freely. She dares Poggio to come and lift the cross, but he excuses himself, and goes into the church.

There his attention is attracted by a wonderful life-size picture of a woman bending under the weight of the same heavy cross, and the Virgin helping her to carry it. Before the picture a weeping young girl is kneeling, whom Poggio at once takes to be Gertrude. He engages her in conversation and finds that he is right.

Poggio mentions that he has met Hans, her lover, and she admits that she still loves him, and would rather marry him than become a nun, but when she was a child her mother had taken ill, and she had then made a vow that if the Holy Virgin would let her mother recover, she would take the veil when she had reached the age of twenty years. Her mother recovered and had lived till only a few months before. Then she had met Hans, and she wanted nothing better in life than to become his wife. But this was her twentieth year, and she must keep her vow, though she could not help hoping that the Holy Virgin would not insist on her keeping to the letter a vow made when she was a child, and before she knew 'what man and wife meant.'

Her only hope was that she would be too weak to carry the cross on the morrow. She would look on that as a sign that the Virgin had released her from her vow, but it was a rather vain hope, for never yet had the Virgin failed to do her part. Poggio suggested that she should stumble purposely under the cross, but she became indignant.
Then she turned her back on him and went away.

In spite of her rather barbarous dialect and peasant costume, her beauty and personality made such an impression on Poggio, that he determined to play the role of match-maker, just as the General had done, in DER SCHUSZ VON DER KANZEL. He suspected a dummy cross, made of cork, or some light wood, and he looked around to see where such a thing might be hidden. Near the mark on the church wall which showed where the heavy cross habitually stood there was a door, but it was locked. Probably the dummy was in there. On the other side of the chancel was a door which led to the library. He went in and began to rummage around among the books and manuscripts, trying to find the PLAUTUS. He did not find it, but found another that looked interesting and put it in his pocket.

Just then the abbess came in like a whirlwind and took the book from his pocket, scolding him roundly for a thief. She said she knew what he was after, but ever since she had heard he was in her neighborhood, she had slept with the 'Podex', as she called it, under her pillow, so there would be no chance of his stealing it.

He found he would have to try a ruse, so he pretended to have been sent by the Council of Constance to reform abuses in the Church and to investigate miracles and wonder-working relics. He was going to investigate her cross, and if it was a hoax, then she would burn at the stake. She turned pale, but defied him till he demanded the key of
the locked door on the other side of the Chancel. She pretended it was lost, but produced it when he threatened to have the door broken open. When the door was opened, there, sure enough, was the dummy cross, exactly like the other but ten times as light.

The abbess then offered to let him have the Plautus, if, only for this once, he would say nothing, and let the performance tomorrow go on as usual, and he, in his eagerness to get the manuscript, consented. When he got it, he brought it with him to his room, near by, where he at once became so happily engrossed that he completely forgot poor Gertrude. Finally he fell asleep, but towards morning he awoke with a sudden start, for he seemed to hear some one groaning. It was Gertrude who, according to custom before taking the veil, had spent the night in the Church praying before the High Altar. Poggio got up, went into the church, and found her in great distress before the picture, begging the Virgin not to insist on her vow. She cried:

"Was mir taugt ist Sonne und Wolke, Sichel und Senze, Mann und Kind."

At the sight of such distress Poggio's conscience would not let him remain idle. He had promised the abbess not to reveal the secret to Gertrude, so, muttering a prayer:

"An jene freundliche Göttin, welche die Alten als Pallas Athene, und wir Maria nennen,"

the old pagan strode up to the cross, and gave it a good plain mark with his dagger. Then he told the story of a porter, who had lifted an empty trunk with the same gestures as if it weighed a ton. He concluded with a cryptic remark, which sounded like "The truth inside, the lie
outside". Turning to Gertrude, he saw by the scorn on her face that she understood what he meant. Whereupon he went off to bed again.

In the morning the church is crowded to the doors, and Gertrude, pale as death, appears, dressed for the ceremony, and wearing a real crown of thorns, which in her zeal she has pulled down over her face till the blood flows. The dummy cross is brought to her, borne by six nuns who apparently stagger under its weight. She takes it, looks for the mark of Poggio's dagger, and not finding it, she casts the cross from her till it breaks in pieces. Then she marches into the little side room, takes the real cross on her shoulders, and staggers out with it again before the great crowd of people. It is too heavy for her, though she tries bravely to carry it, and "keine Göttin erleichterte es ihr." Her arm cracks, and she stumbles and falls unconscious to the floor, with the heavy cross on top of her.

But it is with a face beaming with joy that Gertrude awakens from her swoon, for now she knows that the Virgin does not desire her sacrifice. She calls out to her lover, Hans, who is sitting in the audience. He comes forward joyfully to greet her, and they go away together to be married. But now that she has gone back into ordinary life, she has lost all interest for Poggio.

Just then a post from Constance brings him the news of the election of his favorite candidate as pope, and, to still the rage of the people which has been gathering against the abbess, he orders them to sing a Te Deum in honor of the new pope. They all leave the church, and he hurries back to his room to get his Plautus. On the way he meets the
abbess, who shakes her fist at him in a rage.

On the way back to Italy, Poggio later visits Hans and Gertrude, and finds her now, a happy wife with a baby at her breast. The story ends with Poggio presenting the Plautus to his friend and patron, Cosimo di Medici, and thus ends this, the shortest of all Meyer's novellen.

While not among his great works, yet it is pleasingly written, and the character of Poggio in particular is very well done. He paints for us his own picture as he talks, and at length stands out before us, a true man of the Renaissance period, with its love of art and beauty, and at the same time its lack of morality or conscience. He is a great contrast to the simple peasant, Gertrude, with her fortitude and her keen sense of loyalty and honour. Maync says it illustrates that

"ehrlichen Pond in der deutschen Volknatur, ohne welche
die Reformation eine Unmöglichkeit gewesen wäre."

Some of Meyer's Puritan friends reproached him for treating religion in a frivolous manner, thereby identifying the author with the character of Poggio. They did not catch its note of bitterness, for the whole tale was meant to be a scathing indictment of the Catholic church of that time.

(6) GUSTAV ADOLFS PAGE. 1882.

Like JÜRG JENATSCHE, this story has the thirty years' war

1. Maync, 191.
as its historical background. It is by no means one of Meyer's greatest works, as it has several inconsistencies which we shall point out later. These are probably due to the fact that the author wrote the story rather hurriedly. It was his habit to take years of thought and planning before putting pen to paper, and this is one reason why his stories are usually so artistically and historically correct, and so completely satisfying. The author himself was not quite content with this production, although, as we shall see, it contains many of his most marked characteristics.

The motive, - that of a girl disguising herself as a boy, in order, unknown to him, to be near to, and to serve the man she loves, - is by no means new. Shakespeare has used it in AS YOU LIKE IT, and Heinrich Laube wrote, in 1843, a tragedy entitled GUSTAV ADOLF, in which he made his page a girl. However, it is probable that Meyer never read the latter, as he prides himself on this idea being an invention of his own. He claimed to have got the idea from Goethe's EGMONT, where Klärchen says:

"Wenn ich nur ein Bube, und könnte immer mit ihm gehen."

He speaks as follows:


The setting of the story is Nürnberg, and the time just before the battle of Lützen, during which Gustavus Adolphus lost his life.
The story opens in a magnificent room in a large, newly-built house near the city wall, with the merchant prince Leubelfing and his son sitting balancing their books for the year, and waiting with breathless interest to see what their profits are going to be. Just then a cornet of horse is introduced, bearing a letter from no other than King Gustavus himself. Leubelfing, as an important citizen of Nürnberg, has entertained the king at a banquet a short time before, and he now feels himself highly honored at receiving such a personal letter, until he opens it. His consternation shows on his face, and the son asks what is wrong. It seems that, at the banquet, in drinking to the health of their guest, some one in the audience had called out, "Long live Gustavus Adolphus, the future king of Germany". The father, who had drunk too much wine, thought to flatter his guest by saying that it was his son who had said these words, and that the son's highest ambition was to serve the king as page. At the time there seemed not the remotest possibility of such a thing happening, but here is a letter from the king, stating that his two former pages have been killed in battle, and offering the position to Leubelfing's son.

The son groans and the sweat stands out on his forehead as he looks up at the magnificent ceiling of their room, on which Meyer, with characteristic symbolism, has described a painting of Abraham offering up his son Isaac. He feels as if his father is sacrificing him too. He realizes that he must go, or the family will be disgraced forever and he will be branded as a coward, but he is willing to snatch at any straw to escape.

Just then the heroine, Gustel, enters to call them to supper.
The author has made the story probable by making her as much like a boy as possible. She has short hair, a deep alto voice, and rather hoydenish manners. As a child she had grown up with her father in the army, and she is more at home in the saddle, and wearing a man's clothes than in her own. Now her parents are both dead and she has come to live here in Nürnberg with her uncle. Her favorite uniform is that worn by her father when he was killed in battle. All her life Gustavus Adolphus has been her hero, whom she has openly worshipped.

Coming into the room, she sees their depression, and when told about the letter and its cause, she admits having hailed Adolphus as king of Germany, for she had been at the banquet disguised in her father's clothes. Her cowardly cousin says she ought to go in his place for having got him into such trouble, and the idea pleases her at once. It seems like the hand of fate, which is bringing her to her hero. She hasn't much time to think, for just then the cornet of horse is announced who is to take the page back with him. Urged by her uncle and cousin, she hurries off to get into her father's uniform, and the two go away together.

In spite of her boyish appearance, which the author takes pains to emphasize, she is still a modest girl, and will not allow the cornet to take any liberties, though he has not the slightest idea that she is not a boy. Once with the king her troubles begin; for while near him she tastes the highest joy, yet one thing after another happens to disturb her peace. The first day she sees a girl who has been disguised as a boy whipped out of the camp in disgrace.
cannot help liking the queen, who is very kind to her, yet she is intensely jealous of her. Then, too, she cannot be with Gustavus Adolphus long before learning his attitude toward deceit and trickery. This is shown by an incident of a Jesuit tutor who had attempted to proselytize the young daughter of the king, and here Meyer's protestantism and his hatred of the Jesuits is again revealed. The only time Gustel is really happy is when she is riding to battle beside her hero and facing death with him. For 'courte et bonne' is her motto. For her the highest happiness - one supreme moment of ecstasy - and then death, swift and sudden. She knows that her days with the king are numbered. Her unmasking may come at any moment. The incident of Corinne shows her this. Corinne is the mistress of Count Launberg, who, a short time before, had married a friend of the queen, and then left her on their wedding-day for the beautiful Corinne. The queen has made a complaint to the king, on her friend's behalf, and the king orders Corinne to be brought before him. The king is out when she arrives and the page receives her. She soon realizes that the page is a girl, and accuses Gustel of being even more shameless than herself, for, she says, "I have never stooped to the disgrace of wearing men's clothes." Gustel, in an agony of fear, confesses that the king knows nothing about her sex, and that she is there because she loves him. Corinne appreciates this motive, for she, too, loves Launberg, and declares that the king cannot force her to give him up.

Just then the king comes in. He tries to show Corinne what a sinful life she is leading, and threatens to send her home to her
father. She says her father would kill her if she went home, so the king says he will send her to Sweden to a Protestant Reformatory, where she will be properly taught. Corinne realizes that this means she will have to become a heretic, a dreadful thing to one who has always been so strict in following the rites of the church. Here Meyer's Protestantism is again in evidence, in making Corinne, in spite of her way of living, a good orthodox Catholic. In the meantime the page is in agony, for she fears that Corinne will take her revenge on the king by telling him all. Instead, however, the poor creature cuts her throat, and is carried out of the room dead.

The whole episode shows Gustel how easy and horrible an unmasking would be for her, and she thinks of running away, but, one more evening with the king, who runs his hand through her curly hair, and laughingly rebukes her sharp replies, and she has to stay. The king has not the slightest idea that his pleasure in the page's company is due to her sex. It is interesting to see how the author has avoided the eroticism which seems almost inevitable in a story with such a motive, but there is hardly a trace of it.

It is interesting, also, to note how cleverly Meyer has described the life in Adolphus' camp, and to compare it with Schiller's description of Wallenstein's camp, as shown in the LAGER. Among the common soldiers there is a strong religious enthusiasm, and an ardent Protestantism, also a great admiration for their hero, Adolphus. They are no ordinary soldiers of fortune, like Wallenstein's men. Instead of the drinking songs of Schiller's play, these soldiers go around chanting
hymns, such as the famous swan-song of Gustavus Adolphus, "Verzage
nicht, du HMuflein klein". This song can be found in most English and
American hymn-books, in Miss Winkworth's translation, as "Fear not, O
ye little flock". Thus does the author succeed in giving us local color.

In strong contrast is the conduct of the German nobles. They are disloyal and rebellious, and ready to rob even their own people. The king's speech, in which he scolds them roundly for a band of thievish marauders, is taken almost word for word from Meyer's source. And it makes an impression upon them, too, that is, upon all except Count Launberg. The king has made an enemy of him, and is to suffer through him later on.

Meyer has been criticised for making a great man like Adolphus merely a subordinate character in the story, but I think the criticism is hardly justified, for he is an entirely sympathetic character, fully worthy of the page's admiration and love, and the fact that he is subordinate does not strike us as a fault. For Meyer, he is the great Protestant hero, almost as completely without flaw as Duke Rohan. And as such, he is intended to contrast with Wallenstein, in the episode where the two are brought together. After reading Schiller's play it must be admitted that Meyer's Wallenstein is a little disappointing, but of course we only see him on this one occasion, and no doubt the atmosphere of superstition with which he is surrounded is quite historic. It is also brought in Schiller's play. He advances the plot by warning Adolphus of treachery, and the poor page gets the blame, because Launberg's voice sounds like hers, and because the same glove fits both.
The story of Launberg’s talking in his sleep and revealing all his treachery to Wallenstein seems just a little incredible, though Wallenstein mentions the same thing as having happened to Coligny. Then the poor page, when she sees herself suspected of treachery, runs away, just at the moment when she knows that the king is in the greatest danger, which does not seem exactly like Gustel. She does not leave the army, however, for she meets her father’s old Colonel, Ake Tott. He is her godfather, and has known her from a child. He recognizes her and takes her to his tent, where, much to her disgust, she meets his batman, Jacob Erichson, who is really a woman. The good soul, to keep her family from starving, has taken her dead husband’s place, and his clothes. This is just another example of Meyer’s fondness for repeating the ‘Leitmotiv’ of his story again and again with variations.

The incident in which the Naumberg citizens meet the king and fall down before him as if he were a god, is quite historic, and it reminds one of Christ’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem. And, like Christ, the king accepts it as an omen of the near approach of death, and so does Gustel, who has seen it from a distance. She can stand it no longer, and breaking her word to her godfather, she hurries back to her old place with the king, who accepts her presence without surprise or comment. In truth, his mind is occupied with other things, for it is the evening before Lützen, and he has the affairs of the battle to arrange. The scene in which he addresses his soldiers before the battle is most touching.

Then Launberg comes in and, like the prodigal son, kneels
before the king, begging his forgiveness, which he grants, and they both ride together into the battle, followed by the page. The battle itself is not described.

The last scene is in the parsonage of a nearby village. The parson's conversation with his housekeeper, Ida, seems hardly necessary to the development of the story, though it may have been intended to give us an idea of the Protestantism of the time. The door is suddenly opened by the page, bearing the dead body of the king, and herself covered with blood. She lays the body on a couch and attempts to wash off the wounds, but falls in a faint. She is borne to a couch and they discover a mortal wound in the chest. It is only when examining the wound that they find out the page is a girl. For some unexplained reason, we find the same cornet of horse there as at the beginning of the story, also Gustel's cowardly cousin, and her godfather, Ake Tott. It is almost a mannerism of Meyer's to have the same characters appear at the end, as at the beginning of a story, and thus give symmetry to it. In this case, however, it seems rather improbable to have these people all turn up just here.

The page, with her last gasp, attempts to stammer out something about 'Launberg' and 'treachery', but dies in the midst of it, her last glance being directed to her beloved king's face. Her cousin thinks that, now she is dead, he will be able to resume his own name again, but they all agree that this must not be. For the sake of the dead king's reputation, the page must be buried as a boy, and they must all keep silent about her sex, a silence as deep and profound as that in
DER SCHUSZ VON DER KANZEL.

The bodies are removed to the church, where the page lies in state at her beloved king's feet, and the sun which has succeeded the fog of the day of battle, shines on the king and spares a glance for the page's happy face. 'Courte et bonne' has been her life, and she has got her wish, to die beside her hero.

The story has several weak spots, as we have seen, but in spite of them there is something gripping about it. Gustel is almost as attractive a character as Georg, the page in Goethe's GOETZ VON BERLICHINGEN, and, as a psychological study, the character of Gustavus himself is extremely well done.

The story first appeared as PAGE LEUBELFING in DIE DEUTSCHE RUNDSCAU of 1882, and shortly after it appeared in book-form, under its present title.

(7) DIE LEIDEN EINES KNABEN, 1883.

From the stirring times of the thirty years' war, we come now to the period of the sun-king, Louis XIV. This comes nearest to the modern age of any of Meyer's stories, the time being the latter part of Louis' reign, when Madame de Maintenon was his favorite, and when he had begun to come under the influence of the Jesuits. As in the previous story, the Protestant Meyer's hatred of the Society of Jesus is very much in evidence. The story is based on a few lines from the 'Mémoires' of Saint-Simon, which Meyer had read with peculiar interest.
The story of the unhappy youth, Julian Boufflers, who was done to death by the Jesuits, is the most autobiographical of all Meyer's works, and for that reason it is one of the most touching, for in it he puts all the sufferings of his own frustrated and unhappy youth. He, too, was an 'ungifted' scholar, and suffered all the humiliations from his teachers and fellow-pupils, which he describes so sympathetically in DIE LEIDEN EINES KNABEN. In the story, too, we have many other things which were characteristics of the boy, Meyer, such as his love for dogs, his skill in fencing, and his talent for drawing.

It is another 'Rahmenerszählung', the story being put into the mouth of Pagon, the king's physician, an eccentric but kind-hearted old man. Like Hans the Bowman, and Poggio, he paints his own character as he tells the tale, and story and framework are so intimately bound up together that at times it becomes almost a dialogue between him and the king, with Madame de Maintenon occasionally joining in. He takes a great deal of liberty in addressing the king, more than seems quite allowable, from what we know of the historic Louis XIV. For example, he occasionally addresses the king with 'du'. The whole story forms a sort of treatise on the proper education of children, and the ideas are so modern, that it seems almost an anachronism to put them in the mouth of a character of the seventeenth century. It is one of the author's most life-like and charming creations, and contains on almost every page, little touches which make the characters and the period stand out before our eyes.

When the story opens, it is late in the afternoon, and the
king has just come to pay his accustomed daily visit to his favorite, Mme de Maintenon. She is really his wife, and Meyer calls her so, though their union, owing to the jealousy of the Jesuits, has been sanctified by no marriage ceremony. The description of this clever tactful woman and of the sun-king himself is historically accurate, even to such a characteristic touch as his opening of the window and Mme de Maintenon's shivering as the cold air blows into the room.

During their conversation, we learn that the king's confessor has just died, and that he has appointed Father Tellier, the head of a famous Jesuit boys' school in Paris, to be his successor. The king is quite vexed at Fagon, his physician, who was standing in the room when the Jesuit was explaining his peasant origin. Fagon, under his breath, but overheard by the king, had called the Jesuit a name, which the king would not repeat, 'for he never allowed a coarse expression to soil his lips.' He tells Mme de Maintenon, however, that Fagon is counting too much on being indispensable, and is taking too great liberties, but, just then Fagon, who has heard the latter part of this speech, limps into the room on his crutch, and attempts to justify his conduct.

Fagon explained his remark as having been prompted by disgust because the king had appointed Father Tellier to be his confessor, and called the man a murderer, who had done to death one of his own pupils, Julian Boufflers. The king remembered this youth, a handsome well set-up young fellow, who had been presented to him by his father some time ago, but the boy was shy and stuttered, so the king had dismissed him rather summarily. Mme de Maintenon, who had been a friend of his mother,
noticing his humiliation, had befriended him, and found him, while not exactly clever, yet with most pleasing manners. But her friendship had caused the jealousy of Saint-Simon,

"das lauschende Ohr, das spürende Auge, das uns alle beobachtet, und die gefübte Hand, die mächtlicherweile hinter verriegelten Türen von uns allen leidenschaftlichen Zerrbilder aus das Papier wirft."

This is an exact characterization of Saint-Simon, though it is doubtful if Mme de Maintenon or anyone else knew so much about him at that time. Saint-Simon had then given to young Julian Boufflers the nickname of 'le bel idiot', which had stuck to him, to his infinite humiliation. This is an invention of Meyer's and is not found in Saint-Simon. The king, however, refused to believe that young Boufflers had been murdered. His own father had told him that the boy had died from brain fever, brought on by too much study, in the effort to keep up with his classes. Fagon, however, insists that he is right, and goes on to explain.

He begins by describing a performance of Molière's MALADE IMAGINAIRE at which he had been present. Those who have read the play will remember the passage where Diaforus, with the partiality of a fond parent, praises his stupid son, who could never learn anything. Under Molière's skilful sarcasm, the passage is most comical, but Fagon saw a beautiful lady there wiping away a tear, and he knew that she, too, was the parent of an 'ungifted' son. The lady was Julian's mother, the first wife of Marshall Boufflers. Both the king and Mme de Maintenon remembered her beauty, and Fagon had loved her, as he had loved no other women, though she, too, had not been clever.
Soon afterwards she became ill, and Fagon attended her as physician. Before she died she made him promise to befriend her poor young son, and to guard him from the humiliations that were bound to come to him when he mingled at school with cleverer boys. For his father was so occupied with his work in the king's armies, that he had no time to look after his son. And besides the father simply could not believe that a son of his could not be clever enough to cut a good figure in the world. The poor boy was bound to suffer, for the great danger was that he would over-exert himself trying to please his father, whom he blindly loved.

A year after her death, her husband had married again, and a school must now be found for Julian. At that time, in Paris, the best schools were conducted by the Jesuits, and to the one under Father Tellier Julian was sent. At first all went well. The fathers, knowing that Julian's father stood high in the king's service, exerted themselves to make things pleasant for him. His studies were made as easy as possible and he seemed quite happy.

Suddenly, however, all had changed. Marshall Boufflers had found Father Tellier engaged in some villany, and he refused to hand over to them his evidence. With the threat of exposure hanging over their heads, they could do nothing with the Marshall himself, so took their revenge on the innocent Julian. His life was made miserable for him with difficult lessons which he could not learn, and with being placed in classes with small boys, much younger than himself. His health began to suffer, and the Jansenist, Fagon, who knew the Jesuits, and who hated them, even as Pascal did, wanted Julian removed from the school. It is easy to see
how Meyer's reading of the LETTRES PROVINCIALES has influenced this work.

