

style. In spite of these advantages they are subject to a defect that is perhaps due to Freytag's character, a kind of unimpassioned, sober contemplation of the world that is devoid of any flights of sentiment, of high ideals, and of passion, that wasteful but potent ruler of men's hearts. To him respectability is everything, the idealistic inspiration is sacrificed to the stern duty of routine.

Of Freytag's private life during this period little is known, nothing remarkable having occurred to make him prominent.

He had no inclination to move in large circles, nor had he the power of feeling happy as the central figure of a numerous company. At his country-seat at Siebleben he led a quiet, laborious life, brightened by the love of his wife, and the occasional visits of some sincere friends, among whom should be specially mentioned Karl Mathy and Julian Schmidt. The generous-minded Duke of Coburg-Gotha was also a frequent guest in his hospitable home. Suddenly the stormy year of 1866 changed all this. The question on which the elections for the North German Diet turned referred to the confederation of South and North Germany, and the country was divided into two opposite camps. Freytag himself was proposed as a Liberal candidate, was accepted, and won his seat by a large majority. He joined the National Liberal party under Von Bennigsen, and took great interest in the debates. But he felt that it was not in his power to assume a leading part among his colleagues, and so, when in the autumn of 1867 re-elections had to take place, he resigned his seat and retired again into private life. Other circumstances made it almost a necessity for him to withdraw from public life,—the death of his best friend, Mathy, and the incurable malady that befell his wife. During her painful and lingering illness he never left the house but for a very short time. Henceforward he became more and more gloomy, and the cheerful, good-humoured companion became a misanthropic hermit who found comfort and distraction only in scientific researches and studies.