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## SCHILLER'S 'ROBBERS' IN ENGLAND.

TOWARDS the end of the eighteenth century, in the seventeen-eighties, to be more exact, a student in Edinburgh became aware of German tragedy, and of Schiller's *Räuber* in particular. He belonged to the Royal Society, and read a paper on this new subject at one of their meetings, a guarded and somewhat tentative paper, intended to interest but not to evangelise. 'I only intend these remarks,' he apologised, 'as presenting a sketch of something that merits the further enquiry of the industrious.' He spoke more as a scientific analyst pronouncing judgement on the ore of a new mine, than as a pioneer who has pressed far into the hills of a strange country and returns with rich accounts of unspoiled glories. In such an unassuming fashion he gave his report; and the young generation cried that he had found Eldorado, and hastened to prepare their ships for the adventure.

For all his undemonstrative demeanour, Henry Mackenzie<sup>1</sup> had caught the thrill, and instinctively seized the very qualities the age most loved and needed. His suggestions pointed out with extraordinary acuteness the lines which German literature in England was to take. The qualities he admired were those the next generation worshipped; the plays he praised were later passed from hand to hand, their names grown commonplace with use. And this in spite of his clinging to the traditions of the past age. He could not help feeling that some apology had to be made for the plays to his own critical mind. He referred to the high-wrought sensibility and refined sentiment which characterised German literature at the time—*Werter* had made it adored by the youth of every country. There lay its explanation and defence; it was the mark of a young literature, inexperienced as yet in the wider issues of life. It was indeed the first quality to appeal in England—as, after all, its development had been fostered by English influences—and this depth and intimacy of sentiment did its part in bringing our literature back, often by devious paths, to a recognition of the dignity and

<sup>1</sup> Author of *The Man of Feeling*. The paper was read to the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1788.

romance of the everyday. Again, Mackenzie felt apprehensive as to the effect of the spirit of revolt in this literature. Rebellion against authority seemed to invite the worst that polite criticism could do. In the tragedies, the scene was 'sullied with murder and disfigured with madness as often as that of ancient English tragedy; the plays went beyond the utmost limit of Shakespeare in change of scene and multiplicity of action.' Still for his own part he was not disposed to blame this recklessness, for it gave opportunity for passages of heightened imagination and 'displeases less than some disciples of Aristotle are apt to suppose.' He suggested that it was worth while sacrificing purity of form to gain a fresher gust of life. Connected with this freedom was the element of sublimity, or rather of a grandiose sentiment verging on sublimity, which proved the strongest attraction of German literature. He could not but feel a sense of shock, but the very boldness and nobility of the conception held him. Trampling the insipid formality which was all the representation of restrained passion and chastened manners could afford, the poet cried aloud that men could still rise to the heights of daring. Mackenzie, like the whole poetic world, thrilled to the summons.

Not uncritical in his judgements, he yet gave a warm appreciation of Schiller's *Räuber*. 'Impressive' was the word that expressed his feeling best. 'The author has drawn, from the sources of an ardent and creative imagination, characters and situations of the most impressive kind and has endowed them with a language in the highest degree eloquent, impassioned and sublime.' There was an element of strangeness about the play which fascinated him, in spite of the fact that he had been troubled by the wildness of *Otway*. The new combination took his startled enthusiasm unawares. The figure of Karl Moor, endued 'with a soul of fire and a heart of sensibility,' separated from ordinary humanity by tremendous fate, and set against a background of woods and deserts, presented 'a kind of preternatural personage, wrapped in all the grandeur of visionary beings.' He seemed especially moved by the sunset scene by the Danube. The tenderness of feeling here evinced gave depth to the somewhat garish colours of the story and reconciled him to them. The sense of wonder was so deadened with disuse in the eighteenth century, that it needed a rough awakening, like a paralysed nerve, which is only quickened by an electric current. It was almost with a start of surprise that Mackenzie welcomed this product of the solitary imagination, 'one of the most uncommon productions that modern times can boast.'

Mackenzie's restrained wording belied his enthusiasm; nevertheless it achieved his purpose. There were men who heard him quick to receive the message. Lord Woodhouselee was evidently caught, either by firsthand acquaintance with the lecture or the subsequent discussion. Nor was his interest short-lived, for, a year or two later, he published the first translation of the *Räuber* from the original. (Mackenzie had worked from unsatisfactory French versions.) Scott too, of the younger generation, owed his initiation in German literature to Mackenzie and Woodhouselee, and formed a class to further the study.

Shortly afterwards a group of students appeared at Oxford, and from them the enthusiasm was handed on to Coleridge. In 1794 he went up and made the acquaintance of Southey at Balliol. It appears that among the thousand and one subjects on which undergraduates are wont to converse, German found a place. Coleridge's curiosity was roused; and when he returned to Cambridge, he borrowed a translation of the *Räuber*, probably Woodhouselee's, and sat down to read. It was rough November, and he sat up till after midnight, held captive by the extraordinary power of the drama. At last the nervous tension grew too great. He threw down the volume, and, by way of relieving his overwrought emotion, wrote to Southey. 'Tis past one o'clock—I sat down at twelve to read the *Robbers* of Schiller. I have read, chill and trembling, to the place where Moor fires a pistol over the robbers who are asleep. I could read no more. Who is this Schiller, this convulser of the heart? I tremble like an aspen leaf.... Why have we ever called Milton sublime? That Count de Moor—horrible wielder of heart-withering virtues!'... It did not need the late hour and silence to produce this impression of force and grandeur. Every reader felt it, to a greater or less degree, as inevitably as everyone is conscious of the power of the Atlantic rollers pouring in among the Cornish rocks. The largeness of Schiller's conception was no deception of nebulous fancy. He gave mountain scenery to an age just awakening to the mountain glory. Coleridge met the experience with the violence of generous youth. The emotion of the night was not packed off with the morning's dreams, fairy gold discovered to be dead leaves in sober daylight; it held true. Later he probably smiled over the expression he gave it, but even in the extravagance of the sonnet to Schiller, the words reveal what the German poet meant to man after man in England: a shock of wonder almost reverent, and a sudden wild pride at finding answering force within himself.

