It is significant of the stage of literary culture reached by Germany that she enjoyed the barbarous productions of this scribbling prince while English audiences were appreciating "Hamlet" and "Othello."

Thirty Years War.

V. *The Period of Decay.*—The period at which we have now arrived is in many respects the most dismal in German history. From 1618 to 1648 the country was desolated by the Thirty Years' War, a struggle which—as Gustavus Adolphus, its greatest hero, declared—absorbed into itself all the other wars of Europe. It completed the disintegration of Germany, blurred every great national memory, fastened upon the people hundreds of petty despotisms, reduced the population by more than half, caused a whole generation to grow up in ignorance, accustomed all classes to an almost incredible brutality of manners, and put an end to the material prosperity which had been steadily growing during the 16th century. It is not surprising that pure literature drooped and nearly died out during the time which followed this tremendous war, for the conditions of pure literature were almost wholly wanting. Had a man of high genius arisen, the buds of his fancy must have faded for lack of light and air.

The only species of literature for which the conditions were favourable was the religious lyric. Under the pressure of grinding care, with no hope that a better day would dawn for them in this world, meditative and gentle spirits devoted their thoughts to another life; and many of them linked themselves to the truest poets of the previous century by giving musical voice to their spiritual fears and joys. Their prevailing tone in regard to "things seen" is one of profound melancholy; but all the brighter are the strange lights from the invisible which break through the gloom. The greatest of these writers is Paul Gerhardt (1606–75), many of whose hymns—such as *O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden, O Welt sieh hier dein Leben*—penetrate to the essence of Christianity as the religion of humility, of sacrifice, and of sorrow. He had worthy associates among the Protestants in Johann Rist (1607–67), Joachim Neander (1610–88), and Louise Henriette of Brandenburg, wife of the Great Elector (1627–67). Some of the wiser Jesuits also attempted the lyrical expression of religious feeling; and one of them, Friedrich von Spee (1592–1635), fell little short of the best among his Lutheran rivals. Spee was a man of admirable moral as well as literary qualities. Asked by the elector of Mainz how it happened that at the age of forty his hair was white, he answered, "It is because I have accompanied to the stake so many women accused of witchcraft, not one of whom was guilty."

Literary societies.

The standard of pure speech set up by Luther in his translation of the Bible had not been maintained by later writers. The innumerable dialects of Germany are an almost inexhaustible fountain for the renewal of the youth of her literary language, but when the literary language was less fixed than it is now, they were also a temptation to barbarism. In addition to the evils of excessive provinciality, the written speech had suffered from a too generous importation of Latin, Spanish, and French words. In the early years of the 17th century the prevailing laxity suggested to an enlightened prince, Louis of Anhalt-Köthen, that it would be desirable to introduce into Germany institutions resembling the Italian academies. Accordingly, in 1617, the "Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft" ("The Fruit-bearing Society") was established,—a union which took the form of an order, with a palm tree for its emblem, and the words "Alles zu Nutzen" ("Everything for use") for its motto. It immediately became fashionable for members of the highest classes of central Germany to belong to this society; and at a somewhat later time other societies were started in imitation of it. Of these the most famous was the "Order of the Pegnitzschäfer" ("Shepherds of the River Pegnitz") in Nuremberg, which to some extent took the place of the school of meistersänger on which honour had been reflected by Hans Sachs.

These societies were associated with much pedantic folly, and from none of them proceeded any great work of genius; but they did good service by at least protesting against unlawful forms of speech. One of the earliest writers who worked in their spirit was Weckherlin (1584–1651), who, being associated with the German embassy in London, became intimately acquainted with some of the many forms in which the English genius then revealed itself. He wrote a number of odes, idylls, and sonnets, with an evident desire to give them a careful artistic finish. To him belongs the doubtful honour of having introduced alexandrines into German poetry,—a measure totally unsuited to the national spirit, but which for more than a century was in general use. The fame of Weckherlin was soon overshadowed by that of Martin Opitz (1597–1639). The beginnings of modern German poetry are often dated from the publication of his critical book, *Die deutsche Poeterei*, which appeared in 1624, and enjoyed an astonishing popularity. It became a sort of secular Bible to the "Fruit-bearing Society," of which Opitz was a member, and was regarded by several generations of verse-makers as an almost infallible guide. In regard to merely outward forms, it deserved its reputation, for Opitz was the first German writer who attempted sharply to distinguish the different species of poetry, to bring together some of the external laws which govern them, and to insist with emphasis that purity of style is essential to high literary effect. He altogether missed the fact, however, that poetry must be the expression of an emotional life; it became in his exposition a mere handicraft, for excellence in which industry and familiarity with good models are alone necessary. The result is seen in his own lyrical and didactic poems, which are laudably correct in language and in metre, but are hardly once lighted up by the fire of intense feeling.

Opitz was born in Silesia; and from this circumstance the writers who shared his tendency or came under his influence are known as the first Silesian school. By far the most distinguished member of this so-called school was Paul Fleming (1609–40), the only secular German poet of the 17th century of whom it can be confidently said that he was endowed with true genius. He did not live long enough to reveal his full capacity; he confined himself to short rapid flights, and all his lyrics are contained in a moderately sized volume, *Geistliche und Weltliche Poemata*. This single volume, however, comprises enough to secure for him an enduring place in literature. He moves freely over the whole range of lyrical poetry, but his charm is at once strongest and most delicate in his love verses, which sometimes recall the gaiety of Herrick, although a touch of sentimentalism distinguishes the German writer from the more worldly Englishman. A fine spirit of manliness is the note of Fleming's sonnets; and in several hymns he almost equals the religious depth of Gerhardt. Even in its artistic qualities his best work is higher than anything achieved by Opitz; in its power of awakening permanent human sympathies it stands alone in its era.

Paul Fleming.

Gryphius.

Another writer of the first Silesian school was Andreas Gryphius (1616–64), who sought to create a drama in accordance with the laws laid down by Opitz. He was the first German dramatist who divided his tragedies—of which he wrote five—into five acts; but his characters are roughly conceived, and he produces his effects rather by violence and bombast than by the gradual evolution of a definite plan.