The father, however, would not hear of having Julian removed, and the poor boy continued to suffer. And yet he had occasional days of sunshine, too. Fagon's description of his day spent with Mouton, the great animal painter of the time, is touching and interesting. Mouton is a dissipated, unconventional figure, a sort of half-man, as Meyer calls him, but he can paint animals, and he loves his poodle, Mouton II, as does also Julian, and the death of the poodle soon brings on the death of his master. But on this one day, they are all perfectly happy. Mouton is teaching Julian to draw, and the poor boy's delight in finding something he can do well is most touching. His drawings of animals show real talent, and a spirit that is absent even from Mouton's. Through this talent for drawing the author prepares the way very skilfully for the catastrophe soon to come.

One day on going through the park, they come upon a caged wolf, which Julian cannot bear to look upon, because the expression on its face reminds him of Father Tellier, who among his pupils went by the name of "The Wolf", - a good example of the symbolic touches frequently introduced by the author. Then Mouton talks of taking Julian away to the south of France with him to the castle of the Grignans, for he has been commissioned by Madame de Sévigné to paint some pictures for the governor there, her son-in-law. Thus in numerous ways does the author give us the interesting background of the time.

Julian's little blue sweetheart, Mirabella, is another example of a child who suffers from a wrong system of education, and their
common suffering from the ridicule of their mates brings them together. She has been brought up in the Provinces, where preciosity is still in vogue, and she cannot break herself of their manner of speaking, even though it brings her ridicule in Paris, where it is no longer the fashion. Such a point is a typical Meyer touch. Molière's LES PRÉCIEUSES RIDICULES has had its effect on the latter years of Louis XIV's reign.

Julian in spite of his backwardness has eventually become rather a favorite with his school-mates, and an object of envy to some of them, for at shooting, fencing and riding, he wins the respect even of his masters. The story of his chum, Guntram, whose highest ambition was to follow the king's armies to battle, but who was too near-sighted to shoot straight, is very touching.

"Ein hübscher Gott," hohnlachte er, und zeigte dem Himmel die Faust", der mir Kriegslust und Blindheit, und dir einen Körper ohne Geist gegeben hat."

Julian's highest ambition, too, is to follow his father into battle, and he envies one of his chums, who has died fighting for his king. If he has any grievance against his father, it is that his father has let this other boy go with him to fight, while he leaves Julian at school, sitting at his desk among the smaller boys.

And then, rather suddenly comes the final catastrophe. At school one day, when the masters are out of the room, the boys who know his skill, coax Julian to draw a picture on the blackboard. Julian, busy with his lessons, at first refuses, but is at length persuaded to draw a bee, which he labels, 'abeille', but is persuaded to change it to 'bête à miel', or 'stupid Amiel'. He does not realize that
this is intended as a rather poor pun on the name of one of his teachers, Father Amiel, a kind-hearted old fellow, whose enormously large nose, like that of Cyrano de Bergerac, has made him a marked man. In spite of his vanity, he is a pleasing old fellow, and the boys like him, though they tease him unmercifully about his long nose. Like Boccard in the Amulet, and Father Pankrazi in the Jenatsch, this is another example of a Catholic character whom Meyer has made most attractive.

When Father Amiel comes in and sees the picture, the noise made by the boys attracts the attention of Father Tellier, who has been listening at the door. He rushes in and in a rage calls for the boy who made the drawing. Of course Julian has to confess that he did it, and though his chum, young Argenson, tries to take all the blame, yet Julian is called up and brutally whipped by Tellier, in front of the class.

This humiliation is too much for the boy. His body, already weakened by overstudy, cannot stand the strain of the public disgrace, for though a boy in years he has the soul of a man, and of a nobleman at that. He becomes seriously ill, and Fagon is sent for to take him home. But even when at home, he cannot rest, for his father insists on his appearance at dinner, where he has to listen to a long conversation on corporal punishment in the army. The subject is argued pro and con, and even Mirabelle gives it as her opinion that a soldier who has been so disgraced can no longer continue to live. Julian takes that decision as his death-warrant. He is put to bed by Fagon, and in a short time is delirious.

Young Argenson enlists the aid of his father, and the two
go to Tellier, in an effort to get him to apologize to Julian for the injustice done him, and thus save his life. That, they tell him, is what their great example, the Nazarene, would have done. But Tellier refuses to apologize to a school-boy, least of all to a son of the hated Marshall Boufflers. He screams in his rage: "What have I to do with the Nazarene?"

Even Father Amiel stands up to him and tells him he is wrong, a bold thing for the trembling old man to do, for 'The Wolf' has his subordinates thoroughly cowed.

Then Fagon in despair tells the whole truth to the father, and blames him for his boy's illness. The father sees his error, and, wiping away a tear, he says, "At least I will see that he dies happy."

He goes to the boy's room and speaks to him. "Julian", he says, "you are to leave that school at once, and join the army with me." The boy, though he has been unconscious for days, seems to hear and understand. His eyes shine. In imagination he is already at the head of the line, leading his troops to victory. But death comes, and with a 'Vive le roi' on his lips, he falls back as if a bullet had struck him. In imagination, at least, he has met the glorious death in battle, which the Page Leubelfing had met in reality.

But if Fagon had hoped to influence the king against Tellier, he soon saw his mistake. The king's prejudices were too strong. "Armes Kind" was all he said, and got up to go. The sorrows of the poor Julian Boufflers had only served to entertain, for an idle hour, a king and his mistress.
Yea, thou shalt learn how salt his food who fares
Upon another's bread, - how steep his path
Who treadeth up and down another's stairs.
Dante's Div. Com. Para. XVII.

In this story, the last in which Meyer employs the
Rahmenzählung, we have the technique of this art of story-telling carried
to its highest point. It is doubtful if, in all literature, we can find
a better example of this particular genre than here. As in the PLAUTUS
IM NONNENKLOSTER, the author chooses a period with which he was to occupy
himself very much from now on, the Italian Renaissance. The narrator
is the great poet Dante himself.

It is a bold thing for any author to do, to bring another
author back to earth again, as it were, and put words in his mouth.
Especially is this the case with such a great poet as Dante, but none the
less, Meyer has here succeeded admirably. The story which Dante tells,
or rather improvises, is quite worthy of such an author, though he him­
self, rather than the monk, Astorre, is the real hero.

Dante has been banished by his fellow-countrymen from
Florence, his native city, and has accepted the hospitality of Can Grande
della Scala at Verona. Like most poets, he is temperamental, and we
can see that he must have been a rather difficult guest sometimes, but he
could scarcely have helped realizing that he was not being generously
treated. He was housed in an attic reached by steep stairs, and often
neglected by the servants. Can Grande himself, a typical pleasure-loving
gentleman of the Renaissance, if history tells us truly, does not always seem to have been as hospitable to his guest as he might have been, and perhaps Dante's words from the Paradiso, quoted above, may have been inspired by him.

When the story opens, it is a dark cold evening in November, and Can Grande, his wife, Diana, his lady friend, Antiope, and several other guests are gathered around the great open fire-place, telling stories. The door opens, and the dark and rather forbidding face of Dante appears. He has come there really to warm himself, for the servants have neglected to put a fire in his room. Place is made for him beside the fire, and he is asked to take his part in the story-telling, the subject being sudden change of occupation, with results good, bad or laughable, as the case may be. Dante is quite willing, and says his story will be about a monk, who was quite happy in his calling, but who has been forced by circumstances, by motives of the highest piety, indeed, to put off his monk's garb, and become a worldling. He got the idea of his story from an inscription on a tomb in Padua, he says. Translated from the Latin, this inscription reads: "Here lies the monk Astorre, with his wife, Antiope, Ezzolino gave them sepulchre." This monk, Astorre, is the hero of his story.

Turning to Can Grande he asks how such a story is likely to turn out and Can Grande says:

"Notwendig schlimm, denn wer aus freiem Anlaufe springt, springt gut; wer gestoszen wird, springt schlecht."

This is really the motto of the story.

As Dante looks over the brilliant and clever company, he
sees himself surrounded by friendly faces in the main, with the exception of Can Grande's fool, Gocciola, whom he despises, and who returns the feeling with interest. He also sees the rivalry of the two women for the favor of Can Grande, and all this he weaves into his story, for he improvises, giving his characters the names and actions of the people in the room, and thus adding to the interest. The whole thing is so cleverly done, that the two stories fit into one another like the wheels of a watch, or like a song and its accompaniment.

The tyrant Ezzolino of Padua, the only historic character in Dante's tale, while travelling on horseback along the banks of the river Brenta near Padua, meets a wedding-party in a boat. This party consists of the elder son of the Vicedomini, his newly betrothed wife, Diana, and his three sons by his first wife. We are told that he has married this tall and stately woman without love, in order to please his dying father, who wishes him to carry on the family line, — an absolute obsession on the old man's part. As the party turns to greet Ezzolino, the overladen boat capsizes, and they are soon all struggling in the water. Just then the monk, Astorre, the younger brother of the bridegroom, comes up, and he and Ezzolino try to rescue the drowning, but they only succeed in saving Diana. The others have been pulled down by the current and are drowned. This leaves Astorre as the only son of his house, for his two elder brothers have been killed a short time before in one of Ezzolino's wars.

While the others are searching for the bodies, Astorre brings the half-drowned Diana home to his father's house, but finds that
Ezzolino has reached there before him, and has told the old man the news. In a towering rage, the latter blames Ezzolino for the death of all his sons, though Ezzolino tells him to blame fate and not him for bringing him to the river-bank at that particular moment. Then the old father insists that Astorre shall break his monk's vows, and marry Diana in his brother's place. He shows a dispensation from the pope, with which he has provided himself for just such an emergency.

But Astorre shrinks from such a step. As a monk he is beloved by the people, who will be disillusioned if he goes into the world again, and besides, his monkish life based on its three vows of poverty, obedience and chastity is congenial to him. But the father would rather lose his hope of heaven than see his line discontinued here on earth. He refuses to take the sacraments for the dying unless Astorre consents, and sooner than see his father lose his soul, by refusing the last rites of the Church, he lets himself be persuaded, and he and Diana are betrothed, just before the old man, with a triumphant smile on his face, dies.

Astorre has done a foolish thing, and Meyer indicates this symbolically, by letting the family fool, whom he names Gocciolo, get possession of his old monk's frock. Diana goes home to her father, for nine days of mourning must elapse before the wedding. This time Astorre spends in his father's house, which is now his, though he cannot get used to his new possessions, or to his secular clothes, and he is ashamed to show himself in the streets.

As he sits on the grass one day, he is joined by two of his old school-friends, Germano, the brother of Diana, and Ascanio, the nephew
of Ezzolino. They are both ardent followers of the tyrant, Ezzolino, - Ascanio, because he is a real 'Renaissanzmensch' who wishes to enjoy to the full all that life has to offer, and Germano, on account of 'loyalty'. It is interesting to note how the author makes that virtue again depend on race. He gives Diana and Germano a German mother and an Italian father, and both are large-hearted, direct and straightforward. On account of her German blood Diana is the soul of loyalty, but she will also insist that others shall be loyal to her. This 'deutsche Treue' is a favorite subject with Meyer, as we have already seen, - for example - in the character of Gertrude, in the Plautus story.

These young friends advise Astorre to travel, and see other places and other women, before coming home to marry, for his fifteen years in the cloister have quite unfitted him for a secular life. Ezzolino, however, who has overheard this advice, appears suddenly and gives orders that the wedding must take place that same evening. He commands Astorre's major-domo to deliver invitations to all the first families in the city.

It is interesting to note how everyone obeys without question the orders of Ezzolino. The author tells us that he had not yet begun to practise the cruelty for which historians tells us he was afterwards so notorious, but we have a hint of it every now and then, for example, in his fondness for closing the eyes of a corpse who has just died. Here Dante gives a veiled warning to Can Grande, who exemplifies the qualities of the younger Ezzolino. Let him beware of developing into such another ruthless tyrant, he seems to infer.
Here, too, occurs a digression which is perhaps the only blemish on an otherwise perfect story. Ezzolino reads a letter from the Pope, addressed to the Emperor, Friedrich Hohenstaufen, whose son-in-law he is. The Emperor has a Chancellor, Petrus del Vinea, who is afterwards executed as a traitor, and the whole thing is forecast in this letter, and in Ezzolino's conversation over it. The episode has absolutely nothing to do with the progress of the story, either now or later on, and this is very unusual for Meyer, who practically never introduces the slightest episode that is not necessary for the development of his plot. He usually had more than one subject in hand at once, and was engaged at this time in writing another Novelle, with Petrus del Vinea as the hero, and the only explanation is that he was so full of the other subject that he had to inject this reference to it here.

Just then there is an interruption from Can Grande's pedantic major-domo, Burcardo, and Dante brings a major-domo into his story, also called Burcardo, much to the real Burcardo's disgust. The friends consult him as to who shall receive invitations to the wedding, and they are about to refuse to invite Antiope Canossa and her mentally unbalanced mother. But just then Astorre remembers something that had happened three years before, which has remained in his memory ever since. In his mind's eye he sees an old man with his head on the block, about to be executed, and beside him a young girl also bares her beautiful white neck to the executioner. It was Antiope's father, condemned to death by Ezzolino, and she had wanted to die with him. The shock of his death
has been too much for the mother, and ever since her mind has been affected. Astorre has not seen the girl since, but now he remembers her, and insists that both she and her mother shall receive invitations to the wedding, in spite of the objections of his friends that the mother will be sure to do something embarrassing.

Then the two friends persuade Astorre to go to buy his wedding-ring. He goes to a Florentine jeweller, who has a shop in the middle of the town's only bridge, just because, in Florence, the jewellers all have their shops on bridges. Dante's opinion of his fellow-countryman, and of Florentines in general, is not very complimentary, and he is rather sharply taken to task for it by Can Grande. Without replying, Dante looks toward the window, against which the snow is driving in gusts outside. And all at once Can Grande remembers that he is speaking to a homeless man, who has no roof of his own to shelter him from the storm, and Dante is asked to draw his seat up closer to the fire. The little episode is quite touching.

There is a great crowd on the bridge, when Astorre arrives, and the Florentine is doing a brisk business. At length Astorre's turn comes, but he does not know the size of the ring he wants to get. The sly Florentine shows him two rings, a large and a small one, and says: "For your two sweethearts", as he presses them into his hand. Just then a troop of soldiers go by, crowding the people off the bridge, and the smaller ring rolls away. It is picked up by Antiope's maid, Isotti, who puts it on her mistress' finger. When the crowd has lessened a little, Astorre comes looking for his ring, and sees it on Antiope's finger. He
recognizes her as the girl whose head he had seen on the block three years before, and is about to ask for his ring back, when he is carried away forcibly by Germano. Thus again does fate play her part in his undoing.

The maid then tells the mother a highly colored story about Astorre's purposely giving Antiope the ring, and she at once jumps to the conclusion that her daughter is about to win a rich husband.

That evening all the families invited by the major-domo are assembled at Astorre's house for the ceremony of exchanging rings, which is a continuation of the betrothal ceremony. Astorre exchanges rings with Diana, and acknowledges her as his future wife. But Antiope's insane mother, seeing all her dreams fading, gets into a rage, so she stands before Diana, and calls her and her parents some very uncomplimentary names. Diana cannot stand this and strikes out angrily at her, only to hit Antiope instead. The poor girl is ready to die with shame and embarrassment, and she now bursts out weeping. The mother rushes off, and the party breaks up in disorder. Astorre, like the gentleman he is, takes Antiope home. It is during this short journey to Antiope's house that they find out they love each other, though Astorre does not speak.

Here occurs another delightful little digression. The two women, Diana and Antiope, burst out in protest at Astorre's remaining silent, and Dante smiles for the first time that evening;

"da er die beiden Frauen so heftig auf der Schaukel seines Märchens sich wiegen sah."

When Astorre comes home, he finds the fool in the empty room filling himself with the wine the guests have left. As Astorre
marches up and down talking to himself about Antiope, and the half-
drunken fool imitates him, we realize that the author is again symbolically
emphasizing how little reasoning control is left to Astorre. Finally,
Gocciola asks him what is to become of the other woman, and he says:

"What other? Is there another woman that is not Antiope?"

Astorre is overheard by Ascanio, who endeavors to bring
him to his senses, and he soon partly realizes himself the danger of the
course he is pursuing. Germano enters and offers to solve the difficult
problem by marrying Antiope himself. He wants Astorre to go with him
while he makes the proposal. Astorre suspects that Germano has already
begun to love the beautiful but unhappy girl, and he feels intensely
jealous.

They find Antiope's house deserted, and pass unannounced
through several empty rooms, before they find her sitting alone by a
window, and gazing out into the night. She makes a beautiful picture
sitting there, and Meyer's description does it justice. This is another
example of his fondness for tableaux. Germano makes his proposal,
which Antiope of course rejects. When he goes away, Astorre does not
follow him. What then passes between him and Antiope the author leaves
to the reader's imagination.

Some time afterwards, the mother finds the lovers sitting
together in the window-seat. It is her hour of triumph. It is the
anniversary of her husband's execution three years before, and even now the
priest is waiting in the chapel near by, to conduct the memorial service.
But the same priest will do for a marriage ceremony, and she hurries the
two into the chapel, where they are made man and wife. Then, all at once, realizing what a dangerous thing she has done, she orders her horses and rides away.

As the two come out of the chapel, they meet Ascanio, who has come to see what has become of Astorre. He delivers them over to the keeping of Abu Mohammed, the body-watch of Ezzolino, and they are both lodged as prisoners in Astorre's house, Antiope refusing to leave her husband. Their case will have to be judged by Ezzolino, for after such an affront to Diana and Germano, Astorre's life is no longer safe. On the way to Astorre's house, they meet the funeral procession of a dead bride, and the coffin is overturned, exposing the corpse. Thus symbolically does Meyer prepare us for the coming tragedy.

In the meantime, the people have become aware of the monk's marriage, and his treachery to Diana almost causes a riot. But Ezzolino is above the crowd. He is no respecter of persons, and will judge the case on its merits, in spite of the anger of the people.

The culprits and their accusers are called before him. He knows that Diana's father is a miser, so he arranges that Astorre shall pay him a large sum of money to soothe his wounded feelings. Germano refuses to be bound by this vile agreement, but this does not worry Ezzolino. Let him and Astorre fight it out between them. As for Diana who has twice been cheated of a husband, what remains for her but the cloister? The father being satisfied, Ezzolino decrees that Astorre's and Antiope's wedding shall be celebrated that night with a masked ball in Astorre's house, and while there, Antiope must humiliate herself
before Diana, and obtain from her the ring which Astorre has given her. Then he goes off on a trip to the country, from which he does not return till late.

As in JENATSCH, the final tragedy takes place during a festival. With song and dance and rough jesting, Astorre's people celebrate the wedding of the chief of their house. Antiope, who fears Diana's vengeance, tries to get her maid to impersonate her, but Astorre will not allow it, and so unwittingly he sends the poor girl to her doom. Pale as death, she seeks out Diana, and tries to get the ring from her finger. But she is pierced to the heart by the dagger of the enraged amazon, and falls dead at her feet. Astorre finds her dead and falls in a faint by her side. Then Germano rushes in. Astorre recovers consciousness and the two fight to the death, in spite of the orders of Ezzolino, who comes in only in time to close the eyes of the dead, while through the open window comes discordant laughter, and the words:

"Jetzt schlummert der Mönch Astorre neben seiner Gattin Antiope."

No words were spoken as Dante finished and turned to go, for none were needed. We are given a glimpse of the steep torch-lighted stairs up which he climbed. Even Can Grande was silent, that Can Grande whose only claim to greatness today is that he harbored Dante. D.G. Rossetti, in the last verse of his poem, DANTE AT VERONA, expresses it well when he says:

"Eat and wash hands Can Grande, — scarce
We know their deeds now: hands which fed
Our Dante with that bitter bread;
And thou the watch-dog of those stairs
Which of all paths his feet knew well
Were steeper found than heaven or hell."
If DIE LEIDEN EINES KNABEN had the most modern setting of any of Meyer's stories, DIE RICHTERIN has the most ancient, for it goes back to the shadowy days of Charlemagne, when Christianity was still struggling with heathenism, when the people believed in elves and fairies, and when the barbarian Lombards were still wandering over Europe. The author places the scene again in Rhätia, the country of JÜRG JENATSCH. The place is Malmort, a picturesque castle on the Upper Rhine, with high precipitous walls, against which the Rhine washes far below, with a sound like thunder. The very name of the place, Mal-mort, is symbolic.

This is one of the most dramatic of Meyer's 'Novellen'. It is divided into five chapters, corresponding to the five acts of a drama, and one can point out the exposition, ascending action, climax, descending action, and catastrophe, as in a drama. In the first chapter we have the exposition.

The story opens at Rome, where Charlemagne has gone to be crowned Emperor. He is at present attending mass in the church, 'Ari Coli', and the singing of the monks is heard by the young men of his palace-school, who are grouped around an equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius in the square before the church. While they are criticising the statue, a stranger appears among them, who announces himself as Gnadenreich, the nephew, though really the son of the Bishop of Chur, in Rhätia. He has been sent by the Bishop to obtain a copy of a book written by Alcuin, the secretary of Charlemagne. Here he meets Wulfrin, the
son of Wulf, who, however, bears no love for his dead father, who had ill-
treated his mother, and shut her away in a convent. Then, after her
death, he had married a young wife. Wulfrin had run away from home when
he was seven years old, so he has never seen his step-mother, and does
not know that he has a beautiful young sister till Gnadenreich tells him
about her. Her name is Palma Novella, and she is lovely and straight
like the young palm-tree by the fountain where they are standing. He
also shyly confesses that he is in love with her and wishes to marry her.
Gnadenreich admits, however, that his real purpose here is to bear a
message from Wulfrin's step-mother, Stemma. She wants him to come home,
and acknowledge openly before all the people, that he does not hold her
responsible for the death of his father. For the father had dropped dead
just after draining a beaker of wine, which his wife had offered to him
as he returned from a journey.

The young Stemma, when only sixteen, had had another lover,
the clerk Peregrin, and was secretly married to him. Her grim father had
cought them together, and had strangled Peregrin and thrown his body
over a cliff. Not knowing that Stemma was to have a child, he had be-
trothed her to Wulf, as his third wife, though Wulf was an elderly gray-
haired man, and Stemma did not love him. However, she had to submit,
but before she went to her husband's house, her father was killed, and Wulf
had to go and avenge him. It was when returning from this expedition,
that his sudden death took place. According to a family tradition, the
husband blew his hunting-horn when returning from a journey, and the wife
had to fill a beaker with wine, and take three draughts from it, repeating
forward and back the lines written on the beaker, before giving it to the husband, to drain at a draught. From the way she did this, the husband could tell if she had been faithful to him or not, when he was away. Since Stemma had been the first to drink from the beaker, no one had at the time suspected her of poisoning her husband.

