

BUT GERMANY MADE A NATIONAL IDOL OF HIM



Othello. *Yet I'll not shed her blood; Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow, And smooth as monumental alabaster.* Painted by H. Hofmann. Collection of Evert Jansen Wendell.



Alexander Moissi as Hamlet.



Falstaff. Painted by Eduard Grützner, Munich.

He Has Become "Part and Parcel of the Intellectual Equipment of Every German"

Written for THE NEW YORK TIMES
By Rita Hochheimer

ONE result of the present war, whether for good or ill, is the increased national consciousness of all the belligerents. Even we, in the security and dispassionateness with which our distance from the theatre of war should endow us, are apt to regard our brothers across the seas as Allies or Teutons, losing sight of the common bond of human sympathy that should unite us all. Small wonder, then, that this misconception has been carried over from the stormy realm of political activity to the field of literary criticism. It is to this false perspective that we can most charitably ascribe the tenor of Shakespeare articles which have lately been appearing in English publications. When The London Daily Mail purports to give a German viewpoint, and says: "All good things are German; Shakespeare is a good thing, therefore Shakespeare is German," or that the Germans have chosen Shakespeare to annex, like a hostile province, it presents a perverted truth to its readers.

As a matter of fact, Shakespeare has been long appreciated and loved, in Germany as in England. Shakespeare's transcendent genius belongs to no one nation. To attempt to narrow his sphere of influence is comparable to trying to keep the Bible from becoming the literary possession of any people except the Hebrews. It has for generations irrevocably entered into the literary life of every nation. The fact is there. To attempt to narrow its influence now simply exhibits our own ignorance. So with Shakespeare. His plays have become part and parcel of the intellectual equipment of every German. This is the fact. Let us not quibble over it, but rather rejoice in the greatness of this genius, who has won such complete recognition.

I said Shakespeare has long been known and loved in Germany. Nay, more, he has become a very wellspring of inspiration to the Germans, who regard him since Schiller's time—the middle of the eighteenth century—as "our Shakespeare." His influence is apparent throughout German literature, and to a less extent in the other arts. Let us see how far this is true.

The Shakespearean plays were first introduced into Germany toward the end of the sixteenth century, at about the same time that they were being performed in Drury Lane and Blackfriars in London. But the German stage was still in its infancy. There were no theatres—the plays which had been previously given were presented by troupes of wandering players on the village green or in the taverns. Often apprentices and schoolboys took part. The plays themselves had been crude affairs, often perverted versions of Church legends and Bible stories. Their purpose was either merely to amuse the audience, often by obscene and ribald jests, or to "point a moral or adorn a tale." Into this atmosphere bands of English players brought Shakespeare's plays, together with those of other contemporary English dramatists. There was no question of patriotism involved in this, nor of service to literature. The players were invited to cross the Channel by various German Princes, and came because they saw in so doing an opportunity of earning money. Their coming, however, familiarized the German people with the stories of Shakespeare's plays. To be sure, these were often presented in a much mangled form. Still the foundation was laid at this time for the later truer understanding and appreciation of our great poet in Germany. This at a time when France, entirely oblivious to Shakespeare's existence, was still subservient to classical antiquity, and when England herself had not by any means accorded him the undisputed place he holds today.

The real recognition of Shakespeare's genius in Germany dates from the eighteenth century. With the translation of twenty-two of Shakespeare's plays by Christian Martin Wieland in 1732 we have the beginning of the "Shakespeare cult," which has permeated all German life and thought. In 1773 Johann Gottfried Herder published his essay on Shakespeare. Here Shakespeare was hailed as the great "translator of nature into all tongues," whose God-given genius must eventually be



Lady Macbeth. *All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand.* Painted by Wilhelm von Kaulbach, Munich.

recognized. He is described as "seated on a rocky summit, with storm and tempest and the raging ocean at his feet, his head encircled by the radiance of heaven."

Although Herder recognized Shakespeare's greatness, it remained for Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, the greatest critical mind Germany has produced, to proclaim this greatness throughout the length and breadth of Germany. The Germans at that time regarded the French writers, particularly Voltaire, as the models upon which they must pattern their literature. They had made veritable idols of them. With the sarcasm and wit of which he was a thorough master Lessing sought to tear down these false gods and to put in their stead Shakespeare, nature's child. Through Herder and Lessing the Germans have come to regard Shakespeare as the spokesman of nature, as the very embodiment of nature, and to revere him as the supreme master. All later German literature is permeated with this devotion to Shakespeare, no longer regarded as a foreigner to be looked at askance, but as the embodiment of that great mother, nature, the rightful heritage of all men of all nations.