His comedies, although also rude, have more life than his tragedies. In one of them, *Peter Squenz*, there are traces of Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, of which Gryphius appears to have had some knowledge through a third writer. Friedrich von Logau (1604–55) applied the principles of Opitz in epigram. He had a decided talent for terse, emphatic expression, and a considerable number of the vast collection of his epigrams have a keenness of edge which must have made him a dreaded enemy. His prevailing tone is satirical, and the chief object of his satire is the moral corruption of his time. Joachim Rachel (1618–69) was another satirist who strove by means of polished verses to castigate popular vices; but he lacked force and invention. There was much more vigour in the *Scherzgedichte* of Hans Wilmsen Lauremberg (1591–1659), who wrote in Platt Deutsch; he, however, can hardly be claimed as a member of the first Silesian school. Philip von Zesen (1619–89), a writer of some versatility, wrought in the spirit of Opitz by warring against foreign words which had intruded into German,—a warfare in which his zeal was not always as wise as it was patriotic. He founded in Hamburg, in imitation of the "Fruit-bearing Society," an association (the "Deutschgesinnte Gesellschaft") inspired by his enthusiasm for Teutonic purity of speech.

While the admirers of Opitz were striving, with the best intentions, to introduce a correct poetic style, a movement of a very different kind originated among the "Pegnitzschäfer" of Nuremberg. The members of this society, conscious of the barrenness of existing poetry, and not feeling in themselves the sources of a higher activity, turned for help to Italian literature. Instead of studying the great Italian poets they attached themselves to Marino and his extravagant school; and the chief result was a number of fantastic pastorals, the writers of which seemed to have no other aim than to show how much silly affectation the German language may be made to express. Their tendency was carried to its utmost development by the second Silesian school, whose leading representatives were Hoffmannswaldau (1618–79) and Lohenstein (1635–83). Hoffmannswaldau wrote odes, pastorals, and heroic epistles, which are marked by a childish foppery of manner, and whose tone affords startling evidence of the moral laxity of the society to which they were addressed. Lohenstein chiefly cultivated the drama, and he has the distinction of having written perhaps the worst plays ever accepted as literature by a modern community. They are so wild and bombastic that, even if presented as burlesques, they would now be condemned as ridiculously extravagant. The lyrics of this pretentious writer are not less crude and unnatural than his plays.

Court poets.

As the century advanced, the German courts passed more and more under the influence of France. Pocket editions of Louis XIV. were to be found in all the little capitals, courtiers talked more French than German, and it was unfashionable not to know, or not to affect to know, contemporary French literature. It was, therefore, inevitable that some writers should turn away from the path of the second Silesian school, and compete for court favour by imitating the French style. This was done by Canitz (1654–99), Besser (1654–1729), König (1688–1744), and many other authors of the same class. These "court poets" took Boileau for their guide, and had, therefore, the negative merit of avoiding the absurdities of Lohenstein and Hoffmannswaldau. But they were, as a rule, tame, cold, and dull. In Canitz alone, who was a Prussian statesman and wrote for his pleasure, is there any evidence of original energy; the others were professional versifiers who produced appropriate odes and sonnets at the bidding of their employers.

During the greater part of the 17th century Germany produced few prose works that can now be tolerated. Notwithstanding the efforts of the purists, the language became more and more corrupt, and most writers were either artificial, or pedantic, or coarse. One of the small number whose power we can still feel was Grimmelshausen, whose *Simplicissimus* (1659) has qualities bordering upon genius. The hero is a peasant's son, who tells his own tale. Torn from his parents during the Thirty Years' War, he is brought up by a hermit; afterwards in the service of a commandant, he makes himself notorious for tricks like those of Tyll Eulenspiegel; he then becomes a soldier, rises to wealth and rank, but ultimately loses both, passes through many wild adventures, and retires from the world to a desert island, in which he devotes himself to religion. The value of the book consists in its graphic pictures of the horrors of the Thirty Years' War,—pictures relieved by touches of rough, sometimes of the coarsest, humour.

Prose writers of 17th century.

Grimmelshausen.

Another writer of great but insufficiently cultivated talent was Moscherosch, author of *Gesichte Philanders von Sittewalt* (1650), which is partly an imitation of the Sueños of Quevedo. It is made up of a number of visions or dreams, some of which, like passages of *Simplicissimus*, convey a vivid idea of the sufferings of Germany during her great struggle; in others the writer strikes with effect at popular follies, including the extravagances of the second Silesian school. Sigmund von Birken wrote a history of the house of Austria, which, although one-sided, is not without merit as a plain narrative; and an ecclesiastical history by Gottfried Arndt has some interest as an attempt to do justice to heretics condemned by the church. A very good book of travels was written by Adam Olearius, describing the adventures of a mission to Persia, of which the author and Paul Fleming were subordinate officials. A Protestant pastor, Balthasar Schupp (1610–61), was the author of several didactic prose works, which, although rough in form, display native wit, and pour wholesome ridicule on the follies and barbarisms of contemporary writers. Against these more or less valuable prose writings we must set piles of enormous romances in the style of D'Urfé and Mademoiselle Scudéry. The favourite authors of these astonishing productions were Buchholtz, who wrote *Hercules und Valisca*, and *Herculiscus und Herculadisla*; Anton Ulrich, duke of Brunswick, whose *Octavia* was loudly applauded by aristocratic readers; and Von Ziegler, the writer of *The Asiatic Banise*, an incredibly foolish book which, published in 1688, took Germany by storm, and maintained its popularity for more than a generation. Lohenstein was also the author of a romance, dealing with the fortunes of Arminius and Thusnelda. It is hard to understand the interest which works of this class once excited; they are barren of every imaginative quality, with no kind of relation to life, and grotesque in style. They were ultimately driven from the field by imitations of *Robinson Crusoe*, which, notwithstanding the charm of their model, display no more talent than the romances. Various writers imitated *Simplicissimus*, but they succeeded only in reproducing in an exaggerated form its occasional brutalities. Abraham a Sancta Clara (1642–1709), a Vienna priest, whose real name was Megerlin, revealed considerable power of satire in his *Judas der Erzschelm* ("Judas the Arch-Rogue"), and in pamphlets and sermons; but his naturally rich fancy was wholly uncontrolled, and his humorous passages are marred by a far larger number in which he is pedantic or vulgar.