It is just possible that Schiller's political indignation caught the

ear of the young revolutionaries, exultant over the upheaval in France, and weaving fantastic schemes of communism. They were not alone in this. All the plays first read were the more turbulent ones of the 'Sturm und Drang' period. The reviewers saw the dangerous connection at once. German literature, they fulminated, came to our shores with those tremendous convulsions of the political world 'when the abyss of error was pouring forth all her brood of serpents.' The connection showed itself in quiet places where it might have been least expected. At Norwich a Revolutionary Society was formed in 1790, and one of its members was William Taylor. He was a keen Liberal, a friend of Burke's opponents, and roused himself to write a poem of rejoicing on the fall of the Bastille. He was already familiar with German literature, and had personal knowledge of some of the authors themselves, as, ten years before, he had travelled in Germany and made some lasting friendships. Returning to Norwich, he drew around him a group of friends who helped to spread the enthusiasm. A translation of *Lenore* produced quite a small storm. Taylor's old schoolmistress, Mrs Barbauld, carried it off to Edinburgh, where it was made known to Dugald Stewart and to Scott who made his own famous translation thereafter. Taylor worked on at Norwich for the next thirty years, with a deepening understanding of the permanent value of German work. He wrote articles on Klopstock, Lessing, Goethe, Schiller, Wieland. Several papers on *Die Räuber* appeared in a local newspaper. But his youthful translation of *Lenore* did more to further the course of literary taste than his later and finer translations, and won more converts to the study of German than his scholarly essays. He tried to establish an appreciation too refined and catholic to hold an age that wanted only excitement—food for the imagination. The stream of popular feeling rushed by and left him in a quiet backwater.

To the poets of the new school, the early work of Schiller and Goethe was of paramount importance. They were daily growing clearer about the position they must take up, and sifting out what was permanent and true to themselves from the multitude of ideas that beset them. The dramas in which two other young poets had thrown out their new belief challenged a like brave action. In 1795 Wordsworth was settled at Racedown, and one of the first attempts of his poetic career was *The Borderers*. It is clear that the impression of *Die Räuber* was fresh in his mind, whenever or wherever he came upon it: idea after idea bears the mark of Schiller's conception. Doubtless there are more subtle proofs than can now be traced. In the

woven ideas, only the main outlines of the complex pattern show clear; the minute touches, which cost much in heart and brain, are of necessity lost. Wordsworth was still occupied with his experiences of the Revolution. The sombre questioning, to which the betrayal of his hopes in France had led, turned his mind to the tragic idea. He brooded over the terrible truth that sin is apt to start from its opposite qualities. With the spectacle of Paris under the Terror before him, he could only ruminate bitterly that this was the end of high and generous ideals—this came from reverence for reason and trust in logical thought. *Die Räuber* dealt with these very problems. The social problem pervades the tragedy, but it centres in those more universal and individual facts to which Wordsworth had penetrated. The theme is stated in double fashion. In Karl Moor is shown evil springing from high impulse: the brave heart gone astray, lacking the clear vision of the mind; while Franz offers the reverse of the medal, the self-destruction of mind divorced from heart.

The study could not fail to occupy Wordsworth. He made his way into it deeply. The characters of the two 'Lake Poets' come out strongly in the way they met this play. Coleridge felt immediately the passion of it, and the eerie inevitableness of the story. It caught his imagination as a whole; passages here and there haunted him. Wordsworth took it into his solitary contemplations, pondered over the ideas that lay behind it, thought out their bearings on his own troubles, and incorporated the whole conception in his own plan. The plot of the *Borderers* grows in essence in every part from the problem of Karl and Franz Moor; in form, a dozen traits and incidents betray their source.

Marmaduke is driven from his home by personal misunderstanding; and an idealist's desire to set right the infamies of his age drives him to throw in his lot with a band of freebooters, dealing rough justice; whose leader he becomes. Like Karl Moor he is of noble character and aspect. His face bespeaks

A deep and simple meekness: and that Soul  
Which with the motion of a virtuous act  
Flashes a look of terror upon guilt,  
Is, after conflict, quiet as the ocean,  
By a miraculous finger stilled at once<sup>1</sup>.

It is the face of Karl, frank, gentle to tenderness, revealing an unconquerable spirit: 'den feurigen Geist, der ihn für jeden Reiz von

*Borderers*, I, 1. Compare the description of Karl in the first scene of *Die Räuber*.

Grösse und Schönheit so empfindlich macht, diese Offenbarkeit, die seine Seele auf dem Auge spiegelt...diesen männlichen Mut.' His temper is too fine to rest content in outlaw life. A critical moment finds him despondent, convinced that his way of healing the evil time was wrong. The trouble lay deeper than he thought. 'We look But at the surfaces of things, and rush upon a cure That flatters us because it asks not thought: The malady is better hid'. So he comes to face his failure, and to acknowledge that instead of defending right he has done flagrant wrong. He forces himself to confession:

I am the man...  
Presumptuous above all that ever breathed,  
Who, casting as I thought a guilty Person  
Upon Heaven's righteous judgment, did become  
An instrument of Fiends<sup>2</sup>.

