

NOTES ON STUMME LIEBE,* BY MUSÄUS.

BY A MUELLER, MODERN LANGUAGE MASTER, BERLIN HIGH SCHOOL.

THE writer of "Stumme Liebe," Johann Karl August Musäus, was born 1735, at Jena, where he studied theology, intending to enter the church. The members of a congregation to which he had been appointed, refused, however, to accept him as their pastor, alleging that he had danced at one time. He afterwards was appointed "Master of the Pages" at the Court of Weimar. In 1770, he became Professor at the Weimar gymnasium, where he died 1787. All the writings of this author have the same object in view, viz., to satirize the style of certain authors in vogue in his time. (See page 7 of "Stumme Liebe.") This endeavour is most conspicuous in his "Volksmärchen der Deutschen," all of which lack that unaffected, artless, easy flow, so characteristic of the German legends, and which has made the Grimms and Hauff household words. The moral tone in "Stumme Liebe" is not the best, the book being specially objectionable for young pupils. Musäus' first work was levelled against Richardson's novel "Sir Charles Grandison," a somewhat tedious work of fiction much read in Germany, and which was satirized in "Grandison der Zweite." His next work "Physiognomische Reise," was written in opposition to Lavater's once famous book, "Physiognomische Fragamente zur Beförderung der Menschenkunde und Menschenliebe," in which the author propounds the theory that the character of man can be ascertained by the lineaments of the face. Lavater's quickly-spreading theory was largely checked by this work of Musäus, and after its appearance he produced the previously mentioned work,

"Volksmärchen" of which "Stumme Liebe" is a fair sample.

(Pages and lines refer to the small Leipzig edition.)

p. 1, l. 3.—Reichen Manne im Evangelium.

See Luke 16, v. 19.

" 10.—Aufs solide gestellt — Placed on a solid basis.

" 25.—Quabbenschmaus.—Quabbe, a fish resembling the eel and largely caught in the Weser.

" 26.—Hab und Gut—Idiomatrical expression for chattel and lands.

p. 4, l. 3.—Consistent—Well knit.

" 10.—Geilen Ueberwuchs—Runs to rank growth.

" 14-16.—So suchte er..zu entledigen —He sought to free himself from it, as if it were from a heavy burden.

" 20.—Krüselbraten—Probably a roast, small enough to go into a *Krösel*, low German for pot with a handle.

p. 6, l. 2.—Von stund an—Without delay.

" 17.—Nach der denkungsart, etc.—Observe how the author criticizes the fiction writers of his time.

p. 7, l. 22.—Robinsonaden—Tales founded on Robinson Crusoe.

" 23-24.—Plimplamplaskos Kakerlaks—Words of author's coining, whose absence of meaning is supposed to represent the senselessness of the writings of his time.

" 24.—Rosenthalische—Very likely the licentious writings of Baron von Rosenthal.

* One of the works for Matriculation in German, at University of Toronto.