Wulfrin, however, would not consent to come home, even though Gnadenreich told him how much his sister longed for him. But just then he was told that the king was coming out of the church, so, with a mighty blast of his horn, (the one his father had owned), he called all the young men together before Charlemagne, who stood on the steps before the church. Then Gnadenreich saw one of his own countrymen approach the king with a petition, which he handed to Alcuin to read, for Charlemagne himself was illiterate. It is through little touches like this, that the author gives us the correct historical setting. This petition is from Stemma, who has asked Charlemagne to come himself to Thmita, and drive away the Lombards who are overrunning the land and robbing her people. The king promises to go, and plans to send Wulfrin on in advance, especially when he learns from Gnadenreich that Wulfrin's step-mother desires his presence. So fate seems to be leading Wulfrin, against his will, back to his native land. This completes the exposition.

In chapter two we are at Stemma's castle at Malmort. Stemma is away attending to business affairs, for, since the death of her father and husband, she has inherited her father's office of judge, and is known far and wide over the country-side for her skill in ferreting out crime. Her daughter, Palma Novella, a beautiful brown-eyed young
girl, is alone in the courtyard of the castle. She is in great excite-
ment, for she has heard that Charlemagne is coming to Rhätia, and she
expects soon to see her brother, that brother whom she has longed for
and dreamed of all these years. Suddenly she sees a dirty figure, with
a long black beard, standing before her. It is a Lombard, who has come
to tell her that his master, Witigis, is holding her brother for ransom,
and unless she sends all her jewels to the mistress of Witigis, Wulfrin
will be killed. Palma runs at once and brings all her treasures, for
the life of Wulfrin is more precious to her than any jewels.

They are interrupted by Stemma, who has returned unex-
pectedly, and we have a glimpse of a tall figure in helmet and armor, a
regular Brunnhilde of the German forests. She threatens the Lombard,
who says jeeringly to her that she evidently wants Wulfrin killed. This
so distresses Palma that Stemma lets him take the jewels, and, as it is
now evening, she sends Palma to bed.

But before she retires to rest herself, she is called to
the prison to see a poor vassal of her own, Faustine, who has persisted
in shutting herself up there, because she wants Stemma to judge and punish
her for the murder of her husband, long years before. She has been al-
lowed to live to bring up her daughter, but now this daughter is married,
so Faustine's work is done, and her conscience is troubling her. She
insists that Stemma shall have her executed for this murder, and tells
how it happened. Like Stemma, she had had another lover who was killed
while hunting, and her father had betrothed her to one Lupulus against
her will. It is interesting to note the similarity of this 'Neben-
geschichte' to Stemma's own story, even to the names of the men, Lupulus
and Wulf. Faustine, to protect her unborn child, poisons her husband with a plant, the properties of which she has learned from Peregrin, though Peregrin knew nothing of the murder. Stemma refuses to judge Faustine, and sends her to confess to the Bishop of Chur.

Then she goes in to bed, but not to sleep. It is not worry about her office that keeps her awake. She had had a few stormy years after her husband's death, but now all is quiet and peaceful. However,

"Die überhetzte Natur rühchte sich, und Stemma verlor den Schlummer".

As she sat and watched her sleeping child she played with a flask at her throat, and we are told how there had formerly been two, one labelled 'antidote', so we can guess what has happened to Wulf, and why Stemma cannot sleep. However, there is only the poison-flask left now. Once, years ago, she had attempted to destroy it, when it fell into the hands of the tiny child, Palma, but she had unwittingly destroyed the antidote instead. Believing that fate willed it so, she had kept the other flask.

Now, in a sort of waking dream, she sees and talks with the spectre of Peregrin, who has come to see his child, and to remind her of her former love for him. But Stemma refuses to admit any guilt.

"Siehe mich an", she says, "gleiche ich einer Sünderin? Stemma ist makelloes."

Finally she drives Peregrin away, and will not let him have any part in Palma. She even defies the spirit of Wulf,

"denn Stemma kannte die Hilflosigkeit der Abgeschiedenen."

The whole thing forms a sort of subordinate 'Rahmenerzählung', which enables us to get a glimpse into the strong soul of Stemma. She had
acted for the best at the time, and will not let her present life be
spoiled by the pangs of an outraged conscience. Since her husband's
death she has lived a useful life, and will continue to live it, looking
not to the dead past, but to her daughter's future. She thinks herself
stronger than Nemesis itself.

The next morning they are awakened by the sound of a
hunting-horn, and Palma tries to welcome her brother with the full beaker
in accordance with the tradition of her family, but Stemma takes it from
her and sends her to call the vassals to the courtyard. And there
before the grave of his father she gets Wulfrin, much against his will,
to acknowledge that she is blameless for the death of Wulf. Wulfrin
thinks it a useless proceeding, for he has never suspected her of guilt.
Poor Stemma! it is the beginning of her unmasking. Then, as Wulfrin
stands beside her, she takes his hunting-horn from him and throws it over
the precipice into the Rhine. Nevermore will she hear its hated sound
again, for it reminds her of the day her husband died, - it is a symbol
of that buried past.

In the next chapter, or act three, the suspense increases.
Stemma wants Wulfrin to settle down here, and be a protection to his
sister, who will inherit Stemma's office and her lands. But Wulfrin feels
himself suffocated on this narrow rock. He must get back to the Emperor
again. However, he promises to remain for that day only, and make
arrangements for his sister's betrothal to Gnadenreich. Stemma offers
as guide the boy Gabriel. Palma begs to be allowed to go too, so the
three set out for Gnadenreich's home at Prätum. On the way, Gabriel and
Palma listen eagerly to Wulfrin's tales of the Emperor and his court. But Gabriel is called away, and the brother and sister remain alone together, beside Palma's favorite lake. Clasped in each other's arms, they are perfectly happy, and, as they see themselves reflected in the calm water, they can almost believe the tales of elves and fairies, with which the place is haunted. Here is the first hint of the love which is to follow.

But they must hurry on to Pratum, and they meet Gnadenreich on the boundary of his estate, guarding it from a band of marauding Lombards. He is delighted to see them, for he guesses the purpose of their visit. They arrive soon at his round-towered castle, where they have dinner up on the parapeted roof, and the subject of a betrothal with Gnadenreich is broached to Palma. Knowing nothing of love she consents merely to please her brother, and he, feeling that he is beginning to love her too much, is in a hurry to get the matter settled. For he knows now that she is the dearest thing on earth to him. Here we reach the climax of the drama, when Wulfrin realizes that he loves his sister.

A storm is coming up, and they must hurry home. Wulfrin, to hide his real feelings, treats Palma so roughly that the tears come into her eyes, and she withdraws her consent to marry Gnadenreich. There are two ways home, one over the hills, and the other through a valley. He will not let Palma go with him, so sends her along the high road, while he takes the low one through the valley. Here we have one of Meyer's most wonderful and characteristic descriptions of natural scenery, the storm breaking in this valley, symbolic of the storm which is raging
in Wulfrin's soul.

But, when the tempest is at its height, Palma crosses the dangerous precipice separating the two roads, on an overhanging log, and throws herself into Wulfrin's arms. "Kill me, if you will", she says, "but I cannot live if you are angry with me." Poor child. She has the same feeling for him, that he has for her, but does not realize as he does what it is. Again he thrusts her roughly from him, and she hurts her head on a stone, and falls bleeding and unconscious. He picks her up and carries her, till they meet Stemma with torches searching for them. He hands the unconscious Palma over to her, and rushes away into the darkness.

In chapter four, it is morning and Wulfrin has become calm again, the storm in his soul having passed with the storm of the evening before. Then Stemma comes out to seek him and soon worms his secret out of him. He confesses quite frankly that he loves Palma. Stemma tries to make him realize what an awful thing he is doing, but his only impulse is to confess it before the Emperor. Stemma reproaches him for lacking strength to keep his sin secret.

"Das ist Weibes Art und Weibes List", sagte er verächtlich."

He will bring the Emperor back with him, and confess all, and Stemma herself shall pass sentence on him. Stemma goes in, and he turns away to find a short cut over the mountains.

But just then he sees the boy Gabriel, who has fished his hunting-horn out of the Rhine. They try it, and find it unharmed, and he takes this as a good omen. Perhaps his father is watching over him.
He will take the horn to his grave and blow it, and perhaps his father will answer. So he goes to the grave and blows again and again. Receiving no reply, he wends his way over the hills.

In the meantime Stemma has gone to her room, but not to sleep. She sees now that by calling Wulfrin to her, she has set in motion forces that she cannot control. She has a vision of the Goddess of Justice gazing scornfully at her. The figure seems to threaten her, but she defies it. "What can you do? You have no witnesses," she says.

Then suddenly she hears the hunting-horn, which she had believed silenced forever, and the sound is dreadful to her. It seems to come from Wulf's grave. Perhaps the figure on the grave-stone has come to life and is blowing his horn to frighten her. But, nothing daunted, she will go out and defy it too.

In her overwrought state, she is ready to brave anything. The figure on the grave-stone is peaceful enough, but she calls to her dead husband and tells him everything, that Palma is not his child but Peregrin's, and that she had poisoned his beaker and saved herself with the antidote. She still has the poison-flask here in her bosom, but as she turns to go in, she sees Palma standing behind her. The girl has heard all. The Goddess of Justice now has a witness against her - her own child.

Now comes the last act of the drama. After that awful night, Palma's health begins to fail. Her mother in despair attempts to reason with her and explain away her own damning words, but in vain. Palma had heard too much, and even the flask at Stemma's breast bears
witness against her. Had she been fated to preserve this flask only for her own undoing? When Palma thought of Wulfrin, she longed to tell him all, but she could not without betraying her mother, and as she believed her mother would never confess, the poor girl saw no way out but to die.

Stemma, in despair, saw her child dying before her eyes; that she could not endure, and suddenly she made a great resolve. She would tell all to the Emperor upon his arrival and let him sentence her. She announced this resolve to Palma, who at once began to recover.

As the Emperor soon afterwards climbs the hill to Malmort, his horse stumbles over the dead body of poor Faustine. He takes this as an omen that there is some evil hanging over Malmort. Stemma and Palma meet him, and all their underlings are sent for. Then, over the dead body of Faustine, Stemma confesses her sin. But when she finishes she swallows the contents of the poison flask and falls dead beside Faustine. God and not the Emperor shall judge her.

Wulfrin and Palma, no longer brother and sister, are now free to marry.

The whole story, with its setting in a shadowy past, and among primitive people, produces a most powerful effect. The author himself called it a "Gewissensgeschichte", but it seems that mother-love is the most powerful motive, more powerful here than the power of conscience, for if Stemma had not hoped to save her daughter from death, it is doubtful if she would ever have confessed voluntarily. Yet the skilful way in which the author shows her unbroken self-control and defiance of detection through so many years, only to fall at the last a
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victim to her overwrought nerves, is beyond all praise.

There is just one flaw in it. Palma has too little sympathy for her mother. She does not realise how awful such a confession must be for her. The betrothal to Wulfrin over her mother's dead body, with no great show of feeling on her part seems very hard. Could her love for Wulfrin have rendered her so callous toward that mother who had done everything for her? Such a thing hardly seems good psychology, though, of course, there may be room for difference of opinion. Perhaps Meyer ascribed this to the roughness and hardness of that barbarous age, also to the fact that Palma could not endure deceit. He obviously wants us to see in her the very soul of truthfulness.

The story pleased most of Meyer's friends immensely, many preferring it to DIE HOCHZEIT DES MÜNCHES. Both are stories of a passion that bursts all restraining bonds. To-day most people prefer the Hochzeit, but still this latter will always be looked upon as a powerful story.

(10) DIE VERSUCHUNG DES PESCARA, 1887.

From the time of Charlemagne, in the previous story, the author now takes a jump of seven hundred years or so, to the time of another Charles the Great, this time the Emperor, Charles V. It is another story of the Italian renaissance, and here we see the author at the very height of his powers, for this story possesses a peculiar artistic excellence rarely to be found in the works of any other author. Gottfried Keller, Meyer's great countryman, said that Meyer's works reminded him
of 'brocade', and if that is true of any of the Novellen, it is particularly true of this, for it possesses a balanced symmetry, and a perfection of construction, which reminds one of an exquisite pattern on old brocade.

It is, however, a difficult story to read, unless one is familiar with the European history of the time. Like Browning, Meyer supposes that his readers are all as well read in history as he is himself, and this is very rarely the case. Hence a few words on the historical background of the story will not come amiss here.

The time is just after the battle of Pavia, in 1525, in which King Francis I of France was defeated and taken as prisoner to Madrid. The victorious general in that battle, and the leader of the armies of Charles V, was Pescara, the hero of our tale. Emperor Charles is now the most powerful monarch in Europe, ruler of Spain, Austria, and the Netherlands, and supreme in the new world. Apparently no one can stand against him, and Italy, too, is about to fall under his army. However, this is not to happen without a struggle. The Medici Pope, Clement VII, who holds the fief of Naples, and delegates from the two City States, Venice and Florence, meet at Milan, and, under the leadership of Morone, the Chancellor of Duke Sforza of Milan, they form a Holy League, as they call it, whose object is the freedom of Italy, and its independence of Spain. This League is to drive the Spaniards out of Italy, just as in JURG GENATSCH, the league of the Dreibünden was formed to drive them out of Rhätia.

They thought they had good hopes of success, too, for all was not complete unity in Charles' dominions. The heresy of Luther
was spreading in Germany and in the Netherlands, and the Emperor was preparing to stamp it out with the fires of the inquisition. The prospects of the League seemed good, if they could only get an efficient leader. For this great task there seemed none better than Charles' own general, the great Pescara, if he could only be tempted from his allegiance to the Emperor. He was only half a Spaniard after all, born in Italy of an Italian mother, and married to an Italian wife, the magnificent Victoria Colonna, the Italian poetess. Besides, for his Italian possessions he owed fealty to the pope, who would absolve him from his allegiance to the Emperor. The persuasive Morone was sent to win him over, but history tells us that Pescara resisted the temptation, and remained faithful to the Emperor, and that Morone was imprisoned. Shortly afterwards Pescara died. Meyer, without historical foundation, ascribes his death to a spear-wound received in the battle of Pavia.

In this story the author attempts to give the psychological reasons for Pescara's fidelity, just as in DER HEILAGE he gave the psychological reasons for Becket's sudden change of front, after becoming archbishop. As Maync says: "Nicht das Was/Geschehens kümmert ihn, sondern das warum."¹

Like DIE RICHTERIN, the story has almost a dramatic form, being divided into five chapters corresponding to five acts, and a final chapter, or epilogue. In the first three chapters we have the presentation of the temptation to Pescara. In the last three, we have

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¹ Maync 263.
his reaction to it. The whole is absolutely symmetrical.

The first scene opens in the palace of Duke Sforza in Milan. He is talking with his Chancellor, Morone, over the terrible state of affairs in his Duchy. As he talks we learn his character. He is a weak, spineless sort of individual, entirely dependent on his Chancellor. Morone is a very clever man, but absolutely without dignity of appearance, almost a mountebank, in fact. Sforza is in a panic of fear that he is going to lose his Duchy, for he is on bad terms with the Emperor, who will likely hand it over to his particular enemy, the Bourbon, and he beseeches Morone to save it for him.

The Chancellor tells him his only hope is to join the Holy League, and informs him that Guiccardin, the representative from Florence, and Lalius Nasi, the one from Venice, are to dine with him that very evening, and arrange for the organization of this League. But just then who should be announced but the hated Bourbon himself, Pescara's particular friend.

This officer is a Frenchman who has betrayed his own king and gone over to the Emperor, Charles V, and ever since, even in that renaissance-age, "wo jede Art von Verrat und Wortbruch zu den alltäglichen Dingen gehörte," he was known everywhere as the 'traitor', an object of contempt to every man, and even to himself. The author says of him: "Karl Bourbon lebte mit seinem Verrate in einer sengenden und verzehrenden Atmosphäre ses Selbsthasses." Here again we have one of Meyer's most characteristic devices. The subject of the story is to be 'treachery versus fidelity', and right at the start he brings us face to face with
a man who has already betrayed his country. The same man is also mentioned in Schiller's WALLENSTEIN, fittingly enough, since the 'Leitmotiv' in that drama is also 'treachery'.

He has come as the Emperor's ambassador to warn Sforza not to join the League on pain of losing his Duchy. He listens with an air of cynical contempt, as Sforza denies categorically that he has ever heard of such a League, and finally he delivers the Emperor's ultimatum. Sforza must at once cease building all forts, disband his armies and dismiss Morone, his Chancellor. Then, as he is leaving he puts Morone in a rage by saying ironically: "Adieu, Pantalon, mon ami."

Morone knows that his enemies call him a clown behind his back, but to be taunted with it openly is too much for his pride. Sforza, too, is in a panic, for he is sure that the Bourbon intends to get his Duchy, so as they go in to greet their guests, they are both ready to join this new league against Spain.

On their way to the dining-room, they pass a beautiful life-size painting of Pescara and his wife playing chess together, and in this manner Meyer makes us acquainted with the hero of the story before we actually see him, and with Victoria Colonna, his beautiful Italian wife. It is Victoria's turn to play, and as she touches the queen, she seems to be saying to herself, "What will he do next?" In this symbolic manner the author gives us a hint of the inscrutable character of Pescara, for, as we shall see, that is the question the conspirators keep asking themselves all through the story.

We have seen in previous stories, many examples of the
author's use of symbolic pictures or statues to emphasize his "Zeitmotiv", but in this story he makes a particularly lavish use of this device, which not only serves to illustrate the luxury and beauty in the homes of these art-loving "Renaissanzmenschen", but also to repeat again and again the main theme of his story. This picture also gives us a glimpse into the character of the hero and heroine and shows an atmosphere of purity and truth surrounding these two married lovers, which rendered them almost unique in that immoral age.

The brilliant conversation of the four men around the dinner-table is given almost word for word, and thus the author leads us right into the spirit of the century. They discuss the reformation, the worldliness of the different popes, and the anomalous political situation in which Charles V, a Catholic Emperor, is almost forced to support the Reformation to hold in check the Pope, who is the leader in forming the league against him.

Then, after the meal, they all gather in the little room, which is dominated by Pescara's picture, to discuss the formation of the League and the choice of its leader. After some discussion Morone suggests Pescara, who, he thinks, could be induced to desert the Emperor. At first the others are aghast at the idea of trying to seduce the Emperor's own general, but the very boldness of the idea at length wins favor; Morone is commissioned to put the matter before him. But first they arrange that a famous but venal Italian poet of the time, Pietro Aretino, shall conduct a campaign of propaganda through Italy, and thus force Pescara's hand by declaring that he is preparing to betray the
Emperor. So ends the first chapter, and the exposition.

In the next chapter the scene changes to the audience-chamber of Pope Clement VII in the Vatican. And the beautiful woman kneeling before him is none other than the lady of the painting, Victoria Colonna. Linden says that Meyer has intentionally given us in this pope Clement VII his own portrait.

"Und wie alte Maler oft in irgendeiner Ecke, unter gleichgültigen Zuschauern, ihr eigenes Bildnis einbringen, so hat auch Meyer einmal ein Porträt von sich entworfen. Clemens VII in sein Pescara ist sein Gleichnis, von dem Burckhardt berichtet, er vereinige sanguinisches und melancholisches Temperament, und den Meyer als entschlossenen schildert, von greisenhafter Überklugheit, Überdachtsamkeit, Misstrauen gegen sich selbst, und Schicksalsfurcht; innerlich aber ist er 'ein leidenschaftlicher, ein zorniger Mensch'."

Whether we agree with this idea or not, it is interesting, in this the only scene where we meet him, to note his skillfully he brings his influence to bear on Victoria Colonna, and how complete is his success. He wants to win over Victoria to the side of the League, so that her influence with her husband may be used to induce him to desert his feudal lord. He appeals first to her patriotism, as a true daughter of Italy, struggling for freedom from the Spaniard, then to her ambition, by saluting her as the future queen of a united Italy, united under Pescara as king. Victoria is completely won over. She is preparing to leave next day to join her husband at his army headquarters near Novara, for Pescara cannot spare the time to come to Rome, and now the Pope is sure of her aid.

As she is leaving the Vatican she meets and is introduced

1. Linden 232.
to Morone and the Venetian, who have come to see the Pope, and Morone decides then and there to have an interview with her before she goes. The Pope cannot receive them, and as they go away talking together, their conversation is worth noting. The Venetian says that, in spite of the Pope's authority and his wife's influence, there is something unfathomable about Pescara which gives him sleepless nights. He says:

"Er (Pescara) glaubt nur an die einzige Pflicht der grossen Menschen, ihren vollen Wuchs zu erreichen, mit den Mitteln und an den Aufgaben der Zeit. (What a succinct statement of the Renaissance ideal !) So ist er, und so passt er uns, Unfehlbar er wird unsere Beute und wir die seinige. Dennoch ... lache mich aus, Morone, ... etwas umhaucht mich. Ich wittere Verborgenes oder Geheimhaltenes, etwas Wesentliches oder auch etwas Zufälliges, etwas Körperliches, oder ein Zug seiner Seele, kurz, ein unbekanntes Hindernis, das uns den Weg vertritt und unsere genaue Rechnung fälscht und vereitelt."

And if the future actions of Pescara were a riddle to these men, they were none the less so to his wife, for Victoria Colonna had to admit that, in spite of the long and beautiful intimacy of their married life, she did not know the innermost soul of her husband, nor how he would react to this temptation. Through a misunderstanding, her servants with her sedan chair had gone home without her, and she had to walk home from the Vatican alone. As she hurried to reach shelter before an oncoming storm, the turmoil in her soul was in keeping with the turmoil in the heavens, another instance, as in DRE RICHTERIN, where the author makes nature sympathize with the struggle in the soul of his characters. She knows that treachery to one's feudal lord is a disgraceful thing, but just then a party of Spaniards rode past —

1. Pescara 59.
"und sie sah und fühlte in der Grandezza der Reiter und Rosse, den in die Hüfte gesetzten Armen, den verachtlich halb über die Schulter auf die Romulussöhne niedergleitenden Blicken und bis in die steifen Bartspitzen den Hohn und die Beleidigung der beginnenden spanischen Welterrschaft, sie empfand Grauel und Ekel, und ein tödlicher Hass regte sich in ihrem römischen Busen gegen diesen fremden Mühever, und hochfahrenden Abenteurer, welche die neue und die alte Erde zusammen erbeuteten."

If only the Emperor had not been a Spaniard, she thought.