Moscherosch.

Schupp.

Romances.

No progress was made during the 17th century towards the formation of a national drama. At the courts the Italian opera was the favourite entertainment, and the wandering companies of actors represented for the most part barbarous plays of their own devising, in which Hanswurst was generally the popular character. Occasionally a man of some talent found his way into these com-

panies; and one such actor, Velthen, showed so much insight as to include in his repertory some of the works of Molière. But the general tendency of what passed for the drama was from bad to worse, and the usual character of the plays to a considerable extent justified the hatred with which they were denounced by the clergy.

For a time it almost seemed as if Germany could never hope to emerge from the intellectual degradation into which she had sunk; but in reality the higher forces of the nation were rallying in preparation for a new era. One of the first symptoms of revival was presented by the remarkable pietistic movement, which, although it ultimately led to the formation of the pettiest of petty sects, was in its origin noble both in aim and in method. Its originators were the ardent, generous, and eloquent Jacob Spener (1633–1705), and August Hermann Francke (1663–1727). The labours of these writers and preachers, who had close affinity to the mystics, not only gave more sincerity to religious forms, but did service to literature by quickening the popular intellect, and awakening emotions which could find no satisfaction in the tedious writings of the day. Of still greater importance were the beginnings of modern German philosophy. It was in this dreary period that Germany gave birth to one of the most brilliant of her thinkers, Leibnitz (1646–1716). The prevailing style of the day—"Mischmasch," he called it—seems to have disgusted him with his own language, for nearly all his writings are in French or Latin. Nevertheless, he exercised a profound influence on the best minds of his generation. His monadology, his doctrine of the pre-established harmony, his theory of the best of possible worlds, while carrying on the central current of European thought, offered Germany new problems for solution, and helped to replace a rigid orthodoxy by a spirit of disinterested curiosity. The task of giving shape to his ideas was undertaken by Wolf (1679–1754), who had none of Leibnitz's genius, and often crushed his fruitful suggestions under a burden of logical proofs. The disciple, however, so far taught in his master's spirit as to exalt the claims of reason over mere authority; he also encouraged habits of systematic thinking, and proved by his practice that serious writers had no excuse for clothing their doctrines in any other language than their own. Less philosophical than Leibnitz, and even than Wolf, Christian Thomasius (1655–1728) was an impressive popular thinker. He edited the first German periodical, a sort of monthly magazine, in which he vigorously attacked pedants and bigots. His style, although not pure or graceful, received glow and warmth from his moral earnestness. Through him literature became a great practical power, for it was mainly he who put an end to the burning of witches and to punishment by torture.

Philosophy. Leibnitz.

Wolf.

Thomasius.

Wernicke.

Even in poetry, before the close of this period, there were a few glimmerings of dawn. Wernicke, a man of cultivated and severe taste, published a volume of epigrams (1697) in which he thrust home at the follies of Lohenstein and his followers; and that his mockery had effect was plain from the outcry of two noisy members of the school, Postel and Hunold. Günther (1695–1723), who died too soon for his genius, wrote lyrics in which the voice of nature was once more heard. "A poet in the full sense of the word," Goethe calls him; and no one can realize how great was his achievement without making some acquaintance with his truly dismal predecessors. Brockes (1680–1747) had not Günther's fine spontaneity, but he had the merit of giving simple expression to unaffected pleasures,—a virtue for which historians of literature, remembering the formality of the court poets and the insincere posturing of the second Silesian school, readily forgive his occasional flatness and garrulity. He was the first German poet who displayed some knowledge of English literature. Although unacquainted with Shakespeare, he directed his countrymen to Milton, Young, and Pope; and he appended to his chief work, *Irdisches Vergnügen in Gott*, a fair translation of Thomson's *Seasons*.

VI. *The Period of Revival.*—For five centuries there had been no great literary period in Germany which deserves to be named with the famous periods in the history of England, France, Italy, and Spain. The Reformation was a spiritual achievement of splendid originality, but in literature Germany had for the most part followed timidly in the footsteps of her neighbours. She was soon to make up amply for this tardy progress; and we have now reached the age in which she fairly awoke to a consciousness of her strength,—an age mainly of preparation, but one which has also an independent interest, since it includes names that rank high in the history of European as well as of German culture. We have seen that in the midst of the period of decay there were already symptoms of revival. These became more and more numerous, and while they increased, Germany was suddenly startled by the appearance in her midst of a great warrior and statesman. It is impossible to estimate with any approach to exactness the impression produced by Frederick II.; but it is beyond doubt that he profoundly affected the intellectual life not only of Prussia but of Germany. After the Thirty Years' War the people had lost confidence in themselves. They forgot that they had a magnificent history; they only saw that the structure of society had been rudely battered, and that nearly every enterprise of the nation as a whole ended in failure. Frederick the Great restored to them faith in their own vigour; he convinced them that it depended on themselves whether or not they should rise to their ancient place in Europe; and by the prompt, faithful, and energetic discharge of his personal duties he set before them an example which was widely felt. Literature shared the impulse which penetrated the national life. It became stronger, more independent, and moved forward with the assured step of a power conscious of high destinies.

Frederick the Great.

Classical study.

Several causes of a purely literary character contributed to promote this advance. One of these was the revival of classical study in the best sense. Classical study had been pursued with ardour by the humanists; but after them it became dry, pedantic, and tedious, and was subordinated to theological controversy. In the 18th century a number of scholars arose, who, ceasing to interest themselves in merely verbal criticism, sought to pierce to the meaning of classical writers, to understand and enjoy their imagi native effects, their ideas, and their style. They also strove to construct what the Germans call "Alterthumswissenschaft," the science of antiquity—that is, to comprehend the life of the Greeks and Romans, their religion, art, and philosophy, and to interpret their literature in the light of this knowledge. The movement passed from one university to another and soon made itself felt in the public schools. Thus the best class of minds were familiarized with higher ideals than they had yet known, and received, almost without being aware of it, the germs of new activity. Another cause, which co-operated with the more intelligent study of the classics, was acquaintance with English literature. Hitherto the foreign influences which had affected the Germans had come from Italy, Spain, and, above all, France; but now they began to know something of contemporary English writers, and gradually worked their way back to Shakespeare. The English genius was instinctively recognized as more in harmony with that of Germany than any other, and its products stimulated the free exercise of the imagination and the reason, while the ancient classics led to the perception of the greatest laws of form.

