SELF-CONFESSION

in

"IPHIGENIE," "TASSO" and "HERMANN UND DOROTHEA."

by

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INTRODUCTION

The peculiar charm in Goethe's literary works, in the final analysis, proceeds from the fact that everything he wrote is so eminently human. He did not attempt to portray life as he had observed it in other men, nor to depict experiences of which he had heard or read, but he always interpreted life from the viewpoint of reality. His inspiration and guide was his own experience and because he wrote so directly from his own heart, his words cannot fail to go straight to the heart of the reader. It is more than true that "Goethe's supreme work is himself. What Friedrich Schlegel said of Lessing might with equal justice be said of Goethe: 'He himself was of more worth than all his talents; in his individuality lay his greatness:' The key to his works is his personality; he was the most "personal" of poets and the greatest personality among poets."*

Goethe himself has told us that all his works "are but fragments of a great confession", and that all his life he could never deviate from the tendency to transform into an image or poem everything which "delighted, troubled or otherwise occupied" him. "The gift for this", he says, "was more necessary to no one than to me, whom his nature always threw from one extreme to the other".**

*J.G.Robertson:"Goethe and the Twentieth Century." p.141
** "Dichtung und Wahrheit" 1 Abth.27 Band S.109
This is the basis upon which we rely when interpreting Goethe's literary works from the standpoint of his personal experiences. There is, of course, a danger of carrying this method too far and of trying to discover back of everything he wrote some experience in his life and of identifying some real persons whom he knew with every character in his literary works. It should not be forgotten that Goethe always had experienced the same emotions as his characters, but when he wrote out of his heart he always changed the circumstances.

So much has been written about Goethe's life by himself in his "Dichtung und Wahrheit" and by his many admirers that a study of this material makes it possible to ascertain with a comparative degree of certainty to what extent Goethe's life is reflected in his works. This tendency to write from his own life explains why there may be observed in all his writings a "strong feeling for the real, the concrete, the living; and a repugnance as strong for the vague and the abstract."*

In the Classical period of Goethe's life he had attained more equanimity and reserve than he had experienced in the preceding impetuous period of the "Storm and Stress". To some extent the experiences he had undergone in Weimar, his extensive reading of critics and philosophers, and the elevating influence of his Italian journey were responsible for this change. But more than anything else stands the fact that

*Lewes: "Life and Works of Goethe". p.53
Goethe was never at a standstill, for he said of himself, "Ich hatte immer ein Starken Nisus noch vorwärts." He was continually growing and more unconsciously than by any determined effort of his own his writings took on the dignity and serenity which he gained from his reading of the Greek classics. In "Iphigenie", "Tasso" and "Hermann and Dorothea" the form imitates the Greek classics. Yet back of this form, which is merely external, the life portrayed is purely German, and it will be my purpose to show to what extent the life portrayed in these three works was an outgrowth of Goethe's own experience.
Outline for "Iphigenie."

I. The Influence of Women on Goethe.
   1. His mother and Sister.
   2. Frau Bohme.
   3. Fraulein von Klettenberg.
   4. Friederika.
   5. Lili.
   7. Frau von Stein

II. The Break with Lili and Removal to Weimar.

III. The Shaping of the Iphigenie Theme.

IV. Content of the Drama.

V. Personal Experiences Underlying the Drama.
   1. Correspondence with Augusta von Stolberg.
   2. Correspondence with Frau von Stein.
   3. Similarity of Goethe's relation to Frau von Stein to the situation in the drama.
Even a brief study of Goethe's life will reveal the fact that his was a nature deeply impressionable, sensitive to a high degree, and one that inspired and required in return confidence from his closest friends. Especially noticeable is the fact that he had many women friends, and from a study of his life, literary works and letters we may safely say that there never was a poet who understood more thoroughly the feminine heart and who was influenced to a greater degree by women. The nature of the poet needed feminine interest to stimulate him to his best effort and Goethe was never himself unless he had some woman in whom he could confide. Much blame has been laid upon Goethe by his enemies because of his conduct in several affairs with women, but it is necessary to remember that all we know of the influence of women upon Goethe he has told us himself, so that his life lies as an open book before us. We are told confidentially of every one of his friendships, and every letter of his that is still extant has been published, and nothing yet has been found that could be used to his dishonor. He greatly admired several married women, who never tried to conceal this friendship from their husbands, and who, in turn, saw no reason for breaking the attachment. Goethe admired a pure and beautiful soul, to which, but not always, was added a keen intellect, and the strength and tenderness of this soul life reacted on Goethe in such a way as to in-
spire him to produce his best. It was necessary for him to confide in some woman to whom he looked for guidance and inspiration. By a close study of the poet's works we find this element always present, that there is an inter-relation between the two main characters, a man and a woman, where the hero usually is dependent on the heroine for guidance and who often saves him from some destructive force by her strength of soul and the influence she exerts over him. Knowing the influence women exerted on Goethe it is safe to assume that this is one of the elements he transferred from his own life to his works and before making a detailed study of the personal elements in the works we have to consider it is necessary to consider first the influence of several women in particular who were prominent because of the poet's relation to them.

First and foremost in the life of Goethe, as in the life of almost every person of distinction whose biography is known to the world, is a woman whose loving care and devotion called forth the highest strivings of his nature, who was devoutly attached to him, and always, to the end of her life, made his welfare and comfort her first thought. This woman, of more than ordinary influence on the poet, was his mother. From her, as Goethe himself tells us, he inherited some of his best characteristics:--

"Vom Vater hab ich die Statur
Des Lebens ernstes Führen
Vom Mütterchen die Frohnatur
Und Lust zu fabulieren." *

*1 Abth 3 Band S.368
The difference in the dispositions of the father and mother is thus neatly shown. The father was of a stern, haughty nature, who believed in the disciplinary value of severity rather than love in ruling his children.* The poet's mother had a very different attitude, being guided by her feelings and her love for her children. Much younger than her husband, she was of a jovial disposition and shared with her son and daughter their pleasures and sorrows, had like feelings and wishes and was young with them.

There was another influence in Goethe's home which was of great value to him. How strong this influence was is best seen in his own words: "Von solchen...Streifpartien...ward ich jedoch wieder nach Hause gezogen, und zwar durch einen Magnet, der von jeher stark aufwirkte: es war meine Schwestér.* He tells (*) us how he and his sister grew up together, each sharing the joys and sorrows of the other. They placed the utmost confidence in one another and in no place does Goethe ever mention her except with the utmost tenderness and love. She was his comforter when his feelings were hurt in youthful love affairs (Gretchen) and his adviser in the more serious questions of later life.(Lilí:) This sister, Cornelia, took an attitude of defiance and antipathy towards her stern father, and while she displayed to him only the harshness of her

* Dichtung und Wahrheit. 1 Abth.27 Band. S.21, Z.7-S.22, Z.8
(**) " " " 1 Abth.27 Band. S.20, Z.27-S.21, Z.4
(*) " " " 1 Abth.27 Band. S.20, Z.27-S.26, Z.18
nature, she turned to her brother for comfort and consolation
and bestowed upon him in turn all the love and devotion of which
her rich heart was capable.* In later years Goethe loved to
call the women in whom he confided "Schwester", this term be­
ing used only in passages of tenderness when he pours out his
heart in confidence and appeals only to their most noble quali­
ties. This alone is fitting tribute to the regard he gave his
sister, or otherwise he would not have attached such high mean­
ing to the word.

Before Goethe left his Frankfort home his tender soul
was stirred by the awakening of a new love. His boyish affect­
ion was laid at the feet of a certain Gretchen, somewhat lower­
er than himself in station, but a girl of dignity and good
sense who apparently permitted him to worship her without show­
ing any more than a sisterly affection for him. For some time
his emotions were stirred by the tenderness of this new love,
the various incidents of which are related in Book V of "Dich­
tung und Wahrheit,"** until it was brought to an abrupt close
by the bitter blow dealt him when Gretchen called him a mere
"boy" and subsequently disappeared from his life, never to be
heard from again. Under the influence, however, of these ro­
mantic stirrings the boy Goethe wrote much verse, even though
most of it was written under the guise of practical jokes
upon his friends.

* Dichtung und Wahrheit.1 Abth,27 Band S.196 Z.27-S.198,Z.20
** 1 Abth 26 Band. S.261-342
The next important figures who appear come in the Leipzig period of the poet's life. Goethe's father had long been ambitious that he take up law as a career, so accordingly it was to the University of Leipzig that Goethe went, finding there at "Little Paris" a great difference in social customs and forms from those to which he had been accustomed at Frankfurt, where he was the son of a patrician family and needed to put forth no effort to gain the respect of his fellows. He found himself ill at ease in Leipzig, even though possessing some letters of introduction to persons of importance. He was so discouraged that he would have withdrawn from society had it not been for the influence* of Frau Böhme upon him, and for the fear and esteem with which Goethe regarded Hofrath Böhme, a Professor of law at the University of Leipzig. Frau Böhme, though in poor health, often invited Goethe to spend the evenings at her home. It was here that she took him in charge, instructing him in social forms of the day, teaching him games and telling him how he should talk and dress. She encouraged him and through her genuine interest gained his confidence and respect. Furthermore, she was educated and it was possibly in her guidance of the poet's literary taste that she exerted the greatest influence over him. Another strong friendship which Goethe formed in this period was that with Frederica Oeser, the daughter of his drawing instructor, with whom he passed many pleasant evenings and whose in-

*Dichtung und Wahrheit, 1 Abth. 27 Band. S. 62, Z. 16-S. 65, Z. 13
fluence and hold on him is shown by the letters * he wrote her after his return to Frankfort. A third feminine influence in Leipzig was the young girl Kätkchen Schönkopf, the daughter of the inn-keeper at whose home Goethe boarded. This attachment was of an entirely different nature, for Goethe worshipped and tormented Kätkchen with all the jealousy of an ardent lover, being in turn calmed by her soothing influence. Other than returning the affection of the young poet and placing his fevered moods on a saner basis it is doubtful whether Kätkchen exerted any lasting influence over him. Some of their experiences are found reflected in one of Goethe's earliest works, "Die Laune der Verliebten."

While at Leipzig Goethe read and heard much of the doctrines of Rousseau, and influenced partly by these and partly due to the recklessness of youth he subjected himself to overexposure, till his health failed and it was necessary for him to return to his home in Frankfort where he was ill for some time. Here he felt again in abundant measure the love and devotion heaped upon him by his mother and sister. Added to this was the interest of a friend of his mother's, Fräulein von Klettenberg, a Pietist of a distinguished family. She was genuinely interested in the soul struggles of the young Goethe and set forth to him in convincing manner her ideas of what his relation to his God should be. While religious—

*Briefe IV Abth.1 Band. S.206-209; S.188-202
**Dichtung und Wahrheit,1 Abth.27 Band. S.110 Z.10-S.112-
***Dichtung und Wahrheit,1 Abth 17 Band s.///-26.Z.28.
ly inclined, she was neither narrow nor soured on the joys of life, and her active mind was a source of much delight to Goethe, who enjoyed with her lively discussions on religion. Her views of life and influence were most beneficial to Goethe, and it is from her conversations and letters that we have the "Confessions of a Beautiful Soul" which are found in "Wilhelm Meister."

When Goethe recovered from his illness he went to Strasbourg to resume his work in the study of law. Not far from here, at Sesenheim, he met *Friederike Brion, whose father was a pastor of the little village and the members of whose household corresponded so nearly to the characters in the "Vicar of Wakefield", which Goethe had just been reading, as to awaken his interest from the first. Friederike was a good-hearted, amiable girl who accepted life just as she found it and enjoyed it to its fullest extent. Goethe enjoyed the open country in strolls at her side, and the harmony of her nature so impressed him that he did not attempt to conceal his love for her, and she in return gave her whole heart to him. Between visits to her father's home the mind of the young Goethe was only filled with the thought of when he should see her again. Having some relatives in the city of Strassburg, Friederike and her sister paid them a visit and it was at this time that Goethe was made to feel, more than ever before, the disparity of their positions.

* "Dichtung und Wahrheit" Bücher X & XI
It was not until later when Goether left Strassburg finally after taking his degree that he said farewell to Friederika. It was this breaking of their virtual engagement for which the world has judged the poet most harshly, which, however, was not a cold desertion but rather a surrender to the attitude of society toward differences in rank and to the struggling of the poetic genius which called for expression and avoided any ties which might become a fetter. Nevertheless this parting caused Goethe many a pang of grief and he took with him a guilty conscience because of the beautiful heart he had wounded and it was only after many months of unrest at Frankfort that he became himself again. In late life Goethe himself tells us* \textit{Die Antwort Friederikens auf einen schriftlichen Abschied zerriss mir das Herz. Es war dieselbe Hand, derselbe Sinn, dasselbe Gefühl, die sich zu mir, die sich an mir herangebildet hatten. Ich fühlte nun erst den Verlust, den sie erlitt, und sah keine Möglichkeit, ihn zu ersetzen, ja nur ihn zu lindern. Sie war mir ganz gegenwärtig; stets empfand ich, das sie nur fehlte, und was das schlimmste war ich konnte mir mein eigenes Unglück nicht verzeihen. Gretchen hatte mir man genommen, Annette mich verlassen, hier war ich zum erstenmal schuldig; ich hatte das schönste Herz in seinem Tiefsten verwundet, und so war die Epoche einer düstern Reue bei dem Mangel einer gewohnten erquicklichen Liebe höchst peinlich, ja unerträglich.} \)

*"Dichtung und Wahrheit". 1 Abth.28 Band S.118 Z.8- Z.22
His law course completed, Goethe returned to Frankfort in August 1771 to take up the practice of law. In order that he might gain more practical experience in affairs of law, his father secured for him a position in the Reichskammergericht at Wetzlar. His duties became very irksome and although he only remained here four months the period is important for the fact that the old love was supplanted by a new one, which however was equally hopeless, since Lotte Buff was betrothed to Goethe's friend, Kestner. Her mother had died two years previously and to Lotte fell the duties of the household and the responsibility of the large family. When Goethe became acquainted with her he enjoyed most the visits to her home, where he was a welcome guest to her younger brothers and sisters. Despite the fact that Kestner was engaged to Lotte, and that he had many a struggle in his own mind, he showed no hint of jealousy, and Goethe and Lotte maintained for each other feelings that were affectionate, although Goethe realized that he could claim nothing more than her friendship. He knew that this was a love which he would have to renounce, but nevertheless Lotte's charm took such hold on him that in desperation he left early one morning and returned to Frankfort, denying himself the sad pleasure of a farewell because of the grief it would cost him. Many of these experiences are reflected in "Die Leiden des Jungen Werthers."

During the winter of 1774-1775, after his return to Frankfort, Goethe met Anna Elisabeth Schönemann, whom he
loved to call Lili. Her father was a wealthy banker of Frankfort, and the lavish entertainments they gave and the brilliancy of the circle in which they moved were distasteful to Goethe, yet for the sake of being near Lili he accompanied her to many of these functions. Lili was a pretty girl of sixteen but somewhat spoiled and a coquette, and very conscious of her power over Goethe. This power worked upon his emotions to the exclusion of his intellect, and served to stir him up rather than calm him. In April, 1775 Goethe was formally engaged to Lili but this lasted only a short time. Both families objected and Goethe seemed to realize that their marriage could not contribute to the permanent happiness of Lili or himself. Several times he tore himself away, hoping that a change of scenery would help him forget, but an irresistible impulse kept drawing him back to Frankfort. In Eckerman's Gespräche we are told that Lili was the only women Goethe ever loved:*"Sie war in der Tat die erste, die ich tief und wahrhaft liebte. Auch kann ich sagen dass sie die letzte gewesen; denn alle kleinen Neigungen, die mich in der Folge meines Lebens berührten, nur leicht und oberflächlich." Lewes insists that this is an exaggeration due to the carelessness with which statements are made in old age. He believes that Goethe had felt for Friederike and that he afterward felt for Frau von Stein and his wife as true and noble a love as that which he held for Lili. At any rate it is sufficient

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*Eckerman's Gespräche III S.207. — — —— March 5, 1830
for our purpose to know that his devotion to Lili occupied his entire mind and thought, that she stimulated his poetic activity and his attraction to her was only severed with difficulty.