It is an humble echo of Moor's proud avowal that 'zwei Menschen wie ich den ganzen Bau der sittlichen Welt zu Grunde richten würden.' The force of Moor's tumultuous spirit is not in him; but with what closeness he may, he follows him in tense restraint of passion in renunciation. Acknowledging his guilt, he holds the joy of love to be none of his; he denies his passion for Idonea and yields up the leadership of the band with the same steadfastness with which Moor bids farewell to happiness and life itself.

The agent of Marmaduke's downfall is Oswald, once captain presumptive of the band. He has learned of Spiegelberg what it is to be eaten with jealousy of a younger man who supplanted him; he has learned to lure him through a forlorn attempt at heroism—into the trap. He remembers the very catchwords:

Today you have thrown off the tyranny  
That lives but in the torpid acquiescence  
Of our emasculated souls, the tyranny  
Of the world's masters, with the musty rules  
By which they uphold their craft from age to age<sup>3</sup>.

He plays his tune on the chords of Marmaduke's character, but shares the traitor's fate, falling under the daggers of the faithful outlaws. Oswald's training in the management of others, however, has been thorough. If Spiegelberg practised on Karl, Franz was even more expert with his father; and his intellectual love of the game of intrigue, together with his disappointed materialism and self-assertion, laid the foundations of Oswald's philosophy. The immediate cause of revolt

<sup>1</sup> *Borderers*, II, 3 (abridged).

<sup>2</sup> *Borderers*, v, 3. Compare with *Räuber*, v, 2.

<sup>3</sup> Compare *Die Räuber*, I, 2.



with him was dissimilar; the right of the elder son does not trouble him, but he lights on the same casuistical arguments to defend himself. Once he slew an innocent man under a misunderstanding and to elude remorse persuades himself that it cannot matter :

Action is transitory—a step, a blow—...  
'Tis done, and in the after-vacancy  
We wonder at ourselves like men betrayed:  
Suffering is permanent, obscure and dark,  
And shares the nature of infinity<sup>1</sup>.

And this dominion of suffering he revolts against as injustice. Why endure this strain, when the self must be free if it is to grow? He flings out a challenge: the world is material; there is no necessity laid upon any man; the brave shall take their own will in the world's despite. But he wears the yoke of suffering nevertheless, and knows that to be the greatest ill he can give his enemy. He snares Marmaduke into the same wrong he has done; tangles his mind with the same fine-seeming argument, and having gained his will, makes shift to scorn his own downfall. The problem of Franz, removed from the social indignation which led to his creation, assumes a more psychological aspect.

The result of the philosophy for both is the same in action and in certain strains of thought. Like many minds rejecting all religious belief, they become the prey of superstition. The remnants of rejected faith spell terror to Franz—Oswald shows a 'sudden blankness' of face at the mention of God, and has built up a strange superstition of his own, which he seems afraid to divulge, answering only vaguely when questioned, 'I hold of spirits—and a sun in heaven.'

It was in the creation of Oswald that most of Wordsworth's thought was expended. The experience of the fearful incidents of the Revolution meant, for his speculative temperament, not merely the test of his faith in the ultimate good of France, but a revision of all his ideas of human nature. It had been bitterly impressed on him that there is 'no cheaper engine than misery to degrade a man, nor any half so sure.' It was this spiritual mystery, which troubled him most deeply, that he embodied in the figure of Oswald. And it was perfectly natural that a play which dealt with this problem, even without the arresting power of its expression, should hold his mind till he scarcely knew whether the thought was his own or from the printed page.

In this way constant similitudes appear, even to details, in the

<sup>1</sup> *Borderers*, III, 5. This idea was evidently strong in Wordsworth's mind when he was writing, and is intimately bound up with the conception of the play. It evidently expressed an idea important to him, as he repeated the lines in another place.



background against which the central figures stand out. Herbert and Idonea, the victim of Oswald's scheming and his daughter, whom Marmaduke loves, move together like pale memories of 'alter Moor' and Amalia. The very name of the girl chimes an echo, as if the poet's mind were playing with the syllables. The same wild moorland scenery serves for both; a ruined castle on the hillside makes a foreground. Even tiny incidents, like the hero's sudden faintness and demand for water, which occur quite naturally in the German, produce their useless echo in the English play.

During the last months Wordsworth spent at Racedown, Coleridge brought over the opening scenes of a tragedy he had in hand, and read them to his friend. Wordsworth listened eagerly. It was fine work, he decided, and the end was not a dreamy project as other ends of Coleridge's poems were to be. The work went forward under the friendly eyes of Wordsworth, and was finished, offered to Drury Lane, and rejected by the next autumn. Remembering the letter of that November night at Cambridge, one looks to see the mark of *Die Räuber* writ large on this new tragedy, but the trace is none too clearly defined. The play had set light to Coleridge's flaming imagination and the fire had run far from the spot where it started and only a few glowing spots remained. Ordonio, the treacherous brother in *Remorse*, was a fellow disciple with Oswald in the school of Franz Moor. A cruel and deceitful nature, he is filled with jealous hatred of his brother, and attempts by fair means—or foul when necessity compels—to rid himself of Alvar. Their father is hoodwinked, and a tool for the ignoble work is found in the Moor, Isidore, who is bound servant to Ordonio by ties of gratitude. Meanwhile Ordonio justifies himself by would-be logical arguments. Of what import is right or conscience in the world? The fault, if any, lies in the nature of human character. 'What have I done but that which nature destined, Or the blind elements stirred up within me. If good were meant, why were we made these beings<sup>1</sup>?' The elder brother has something of the dignity of Karl without his energy, and the points of resemblance are those which bring out the quieter traits and the more pathetic incidents of his life: his return as an unknown stranger to his home, the meeting