Among the poets who helped to effect the revival of a

truly national literature a place of honour belongs to Haller (1708-77), who, although chiefly famous as a man of science, revealed imagination and poetic sympathies in his descriptive and didactic poem *Die Alpen* ("The Alps"). Hagedorn (1708–54) was for a time the most popular poet of his day in virtue of his songs, odes, fables, and narratives in verse. He was of a genial and happy temper; and no author who preceded him was master of so clear, bright, and animated a style. One of the chief characteristics of the time was the tendency of writers to group themselves in schools. If two or three writers who lived in the same place happened to become friends, they forthwith called themselves a school; and the result was that they usually developed some marked common characteristics. These coteries inevitably became more or less narrow and exclusive; but they also stimulated each other to fresh effort, and the clash of their ideals sometimes helped the outside world to new points of view. The Saxon school, whose headquarters were in Leipsic, was for some years more prominent than any of its rivals. It was founded by Gottsched (1700–66), who, although he made himself ridiculous by pedantry and vanity, became the ruling literary man of Germany He was appointed a professor in Leipsic in 1724, and founded there "The German Society," which soon became the centre of a number of similar bodies for the cultivation of literature. Gottsched aimed at nothing short of the complete reformation of German poetry. He had the sense to see that if he wished to reach the people he must begin with the drama, and he was fortunate enough to find in Frau Neuber, who had formed a company in Leipsic, an intelligent actress capable of giving effect to his ideas. With her help he banished Hanswurst from the stage; and she was forthwith supplied with plays by himself, by his clever wife Louisa Victoria, and by several disciples. He gave his attention chiefly to tragedy, and unfortunately he had but one idea in regard to it—that it had reached the utmost possible excellence in the classic drama of France. The English drama, he admitted, had some merit, but only in so far as it had modelled itself on the work of Corneille and Racine. Hence, in his chief tragedy *Der Sterbende Cato* ("The Dying Cato") he availed himself freely of Addison's *Cato*; the Elizabethan dramatists, of whom his direct knowledge was slight, he believed to be mere barbarians. His taste gave the law in nearly every theatre in which German plays were acted; and it was certainly a good consequence that Lohenstein fell into permanent disrepute, while even the groundlings began to feel that the uncouth works which actors themselves had hitherto produced were, to say the least, far from perfection. On the other hand, the German genius was forced to submit to arbitrary laws antagonistic to its true nature; and so long as its submission lasted, a genuinely native drama was impossible. It was not only in regard to drama that Gottsched insisted on absolute subservience to France. In regard to all species of verse his sympathies were with the court poets, and both by example and by critical precept he insisted that in poetry as in everything else the understanding must be supreme, and that clearness of statement, correctness in the management of figures, and logical arrangement are the highest literary virtues. Regarding the function of imagination and feeling in poetry he had no suggestion to offer.

Saxon school.

Gottsched.

Swiss School.

There were writers who instinctively felt that this could not be a complete theory; and of these the chief were Bodmer and Breitinger, the leaders of the Swiss school, which was formed in Zürich. These writers, although destitute of creative genius, had nourished their imagination on English poetry, especially on *Paradise Lost*, and it was incredible to them that a critical doctrine could be correct which left out of account or condemned their favourite writers. At first they were on friendly terms with Gottsched, but when the latter harshly criticized a translation of Milton's epic issued by Bodmer, his Swiss rivals prepared to defend themselves; and thus broke out a literary controversy which made much noise at the time, and in which the angry critics, to the edification of onlookers, pelted each other unmercifully with abusive epithets. Neither party was fully conscious of the significance of its attack, and sometimes the warriors seemed almost to change sides. But the general tendency of the dispute was that the Swiss school, amid much exaggeration, defended the claims of free poetic impulse, while the Saxon school, in a narrow and pedantic spirit, maintained those of conscious art. It is hard work now to follow their arguments, but at the time they interested a considerable public in literature, and opened fresh lines of investigation. One of the results was that Baumgarten, a disciple of Wolf, published a book which Germans regard as the beginning of modern æsthetics,—a branch of mental science to which their philosophers have ever since devoted thought and labour.

Bremer Beiträge.

While this warfare of critics was going on, there were in Leipsic a number of young writers who more or less attached themselves to Gottsched, but who gradually shook off his authority. They founded a periodical, the *Bremer Beiträge* (the "Bremen Contributions"), which had considerable influence in forming their own style, and in keeping alive the popular interest excited by the central controversy. After a while many of them were scattered over different parts of Germany, but they retained their original impulse, and continued to be known as members of the Saxon school. Gellert (1715–69) was by far the most famous of the circle. It is impossible to mention without respect this amiable writer. His plays are unimportant, but his fables and tales reveal so gentle and pure a spirit that we cannot wonder at his great popularity. He was a favourite among all classes, even Frederick the Great himself, who rarely condescended to notice a German author, declaring after a long interview that he was "the most reasonable of German scholars." His supreme defect was a tendency to weak sentimentalism and pious commonplace. Rabener (1714–71) acquired fame as a good-humoured satirist. His prose is fresh and clear, but he has not sufficient grasp of any important principle to entitle him to very high rank among moralists. Christian Felix Weisse (1726–1804), the friend of Lessing's youth, failed as a writer of tragedy, but was a favourite author of comic operettas. He was also the first successful German writer for children, and edited for many years a periodical (the *Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften*) which had a favourable influence on popular culture. Johann Elias Schlegel (1718–49), uncle of the two Schlegels who became long afterwards leaders of the Romantic school, gave evidence of high dramatic talent, but died when he was beginning to be conscious of his power. Arnold Ebert distinguished himself by good translations from English; and Zachariä wrote with some success mock heroics in the style of *The Rape of the Lock*. Kästner, whose disputations at the Leipsic university were diligently attended by young Lessing, made himself feared as a biting epigrammatist. Cramer became one of the most eloquent preachers of the day, wrote popular religious odes, and edited *The Northern Guardian*, a well-meaning but rather commonplace imitation of the *Guardian* of Steele. These writers, who from being Gottsched's friends all became more or less hostile to him, have a clearness and grace of style which were unknown in the previous century. Another author who was from the beginning Gottsched's enemy, but who had no relation with this particular school, may be here mentioned,—Liscow (1701–60).