While Goethe's heart was thus troubled with his love for Lili he received an anonymous letter signed "Gustchen". The writer gained his confidence and in his answers he gradually opened his heart to his unknown correspondent and told her of all his happiness and sorrow in his love affair with Lili. This correspondence developed into a genuine and pure friendship and it was not long before Goethe discovered that his unknown friend was Augusta von Stolberg, the sister of the two brothers with whom he had travelled in Switzerland. The sway she held over Goethe was not slight, but it is necessary to defer a further discussion of her influence, together with that of the next important woman who came into Goethe's life, until a later time where it is included in another topic.

Among Goethe's first acquaintances at Weimar was Charlotte von Stein, wife of the Master of Horse. She was seven years older than Goethe and the mother of seven children, of a retiring and quiet disposition, yet gifted with an active mind and a noble character. Goethe was fascinated by her charming personality and it was through her influence, as will be seen in a later discussion that the tumult of the poet's youth was transformed into the quiet and composure that followed. This attraction, which was strong on both sides, was kept
on the basis of a spiritual friendship by Frau von Stein and it is from the letters that Goethe wrote to her that we gain the greatest information as to the place this woman occupied in his life.
The Break with Lili and Removal to Weimar.

Something has already been said concerning Goethe's relation with Lili, but for a complete understanding of the experiences underlying the "Iphigenie" it is necessary to consider this relation more in detail.

Owing to the difference in station of the respective families of Goethe and Lili an engagement seemed impossible, yet Goethe himself tells* us how it was brought about: "Wie sie (Demoiselle Delf) es begonnen, wie sie die Schwierigkeiten, die sich ihr entgegen stellen mochten, beseitigt, genug sie tritt eines Abends zu uns und bringt die Einwilligung. "Gebt euch die Hände!" rief sie mit ihrem pathetisch gebieterischen Wesen. Ich stand gegen Lili über und reichte meine Hand dar; sie legte die ihre, zwar nicht zaudernd, aber doch langsam, hinein. Nach einem tiefen Atemhollen fielen wir einander lebhaft bewegt in die Arme."

Goethes happiness was complete, the dearest wish of his heart had been fulfilled yet the nearer the idea of marriage approached him, the more restless he became, and his fears and doubts overwhelmed him with peculiar force. It was just at this time that the two brothers, the Counts of Stolberg, invited him to accompany them on a journey through Switzerland. He welcomed this idea with delight, for besides

*Dichtung und Wahrheit, 1 Abth 29 Band (S.61, Z.12-20)
it giving him an opportunity to see and enjoy in pleasant companionship the beauties of nature of the Swiss Alps, it afforded him a slight respite from the misgivings that had been assailing him and afforded him an opportunity to test his true feelings toward Lili. If he found that away from her magnetic presence he was able to forget and do without her, he might safely flee the bonds that would tie him, so accordingly he set out on the journey with enthusiasm.

On their tour Goethe and the counts of Stolberg set aside all conventionalities and enjoyed life to the fullest extent. Goethe was singularly impressed by the wonders of nature, yet opposing his desire to press on and on there was an equal force pulling him back. Just beyond lay Italy, the land of his dreams, the land his father had always desired him to see.* Yet when he had scaled a mountain, just beyond which he could almost see this Land of Promise, it seemed strange and foreign. Germany came forward as the land of happiness, now doubly dear. He still had about his neck the little gold heart which Lili had given him in their happiness, hanging on the same ribbon which she had tied. He drew it forth and kissed it, and from that moment -then- resolved to return home as speedily as possible. A little poem which he wrote to Lili on this occasion expresses his motive for leaving Germany and his desire to return:**

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** " " " " , 1 " 29 " S. 130
"Flieh ich, Lili vor dir! Muss noch an deinem Bande,
Durch fremde Lande,
Durch ferne Thäler und Wälder walten!
Ach, Lili's Herz konnte so bald nicht
Von meinem Herzen fallen."

Accordingly Goethe returned to Frankfort, where he found that many influences had been at work to alienate Lili from him.* As was only natural all persuasion against him bound her only the more firmly to him till she declared her readiness to go with him to America. But as he himself said: "Aber eben das was meine Hoffnungen hätte beleben sollen, drückte sie nieder."** During all this time he was exceedingly unhappy, "not strong enough to give up Lili, nor sufficiently in love to marry her."*** He was jealous of other admirers and hurt by Lili's coldness, himself by turn indifferent and tender, so that after a time the inevitable was broken. Goethe was free, yet he was unhappy. He could neither marry Lili, nor force himself to forget her. In his own words: "Eine Neigung, die auf die Hoffnung eines wechselseitigen Besitzen... gegründet ist, stirbt nicht auf einmal ab."(*)

Concealing his identity by a large cloak, he often walked around Lili's home in the evenings to catch a glimpse of her, if nothing more than her shadow moving across the blind. One evening as he neared her home he heard her at the piano singing and playing, singing a song he recognized as one he had written for her, and its melody floated out to him with peculiar

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*Weimar Dichtung und Wahrheit, 1 Abth. 29 Band (S. 155-160)
**Dichtung und Wahrheit, 1 Abth 29 Band, Z. 156 Z. 24-25
***Lewes "Life and Works of Goethe, p. 193
(*)Dichtung und Wahrheit 1 Abth. 29 Band. S. 177, Z. 23-26)
tenderness. The familiar voice which had always been so charm­
ing seemed to put more feeling into the song then ever before. As she left the piano Goethe saw her figure move across the room. He waited, hoping to catch another glimpse of her, or hear her voice again, but all was silent.

In September Karl August, Duke of Saxe-Weimar came through Frankfort with his bride, on his way to Weimar. He had previously met Goethe at Karlsruhe where a strong attract­ion sprang up between the two and he invited Goethe to Weim­ar. On the Frankfort visit Karl August pressingly repeated the invitation and Goethe accordingly resolved to accept it:

"Ich entschloss mich daher abermals zur Flucht, und es konnte nur deshalb nicht erwünschter sein, als dasz das junge herzoglich Weimarische Paar von Karlsruhe nach Frank­fort kommen und ich, früheren und späteren Einladungen gemäss, ihnen nach Weimar folgen sollte".* Goethe's father was at first opposed to this visit, yet after much persuasion his consent was granted, and Goethe set out, little dreaming that the visit would become a permanent residence. Many of the persons whom Goethe met at the Weimar court were persons of distinction and fame, yet he was able to make a place for him­self. Their estimation of him may be judged by a letter** written by Wieland, the tutor of Karl August and friend of the Duchess, who would surely be an impartial judge:  "How per-

* Dichtung und Wahrheit 1 Abth 29 Band, S.177
fectly I felt, at the first glance, he was a man after my own heart! All I can say is this: since that morning my soul is as full of Goethe as a dewdrop of the morning sun...I believe the godlike creature will remain longer with us than he intended; and if Weimar can do anything, his presence will accomplish it." The Duchess Amalia heartily approved of Goethe and everywhere he was a great favorite, but more particularly with the women. Into the Weimar society the poet introduced skating and this became one of the favorite pastimes of the court circle. The friendship with Karl August continually became stronger and Goethe became his inseparable companion from affairs of serious import to standing on the market square and cracking whips on a bet. Goethe's nature was exactly of the kind that stimulated the Duke in the way of entertainment and merriment, yet the poet exerted a beneficial influence on the ruler in that he knew just how far to go, and beyond which he restrained the reckless judgment of the young Karl August. It is needless to add that Karl August was a wise, farseeing, and democratic ruler, and after serious thought he followed his best judgment and appointed Goethe to the post of Geheime Legations Rat, with a seat and voice in the council. This position was not given because of favoritism, but because he recognized in Goethe a mind that would be valuable to him in the administration of government.
The Shaping of the Iphigenie Theme.

It is not known exactly at what time the Iphigenie theme first occurred to Goethe. Late in life he said that he wrote the fourth act near Ilmenan in a single day. This statement is also found in his journal under the date of March 19, 1779 so that it refers the first thought of the drama to the year 1776. Under date of Feb. 14, 1779 the poet wrote to Frau von Stein: "Den ganzen Tag brüt ich über Iphigenien dass mir der Kopf ganz wüst ist, ob ich gleich zur schönen Vor­bereitung letzte Nacht zehn Stunden geschlafen habe...Musik hab ich nur kommen lassen die Seele zu lindern und die Geister zu entbinden". Immediately after the drama was finished it was performed at the court of Weimar Easter Tuesday, April 6, 1779, and Goethe himself taking the part of Orestes. This fact is in itself significant and we shall later see in how far the part of Orestes was written out of Goethe's own life. The play was received with enthusiasm by the court circle, yet Goethe was not satisfied with it. In 1781, he revised it, and at the advice of Herder took the manuscript with him to Italy where he cast it into its final form and sent it to Weimer Jan. 13, 1787.

The first draft of Iphigenie was written in prose, the drama as we know it today is in verse, iambic pentameter. Goethe was a reader and admirer of the Greek classics and...
their imprint may be detected in the language he used. The style is serene and exalted, with no pretence of adapting the speech to the character of the speaker. The poet conforms strictly to the classic unities of time, place and action. The composure and dignity of the Iphigenie was a distinct disappointment to many of the admirers of Götz, who expected another drama of like vehemence. But Goethe had passed the Storm and Stress period of his life, and laments in his journal* that the public were so accustomed to the old forms and expressions that the Iphigenie suffered and no one thanked him for the trouble he had taken with it. In another entry * he added that after a public reading of the play that many could not make out the calm movement of Iphigenie after expecting a work like Götz, yet the nobler and purer passages did not fail to produce an effect.

In the drama there is the very evident blending of the classical and modern. Many of the features of the story Goethe owes to the tragedies of Sophocles, Aeschylus and Euripides, all of whom treated the same theme. In Aeschylus there is the theme of guilt and retribution, in Euripides the question of conflicting duty, that which Orestes owes to the gods and that which he owes his mother. Goethe develops the theme in such a way that it is soothing and peaceful, where in the classical writers it is one of extreme horror. Although the

*Jan. 10, 1787.
"Iphigenie" of Goethe is Greek in form and subject, its content is thoroughly modern and should not be judged according to classical standards. Goethe's great contribution, which makes the play modern and Christian instead of classical and pagan, is his different treatment of the expiation of the curse. In the classic writers this expiation takes place through a ritual and outward form as in the capture of the goddess. In Goethe's drama it takes place through repentance and purification. The center of interest is not in deeds, but in character and on the beneficial influence of one personality on another. Throughout the drama the mental processes and working of character are the most outstanding facts, and because of this it is thought by some* that the work is really a wonderful dramatic poem instead of a drama. Harmony of character shines through the form in the shape of perfect unity. Nothing is there that is not needed, and all detail melts away in dependence on the unity of impression produced by the whole. The distinctive passages are beautiful, yet rather than remembering these, the reader is able to forget them in the striking impression and harmony produced by the whole, just as he forgets the minute detail in the grandeur of a wonderful marble statue.

*Lewes P.272. "Life and Works of Goethe."
Content of the Drama.

When the first scene opens Iphigenie is at Tauris as a priestess of the temple of the goddess Diana. To Diana she really owes her life, for when, on the sacrificial altar, the knife was raised which was to stay her, the goddess appeared and transported her in a cloud to this new land. What wonder then if Iphigenie, contrary to her race, believed in the goodness of life and had faith in the gods. Despite this she longs for her home in Greece. Thoas the king in this strange country is desirous of marrying Iphigenie and this unwelcome suit makes the country doubly hateful, although she is grateful to Thoas for the refuge he has given her. When pressed for an answer Iphigenie tells the king she is descended from the race of Tantalus, a well known family on whom a curse rests. She relates the crimes and misfortunes of the house which are many and horrible in the extreme. Instead of repelling the king as she hopes, this makes no impression on him, but her insistent refusal and coldness make him angry to such an extent, that he orders the renewal of an old ritual which, through Iphigenie's humane influence, has been abandoned. This involved the slaying upon the altar of Diana any strangers who may be found upon the shore.

Before long two strangers, Orestes and Pylades, are cast upon the shore. Orestes has avenged the death of his father Agamemnon upon his mother and was consequently pur-
sued by the Furies. At the oracle of Apollo he learns that the curse would be lifted from him, if he should bring back to Athens from Tauris the image of "die Schwester," Orestes interpreting this to mean the image of Diana, the sister of Apollo. Pylades, the relative and inseparable companion of Orestes from boyhood is his companion on this mission. On meeting these two as strangers, Iphigenie finds they are from Greece and inquires about her family. Her influence is such that Orestes confesses to her his identity and his guilt. He is filled with remorse and despair and when Iphigenie makes known who she is, he is already so overwhelmed with grief that he fails to grasp her meaning. Then through a vision Orestes sees that the feuds of his race have ceased, and upon awakening realizes now, for the first time, that a new life has opened up, that Iphigenie is really his sister, and that it is through her love and purity of soul, and his confession to her, that the curse has been lifted, and his outlook on life and whole mental attitude has been changed. With the restoration of Orestes, the three plan to flee to their native country, Iphigenie for the moment consenting to a plan of deception.

Thoas suspects that there is something wrong and demands an immediate execution of the human sacrifice, which Iphigenie has delayed. Iphigenie reproaches him with his cruelty and tries to answer his objections, but a mind like hers is so unused to deception that it is impossible for her
to keep silent further, and she tells him the identity of the captives and her plan to escape with them to her native land. She thus appeals to his generosity by placing their fate in his hands, and in spite of the severe words there is still in the king a heart large enough to rise to the occasion, and although it costs him pain and sorrow, he bids them depart.

Such, in rough outline, is a sketch of the "Iphigenie". Rather than tear the drama apart and finding what particular passages and speeches were written out of Goethe's own heart and from the experiences of his life, I shall, in the main, deal with the general situation since much richer material is to be found here, when considered in its entirety, than in loose and unconnected fragments.
Personal Experiences Underlying the Drama.

We have Goethe's own word for it that the characters of his Iphigenie are not historical. "Nun mögen seine (Manzoni) Facta historisch sein, aber seine Charaktere sind es doch nicht, so wenig es meine Iphigenie ist." In the Goethe Jahrbuch we are told that Orestes is a portrait of Goethe, and in one of Goethe's letters he expresses surprise that Tischbein discovered the human element under the mask of heroic classicism. We also know that when the drama was played at Weimar Goethe himself took the part of Orestes. Without further proof it is safe to conclude that in Orestes there will be reflections of Goethe.

That Goethe must have had an experience similar to that depicted in the drama is evident because of his extreme reluctance in later years to witness a performance of Iphigenie. He could not endure the revival of the past which had meant so much to him, which had been so beautiful and was now forever past. At one time Schiller had persuaded Goethe to be present at a performance of which he had charge and had staged. Goethe wrote from Jena: "I shall arrive in time to experience at your side one of the most wonderful effects which I have ever felt in all my life: the immediate presence of a condition now more than past for me."(*)

* Eckermann's Gespräche I S.225
** Goethe Jahrbuch 9:222
*** Briefe Wk,IV,Abth 8:94
(*) Briefe IV .Abth.16 Band S.84
As Bielschowsky points out the Orestes moods were past, and also his love for his redeemer, Frau von Stein. In 1827 when the actor Krüger played in the role of Orestes Goethe wrote to Zelter who had recommended the actor:—"It is impossible for me to go. What good will it do me to recall the days when I felt, thought, and wrote it all?" Eckerman, Goethe's secretary, went to see the performance and after a favorable review of it the next day Goethe told him: "Ich muss gestehen, es hat mir noch nie gelingen wollen, eine vollendete Aufführung meiner Iphigenie zu erleben. Das war auch die Ursache, warum ich gestern nicht hineingering. Denn ich leide entsetzlich, wenn ich mich mit diesen Gespenstern herumschlagen muss, die nicht so zur Erscheinung kommen wie sie sollten."