Aside from Lessing's critical appreciation of "the greatest dramatist of the North" (to quote Herder) and Herder's own emphasis upon Shakespeare's aesthetic supremacy, the really remarkable translation of his works by August Wilhelm von Schlegel, and his less gifted collaborator, Ludwig Tieck, has had the greatest influence in bringing Shakespeare home to the German people. Schlegel has entered into the spirit of the original in such a sympathetic manner that even the harsher critic can accuse him of but few inaccuracies. And yet, as Menzel in his Shakespeare picture has subtly Germanized the great Briton, so Schlegel has produced a work that of and for itself is and must remain a German classic. It is this remarkable achievement of the translator's art that has made possible what is a most astounding fact—there are more Shakespearean plays produced in Berlin in normal times than in any other capital. There is hardly a German city of any size where Shakespeare is not part of the regular repertoire; hardly a village where there is not at least one Shakespearean play a year. At the opening of the present war there was a group of people in Berlin who wished to have all Shakespeare productions stopped. I have been told, but the demand of the public for them was so great that they had to be resumed. The repertoire of our German theatre in New York includes Shakespeare's plays, and they have probably been presented more often during the war than before. The situation in regard to giving them up is quite analogous to that arising from the suggestion made at the opening of the war that Wagner's operas be boycotted at the Metropolitan. You will remember how em-



Rudolf Schildkraut as Shylock.

stars in the firmament of German literature, are indebted to the "British Titan," as Heinrich Heine has characterized the Bard of Avon. Heine, in his essay on Shakespeare's women, has summed up the situation when he likens him to the first German Emperor, who, you will remember, was chosen such by all the ruling German Princes and Kings. He says: "A glittering array of literary kings, one after the other, raised their voices, and chose William Shakespeare as the emperor of literature."

To mention a few of the modern Germans who have shown their appreciation for Shakespeare, we find Paul Heyse, Otto Ludwig, and Ludwig Fulda. The first of the three has written a drama called "The Island," based on Shakespeare's "Tempest." Heyse himself says of his earliest play, "Francesco da Rimini," "its style, to be sure, still shows my dependence on that inevitable model, Shakespeare."

Otto Ludwig has left us but little original work by which we may judge how profoundly Shakespeare influenced him, but all the last years of his life, while he lay on his invalid's couch, he was an eager student of the great English dramatist. We may almost say that in Shakespeare alone Otto Ludwig was able to lose sight of his bodily ailments and infirmities.

Ludwig Fulda, our German contemporary, who visited New York only a few years ago, must speak for himself. He says: "He [Shakespeare] has become not only a guest at the threshold of our culture, but has been granted the rights and privileges of the completest citizenship. Shakespeare

has become our Shakespeare, a German poet of whom we are as fond as of our own great men, and from whose works countless single passages and expressions have become part and parcel of the intellectual inheritance of the German nation." Nor does this intellectual inheritance confine itself to literature. Probably a greater percentage of Shakespeare music has been composed by Germans than by any other nation. Mendelssohn's musical version of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" is the classical example. Besides, we may mention Schumann's music for a song in "Twelfth Night" and his overture to "Julius Caesar." Hans von Bülow is responsible for an "overture heroique" to "Julius Caesar," as well as a triumphal march intended for Caesar's entrance in the first act of the play. Weber's delightful setting to "Tell me where is fancy bred," from "The Merchant of Venice," is familiar to all music lovers. What is not generally known and is of interest in this connection is that Richard Wagner composed an opera based on "Measure for Measure."

In German art Shakespeare appears again and again, in the early nineteenth century, when German artists were painting whole series of pictures around one central theme, we find, together with Goethe galleries and Schiller galleries, Shakespeare galleries, that is, series of pictures illustrative of Shakespeare's plays. Of these the most notable are the one by Wilhelm von Kaulbach and the later Bruckmann Shakespeare gallery, in which the greatest number of pictures is by Edward von Steine. The German artist, Eduard Grützner, has given us the classical portrayal of Falstaff. He has presented him to us in all his various pranks and adventures, and has managed to make of him such an engaging rascal that one cannot be angry with him. Anselm Feuerbach has painted Romeo and Juliet in the full beauty of their Italian home. Paul Thumann has illustrated "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and Gabriel Max "Macbeth."