She reached home to find her husband's young lieutenant, Del Quasto, who was also her nephew, waiting to conduct her on the morrow to her husband's camp. This Del Quasto was the godson of Victoria and Pescara, who had brought him up, but he was no credit to them. He was guilty of many deeds of horrible cruelty, and had recently betrayed Julia, the granddaughter of Pescara's physician, refusing to marry her. The girl in her distress had disappeared from her home and gone into a convent. Victoria burned with anger against Del Quasto, but he was quite brazen, even offering to go with her before Pescara and justify himself. Here again, in the betrayal of this young girl, we have a repetition of the 'Leitmotiv' of the story in another form. Victoria turned away from him in disgust, and taking her Bible she wandered into the garden and sat down to read. The book opened at the temptation of Christ, and soon the form of Christ changed to that of Pescara, and the devil wore the long lawyer's robes of Morone, (another striking use of symbolism).

But all at once there in the garden before her stood Morone himself. In a most eloquent speech, he appealed to Victoria's patriotism and ambition, even as the Pope had done. It is wonderful how eloquently

1. Pescara 63.
Meyer makes this man talk. Though ugly of face, and full of clownish gestures, and with no very high regard for the truth, yet his patriotism lends him an eloquence which is almost irresistible, and which creates a deep impression upon Victoria.

The scene of chapter three is laid in Pescara's camp in Novara. Pescara himself is lodged in an old castle with a beautiful inner court and garden. Busily working over his campaign plans, he is scarcely aware of the entrance of his servant Battista with his lemonade. But calling the man to him he dismisses him from his service, in spite of tears and protests, for he has caught him spying the night before, and now knows him to be a secret agent of his enemies. This incident not only shows us the difficulty of Pescara's position, but also gives another variation of Meyer's 'Leitmotiv,' another form of treachery.

As Battista goes out, the Bourbon rushes in with the news that he has seen Morone in disguise on his way to Novara, so Pescara expects a visit from him shortly. He imagines that it is an embassy from Milan to try to save Sforza's Duchy, but the Bourbon forecasts the truth, when he says jestingly: "Maybe he has come to offer the two of us Italian crowns if we will fall away from the Kaiser." From their conversation we can see the strong friendship these two men have for each other. We also see what Pescara has to contend with in his own ranks in the enmity between the Bourbon and his other general, Leyva, who despises the former and will not work with him; so Pescara has to give them separate commands.

They are interrupted by the arrival of the travel-stained
Del Quasto, who announces the safe arrival of Victoria, and also that of the Spaniard Moncada, as ambassador from the Vice-king of Spain. Del Quasto has also seen the disguised Chancellor, Morone, and reports that all Italy is full of rumours that Pescara is about to fall away from the Emperor and head the Holy League. We can see that Pietro Aretino has got in his work.

Then the page announces Morone himself, and, in order that he may have witnesses to the interview, the theme of which he clearly foresees, Pescara places the Bourbon and Del Quasto behind a curtain, where they can overhear all.

The following conversation, in which Morone seeks to persuade Pescara to leave the Emperor and head the League, to be rewarded finally by the Crown of Italy, is a masterpiece. It ranks with the parable scene in NATHAN or the Marquis Posa scene in the third act of DON KARLOS. In spite of his duplicity and sophistry, Morone’s speech is ennobled through and through by a lofty spirit of patriotism, for he really loves his Italy. But he is no match for Pescara, who, with unshaken poise remains master of the situation.

With fine irony he turns Morone’s arguments against himself by threatening to sacrifice Sforza and give his Duchy to the Bourbon. “Will you give your master up to me?” he says. “By all the gods, no,” yelled Morone, “Shall I betray my master, and for the Bourbon above all? Why do you soil your cause with such a man? ”Sehet diesen Menschen, verhöhnte ihn Pescara, Gibt es etwas Frecheres? Dem armesigsten Fürsten will er Treue halten, und mutet mir zu, die, meinem erhabenen Kaiser zu brechen. Sehet diesen unzusammenhangenden Geist. Er verlockt mir zum
Verrat und will rein bleiben von Verrat.\textsuperscript{1}

Nowhere can we see just what Pescara is going to do. He will wait, he says, till the morrow to decide, and in the meantime Morone is conducted by the page to some rooms overlooking the inner court of the castle, where he is virtually a prisoner. The most ironic touch is that the Bourbon and Del Quasto, who have overheard all, are so impressed by Morone's arguments, that they, too, try to tempt Pescara. There could be no more convincing testimony to Morone's eloquence. Here we reach the climax of the story. The forces of temptation have presented their case.

In chapter four, the feelings of the excited Chancellor are described, as he walks to and fro through the beautiful rooms of his prison. He must rely solely on Victoria's influence now, and at any moment she may appear, for a house in the castle-garden opposite his window seems to have been prepared for her coming. As he wanders through the rooms, he comes to a wonderful ceiling frescoed with serpents, said to have been painted by Leonardo da Vinci. This is another case of Meyer's fondness for symbolic pictures, for the serpent is the emblem of treachery.

Then he wanders into the palace garden, and comes suddenly upon Pescara, asleep in a seat near the fountain. Morone is startled by his pallor, but his sleeping face gives no hint of any other thought save calmness and resignation. Suddenly Pescara's aged physician, Numa Dati, lays a hand on his shoulder and advises him to fly while there is yet time, for he says Pescara could not betray his master even if he would.

\textsuperscript{1} Pescara 120.
This is all a riddle to Morone, but we can begin to guess, from Pescara's paleness and Dati's words, the real reason why he is invulnerable to temptation. His wound received at Pavia has not healed, and he is fated to die soon. Even Victoria does not know it yet, and as she hastens with eager joy to meet her husband, Morone withdraws into the background. After their first greeting, Pescara presents Dati to her. He is Julia's grandfather, and from him we learn that the poor betrayed girl has just died in the convent; Pescara learns now for the first time of his kinsman, Del Quasto's treachery to Julia.

When Victoria goes to her room to wash off the marks of travel, we learn definitely from the conversation between Pescara and Dati that Pescara's days are numbered, and we realize that, standing thus under the shadow of death, he regards himself as quite outside of the political struggle and rivalry. Then he goes in to attend a council of war, at which the Spaniard, Moncada is present. Moncada announces that he has been delegated by the Vice-king of Spain to accompany Pescara's army and keep an eye on operations. He demands that Pescara's forces shall move at once against Milan, and when the place falls, he is to treat Sforza and the people with great severity. This Pescara refuses absolutely; he will not be inhuman. Moncada further demands the particulars of Pescara's interview with Morone, but when Pescara tells him the truth he will scarcely believe him, till he has the evidence of the two men who have heard it all.

They then go out, leaving Moncada alone, and we expect trouble from him later on, when we hear him say "Du entrinnst mir nicht."
Ich umschwebe dich, Pescara." This gray figure, with the face of a grand inquisitor, represents the power and might of Spain. Poor Pescara!

Again we see the trouble he is having through dissension in his ranks, when Leyva leaves the Council, raging against the Bourbon. Pescara also has to rebuke Del Quasto severely for what he has done to Julia, and he advises both him and the Bourbon that fidelity to their Emperor is all that is left to them now. These troubles in his own ranks, show us another reason why Pescara could not be tempted. As he says, Italy is unworthy of being rescued. Her downfall is inevitable, regardless of what he or anyone else can do to save her. For Italy has dealt falsely even with him, whom she sought to honor. She has spread lying reports about him, and attempted to force his hand. Now this has brought the Spaniard Moncada, who will henceforth hover over him like a vulture.

We learn also that many years before Moncada has assassinated Pescara's father, seeking thereby to win the favor of the king. Since then this dark and sinister figure had been all over the world, in the interests of his church. He had even followed Cortez to Mexico, to spy on him, no doubt, as he was spying on Pescara now.

The Bourbon offers to fight a duel with him, and thus rid Pescara of this incubus, but the latter refuses, saying it is too late. Once he had wanted to take vengeance upon him, but now he will leave him to the justice of God.

They go in to dinner with Victoria, and the Bourbon is presented to her. He is very polite, but after he is gone, Victoria
asks her husband why she must dislike him so, and he, her husband's best
friend. He answers that it is because the Bourbon has never been able
to live down his treachery to his king. Did not her own poet, Dante,
picture treachery as the worst of crimes? Victoria turns pale, for she
remembers her mission from the Pope.

Then follows one of Meyer's characteristic discussions
between the husband and wife on poetry and art in general. Gradually it
works around to his mission, and she reproaches him for not letting her
read his heart. He says he has seen this temptation coming, and blames
the Pope for thinking he can absolve one's conscience. Savonarola, and
the monk, Luther, have done that much for him.

They go out to the garden, and sitting in the stillness
they overhear a conspiracy between Leyva and Moncada to take Pescara
prisoner the minute he attempts to go over to the Italians. Unhappy
Pescara! he sees himself surrounded by treachery on every side, both
from Italy and Spain.

But just then a horn sounds, and a post comes direct from
the Emperor himself. In his own handwriting he expresses his faith in
Pescara's unalterable fidelity. How could his general betray him after
that? Poor Victoria soon learns her husband's dread secret, for in the
garden he is seized with a fearful convulsion, which nearly kills him.
But after terrible suffering he recovers, and they both sleep the sleep
of exhaustion. This ends chapter four.

The next morning Victoria finds Pescara refreshed by his
sleep, and she can hardly believe that the frightful scene of the night
before is not a bad dream. But Pescara makes it all too clear. He says he has known of his fate ever since the battle of Pavia, but, not wishing to worry her, he has kept it to himself. Besides, his enemies must not know of it till he has finished his campaign against Milan, which is to start this very day. Till he can summon her to Milan, after his victory, she decides to go to a convent she had passed the day before, the convent of the Holy Wound, (note the significance of the name). So after breakfast they have their horses brought and ride away together.

Pescara has determined that, after this parting he will not see her again; she must not see him suffer any more. As they ride through the fields, the dark and dreary day is a fit setting for the sadness of their hearts. As they near the convent they hear the nuns singing a requiem, which they afterwards learn is for the poor betrayed Julia, who had formerly been their pupil. The abbess is only too pleased to find a room for Victoria, whose sadness they believe is due to the fact that her husband is going into battle.

While Victoria and the abbess are arranging matters, Pescara walks into the little church. Here he sees a wonderful altar picture of Christ on the cross, receiving the sword-thrust of the soldier. But the soldier in this picture is no Roman but a Swiss, and Pescara is struck by his resemblance to the man who had wounded him at Pavia. He learns from the nuns that the picture is quite recent, and that this man had posed for the artist. Here we have another example of Meyer's symbolic pictures. Standing near the end of the story, as it does, it counterbalances the picture of the chess-players at the beginning, so
symmetrically has this story been constructed.

As Pescara looks at the picture, he is secretly watched by the nuns, who admire his tall figure, and envy the happiness of Victoria in being the wife of such a man, little knowing that in an adjoining cell the poor soul is wringing her hands in despairing grief.

Then he and Victoria take an affecting farewell. He tells her not to grieve too much, for death comes to him as a deliverer. His words here are worth quoting, for they give the kernel of the story:


Then he rides away to join his army and comes to where a Swiss is struggling with a party of Spaniards, who are about to hang him as a spy. Pescara finds it is the same Swiss, who wounded him at Pavia. Drawing him aside, he has a conversation with him, and finds him a rough but honest fellow. He has seen his own picture in the church, and his disgust, when he saw himself thrusting a spear into his Lord's side was quite genuine. Pescara could take vengeance on him by letting him be hanged, but instead he gives him quite a large purse of gold and lets
him go. The Spaniards are surprised to see their usually rather parsimony general so generous, but like his Lord, Pescara not only pardons but rewards his enemy, who turns out to be no enemy after all.

As he stands at the head of his army, the monk, Moncada, comes up again demanding a private interview. But before Pescara can give it to him, Morone comes and throws himself at his feet demanding a definite decision. Pescara tells Morone he has not found Italy worthy of his aid. But Moncada, who has been standing near, has heard all, and when Morone turns and sees him, he thinks Pescara has betrayed him. Then, thinking to save his own skin, he basely lays all the blame of the conspiracy on Pescara, who has again to call his two witnesses before Moncada will believe him innocent. Pescara refuses to acknowledge Moncada's right to judge him, however, and then Moncada, in a private interview, tries to tempt him to go over whole-heartedly to Spain, even as Morone had tempted him with the Crown of Italy. He tempts in vain, however, and Moncada leaves him with a dark threat as to what will happen, if, when he takes Milan, he fails to obey the Spanish order to be ruthless.

That night Pescara burns all his papers, even the Emperor's letter. No dangerous papers of his shall leave his friends a prey to Spanish spies after his death. The next morning he is visited by another heart attack, and to conceal it he rides to the battle in a closed carriage, his charger being led saddled behind.

But Morone, surrounded by Spanish soldiers, is seated backward upon an ass, and rides through the gates, amid the jeers of the
people, and so out of the picture.

In the last chapter, or epilogue, the story is brought quickly to a close. We see the trembling Duke Sforza of Milan, lost without his Chancellor, vainly trying to protect his Duchy against Pescara's oncoming soldiery. But nothing can withstand Pescara's hosts, or Pescara himself. Clad in a flaming garment, and swinging his sword, he strides along, "als schritte der Würgen Tod in Person gegen die Schanze." Sforza takes to base flight.

The last scene is played in the same throne-room of Duke Sforza's palace at Milan, in which the story opened, another indication of Meyer's love for balance. Sforza has fled thither, only to find that the canopy over his throne has broken down. Taking this as an evil omen, he awaits the victor. Pescara soon comes, and much to Sforza's surprise, he treats him with unlooked for mildness. Moncada attempts to interfere, but is sternly set aside by Pescara, who shows him the Emperor's power of attorney, giving him full authority. The description of the judging in which he and his two generals, Leyva and the Bourdon, take part is quite characteristic. Leyva votes on the Spanish side for severity and ruthlessness, but the other two outvote him, so Sforza keeps Milan, and even Morone's life is spared. Thus ends the Holy League, even the Pope submitting, and renewing his fealty to the Emperor. And just as Morone and the Venetian had talked together over the riddle of Pescara's conduct in chapter one, here, in the last chapter, is a parallel conversation:
"Erinnerst du dich, Girolamo, was ich dir in dem vatikanischen Gärten sagte, von einem möglichen letzten Hindernis in der Brust Pescaras? Wenn ich wörtlich wahr geredet? Wenn der Feldherr bei Pavia den Tod empfing, und ihn verheimlicht hat? Wenn wir einen nicht mehr Versuchbaren in Versuchung führten?

Also die Wahrheit, "schlosz der Florentiner," nicht Pescara trog. Wir selbst haben uns betrogen. O Weisheit der Menschen.\(^1\)

Then, seated on the canopy of Sforza's broken throne, Pescara writes his last commands. Just as Moncada and Leyva are about to arrest him as a traitor, he has another heart attack, and he is delivered out of their hands. He seems to be slumbering when Victoria enters and rushes toward him, but he lies dead on his couch:

"Gleich einem jungen magern von der Ernte erschöpften und auf seinem Garben schlafenden Schnitter.\(^2\)

At the very beginning of the story, the author has described a picture on the roof of that same throne-room, of Christ feeding the five thousand "einer Mittag haltenden lombardischen Schnitterbande gleich,"\(^3\) and so to the very end the exquisite symmetry of the story is maintained.

One cannot but be struck with the similarity between Pescara and Becket. Both are 'mehrdeutig,' a riddle to the people around them. Both are advanced in their thinking beyond their age. They each have suffered, and both are conscious of the near presence of death. We can trace the steps in the conversion of each, and see how the character of each grows more Christlike, the nearer he comes to

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1. Pescara 225
2. Ibid 229
3. Ibid 6
death, for both like Christ, "have learned obedience through the things which they suffered."

If we have given more time and space to this story than to any of the others, it is because it is so difficult, and at the same time so important. It is doubtful if a more sophisticated story has ever been written. It is impossible to see all its beauty and exquisite symbolism in one reading, or even in two. It is like a puzzle, containing concealed faces, which at first sight are not visible, but the more we look, the more we can see. It is full of Meyer's characteristic devices and mannerisms, and its symmetry is so perfect that it seems like some exquisite geometric pattern on an oriental rug. In telling the story, it is almost impossible to leave anything out without spoiling the connection of the whole, and there is not a single episode or description but has its bearing on the plot.

Maync says of it:

"Die Vergeistigung eines politischen Stoffes, deren Schwierigkeit der Dichter wohl bewusst war, ist seiner Künstlerschaft 'nach strenger Arbeit' wohl gelungen. Seine künstlerischen Mittel sind die gleichen, wie in seinen früheren Erzählungen, aber es ist der Meister auf der Höhe seines Könnens, der hier sich ihrer bedient."\(^1\)

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1. Maync 275
After the publication of Pescara, Meyer became seriously ill, and for almost four years nothing came from his hand, till in 1891 appeared ANGELA BORGIA, his last Novelle. He made many subsequent attempts, but except for some lyrics, which could be written in a flash of inspiration, he never completed anything which he considered worthy of publication. Even this piece shows many signs of age and failing powers. There are really two heroines, for the story could, with equal propriety, be called LUCREZIA BORGIA. Her character is even better drawn than that of Angela. However, this is only another example of the author's fondness for paradoxical titles, for the fact that there could be a Borgia called Angela, and one, moreover, for whom the name was not a misfit, is enough in itself to cause comment. One could, with almost equal propriety have called the story GIULIO D'ESTE, for the past is played by this character/also very important.

For these reasons it lacks that unity which is so characteristic of the rest of Meyer's work. The fact that it covers a period of several years' time may also help to explain this defect, for most of the other Novellen occupy short periods of time. This lack of unity makes the story rather difficult to read, as it is hard to keep the various threads disentangled. There are also a few instances of false chronology, caused, no doubt, by an old man's failing memory.

Yet, in spite of these weaknesses, the story is a powerful one, and the character-drawing is worthy of Meyer at his best. The portrait of Lucrezia Borgia ranks with the very best of his male
characters, for, it must be admitted, his male characters are, on the whole, much more life-like than his female ones.

For historical background he goes back to his favorite period, the time of the Italian Renaissance, and he gives an interesting and historically accurate picture of those stirring times of artistic excellence, but of moral decay. The story opens with a wedding procession. Duke Alfonso von Este of Ferrara, the grandfather of that Duke of Ferrara, made famous by Goethe in Tasso, has been wedded by proxy to Lucrezia Borgia, the daughter of Pope Alexander Borgia, and the sister of the dreadful Caesar Borgia. The latter has murdered Lucrezia's second husband, for she has already been married twice, and she herself has a rather evil reputation as a poisoner. Victor Hugo's drama, LUCREZIA BORGIA and Donizetti's opera of the same name have made her name familiar to us as a monster of wickedness and cruelty. Meyer, however, calls her a 'tender plant growing in a forcing-house of sin', and lays the evil of her character on circumstances rather than on her own nature. She has decided, however, to reform, and looks upon this marriage with Don Alfonso as a chance to rehabilitate herself in the eyes of the world. She will live a blameless life from henceforth and will give her husband not the slightest chance for regret, unless, perchance, her brother escapes from the prison in which he now languishes and calls upon her for aid. In that case, so great is his influence over her, that he knows she will have to give it.

As the wedding procession moves along, she sits under a canopy which is held over her by certain professors of the University
of Ferrara, among them one Strozzi, the Dean of Law. They cast admiring looks at her wonderful blonde beauty, and Strozzi wonders if such a beautiful creature can possibly be so wicked as reported. As judge he condemns her, but as man he has fallen in love with her already.

Behind her rides her kinswoman, Angela Borgia, a tall dark-eyed girl, with curly hair. Lucrezia, who is fond of this girl, has taken her out of her convent school to bring her to Ferrara as companion. She also expects to find a rich husband for her at the court here. Beside Angela rides the youngest brother of Duke Alfonso, Don Ferrante, who has accompanied them as escort from Rome, and, as they ride, he gives her a rather uncomplimentary account of his family. We learn that there are two other brothers. The second eldest, and the cleverest of them all is Ippolyto, the cardinal, the diplomat of the family. The third, Don Giulio, is a drunkard and a wastrel, who for some nameless crime is now in prison. He is noted for his extremely beautiful eyes, according to Don Ferrante, the only good thing about him. Don Ferrante says she will shortly see him, for one of the customs of Ferrara is that, after such a wedding procession, all the prisons are opened and the inmates allowed to go free.

Angela, though a Borgia, has, like Iphigenia, had no share in the iniquity of her house. As both her parents were dead, she had been brought up in a convent, and when she had seen the nuns shuddering over some particularly horrible deed, done by some member of her family, she had tried to atone for it by imposing some grievous penance on herself. Her innate purity of character instinctively re-
coiled from Don Giulio, as he approached her, when the prisons were opened, even though his beautiful eyes, as he looked up, were full of a strange charm. But she was severity personified. She drew herself up and said: "God have mercy on you, Don Giulio, May God pity you." Lucrezia drew her hastily away, and even the bold Don Giulio lost his composure for the moment. Thus is described the first meeting of the hero and heroine.

The next chapter opens after a period of two years, in a park in the same Belriguardo, where Goethe's Tasso opens. Lucrezia and the Venetian ambassador, Bembo, are talking together. We learn that he is leaving Ferrara because he has fallen in love with her, and he knows that, if he stays, he will only expose both of them to danger from her husband's jealousy. Thus a second Meyer illustrates the historic fact of Lucrezia's power to bewitch almost every man she met. Bembo is an extraordinarily clever man and an acute observer, and now he gives her some good advice. She has won her husband's love, he says, and must do nothing to lose it. Therefore, if her brother, Caesat, escapes from his prison - and there are rumors that he has escaped - she should throw herself on her husband's protection. He knows, however, that she will not take his advice, for her brother has such power over her that she will obey his call, even at the risk of his husband's displeasure. Lucrezia turned his words lightly aside, and drawing forward Angela, who was by her side, she said: "Give me some advice for one who is in greater danger than I." We soon learn what that danger is. The Cardinal has fallen in love with Angela, and knowing the character of
the man, they fear that he will go to any lengths to win her.

A screaming vulture rises and circles over their meadow, and with this symbolic omen Meyer introduces the Cardinal, the evil genius of the piece. Lucrezia, to see how he will react to the news, tells him of her matrimonial plans for Angela. She proposes to wed her to the rich Count Contrario, who is engaged in a law-suit with the family over some disputed lands. She will settle the lawsuit and Angela's future at the same time, by marrying the two of them, and giving Angela the disputed lands for dowry. The Cardinal, however, is openly scornful. He confesses publicly his love for Angela, who, he says, will never consent to be a mere figure in the reckoning of Contrario's account. There is one thing, however, that he dreads more, and that is her unconscious love for the beautiful eyes of his scoundrel brother, Don Giulio. She may deny it and suppress it as she will, but it is there, and that is one thing he passionately asserts he will never allow. He may not be able to have her, but he will see to it that Don Giulio does not. The very thought of him should be degrading to her. His jealous anger is interrupted by a summons from the Duke, and they all walk through the sweltering July heat to the castle.

