

## FREYTAG'S WORKS

Freytag entered the field of letters as a dramatist.<sup>1</sup> His first productions, *Die Brautfahrt*, 1841, and *Der Gelehrte*, 1844, failed, both because the dramatic structure was faulty and because Freytag lacked familiarity with the practical requirements of the stage. To supply this latter defect he visited Leipzig, Dresden, and Berlin; formed intimate relations with leading managers and actors, and learned their point of view. As a result of this experience and with the foundation of more extensive private study, the next two dramas, *Die Valentine*, 1846, and *Graf Waldemar*, 1847, showed an advance and were fairly successful on the stage. In 1852 he produced his dramatic masterpiece, *Die Journalisten*.

Freytag's devotion to his country had long before prompted him to make extensive studies of German life both in its historical development and in some of its modern phases. His interest in the latter found expression in the novel, *Soll und Haben*, 1855, an admirable and widely read story, interesting for its careful delineation of character and its well drawn situations. Its evident sympathy with the gifted, cultivated merchant class, in contrast to the unproductive aristocracy, reveals the author's faith in the soundness of the liberal tendencies of the time.

*Die Bilder aus der deutschen Vergangenheit*, 5 vols., 1859-1867, are brilliant descriptions of German life in selected epochs covering a period of nearly two thousand

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<sup>1</sup> He published in 1845 a volume of poems, but he frankly admits that he had no poetic gift and credits himself merely with a certain facility in versification common to the Silesians.