His prose has nerve and animation, and few satirists have dealt severer blows at literary pretence.

Halle School.

The Halle school of poets was in some respects different both from the Saxon and the Swiss schools. Its original members were Gleim (1719–1803), Uz (1720–96), and Götz (1721–81). These three writers formed a friendship in their student days at Halle, where they came under the influence of the poets, Pastor Lange, and the tutor of his children, Immanuel Pyra, ardent disciples of Bodmer and Breitinger. The young students, while feeling sincere respect for the Swiss critics, did not attempt any very serious flight; they preferred to amuse themselves with lively little anacreontic verses, which they soon brought into high repute. Afterwards Gleim settled in Halberstadt, where he lived to an extreme age. His didactic poem *Halladat*, which he wrote, he himself modestly explained, in order to gratify a wish of his youth to produce a book like the Bible, has no vitality; but during the Seven Years' War he composed *War Songs of a Grenadier*, which were everywhere read, and have not yet lost their popularity. They were edited by Gleim's friend Lessing, who, however, protested against their patriotic vehemence. Gleim was one of the most kindly of men, and became the patron of young poets, several of whom he always had in his pleasant bachelor's home. He also kept up an extensive correspondence with other writers, which is now an important source of information respecting the movements of contemporary literature. One of his most intimate friends, who resembled him only in geniality of disposition, was the noble-hearted Ewald Christian von Kleist (1715–59), who was fatally wounded on the battle-field of Kunersdorf. He would still deserve to be remembered as the man whom, of all others, the equally noble Lessing most loved. His descriptive poem *Frühling* ("Spring") is partly an imitation of Thomson; but it is also the work of an independent lover of nature, who knew how to give beautiful utterance to true and simple feeling. Ramler (1725–98), another friend of Gleim, and the friend, too, of Kleist and Lessing, wrote spirited odes in Horatian metres, which, like the *War Songs of a Grenadier*, gave pleasure because of their strongly patriotic tone,—the direct result in both cases of Frederick's influence. Anna Louisa Karsch (1722–91), a poetess who owed much to Gleim's goodness, was a favourite among the literary men of the day, but her verses are ruder than they ought to have been at so late a date. Idyllic poetry, which Kleist and Götz to some extent cultivated, was taken up in earnest by Solomon Gessner (1730–87), whose prose idylls, *The Death of Abel*, *The First Sailor*, and others, were translated into French and English, and were better received in their foreign dress than in their original form. They are written in an easy style, and express much harmless although somewhat tedious sentiment. He was imitated by Xaver Bronner, a Catholic priest, whose idylls have not half the merit of his autobiography, which affords remarkable insight into the religious life of Catholic Germany about the middle of the 18th century.

The religious lyric, which had shared the general decay during the latter half of the 17th century, displayed more vitality during part of this period. It owed its fresh life mainly to the pietists, who reopened fountains of spiritual feeling that had been apparently dried up by theologians. Among the best of this younger generation of hymn writers were Freylinghausen, Neumeister, and Tersteegen. Their fame was, however, less extensive than that of Count von Zinzendorf (1700–60), the founder of the sect of Herrnhüter or Moravian Brethren. Besides hymns he wrote religious works in prose, and made himself one of the most prominent figures of his time by ardent missionary zeal. His followers, like all deeply religious sects in Germany, delighted in hymns; and many of those they produced are remarkable for the sensuous, sometimes almost sensual, forms in which their emotions are expressed.

Fabulists.

Fables were at this time an extremely popular class of writings, and nearly every imaginative writer sought to distinguish himself as a fabulist. The Swiss school, indeed, in their zeal for a combination of the wonderful and the useful in literature, maintained that the fable was the highest type of literature. As a rule, Lafontaine was taken as the model in works of this kind, but we look in vain among his German imitators for his exquisite grace and naiveté. Gellert stands at the head of the more sentimental fabulists; after him may be named Willanow and Lichtwer. The latter (1719–83) has humour as well as sentiment, and some of his fables have an artistic finish that indicates a faculty by which he might have won distinction in more important labours.

Popular philosophers.

From about the middle of the 18th century onwards a number of prose writers, who may be classed together as popular philosophers, worked effectively for the enlightenment of ordinary readers. They attached themselves to some extent to Wolf; they also came under the influence, although not in any great degree, of the French Encyclopedists; and they were admiring students of the English deists, and of Locke, Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson. They are often condemned for the shallowness of their thought; and if we compare them with the great thinkers who followed them, the condemnation is just. They did not grasp the significance of the problems which had been handed down by Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibnitz, with which Hume was now grappling, and which were soon to enter upon a new phase in the critical philosophy of Kant. In regard to religion they had a very imperfect appreciation of every element that could not be expressed in clear logical statements; feeling and imagination were rigidly subordinated to the understanding. And they had not even a remote suspicion of what is now familiar as the historical spirit, so that they displayed amazing narrowness of vision in their treatment of past spiritual developments, and of contemporary creeds with which they did not happen to agree. But if we are to do justice to these popular philosophers, they must be compared rather with their predecessors than with their successors. An important place belongs to them in the movement by which vital human interests have been raised above theological disputes, by which morality has received a basis independent of dogmatic religion, and by which toleration has been secured for men of every faith. They were penetrated by a truly humane sentiment; and it must be counted a high merit that in a country which had been more or less dominated by pedants, and whose great writers of a later age have not always attempted to be both profound and clear, they sought to express themselves in unpretending and straightforward German. The chief of the popular philosophers was Moses Mendelssohn (1729–86), not a deep or massive thinker, but a man of fine moral sympathies, an enthusiast for freedom—from the lack of which he himself, as a Jew, keenly suffered—and an incisive psychological analyst. His friend, Frederick Nicolai (1733–1811), the Berlin bookseller, had the misfortune to outlive his epoch. He had only words of contempt for Goethe and Schiller; and Kant, whom he did not profess to understand, seemed to him a sort of cross between a bungler and an impostor. These terrible mistakes have made poor Nicolai, notwithstanding his lifelong warfare against bigotry, the type of a narrow-minded bigot. Yet in his earlier days he was recognized by such a judge as Lessing, with whose friendship he was honoured, as a writer of talent. And his *Bibliothek* ("Library"), the most important literary periodical of his