A direct admission of the influence of Frau von Stein on the writing of "Iphigenie" is included in one of Goethe's letters to her: "Heute geht auch Iphigenie ab. 0, möchtest du fühlen wie viel Gedanken zu dir herüber und hinüber gegangen sind bis das Stück so stand."(*) Goethe's impetuous love for Frau von Stein was transformed through her soothing and calming influence into something more like reverence and worship and there are many places in his letters where he calls

*Bielschowsky Vol II, p.32
**Briefe IV. Abth.42 Band. S.102
***Eckermann Gespräche III. S.95-96.
(*)Briefe IV. Abth. 8 Band. S.132
her his "Best Angel,"* and his "Consoler". From Goethe's own admissions, direct and indirect, and from what is known of the circumstances and events of his life it is impossible to deny that the characteristics of Frau von Stein are reflected to a great extent in Iphigenie. However, it is necessary to draw a line of distinction and not to carry the comparison too far. It would be absolutely untrue to state that Iphigenie was Frau von Stein, and that Orestes was Goethe, and it would be mere folly to attempt to prove such a statement, since, in many of their main characteristics, they were essentially different from the characters of the drama. The basis for my discussion, and the comparison which I shall attempt to prove, is that the healing and calming influence of Frau von Stein on the disturbed mind of Goethe is reflected in the influence of Iphigenie on the troubled soul of Orestes.

There was a power, of which Goethe thought, felt and wrote much. This, the demonic element, is hard to understand or explain exactly as Goethe meant it. It is a force which drives or leads men onward, sometimes to good and sometimes to evil, but always manifests itself in some positive activity. Its influence on other persons is exerted through what we would possibly call magnetism and this power, Goethe explained,

* Briefe IV. Abth. 4 Band S.2 & 20 & 280.
** " IV. Abth. 3 Band S.20.
was only possessed by highly gifted persons.* He himself did not possess it but had often been under its influence, we are told in one of his conversations with his secretary. This idea, as expressed by Goethe, may be seen, not only in his own life, by the unconscious power which personality exerted over him, but it is likewise expressed in his poetic productions. This power in its influence on others did not manifest itself through deeds and actions, but rather by an unconscious drawing of one soul toward another, in which some beneficial results were the outcome.

In direct reference to the Iphigenie perhaps the first relation which suggested Orestes' healing through his sister was Goethe's relation to Augusta von Stolberg. It will be remembered that Goethe went to Weimar after breaking the engagement with Lili, whom he still loved, and after a year which he himself said was the most distracted and perplexed of his whole life. All of the joys and sorrows of his love affair he had confided to Augusta von Stolberg, revealing his heart completely to her. He told her how he wandered about in the open for three months, hoping to forget in new scenes that which disturbed him, only to come back to find himself in the

* Eckermann's Gespräche II.S.204-205.
** " II.S.201-202
*** Briefe IV Abth.2 Band S.302
(*) Briefe IV Abth.2 Band S.272 & 288
presence of "Das Mädchen, dasz mich ünglücklich macht, ohne ihre Schuld, mit der Seele eines Engels, dessen heitre Tage ich trübe... ...vergebens dasz ich drei Monate, in freier Luft herumfuhr, tausend neue Gegenstände in alle Sinnen sog....Diese Leidenschaft ists die uns aufblasen wird zum Brand, in dieser Not werden wir um uns greifen, und brav sein, und handeln und gut sein, und getrieben werden, dahin wo Ruhe Sinn nicht reicht... Unseeliges Schicksal das mir keinen Mittelzustand erlauben will." He then begs her to let no one see his letters. He seems to have been compelled to unburden his troubled soul to Augusta von Stolberg, these confessions coming from a mind that was overburdened, but was unwilling that the world know its sufferings. In another letter he tells his confessor that absence only strengthens the bond which draws him to Lili, that he can not, dare not tell her everything because it concerns him too closely and he does not wish such recollections. In the same letter after having seen Lili he complains: "Wär ich das los...und doch zittr' ich vor dem Augenblick da sie mir gleichgültig, ich hofnungslos werden könnte....Ich bin ein Armer verirrter verlorner."

It was more true than might appear at first glance

* Briefe IV. Abth.2 Band S.273
** Briefe IV Abth. 2 Band S.289
that Goethe was indeed at this time "ein Armer verirrter, verlorner." He stated that nothing outside of himself "disturbed, cut or hindered him." So it is clearly evident that his agitated feelings proceeded from his own heart and mind, and not from outside circumstance, and for this reason it was all the harder for Goethe to get away from that which was disturbing him. When the weight on his mind became unbearable he tried a change of scene and felt that he was being driven about by an unseen power:-"Vielleicht peitscht mich bald die unsichtbare Geisel der Eumeniden wieder aus meinem Vaterland." Yet his self-imposed exiles did not help, for the feelings of his heart were impossible for him to escape, and he wrote impatiently to the friend who understood him best: "Grosser Gott, was ist das Herz der Menschen. Ich dachte mir sollts unterm Schreiben besser werden—umsonst, mein Kopf ist überspannt...O, wenn ich jetzt nicht Dramas schriebe, ginge ich zu Grund...O, beste, wie wollen wir Ausdrücke finden für das was wir fühlen?"

It was a natural impulse in Augusta von Stolberg, when responding to these confidences of the poet to attempt to soothe his troubled mind, and from many of his answers to her we can form some opinion of how highly he valued her

* Briefe IV. Abth.2 Band S.231
** Briefe IV. Abth.2 Band S.271
*** Briefe IV. Abth.2 Band S.282
(*) Briefe IV. Abth. 2 Band. S.241
friendship and interest in him. In several places he affectionately calls her "dear sister" and "Angel".* From extracts of Goethe's letters to her we know what she meant to him, and the state of his feelings at this time:


These are only a few of many letters that might be quoted to illustrate the same thing. It is, at least, sufficient to know that Goethe laid bare his whole heart, with all its weaknesses to Augusta von Stolberg, confessing to her his guilt and begging her to "save him from himself."

Her soothing influence is apparent when he tells her that in thinking of her he feels only "equanimity and love", and that she is the only feminine creature who can save him from deep distress. All this bears a strong resemblance to the central problem in Iphigenie, yet Augusta von Stolberg was destined to give place to another woman, to whose influence the Iphigenie theme is directly traceable.

The need of an immediate, present love was always felt by Goethe. Upon his removal to Weimar he was so strongly attracted to Frau von Stein, and felt so deeply the influence of her magnetic personality that she became to him the embodiment of all that was good and noble and lovable in woman. Besides filling this need for an ever present love she became mother-confessor to the troubled poet and he poured out his heart to her to a greater extent, even, 

*Dichtung und Wahrheit" 1 Abth. 28 Band. S. 118 Z. 21
than he had done to Augusta von Stolberg. Instead of filling him with unrest, as many previous love affairs had done, her influence "infused composure into his hot blood." In the same poem in which this is expressed, he gives voice to the belief that since the bond between Frau von Stein and himself is so strong, she must have been his wife, or sister in some former existence.*

"Sag, was will das Schicksal uns bereiten? Sag! wie band es uns so rein genau? Ach, du warst in abgelebten Zeiten Meine Schwester oder meine Frau."

It is evident that, during the early Weimar period Frau von Stein was more to Goethe than anything else in the world: "Even the relation, the purest, most beautiful and truest in which, except to my sister, I ever stood to a woman, is thus disturbed ...The world which can be nothing to me does not want that you should be something to me."** Although Goethe had loved many different women he said if he should be allowed to come to earth again he would beg the gods that he love only one and that that one should be Frau von Stein.***

"Heute habe ich im Paradiese an Sie gedacht, dass Sie drin herumgingen eh Sie mich kannten. Es ist nur fast unangenehm dass eine Zeit war wo Sie mich nicht kannten, und nicht liebten. Wenn ich wieder auf die Erde komme, will ich die Götter bitten dass ich nur einmal liebe, und wenn

*"Gedichte" 1 Abth. 4 Band S.97
**"Briefe" IV Abth.3 Band. S.70
*** Briefe IV Abth. 4 Band.S.13
Sie nicht so feind dieser Welt wären, wollt ich um Sie bitten zu dieser liebe Gefährtinn." Higher tribute than this it would be hard to find. Evidences of Goethe's really true and genuine love for Frau von Stein are to be found in many other letters of his, so there is no question as to the place she occupied in his life:--

"Briefe" IV Abth.4 Band.S.238,June 24, 1780
S.245,June 30, 1780
" IV Abth.5 Band.S.30 ,March 12,1881.
" IV Abth.6 Band S.215,Nov.23,1883.
S.312,June 24,1884.

This love which Goethe possessed for Frau von Stein, and which she returned in like measure, was not a mere passive affection, but a dynamic force in the life of the poet. We find him telling* her that he needs her love more every day to resist the evil spirits which assail him. It was his habit to confess to her all his sorrows and weaknesses, and through her magic power his mind was cleared and he was himself again** In another letter he speaks of the openness and rest of his heart which she had restored to him, that through her his old activity had returned and he felt entirely different since, through her, joy had returned in his life*** Her healing power over Goethe is most humbly expressed in a letter where he compares her to the brazen serpent in the wilderness, upon which he only need look to be healed

* Briefe. IV Abth.6 Band. S.89
** Briefe. IV Abth.5 Band. S.13
*** Briefe. IV Abth 5 Band. S.97
from his sins:**"Was mir die Götter geben ist auch Ihr. Und wenn ich heimlich mit mir nicht zufrieden bin, so sind Sie wie die ehrne Schlange zu der ich mich aus meinen Sünden und Fehler aufrichte und gesund werde." This is an unmistakable proof that Goethe through confiding in and confession to Frau von Stein was able to see again the clear light of day, that through her, peace and harmony was restored to his soul just as it was restored to Orestes through Iphigenie.

It is almost unnecessary to add that Goethe felt deeply the debt of gratitude which he owed Frau Von Stein and which he expressed to her again and again. In one letter (Feb. 23, 1776) he tells her he greeted the rising sun for the first time in two weeks with a free heart, which was full of thanks to her, "Angel of Heaven", to whom he owes it.** In the same letter he confesses that she is the only woman who ever gave him a love which made him happy, and that "Ich (Goethe) liege zu deinen Füssen, ich Kusse deine Hände." In another letter he thanks her again "tausendmal" for the presence of her love, and tells her he has never come so near to being worthy of her love as he then is.***

He felt that he could never tell her how much he owed her.(*)

* Briefe IV Abth.4 Band S.230
** Briefe IV Abth 3 Band.S.33
*** Briefe IV Abth 5 Band.S.68
(*) Briefe IV Abth.5 Band.S.95
In the third Act of Iphigenie, before Orestes is completely restored to his normal self, and before Iphigenie's healing influence takes entire effect, he falls into a deep trance, from which he awakens restored. It is interesting to notice the parallel in Goethe's own life, where, in his letters to Frau von Stein he often speaks of the healing and soothing influence of sleep through which his soul is purified and he is brought into proper balance:

Feb. 23, 1776: "Wie ruhig und leicht ich geschlafen habe... und wie voll Danks gegen dich... dem ich das schuldig bin." (IV Abth. 3 Band. S. 33.)
May 21, 1778: "Durch einen schönen Schlaf hab ich meine Seele gereinigt." (IV Abth. 3 Band. S. 226)
March 7, 1783: "Ich habe mich wieder herausgeschlafen wie gewöhnlich." (IV Abth. 6 Band. S. 135.)
Nov. 23, 1783: "Mein übriges Wesen aber durch den Schlaf wieder ins Gleichgewicht gebracht." (IV Abth. 6 Band. S. 215.)

Up to this point it has been my purpose to show the evidence for believing that in the healing of Orestes through the personality of Iphigenie, is reflected the relation and influence of Frau von Stein over Goethe. The proof is so self-evident that it is almost needless to point out the conclusion.

The central theme in Iphigenie, just as it is taken from Goethe's life, concerns itself with the healing of a man suffering from a guilty conscience, through the influence of a noble personality.

In considering first the personality that does the heal-
ing, we know from the esteem in which Frau von Stein was held at Weimar, and by Goethe's letters, most minutely, as well as the expressions of opinions of others, that Frau von Stein was a noble woman in every sense, high minded, and richly gifted both in intellect and heart. Iphigenie likewise was endowed with noble gifts. Diana thought her worthy to be saved from the sacrificial altar, and in a strange land away from the ties of race and kindred she had won for herself a place of respect. Arkas addressed her as "worthy," "much honored," and "holy" and the king not only loved but respected her to such a degree as to wish to make her his wife. Thus in the drama and in life we have the similarity of a pure and noble personality who is to do the healing.

Next, it is important to know the state of mind of the man who is to be healed. Orestes is pursued by the furies, who give him no rest. He is not in his natural state of mind because of the enormity of grief at his great crime. Interpreted in the light of Christianity, instead of Paganism, the furies can be nothing more than a guilty conscience which pursues him and disturbs his peace of mind. In Goethe's own words taken from the poem he has suffered just as Orestes has:

"Unseliger, du bist in gleichem Fall,
Und fühlst was er, der arme Flüchtling, leidet."

* Iphigenie, Act I, Scene II, 1.64 & 65.
** " , l.1070-1071.
It is known that Goethe's peace of mind was greatly disturbed by his guilty conscience after the break with Lili, and he once expressed the view that the furies would possibly drive him from his fatherland:—

"Vieleicht peitscht mich bald die unsichtbare Geisel der Eumeniden wieder aus meinen Vaterland."* It has already been explained that his guilt gave him no rest, that he looked back on that year as the most perplexed and most troubled of his whole life, and that he welcomed the invitation to Weimar as an opportunity to escape from scenes which brought back tender memories to him. Then we may safely add to the equation between the drama and the poet's life two men suffering from a guilty conscience, from which they had, up to this point, obtained no relief.

In the reaction of a noble woman's pure personality on the mind of him who is suffering from a guilty conscience, we find that from the outset there is a strong, unconscious tie which links the two personalities. This has already been noted in the case of Goethe and Frau von Stein, and it is known that Iphigenie feels drawn to Orestes from their first meeting more than to Pylades, to whom she refers as "der fremde Mann"**. The soothing influence of Frau von Stein on Goethe may likewise be interpreted from the words of Iphigenie:

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* Briefe IV Abth.2 Band. S.282
** Iphigenie,1.1185
"Ich bringe süsses Rauchwerk in die Flamme, 
O,lass den reinen Hauch der Liebe dir 
Die Glut des Busens leise wehend kühlen."

Arkas expresses the influence of Iphigenie over the king, who, however, was not the only one who was led by her good words: "Ein edler Mann wird durch ein gutes Wort der Frauen weit geführt." This expresses as concisely and as truly as might be possible, the condition both in the drama and in the life of the poet. The words of a good woman had done much to lead him onward and make him what he was. In each case Goethe and Orestes confessed his guilt to the woman possessing this magnetic influence over him, and through her purity and harmony of soul each was restored and purified. Each of these women brought salvation and life again over the threshold of the guilty conscience.

"Du bringst über jene Schwelle Heil and Leben wieder, 
Entsühnest den Fluch und schmückest neu die Deinen 
Mit frischen Lebensblüthen herrlich aus."

Through love the curse was conquered and the healing was accomplished through a pure personality. Orestes words in rejoicing at his restoration sound almost exactly like some of Goethe's letters to Frau von Stein:

"Lass mich zum Erstenmal mit freiem Herzen 
In deinen Armen reine Freude haben!"(*)

*Iphigenie, 1.1156-1159
** " , 1.213-214.
*** " , 1.1615-1618
(*) " , 1.1541-1342.
It is possible to take the analysis of the drama a step farther and say it is more than a reflection of Goethe's relation to Frau von Stein and his reaching spiritual composure through her. In a copy of Iphigenie which Goethe gave to the actor Krüger, he inscribed a short poem which may well contain an embodiment of the ideals of the drama:

"Was der Dichter diesem Bande
Glaubend, hoffend, anvertraut
Werd im Kreise deutscher Lande
Durch des Künstlers Werken laut.