Meanwhile from another direction two young men, Herkules Strozzi and Giulio d'Este are approaching the Duke's party. The two friends are both extremely handsome young men, for whom life seems opening up, full of enjoyment. From their conversation we learn that Don Giulio, for another particularly foolish escapade, has been banished.
by his brother, the Duke, to Venice, and must leave Ferrara that very night. We learn also of Strozzi's infatuation for Lucrezia, against which he struggles but which he cannot overcome. Angela is also mentioned, and we get an idea of Giulio's feelings towards her. He professes indifference, but since that day she had judged him, he has never been able to get her out of his mind. He says:

"Seit jenem Tage, bin ich nicht mehr derselbe. Meine Sinne taumeln, und wie ein Rasender, suche, wechsle ich Mund und Becher, und habe nur einen Wunsch, dass jene, die sich feindselig und kalt von mir abwenden, mir noch einmal ihr hellflammandes Antlitz zukehre, und mich noch einmal bedrohe ... noch stärker als das erstemal ... Doch ich rede Unsinn. Sendet mich nach Venedig."
cloister at once, for he thinks such dreams can come only from a bad conscience.

Giulio then hurries to the castle and meets his friends Strozzi and Bembo coming out, after an interview with the Duke. Strozzi is extremely angry, for the Duke has talked very plainly to him, telling him what will happen if he persists in his sinful infatuation for Lucrezia. He forecasts that, if ever her brother Caesar escapes, she will use Strozzi as a tool, and then he, the Duke, will have to take Strozzi's life for treachery. All this actually happens in the future, but Strozzi will take no warnings now. He attempts to warn Don Giulio, however, to leave the palace at once, for he feels that great danger lies in wait for him. But Giulio will not be warned, either, and goes on in to the Palace to talk to his brothers, the Duke and the Cardinal.

Here he is again solemnly warned by the Cardinal to have nothing whatever to do with Angela. Don Giulio swears that Angela despises him, and that he does not love her, so the Cardinal has no cause for jealousy, but the Cardinal's rage grows to such a point that he almost screams at his brother to get out of his sight at once, or something dreadful will happen to him. The Duke, however, intervenes and just then Don Ferrante enters, and mockingly calls his three brothers to the Park, where the ladies are.

But Ferrante entices Don Giulio into the woods, so only the Duke and the Cardinal reach the ladies. They find them being entertained by a Persian, Ben Emin, who is telling stories. One of these is an eastern legend about the Christ, who finds some good in every one,
and had a good word for even a dead dog, the lowest of the low, in Oriental countries. Finding nothing else to praise, he praised its white teeth.

The story seems to affect Lucrezia very strongly, for the tears come to her eyes, and the rest of the party think she is affected by the oppressive weather, for the sultriness has become almost unbearable. A storm is rapidly coming up, another example of Meyer's favorite devices of showing nature in harmony with the coming tragedy. Then Don Ferrante comes and says Don Giulio will be along soon, when he has finished flirting with the gardener's daughter, whom he has met on the way.

The Cardinal suggests that even the Christ could find nothing good in Don Giulio, looking towards Angela as he jeeringly makes his hateful remarks. But she detests the Cardinal and is stung to reply "Yes, he has beautiful eyes. You would surely leave him that."

"Would I?" he asks.

Then he slinks into the woods, and calls his cut-throats and when he comes back a fearful deed has been planned.

Suddenly a dreadful despairing cry is heard, and the poet Ariosto goes to seek his friend. He leads him back, all covered with blood, reeling and stumbling in his blindness, for his eyes have been put out. He falls at the Cardinal's feet, and buries his bloody head in the purple cloak.

"O warum räubst du mir das Licht?" he says, "Was nimmst du mir das all und einzige weg, das ich war ... ein in der Sonne Atmender ... Du, der du Alles bist und hast: dem ich Nichts nahm und Nichts neidete ... Ich winde mich vor dir wie ein blinder Wurm. Bruder zertritt mich. Töte mich ganz."  

1. Angela Borgia 92
The Cardinal gave the ancient excuse, which only Angela heard. "Nicht ich, ... Das Weib verführte mich ... Sie lobte deine Augen."

Then the fainting Giulio is taken away, and the company scatters before the oncoming storm. Meyer's description of it is magnificent. "Jetzt röntete ein Blitz den gefesselten Amor. Windstürze sausten durch den Wald und beugten die Wipfel der Bäume. Bald war der Himmel lauter Lohe und die Luft voller Donnerstürze. Dann stürzten die finsteren Wolken auf die Erde, und schwere Regen wuschen und überschwemmten die, mit Blut und Sünde befleckten Gärten."

This is the climax of the piece, and occurs at the end of the sixth chapter, at the very middle of the story, which has twelve chapters. Meyer has not forgotten his love for symmetrical construction.

Chapter seven is taken up with a description of the life of Don Giulio after his blinding. He is taken to his estate at Pratello, and left very much to himself, as the time-serving courtiers, thinking he is in disgrace, do not visit him. For beyond banishing the Cardinal from his presence for a time, the Duke does not punish him for his awful crime. The Cardinal, however, has retired to his palace, and it is reported soon after that he is very ill.

The steps in Don Giulio's recovery are very skilfully drawn. After the first fearful days of darkness and despair, he began to seek his garden, where he sat in the sun, trying to feel the rays, which he could no longer see, or stretching himself in the grass, and burying his face in the cooling leaves.

He had only two visitors, the poet Ariosto and his
younger brother, Ferrante. The helpful ministrations of Ariosto, for whom Meyer had the warmest admiration, are most beautifully described, and we must remember, too, that this is all historic. First they had long talks together about affliction and suffering, and how brave men ought to bear them. Then Ariosto read to him some chapters from his own heroic poem the ORLANDO FURIOSO, and from other poets, till "sich nach und nach das Dunkel heller farbte, und in der entzückten Seele des Blinden eine Sonne aufging." Then he tried to read him a poem of joy, but Don Giulio laid his hand on the page. "Das ist nichts für einen Blinden" he said. "Da weinte der Poet innerlich über diese Abwendung von der Freude."

But gradually Don Giulio awakened to the fact that there were others on his estate, simple souls who longed to serve him, for his misfortune had awakened the sympathy of his vassals, and they forgot all his former wildness. Gradually he became aware of their existence, till at last he could distinguish their voices and talk to them, and their artless sympathy soothed him. Ariosto soon observed that he began to enroll himself in another circle,

"unter einer andern Menschenklasse, als die war, welcher er bisher angehört hatte, in derjenigen der Unglücklichen und Leidenden, der Benachteiligten und Enterbten, in einem Lebenskreise, der offenbar unter andern Bedingungen stand, und andern Gesetzen folgte, als die Vollsinnigen und zum Genüße Berechtigten."¹

And gradually he came to blame not fate, nor the hatred of men, but himself, for his dreadful punishment. As the author says:

1. Angela Borgia 101
Don Ferrante's influence, however, was not so beneficent as that of the poet. He continually tried to stir up trouble between Giulio and his two elder brothers, and kept reminding him of his horrible wrong, which had never been punished. He sought to enlist his aid in fomenting an uprising of the people against the Duke. For the unpunished outrage on Don Giulio has stirred the people's feelings to such an extent against the Duke and the Cardinal that a rebellion could easily have been fanned into flame.

Don Giulio was averse to bloodshed, and at first did not listen to his brother's arguments, but gradually he was being won over. One occurrence decided him. This was Angela's visit. Ever since that dreadful day, she had felt herself partly responsible for Don Giulio's misfortune, for had she not praised his eyes to the Cardinal? She determined to visit him secretly, so rode over one day to Pratello, and sat down on a stone bench in the beautiful park. Soon she saw Don Giulio approaching, carefully tended by his servants. He did not walk like a blind man, and stumbled only once, as he approached her bench, where, not knowing of her presence, he sat down. Then he began to compose a little poem, after the manner of Dante's INFERNO in which he put the blind in the lowest circle of misery.

Angela could stand it no longer, but threw herself at
his feet, and wet his hand with her tears. She asked his pardon for having caused his blindness by praising the beauty of his eyes. He tried to comfort her, but rushed away overcome with grief, and the servants had to help him home. The more he thought over Angela's misery and his own, the angrier he became, till at last he sent a note to Don Ferrante, stating that he was ready to join the conspiracy against his two brothers at any time. The note fell into the hands of the Duke and soon the two brothers were lodged in prison.

In chapter eight we have an account of their life in prison. After a form of trial they were judged guilty and sentenced to death on the scaffold. But no fixed time was set, and this waiting for death was harder to bear than the reality.

At first Don Giulio had wept like a child. Then when he could weep no more, he begged for a cell to himself, for he could not bear his brother's cynical bitterness. His request was granted, and he was also allowed the ministrations of his old priest from Pratello, Father Mamette, another of Meyer's portrayals of an attractive Catholic character. Don Giulio, who had never listened to him before, listened now. As Meyer says:

"Nun lasse er sich von dem Franziskaner, der seit Jahren aber früher vergeblich an seinem Gewissen gerüttelt, auf ein christliches Ende vorbereiten, das er eher ersehne als fürchte, da, wie er sage, das einzige Licht, das ihm in seine Nacht heruntergestreicht werden könne, das ewige sei." 

He also asked for some work to do in his prison, and was taught how to weave straw rugs. Soon he became quite skilful at

1. Angela Borgia 124
this task, and long hours of his prison time were passed at this monotonous occupation. We are also told how his vassals at Pratello held him in loving remembrance, for "auf dem dunkeln Hintergrund seines Unglücks, das Grundbild seines warmen und ehrlichen Gemüttes fesselnd und blendend hervortrat."

Meanwhile the chief sinner, the Cardinal, was struggling with a deadly illness, alone in his palace. In his delirium he had horrible feverish dreams, in which all the persons he had murdered passed before him, but the worst vision was one with bloody, empty eyeballs. The tortures of a wicked conscience could not be better described. After days of delirium, he finally came to himself, to find his brother, the Duke, beside his bed. The Duke was overjoyed at his recovery, for the Cardinal's clever advice had made him almost indispensable in the government. He himself knew, however, that he must leave Ferrara, for his last crime had made further residence there impossible, so he decided to accept an invitation from Duke Sforza of Milan, to go to his court for a time.

However, he promised to stay long enough to help the Duke out of one difficulty. That was the escape of Caesar Borgia from his prison, about which all Italy was talking. Gradually the Cardinal recovers enough to take short walks through his rooms every day, and one day his glance rests on a particularly well-made straw mat on which he is walking. When he enquires about it, and finds it was made by his brother, Giulio, he falls fainting to the floor.
In the ninth chapter, we have a description of the room in which the death warrant of the two brothers is about to be signed, and on the walls are two symbolic pictures, after Meyer's most characteristic style. One is that of the Roman Empress, Tullia, who rides with her chariot over the dead body of her murdered father. The other is that of Romulus, who has just killed Remus, his brother, and, underneath the pictures were the seats for Lucrezia and the Duke.

Just outside, in the courtyard, workmen are hammering upon a scaffold as Angela enters dressed in mourning. She shudders as she looks out on the black scaffold, now lightly covered with falling snow. Then the door opens and Herkules Strozzi comes in with the death warrants. Angela protests to him that a grave injustice is being done, but Strozzi excuses the Duke, who must in his sacred person protect the rights of all governments and prevent the spread of rebellion and conspiracy.

Then the Duke and Lucrezia enter and take their chairs beneath the pictures. But before the Duke can sign the warrants, Angela throws herself at his feet, taking all the blame upon herself, since it was she who had given the Cardinal his devilish idea. They are interrupted by the entrance of the Cardinal himself, thin and worn almost to a skeleton. Angela reproaches him for causing so much bloodshed upon the earth, instead of the peace of the Nazarene, his Master.

The Cardinal's reply is characteristic of the "Renaissanzmensch" and again shows Meyer's Protestantism. It is almost like that of Father Tellier, in DIE LEIDEN EINES KNABEN:

And yet this man is a Cardinal in the Catholic church.

However, he, too, begs for no more bloodshed, and to please him, the Duke changes the sentence to life-imprisonment, and they all step out on the balcony to announce the sentence to the prisoners.

But Don Ferrante will not accept his life from the Duke, and takes poison on the scaffold. As his body is carried away they turn to Don Giulio. He accepts the gift of life with a better grace. His speech is well worth quoting, and shows how far his conversion has progressed. He says:


Then he is led back to his prison, accompanied by Father Mamette, and Angela hastens to drop a rose in his path as he passes under

1. Angela Borgia 143
2. Ibid 148
her window, a blessing of God, as Father Mamette says, which accompanies him to his prison. He holds it up and calls to Angela: "Ich grüße dich, geliebtes Unglück."

But Lucrezia has learned of the escape of her brother Caesar from prison, and at once plans how she can make a tool of her infatuated admirer, Strozzi, and send him with aid to Caesar, though she knows it means his almost certain death. All happens just as the Duke had forecast.

Both he and the Cardinal know that she is plotting, and take means to circumvent her. The wily Cardinal reads all her letters and spies on her actions, and she knows nothing of it. The Duke goes off to battle and leaves her as his regent. She makes an excellent regent, though all the time she is plotting how to aid her brother.

All along the Duke knows of her machinations through the Cardinal, but he loves her, and knows she cannot help herself. It is interesting to see how Meyer explains her actions.

"Der Herzog," he says," wusste dass die kluge und reizende Lucrezia, bei der Annäherung Caesars ihrer selbst nicht mehr mächtig war, und wieder in den Bann ihres altes Wesens, ihrer früheren Natur gezogen, schuldvoll und schuldlos sündigte."1

Here is Meyer's idea of predestination carried to its greatest extreme.

The scene where, in the presence of Angela, she sends Strozzi to her brother, and to his own death, is extremely dramatic. Strozzi wants a reward, but gets nothing but a Medusa-like stare when he suggests it, yet he goes blindly to his doom. Angela cannot under-

1. Angela Borgia 160
stand it and says:

"Mit einem unüberlegten Worte habe ich einen Menschen geblendet, und kann es nie verwinden. Diese aber lächelt indem sie einen Menschen überlegterweise in den sichern Tod sendet."\(^1\)

There could be no stronger contrast.

Fortunately, Caesar Borgia is killed while storming a fort, and so Lucrezia is freed from her incubus. The Duke is present when she receives the news of his death, and now she throws herself on his mercy, confesses her sin, and is freely forgiven. He even offers to forgive Strozzi, if he will remain away from Ferrara, but the poor infatuated moth must fly towards the flame. He cannot stay away from Lucrezia, and so the Duke gives him a violent death. Angela, who by chance has overheard their last interview, and his death-cry a few minutes afterwards, can no longer contain herself, and hurries to the near-by convent of Klarissa, where Lucrezia has gone to pray for the soul of her brother. On her way she sees a procession in the midst of which is Don Giulio, who is being led to a forsaken ivy-covered tower in the convent grounds, which is henceforth to be his prison.

When she enters the convent she finds Lucrezia sleeping peacefully, with the smile of an innocent child on her lips, and yet she had just sent a man who had loved her to his death, while poor Angela could not sleep because she had unwittingly caused a man to be blinded. As she looked at Lucrezia she was forced to say: "Wie bin ich eine andere!"

The last chapter opens after five years have passed away.

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1. Angela Borgia 166
We learn that the murder of Strozzi has gone unavenged, the Duke even attending the funeral, as one of the chief mourners. And then, for the first time, we learn that Strozzi has been married all the time, a rather strange oversight on Meyer's part, and one which would not have occurred in one of his earlier Novellen. We learn, too, how Ariosto consoled Barbara Torelli, the beautiful and at first inconsolable widow of his dead friend, and how he eventually married her. All this is quite historic.

Don Giulio was still incarcerated in the 'forgotten tower' where Angela had by chance seen him imprisoned, and his existence there, too, was almost forgotten. Even the clever Lucrezia knew nothing of it, though she was accustomed, for the good of her soul, to spend a few days now and then in the convent of the nuns at Klarissa, and Angela always accompanied her, for she liked the ministrations of the good Father Mamette, who was also Don Giulio's 'Beichtvater.'

Though Don Giulio was apparently forgotten, yet there were many people interested in him. First there was his friend, Ariosto, who devoted one of the Cantos of his ORLANDO FURIOSO to his blind friend. And one day appeared the ancient Mirabili, an old teacher of the Duke and Don Giulio, who was filled with admiration for the ancient stoic philosophy, which taught men how to bear suffering with dignity and fortitude. With the Duke's permission he endeavoured to impart this love to Don Giulio, with, however, scant success.

The ministrations of the good Father Mamette brought him much greater comfort. This man showed him that only when one had reached
the lowest depths of human misery could one completely renounce earthly happiness, and let the heavenly happiness enter his soul. Even the selfish indulgence in his own grief must be renounced if possible. We are told that

"das Geheimnis des heiligen Franziskaners drang in eine Tiefe seiner Lebensdurstigen Seele, die weder Ariost noch Mirabili, weder der Dichter noch der Philosoph hatten erreichen können."

Owing to the too close confinement, however, the health of poor Giulio has begun to fail, but when Mirabili tried to call the Duke's attention to this the results were disastrous for Giulio, for his confinement was only made all the closer.

We learn that the pedantic Count Contrario has still continued to woo Angela. He would have preferred her lands without her, but wanted them at any price, even with her included. Angela despised him, and would have nothing to do with his wooing, but he has never lost hope.

We also get a glimpse into the soul of Lucrezia, and it is interesting to note the difference between her conversion, if such it might be called, and that of Don Giulio. She thought she had rehabilitated herself with the world, and now tried to make her peace with heaven. Every few weeks, she spent some time with the nuns at Klarissa, doing penance. Remembering her former crimes, she sought reconciliation with heaven by all the rites and formulas of the church, though, as Meyer says:

1. Angela Borgia 202
"Nur der Verdamnis zu entgehen hoffte sie, und mit Hilfe der kirchlichen Rettungsmittel einen untersten Raum des Fegefeuers zu gewinnen. Einmal dort, so überredete sich die Kluge in liebenswürdiger Torheit, würde es ihr durch die Vermittlung der Heiligen gelingen, eine höhere Stufe zu erreichen."

The chapter ends with a touching little love story, in which we learn that Don Giulio and Angela have been united in marriage by the good Father Mamette. Only by chance does Lucrezia learn that Angela so loves Don Giulio that she is ready to follow him to prison and to death. At first she is angry, for she sees that her plans for Angela's marriage with Count Contrario are all upset. But when she hears how Don Giulio's 'liebes Unglück' has become his chief happiness and that Father Mamette, in the service of a higher power, and to save poor Don Giulio's life, has married them, she promises to use her good offices with the Duke on their behalf. Then comes a letter from the Cardinal, who is dying, and his remorse is so great that he wishes Don Giulio freed from his prison before he dies.

The last scene, in which the Duke is reconciled to Don Giulio and the latter sentenced to perpetual banishment on his estate at Pratello with his wife Angela as guardian, brings the tale to a happy ending.

When the disappointed Count Contrario reproaches Don Giulio with selfishness, in tying himself in his blindness to a beautiful young girl, he says

"Graf, sie nahm mir die Augen, und gibt mir dafür die ihrigen. Sie gibt gern, und ich nehme gern. Sie ist selig im Geben und ich im Nehmen."
And thus a beautiful love-story comes to a close, with one of the few happy endings to be found in Meyer's works. It is not without significance that he ends his work in a happy vein, when his own spirit is so soon to be plunged in darkness, for shortly after this he was seized with a return of the old malady, and this time he never completely recovered.

As the story of a conversion, it has scarcely a peer in all literature, for all the steps are clearly shown in Don Giulio's progress 'from darkness to light', for only when his eyes were closed to the earthly light did for him 'the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his Wings.'
A DISCUSSION OF MEYER, THE ARTIST.

(1) HIS TECHNIQUE AND STYLE

Meyer's prose works are almost entirely confined to one particular genre, the Novelle, or short-story, and to a restricted part of that genre, the Novelle which treats of history. The short story is a form of prose-writing which has developed within the last hundred years, and has now become the form of story-telling most characteristic of our century. Many great authors, such as Edgar Allan Poe in America, De Maupassant in France, and Kipling in England, have given to the world short stories of outstanding merit, but it remains for Meyer alone to be preeminent in the unique field of the short story in which the scenes are laid in a bygone age. To do this sort of thing well is a matter of extreme difficulty, which perhaps gives the reason why so few authors have attempted it. "Die Novelle," says Meyer's contemporary, Theodor Storm, "ist die strengste und geschlossenste Form der Prosadichtung, die Schwester des Dramas, und es kommt nur auf den Autor an, darin das Höchste der Poesie zu leisten." But these very difficulties, - its conciseness of form and omission of all irrelevant details - its single outstanding incident or character to which everything in the story points, - and, added to these the problem of dealing with historic personnages and events, where the story is compelled to follow to a greater or less extent the known facts of history, - all these were the very things suited to Meyer's peculiar habit of mind. He had a sensitive and retiring disposition, disinclined to come to grips directly with life's problems, and feared a harsh judgment as one fears a blow, so to avoid
direct criticism, his characters, though entirely modern in their reactions to life, are viewed by him through the medium of history, and the setting is that of a bygone age.

Only in JENATSCH does the author depart from the Novelle-form. In this novel he deals with a whole period of Swiss history, and it may be called the Swiss epic of the reformation and the thirty-years' war. It is without doubt a wonderful historical novel, but it represented years and years of effort, and the fact that Meyer did not repeat it successfully shows us that only in the shorter Novelle-form did he find his true metier. In his last story, ANGELA BORGIA, he goes back again to the methods used in JENATSCH and makes his story cover a period of years, but, as we have seen, this story shows many signs of advancing age. It is the least perfect of them all.

One reason for the perfection of Meyer's Novellen was the frequent use which he made of the "Rahmenerzählung" or story within a story. It was just another device of the shy, retiring author, who must speak to the public, not through his own, but through another man's voice. Of his ten Novellen five make use of this form of narrative, and these are among the very best of his works. Even in the stories directly narrated there is a tendency to employ, in part, this device. Herr Waser's narrative in the first part of JURG JENATSCH is nothing but a Rahmenerzählung, and Stemma's dream in DIE RICHTERIN is another example of the same thing. The tendency to use the Rahmenerzählung was becoming so strong that it was getting to be almost a mannerism with Meyer, so, to avoid this reproach, he wrote PESCARA, just to show that
he could write a great story in direct narrative also. As a rule, though his stories in direct narrative are not his best work. His nature required, before he could work at all, a 'go-between' between himself and his readers, which is supplied by placing a long period of years and another personality between himself and his public. In an interesting letter to Betty Paoli of April 19th 1880, he himself gives some of his reasons for using the "Rahmenerzählung”. Speaking of DER HEILIGE he says:


There is no doubt that this form of narrative gives a stronger air of probability to the story. As Maync says of it:


His use of the Rahmenerzählung was, therefore, conscious and deliberate.