<sup>1</sup> *Remorse*, II, 1. Legouis traces the philosophy of Ordonio to Wordsworth's play. 'A flagrant piece of imitation, which begins at the very point in his tragedy where Coleridge had stopped before he became acquainted with the *Borderers*.' Probably the speech of Ordonio in III, 2: 'Hatred—love: fancies opposed by fancies' has proved misleading. Already in the second act, similar cynical and fatalistic doctrine shows itself. Probably the similarity is due to the common influence of Schiller.

with his betrothed in uncertainty whether she has remained faithful to him, his susceptibility to the influence of Nature in its peaceful moods. The scene in which Karl watches the sunset by the Danube roused the keenest enthusiasm in Schiller-worshippers. Coleridge, with his own intense love of nature living in daily companionship with Wordsworth at the time of writing, was particularly sensitive to its beauty. Alhadra, the Moorish patriot, watches the Autumn woods, flame-coloured and beautiful, and feels the bitterness of indignation steal from her, leaving her at peace, since this earthly vision of the divine dwarfs her human anger into insignificance :

You hanging woods most lovely in decay,  
Lie in the silent moonshine, and the owl  
Sole voice, sole eye in all this world of beauty.  
Why such a thing as I?—Where are these men?  
I need the sympathy of human faces,  
To beat away this deep contempt for all things  
Which quenches my revenge<sup>1</sup>.

Even Alvar in his dungeon recalls the beauty of the world, and is lured from pessimistic brooding, that jars dissonant on the harmony of Nature.

The struggle between the two brothers is not forced to the tragic issue of *Die Räuber*. Ordonio does indeed fall in the snare of his own treachery, but Alvar escapes the power, and with it the guilt and downfall, of Karl Moor. The matter of the play that stirred Coleridge to nervous agitation as he read, remained in his memory as fine romantic stuff. The philosophy did not interest him for itself, the politics troubled him not at all<sup>2</sup>. But the thrilling subtlety of Franz's crime, the pathos of Amalia, true to her outlawed lover, endangered, gentle, unyielding, the wild scene of a country in unrest with one heroic figure moving in self-contained power in spite of fire and clamour, these wove themselves anew into a different pattern. No longer charged with indignation, they lured with their own fantasy. Here was a human story tinged with the changing hues of romance.

To Wordsworth then, Schiller's flaming tragedy gave the impulse for a passionate and pitiful enquiry into the secret workings of character, and the strange mingling of good and bad in a single man. Coleridge found it the door to new adventures, where even familiar things were

<sup>1</sup> *Remorse*, iv, 3 (abridged).

<sup>2</sup> In the second version of the play, Coleridge added some references to the wars for freedom in Belgium. However the old challenge to the world's tyrants from *Die Räuber* seems to be less in question than possible reminiscences of *Don Carlos*. But such work is inevitable for a hero lacking occupation in the time of Philip II.

circled with glamour and the air filled with supernatural presences. Less imaginative folk admitted that it was an exciting tale, and were prepared to enjoy exploring ruined castles, or gloating over highway robbers. The commoner form was sufficient for a pedestrian fancy. They took, as such will always take, the gorgeous dress for more than the spirit which ennobles it. Castles with secret rooms behind the wainscot, outlaws who live a gay and perilous life on the road, unhappy victims prisoned in foul dungeons—these things are enough in themselves. What matters it if they have been made to convey higher things? One may enjoy the show while it passes. Psychology is for such as please to study it. The noble outlaw was a figure so enviably picturesque that the life of the freebooter became a not uncommon career for heroes. There was then ample possibility of finding aged unhappy men in caverns and dungeons, and collecting piteous tales of wrongs done or suffered. The fancy developed into a fashion, and the robber appeared constantly in the work of those who, for respectability's sake, disclaimed all knowledge of German plays. Joanna Baillie's *Rayner*, a tragedy that went wrong in the making, deals with a rather indeterminate young nobleman, who has been driven from his inheritance by a forcible uncle. He wanders by unfrequented paths in melancholy fashion, shrinking from observation, till the dare-devil villain Zaterloo discovers him and tries to induce him to despatch the uncle. However in the wood at night, a terrible old man, haunted by remorse, emerges from his hermitage and dissuades him. The villain confesses, and tragedy is averted. The Bohemian forest sheltered some poor creatures, as well as heaven-storming Moors.

Byron's Ulric in *Werner* is a more sturdy, trampling fellow, fine even in appearance; 'Handsome as Hercules ere his first labour, And with a brow of thought beyond his years When in repose, till his eye kindles up In answering yours.' He has sought the bandit life chiefly for the pleasure of peril, because so one may play the part of a man. But his moral sense has been perverted. His father once defended a theft before his son, and Ulric logically carries the teaching to the extreme. A rich noble whose life he saved, falls into his power, and, approaching his lodging by secret corridors, Ulric murders him to obtain the wealth. It is his right, he argues deftly. 'As a stranger I preserved him, and he owed me his life.' Byron claimed the study of the father's retribution in the moral downfall of the son and the problem of the son's culpability under such temptation to be the main theme of his play. But no great subtlety was used to follow out the ideas.