So im Handeln, "so im Sprechen
Liebevoll verkünd es weit,
Alle menschliche Gebrechen
Sühnet reine Menschlichkeit."

Here again Goethe expresses the belief that pure humanity can redeem the frailties of mankind. Goethe raised the ideals of humanity to a striving after pure human nature. From this standpoint the work can be viewed as neither particularly Greek, nor particularly modern, but as embodying the highest ideals of humanity of all time.
I. Life of Tasso.

Showing
a. Traits that were peculiarly Tasso's.
b. Where the lives of Goethe and Tasso coincided.
c. Incidents and characteristics which were not in the life of Tasso, but which Goethe supplied from his own life.

II. The Genesis of the Drama.

a. Biographical Sources.
b. Date of Composition and Development.
c. Combining of the objective and subjective necessary for Goethe to develop the plot.
d. Writing on "Tasso" laid aside.

III. The Break in the Drama.

a. Cause
b. Goethe in Italy.
   1.) His different attitude.
c. Result in difference of:
   1.) Tasso's dramatic character.
   2.) Antonio's Character.
   3.) Relation between Tasso and the Princess.

IV. Analysis of the Plot.

V. Reflections of Personal Experience.

a. Conflict between life of action and life of contemplation.
b. A hopeless love affair.-Lenz.
c. Court intrigue and Rivalry.
d. An indulgent ruler and patron.
e. Goethe's love of Italy.
Tasso

From even a short account of Tasso's life may be determined what traits of the character in the drama were peculiarly Tasso's, what traits of his own Goethe wrote into the dramatic character and just where the lives of the two coincided.

Torquato Tasso was born at Sorrento, Italy, March 11, 1544. His mother came from a noble and very wealthy family of Naples, and his father before his marriage had been for seven years secretary to the Prince of Salerno. Tasso was the youngest of three children, the second of whom died, and the eldest was a sister Cornelia. When Tasso was six years old his father with his patron, the Prince of Salerno, was driven into exile by the Spaniards. Their property was confiscated and Tasso with his sister and mother were dependent on the mother's relatives at Naples.

After four years of exile the elder Tasso returned to Rome and sent for his family. Only the son was allowed to return as his wife and daughter had been put in a convent where his wife died after two years.

The early education of Torquato Tasso was under
the direction of the Jesuits. When his father returned from exile Torquato followed him from place to place till at the age of sixteen, much against his will, he was sent to Padua to study law. Secretly he did all he could to develop his poetic talents, till he won his father's approval by writing "Rinaldo." He then left Padua and went to Bologna where the idea of "Jerusalem Delivered" occurred to him. At this time he wrote three cantos of the poem, retaining, however, very few of these stanzas in the completed poem. At this time Tasso's extreme sensitiveness was apparent, for he left Bologna because he had been accused of writing a satire. From here he returned to Padua where he became a member of a recently instituted academy and continued his studies in literature and philosophy. Tasso was then invited by Cardinal Luigi of Este to the court of Ferrara. He accepted this invitation and entered the service of the cardinal October 1565.

A year before this Tasso had fallen in love with a girl in Mantua, whom he had met on one of his visits to his father. At the court of Ferrar he fell in love with one of the court ladies, who, however, was soon married to a Machiavelli. The poet Guarini, who was also at the court of Ferrara grew jealous of Tasso's popularity and
angered him by accusing him of paying his attentions to two women at the same time. Besides making him angry this caused Tasso to become morbid and suspicious. These tendencies were furthermore increased by Battista Pigna, the secretary to the duke, who seems to have been from the first an enemy of Tasso's. Nevertheless Tasso gained many friends at court, the chief of whom were the duke's two sisters, Lucretia and Leonora, under whose encouragement he began work again on his epic poem, "Jerusalem Delivered." Pigna was angered by Tasso's poetic pretensions, since he himself had some slight inclination toward poetry, but before he could carry out any intrigue Tasso left the court to accompany the cardinal on a mission to France.

For some unknown reason Tasso left Ferrara and entered Alfonso's service at Rome, 1572. He stayed here only a short time and then returned to Ferrara where the welcome given him and the enthusiasm with which his poems were received caused Pigna to begin his intrigues anew. The criticism and envy of these intrigues was increased by sickness, and thus the sensitive nature of Tasso received a double blow. He became morbid and suspicious, and believing himself to be surrounded on all sides by enemies, he imagined himself to be in disfavor in Ferrara and
went to Rome. At Rome the favorable offers and treatment of the Medici aroused his suspicion and he again returned to Ferrara, 1576.

At this time Eleonora Sanvitale and her mother became Tasso's chief friends and stimulated his poetic activities. During Tasso's absence Pigna had died and Antonio Montecatino had taken his place. It would seem that the real Antonio was not at all the statesman that Goethe pictured him to be, although the antipathy between Tasso and Antonio existed from the first in real life just as in the drama. Tasso's fear and distrust was increased and he was so constantly on the alert that one day when a servant came towards him quickly Tasso threw a knife at him. This resulted in the poet's arrest which only amounted to his being kept in his room. After his release his suspicions increased, until he unexpectedly left Ferrara in secret and went to a monastery of the Franciscans. He trusted no one and soon left here and went to the home of his sister in Sorrento where he was slowly nursed back to health.

After much wandering about from place to place Tasso again returned to the court of Ferrara at the time when preparations were being made for the dukes marriage. Here he was not received with much enthusiasm and before long his suspicious nature again asserted itself
and he began to denounce the duke and other members of his family. This caused Tasso to be pronounced insane and he was confined in the hospital of St. Anne for seven years. The next year his "Jerusalem Delivered" which had been in the hands of the duke was published without the author's consent. The interest which it awakened caused much speculation as to the reasons for the poet's incarceration. The story went abroad that the duke's disfavor and mistreatment of Tasso was caused by Tasso's love for the duke's sister Leonore. Although it is not believed today, Manso who was the earliest source of Goethe on this subject, gave full credit to the rumor and in Goethe's drama Tasso's love for the princess is one of the main motives of the action.

During his stay at the hospital of St. Anne Tasso wrote some of his best poems and philosophical works. He was finally released through the intercession of friends on condition that he remain under their guardianship and leave Ferrara. For the next few years he was not in any one place a long time, although during his stay at Naples he revised "Jerusalem Delivered." In 1594 Tasso found a new patron in a Roman cardinal and was invited by him to come to Rome to receive the poetic crown. When Tasso arrived in November he was told that the ceremonies were to be postponed till spring. During this winter the
poet's health failed and he died in the monastery of San Onofrio April 25, 1595.

That Goethe should have been led to write a drama on the life of Torquato Tasso is not hard to understand when it is noted how many points of similarity existed in the lives of the two poets. In the first place they were both urged, in fact compelled by their fathers to study law, while in secret they both devoted themselves to the development of their poetic powers. While it may not have been a determining factor in gaining Goethe's interest, it is at least a fact that both he and Tasso had a sister named Cornelia, whom they loved and trusted. Then, again, both of the poets went in early manhood to the court of a great duke, whose patronage they enjoyed. Here they were both opposed by jealousy and intrigue, although Tasso suffered from this cause to a much greater extent than Goethe did. Goethe's "Storm and Stress" period likewise found a counterpart in Tasso's nature. Although today the story is not given much credit, Tasso's earlier biographers told of his hopeless love for the duke's sister, for which reason the duke treated him harshly. This story was believed by Goethe who found in his own life a parallel, as he himself was involved in a love affair with Charlotte von Stein, a noble woman of the court of Weimar who was not only older than Goethe
and higher in station, but married.

In his drama Goethe preserved several main elements which were peculiarly Tasso's. Especially in the first two acts Tasso is made the innocent victim of hate, jealousy and intrigue. As the opposition to which he was subjected was greater than any jealousy Goethe experienced at Weimar, we may assume that Goethe relied mainly on Tasso's biographers for this information, although in reality Tasso suffered even more than Goethe pictured. As the history of his life relates, Tasso had been from early youth extremely sensitive to criticism. This developed into morbid suspicion and it is certain that the abnormality which is observed in Tasso's character in the drama had no part in Goethe's nature. The duke as Goethe pictured him in his relation to the poet was neither Karl August nor the historical duke as far as his relation to the poet is concerned. In certain respects, as will be discussed later, he had some elements of both.

From Goethe's habit of writing his life into his works, certain historical elements are thrown aside in favor of experiences supplied from his own life. As Antonio's activities in the drama represent Goethe's success in the real business dealings of court life, the poet seems to have disregarded the fact that the histori-
cal Antonio was not a capable statesman, and that he lost favor with the duke because of his inability. The love of Tasso for Ferrara and his friends there, with his great admiration for the duke seems to be characteristically Goethe's feeling for Weimar and Karl August, rather than an exact representation of the relation of Tasso to the court. Goethe began work on the drama at a time when his love for Frau von Stein was the question uppermost in his mind. So it was not unnatural that he should write into his poem more of his own love than to portray what he had read of Tasso's love for the princess.
II. The Genesis of the Drama.

From early childhood Goethe was familiar with Tasso's "Jerusalem Delivered" and with the main facts of the poet's life. In the library of Goethe's father was Kopp's translation of "Jerusalem Delivered", which the young poet had read and parts of which he had even memorized and was called upon to recite for the entertainment of company.* With this translation was a short sketch of Tasso's life, based on Manso's biography, which Goethe also had read. Later, after having studied Italian, Goethe read the poem in the original, which must have impressed him and awakened his admiration to a much greater extent than the translation could have done. In the autumn of 1774 Heinse published an article on Tasso which was likewise founded on Manso's biography. This article was extremely sentimental and portrayed chiefly Tasso's great love for the princess, who was unattainable to him and also showed him to be the victim of plots and intrigues, emphasizing how greatly he suffered from open and secret enemies. Just a year after reading this article Goethe went to Weimar where he began to experience some of the emotions which Tasso had felt. Goethe also

* "Dichtung und Wahrheit". 1 Abth. 26 Band. S. 123.
read and credited Manso's biography of the poet Tasso. In 1785 Serassi's biography of Tasso appeared and Goethe read this work in Italy. It undoubtedly affected the final version of Tasso. The last two works were the most complete, and therefore the sources upon which Goethe relied most for the historical facts of the poet's life.

There is some doubt as to the exact time when Goethe planned a drama on the life of Tasso. In the "Italienische Reise" Goethe stated March 30, 1787, that the first two acts of Tasso had been written fully ten years previously.* This would place the writing in the year 1777 but in the light of other known facts this statement has been discredited. It is known that this statement in the "Italienische Reise", although dated 1787, was in reality not written till thirty years later. More than once instances have occurred where Goethe's memory for exact dates failed him, and since the statement was made so many years later it is not at all unlikely that this was not the real date of the writing. There is a record in Goethe's diary, dated March 30, 1780, "Gute Erfindung, Tasso.** It is not likely that this designates the first time that Goethe thought of a drama on

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* Italienische Reise 1 Abth. 31 Band. S.83.
** "Tagebücher" III Abth. 1 Band. S.113
this subject, but rather that this marks the time when he began to make a more complete plan of the work. This seems to have been the case since the plan had time to ripen in the poet's mind and the actual writing began in October. The first act was finished in November and sent to Frau von Stein for her approval. As she encouraged him he began the second act in a few days, and by the 25th of the same month he had completed the first scene of this, and was ready to read it to her. Goethe mentions nothing of the progress of the work until March 1781. It was just at this time that he had been able to gain from Frau von Stein some admission of her love for him, and under this stimulus the work progressed. It was at this time especially that Goethe used his poetry as a mirror to show Frau von Stein his love for her. In August 1781, the second act was completed and Goethe laid the work aside. Even in 1786 he thought somewhat of confining the drama to the two acts, but nothing more was planned for it until he went to Italy.

In Italy, after finishing "Iphigenie", Goethe again began work on Tasso in February 1787, but he was not able to make much headway. He took the manuscript with him to Naples, thought and planned it all again on the journey to Sicily, where he was able to bring the plot very nearly to completion. Again there is no
more mention of the play until February 1788, when Goethe was about to leave Rome. It was then that he spent most of his time upon the drama and when he returned to Germany it was not quite completed. The last work was done in Weimar and here it was finished July 1789.

It is noticeable that Goethe always combined the objective with the subjective. This seems to have been a necessary prerequisite for poetic composition. From a study of the poet's life it would seem evident that before the spring of 1780 he did not have the experiences in his life necessary to objectify in "Tasso" such experiences and emotions as are portrayed there. Goethe went to Weimar in November 1775 and from then until 1780 there gradually developed in his life many elements which he combined with the objective as he found it in the history of Tasso's life.

When Goethe first arrived at Weimar he was criticized and to some extent mistreated by some of the nobles of the court who resented the presence of a man who was not titled and who had not grown up in the court circles. Goethe and the duke, Karl August, became inseparable friends and each of them delighted in the other's company in creating amusement when the weighty affairs of the court had been attended to. They enjoyed practical jokes and the unceremoniousness of their pleasure hours shocked
many of the notables of Weimar. Gossip and slander spread and Goethe was held responsible for the Duke's innocent hilarity. Every time Goethe was given a promotion there arose much talk and jealousy. When Goethe was given the rank of Privy Councilor September 2, 1779 he set out with the duke to visit the courts of Germany. Here he observed how much misery among the lower classes was caused by misrule on the part of the sovereigns. When he returned to Weimar he had lost almost all respect for court life. He found here almost the same condition existing as in the courts he had visited. Scandal and gossip was widespread and all the little jealousies of court life occurred to him peculiarly petty and low after he had received an insight into the real questions of life and had obtained a broader view of humanity. This feeling was further enhanced by his journey through Switzerland where he was made to feel in the presence of the sublimity of nature how insignificant narrow conventions are after all. So on his return to Weimar Goethe certainly must have experienced keenly the antagonism of his surroundings to the ideal longings of a poet's soul. This same antagonism is one of the two main motives of the drama "Tasso" and is reflected in the hostility of the natures of Tasso and Antonio.
The other main motive of the drama is Tasso's love for the princess, and before Goethe could put this into verse it had to be linked to a subjective experience. Before Goethe went to Weimar he had been informed of the interest which a noble woman of the court, Frau von Stein, took in his literary activities. When Goethe was shown her silhouette he became fascinated and wished that he might see "how the world was mirrored in her soul", which seemed to look back on the world "through the medium of love."

As has been stated before, Charlotte von Stein was the wife of one of the court officials and seven years older than Goethe. She was not strong and therefore lived in retirement, taking almost no part in the social activities of the court. Goethe did not become acquainted with Frau von Stein until about a year after his arrival at Weimar. Having gained her friendship, Goethe's feeling soon grew into love and from her he learned much of the ethics of ideal love. Goethe succeeded in brightening and enriching her life and in drawing her out of her seclusion to enjoy the court festivities. Frau von Stein's warm friendship knew how to keep the poet within bounds and the high ideals which he interpreted through his love for her were expressed in the ideal love of "Iphigenie."
However the love which is expressed in "Tasso"
is of a different variety since we are led to believe
that the princess returns the feeling of the poet,
whose love is more impetuous than any expressed in the
"Iphigenie." Up to this time Goethe had been unable to
secure from Frau von Stein any confession of her love.
She knew of Goethe's love for her and gave him her warm­
est friendship. The only admission of her feeling for
him which she had ever expressed to him was a ring en­
graved in her initials C v S. Yet as the poet's love
grew he became desirous of the assurance that he in
turn was loved and under his persistent urging Char­
lotte von Stein finally made this confession. It was
just after this that the work on "Tasso" progressed so
rapidly, since the poet had a stimulus to urge him on
and he felt that he could use his drama as a means to
express to Frau von Stein the love that he had for her.
So besides the conflict between his poetic ideals and
real life, Goethe experienced all the emotions of the
love problem which forms one of the main threads of his
drama, and which was necessary for him to feel in his
inner consciousness before he could write it in dramat­
ic form. The first two acts contained as much of the
plot as could be developed up to the place where the
tragedy of Tasso's nature had to turn one way or the
other. Goethe was as yet in no mood to change the character of the conflict and so the writing was laid aside.
III. The Break in the Drama.