1. Maync 183  
2. Ibid 184
Another striking fact is the marked improvement in the author's technique between the first of these 'Rahmenerzählungen' and the last. In the first story of this sort, DAS AMULETT, a simple old man tells a narrative of what has happened to him in his youth, and no attempt is made to draw his character or make of him a living personality. Any character-drawing there is is found in the inner story. This is the very simplest form of the Rahmenerzählung. In DER HEILIGE the honest peasant-like character of Hans, the Bowman, is drawn very clearly and artistically, and not only that of Hans, but that of Canon Burkhardt as well. We seem to be sitting with both of them beside the fire on the dark winter afternoon in December, listening to Hans tell his tale. Here, also, we have the first example of the interweaving of the two tales, for every once in a while the old Canon interrupts to ask a question or make some remark. The PLAUTUS gives us in Poggio an excellent portrait of the clever, artistic, and rather sceptical man of the renaissance, and, along with him, we seem to sit at Cosimo di Medici's table, and share in the witty and cynical conversation. In DIE LEIDEN EINES KNABEN there is not only an excellent portrayal of Fagón, the narrator, but also of the great Sun-king himself, and of his favorite, Madame de Maintenon. Both of them interrupt Fagón as he tells the story, and sometimes the conversation forms a most interesting dialogue.

But the last and greatest of all these delineations is that of Dante in DIE HOCHZEIT DES MÜNCHES, which is one of the best examples of the Rahmenerzählung to be found in all literature. Here the two
stories are so skilfully interwoven, that the characters in both have the same names and characteristics, and frequently Dante is interrupted in his narrative by some pertinent remark, or some significant dialogue. Here is artistry at its very highest point.

Perhaps the field in which Meyer reveals himself most clearly as a great artist is in his power of characterization. In his pages we see all ranks of society represented, from the throne to the dungeon, all types of men and women, great historic figures and characters purely imaginary, and all drawn with a few skilful strokes, and yet with a clearness and accuracy of detail which almost make them stand out before our eyes as vividly as if they had been carved by a sculptor. It is this power of characterization which, as has been said once before, challenges comparison with Shakespeare. Shakespeare, too, used ancient and English history as a background for his plays, and drew many a great character, historic and non-historic, just as Meyer did. To be sure Shakespeare covered a very much wider field, and made much greater use of comic characters than Meyer ever could, but, in his own limited field, Meyer's characterizations are quite the equal of Shakespeare's.

One must make one reservation here, however. With a few great exceptions, Meyer's women characters are by no means equal to his men. The exceptions are Stemma, Custel Leubelfing, and Lucrezia Borgia. The latter is a particularly clever piece of character-drawing, true both as to facts of history and to life. None of his men are better drawn. Stemma is perhaps less well done, but she is a great heroic figure none the less, - a strong soul who would not yield to weakness,
even though assailed by the pangs of a guilty conscience. Gustel, the page, is a delightful creation, such as Meyer must have loved to depict, for she represents his favorite type of womanhood, having all the qualities which he himself lacked. His other women characters have nothing about them to make them especially outstanding, even in the case of historic figures like Lucretia Planta, Victoria Colonna, or Angela Borgia. Rahel, Gertrude and Diana are types of good honest German girls illustrating the German virtues of efficiency and loyalty, while Antiope is the more sensational romantic heroine. Gasparde is the most colorless of all.

Coming next to the great historic characters, we find that almost without exception Meyer uses one particular method to make them stand out, and that is the method of contrast, the graphic portrayal of one striking character set over against another and quite different one. For example, there is in DAS AMULETT the great Protestant hero Coligny opposed to the wily Catholic, Catherine de Medici. A Jenatsch is opposed to a Rohan, a Becket to a Henry II, a Pescara to a Moncada, a Gustavus Adolphus to a Wallenstein. In these character delineations, Meyer does not think historical accuracy of detail too important when he wants a particular effect. He adds to or subtracts a few years from a man's life, without regard to the truth of history, and makes events take place in rapid succession which are really years apart. He idealizes such characters as Jenatsch, Gustavus Adolphus, Pescara and Don Giulio and is rather too severe with others, but in the end he secures the effect which he desires, and we seem to be living in the age which he is describing.
Among the most interesting of his historic characters are the three authors, Montaigne, Ariosto and Dante. His Montaigne is quite like what we know of the historic Montaigne, the clever, lively little Frenchman from Perigord, whose motto was neither to kill nor to let himself be killed if he could help it. That he should have come to Paris before the massacre to help his friend, Chatillon, is not historic but quite probable, for he often made trips to Paris. The author makes of Ariosto, the friend of Don Giulio, in ANGELA BORGIA a most sympathetic and truly admirable figure, such as we have no reason to doubt the real Ariosto was, while we have already mentioned more than once how outstanding was his characterization of the great poet, Dante. There is also another Italian poet, whom Meyer mentions, but whom we do not meet. This is the venal Pietro Aretino in Pescara, to whom Meyer, characterizing him with historic accuracy, gave the task of spreading propaganda in Italy.

Of his non-historic characters there are several extremely interesting, but none supremely outstanding, the most important, perhaps, being the monk, Astorre, though Schadau and Boccard are also interesting types.

Before leaving the subject of Meyer's characterization, however, there is one more point to bring out, and that is the skill with which he seizes on some salient characteristic of a well-known historic hero and makes it stand out in his story. Those who have read closely the life of Louis XIV will remember his fondness for open windows and fresh air, so Meyer makes him go at once and open the window, when he
enters the room, while Madame de Maintenon shivers. The great Charlemagne has to hand his letter to Alcuin to be read for him, for it is a matter of historic fact that he never learned to read. Meyer makes the tyrant Ezzolin, on more than one occasion, close the eyes of the dead, thus forecasting his future cruelty. The historic Pescara had a reputation for parsimony, and Meyer, on at least two occasions, brings that point out, only to contrast it, no doubt, with the generosity of his gift to the Swiss soldier who had given him his wound at Pavia. In the same story the historic eloquence of the Chancellor Morone is brought out by Meyer with telling effect.

Closely allied to this use of contrast is Meyer's fondness for using antithesis in his plots. In the PLAUTUS, for example, the loyalty and simple religious faith of the novice, Gertrude, is opposed to the deceit and jugglery of the abbess, and even to the sophisticated atheism of Poggio himself. In DIE HOCHZEIT DES MUNCHES the rivalry of the two women, Diana and Antiope, is one of the main forces leading to the tragedy, while in the PESCARA the representatives of the two opposing powers, Spain and Italy, are brought into strong contrast, as they sue for the soul of the hero. ANGELA BORGIA is the very antithesis of Lucrezia in the matter of 'too much and too little conscience', and the love of Don Giulio which brings him peace and happiness is very different from the passion of Strozzi, which brings about his destruction. These antithesis are never crude and never too obvious, but subtly artistic, and emphasize Meyer's love for proportion and balance.

It was this love for proportion and balance which led Meyer,
at the last, to write stories that were so symmetrical in form as to be almost like a pattern on tapestry. For example, a character which has appeared at a certain distance from the beginning of a story appears again at almost the same distance from the end. Certain words and even speeches appear in almost the same relative distances from the beginning and the end of the story, and the climax appears exactly in the middle. This use of symmetrical construction was a habit which grew upon Meyer, as most of his earlier works show very little trace of it, though we have the three scenes of 'warning' in Jenatsch, one of these scenes occurring in each of the three parts. To use this sort of construction properly requires an almost absolute perfection of artistic skill on the part of an author, and Meyer was not always perfectly successful. In GUSTAV ADOLF'S PAGE, for example, this endeavour to obtain symmetrical construction makes one of the weak points of the story, since he endeavours to bring the same persons together at the end as appeared at the beginning, without sufficiently motivating their appearance. However, when he gets to the Pescara, we have one of the most unique examples in all literature of perfect symmetrical construction, but, as most of these examples have been mentioned in detail, when treating the Pescara story in part II, it is unnecessary to mention them here.

This love of symmetry and proportion is a characteristic phase of Meyer's artistic nature. A closely related aspect was his urge to translate everything into the realms of sight and hearing. One cannot but be struck by the great use of dialogue he makes in his stories, and also by his fondness for striking tableaus. One who did
not know it already could easily infer from his stories that he had studied art in his youth. And these exquisite word-pictures usually come at some dramatic moment, at some climax in the story, and forever fix it in the memory. For example, in DAS AMULET we have an unforgettable picture of Catherine di Medici and her two sons standing on the balcony overlooking the Seine, waiting for the signal which is to start the massacre of St. Bartholomew. Or we have the picture of Becket prostrated with grief before the tomb of his murdered child, or the sun shining through the church window on the dead Gustavus Adolphus, and sparing a ray for the page lying at his feet, or Jenatsch in the light of his burning home striding forward with a face stony with grief, and bearing in his arms the body of his murdered wife. Example after example could be given, for the Novellen are full of them.

In Part II our attention has been called a great many times to Meyer's use of symbolism, so it will only be necessary to give one or two examples of this expedient here. Jürg Jenatsch is killed before the statue of Justitia, symbolizing that he has died justly for the murder of Planta. In DER HEILIGE we have the very important symbol of the cracking of the great seal of England when Becket gives it into Henry's hands, symbolic of the coming division of his kingdom. Meyer is particularly fond of symbolic pictures, such as the 'Sacrifice of Isaac' in Gustav Adolph's Page, or Pescara and Victoria playing chess, or the Roman murdress, Tullia, under whose picture is the chair in which Lucrezia Borgia sits. With the numerous examples already given, enough has been said to show just what is meant by Meyer's "symbolism."
One of the characteristics which must strike all readers of Meyer's stories is his extreme conciseness, and this alone contributes not a little to the artistry of his work, as will be seen when we compare the length of his historical Novellen to the appalling length of many contemporary German writers of historical romances, - some of those of Laube or Gutzkow, for example, running to as many as nine volumes for one story. It was precisely this necessity of his for conciseness which led Meyer to choose the Novelle for his medium, for the Novelle is a form of romance writing which presents the same difficulties and has the same advantages as has the sonnet in the realm of poetry. It demands of necessity that it be built around some main incident toward which everything else must point and very rarely can any irrelevant matter be introduced which is not calculated to strengthen and deepen this impression.

The greatest danger, however, which an author who uses such an extremely concise style has to face is that of becoming obscure, and Meyer has been reproached, even as was the English poet Browning, with being obscure and hard to read. We know that the chief reason for Browning's obscurity was that he presumed his readers to have read as widely as himself on all sorts of out-of-the-way subjects, and to possess knowledge which even the very best educated persons do not always possess. Meyer makes the same error, if error it can be called. He often expects his readers to be familiar with various obscure points in early Swiss history, or in the history of the Italian renaissance, for example, - a familiarity which, as a matter of fact, even professional historians
do not always possess, unless they have read widely in that particular field. So in reading Meyer's works a good glossary or commentary on the text is almost a necessity, otherwise the ordinary reader is bound to miss, through lack of knowledge, some of the author's very best points. This is no doubt the chief reason why Meyer's works can never become popular among the common people, like those of Gottfried Keller, but must depend for their clientele upon only the best educated people. However, to some minds the very difficulty of the approach to his works constitutes one of their chief charms, for, after the hard outer shell of the nut has been cracked, the inside kernel is so very worth while. His works are like a gold mine where the gold is so buried in the rock that it is a difficult and expensive job to smelt it, but after the hard work is all done, the residue of pure gold left behind is very valuable.

One of the difficulties which an English reader has in reading Meyer is a peculiarity of style which he shares with many other German writers, but which is used by him so frequently as to be almost a mannerism. This is his habit of using long participial phrases to modify his nouns, instead of using an adjective, or a qualifying phrase or clause as an English author would do. One can pick up any one of his prose-works at random and find examples of this on almost every page; for example: "Der Herzog hatte seine Blicke voller Güte auf die schweigend und bescheiden vor ihm stehende Bündnerin gerichtet." (Jenatsch). "Die auf der Ebene gellende Feldmusik und die überall marchierenden Truppen verrieten ihm den Beginn des Feldzuges." (Pescara). "der finstern Stadtmauern zugewendeten Öffnung." (Der Heilige). Apart from this
almost excessive condensation, Meyer's style is usually quite clear and direct.

We have already called attention in Part 11 to the author's fondness for emphasizing the 'Leitmotiv' of his story in every conceivable way. His tales are almost like Wagnerian dramas in this respect. Numerous examples have already been given, but we will add a few for illustration. The tragic fate of Hilda in DER HEILIGE is a forecast of the tragedy which is later to happen to Grace. The hatred of Bertram de Born for Henry is another variation of the same feeling in the soul of Becket. In DIE RICHTERIN we have Paustine's remorse, and that of Wulfrin when he finds out his sinful love for one whom he supposes to be his sister. Both of these are impelled to open confession, as contrasted with Stemma, whose remorse leads her to conceal her crime. In GUSTAV ADOLF'S PAGE, where the chief theme is the danger run by a girl disguised as a man, we have the incident of the courtesan being whipped out of the camp, the incident of Corinne, and the incident of Jacob Heinrichs, all variations of the same theme. In PESCARA, where this device is particularly noticeable, it is interesting to note how many various forms of treachery are touched upon: the treachery of Del Quasto to Julia, the treachery of the Bourbon to France, the treachery of Moncada to Pescara, all emphasising the main theme of Pescara's possible treachery to his emperor. This desire to emphasize the main theme of his stories in so many pointed ways is one of Meyer's very unique characteristics.

It is interesting to note the part which descriptions of natural scenery play in his works. For him they are never an end in them-
selves, but are only used as a harmonizing background for some human situation. They are never merely decorative, and do not occur too often, but when they do occur they are always vividly given, and serve to emphasize or to harmonize with some deep human emotion. His little touches in describing nature in her more cheerful moods are usually wonderfully happy, particularly when he is describing his native Swiss scenery. For example, note how he appeals both to ear and eye in this description of Zürich Lake on a lovely sunny Sunday morning. The quotation is from DER SCHUSZ VON DER KANZEL: "Es war ein himmlischer, innig blauer Tag, und das nun halb verwehte und vollhallende Geläute aller Seeglocken drang in die Traumkammer."

His best descriptions though are found where he makes nature harmonize with the more sombre moods of his characters. For example, as Henry rides sadly away after his futile meeting with Becket in France, a cold autumn wind drives snow flakes towards him across the grey heath. In DIE RICHTERIN which is particularly full of this natural symbolism, we find Wulfrin, after he finds that he is sinfully in love with Palma, struggling with a fearful storm of wind and rain as he makes his way homeward, the storm in nature harmonizing with the storm in his heart. In ANGELA BORGIA the blinding of Don Giulio takes place just before a dreadful thunder storm. Even in his lyrical poetry Meyer usually makes no attempt to describe nature as an end in itself, but always gives it some connection with man and his feelings. The connection is sometimes rather subtle, but it is usually there. Take, for example, the well-known lyric:
Ewig jung ist nur die Sonne
Heute fanden meine Schritte mein vergessnes Jugendtal,
Seine Sohle lag verödet, seine Berge standen kahl.
Meine Blüme, meine Träume, meine buchendunkeln Höh'n
Ewig jung ist nur die Sonne, sie allein ist ewig schön.

Drüben dort in schilf'gem Grunde, wo die müde Lache liesgt,
Hat zu meiner Jugendstunde sich lebend 'ge Flut gewiegt,
Durch die Heiden, durch die Weiden ging ein wandernd' Herdgetön-
Ewig jung ist nur die Sonne, sie allein ist ewig schön.¹

Here all the natural descriptions only serve to add force and poignancy
to the grief of a human soul, who has returned to the scenes of child­
hood only to find that everything but the sun has changed.

The essential artistry of Meyer's nature is shown again in
his choice of words. His language is always chaste and restrained, the
words carefully chosen, but without affectation. He is never rhetori­
cal and never seeks for high-sounding expressions as an end in themselves.
His well-known love of harmony and proportion always leads him to the
choice of exactly the right word or phrase, and in the end his work has
the polish and finish of a beautiful piece of sculpture.

The last thing we will mention in connection with Meyer's
style is his passion for dramatic effects. We have already noted how
some of his stories have all the characteristics of the stage drama,
being divided by chapters into acts, and having an exposition, ascending
action, climax, descending action and final catastrophe, just as in a
drama. In fact he actually wrote dramas, but soon found that what was
not his field. The question is often asked why Meyer did not succeed
as a dramatist when his Novellen were so nearly like dramas. Linden

¹ Meyer's Gedichte 83
has attempted to answer this question, and his answer is worth quoting in full:


In short the author's own remarks about his work are quite justified

"Ich habe den Stil der grossen Tragödie in die historische Novelle eingeführt."
MEYER'S USE OF HISTORY

One of the things that strikes us after a reading of Meyer's historical tales is their difference to any other type of historical tale with which we are familiar. What constitutes this difference? Why are they so unlike the great flood of historical writings of the XIX. century whether of English, French, or German origin?

It is not entirely due to the fact that these are, for the most part long epical romances, covering great periods of time, and containing many historical incidents, while Meyer uses the short-story form, which elaborates one main incident. There is his JURG JENATSCH and his ANGELA BORGIA, both treating of periods of time extending over many years. DÖR HEILIGE and the PESCARA are also quite long for Novellen, and have been classified as novels by some commentators, List among the number. This difference has, in my opinion, quite another explanation, which I will endeavour to give here.

First, what do we mean by a historical novel, as such? We know that history is a chronicle of events that have taken place in the past. It is 'mankind remembering.' A novel, as we know, is a story about people, and a historical novel, therefore, would be a story about people who lived in the past. It is a new form of art, a welding of history and psychology, just as a piece of poetry and a piece of music can be welded together to form a song, which is quite different from either of them taken separately. And the more skillfully the two forms are blended, the more artistic will the resulting product be.

And because the historical novel is a blending of two forms
of art, it follows that there may be two kinds of historical novels, those in which the historical element receives the most attention, and those in which the psychology is emphasized, the historical serving merely as a background. The chief characteristic of Meyer's stories is that it is the psychological part that receives the emphasis, while the other novels mentioned above, tend rather to emphasize the historical side.

In the last few years there have been a great many so-called historical novels written, but in very many of these the author has obviously 'worked up' a period, merely trying to avoid glaring anachronisms. His characters are nothing but lay-figures, draped with the trappings of their age. Such works are not true historical novels. To write these the author must steep himself in the spirit of the age. Butterfield says:

"In the true historical novel the writer has learned to feel at home in the age with which he is dealing. Such a novel comes out of the world of the past that exists in the writer's mind. The history that it embodies will be true or inaccurate according as the man has, throughout his life, built up that world in his mind on true foundations, but, in any case, that history will come spontaneously; and here the historical novelist is not a novelist working under limitations, but one who has captured new fields of experience and of circumstance, and has conquered a new world for art."\(^1\)

And speaking of that intangible thing called 'atmosphere' he says:

"The historical novelist does not merely acquire information about the past, but absorbs it into his mind. Atmosphere comes out in his books as the overflow of a personality that has made a peculiar appropriation of history. It comes as part of the man himself. This explains why Hewlett is at home in a peculiarly romantic and colored world like that of Renaissance Italy, and Dumas is really himself when

1. Butterfield 31
his books are in an atmosphere of court intrigue and racy adventure, and Scott is a king in his kingdom, when he is in the peasant world of Scotland, or when he is concerned with those covenanting days of which he wrote 'I am complete master of the whole history of those strange times.' These writers breathe in their novels a life that they have made their own, and that has become part of themselves.

We know that Meyer also was steeped in the atmosphere of the times of which he wrote, having studied his subject for years before ever attempting to put pen to paper, so it is not this that differentiates him from Scott, for example. It is that Scott emphasizes the history rather than the struggle in the soul of his characters, which always forms so important a part of Meyer's work. With the exception of a few peasants, such as Dandie Dinmont or Meg Merriles, whom he really drew very well, his characters are mostly conventional types. His upper class characters, such as Waverley, for instance, are really the conventional gentlemen of his own time. Nowhere does he depict a great psychological struggle, such as goes on in the soul of a Becket or a Pescara. His work, too, is full of long historic digressions, which we now find rather tiresome, and which are nowhere found in Meyer, except perhaps to a small degree in his first Novelle, DAS AMULETT. His women characters, with the exception of Jeannie Deans, are mostly conventional figureheads. But he gives with great wealth of detail wonderful descriptions of folk and land with a rich panoramic background.

Coming to other novels of the sort, we find the same thing is true to a greater or less extent. THE CLOISTER AND THE HEARTH, for example, is merely a series of adventures whose only claim to unity is

1. Butterfield 107
that they happened to the same person. From the title one could see that it might be a story of divided loyalties, and that it might centre around a great psychological conflict, but no attempt is made at anything of the kind. The hero wanders through the landscape of the middle ages, which gives its own peculiar tone to his wanderings - that is all.

The same thing is true of Dickens' two historical novels, though the TALE OF TWO CITIES is much better written than BARNABY RUDGE. One might argue that George Eliot's ROMOLA was a psychological novel, since it represents the degeneration of the soul of Tito Melema, but as a historical novel it is a failure. The period is too obviously 'worked up' and Tito could just as well have been a conventional middle-class gentleman of George Eliot's own acquaintance.

Dumas is a wonderful storyteller, and in his own peculiar field of court intrigue has few equals, for history and fiction are so welded together that only a skilful historian can separate them, and there is something happening all the time. But there is absolutely no attempt at psychological analysis. Even Hugo, the great French master of the historical novel, falls far behind Meyer in this respect. He has created some great characters, but he is full of long digressions, which are so obviously full of propaganda that they are rather uninteresting to us now. The works of Hewlett come nearest to those of Meyer, both in the historic period, which he has chosen, and in dramatic interest, but they have not the psychological appeal that we find in the greatest of Meyer's novels.

Coming to the German writers of historical tales, Willi-bald Alexis, who wrote stories about the early days of Brandenburg and
Prussia so thoroughly modelled his work on that of Sir Walter Scott that his works are open to the same criticism. One of the most celetrated of German historical romances is von Scheffel's Ekkehardt. The hero is the historic monk who, in the monastery of St. Gall in the early years of the thirteenth century wrote the Waltharilied. In a rather long story the author gives a bright and vivid picture of the time, but of character-drawing, such as we find in Meyer, there is not a trace. Two other German historical writers, Ebers and Dahn, the one a writer of romances of ancient Egypt and the other of the times of the Ostragoths in Italy, were rather famous some years ago, even outside of Germany. But their usually highly sentimentalized stories were long and prosy, the characters serving largely as lay figures about which was draped semi-scientific archeological material, and now that modern research has proved much of the history and archeology wrong, they are for the most part discredited.

Therefore, as psychological character studies with a historic background, we must admit that the works of Meyer are outstanding. The only one who can rival him in this respect is Shakespeare in his historic tragedies.