What seems to have attracted him most was the defiant lawless splendour of the man. Ulric's kinship with Milton's Satan, Shelley's Prometheus, Schiller's Moor is real; however the reckless spirit showed itself, he loved it. The dashing outlaw conveyed his feeling as did Manfred's brooding or Cain in his fine rebellion. As in other work he expressed his own defiance in high poetry, so here he expressed himself in the cheap language of an evanescent fashion.

One point however is interesting in *Werner*. Like the German dramatists who developed their ideas from Schiller's, the 'Schicksalsdramatiker,' Byron plays with the thought of fated retribution. Even if he fails to evoke the mysterious horror which is awakened by those stories of punishment falling inevitably on the anniversary of the crime committed, he uses the same technique. Ulric the long-lost son returns to his parents at a critical moment in their fortunes—not however to save the situation, but to show their old sins grown to enormity and rebounding on their heads<sup>1</sup>.

What this type of character might become when the writer really seized its nightmare possibilities, appears in *Bertram*. Maturin's hero has all Karl Moor's fierceness, with none of his redeeming self-control and gentle heart. He has taken to the outlaw trade when deprived of his own lands, and meanwhile cultivates a vein of neurotic misanthropy. If Karl Moor in a moment of tense emotion cursed the whole human race, Bertram has made its turpitude a definite creed. Cast on a wild shore by a terrific storm, he turns on the monks who rescue him with the savage snarl: 'Off, ye are men. There's poison in your touch.' To the question of the sympathetic Prior who tries to search his melancholy, 'Why dost thou despond?', he snaps, 'Because I live.' 'Look not so wild' the Prior answers mildly: 'Can we do ought for thee?' 'Yes—plunge me in the waves from which ye snatched me—so will the sin be on your souls, not mine.' He is proud of his wretchedness, flinging the blame on those who made him so; and even in his

<sup>1</sup> *Werner* was derived directly from Miss Lee's *Kruitzner*, in her *Canterbury Tales*. This is a novel of the free adventurous type set in fashion by *Die Räuber*, and supplied Byron with most of his plot, characters, even dialogue and wording. *Blackwood's* attempted to prove him a mere plagiarist, Stoehsel (*Lord Byrons 'Werner' und seine Quelle*) in later days defended his originality. Apparently Byron took much material from Miss Lee, which he modified both by his own invention and some memories of Schiller. Ulric's band who fight against all and sundry, who laud their calling as the one career for men who are not weaklings, know much of Karl Moor's spirit. Also Ulric has a touch of sophistication proceeding from Franz's meditations. Miss Lee's hero murdered to avert consequences—he did not argue. Byron noted in his diary that he 'redde the robbers' in Feb. 1814, about which time the play was largely composed, though not finished till 1821.

sleep, the bare teeth grind and sweat pours from his brow. Nevertheless, the Prior is moved to some admiration, though mixed with terror; and his comment is noteworthy: 'High-hearted man, sublime even in thy guilt.' Karl Moor, though capable of passionate indignation when injustice or abstract wrong touches him, is always gentle and nearly flexible, when face to face with actual men. Bertram's fierce madness does not abate in the presence of those he loves most. He may have moments when he dreams of sending all his desires to the winds; but if he feels at all, it is with bitter violence. The only way of satisfying his love is by the death of Imogene's husband, Aldobrand. He immediately requires Imogene to aid him in the plot, and threatens to kill her young son also if she refuses. No finer chivalry suggests itself to him. Passion has grown morbid through its own hot fever. When the crime is done, when Imogene has died insane, the death of Bertram follows with no shadow of pity mingled with any terror. There is only a sense of relief that the world is rid of an abomination.

It is difficult to be persuaded that anything of emotional sympathy was intended to be called out by the plays of Maturin. They seem much rather to be addressed to the intellect alone, like the weird and terrible art of Poe, only the ingenuity of his work is lacking. It is fairly clear, however, that one is meant to enjoy the nervous thrill that tingles as the story twists and doubles, meeting spectres at every turn. Maturin takes things less seriously than the greater men, and with a more sophisticated mind. The next tragedy, *Fredolfo*, proceeds from sheer toying with the horrific. Everything in its world has gone mad; sanity has no place, or seems a wild exception. Maturin snatches 'the page on which Nature would have written man,' and scrawls it with a pictured devil. Every movement is violent—the characters rush in and out; they struggle, snatch and writhe. When they speak, it is in agony and shuddering; and their agitation, punctuated by sudden changes to complete calm, is echoed by the ever increasing sound of the storm without. The directions both for scenery and personal bearing make instructive and amusing reading. 'The mountains of St Gothard; a tremendous storm; a dark chasm in the rock. Urilda stands in conscious horror. He utters every line with increasing difficulty. She listens with increasing terror. Clinging with a scream of horror. With convulsive emotion. With an exulting shriek. [These follow each other almost immediately.] After enjoying it silently, he bursts into a demoniac laugh. With ghastly significance.' Urilda, the heroine, must be hoarse with screaming long before the play closes, and

fainting fits are everyday occurrences. The crowning point of the malignant irony of Wallenburg, the scorned lover, comes in the last scene, where, during a demoniac struggle in a sanctuary, Adelmer, the accepted lover, on his knees offers his sword and is stabbed with it as he kneels. That was too much. Possibly the audience failed in a sense of humour, but they rose indignantly against the piece.

To such lengths could the appreciation of Moor lead an irresponsible writer. The vehement language of the German develops into more blustering violence still, when the force of the play rests on the word only, not on the conception. All the terrific school learned ranting in their kindergarten.