For five years after the completion of the second act the drama was apparently forgotten. All work on it was stopped and the only explanation for this is to be found in the somewhat changed nature of Goethe himself. He had experienced the conflict of nature which is portrayed in Tasso, but as the second act neared completion Goethe's poetic dreams and ideals gave way, at least temporarily, to a life of activity. He was active in the business affairs of the court where he became one of Karl August's most trusted statesmen and also busied himself with the improvement of economic conditions of the duchy. When he was not occupied with affairs of state, Goethe spent his time in scientific investigations, especially along the line of geology, zoology, and botany. Thus the dreamer had become a realist and was no longer in sympathy with the mood portrayed in Tasso, so he was unable to go on with the work.

Almost at this same time Goethe experienced some annoyance which caused a difference in the happy hours which he had had in the company of Frau von Stein. Very often he had dined at her home and here enjoyed her guid-
ing influence which always strengthened him to something higher and better. Often Goethe's friends assembled here and he received much pleasure from their companionship. During this time Frau von Stein's husband by reason of his position had been required to dine at the duke's table, but in 1784 he was released from this obligation. Although neither the frequency nor the intimacy of his visits was marred by the presence of the husband, Goethe was made to realize more than ever that he could never hope to possess the woman whom he loved. He began to feel resentful towards the husband and to understand the impossibility of the situation, which however did not cause his love to decrease in the least. His nerves began to give way and all exacting duties become irksome. The mental strain became almost too much for him and his health was about to break under it. Accordingly the poet went to Karlsbad in September 1786 to rest and gain strength.

Without informing even Frau von Stein of his departure, Goethe left Karlsbad in secret and went to Italy. Here he led a real and active life. Much time was spent in travel and in the study of art. The old enthusiasm in life which the pressure of court duties had partly destroyed returned again and Goethe seemed to be
renewing his youth and enjoying life to the utmost. Italy had always been the land of his dreams and in the last few years his longing to visit it had become so great that he scarcely dared allow himself to think about it, and religiously avoided reading anything that brought up thoughts of Italy. So having finally reached the land of his desire the poet set out to live life to the utmost and thus quiet his mental unrest, and also to study art which had been one of the unfulfilled longings of his life. He took the manuscript of Tasso with him but did not attempt to write on it until near the end of his Italian sojourn.

This difference in the attitude of Goethe resulted in a change of Tasso's dramatic character. The drama had been started when Goethe's nature was in full accord with the moods of Tasso, but after the completion of the second act Goethe had grown away from these moods. In Rome for the first time he was able to see objectively all the conflict of emotion and reason which he had passed through and which he no longer felt. The confidences of Karl Philipp Moritz whom he met and cared for in Rome and to whom he acted as father-confessor gave him a view from the outside of many experiences through which he himself had passed.* Added to this was the fact that

* "Briefe"—Dec. 16, 1786. IV. Abth. 8 Band. S. 94
Goethe had been saved from the conflict in his nature by his flight from Weimar so that he no longer felt such intense sympathy with Tasso as he had when beginning the drama. Just at this time Serassi's biography of Tasso appeared and it was an invaluable aid in giving Goethe a more critical view of the poet's life. In the drama there is a marked difference between the Tasso of the second act and the Tasso of the fourth and fifth acts, which is undoubtedly due to Goethe's interest and sympathy being withdrawn from the poet in the time intervening.

As Goethe's interest was withdrawn from the poet it was transferred to Antonio, the man of affairs. This was only natural, as Goethe in the last few years at Weimar had become more active in the affairs of court and had been gaining experience which made him an invaluable statesman. In Italy he was still occupied with affairs of real life, and scorned anything which bordered on the unreal. He was still the trusted advisor of Karl August and much of their correspondence was occupied with matters of serious weight. Thus Antonio, who in the first two acts had been the intriguing enemy of Tasso, became something entirely different in the last three acts. Goethe saw by his own experience how much good could be accomplished in the world by a true
statesman. So Antonio's character was changed and he became the real friend of Tasso and stood ready to help him even when others seemed to fail. Goethe had learned to put the proper value on a life of activity and this resulted in his sympathetic interest in Antonio in the last three acts.

Goethe's different attitude manifested itself in a third direction in the drama; this was in the changed relation between Tasso and the princess. When Goethe left for Italy without informing any of his friends, it caused much bitterness to Frau von Stein because he had not told even her. This feeling was further increased when the first letters which he sent her from Italy were lost and a growing coolness resulted. Aside from this break in their friendship another reason stands out even more prominently. As Goethe was transformed from the dreamer to the realist he found that he could not be content with the ideal love which was all that Frau von Stein was willing to give him. In Italy he fell in love with a beautiful Italian girl, and after his return to Weimar his desire for domestic happiness caused him to take Christiane Vulpius into his home. This was not the cause of the changed relationship in the drama but it was the result of the same attitude in the poet which caused him to change the plot as he
had first conceived it. Although he still placed a high value on ideal love, it had failed to redeem him from the conflict in his nature. He found that he had to escape from the bonds of this love and work out his own salvation in another way. As the first two acts of "Tasso" were written at a time when the love between Goethe and Frau von Stein was mutually strong, the last three were written when there was a breach in their friendship. In the first two acts of the drama we are led to believe that the princess returns the love of Tasso. In the last three acts it is evident that she does not, that she is the princess and has for the poet only high regard. Tasso must turn to something else for salvation and finds it through Antonio, the statesman, and in his departure from the court.
IV. Analysis of the Plot.

Act I.

When the first scene opens the Princess and Leonore Sanvitale are weaving wreaths of flowers for the statues of the poets. The conversation drifts around to Tasso and he is described as being dreamy and unreal. Verses written by him to an idealized Leonore have been found on many of the trees and from this many traits in his imaginative nature are described. When the duke, Alphonso, enters he joins in the conversation and blames the poet particularly for avoiding society, which is the very thing which would strengthen his character most. In the third scene Tasso appears and presents the poem on which he has been working so long. The duke and the ladies thank and praise him and a laurel wreath is placed upon his brow. This token of admiration causes him unspeakable ecstasy. In all Tasso's speeches there is evident an excess of excitement which throws him from one extreme to the other. Antonio appears as the trusted statesman and adviser who has just returned from a diplomatic mission to Rome. He is admirable in every way except in the disdain he shows for Tasso's poetic activities.
Act II.

In talking to the princess Tasso tells her how he has been hurt by the words of Antonio. Tasso still represents the aesthetic view of life, and the princess represents the ethical attitude. Tasso tells her of his regard for her and the princess leads him to believe that his feeling for her is not unwelcome. She praises Antonio and expresses the desire that Tasso should gain his friendship. Accordingly Tasso later offers and almost thrusts upon Antonio his friendship, which Antonio is reluctant to receive because he has not been in the habit of making friends until they have been tried and found worthy. Each misunderstands the other and harsh words follow until Tasso draws his sword. Just at this moment the duke steps in and for this offence orders Tasso to remain in his room. This was a very light punishment for so serious an offence but Tasso takes it deeply to heart.

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Act III.

In this act Tasso does not appear, and the princess also sinks to the background. The more practical comes to view and Antonio and Leonore and the duke make plans for Tasso. Everyone is anxious that peace and harmony be restored. The better part of Antonio's nature
is manifested and he is willing to make amends for his share in the matter.

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Act IV.

Here more than ever Tasso's abnormal condition is apparent. The act is composed of three monologues bridged by two other scenes, and it is in the monologues that Tasso displays the weakness of his nature. He has been brooding over his punishment and becomes suspicious of everyone. Leonore Sanvitale talks with him and urges him to go to her home in Florence for a rest and change. Tasso thinks this is a conspiracy to get him out of the way and makes plans of his own. He decides to leave Ferrara and asks Antonio's help in obtaining his release. His pretext is that he is going to Rome to consult with friends about his poem. Antonio urges him to give up this plan but when he sees Tasso will not take his advice he promises to use his influence with the duke to obtain the poet's release.

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Act V.

After much reluctance the duke consents to allow Tasso to go. The latter asks for the manuscript of his poem, which, however, the duke is unwilling to give him as he has only received it earlier in the day
and promises Tasso a copy of it soon. He urges Tasso to rest before taking up the work again and tells him his return to Ferrara will be welcomed. Tasso is still suspicious until the princess appears and tells him of her interest. Tasso is carried off his feet and puts more meaning into the words of the princess than she intended. From his gloomy suspicions he is carried to the other extreme and rushes up and tries to embrace the princess. She pushes him away just as Antonio and the duke appear. The duke leaves and Antonio is left to listen to Tasso's suspicious denunciations of everyone in the court. Antonio offers himself as a friend, and Tasso insists that if he means well, he will help him get away. Tasso then accuses himself and regrets that the duke and the princess have left him without a word of farewell or forgiveness. The final impression gained from the scene is that Tasso may be restored to his normal condition through his departure and through poetry.

By some critics Tasso is held to be a tragedy. At the conclusion he is not yet healed, but is a shattered and disorganized man. Very near the end Tasso himself says "alles ist dahin!" * and "Ich fuhle mir das inn-erste Gebein zerschmettert." ** These words certainly

* "Tasso", 1.3426
** "Tasso", 1.3370
point to his final destruction and furnish strong proof of a tragical conclusion. Yet, just at this point Antonio enters and "Tasso" addresses him as "edler Mann" * and receives him as his savior:**

"Berstend reisst
Der Boden unter meinen Füssen auf!
Ich fasse dich mit beiden Armen an!
So klammert sich der Schiffer endlich noch
Am Felsen fest, an dem er scheitern sollte."

Interpreting the final outcome through these lines it would seem that there are strong hopes for Tasso's recovery. In Antonio, through whom he thought himself shipwrecked, he finds the rock upon which he is saved. He is now the only one upon whom Tasso relies and who helps him to get away from Ferrara. While the reader is left in uncertainty, we may believe that Antonio will bring reality into the life of Tasso and he will be restored through activity. This, just as Goethe had often experienced, Tasso would find through self-expression in his poetry.

* "Tasso" 1.3434
** " 1.3439-3455.
V. Reflections of Personal Experience.

To what extent personal experience is reflected in "Tasso" is best judged from Goethe's own words:

"Das Gespräch wendete sich auf den "Tasso" und welche Idee Goethe darin zur Anschauung zu bringen gesucht.


We have the life of Goethe and of Tasso before us and the drama stands as a connecting link between the two. The only thing that remains to give evidence of the poet's statement is to point out a few representative instances from the wealth of material to show in what respects the drama is, as Goethe said of it, "bone

* Eckermann "Gespräche"III. S.117
of my bone, and flesh of my flesh."

**Conflict between Life of Action and Life of Contemplation.**

From the beginning to the end of the drama there is a conflict of personality, which is manifested in the differences which arise from a life of action and from a life of contemplation. When Goethe went to Weimar his nature was essentially that of the poet, since he was young and inexperienced in affairs of the business world. Here, as the constant companion of Karl August, he gained more and more in his knowledge of the everyday world and, after showing himself to be an invaluable statesman, he received a flattering appointment from the duke, which caused much jealousy in court circles. However the poet in him was not dead nor even dormant. At least during Goethe's first ten years of the Weimar residence the poet was uppermost, although he felt the conflict of the calling of the poet and of the statesman. Sometimes the one nature, sometimes the other would gain prestige and he could never settle the struggle. The poetic genius demanded solitude and a life of contemplation, while it was necessary for the statesman to live a life of action in a world of real people. So in the drama Goethe allowed Tasso to represent his poetic nature and Antonio his calling as a statesman.
Leonore, in speaking of their quarrel, gives the reason for the incompatible difference between them:*

"Zwei Männer sind's, ich hab' es lang gefühlt,
Die darum Feinde sind, weil die Natur
Nicht einen Mann aus ihnen beiden formte."

This explains their hostility throughout the drama. Their natures were essentially different and could not be reconciled one with the other.

Antonio represents activity and values the accomplishments of others only in the light of what actual deeds they are able to perform in a real world. He judges everything from this viewpoint and is able to recognize the true worth of active service. His enthusiastic description of the activities at Rome stands for that which he values most highly in his own life on the practical side.**

"Er ehrt die Wissenschaft, sofern sie Nutzt,
Den Staat regieren, Völker kennen lehrt;
Er schätzt die Kunst, sofern sie ziert, sein Rom
Verherrlicht, und Palast und Tempel
Zu Wunderwerken dieser Erde macht.
In seiner Nähe darf nichts müssig sein!
Was gelten soll, muss wirken und muß dienen."

On the other hand Tasso is essentially the dreamer:**

"Sein Auge weilt auf dieser Erde kaum;
Sein Ohr vernimmt den Einklang der Natur;
Was die Geschichte reicht, das Leben gibt,
Sein Busen nimmt es gleich und willig auf;

* "Tasso". 1.1704-1706.
** "Tasso". 1.665-670
*** "Tasso". 1.159-172
Das weit Zerstreute sammelt sein Gemüt,
Und sein Gefühl belebt das Unbelebte.
Oft adelt er was uns gemein erschien,
Und das Geschatzte wird vor ihm zu nichts.
In diesem eignen Zauberkreise wandelt
Der wunderbare Mann, und zieht uns an
Mit ihm zu wandeln, teil an ihm zu nehmen:
Er scheint sich uns zu nahn, und bleibt uns fern;
Er scheint uns anzusehen, und Geister mögen
An unsrer Stelle seltsam ihm erscheinen."

In this passage Goethe also expresses his view that it is the duty of every great poet to be harmonious. He must first establish harmony in his own soul and express through his verse the harmony of nature. There is a difference between Tasso as described here and Goethe. Tasso always has the tendency toward the unreal while Goethe always kept his feet firmly on the ground. This part of Goethe's nature is best explained in the words of Richard M. Meyer: "Dies hat Goethe gerettet, dass er bei aller Selmsucht nach dem Schönen, bei aller Produktivität der Phantasie sind doch stets für das Wirkliche die Augen offen hielt. Er sah in Weimar weder ein Zauberschloss, noch ein Burgverliess; er sah das Kleine klein, das Grosse gross. Dies kann und will Tasso nicht."

However Tasso is more than the dreamer who removes himself from touch with the world. The princess continues the description of his character to prove that he does dwell in a real world: **

* "Goethe"-Richard M. Meyer, S.325-326
** "Tasso" 1.173-181.
"Du hast den Dichter fein und zart geschildert, Der in den Reichen süßer Traume schwebt. Allein mir scheint auch ihn das Wirkliche Gewaltsam anzuziehn und fest zu halten. Die schönen Lieder, die an unsern Bäumen Wir hin und wieder aufgeheftet finden, Die, goldnen Apfeln gleich, ein neu Hesperien Ups duftend bilden, erkennst du sie nicht alle Für holde Fruchte einer wahren Liebe?"

Thus Tasso is shown to be the realist as well as the dreamer and he feels in himself the same struggle that Goethe felt:

"Ich will dir gern gestehen, es hat der Mann, Der unerwartet zu uns trat, nicht sanft Aus einem schönen Traum mich aufgeweckt; Sein Wesen, seine Worte haben mich So wunderbar getroffen, dass ich mehr Als je mich doppelt fühle mit mir selbst Auf's neu' in streitender Verwirrung bin."

This is certainly written from Goethe's own heart, as he felt there were two souls in him, and he experienced much of the confusion and conflict of emotion which a double nature always causes. He must have felt that one could not form his own estimate except as life teaches it to him, and through Antonio he gave voice to this idea:

"Es ist wohl angenehm, sich mit sich selbst Beschaft'gen wenn es nur so nutzlich ware. Inwendig lernt kein Mensch sein Innerstes Erkennen; denn er misst nach eignem Mass Sich bald zu klein und leider oft zu gross. Der Mensch erkennt sich nur im Menschen, nur Das Leben lehret jedem was er sei."