day, did excellent service by providing the popular philosophers with a medium for the expression of their opinions on all the great questions which then agitated Germany. Other popular philosophers were George Sulzer (1720–79), who devoted himself to æsthetics in the spirit of the Swiss school, but with the advantage of later lights; Thomas Abbt (1738–66), whose style was one of uncommon vigour; Christian Garve (1742–98), who did not attempt any great original work, but in letters and articles examined many individual philosophic questions from new points of view; and Johann Jacob Engel (1741–1802), whose *Philosoph für die Welt* ("Philosopher for the World") interested a class of readers who would have been unable to follow a more adventurous guide. Zimmermann (1728–95) hardly deserves to be mentioned in such good company; but his *Betrachtungen über die Einsamkeit* ("Observations on Solitude") by its sentimentalism and rhetoric carried his name far beyond the bounds of Germany.

Liberal theologians.

Some theologians, without exactly sharing the beliefs of the popular philosophers, were profoundly affected by them. Among these were Mosheim, the ecclesiastical historian; Spalding, the translator of Shaftesbury; and Jerusalem, the father of the young writer whose suicide suggested some elements in Goethe's *Werther*. These liberal theologians did not hold a very intelligible logical position, but they were of some importance by their attempts to introduce a freer and more polished style of eloquence than had hitherto marked the German pulpit. In regard to the permanent movements of thought, their influence was greatly inferior to that of Michaelis and Semler, whose labours heralded the approach of modern Biblical criticism.

Historians.

Möser.

In history Germany produced at this time at least one writer of high eminence, Justus Möser (1720–94), author of the *Osnabrückische Geschichte* ("History of Osnabrück") and *Patriotische Phantasien* ("Patriotic Fancies"). Möser was the first German historian who wrote a good style and attempted to penetrate to the meaning of events and to present them in the light of great principles. He also produced a strong impression by his enlightened patriotism and by his burning scorn of wrong. Schröck and Schlözer were prominent historians, and the latter made himself known as a clear writer on contemporary politics. Karl von Moser, of Stuttgart, applied to political subjects a faculty for wit and satire that was estimated highly in his own day.

Winckelmann.

It has been already stated that the revival of classical study was one of the chief causes by which the mind of Germany was awakened to new effort. Professors Christ and Ernesti, of Leipsic, who were the favourite teachers of many young students, including Lessing, were two of the chief writers to whom this revival was due. Incomparably greater than either, however, was Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717–68), whose *History of Ancient Art* (1764) opened a new era in the appreciation of ancient life. Later investigation has corrected Winckelmann on many points, but no critic has displayed a keener feeling for the beauty and the significance of such works as came within his knowledge, or a truer imagination in bridging over the gulfs at which direct knowledge failed him. And his style, warm with the glow of sustained enthusiasm, yet calm, dignified, and harmonious, was worthy of his splendid theme. What he did for ancient art was to some extent done for ancient literature by the untiring editorial labours of Christian Gottlob Heyne (1729–1812).

National literature.

Important as were many of these writers, Winckelmann above all, they exercised slight influence on the national mind compared with the three men whom the Germans justly regard as the founders of their classical literature—Klopstock (1724–1803), Wieland (1733–1813), and Lessing (1729–1781).

Klopstock stood in direct relation to the Swiss writers. When a pupil at Schulpforta, one of the great Saxon schools which sent forth many of the best authors of the day, he was a diligent student of Bodmer, by whose critical principles he guided himself in reading Homer, Virgil, and Milton. The *Messiah*, on which his fame mainly rests, is now little read, and it is impossible even to glance through it without becoming conscious of glaring faults. Klopstock's genius was essentially lyrical; he lacked the plastic force of imagination necessary for a great epic. His central figure is nowhere presented in clear sharp outlines; it wavers between two distinct conceptions, that of a divine and that of a human character. And the facts to which he turns our gaze in the crisis of his narrative are not such as kindle the deepest sympathies; he exhausts the powers of language to convey an impression of the Messiah's sufferings, but we hear nothing of the qualities of soul which these sufferings rouse into action. The subordinate characters are innumerable, and except Abaddona, a repentant fallen angel, between whose character and whose fate there is an effective contrast, none of them can be said to live; they exist only as an excuse for the utterance of Klopstock's feelings. They talk incessantly, weep, embrace, and kiss, but they never do anything that exhibits more than a vast quantity of obtrusive sentiment. Notwithstanding its obvious defects, however, the *Messiah* has qualities which must still command admiration; it reveals a nature full of lofty aspiration and deep humanity, and it contains individual images of striking force and beauty.

It would be difficult to imagine anything more dreary than Klopstock's plays, the subject of three of which is Arminius, while the others deal with scriptural themes. He knew enough neither of life nor of the stage to be a true dramatist; his characters are mere names, and the incidents are grouped according to no principle of art. His odes, which he continued to write from the beginning to the end of his long career, are of far higher excellence. Those which derive their inspiration from Northern mythology are too remote from general sympathy and too obscure in construction to awaken interest; but the stamp of genius is upon several of the lyrics in which he expresses his passionate feeling for the grander phenomena of nature, his ardent patriotism, his enthusiasm for freedom, and his elevated sense of human worth and destiny. Both as an epic poet and as a writer of odes he had many imitators, who, like most others of their class, exaggerated the defects of their model and left his virtues alone. His influence upon the intellectual life of Germany was deep, and, on the whole, beneficent. He encouraged the self-respect of his countrymen, intensified their desire for an independent literature, and by handling high themes, sometimes powerfully, always seriously, suggested that the national imagination would reveal its full capacity only by undertaking greater enterprises than any it had yet attempted.

