

from his "Nathan the Wise" the beautiful allegory of the king who had a precious ring, the possession of which insured peace and happiness and universal love. He had three sons, and, unwilling to disinherit any of them, he had two other rings made exactly like the true one. After the father's death the sons came before the judge to decide which had the genuine ring; the judge replied: which of you brothers loves the best? He it is who has the true ring." "So," says Lessing, "instead of wrangling about forms of faith, we should exhibit the fruit of religion, even Christ in the soul."

The great idol of German literature, the cold-blooded, selfish egotist, Goethe, our author severely criticises. Although his life was devoted to almost continuous self-indulgence, he yet said to Eckerman in his old age, "I have ever been esteemed one of fortune's chiefest favourites, yet truly there has been nothing but toil and care, and in my seventy-fifth year I may say I have never had four weeks of genuine pleasure." In this idol of the German people, though the head was of gold, yet the heart was of iron and the feet of clay. Nor is this severe judgment the mere Puritan idiosyncrasy of our critic. The famous Margaret Fuller Ossili remarks "that Goethe as a man was selfish, a debaucher and a well-bred epicurean who had little sympathy with what was highest in man so long as he could crown himself with rosebuds, we are willing to admit." His famous autobiographical of "Wilhelm Meister" our author describes as dull, prolix, low, grovelling, fleshly, loose-jointed, ill-schemed, invertebrate, dim, beclouded, enigmatical, self-complacently biographical, novel, with, of course, some passages worthy of its author's fame. On this book Carlyle gives the following judgment: "What a work! Bushels of dust and straw and feathers, with here and there a diamond of the first water!"

Of the famous "Faust" Mr. Wilkinson says: "The time will come when men will wonder that ever such a Heteroclitite production imposed itself on several generations of read-

ers, or rather of critics, as a true triumph, of genius or art. The atmosphere of a mocking worldly wisdom pervades the work. There are reliefs in it of beauty and of pathos, there are passages of power, but if we were challenged to produce from 'Faust' a single elevated or noble sentiment, one generous expression, such as makes a man feel strong in speaking the truth, we should be compelled to confess ourselves at a loss." Does this seem a harsh judgment, opinionated by Philistine or Puritan narrowness? The great English poet Coleridge, who nobly translated Schiller's "Wallenstein," and "Piccolomini," under the immediate imminency of Goethe's living renown, on being urged to translate "Faust," wrote as follows: "I debated with myself whether it became my moral character to render into English, and so far lend my countenance to language, much of which I thought vulgar, licentious and blasphemous. I need not tell you that I never put pen to paper as a translator of 'Faust.'"

A much nobler spirit our author finds in Schiller, many of whose poems breathe the loftiest moral nobleness. His first play, "The Robbers," was a tremendous shock to German conservatism. One functionary solemnly declared that "had he been the Supreme Being, and had he foreknown that the world, if created, would have 'The Robbers' written in it, he would never have created the world."

These extracts will indicate that Professor Wilkinson's book is one of much educative value in introducing young people to a discriminating acquaintance with German classics.

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The Minutes of the Spring Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church for 1891 makes a closely printed 8vo of 260 pages. It is not a book that one would read through for amusement, but it is a wonderful evidence of the growth of that body, with its many thousands of names and tabulated statistics of that Church.