** "Tasso" 1,1237-1243
* "Tasso, 1.760-766"
Yet his emotional nature is predominant and there is so much of the dreamer in him that after all he relies on intuition as a guide rather than on reason:

"Doch schöner ist's, wenn uns die Seele sagt, "Wo wir der feinen Vorsicht nicht bedürfen."

His friends are able to recognize that the tendency toward contemplation is greater in him than a tendency toward action:

"Es ist ein alter Fehler, dass er mehr Die Einsamkeit als die Gesellschaft sucht. Verzeih' ich ihm, wenn er den bunten Schwarm Der Menschen flieht, und lieber frei im Stillen Mit seinem Geist sich unterhalten mag; So kann ich doch nicht loben, dass er selbst Den Kreis vermeidet den die Freunde schliessen."

An exact parallel to this description is found in Goethe's life. The first two months of his Weimar residence were spent in pleasures such as hunting, skating, drinking and attending masked balls. This was all right for a while but the poet soon grew tired of it and at the end of two months withdrew to a mountainous district near Weimar, where he could be in solitude among simple people and natural scenery. It was in contemplation in the midst of such surroundings that the poet thought and felt most deeply. Thus he transferred to the dramatic character of Tasso this same feeling, with the struggle he felt within his own nature. Tasso expresses Goethe's

* "Tasso" 1.1211-1212
** "Tasso" 1.243-249.
feeling that frivolity does have its true place in off-
setting the more serious affairs of life:

"Wir Menschen werden wunderbar geprüft;
Wir konnten's nicht ertragen, hatt uns nicht
Den holden Leichtsinn die Natur verliehn."

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A Hopeless Love Affair.

Besides the conflict which both Goethe and Tasso
felt between a life of action and a life of contempla-
tion, they were both involved in the meshes of a hope-
less love affair. Much has already been said of Goethe's
love for Frau von Stein. As evidence that Tasso's love
for the princess was a reflection of the poet's own feel-
ing, it is only necessary to point to a few of the let-
ters which Goethe wrote to Frau von Stein in this connect-
ion.

"Diesen Morgen ward mirs sowohl dass mich ein
Regen zum Tasso weckte. Als Anrufang an dich ist gewiss
gut was ich geschrieben habe. Ob es als Scene und an
dem Orte gut ist, weiss ich nicht." ** The part of
Tasso which is referred to here is the poet's soliloquy
in the second act, where he is in raptures over the half-
expressed affection which the princess has given him.

* "Tasso" 1.1579-1581
** Briefe. IV. Abth.5 Band. S.116
"Von mir sage ich dir nichts noch vom Morgen. Ich habe gleich am Tasso schreibend dich angebetet. Meine ganze Seele ist bei dir." *

Goethe's tendency to glorify Frau von Stein in his poetry finds its counterpart in the drama. Tasso in turn glorifies women in his writings: **

"Es ist sehr billig, dasz die Frauen dir Aufs freundlichste begegnen, es verherrlicht Dein Lied auf manche weise das Geschlecht. Zart oder tapfer, hast du stets gewusst Sie liebenswert und edel vorzustellen; Und wenn Armide hassenswert erscheint, Versohnt ihr Reiz und ihre Liebe bald."

That Goethe expressed his love for Frau von Stein through the medium of his poetry is evident from a comparison of one of his letters to her with a passage from the drama: ***

"Da Sie sich alles zu eignen wollen was Tasso sagt, so habe ich heute schon so viel an Sie geschrieben, dasz ich nicht weiter und nicht drub kann." In the drama Tasso expresses the same thought to the princess:

"Und was hat mehr das Recht, Jahrhunderte Zu bleiben und im stillen fortzuwerken, Als das Geheimnis einer edlen Liebe, Dem holden Lied bescheiden anvertraut?"

Other letters to Frau von Stein show that Goethe had her constantly in mind when writing the first two acts.

* Briefe. IV. Abth. 5 Band, S. 115
** Tasso 1.1085-1090
*** Briefe IV. Abth. 5 Band S. 115
1. Tasso, 1.1105-1108.
"Den Frauens, und dir besonders hab ich in der Stille des Morgens eine Lobrede gehalten."*

"An Tasso wird heute schwerlich gedacht werden. Merken Sie aber nicht wie die Liebe für Ihren Dichter sorgt? Vor Monaten war mir die nächste Scene unmöglich. Wie leicht wird mir sie jetzt aus dem Herzen fliessen."**

"Ihr gutiges zureden und mein Versprechen haben mich heute früh glücklich den II ten Akt anfangen machen. Hier ist der erste. Mög er in der Nähe und bei wiederholtem Lesen seinen Reiz behalten. Lassen Sie ihn niemand sehen."***

"Behalten Sie den Akt wie Sie wollen. Er wird mir erst lieb da Sie ihn lieben."¹

In many ways the princess is a counterpart of Frau von Stein. When Goethe went to Weimar Frau von Stein was in poor health and had withdrawn from society and was living in seclusion. Likewise the princess tells of how she had spent her days, mainly as an invalid in seclusion.² After Goethe had succeeded in making the friendship of Frau von Stein, he brightened her life by drawing her out of her seclusion and persuading her to attend the court festivities. Thus, almost unconsciously,

* Briefe IV. Abth. 5 Band S.97
** Briefe IV Abth. 5 Band S.94.
*** Briefe IV. Abth 5 Band, S.5
¹ Briefe IV. Abth 5 Band, S.6
² Tasso 1800-1815.
she was restored to health and happiness, through a saner outlook on the world which the poet had inspired in her. The princess felt the same difference in her life after the meeting with Tasso:*

"Ihn musst ich ehren, darum liebt ich ihn;
Ich musst ihn lieben, weil mit ihm mein Leben
Zum Leben ward, wie ich es nie gekannt."

From the first there existed a strange attraction between Goethe and Frau von Stein just as between Tasso and the princess:**

"Da, Eleonore, stellte mir den Jüngling
Die Schwester vor; er kam an ihrer Hand,
Und, dasz ich dir's gestehe, da ergriff
Ihn mein Gemüt und wird ihn ewig halten."

Both the princess and Frau von Stein stood for the ethical values of life. Goethe was an impetuous youth when he came to Weimar and had much the same idea as Tasso who said: ***"Erlaubt ist was gefällt." Frau von Stein with her guiding influence succeeding in restraining the poet and teaching him that conventions of society are after all for the moral welfare of the many. This feeling the princess also explained to Tasso:¹ "Erlaubt ist was sich ziemt." The one stood for pleasure, the other duty, but it was only by a blending of the two that natural conditions could be produced. Frau von Stein's

* "Tasso" 1.1888-1890
** "Tasso" 1.1832-1836
*** "Tasso" 1.994
¹ "Tasso" 1.1006
teachings hit the mark and Goethe knew that to find out exactly what was fitting, it was only necessary to inquire of the matter from noble women:

"Willst du genau erfahren was sich ziemt,
So frage nur bei edlen Frauen an
Denn ihnen ist am meisten dran gelegen,
Dasz alles wohl sich zieme was geschieht."

The calm reserve and dignity of Frau von Stein impressed Goethe deeply, as his was a nature exactly the opposite and he always felt himself impelled to express the full emotions which crowded upon him. Just as Frau von Stein understood and sympathized with Goethe's whole nature, he in turn recognized the points wherein they differed and embodied the difference in the nature of the princess and Leonore. It was not unusual for Goethe thus to divide his personality among several of his characters:

"Das du, wie wenig andre, still und rein
Geniessest. Drängt mich doch das volle Herz
Sogleich zu sagen was ich lebhaft fühle;
Du fühlst es besser, fühlst es tief und-schweigst;
Dich blendet nicht der Schein des Augenblicks,
Der Witzbesticht dich nicht, die Schmeichelei
Schmiegt sich vergebens kunstlich an dein Ohr:
Fest bleibt dein Sinn and richtig dein Geschmack.
Dein Urteil g'rad, stets ist dein Anteil gross
Am Grossen, das du wie dich selbst erkennst."

The character of Frau von Stein, of a different nature than Goethe's, was exactly what the poet needed

* "Tasso" 1.1012-1016.
** "Tasso" 1.85-88
to help and stimulate him. As has already been quoted from Goethe's letters to her in connection with the "Iphigenie", Goethe unburdened his heart completely to her as he could to no one else. Tasso has this same characteristic.

"Tadle mich!
Doch sage mir hernach, wo ist der Mann,
LieFrau, mit der ich wie mit dir
Aus freiem Busen wagen darf zu reden?"

These confidences on the part of Goethe always resulted in much benefit to him. Frau von Stein strengthened and helped him and he left her presence refreshed and healed and ready to combat whatever he was facing. Her presence relieved him of care and healed his troubled mind.

"Wie den Bezauberten von Rausch und Wahn
Der Gottheit Nahe leicht und willig heilt;
So war auch ich von aller Phantasie,
Von jeder Sucht, von jedem falschen Triebe
Mit einem Blick in deinen Blick geheilt."

Just as Goethe felt in the presence of Frau von Stein, Tasso felt that even the sight of the princess, a word from her lips caused a new day to dawn about him and he was freed from all bonds.

"Unsicher folgen meine Schritte dir,
O Fürstin, und Gedanken ohne Mass
Und Ordnung regen sich in meiner Seele.
Mir scheint die Einsamkeit zu wenden, mich

* "Tasso" 1.923-926
** "Tasso" 1.876-880
*** "Tasso" 1.750-759
Goethe's love for Frau von Stein was not merely a passive affection, but a force which impelled him to action and to greater and nobler achievements. Especially during the first part of his acquaintance with her he was anxious to show her that his love was consecrated to her, and he thought himself most able to show her with deeds, his writings, what he was capable of. Thus she became the inspiration for his work. Goethe wished to become something to her, although, like Tasso, he sometimes offended her.

"Da dacht' ich manchmal an mich selbst, und wünschte Dir etwas sein zu können. Wenig nur, doch etwas, nicht mit Worten, mit der Tat Wünscht' ich's zu sein, im Leben dir zu zeigen, wie sich mein Herz im stillen dir geweiht.
Doch es gelang mir nicht, und nur zu oft Tat ich im Irrtum, was dich schmerzen musste,
Beleidigte den Mann, den du beschütztest,
Verwirrte unklug, was du lösen willtest,
Und fühlte so mich stets im Augenblick,
Wenn ich mich nahen wollte, fern und ferner."

In this same connection Goethe could say with Tasso:

"Ihr bin ich, bildend soll sie mich besitzen."

"Bildend" expresses more properly than any translation

* "Tasso" 1.906-917
** "Tasso" 1.1159
of the word the effect Frau von Stein had on Goethe. His character was plastic in her hands and he became just what she wished him to be. Goethe's writing was the result of his wish to please her, and much of his verse was the expression of his thanks to her who had made him feel the purest happiness and through whom he had experienced the divine: *

"O lehre mich das Mögliche zu tun!
Gewidmet sind dir alle meine Tage.
Wenn dich zu preisen, dir zu danken sich
Mein Herz entfaltet, dann empfinde ich erst
Das reinste Glück, das Menschen fühlen können;
Das göttliche erfuhr ich nur in dir

Du hast mich oft, O Göttliche, geduldet,
Und wie die Sonne, trocknete dein Blick
Den Tau von meinen Augenlidern ab."

"Was auch in meinem Liede wiederklingt,
Ich bin nur einer, einer alles schuldig.**

Another incident in the drama, while it had no counterpart in the life of Goethe himself, reflects an incident of court life in Weimar. One of Goethe's former friends at Strassburg, Lenz, came to Weimar in 1776. He was still living in his impetuous "Storm and Stress" period and had not learned, as Goethe had, to govern himself with reference to the conventions of society. During his short residence at the court he was employed to give Frau von Stein lessons in English. In some

* "Tasso" 1.1065-70; 1082-84.
** "Tasso" 1.1092-1094
way he forgot himself and committed some indiscretion, for which he was banished from the court. Goethe was forced to take the place of the cool, calculating statesman in this matter as he felt that Lenz's offence justified his removal from court. This incident is without doubt reflected in the fifth act of "Tasso" where the poet's feelings overcome him and he attempts to embrace the princess.* Just as in the case of Lenz this act in itself necessitates Tasso's removal from Ferrara.

* "Tasso" 1.3267-3285.
Court Intrigue and Rivalry.

The strong friendship of Karl August for Goethe was bound to cause jealousy. Goethe was young and inexperienced in statecraft and who was he that upon him should be conferred the honor of the Duke's constant company, the gossipers argued. The first few months of Goethe's Weimar residence were possibly a little given to dissipation and pleasure. He was the constant companion of the Duke who seemed not able to live without having Goethe at his side. The Duke was young and somewhat reckless in pleasure seeking and was willing to go even farther than Goethe in wild antics which shocked the community. The fact that Goethe was his most agreeable companion only established for the poet a firmer hold on the friendship and esteem of the Duke, while the people of the court held the poet responsible for all these extremes of merriment and did not put it to his credit, since they possibly did not know, that he exercised a restraining power over the Duke which always kept the latter within bounds.

All this was the cause for the beginning of gossip, yet the poet and the ruler spent more of their time on affairs of serious weight than they did on pleasure.
Karl August was a benevolent rule who had the welfare of his people at heart and not a day passed that he was not doing something to better their condition. He relied more and more upon the aid and advice of Goethe until he proposed to give him a seat in the Council. The President of the Council was Minister von Fritsch and upon hearing of the above decision of the Duke, von Fritsch wrote out his resignation. After one has some knowledge of the unpleasantness which this caused, it is not hard to discover where Goethe got his inspiration for the conflict between Antonio and Tasso. While Minister von Fritsch was a most trusted councillor, he had a very unpleasant personality. His manners were somewhat rough, his mind once set on a question was not easily changed, and he had little consideration for the wishes of others. All of these qualities are found in the drama embodied in Antonio. In a letter to the Duke Karl August, von Fritsch spoke with the utmost discourtesy and contempt of Dr. Goethe and repeated that he would refuse to take his seat in the Council if Goethe was appointed. After several months of delay and debate, and through the kindly offices of the Duke's mother von Fritsch was persuaded to remain and consent to the appointment of Goethe. At the court was another unpleasant personality,
Count Goertz, who was found to be very deceitful. He was clever and scheming, and while seemingly agreeable to everyone, he formed plots and intrigues against all those who were not in harmony with him. So between the schemes of this man, and the avowed plots of von Fritsch against the poet and from the knowledge that he was the subject of much gossip at the court, Goethe did not lack subjective material for the intrigues and rivalry at Ferrara.

It will be remembered that von Fritsch thought the Duke was conferring an undue honor upon Goethe by giving him a place in the Council. Antonio likewise informs Tasso that the Duke is overliberal in bestowing rewards:

"Mir war es lang bekannt, dass ihm Belohnen Alfons unmässig ist, und du erfährst, Was jeder von den Seinen schon erfuhr."

Antonio, like Minister von Fritsch, implies that the poet is unworthy of the honor. However Tasso let these intrigues work upon his mind much more than Goethe did. There is no evidence that Goethe ever took these unpleasant things seriously to heart, while Tasso on the other hand grew constantly more morbid and suspicious till he believed himself entirely surrounded by enemies and suspected even the kindly motives of his friends.**

* "Tasso" 1.697-699
** "Tasso" 1.2921-23.
"Was ist sein Argwohn anders als ein Traum?
Wohin er tritt, glaubt er von Feinden sich Umgeben."

Tasso', in suspecting all those about him, avoided society and his suspicion increased and turned into hate and fear. This in turn reacted even upon his friends so that, as a natural consequence, he was misjudged.*

"O dasz er sein Gemüt wie seine Kunst
An deinen Lehren bilde! dasz er nicht
Die Menschen länger meide dasz sein Argwohn
Sich nicht zuletzt in Furcht und Hass verwandle!

Die Menschen fürchtet nur wer sie nicht kannt,
Und wer sie meidet wird sie bald verkennen."

However, this abnormality in Tasso in no way represents Goethe, for his was a nature entirely different. It is noteworthy that they were both the victims of intrigue, although the effect on each was quite different, since Tasso became really unbalanced and Goethe seems not to have been in the least disturbed.