Although Klopstock was one of the central literary figures during two generations, he was not a prolific writer; Wieland, on the other hand, was one of the most prolific of German authors. He was continually at his desk, and in the course of his career produced a considerable library. Of his many works the romantic poem *Oberon* is by far the most famous, and the only one that really pleases modern readers. *Agathon* is perhaps the best of the prose romances in which he endeavoured to depict ancient Greek life. He was not endowed with great vividness of imagination, and his prevailing tendency is to extreme diffuseness; but some of his descriptive passages, especially those in *Oberon*, have a touch of ideal grace which enables us to return to them with fresh relish. He had a fine appreciation of style, and by the study of Greek

and French masterpieces persistently strove to acquire lightness, clearness, and ease. Even yet few German writers will compare with him in these qualities. In all his works he had a strongly didactic tendency, but his teaching was the opposite of that inculcated by most modern writers who deliberately aim at ethical effect. Above all, he differed from his great contemporary, Klopstock. Writing at first as a strict pietist, he ultimately became a pronounced Epicurean in the popular sense, and made it his object to proclaim an Epicurean theory of life, discouraging enthusiasm, laughing at such aspirations as those of his own youth, exalting the claims of the senses, and placing the highest virtue in kindliness and good humour. This tendency often conducts him to more slippery ground than any on which a German writer of his standing would now venture; but it also gives him innumerable occasions for the play of a gentle and refined irony.

Lessing.

Whatever may be the excellences of Wieland and Klopstock, both are essentially writers of the past. This cannot be said of Lessing, the third great German of this period; he is still a living influence. He is, indeed, the only writer before Goethe whom Germans can now read without feeling themselves in a world foreign to their sympathies. Throughout his career he strove to renew and fructify the intellectual life of his nation, and he achieved his aim by important creative activity, and by the clearest, freest, and most drastic criticism of the 18th century.

As an imaginative writer he was chiefly distinguished in the drama, and his most important dramatic work is *Minna von Barnhelm*. If it cannot be said that this is, in the highest sense, a comedy of genius, it is at any rate a comedy which contains elements of permanent interest. The characters are vividly presented; the plot is systematically, yet naturally, unfolded; the dialogue is clear, fresh, and animated. And the work has the high merit of giving artistic shape to elements taken by the dramatist from the living world around him. *Emilia Galotti* is marred by a deep flaw in the conception of the central figure; but every other character in the tragedy is conceived with bold imaginative force, and it is possible for a competent actress to soften, if not to harmonize, even the clashing elements in Emilia herself. No drama making even a distant approach to the excellence of these two plays had been produced in Germany; they thus gave literature in its highest department a fresh start.

But valuable as were Lessing's imaginative creations, they were inferior to his labours as a thinker. Here he was absolutely supreme among his contemporaries; and in some respects he has not since been surpassed. His method is invariably critical, but he aims at rising to the highest, most universal aspects of every subject with which he deals. As a master of style he ranks with the greatest European writers. The structure of his sentences is clear, precise, and compact; and he keeps the mind awake by vivid images drawn from nature and from human life, by interesting, sometimes remote, allusions, by rapid strokes of wit, and by unexpected turns of thought, as if he were abandoning his main theme, while he is in reality indirectly advancing it. He has often been called the most critical of poets; it would be equally just to call him the most poetical of critics.

The greatest of Lessing's purely critical writings is *Laocoon*, a fragment, but a fragment containing the germs of much of the best thought of his own and the immediately succeeding generations. It has an enduring value as the first serious and great attempt to distinguish sharply the realms of art and poetry, and to foster both by subjecting each to its own laws. Next in importance stands his *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, a series of criticisms on plays represented at the Hamburg National Theatre. By these splendid criticisms, which are based in the main on Aristotle's *Poetics*, with many side-references to Diderot's theories, he put an end to the abject submission of dramatic writers to French traditions. In his later years he issued the *Wolfenbüttel Fragments*, portions of a theological work by Reimarus, a deistical writer of admirable force and clearness. He thus became involved in a hot controversy with indignant professors and pastors, the noisiest of whom was Pastor Goeze of Hamburg. The tracts issued by Lessing in the course of this controversy are in form among the most perfect of his writings; they are at once learned, keen, and witty. And in the history of Western thought they are of deep significance. His immediate object was to secure for criticism absolute freedom of movement; but he did very much more. He foreshadowed, as a vital element of the coming time, inquiry as to the origin and growth of the Scriptures, the rise of Christianity, and the fundamental character of religion. And he indicated a far higher standpoint than that of the popular philosophers by vindicating the claims of feeling in spiritual life as opposed to those of the bare understanding. In his *Education of the Human Race* he gave systematic shape to the fruitful principle that a religion which is not true absolutely or for all time may be of vast importance by meeting the needs of a portion of the race in special epochs, and that there is in history, notwithstanding apparent reactions, a progressive movement towards higher intellectual and moral ideals. The suggestions thrown out in controversy he developed artistically in one of the greatest of his writings, the fine dramatic poem, *Nathan the Wise*, a work which enshrines all that was noblest in the struggles and the aspirations of his age, and connects the thought of the 18th with that of the 19th century. As a drama, it has serious faults; but it powerfully effects its purpose by revealing, in the enlightened Jew, its hero, the grandeur of a nature which, instead of binding itself in dogmatic fetters, cultivates a spirit of free and disinterested humanity.

Thus in all directions this great writer laboured for the intellectual regeneration of his people. If Goethe, Schiller, and Kant found a nation prepared to receive their work, they owed the fact to many causes; but among these the chief were the political activity of Frederick II. and the literary activity of Lessing.

After Seven Years' War.

VII. *The Classical Period.*—At the close of the Seven Years' War the conditions of public life were very unfavourable to literature. The country was impoverished, and Frederick the Great and Maria Theresa were almost the only sovereigns who showed the least regard for the welfare of their subjects. But the mind of the nation had been thoroughly aroused from its long slumber. It had been startled into patriotism by Frederick's unsurpassed energy, while the labours of the chief writers had imbued the better part of the middle class with a desire for a more varied and interesting life. As political freedom was still a dream of the future, they turned more and more to books for refreshment and stimulus. Multitudes of young men who in other circumstances would have occupied themselves solely with practical duty became authors, and they urged each other to an activity without parallel in any previous period.