But Meyer did not win this unique place in literature without working hard for it. We have seen that he had been a reader of history all his life, as had been his father before him. He was steeped in historical atmosphere, and some of his best friends, Vulliemin, for example, were historians. His translations, too, from French to German, and from German to French, had been chiefly in the field of history which treated principally of that renaissance-period, which he was to make so
peculiarly his own.

He spared no pains, moreover, to get local coloring, and most of his geographical descriptions he got at first hand. We have seen how, when preparing to write JURG JENATSCH he had during his holiday trips made repeated visits to all the scenes of his story in the Swiss Canton of Dreiblinden. Many of his stories have the Swiss landscape, with which he was so familiar—for example, DER SCHÜZ VON DER KANZEL, DIE RICHTERIN, and PLAUTUS IM NONNENKLOSTER. The scenes of DAS AMULETT and DIE LEIDEN EINES KNABEN are laid in Paris, where the author had spent several months of his life, and the scene of GUSTAV ADOLPHS PAGE was laid in Germany, which was also familiar to him. The places in Italy, mentioned in his stories of the Italian Renaissance, had also been visited by him more than once during his sojourns in Italy. The only exception is DER HEILIGE, the scene of which is laid in England, and we know that Meyer had never visited England. However, the framework part is located in his own native Zürich, and as for the other, with the exception of Becket's Moorish palace, which might have been located anywhere, there is almost no description of natural scenery which is not common to every country in Europe.

In studying Meyer's prose works, it is interesting to find out just what were his sources, and what use he made of them. In no case does he slavishly follow the facts of history. As we have pointed out, his interests were psychological rather than historical and he took full advantage of his privilege as a novelist to invent characters and change dates and mould the facts of history to suit his own purposes, without
however losing that intangible thing called 'atmosphere' which makes his work historic in the truest sense.

To quote Butterfield again with reference to 'atmosphere' as applied to a historical novel,

"For the novelist therefore it is more important to depict the past as a world different from our own, and to show something of its character and colouring, than to map out a particular path in that world, and to track down a particular course of public events. It is more important for him to breathe the spirit of a bygone age, and make his book the stuff of its mind, and recapture its turns of thought, its fund of feeling, and all its waywardness, than to chronicle events with precision, and keep tight to big political happenings. The supreme thing for him is to catch the age as a synthesis, to reproduce its way of looking at the world, its acceptance of life and the peculiar unity of its experience, rather than to relate things that actually happened. Looking to some distant time, he does not, so to speak, see 'notes' and relations of notes, but catches a 'tune'; he figures it, not as a heap of facts and happenings, but as the world-life in one of its moods. He enumerates, describes, comments, -perhaps; but the real secret of his art is that in doing all these things he disengages a subtle influence - does it as if by stealth - he breathes a thing that quickens and is as spirit to the body; so that while he is describing or reflecting or narrating, the age itself seems to conspire with him, and presents itself in its 'atmosphere'."^1

This describes exactly what Meyer has done.

He was, as has been said, more concerned with the individual and his personal problems than with the events of history. His own nature was subjective rather than objective, and he was supremely interested in psychological problems. The extreme sensitiveness of his nature, however, led him to place a screen between his characters and the public, and he chose the screen of history. He had to live withdrawn from public gaze before he could do any work at all. This historic background, though so necessary for him, had only a secondary importance, in spite

1. Butterfield 96
of the fact that, in every finished story it seems to suit the characters exactly. This is proved by what he tells us himself. In DIE HOCHZEIT DES MÜNCHES and DIE RICHTERIN he actually changed the setting in each case, and finally decided on the present settings because they seemed more suited to the characters he had in mind; against them he could most clearly project his problems. He uses the historic setting merely as a suitable stage on which his characters perform.

Let us take his tales one by one, and consider them in their historical setting. The first one DAS AMULETT, is the only one of Meyer's stories in which the happenings of history may be said to have more value than the character-study, and in this he betrays his apprentice hand, for the tale, especially at the beginning, is overladen with historic details. A good part of the work is taken from Prosper Mérimée's CHRONIQUE DU RÉGNE DE CHARLES IX. Some of it seems almost like a translation. We have the same chief characters, Coligny, the king, the queen mother, playing almost the same parts, except that the Coligny of Meyer's story is an ardent Protestant instead of the disillusioned sceptic of Mérimée's story. There is a similar love story in both, though Meyer's handling of it is rather weak, and in both the amulet-motif appears, the hero in each fighting a duel, and each one having his life saved by the interposition of an amulet.

Meyer introduces some other details, though, which show that his story is not merely a blind imitation of his French model. He makes his hero, or rather his two heroes, Germans from Switzerland. Schadau has many of Meyer's own characteristics, and Boccard, his Catholic friend,
has many traits in common with his own boyhood friend, Mischeler, who also tried, unsuccessfully, to convert him to Catholicism. The fencing master of the story has his counterpart in a fencing master who had taught Meyer in his youth. According to Maync, even Gasparde had her counterpart in Clelia Weidman, a young girl who had refused the offer of Meyer's hand just before he went to Paris.

We have already given in part II the historical setting of the Jürg Jenatsch story, as that was necessary to understand the narrative.

His main sources were the works of the Swiss historian Balthaser Reber. Laube wrote a novel on the same subject, which Meyer prized very highly, as did also Ricarda Huch, and the subject has also been dramatized by Richard Boss, though it is doubtful if Meyer had read either of the last two.

He deviates from the main facts of history only in some minor points, though he glorifies the character of Jenatsch, just as Schiller did that of Wallenstein. As he said himself, his chief problem here was to make a hero out of a rascal. Jürg's wife's name was Anna, and not Lucia, as given in the story, and she was not murdered, but escaped with her husband when the Protestants were massacred. The love-story between Jenatsch and Lucretia Planta is entirely an invention of the author's, which adds immeasurably to the psychological interest of the story. That she actually killed Jenatsch with her own hands is legendary, though the skillful way in which the author turns this, not to an act of vengeance, but to an act of love, is very cleverly done.
The character of Lucas, Lucrezia's servant, of Augostino, Lucia's, half-witted brother, of the good priest, Father Pankrazl, of the Venetian Grimani, and some others are entirely fictitious, while Rudolf Planta was the uncle and not the cousin of Lucrezia. These, however, are only minor characters, and in none of his works has the author followed history more closely than in this. It is no doubt because of its fidelity both to historical and psychological truth that this is one of the greatest historical novels ever written.

DER SCHUSZ VON DER KANZEL cannot be ranked among the historical Novellen. The only historic character is that of General Wertmüller, the hero, who had appeared as Duke Rohan's secretary in Jenatsch, to which book this is then a sort of sequel. It carries on Wertmüller's adventures after the death of Jenatsch. He actually fought in the thirty years' war, first on one side, and then on the other, and rose to the rank of general. The incident of the story is supposed to happen just before he set out on the campaign against the Turks, which was to be his last.

In this story the chief interest centres in the characters, and Meyer has merely given them a colorful seventeenth-century background. It is an excellent example of a true Novelle, depending for its main interest on a single extraordinary happening, and shows Meyer now master of his craft. It is probable also that the author has put some of himself into it as well. Linden says that he has given a picture of himself in the Pope Clement of the Pescara, but it seems to me that the hesitating, retiring, and rather passive but thoroughly upright
character of the young theological student, Pfannenstiel, is in many respects like his own, and the beautiful, efficient and housewifely Rahel could have been drawn from no other model than his own wife. The story was written shortly after his happy marriage, when he had begun to realize his ambitions, and hence its purely happy and humorous vein.

His next piece DER HEILIGE goes back to tragedy again, for here Meyer was always more at home. His source was Thierry's HISTOIRE DE LA CONQUÊTE D'ANGLETERRE, one of the books which he had translated into German earlier in his life. He accepts the story from Thierry of the Saracen origin of Becket, though we know now that he was really a Norman. Meyer also takes liberties with history in several other ways. The real Becket was fifteen years older than Henry, who was only thirty years old when the quarrel began, and thirty-seven when it closed. Meyer, for artistic reasons, makes it occupy a much shorter space of time. He also makes the king's sons much older than they really were, the youngest, John, not being born when the quarrel began, and he and not Richard was the favorite of his father. In his preference for Richard, Meyer may have been influenced by the reading of IVANHOE.

The episode of the Chancellor's daughter, Grace, is, of course, entirely imaginary, though the author makes it the pivot upon which the whole story turns. Through her wronging and death he attempts to motivate the otherwise inexplicable change of front of Becket, when he became archbishop. It is possible here that Meyer had in mind the legend of the fair Rosamond, the king's paramour, whom he kept in hiding at Woodstock to protect her from the vengeance of Queen Eleanor.
Apart from these and a few other minor deviations from history, Meyer has caught the atmosphere of the times remarkably well. The framework is, of course, all imaginary, although the picture given in it of the canonization of the Holy St. Thomas in the Zürich cathedral gives a delightful bit of the atmosphere of the middle ages in Meyer's own home town and is historically accurate, for Becket was canonized by the church on the date given.

All the historic characters are quite true to life. Henry was really an able king, who had the welfare of his people at heart, and he was perfectly in the right in his quarrel with the church. Meyer, therefore, had no difficulty in making him a rather sympathetic character, in spite of his many faults. The limelight of the story, though, is really thrown upon Becket, and it is the struggle which takes place in his soul which is the real subject of the story. As in Meyer's other Novellen the history merely forms a background.

The story of PLAUTUS IM NONNENKLOSTER is dated definitely by the meeting of the historic Council of Constance, (1414-1418). The Poggi who tells the story was a real personage, there being a celebrated Florentine humanist called Poggio Bracciolini, who wrote a brilliant book called the FACETIAE, and who was also celebrated as an ardent collector of old manuscripts. In fact, it was a copy of Quintilian that the real Poggi discovered in a nunnery, but Meyer slightly changes history here, because the stories of the comic Latin writer, Plautus, were somewhat similar to the episode in which Poggio figures. Cosimo di Medici, at whose table the story is told, is also a well-known historic character, being one of
the rulers of Florence at that time and noted for his patronage of art. The story gives the true renaissance atmosphere of levity and clever cynicism.

The story told by Poggio is entirely imaginary, there being no such persons as the novice, Gertrude, or the abbess, Brigita. They are merely used by the Protestant Meyer as examples to show the fundamental honesty at the heart of the German people, which was afterwards to make the reformation so successful in Germany, and, in the case of Brigita, to show the necessity for a reform in the church of that day. Here again the interest is psychological rather than historical.

In GUSTAV ADOLFS: PAGE we have a shining example of how the author has changed history to suit his own purposes. He makes his page a girl, though the real page was a boy, August Leubelfing, who voluntarily became page to Gustavus Adolphus. After being severely wounded at Lützen, the battle in which Gustavus Adolphus was killed, he died at Naumberg several days later, and lies buried in the "Wenzelkirche" there. Tradition has it that he carried the dead king off the battlefield in his horse, though severely wounded himself, and Meyer makes use of this in his story. It is rather amusing to note that a descendant of the Leubelfings objected to Meyer's use of history, stating that until the author could bring some proofs, he would consider the female sex of his great-great uncle a fantastic supposition.¹

His main source of information about Gustavus Adolphus came from August Friedrich Gfroerer's GUSTAV ADOLF KÖNIG VON SCHWEDE

UND SEINE ZEIT, (1837) and the author says himself that he kept this book open on the desk before him as he wrote the story. Gfrorer, however, gives no credence to the rumor that Gustavus Adolphus was assassinated by the Duke of Launberg, as Meyer has it in his story. The character of Gustavus Adolphus himself has also been idealized.

There is no historical foundation for the meeting of Gustavus Adolphus and Wallenstein, and it is highly improbable that they ever actually met. The author took this liberty with history in order to bring these two great leaders together and contrast them, as Schiller did with the queens in MARIA STUART. The whole interest again is psychological rather than historical, and turns on the fact that the page is a girl in disguise. It is the struggle in the soul of the girl which makes the story.

DIE LEIDEN EINES KNABEN is based on the following few lines from Saint-Simon:

"Peu de jours après, il arriva un cruel malheur au maréchal de Boufflers. Son fils ainé avait quatorze ans, joli, bien fait, que promettait toutes choses, et qui réussit à merveille à la cour, lorsque son père l’y présenta au roi pour le remercier de la survivance du gouvernement général de Flandre, et particulier de Lille, qu’il lui avait donnée. Il retourna ensuite au college des Jésuites, où il était pensionnaire. Je ne sais quelle jeunesse il y fit avec les deux fils d'Argenson. Les jésuites voulurent montrer qu'ils ne craignaient et ne considéraient personne, et fouettèrent le petit garçon, parce qu'en effet ils n'avaient rien à craindre du maréchal de Boufflers; mais ils se gardèrent bien d'en faire autant aux deux autres, quoique également coupables, si cela peut appeler ainsi, parce qu'ils avaient à compter tous les jours avec Argenson, lieutenant de police très accrédité, sur les livres, les jansenistes, et toutes sortes de choses et d'affaires qui leur importaient beaucoup. Le petit Boufflers, plein de courage, et qui n'avait pas plus fait que les deux
Argenson, et avec eux, fut saisi avec un tel désespoir qu'il en tomba malade le jour même. On le porta chez le maréchal, où il fut impossible de le sauver. Le cœur était saisi, le sang gâté, le pourpre parut, en quatre jours cela fut fini.

On peut juger de l'état du père et de la mère. Le roi, qui en fut touché, ne les laissa ni demander ni attendre. Il leur envoya témoigner la part qu'il prenait à leur perte, par un gentilhomme ordinaire, et leur manda qu'il donnait la même survivance au cadet, qui leur restait. Pour les jésuites, le cri universel fut prodigieux, mais il n'en fut autre chose."

On such a slender thread has the author built his immortal story. One will notice that certain incidents and characters have been invented, as, for example, Marshall Bouffler's trouble with the Jesuits, invented by the author to explain their spite against him. Also the author makes Julian perfectly innocent of the action for which he is punished. Saint-Simon also says nothing about Julian being an ungifted boy. On the contrary, he is described as quite promising, and as having created a good impression at court, when he was presented to the king, while, according to Meyer, his shyness was so painful that the king turned away from him, and Mme de Maintenon had to come to his rescue.

We are also told by Meyer, that Julian's own mother was dead, while according to Saint-Simon she is still living. Mouton, a well-known animal painter of the time, and his dog, have been brought in by Meyer, also Mirabelle and Julian's chum Guntram, neither of whom are historic. Meyer mentions only one d'Argenson.

We could have no better example of the author's way of treating history. He manipulates unimportant facts to suit himself, but when he has finished, there are living, breathing creatures standing before

1 Maync 214
us and seeming almost ready to step out of the book. The psychology in this story is particularly good, because, as we have seen, Meyer went back to his own childhood experiences in his creation of Julian. There is no exciting action, and no particular plot, but it makes the tragedy of one unhappy boy and with it the age of Louis XIV stand out vividly before us, and it ranks as one of Meyer's best works.

In DIE HÖCHZEIT DES MÜNCHES the chief historical character is, of course, the great Dante himself. We know from the story of his life that he spent some part of his exile from Florence at the court of Can Grande della Scala at Verona, and the author used this place as the setting of his story. Can Grande is the only historical character in the "frame", outside of Dante, while the tyrant, Ezzolin, is the only historical character in the story told by Dante. As Storm does in AQUIS SUBMERSIS, he takes a Latin epitaph, "Hie iacet monachus Astorre cum uxorre Antiope. Sepeliebat Azzolinus" and from it he has Dante build up one of the best short stories ever written. The interest lies entirely in the struggle in the souls of the characters, and the history forms a mere background, yet, when we have finished reading it, we have a picture of the people of the Italian Renaissance, and the life lived by them such as is found in few histories of the period.

The beauty and luxury of the grandees of this age is mirrored in the surroundings of Can Grande. Their keen well-informed minds are shown in their sprightly conversation, clever repartee, and fondness for story-telling. Their religion seems to be a mixture of superstition and paganism, the first shown in the foolish yielding of Astorre to save, as he thought, his father's soul, and the latter shown
in the satisfaction of the dying father at having outwitted them all. The rather loose moral code in marital affairs is seen in the relations between Can Grande and the two women of the story, and lastly the roughness and cruelty of the time is pictured in the forecast of Ezzolin's character and in the wild orgy with which the scene breaks up. However, in Meyer we have none of that cynicism, indelicacy, or coarseness which we so often find in the tales of Boccacio, the great story-teller of the Italian renaissance.

In DIE RICHTERIN the only historical characters are the great Charlemagne and his secretary, Alcuin. Here again the interest is subjective and psychological and not primarily historic, yet, when we have finished reading it we have a pretty good picture of those wild times, when the barbarian Lombards were pouring over the country, and where no one was safe except behind the strong walls of his castle. Though Christianity was already the state religion, yet the beliefs of paganism still persisted among the common people, and every stream and wood was haunted by its water-nixies and fairies. Meyer has succeeded in catching the atmosphere of this misty, far-away past age, where deeds of vidence were part of the day's work. Stemma's motto, "Was ich tue, tue ich Grosz", might well have served for the motto of the whole age, which was a deciding one in world-history. However, as in the other tales, not the world events but the struggle in the soul of the characters makes the story, and the history again is only a background.

We have already given in Part II a short résumé of the historical background of DIE VERSUCHUNG DES PESCARA, as that was necessary for a proper understanding of the story. Meyer's chief sources were
Ranke's *DEUTSCHE GESCHICHTE IM ZEITALTER DER REFORMATION* and the *GESCHICHTE DER STADT ROM IM MITTELALTER* by Gregorovius; also the VITA PESCARII of Jovius. We have seen how he sought to give as the reason for Pescara's refusal to be tempted the fact of his approaching death. Probably Pescara's reason was that on the side of loyalty to the Emperor lay his own advantage. Meyer gives him an unhealed spear-wound, received in the battle of Pavia, as the immediate cause of his death. But this is entirely the author's own invention and has no foundation in history. To be sure Pescara died some months after that battle, but we have no reason to believe that he foresaw his death. Pescara's ideas on the degeneration of Italy, (his second great reason for rejecting the temptation) Meyer got from the historian, Ranke, who says:

"Das größte Gut einer Nation, ihre Unabhängigkeit, kann nur durch eine allgemeine Anstrengung aller Kräfte des innern und Muszern Lebens wieder errungen werden. Hier war ein Bedürfnis dafür nur erst in den literarischen Kreisen erwacht."

Ranke's ideas the author gave to Pescara, who judged Italy incapable of being free, because the people as a whole were unworthy of freedom.

Meyer has also greatly idealized the character of Pescara. Historians of his time picture him as a rather boastful military man, not exempt from cruelty and falsehood, but Meyer shows him with a character ennobled by the near approach of death, and in the same class with Duke Rohan and Becket, or Gustavus Adolphus. His relations with his wife and her character have also been considerably idealized. Meyer makes her one of the chief instruments in the temptation of Pescara, while,

1. Maync 265
acccording to history, she tried to dissuade him from falling away from the Emperor.

Here, too, we have the same colorful renaissance background in the beautiful pictures and statuary, the clever scintillating repartee, as well as the atmosphere of dark intrigue and treachery always seeming to surround Pescara. Meyer always succeeds somehow in giving us this, even though he manipulates the facts of history to suit himself. For him, mere historical detail is unimportant, so long as he makes clear the character, and here he has succeeded to a remarkable degree in laying bare the soul of a great man.

The historical background of ANGELA BORGIA, too, has already been given, it being necessary for an understanding of the story. In this tale the author has accomplished for the terrible Lucrezia Borgia of history a 'Rettung' similar to that by Schiller of Wallenstein. The materials he found in the work of the Roman historian, Gregorovius. Another book on which he drew heavily, not only for this but for all his renaissance stories was Burkhardt's KULTUR DER RENAISSANZ. Angela in Gregorovius receives only cursory mention, but Meyer has given her the title-role in his story, though the role of heroine she shares with Lucrezia, whose character is really much better drawn. We will here quote from Maync, who gives the citation from Gregorovius in full:


We can see how Meyer has changed all this in the interests of his story. Here, to heighten the tragedy, Don Giulio loses both his eyes, and, after a few years in prison is freed, after winning the love of Angela, who marries him because she feels that she is partially responsible for his blindness, - out of her pity and remorse has developed a deep love. Here Meyer takes the opportunity to tell the story of a wonderful conversion, for through Giulio's suffering and blindness the eyes of his soul are opened.
We have now seen how, in every one of his stories, Meyer has taken the cold facts of history, and changed them to suit himself, only to produce for us a series of great psychological character-studies, which have never been surpassed in literature, except by Shakespeare. To do this he has not chosen his historical background at random, but has chosen in each case some stirring time in the history of the world, some 'Übergangzeit', just as Hebbel did. His favorite time was the Italian Renaissance, which was a time of individualism, a time of strong characters who lived lives of action and full enjoyment. And here he found some compensation for the weakness of his own character, in imagining these strong souls so different from his own. His story-writing was for him a form of day-dreaming, a means of escape from the limitations of his own timid nature into a romantic world of the imagination, where he could be a man among men and not a weakling. He was like his own Julian Boufflers, who died dreaming of great things which he was never actually able to accomplish in his own life.

Meyer's manner of working follows as a natural corollary to his outlook on history. As a rule he does not go directly to sources, but relies upon his almost inexhaustible memory, based on a wide reading of history in his youth. He has so steeped himself in the atmosphere of the renaissance that it reproduces itself almost automatically when he writes.

We are told of the painter Böcklin, that someone asked him to paint the picture of a mutual friend long dead, and sent him a photograph to aid his memory. He sent the picture back, saying it was not necessary. His memory alone was sufficient to enable him to paint a
wonderful speaking likeness of his dead friend.

And that is the way Meyer worked with history. For his best Novellen he needed no chronicles or documents; these were already in his mind, and he had only to assemble them in his story to produce the picture he wanted. His own poem, IL PENSIEROSO, in which he describes the manner of working of the great Michael Angelo, describes exactly his own manner of depicting historical characters. The poem tells us that Giuliano di Medici one day entered Michael Angelo's studio, and, thinking him absent, sat down in a chair to wait for him. He began to think aloud, trying to solve some problems which were weighing on his mind. Unknown to him, the great sculptor was watching him closely. Shortly afterwards Giuliano died. The rest of the story we will give in the words of the poem.

"Er ging und aus dem Leben schwand er dann
Fast unbemerkt. Nach einem Zeitverlauf
Bestellten sie bei Michelangelo
Das Grabbild ihm, und brachten emsig her
Was noch in Schilderei'n vorhanden war,
Von schwachen Spuren seines Angesichts.
So waren seine Züge, sagten sie.
Der Meister schob es mit der Hand zurück;
"Nehmt weg: ich sehe, wie er sitzt und sinnt,
Und kenne seine Seele, das genügt."