* "Tasso" 1.306-311.
An Indulgent Ruler and Patron.

Something has already been said under other topics of Karl August as a ruler and a patron of the poet. He has always been described as having the welfare of his people at heart, and every law he made was for their benefit. It was not so in every court, and a ruler had great opportunity to take advantage of his people if he wished. Tyranny usually resulted but in the case of Karl August the power of the land was in the hands of a benevolent despot. Goethe was at one time accused of being a prince's slave and his only answer was that if he was a princes slave it was a consolation to be the slave of one who held himself to be the servant of the people. Tasso expresses this same sentiment, that there is nothing more noble than to serve such a prince:

"Er ist mein Fürst! Doch glaube nicht, gässe mir
Der Freiheit wilder Trieb den Busen blahe.
Der Mensch ist nicht geboren frei zu sein,
Und für den Edlen ist kein schöner Glück,
Als einem Fürsten, den er ehrt, zu dienen.
Und so ist er mein Herr, und ich empfinde
Den ganzen Umfang dieses grossen Worts."

That Karl August was a wise ruler, his kingdom happy, and his people contented to obey him is expressed in another passage:

* "Tasso" 1.928-934.
** "Tasso" 1.639-643.
"Es ist kein schonrer Anblick in der Welt, 
Als einen Fürsten sehn, der klug regiert; 
Das Reich zu sehn, wo jeder stolz gehorcht, 
Wo jeder sich nur selbst zu dienen glaubt, 
Weil ihm das Rechte nur befohlen wird."

Weimar, like Ferrara, was made great by two factions; 
first by a wise and illustrious ruler, and by the no-
ibility of the inhabitants of the court.* Karl August 
seemed to have been exceptionally able to attract men 
of notability and genius to his court. But the attract-
ion did not end there and Karl August was able to re-
tain their regard to such an extent that they usually 
remained at his court.** Here there seemed to have as-
sembled, just as at Ferrara,*** the most beautiful women 
and the most talented men of the time. Taken as a whole 
it would have been difficult to find a more noble circle, 
yet observed as individuals there was not one who was of 
greater worth than his neighbor. The ruler in turn 
reaps his reward for protecting genius, for future gener-
ations read his glorification in song:¹

"Und es ist vorteilhaft den Genius 
Bewirten: gibst du ihm ein Gastgeschenk 
So lässt er dir ein schöneres zurück. 
Die Stätte, die ein guter Mensch betrat, 
Ist eingeweiht; nach hundert Jahren klingt 
Sein Wort und seine Tat dem Enkel wieder."

* "Tasso" 1.55-58. 
** "Tasso" 1.59-76 
*** "Tasso" 1.811-830 
¹ "Tasso" 1.77-82
Nowhere did Goethe feel so thoroughly at home as he did at Weimar. It was the world sufficient for him, and the world for whose opinions he cared most.

Genius avoided the crowded world and among the circle of friends found every inspiration, as it was for this circle that Goethe wrote and their opinions were the ones he valued most highly:


Goethe, like Tasso, was perfectly contented to view the events of the great world from the small state where he was protected:

"Begnüge dich, aus einem kleinen Staate, Der dich beschützt, dem wilden Lauf der Welt, Wie von dem Ufer, ruhig zuzusehn."

The poet always was grateful to Karl August for his protection and help and seems never to have forgotten how much he owed him. Goethe ascribed much of his success to Karl August and he considered his literary honors

* "Tasso" 1.443-456
** "Tasso" 1.808-810
to redound as much to the glory of the ruler as to his own. Through Tasso Goethe expressed this appreciation:

"Du warst allein, der aus dem engen Leben Zu einer schonen Freiheit mich erhob; Der jede Sorge mir vom Haupte nahm, Mir Freiheit gab, dassz meine Seele sich Zu mutigem Gesang entfalten konnte; Und welchen Preis nun auch mein Werk erhält, Euch dank' ich ihn, denn euch gehört es zu."

However much Goethe used Alphons in the drama as a reflection of Karl August, he was in some particulars quite different. The relation of Goethe and Karl August was more on an equal footing, and they lived and spoke as friend to friend. In the drama it is noticeable that Alphons never forgets that he is the Duke. He and Tasso are always the ruler and the poet, and Alphons retains throughout a superior attitude. He admires Tasso and his work and is proud of him as one of his servants:

"Ich bin auf ihn als meinen Diener stolz."

Although this was somewhat different than Goethe had experienced in real life, it was also different from the life of Tasso, since the duke as he is presented in history had a harsher attitude toward Tasso than is found in the drama.

* "Tasso" 1.417-423
** "Tasso" 1.2852
Goethe's Love of Italy.

When life at Weimar became too strenuous and complicated, Goethe longed for a place where he could relax his over-taxed nerves. He knew he had to escape from the ordinary duties of life and the best thing he knew to do was to go to Italy under an assumed name. He had, it is true, developed his character by mingling with people at Weimar. Yet there was something which remained unsatisfied and the poet continually felt the calling of the demands of poetic genius. This he felt could only be developed by a richer mental life and to secure this he went to Italy. In his drama he expresses this feeling in verse:

"Es bildet ein Talent sich in der Stille, Sich ein Charakter in dem Strom der Welt."

It is still an undecided question as to whether or not "Tasso" ends tragically. It is certain that at the end of the play he is shattered and unbalanced. Yet considered in the light of Goethe's Italian trip we have some hopes for Tasso. Like Goethe, his departure may be his salvation, and the rest may be able to restore him to his normal condition. Tasso, like Goethe, may have saved himself by expressing his sufferings in poetry.

* "Tasso" 1.304-305.
Goethe turned to this as a refuge and when anything was troubling him he eased his mind by writing. He held to this tendency from early childhood and it was not unnatural that he should allow Tasso to express the same feeling:

"Und wenn der Mensch in seiner Qual verstummt, Gab mir ein Gott, zu sagen wie ich leide."

There is not absolute proof in the drama that Tasso could be restored to his normal condition, yet interpreted from Goethe's experience in Italy it seems certain that there are some hopes for him. If his restoration ever comes it will be through his removal from Ferrara and through the exercise of his poetic talent.

* "Tasso" 1.3422-3434.
I. Genesis of Hermann und Dorothea.

II. Sources

1. Historical
   a. Salzburg anecdote
      Expulsion of Lutherans.
   b. The Great Conflagration, June, 1780.

2. Literary.
   Goethe's interest in epic poetry.
   a. Homer—(Werther)
   b. Reinike Fuchs
   c. Correspondence
   d. Tell
   e. Foss' Luise
   f. Messiah

III. Synopsis of Poem by Cantos.

IV. The Personal Element
   a. French Revolution
   b. Is Dorothea Lili?
   c. Minor Influences.

V. Conclusion—Comparison with Iphigenie and Tasso as far as personal element is concerned.
"Hermann und Dorothea" is estimated by some critics to be Goethe's most perfect poem, by others to be his most perfect classic poem. Of all his works, with possibly the exception of Werther, it was the one that was immediately received with the greatest amount of enthusiasm by his contemporaries in Germany, and has to this day maintained a place in the hearts, not only of the German people, but in those of other nations as well. It is the result of Goethe's discussions and theories of classic art which fill a great part of his correspondence during the years 1797 and 1798. Some idea of the place which the poem held in the estimation of contemporary writers may be gained from Schiller's comment in a letter to Heinrich Meyer: "His epic poem you have read; you will confess that it is the culmination of his own art and of all our modern art. Although the result of classic art, the theme of the poem is German, having as a background the confusion which the French Revolution had caused on German territory. In reading the poem we do not think of it in the words of the poet, but rather we see the very picture before us in which

the living forms move and speak. This, as has been pointed out by Heinemann is the highest triumph of epic art.*

The poem is of such human interest that it can not be restricted by the limitation of time and place, but must remain a "Besitztum für ewige Zeiten."**

There has been some discussion as to the classification of "Hermann und Dorothea", whether it is an idyl or an epic. It is true that the characteristics of the idyl are present in the portrayal of life and characters which are separated from the pressure of the great world, in the ever-present influence of nature and in the simplicity of the whole. Yet in this life as in a mirror Goethe purposely reflected the seething of the world without, and used the incidents as an occasion to reflect upon the experience of humanity and throughout, as will be discussed later, he made the characters typical instead of individual so that the final work is an epic. The words of Gervinus, the literary historian, are therefore true: "Goethe was led to compose an idyl, but when he had finished, the idyl had grown to be an epic."

* Heinemann "Gothe" S.519.
Genesis of Hermann und Dorothea.

Goethe first conceived the idea of writing such a poem as "Hermann und Dorothea" in the year 1794. However, he did not begin work on it until he had finished "Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre" in Aug. 1796. Although he did not discuss his plans for the poem with anyone, the theme had time to ripen during this interval, and when he was ready to write the work progressed with remarkable rapidity. His first plan was to write it in the form of a drama, but he later decided that the epic was the form to which the subject matter was best suited. This decision was only natural, for at this time Goethe was greatly interested in epic poetry and where the theme permitted he liked to use that form.

When Goethe began the actual work on "Hermann und Dorothea" he wrote for a time an average of one hundred and fifty lines a day and completed two-thirds of the poem between the 11th and 19th of September. This part of the writing was done at Jena, but he wrote later also at Weimar and in the mountain town of Ilmenau. For a long time Goethe did no more work on the poem, but by March 1797, it was finished. However, it was not sent to the publishers till June, and in October it appeared in print.
Sources.

The source to which Goethe probably owed the most for the mold into which he cast his epic poem was the Salzburg Anecdote. In the winter of 1731, many Protestants had been driven from their homes in Thuringia by the Archbishop of Salzburg after a religious controversy. This occasioned much interest in the exiles throughout all Germany and it is known that at least one pamphlet containing an account of the wrongs and sufferings they had endured came to Goethe's attention. This pamphlet related the part which Gera, a town about thirty miles from Weimar, had taken in caring for the exiles. Among other incidents related was that of the wonderful marriage, concerning which, even when publicly pointed out as his source for "Hermann und Dorothea", Goethe was always silent. To any one who is at all acquainted with Goethe's "Hermann und Dorothea" the following quotation from the previously mentioned pamphlet proves beyond question that this was the source for the general theme of Goethes' poem:

"In Alt-Mühl, a town situated in the Ottingen region, a very excellent and well-to-do citizen had a son

* Allen: "Hermann und Dorothea"-Introduction,p.XXIV-XXV.
whom he had often admonished to marry, although he had never been able to persuade him to do so. But now when the Salzburg emigrants took their way through this town there was in their midst a person who so pleased this man that he resolved in his heart to marry her, if he could accomplish it. Whereupon he inquired of the other Salzburgers regarding the girl's character and family and learned that she came of good, honest people and had ever conducted herself well, but had separated from her parents for religion's sake and had left them behind her.

"Hereupon this man goes to his father and announces that whereas he has often been urged to marry, he has now chosen for himself a wife, if his father will permit him to take her. Now when the father seeks to know who she may be, the son tells him that it is a Salzburg girl who has captured his fancy, and that if she be not allowed him he will never wed. The father is frightened at this statement and seeks to talk him out of his humor, and to this end he summons some of his friends and a pastor, that by their good offices they may change the current of his thought; but all in vain. When therefore the pastor finally surmises that God may be working mysteriously in this matter, so that it may work for the best of both the son and the wandering girl, they at last give their consent and yield to the son's fancy.
"The latter goes at once to the Salzburg maiden and asks her how she likes it here in this country and she answers, "very much, sir." He further questions if she would care to work for his father. To which she replies, yes, indeed; if he will but accept her service, she will wait upon him faithfully and well. And she proceeds to enumerate all her accomplishments, how she can feed the cattle, milk the cow, till the field, make hay, and much more of the same sort. Then does the son take her away with him and present her to his father.

"Now the father asks the girl if his son pleases her, and if she will marry him. But she, ignorant of this matter, believes that an attempt is being made to torment her, and returns Ah, but it is not fair to jest with her! The son has chosen her as a maid-servant for the father, and if he will have her she will serve him faithfully and earn her daily bread. Yet, when the father repeats the question and the son gives evidence of his earnest desire for her, she declares, if it is meant in earnest she will be well content, and she will care for the son as for the apple of her eye. Then when the young man offers her a marriage token she thrusts her hand in her bosom, saying she must also give a wedding portion; whereupon she hands him a purse in which there are two hundred ducats."
With additions and omissions this is readily recognized as the framework for the theme of "Hermann und Dorothea." The mother, who was lacking in the original anecdote, was easily supplied by Goethe to make the picture of family life complete, the incident of the two hundred ducats he omitted, and instead of the religious controversy of Salzburg he transferred the scene to the confusion of the French Revolution which was then a matter of great interest to all Germans.

Another historical source to which Goethe owed an incident in the epic was a large conflagration which took place June 26, 1780. He himself did heroic work in helping to extinguish the fire. The impression of horror which the fire left with him is without doubt reflected in the description of the fire in "Hermann und Dorothea" where almost the entire town was burned and over the ruins of their homes, Hermann's father and mother joined hands in a promise of marriage. Goethe's description of the fire occurs in a letter to Frau von Stein: 

"Gestern war ich in Ettersburg und .......die Nachricht von Feuer in Gros Brembach jagte mich fort, und ich war geschwind in den Flammen. Nach so lang trocknem Wetter, bei einem glücklichen Wind war die Gewalt des

* "Hermann und Dorothea", Canto II, 1.105-155.  
** Briefe IV Abth. 4 Band. S.239-240.
des Feuers unbändig. Man fühlt da recht wie einzeln man ist, und wie die Menschen doch so viel guten und schicklichen Begriff haben, etwas auzugreifen. Die fatalsten sind dabei, wie immer, die nur sehen was nicht geschieht, und darüber die aufs notwendige gerichteten Menschen irre machen. Ich habe ermahnt, gebeten, geträstet, beruhigt, und meine ganze Sorgfalt auf die Kirche gewendet, die noch in Gefahr stand als ich kam und wo ausser dem Geübäude noch viel Frucht die dem Herrn gehört, auf den Boden zu Grunde gegangen wäre.... aber der Mensch ist Mensch und die Flamme ein Ungeheuer.... Aus dem Teich wollte niemand schöpfen denn vom Winde getrieben schlug die Flamme der nächsten Häuser wirblind hinein. Ich trat dazu und rief: "Es geht, es geht, ihr Kinder"; und gleich waren ihrer wieder da die schöpften, aber bald musst ich meinen Platz verlassen, weils allenfalls nur wenig Augenblicke auszuhalten war. Meine Augenbrauen sind versengt, und das Wasser in meinen Schuhen siedend hat mir die Zehen gebrüht; ein wenig zu ruhen legt ich mich nach Mitternacht, da alles noch brannte und knisterte, im Wirtshaus aufs Bett."

The literary sources for the poem were determined first of all by Goethe's interest in epic poetry. He had always been a reader of Homer, whom he admired very greatly, and even as early as the first part of Werther
there are frequent allusions to the reading of Homer, whose epics were a source of constant delight. In Goethe's study of classic art and in the formulation of his own theories especially concerned with the writing of "Hermann und Dorothea" he was always led and guided by the works of Homer. In the works of both poets we see national life mirrored in a single situation, characters which are typical and the constant striving to give poetic form to reality. Goethe was exceptionally well fitted to write epic poetry because he always lived in a real world and not in the flights of imagination or fancy. While Homer undoubtedly furnished the inspiration for Goethe's epic, it can not be said that the poem was an imitation since Goethe chose a modern theme and gave it a strong human interest, and looked to Homer only as a guide, not as a model.

Before the writing even of "Hermann and Dorothea" Goethe's interest in epic poetry was manifested by his reviving the story of "Reineke Fuchs" and writing it in hexameters. He wrote to Jacobi Nov. 18, 1793:

"Reineke Fuchs naht sich der Druckerpresse. Ich hoffe er soll dich unterhalten. Es macht mir noch viel Mühe dem Verse die Zierlichkeit zu geben die er haben muss."