Through Arab hosts command me hew my passage,  
And plant the cross, even on the Prophet's tomb.  
Drop, where Charybdis foams, your crown, and bid me  
Retrieve it from the whirlpool's foaming jaws<sup>1</sup>.

Nevertheless, it must not be considered that the Germanic tragedy, to invent an adjective, was mainly of this exaggerated type. Lewis indulged fairly freely in these fearful joys, and Maturin, in his wake, amused the world with telling his bad dreams. Apart from these, most of the writers were too serious, or too sentimental, to use such drastic measures. Only so long as a flash of strangeness or of eerie suggestion touched their picture into the picturesque, they were content. The figure of the old Moor, imprisoned by his own son without light or proper food in a miserable dungeon, proved too exciting and pathetic to be ignored. In the *Castle of Montval*<sup>2</sup>, the Count has bestowed his superfluous father in a secret dungeon of his château, and avoids the place and its sting to memory. The Countess, visiting the château, hears the rumoured ghost story, which was to preclude discovery. Groans proceed from some unknown recess, and with rare courage (for these plays) she descends a winding stair and finds the languid victim. The incident becomes the central part of the whole tragedy, for, in trying to cover the knowledge of his guilt, the Count brings both himself and his father to ruin. In *Alfonso*, a shapeless play of M. G. Lewis, such an episode appears without much being made out of it. An old father is discovered by a lady in the lower dungeon, a pitiable figure almost beyond recovery; his voice only gives any clue to his identity. But the matter was added simply as an extra flavour in the recipe. The play was a deliberate attempt to prove how pretty it might be to put together things so all unlike each other as Guy Fawkes

<sup>1</sup> *Adelgitha*, M. G. Lewis, II, 1.

<sup>2</sup> By T. Whalley.



and Charlemain's daughter. Of what account was another unattached incident in this compound?

Castles, dungeons, spectres and wretched prisoners worn shadowy with long and dark confinement, were by no means the exclusive property of German drama. Mrs Radcliffe and the romantic novelists had laid claim to them before *Die Räuber* was known in England. But a different temper is to be discerned behind the scenery. English romance was dramatised and resulted in comedy in one of its varieties, limelight and pictorial, or operatic: *Fountainville Forest*, a romantic comedy; *Mysteries of the Castle*, tragi-comic opera; *Edmund, Orphan of the Castle*, called a tragedy, but really only tragi-comedy. The German romances have a sombre motive lacking in Mrs Radcliffe, who was merely amusing herself with mediæval romantic accessories. The Germans were not just dressing up. Mrs Radcliffe visited a ruin in holiday mood. The Germans sought it out, and preferred it in darkness or under grey skies, because it accorded with their temper, discontented with modern things, overcast, not wholly consistent. The 'Sturm und Drang' movement, with its efforts at reform and preference for tragedy, left its impress on German romance, and even in the English variations dim traces of it are visible. The extravagance has a touch of wildness, of passion, of conviction which the comedies have not. *Edmund* with all its castles and spectres is entirely lacking in the almost supernatural thrill of *Bertram*. The first is fantastic simply; the other is really haunted, at least by the ghost of a passionate anger at the imposing of any limits on the free play of the individual mind. The author himself has felt something of the terror that moves his audience. He recounts his absurdities in a voice that shakes.

This connection between politics and romance did not escape all the critics. Canning and Frere, their acute perception of the ridiculous sharpened by hostility and apprehension concerning the ideas, made this sufficiently plain in *The Rovers*. This piece of exquisite caricature aimed with sureness at the central ideas of the pestilent drama. It was a diversion in a political paper declaredly antagonistic to revolutionary ideas—*The Anti-Jacobin*. *The Rovers* is announced as the production of one Mr Higgins, who has learned from the Teutonic school the first essential of his art, a deep sense of the moral duties of the stage. He hopes 'to unhinge the present notions of men with regard to the obligations of society.' His play is propaganda; the story reveals of what kind. 'The Count of Saxe-Weimar, a prince of tyrannical and licentious disposition, has for prime minister a crafty villain Gaspar,



who has risen to his position by ruining and then putting to death Rogero's father. Seizing the opportunity of Rogero's unsanctioned passion for Matilda, he causes him to be imprisoned by the Abbot of Quedlinburgh, a rapacious, savage and sensual priest.' Rogero in captivity still refuses to think his hatred of the vileness of courts too strong. A court must needs be vile—that is axiomatic. 'Whether in this dark abode amidst toads and spiders, or in a royal palace, amid the more loathesome reptiles of a court, would be indifferent to me.' The landlady of the Inn contracts to send food to Rogero daily, and she too knows what courts may be. The waiter who takes the food, is offered bribes from high officials to poison Rogero; but he draws himself up with conscious dignity, and agrees with the landlady that the conscience of a poor man is as valuable as that of a prince, or more so, since it is usually more pure. Those are your political ideas, flings out Mr Higgins—what of your sublimity? You needs must pity a hero 'confined, coffined, cut off from the converse of his fellow men?' Well, there is Rogero lightening the weary eleven years of dungeon life by song accompanied by clanking chains.

Whene'er with haggard eyes I view  
This dungeon that I'm rotting in  
I think of those companions true  
Who studied with me at the U-  
-niversity of Gottingen  
-niversity of Gottingen.

Despite the title, *The Rovers* derives little from *Die Räuber*. By means of parody or actual quotation, scraps from *Cabal and Love*, *Stella*, *The Stranger*, *Count Benjowsky* are thrown together. No action where impulsive imagination has left sane common-sense behind escapes the writers, no word where sentimentality minces the tones of passion, no trick of technique whose carelessness or daring displeased the critic in the stalls. The various ingredients, each with poignant flavour, were blended with seeming reckless hand but with fine ingenuity into an ideal sauce whose pungent taste might suit the roasted goose.