Perhaps the most striking evidence of the deep root Shakespeare has taken in this foreign soil is the existence of the German Shakespeare Society, founded in 1864. The learned men of this association aim to increase and stimulate the study of Shakespeare in Germany, together with the presentation of his plays on the German stage. Each year they publish a Year Book containing valuable Shakespeareana.

Let us then realize that Shakespeare is to the German Nation no "hostile province." On the contrary, German critics above all others have for generations appreciated and loved our Shakespeare. Let us join with them in this appreciation, so that Shakespeare may truly become what he has been called by the French critic, Emile Faguet—"the man of all humanity—humanity as it is to be."

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The Greatest Creator, After God

Translated for The New York Times from Alexander S. Fushkin, (Russia's Greatest Poet).

IT was the study of Shakespeare and our history that are responsible for my conception of the idea of revising in the form of a drama one of the most dramatic periods in our history, in "Boris Godunoff." I imitated Shakespeare in his unconstrained and broad character drawing. . . .

Shakespeare felt for all humanity, and he was the creator of an entire humanity. After God, Shakespeare is the greatest creator of living beings. . . .

Shakespeare and the other English poets were first to discover and appreciate nature and its splendor. The French had to wait for Rousseau to find it out. Shakespeare has observed and described completely human nature, from its seed and root to its flowers, fruits, and Autumn leaves. There is not a single side to the human soul, mind, heart, human weaknesses, vices, and virtues which he has not painted. . . .

Shakespeare is not only a great poet, but a great philosopher. Not his verses, but his thoughts, should be studied. Goethe—the Dante of Germany—owes much to Shakespeare. . . .

I did not read Calderon or Lope, but how magnificent is Shakespeare! As a tragedian Byron is pitiable against him. Shakespeare is never afraid of compromising his characters. He makes them speak from the very beginning with all the abundance of life, because he is sure he will find words strong enough for the place and time to uphold them to the very end. The characters of Shakespeare are unlike those of Molière, which are typifications of certain passions, certain vices. They are living creatures, animated with many passions and many vices and virtues. The miser of Molière is but a stingy, greedy person. Shylock in Shakespeare is not only stingy, he is also shrewd, sagacious, revengeful, affectionate, ingenious.

Was Lady Macbeth Intoxicated?

"Pleasures and Palaces," by Princess Lazarovich-Hrebelianovich of Serbia. (The Century Company.)

THERE is in "Macbeth" almost a kind of grim, exalted comedy, such as Balzac meant in his expression, "La Comédie Humaine," where pity, too, has place. In the tragic poem of Macbeth, amid the strains of dirge for human frailty, amid the clamor of swords and shields, resound harsh notes like clash of strange wits, echoing the vanity of successful wrongdoing, the vain, outrageous arrogance of the taker of life. Heate prophetically flames this strident ridicule across the murky sky in the short, sharp measure of her exultant words that ring with demon's scorn and ironic laugh, ending:

Is mortal's chiefest enemy!

If I had ever played Lady Macbeth in an ideal production of the piece, guided wholly by myself, I should have taken the part of Heate, too, though in complete disguise. I cannot explain the value of this point, but it is clear to my inner soul. It has something to do with the identification of the spirit by which Lady Macbeth is possessed in answer to her invocation of that obsession in the hour when, drunk with ambition, she asks and obtains a temporary extension of the faculties, by which, in that intoxication of the imagination, she overleaps and overrides everything in her path. I think Shakespeare means her to be drunk in the murder hour; that is, drunk with ambition and the pictured greatness of the crown for Macbeth and herself. I think, too, he makes it clear that her mental exaltation in the hour of the deed is still further raised to the utmost pitch by a "wee draught of the craythur," which sent the King's guards into heavy sleep. For hear her say, as if the eye of her soul were swollen by deadly nightshade and in the spirit of scornful Heate: That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold:

But there are others who, since the days of Goethe and Schiller, the great twin

Shakespeare

Written for THE NEW YORK TIMES
By Philip B. Goetz

WHAT needs the master of eternal phrase
Our weak and tardy lauds as vain as
fleet?
Naught gains he that in awe we thus repeat
Glibly the rote the meanest voice may raise;
'Tis we win dignity who sound his praise,
Who in the brightness of his daring feet
Learn where to follow for our thieving neat.

Unquenched lives in these after-lays,
Joy dispersed had they slept had he'er sung.

Yet master as he was, he saw not all,
Nor all he said aye glows without a flaw;
From his height flashes no blinding law
Save this, that fame yields never to a thrall;
True, free, unscared speaks the imperious tongue.