And there we have exactly Meyer's method of dealing with history.

1. Gedichte 314
III. THE ETHICAL CONTENT OF MEYER'S PROSE WORKS.

Another and most important aspect of Meyer's writing must now be considered, — his work as a moral and religious teacher, for, that he had an exalted idea of his function as poet and author no one can doubt who has taken the trouble to read through the books treated in this thesis. He was too good an artist to be a mere propagandist for any particular cause. and no one of his works can be called a 'novel with a purpose' in the ordinary meaning of the term, yet in every one of them, with the possible exception of his one comedy, he meant to inculcate some particular moral lesson, some definite religious teaching.

That ethical teaching should bear so very important a part in Meyer's scheme of things is not surprising to one familiar with the deeply moral and religious bent of his nature. He had grown up in an intensely religious atmosphere. We have seen how his mother tried to influence him, and her delight when he openly professed Christianity at Prefargier, a profession which he considered seriously and tried to follow out all the rest of his life. We are told that for years he never missed the daily reading of a chapter from the Bible. All his letters and writing make the same profession, and that he had an essentially religious nature is shown by the fact that all his greatest characters were deeply religious men. To prove that we have only to think of Coligny, Duke Rohan, Becket, Pescara, Ariosto, and Don Giulio. In a letter written to his friend, Bovet, almost at the end of his life he says:

"Malgré tous mes efforts d'échapper au Christianisme, au moins à ses dernières conséquences, je me sens amené par un
plus fort que moi, chaque année d’avantage et même quelque fois avec un extrême violence, et au mépris de toute science critique et philosophique."

Note also his remarks after completing his Pescara. He says:

"Ich fühle immer mehr was für eine ungeheure Macht das Ethische ist, es soll in meinem neuen Buch mit Posannen und Tubenstoszen verkundet werden."^2

Meyer’s particular phase of religion took the form of Protestantism, - not merely an ordinary form of Protestantism - but Protestantism at its extreme, the Protestantism of John Calvin. We are told by Frey that he had an intimate friend, Mirscheler, who became a convert to Catholicism, and who tried to convert him, but in vain. Though they were good friends till Mirscheler’s death, yet Meyer remained what he had always been, a strict Protestant. No doubt this friendship taught him tolerance. He did not consider a man unworthy to be his friend because he happened to be a Catholic, but of Catholicism as a religion he was always the uncompromising critic.

This extreme Protestantism shows in almost all his prose-works. The first story gives the line which the others are to follow. In DAS AMULETT we are ushered into the times of the counter-reformation, and are shown, in the passions which gave rise to the massacre of St. Bartholomew, what a hideous thing was that religious discord which could prompt fellow-citizens, who ought to be like brothers, to massacre each other in the name of religion, as the Catholics massacred the Protestants then. The friendship of the two heroes for one another shows how Catholics and Protestants ought to live together. We can read

1. Frey 304
2. Faesi 134
between the lines the author's contempt for such firebrands as Father Panigarola, who preached religious intolerance, and we can see his admiration for the great Protestant hero, Coligny. There is, moreover, a certain amount of humorous irony in Boccard's belief in the virtues of his amulet, which saves the Protestant who does not believe in it, and fails to save the Catholic who does.

In JÜRGEN JENATSCH it is impossible to mistake his intense admiration for the great Protestant Duke Rohan, and his contempt for the double-dealing of the Catholic Richelieu, who suppressed Protestantism in France, while, for political reasons, he supported it in Switzerland. We have a great deal of sympathy with Jenatsch in his treachery, for he was only fighting Richelieu with his own weapons.

In PLAUTUS IM NONNENKLOSTER there is a bitter attack on the Catholic belief in relics, and the deception and jugglery which usually goes with such a belief. Here, the abbess is intended to be a comic figure, but there is something rather disgusting about her too. The whole story shows the necessity for the Protestant reformation which was soon to come. In GUSTAV ADOLPH'S PAGE Meyer's Protestantism is shown in his veneration for the great Protestant hero, Gustavus Adolphus, depicted as an almost Christ-like figure, whose faith in an over-ruiling providence contrasts strongly with the superstition of Wallenstein. It is further exemplified in the incident of Corinne, whose scandalous mode of life did not hinder her from becoming a good Catholic, and his hatred of the Jesuits and their machinations is shown in the incident of the tutor.

DIE LEIDEN EINES KNABEN reveals even more clearly his hatred
for the Society of Jesus. This is shown in his portrayal of the character of Father Tellier, that inhuman monster who did to death an innocent child, merely to satisfy his lust for vengeance against that child's father. To Pescara, the hero whom he evidently most admires, he gives ideas that are really Protestant. For example, he makes him say to Victoria:


Again the author makes Pescara speak of two men whom we had seen dying in the hospital after one of his battles, one a Spaniard, the other a German:

"diesen unter seinen Reliquiem und in den Armen zweier Priester zitternd und bebend, jenen allein doch voller Zuversicht und Freude."\(^2\)

Could anything be more Protestant than that?

Yet in spite of his strong Protestant leanings we have already seen that Meyer has no antagonism to Catholics personally; he is much too tolerant for that. This is also shown in the fact that some of his most attractive characters are Catholics, and, in the stories in which he attacks Catholicism most sharply, there is usually some attrac-

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1. Pescara 169
2. Ibid 117
tive Catholic character to take away the sting. For example we have Boccard in *DAS AMULETT*; Father Pankrazi in *JENATSCH*; Gertrude in the *PLAUTUS*; Father Amiel in *DIE LEIDEN EINES KNABEN*; and Father Mamette in *ANGELA BORGIA*.

Along with Meyer's Protestantism goes also his strong Calvinistic belief in predestination, which he calls by several names, fate, providence, or the hand of God; but it all means the same thing in the end, namely, that all our lives are mapped out for us by a higher power against which we may struggle in vain. We see this idea occurring again and again in his stories. Aside from the rather amusing talk on predestination in the first part of *DAS AMULETT*, it is fate which causes the amulet to save Schadau's life. It is fate which causes Boccard to be killed by a shot from Schadau's pistol in spite of the amulet he is wearing. It is fate which causes Jenatsch to fall before the statue of justice, killed by a blow from the same axe with which he had killed Pompeius Planta. It is fate which leads Henry along the path to Becket's Moorish castle, and to his meeting with Grace, a meeting which was to have such dire consequences for them all. It was fate which led Stemma to call her step-son Wulfrin to Malmort, and fate also led to the finding of the hunting-horn, which she thought she had destroyed, and which again led to her confession before the tomb of her murdered husband. It was fate which led Palma to overhear this confession. It was fate which led Ezzolin along the banks of the Brenta, to be the indirect cause of the upsetting of the overladen boat. It was fate which caused Astorre's ring to roll along the bridge and fall into the hands of Antiope. In fact,
this story could almost be regarded as a 'Schicksalstragödie', except that
the tragic happenings are so closely interwoven with the characters.
Many other examples could be given, but these will suffice to show how
strongly Meyer believed in the workings of this higher power which has
its dealings with men, in accordance with their characters but regard­
less of their wills.

A letter written by the author to his sister, Betsy, best
gives expression to his ideas on the subject:

"Man musz glauben unser Charakter, gestalte unser Schick­
sal, oder richtiger: unser Schicksal sei auf unser
Charakter berechnet. Weisheit wäre dann; ein frei­
williges Eingehen und, wo möglich, ein selbstständiges
Ergreifen unseres notwendigen Loses, und ein Ruhenlassen
streitiger Punkte, bis wir wissen, ob oder ob nicht sie
in der Linie unseres Lebens liegen. Solange die Vorsehung
zerstört, was wir wollen, sind wir offenbar irregereckangen
oder voreilig, wenn etwa sie nicht unsere Standhaftigkeit
nicht prüfen will. Lässt sie es gelingen, so sind wir
recht, wenn etwa sie nicht unseren Irrweg nur zu Blüte
gelangen lassen, und dann erst jäh abschneiden will.
Wie kurz oder lang? Wer weiss es, und es wäre noch
wesentlich es zu wissen. Wie ist nun unser Weg annähernd
zu erraten? Durch stete scharfe Vergegenwärtigung alles
Verflossenen, ohne das Spiel der Phantasie, und Hinhorchen
unsere Herzenswünsche, wo dann in gewissen hellen Stunden,
mehr durch ein Verschwinden alles Unmöglichen, als ein
positives Erraten, aus den gegebenen Linien unseres
Lebens das Weitere sich zu bilden und als Figur sich zu
schlieszen scheint."

Yet in seeming opposition to this belief in predestination
or fate, is the fact that all the greatest of Meyer's stories present a
spiritual conflict of some kind. In JENATSCH it is the conflict of
political astuteness versus morality, and here Meyer seems to show himself
almost a pessimist, for what chance has the good Duke Rohan when con­
fronted with the double-dealing of a Richelieu, or the treachery of a Jenatsch? He is like a lamb among wolves, and his life ends in seeming failure, even as Christ's did. The unscrupulous Jenatsch is successful for a time, yet, in the end, falls a prey to his own overweening ambition. In DER HEILIGE we have the conflict of church and state, in which the church is for the minute successful, yet we have the feeling all the time at the bottom of our hearts that Henry as a king had right on his side after all, though as a man he had so earned Becket's hatred. The PLAUTUS presents a conflict between the aesthetic culture of the renaissance, as represented in Poggio, and true religion, as represented by Gertrude. The forces of worldly and spiritual ambition are in conflict for the soul of Pescara. It is true that when we meet him in the story the near approach of death has set him above all temptation and conflict. He seems to be assailed by a temptation which is no temptation at all for him. Yet, before we meet him he has already considered and passed judgment on the projects of worldly ambition which are shortly to be placed before him. He was unsusceptible to temptation, even as Christ was, because he foresaw clearly the consequences to himself and others of his yielding to temptation.

It is interesting to note Meyer's attitude towards the problems arising from these various conflicts. He raises the problems but does not attempt to find any final solution for them. That he leaves to the reader to find for himself. His attitude is expressed in these words of Schadau in DAS AMULETT:

"Das ist ein dunkler schwerer Satz, der sich nicht leichthin erörtern lässt."

1. Das Amulett 29
and leaves it at that.

In line with the author's attitude toward questions of religion is his attitude toward certain great moral problems, such as the problem of conscience. He attaches immense importance to this. In almost every one of his greater works remorse of conscience plays a leading part in the development of the plot. We know how Jenatsch saved his country, but at what a fearful price, the defiling of his conscience with treachery and murder. Remorse of a certain kind has its part in the feelings of Henry, though he was not sorry for the deed, only for its effects. It is Gertrude's tender conscience and her regard for the sanctity of an oath which is the key to the whole story of PLAUTUS IN NONNENKLOSTER. Poggio philosophizes upon the subject:

"Was ist das Gewissen? Ist es ein allgemeines? Keinesweg" and then he tells us of Pope John XXIII who could sleep like a child after the most horrible crimes. He continues:

"Nein, das Gewissen ist kein allgemeines, und auch unter uns, die wir ein solches besitzen, tritt es, ein Proteus, in wechselnden Formen auf."

We have seen how Lucrezia Borgia in spite of her crimes could sleep like a child. Her problem was 'too little conscience' while Angela had too much. The gnawings of conscience, the fear of being unmasked and appearing in a disgraceful role has a great part to play in the story of Gustel Leubelfing. Even Gustavus Adolphus has a stain on his conscience which he must confess before he dies. He has wished to be King of Germany. In DIE LEIDEN EINES KNABEN the utter lack of conscience in the Jesuit,

1. Plautus im Nonnenkloster 201
Tellier, and the indifference of the father make the tragedy. DIE RICHTERIN, as we have seen, was intended by the author to be a story illustrative of the workings of conscience, and Pescara's conscience will not allow him to be a traitor to his emperor.

Another great moral problem which also has an immense importance in Meyer's works was that of the necessity of conversion. The great Protestant doctrine of justification by faith had a very real meaning for him and he had himself experienced conversion in his early manhood. So we find that it bears a very important role in his stories. We have three great examples of conversion in his prose-works, that of Becket, Pescara, and Don Giulio, and in each case the different steps in the conversion are set out with psychological accuracy. As they have been commented on in Part II, when dealing with these particular characters, it is not necessary to repeat them here. Suffice it to say, however, that this conversion always takes place as the result of suffering. In Becket's case it is through the loss of his child, for Pescara through the near approach of death, and for Don Giulio through the loss of his sight.

Speaking further of great moral problems in Meyer's works we can always see that his sympathies lie on the side of truth and justice. Though he was too much of an artist to take sides too openly with or against his characters, as do Dickens or Thackery sometimes, yet we can always see that his sympathies lie 'on the side of the angels.' As Faesi says of him:

And in connection with Meyer's sympathy for justice it is interesting to note how often he makes some great character in his stories perform the office of a judge. The great Charlemagne does it in DIE RICHTERIN, Pescara acts as judge between the two forces of evil which are warring for his soul, and Ezzolin also has to act as judge in the last part of DIE HOCHZEIT. Perhaps that is why Meyer takes such pains to explain that he has not yet begun to perpetrate the cruelties for which he afterwards became so notorious.

Meyer is, of course, concerned not only with such great moral problems as conscience or conversion, but is vitally interested, like every great artist, in the supreme facts of human life, such as death and love. In portraying death he shows himself a great artist. It is almost the central theme in four of his Novellen. Most of his stories have a tragic ending and two of them, JENATSCH and DIE HOCHZEIT end in fearful violence and bloodshed. There is an inevitableness about these catastrophes such as we find in the endings of some of Shakespeare's great tragedies like MacBeth or Othello. Some of his noblest characters live with the consciousness of death ever before their eyes, as do Becket

1. Faesi 135
and Pescara. Gustel Leubelfing says:

"Ich wünsch mir alle Strahlen meines Lebens in einen Flammenbundel, und in den Raum einer Stunde vereinigt, dass, statt einer blühenden Dämmerung, ein kurzes oder blendend heisses Licht von Glück entstünde, um denn zu löschen wie ein zückendes Blitz."¹

and also Gustavus Adolphus

"lebte mit dem Tode auf einem vertrauten Fuss."¹

This idea of the imminence of death was inherent in Meyer's own character, and had its root in his own personal experiences. He had suffered through the tragic death of his mother, and all his life he felt himself, as it were, outside the active interests of life, and under the shadow of some impending doom. His nervous breakdown had left with him a constant dread of the recurrence of a similar experience and he worked desperately as one who must make haste to get as much as possible done before the blow fell.

Another of the great facts of life of which Meyer treats in great detail is the passion of love. All his eleven prose-works have a love-story of some kind. DER HEILIGE and DIE LEIDEN EINES KNABEN have, to be sure, a rather elementary one, and we have seen that his drawing of Gasparde in DAS AMULETT was rather weak. In his other eight stories the love element is very important, and they are about equally divided as to tragic and happy endings. In DIE HOCHZEIT DES MÜNCHES the sudden flaming passion of Astorre and Antiope for each other, a passion which overleaps all obstacles, moral, or religious, gives us one of the best love-stories of the time. In this story Meyer gives us Dante's opinion of

¹. Gustav Adolph's Page 234.
love. He says:

"Liebe ist selten, und nimmt meistens ein schlimmes Ende."¹

Some people have thought that here Meyer was giving his own opinion, too, but that hardly seems justified by the facts, for his very next story, DIE RICHERIN, tells a tale of overwhelming passion in the almost instinctive attraction of Wulfrin for his supposed sister, Palma Novella. We must remember that this story is intended to end happily for they eventually marry each other, that is, if a marriage founded on her mother's tragic death could ever make Palma truly happy. The other three love-stories which have a happy ending are those of Pfannenstiel and Rahel, united through the beneficent match-making of Wettmüller, of Gertrude and Hans in PLAUTUS, and of Don Giulio and Angela Borgia.

Of the love-stories with a tragic ending one cannot imagine anything more exquisite than the adoration of Gustel for her hero Gustavus Adolphus, a love which was quite unknown to its object, and which could end happily only in death. The love of Lucretia Planta and Jürg Jenatsch for each other was no sudden passion, but had its beginnings back in their childhood, and the sad fate which made Jenatsch the murderer of her father, and which almost compelled Lucretia to take vengeance on him, like Chimène in Corneille's Cid, was surely tragic enough. Lastly we have the ideal relationship of a husband and wife who truly love each other pictured in PESCARA, but that has a tragic ending when Pescara dies. So in eight stories out of eleven we have some aspect of true love portrayed and of the eight, four have a happy ending, which seems to prove

¹ Die Hochzeit der Münches 86
that, according to Meyer's own ideas, love was neither 'selt' nor did it always end unhappily. It must be admitted, however, that the stories with the happy endings are not among Meyer's best. His outlook on life was rather gloomy, and his tragedies are, therefore, always his best works.

It is interesting, judging from the majority of his women-characters, to note the qualities Meyer seems to prefer in a woman. The 'Clinging Vine' type is almost entirely absent. Most of them are strong, capable, and self-reliant - almost Amazons, some of them - and all of them capable of acting bravely in an emergency, and of doing a man's work when necessary. Even to his women he gave some of the qualities he most keenly admired, probably because he knew that he lacked them himself. On this subject we will again quote Maync, who is speaking of Gustel Leubelfing, - one of the shining examples of the exhibition of qualities Meyer so much admired. He says:

"Der Tod auf der Gipfelhöhe und im Vollgenuss des Lebens war auch C.F. Meyers Traum, des Pagen Lösung 'courte et bonne' auch die seinige. Wie stets barg er auch in diesem Falle seine persönlichen Gefühle in einer geschichtlichen Gestalt und übertrug dabei seinen eigenen Hang zur Heldenverehrung auf das Geschöpf seiner Phantasie. Und wie er seine Lucretia Planta, seine Rahel Wettmüller, seine Viktoria Colonna, seine Richterin, seine Angela Borgia mit einer ihm selbst versagten und gerade von ihm doppelt bewunderten männlichen Aktivität ausstattet, wie überhaupt seine Frauen, darin denen Gotthelfs und Kellers verwandt, an Ungebrochenheit und 'Kraftgefühl oft seinen Männern überlegen sind, so hält er es auch mit seinem weiblichen Pagen."

He was a real hero-worshipper, and loved those qualities in man or woman which he well knew he did not himself possess, - unbroken

1. Maync 204
strength and force of character. Again and again in his works we see some strong character who is visibly a favorite of the author. He is usually morally much ahead of his age, and the purity and strength of his character seem to stand in judgment upon the worthlessness and criminality of his time. Such are Coligny, Duke Rohan, Becket, Gustavus Adolphus, Charlemagne, and Pescara. They seem to set standards for their contemporaries to follow, and to show up the shortcomings and delinquencies of the others in the story. This he does very often, by bringing in a contrasting character. For example, we have the philistinism of Herr Waser as contrasted with the heroism of Jenatsch. He is quite willing to profit by the wrong-doing of Jenatsch, though he will not stoop to soil his own hands. Again we have the very unheroic conduct of the younger Leubelfing, which serves to bring out in sharp contrast the noble character of Gustel.

From all this it is very evident that Meyer's attitude towards life was intensely serious. Very few great authors have possessed to a greater degree than he that "high seriousness" of which Matthew Arnold speaks as being the preeminent quality in all great works of art. We find very little humor in his writings - occasionally a cynical touch or a rather satirical reflection, but never more than that. There is very little jesting, even in the works which he intended for comedies. He was so possessed with the idea of the tremendous importance of this life as an opportunity for self development and as a preparation for the next that jesting and humor seemed to him rather out of place. Yet there is almost no attempt at any subtlety of theological argument. For him free-will and necessity were not two mutually exclusive things, and his
view of God led him to believe in an intimate personal contact between man and his Creator. For him God was not an inaccessible Deity, too exalted to be interested in human affairs, but rather somewhat like Wordsworth's immanent Presence, almost an intimate personal friend. This idea, which is the background of all his moral and religious teaching, he has expressed most beautifully in his poem "In Harmesnächten." — as he perhaps always reveals his own personality most intimately in his lyrics:

"Die Rechte streckt ich schmerzlich oft in Harmesnächten
Und fühl' gedrückt sie unverhofft von einer Rechten—
Was Gott ist, wird in Ewigkeit kein Mensch ergründen,
Doch will er treu sich allezeit mit uns verbünden."¹

LV CONCLUSION

One of the first questions asked in connection with any author of merit is "What standing does he hold in the world of letters?" As only a little more than a generation has passed away since Meyer's death, it is almost too soon as yet to state definitely just what his place in literature will be, and the difficulty of giving him an exact rating is increased, moreover, by the fact that he is so different from every one else. It is also complicated by the fact that he is great in two fields of literature, while most other writers with whom we can compare him are great only in one. As a writer of lyrics he will pro-

¹. Gedichte 64
bably rank next to Goethe in German literature. As to his proseworks, the subject is still open to question. His output was not great, but what he wrote is of such uniform excellence that, for sheer artistry there are very few who can bear comparison with him.

He will probably never rank among the very greatest of the German classicists, such as Goethe, Schiller, or Lessing, but among the 'minor prophets' he is already entitled to a very high place. That he does not rank among the very highest will probably be due to the fact that, owing undoubtedly to the weakness of his own nature, he has allowed fate, chance, predestination, or whatever one may call it, to play such a deciding part in the solving of his plots. The catastrophe many times happens to his characters, not because their own course of action has rendered it inevitable, but too often through the arbitrary working of some outside force, some freakish turn of fate, which has not necessarily any connection with the development of the characters, and which no foresight could avoid. His very best works are open to this reproach.

Probably, also, he will never rank so high as a great popular author as Gottfried Keller does, chiefly because he has not chosen popular subjects as Keller did. This does not mean that Keller deliberately set out to become popular, but only that an author who chooses his characters from contemporary life and depicts the modern world, as Keller did, has a much greater chance of remaining a popular favorite. However, to educated and discriminating readers Meyer's works will always make a strong appeal, and anyone who has studied and really lived with them for several months, as I have done, cannot help feeling that he has
had a distinct spiritual experience, and reached a higher place of thinking.

For Meyer history was a record of the workings of God's Providence among men, and he sought, through the medium of world-stirring historical events, to interpret for us the meaning of life. But to do this adequately he felt, as did Schiller, that the poet must be a man of consecration, dedicated like a priest to his high office. To him, rather than to the savant, has been entrusted the task of explaining the great mysteries of the workings of providence and of the human heart.

Again in a lyric he most clearly reveals his thought; we find his idea of the poet's function most adequately expressed in these beautiful lines:

Der Dichter nur mit seinen klugen Fingern,
Mit seinen Augen, die den Schein durchdringen,
Der Dichter nur kann euch die Faden zeigen
Des wundersam verworrenen Gewebes,
Ursprung und Wachstum dieser dunklen Dinge
Und Herrschaft lehren über euer Herz.

1. Maync 86
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