Nevertheless one need not lay too heavy stress on this matter. The man in the street, even the poet, might be trusted not to share the quick vision of Canning. In Germany revolutionary ideas had much to do in the fashioning of a particular type of hero. In England the political element was not an intentional motive, and the characteristics it induced became dim and vague. The personality of the hero lost something of its purpose and clearness. His figure was felt to be impressive and moving. It was felt that he suffered for a great idea,

but his meaning was but half understood. Thus he came to represent the power of humanity to do great things, whose nature was left pleasantly unspecified. He became a nebulous grandeur, a symbol of strength, beauty and inspiration, which could not fail to put heart into a time that longed to be convinced that there were new worlds to conquer, new visions to dream of, new aims to strive after.

This character came before English audiences most impressively in the figure of Karl Moor, and the enthusiasm with which he was received was tremendous. The other figures of the school of the 'Stürmer und Dränger' were practically unknown in England. No clear idea of the movement ever came here and acquaintance ceased with *Die Räuber* and *Götz*. It was sufficient. In Moor had been recognised that quality which all, by one consent, termed 'greatness.' He possessed a twofold splendour—the power to do and to endure great things. Each gives the other a finer poignancy, for, as he deprives himself of the right to achieve his ideals, so much the more is the suffering he must bear. 'Great actions move our admiration chiefly because they carry in themselves an earnest that we can suffer greatly.' That was it. Human nature was suddenly made of more account. It was finer than the low abasement of compromise revealed it; it was stronger than the timid finching from difficulty which every day insulted its nobility.

The manner in which *Die Räuber* was universally received seems to argue a certain imaginative inexperience. The kind of youthfulness that made it possible for Coleridge to find sustenance in Bowles' lachrymose sonnets betrays itself as widespread in this other relationship. Not that Schiller invites comparison with Bowles; but there is in the delineation of Karl Moor a certain preoccupation with large things. The small is but commonplace—it never shows its concealed divinity. Experience has not yet learnt the complexity of eddy and resistance that headlong action raises. Emotions that all men know or divine fall on the reader singly, and grip with such painful clutch that no other touch is felt at all. The agony of comradeship bereaved felt by Don Carlos for the dead Posa, the pain of Karl Moor in exile or bidding farewell to Amalia, these numb every other feeling at the time. They fill the world. The older reader perhaps will smile a little and shake his head. 'No, no. Things do not happen like that.' But for the other the emotion is so isolated that, having no other by which to gauge itself, it is immeasurable, and so infinite.

To do and suffer great things. The followers of Schiller tasted some of the joys of the mountaineer; the triumph of scaling the peaks

was deliciously tempered by a shuddering terror of near danger. They fell in love with danger. They leaned over dizzy precipices, till they felt in imagination the whirling fall and sickening crash, as they could never have experienced it in the sudden disaster of reality. They explored the craters of live volcanoes and snuffed the fumes of a very Inferno. The fascination of this study of the terrible appears with less morbidity than usual in John Wilson's *City of the Plague*. The idea of strength in the hero is not felt but simply horror, and awe at the tremendousness of fate. There is little action. The piece is a detailed and vivid description of a great calamity. The hero comes back to London in the plague year, having been absent for some period, and searches for his friends. The scenes offer different aspects of the city, the terrified sufferers, the quack dispensing cures, the heroine passing through it all with serenity. The play offers a strange parallel with Gerstenberg's *Ugolino*, and follows the same dramatic method. One vivid picture succeeds another without any very definite connection but the rising sense of horror, till in the end nothing is left but the presence of death.

The lure of the terrible proved itself in some unexpected ways. Appreciation of the Elizabethans, and of Shakespeare in particular, was strongly biassed by this trend of thought. The Shakespearian tragedies most popular were those that dealt with the problem of pain in the most overwhelming form, that studied evil in its most hateful aspect of reasoning coolness: *Lear*, *Richard III* and *Othello*. The plays appeared quite frequently on the stage, and it is noticeable that, in *Othello*, the greatest fascination proceeded from Iago. The great actors constantly studied that character and that of Richard. Hamlet was not the object of attention to anything like the same extent.

The marks on the true coin will be copied on the counterfeit. The Shakespearian forgery *Vortigern* drew its plot largely from *Richard III* and *Macbeth*; and in the event of a case of madness Lear took precedence of Ophelia as a model. Where memories of Shakespeare are woven in with material of German manufacture they are almost inevitably drawn from these particular plays. The author of *Lorenzo*<sup>1</sup>, an adaptation of *Die Räuber*, speaks freely of Francis Moor as a 'domestic Richard,' and where his fluency in translation threatens to run thin or short he refills the volume of it from the royal forerunner's speech. Sometimes a proud claim is made that the play is of the same emotional

<sup>1</sup> Published 1823 anonymously. Written about 1815.

type as one of these Shakespearian tragedies. 'Bertram drew no tears. The answer is obvious. Would it not be reckoned as irrelevant criticism to say that no one weeps for Macbeth or Richard III?'<sup>1</sup>

Even good work shows itself not wholly free from such temptations. In *The Borderers*, the villain wears his German costume with a touch of Iago's style, so that he and the hero surprise themselves acting a portion of *Othello*; and *The Cenci*, needing to borrow neither force nor motive, recalls now and then phrases of these three tragedies.

