

The following description of the boyhood of Friedrich Staps will serve to illustrate the somewhat complicated style of the author (his sentences are almost German in their convolutions), as well as his desire not to omit any of the lore he has acquired.

The romantic and wild scenery of his early home, steeped in the legends of the Middle Age, minnesinger and crusader, and during his holidays long visits to his mother's kindred at Detmold near the Teutoberg and the field of the Hermannsschlacht, scene of the heroism of Arminius and the destruction of Varus and his legions, stimulated the emotions of anger, resolution and despondency which alternately convulsed the boy's mind. (p. 112.)

The author indulges again and again in the enumeration of long lists of names which mean absolutely nothing to the average reader. In the following passage Amalie von Esterthal is indulging in reminiscence while she waits for Napoleon to appear:—

. . . she saw him as in the enthusiasm of her girlhood she had seen him enter Milan, his Hamlet-like countenance very pale, mounted on a black charger. She contrasted him with Austrian generals or with Austrian statesmen, whose character and private idiosyncrasies were known to her from gossip or observation—Cobenzl, Kaunitz, Stadion, Metternich, Wittgenstein, Ziethen, Hiller, Bellegarde, even Liechtenstein and the Archduke. (p. 52.)

The progress of the story is impeded by the fact that every time a new character of importance is introduced, the author has thought it necessary to give us a biographical sketch of some length. Besides Napoleon, his marshals and generals, many figures of Viennese society appear in the book, the two most prominent of which are Amalie von Esterthal and her lover, the poet Rentzdorf. The emotions of this pair are described in language which, we confess, does not convey a very clear impression to our unsophisticated mind.

Something elemental yet eternal, absorbing the heart, making the senses a transport utterly, yet in this entrancement binding the soul, the senses' ancient critic; an instinct, yet so transfigured by the soul in its long voyagings that it was now the forlorn hope of a God, and of the same God the supreme emotion; adding their glory to life's sanctitudes, unavailable oblivious ecstasy was absolutely redeeming art from the desecration of praise, for in this oblivious ecstasy was at once art's inspiration and its hallowing force. Such was the passion of Rentzdorf and Amalie. (p. 390.)

If the aim of a historical novel is to create the atmosphere of a past epoch, it cannot be said that Mr. Cramb has succeeded. When reading Hardy's *Trumpet-Major*, one breathes the very air of England in Napoleonic days, and in *Eckmann-Chatrion's Madame Thérèse* one is carried away by the revolutionary fervour of 1793, yet in neither of these books is one submerged by an ocean of encyclopaedic facts and incoherent, interminable sentences.