Most of these young writers were deeply influenced by the men of the older generation—Lessing, Wieland, and Klopstock. They were also ardent students of Shakespeare, Ossian, and Dr Young, poets who were oddly supposed to be on the same level and to share the same tendencies. Rousseau excited almost as much enthusiasm in Germany as in France, and the criticism of Diderot found many warm admirers. Under these diverse influences a curious movement began which is known as that of "Sturm und

Sturm und Drang movement.

Drang" ("Storm and Pressure"). It lasted, from about 1770, for ten or twelve years, and included nearly all the writers who still had fame to win. Their most prominent quality was discontent with the existing world. They detested not only tyranny and superstition but everything which prevented, or seemed to prevent, the free exercise of any powerful impulse. To break down conventionalities appeared to the "Sturm und Drang" poets their true function; but even this did not satisfy them. They longed for some knowledge deeper and more intimate than that attained by science, philosophy, or history, for some emotion intenser than can arise from any known human relation. All these conflicting feelings they expressed in their writings. From slavish submission to French critical laws they were of course completely emancipated. Most of them despised laws of every kind in literature as well as in life, and continually proclaimed that the duty of a man of genius was to write precisely as nature dictated. By "genius" they meant vehement sensations, by "nature" a free use of vigorous epithets.

Herder.

The writer who formed the connecting link between Lessing on the one hand and Goethe and Schiller on the other, and whom the best writers of the "Sturm und Drang" movement regarded as their critical guide, was Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803). Herder is sometimes compared with Lessing, but while Lessing has a cosmopolitan touch which makes him intelligible and attractive to all the world, Herder is in the strictest sense a German, and is only slightly studied beyond his own nation. He was less boldly original than his older contemporary, and never attained the clearness, force, and classic beauty of Lessing's style. Nevertheless he is justly ranked among the most distinguished spirits Germany has produced. His mind was receptive in many different directions, and what he absorbed he made his own by independent thought, giving it out in new and suggestive forms. As an original poet, Herder does not rank high; yet genuine poetic impulses are visible in the poem in which he gave shape to the Spanish legends of the Cid. The literature in which he looked for the highest manifestation of thought and feeling was that which appeals to popular sentiment and has its root in popular life. Lessing had already called attention to the songs and ballads of the people; but Herder was the first German who decisively followed the impulse which led in England to the publication of Percy's *Reliques*. In his *Stimmen der Völker* ("Voices of the Peoples") he brought together an admirable collection of the lyrical utterances of many races; and it would be difficult to overrate the service he thus rendered, for he conducted his countrymen to a source of imaginative pleasure and revival in which their literature is exceptionally rich. By far his most important prose work was his *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* ("Ideas towards the Philosophy of the History of Humanity"), in which, working to some extent on the lines laid down in the brief paragraphs of Lessing's *Education of the Human Race*, he develops the conception of progress, and indicates that we can fully understand any single element of history only by seeing it in the light of human evolution as a whole. This excellent book elevated the aims and enlarged the scope of historic inquiry in Germany; and it still produces a powerful moral effect by its noble spirit of humanity. To the end of his days Herder was animated by a fine enthusiasm for human happiness, and it lights up his pages even when his subject does not lead to its direct expression.

To Herder belonged the high honour of stimulating and directing, at a critical stage, the young genius of Johann Wolfgang Goethe (1749–1832). In naming Goethe we mention the writer who holds in German literature the place held by Shakespeare in the literature of England, and by Dante in that of Italy. He towers high above even the greatest of his contemporaries, predecessors, and successors,—Schiller himself, who is most worthily associated with him, being far inferior in breadth of sympathy and splendour of creative impulse. Goethe, indeed, is one of the few writers who, while marked by strongly national characteristics, belong to the world rather than to a particular country. The special phases of his age have begun to pass away, but his best work has lost none of its freshness; it cannot become old, since it is rooted in elements of human life that eternally endure.

All things co-operated to render worthy of his destiny this favoured child of fortune. During his long life he enjoyed almost uninterrupted physical vigour; he was born into a family of prosperous circumstances, although not so highly placed as to satisfy his ambition; he received the best intellectual training his epoch could afford; in Weimar he was free to adapt the plan of his life to his inclinations; and he appeared at the very time when, by an era of sincere poetic endeavour and unparalleled critical labour, the mind of the nation had been prepared for the boldest efforts of genius. Nature has seldom lavished so many advantages on the greatest of her great men.

The quality in Goethe which immediately arrests attention is the extraordinary range of his activity. Hardly any aspect of human existence was strange to him. He possessed in an unsurpassed degree the faculty of dramatically thinking himself into phases of life to which his personal impulses would not have led him; and he deliberately enlarged his experience by exercising this power at every stage of his career. It was his prevailing conviction that all ideals which fascinate or have fascinated humanity must have a touch of vitality; and none was so remote from him but he sought to penetrate to its meaning. He could be just to Hellenic culture without doing wrong to mediævalism; he appreciated the spirit of Christianity without being indifferent to the faith of the Parsees or the Buddhists; he presented the ascetic aspirations of a "beautiful soul," while setting forth the gaiety of the brightest and most careless tempers; he felt the charm of art at the same time that he carried on profound researches in science; he loved his country, and yet, even when it was overrun by Napoleon's troops, he would not join the patriots in saying a harsh word of France. This absolute universality destroyed enthusiasm for special practical movements; but it gave astonishing variety to his literary achievements. Goethe's was in every respect a thoroughly poetic nature. He could not pass through a profound experience, an image of beauty could not cross his vision, without an accompanying impulse to find for his emotion an adequate sensuous representation. So vast a body of writings as his inevitably includes much that is tedious, but in his happiest moments his genius moved with the ease, the certainty, the calmness of the great forces of nature; he could be as perfect in the lightest stroke of delicate feeling as in the grandest flight of soaring imagination. The world he reflects is the world we actually know; but he is not, therefore, in any narrow sense, a realist. The facts he images are shaped and coloured by his thought and feeling; he breathes into them a life by which they are made of universal significance. This combination of realism and idealism is one of the chief secrets of his power. His art aims at producing the most general effects, yet it is kept fresh, vivid, and true by incessant contact with the concrete life of men.

Heine relates that he felt inclined to address Goethe in Greek, so like was the calm dignified old man to an earthly Zeus; and this is probably the image suggested to most minds by his name. But in youth he was full of eager life, restless, and passionate, and his early works bear the