The terrible, viewed by the weaker brethren, induced a certain morbidity. The idea of fruitless remorse, already present in *The Borderers*, became accentuated, and the passing sunset mood of Moor became the whole motive of a race of brooding heroes. They live in wilful despondency, thrusting aside the impulse to effort of any sort. Julian, in Sotheby's *Julian and Agnes*, lives as a lay brother in an Alpine monastery. He keeps apart from the brothers in voluntary humiliation; he gives one to understand that his crimes are too huge to allow of equal converse with men. The story, we learn, is much that of Romola and Tito; but Agnes, his Romola, is willing to forget. She wastes herself on the feeble creature. However Julian derives no little satisfaction from being, like Uriah Heep, 'umble. 'Peace—never, Agnes; 'tis virtue's heritage. Guilt, guilt is on me.' Julian is a poor thing, but he follows the fashion of his betters.

For all minds, strong and weak alike, whether the manner was grand or morbid or absurd, Karl Moor determined the type of the heroic for many years. No outfit was complete without such bare necessities as rebellion, remorse, suffering and solitude magnificently endured. The Byronic hero absorbed many of these ideas, probably not so much by definite contact, as through the diffused influence of the time. A good deal of conventional posturing clung about him, though it is not easy to prove that this too did not proceed from the theatrical strain in Byron's own character. 'Er schreibt sich selber aus, während er andere zu kopieren scheint.' Manfred shows more of the paralysing influence of remorse, Cain more of the splendid baffled idealism; yet both originated from a similar idea. Manfred is great in aspect as 'a magnified image in the fog.' His despair has nevertheless more in it than mere attitudinising in the limelight. His vast egotism, his self-conscious comparison of his state with that of the fallen Lucifer, the hectoring vein in which he assumes the dress of Bertram to die in,

<sup>1</sup> Preface to *Manuel*, by Maturin, 1817. The play derives much material from *King Lear*.

as in the middle ages men wore the habit of some monastic order at the last, none of these can wholly mask the finer spirit which has seen the better, and tortures itself because its own act has put away the hope of possession<sup>1</sup>.

We should have expected the political motive in Schiller to appeal to Byron; but no such definite connection does appear. When Byron turned to history, he was hampered by his theories of drama, and the result is very unlike Schiller. Marino Faliero seized remedies as desperate as those resorted to by Moor, but his motive was personal, not altruistic, vengeance; and at the end, he finds peace only in the thought that time may yet avenge him in making the fine city 'a desolation and a curse.' Nothing more than the outline of the heaven-storming hero is retained. Definite borrowing, and a clear likeness appear in *Werner*, but that piece of flashy, uninspired work is not serious enough to bear the weight of political earnestness.

Perhaps the most sympathetic reception of the type was by Shelley. The influence of *Die Räuber* on him was inward, moulding his ideas rather than the superficial presentment of them. There existed a great kinship between the character and philosophy of the two poets—in spite of wide difference of manner. Shelley had the same rebellion against the present circumstances of the world which Schiller felt in his early years: he would understand the temper of *Die Räuber* if all the rest of the world saw it partially or vaguely. The challenge flung at the conventional way of solving social problems, the sharp sense of separation from the rest of humanity by a great wrong, found their most powerful and glorious expression in *Prometheus* and *The Cenci*. Here the influence has proved really fertile in the only way which could produce such fine work: it has permeated the soil from which the poems spring, so that, without any external resemblance, there is evidence that the life within is one with it.

In *Prometheus*, the problem of the hero who defies the existing order to gain some good, almost despaired of, is taken up. He is destined to undergo extraordinary punishment for the attempt, cut off from the world in the solitude of mountain heights. But the poem carries the problem on, so that it comes out, as it were, on the other side of tragedy. It is like a curve which passes through infinity and comes back reversed. After all, Prometheus was demanding something

<sup>1</sup> A general parallel can be shown between Byron's hero-type and Milton's Satan. Kräger notes that Schiller's Moor has also many traits from the English source. It is as impossible as unnecessary to disentangle what each writer owed to the others in a matter like this. The conception remains clear and significant.

right. Although his destiny was to suffer, in the end his demand was justified, and the problem which in common earthly tragedy ends in non-fulfilment is brought to a solution.

*The Cenci* attacks the same problem, no longer as a principle, but materialised in actual history. The complaint against tyranny is still insistent. It is the burden of all Shelley's work. Here it recurs in the most terrible and agonising form. That Shelley should have dared to choose such a form reveals something of the strength of the influence. The plot was not made gratuitously terrible. The exaggeration of the adverse circumstances under which the hero labours was a distinct tendency of the school in England. Shelley pushed with the most extravagant to the very limits of endurance and only by the intensity of his idealising imagination made the position bearable. However it may be obscured, Beatrice's demand to right the wrongs of tyranny by taking the law into her own hands, her reiterated avowal that she is justified in doing so, repeat the same idea. If it had not been for the school of *Die Räuber*, the situation of *The Cenci* would have been practically impossible.

The story closes on its finest chapter. The characters of the *Borderers* were never really alive. Nothing in *Remorse* is permanent but one fragment of song. The rant of Bertram was lost in the rhetoric of *Munfred*. At last out of the turbulence emerged the quiet voice of Beatrice Cenci ending her tragedy in lofty composure :

Here, mother, tie  
My girdle for me, and bind up this hair  
In any simple knot; ay, that does well.  
And yours, I see, is coming down. How often  
Have we done this for one another; now  
We shall not do it any more. My Lord,  
We are quite ready.

MARGARET W. COOKE.

LONDON.