* Briefe IV Abth. 10 Band, S. 127.
In other letters Goethe expressed his interest in epic poetry:

An Jacobi, Oct. 17, 1796: * ....dann habe ich mich mit allen meinen Kräften auf das epische geworfen."

An Körner, Dec. 8, 1796: --"Wie ein Schiffer...so habe ich mich wieder auf eine neue Reise begeben. Ein episches Gedicht...ist jetzt meine Liebe und meine Sorge."

An J.H. Meyer, Dec. 5, 1796: "Durch meine Idylle (Alexis und Dora) über welche mir Ihr Beifall sehr wohltätig ist, bin ich in das verwandte epische Fach geführt worden, indem sich ein Gegenstand (Hermann und Dorothea) der zu einem "ähnlichen kleinen Gedichte bestimmt war, zu einem grössern ausgedehnt hat, das sich völlig in der epischen Form darstellt."

Goethe knew the Tell legend and thought it admirably suited to this form of poetry. He even planned an epic poem in hexameters on this subject as early as 1797, and visited Switzerland to get his inspiration for the characters and scenery he would portray. However, he later gave up his plan of writing on this subject and gave what material he had collected to Schiller.

* Briefe IV Abth. 11 Band S. 233
** " S. 284
*** "Briefe"-IV Abth. 11 Band S. 272-273.
The imagination of Klopstock's "Messias" likewise had an effect on Goethe's epic. Klopstock was practically the first of the German writers to give imagination free sway. Goethe, even when a young boy had read and admired the "Messias" and its predominant element is seen to be used by Goethe more noticeably in "Hermann and Dorothea" than in any of his other works, since here he makes use of much imagination and blends it imperceptibly with the other elements which make up the poem.

The last literary source to which "Hermann and Dorothea" can be traced is Voss's "Luise". This idyl, much after the order of the "Vicar of Wakefield" appeared only a short time before Goethe began work on his epic. According to Goethe's own words to Schiller,* this was a source of much interest and pleasure to him and induced him to write the sort of poetry which eventually culminated in "Hermann und Dorothea". Goethe's indebtedness to the "Luise" was the suggestion to turn from classical antiquity to the every-day life about him for a subject in which to express his genius. In a letter to Voss, Goethe acknowledged his gratitude: **Ich werde nicht verschweigen wie viel ich bei dieser Arbeit unserm Wolf und Ihnen schuldig bin. Sie haben mir den Weg gezeigt und er hat mir Mut gemacht ihn zu gehen."

* Briefe IV Abth.13 Band,S.81.
** Briefe IV Abth.11 Band,S.278.
Synopsis of Poem by Cantos.

Canto I.

The first Canto opens with the conversation of the landlord and his wife. It is a hot day in August and the town is almost deserted as almost everyone has gone to see the exiles who were driven from beyond the Rhine by the French. The innkeeper of the Golden Lion and his wife have sent their son Hermann to take food and clothing to the exiles. Before long the people begin to return and in the crowd are the apothecary and the parson, who stop to talk with the innkeeper. They tell of some of the things they have seen and the innkeeper invites them in to talk and discuss it over their wine. They go in with him where it is cooler and while they are talking Hermann is heard driving through the doorway.

Canto II.

Herman looks happier than ever before and tells what he has seen. He speaks particularly of a girl among the emigrants, whom he saw driving a wagon which was drawn by oxen. In the wagon lay a woman with her new-born child. The girl who had evidently been caring for them stepped up to Herman's carriage with dignity and asked for linen. To her Hermann gave all the food and cloth-
ing he had brought since she could distribute what she did not need more wisely than he could. The apothecary remarks that in such times as these he would rather remain unmarried and not be hampered by wife and child. Hermann hurries to give his views that it is more selfish to protect a wife in such dangerous times and that he feels more inclined to marry than ever before. Since his father and mother have often urged him in vain to marry, the innkeeper again urges him to choose one of the daughters of the rich merchant. These girls have made fun of Hermann and he tells his father how he has been offended by them. This only calls forth harsh words with which the father criticizes Hermann for not aspiring to be something better and warns him never to bring home a peasant girl as a daughter-in-law. Hermann is hurt, but utters no angry words, and instead leaves the room in silence.

Canto III.

The innkeeper continues in his discourse, till he is interrupted by his wife who says: "I will not have my Hermann scolded." She then says that the father is crushing Hermann's spirit instead of helping him and that after all there is in Hermann the making of *Hermann und Dorothea*, Canto III, 1.52
an ideal citizen. She criticizes her husband severely for his attitude toward Hermann and then hastens from the room to comfort her son.

Canto IV

The mother hunts for Hermann in every possible place till she finds him under the pear tree, a favorite spot with Hermann and also with those who worked in the field, since they liked to gather under its shade to eat their noon-day meal. Just as the mother comes close she sees Hermann wiping a tear away from his eye. He tells her his sadness is due to his sympathy for the exiles and that he is determined to go to the army to help fight the enemy, adding that his father will then see whether he has a noble spirit in his heart. By careful questioning the mother finally finds out what is troubling her son. He tells her of his love for the exiled girl and since his father has forbidden him to marry a peasant he fears it is hopeless and thinks the best thing for him to do is to go to war. The mother dissuades Hermann from taking such a step and suggests that she go with him to the father where a kind word may do much in their favor.

Canto V

As the mother supposed, the apothecary and the par-
son were still talking with her husband and she was secretly hoping to gain something of their powers of persuasion. She leads Hermann to the father, explains matters and adds that if the father will not allow this marriage to take place Hermann has vowed to remain forever unmarried. Hermann confirms the mother's words as to his choice of the exiled girl and the parson speaks favorably, urging that Hermann be allowed his choice since he is a commendable youth. The apothecary offers to go among the exiles and inquire about the character of the girl. It is arranged that he and the parson shall go, Hermann gives them a description of the girl and the three drive off. When they arrive at their destination Hermann remains with the horses, the parson interviews a patriarch among the exiles and the apothecary starts out in search of the girl.

Canto VI.

Both the parson and the apothecary find most favorable reports of Dorothea, the exiled girl. People could not praise her too much because of her unselfish deeds. They report what they have heard to Hermann, who decides to stay and see whether he can win the girl while the friends return home.
Canto VII.

Just after the friends leave, Hermann sees Dorothea coming to draw water at the well, near which he has been waiting. Hermann goes with her down the steps to help and as they bend over the water they see their faces pictured on its clear surface. After some hesitation Hermann explains that his mother needs a hired-servant to act as a daughter and help look after the large household. He fears to add that he wishes to take her home as a bride and thinking that he will win her later he ceases speaking. Dorothea replies that she would be glad to go and act as a servant, since it is not best for her to continue this wandering life. Hermann notices that she wears a ring and fearing that she may be engaged to another says no more. Together they go to the village and Dorothea says good-bye to all her friends.

Canto VIII.

As the sun is setting Hermann and Dorothea begin the long walk home. During their conversation Hermann describes his parents to Dorothea with, however, no touch of bitterness added to his characterization of his father. When they reach the pear tree Dorothea asks how she shall conduct herself toward him, and he only tells her to follow her heart as a guide. The moon is now covered
by storm clouds and during the walk through the vineyard Dorothea sprains her foot on the uneven stones. She is supported by Hermann who guides her steps through the darkness.

Canto IX.

When they enter the room where the mother has been impatiently waiting for them, Hermann explains to the parson that Dorothea has come in the belief that she is to be a servant. Before it can be explained to the father, he has remarked to Dorothea that he is proud of his son's choice and insinuates that it was not hard for her to come with him. Dorothea is very much hurt, and says in reply that she is a stranger and does not wish to be made fun of. The parson tells her she should not be so sensitive. Dorothea explains by saying she has felt the words deeply because she had thought well of Hermann and hoped to win him, and then turns ready to rush out into the storm. The mother holds her back, while the father in disgust says he is going to bed. Hermann clears up the misunderstanding and tells Dorothea of his love for her. To seal the engagement the parson steps up to put the mother's ring on Dorothea's finger when he sees she is wearing a ring and asks about it. Dorothea then tells of her former betrothed who has been killed in the French
Revolution. The main theme closes with the words of Hermann: "What is mine is now more mine than ever."*

* Hermann und Dorothea-1.311.
The Personal Element.

Here as in all of his works, Goethe could not refrain from writing some of himself into his poem, although in "Hermann und Dorothea" this tendency is blended with several other elements. The French Revolution was the large historical element which furnished many incidents for the poem.

In 1792 Goethe joined in the campaign which Prussia and Austria waged against the French Revolutionists. After a partial invasion of France the German forces suffered defeat and were pushed back. Here Goethe experienced and saw much of the horror of war, and it was probably because of the interest he took in this campaign that he changed the setting from that of the Salzburg Anecdote to the French Revolution. Several incidents in "Hermann und Dorothea" are directly traceable to events which came to Goethe's attention during the German retreat. When Hermann's mother sent him with food and clothing for the exiles, the first case of want and suffering which he found was that of the Wöchnerin and to her companion and attendant, Dorothea, he gave all these gifts. During the campaign in France, a similar

* Hermann und Dorothea, Canto II, 1.32-60.
case had come to Goethe's attention, many of the details of which he kept the same in the poem, changing, however, the personage of the attendant from an older woman to the young girl Dorothea, for poetic and romantic purposes. An extract from the "Campagne in Frankreich" will give sufficient proof that this was the incident which formed the basis of the story of the Wöchnerin used in Hermann und Dorothea:"

"An der fest verschlossenen Haustür entstand auf einmal ein heftiges Pochen; man achtete nicht darauf, weil man keine Lust hatte, noch mehr Gäste einzulassen. Es pochte fort; die kläglichste Stimme rief dazwischen, eine Weiberstimme, die auf gut Deutsch flehentlich um Eröffnung der Tür bat. Endlich erweicht, schloss man auf; es drang eine alte Marketenderin herein, etwas in ein Tuch gewickelt auf dem Arme tragend; hinter ihr eine junge Person, nicht hässlich, aber blass und entkräftet; sie hielt sich kaum auf den Füßen. Mit wenigen, aber rüstigen Worten erklärte die Alte den zustand, indem sie ein nacktes Kind vorwies, von dem jene Frau auf der Flucht entbunden worden. Dadurch versäumt, waren sie, misshandelt von Bauern, in dieser Nacht endlich an unsere Pforte gekommen....Jetzt forderte die Alt mit Ungestüm Mehl, Milch, Tiegel, auch Leinwand, das Kind hineinzuwickeln. Da sie kein Französisch konnte, mussten

* Campagne in Frankreich 1816, 23. Band, S. 112-114
wir in ihrem Namen fordern; aber ihr herrisches Wesen, ihre Heftigkeit gab unseren Reden genug pantomimisches Gewicht und Nachdruck: man konnte das Verlangte nicht geschwind genug herbeischaffen, und das Herbeigeschaffte war ihr nicht gut genug... In einem Nu war das Kind gereinigt und gewickelt, der Brei gekocht: sie fütterte das kleine Geschöpf, dann die Mutter; an sich selbst dachte sie kaum. Nun verlangte sie frische Kleider für die Wöchnerin, indes die alten trockneten. Wir betrachten sie mit Verwunderung; sie verstand sich aufs Requirieren."

Other events of the campaign in which Goethe used were the polite French children in whose home he was quartered, the flight of the exiles and the lawlessness of the ruffian soldiers. All of these events are found pictured with vivid reality in Goethe's "Campagne in Frankreich und Belagerung von Mainz."**

**** "Campaigne in Frankreich." I Abth.33 Band,S.105-120.

* "Hermann und Dorothea" Canto VIII,1.45-47.
** " " " Canto I
*** " " " Canto VI.1.104-118.
**** "Campaigne in Frankreich." I Abth.33 Band,S.105-120.
There are varying opinions over the extent to which Lili served as a "model" for Dorothea. It seems most wise to assume with Richard M. Meyer that Bielschowsky went too far in asserting that Lili was the prototype for Dorothea. All that is safe to assert is that there were similarities in the lives of both, since Lili, like Dorothea, had been a fugitive at the time of the French Revolution. Let us consider briefly the experiences of Lili in question. Lili's husband was a royalist and was therefore forced to flee for safety. Lili, disguised as a peasant woman with her five children followed him on foot. Seven months later Goethe visited in Heidelberg where Lili had been and it is quite likely that he heard of her experiences from friends. This much at least is conceded by the majority of critics to have been used in the poem by Goethe, but that Lili was always in Goethe's mind during the delineation of Dorothea, and that her Goethe's love-affair with stands back of the poem is pure speculation.

Bielschowsky in his chapter on "Hermann und Dorothea"** is strongly of the opinion that there is as

*"Goethe"—Richard M. Meyer—S.430.
** Bielschowsky: "Goethe" Vol.II. p.269.
much reflection of personal experiences in this work as in any other, where the background is more plainly visible. He believes the fact that Dorothea had been engaged before meeting Hermann, to refer to the fact that Lili was twice engaged before marrying. He also finds a parallel between the experiences of Lili's husband who was in constant danger of the guillotine and Dorothea's first betrothed who met his death in Paris.

In Goethe's own explanation of Dorothea's character there is unmistakeable proof that she was a girl very different from Lili: "Tadelte doch Humboldt auch an meiner Dorothea dass sie bei dem Überfall der Krieger zu den Waffen gegriffen und dreingeschlagen habe. Und doch, ohne jenen Zug ist ja der Charakter des ausserordentlich en Madchens, wie sie zu dieser Zeit und zu diesen Zuständen recht war, sogleich vernichtet, und sie sinkt in die Reihe des Gewöhnlichen herab." Could it be possible that Lili, who is everywhere described as a spoiled child and a coquette in the days when Goethe knew her, could have seized a sword and killed one soldier and frightened away others? She was the child of a wealthy family and was used to being cared for instead of caring for others. Since this incident, as Goethe tells us, is fundamental

* Eckermann "Gespräche" Wk.II. S.61
to the character of Dorothea and since Lili's character
was not in the least compatible with this description, it
is evident that here at least Goethe did not have Lili in
mind.

Bielschowsky quotes Goethe as saying in old age that
"Hermann and Dorothea" was almost the only one of his
longer poems that he still enjoyed and which he could
never read without being deeply affected.* He points
out that many of his other works had too painful memo-
ries attached to them, recalling how Goethe held himself
aloof from the "Iphigenie" and "Tasso" because they were
written so directly out of his own heart that he could
not bear to recall the days when he "lived, thought and
wrote it all." The experience back of "Iphigenie" was,
before the healing took place, the pangs of a guilty
conscience, which Goethe was suffering as the result of
his break with Lili. As has been quoted before, Goethe
himself stated that the year in which that occurred was
the most troubled and confused of his whole life. This
was undeniably the background for "Iphigenie" and because
of the pain it cost him, Goethe in later years almost
never read the drama and refused to see it played. How
then could he so directly contradict himself and state

that "Hermann und Dorothea" was the only one of his longer poems which he still enjoyed, because, as Bielschowsky believes, it recalled the beautiful experiences of his youth? Even if Goethe had recalled the experiences of his youth, however beautiful, would not the fact that he had voluntarily given up his happiness have caused him more pain than anything else? The statement to which Bielschowsky refers is found in a conversation with Eckermann in the year 1825: "Hermann und Dorothea" ist fast das einzige meiner größern Gedichte, das mir noch Freude macht; ich kann es nie ohne innigen Anteil lesen."

Since this is the case, and since it is, as he says, almost the only one of his longer poems that still gives him joy, does this not prove almost beyond a doubt, that "Hermann und Dorothea" must be different in some essential respect from his other long poems? Since the others were in large part the result of some one personal experience it is my conclusion that Dorothea was not Lili, and that "Hermann und Dorothea" was not so largely a result of one experience (the Lili affair) as Bielschowsky believes, as it was a compilation and unification of different personal experiences and events that had come to Goethe's attention.

Minor Reflections.

The experience which is reflected to the greatest extent in this epic poem is the early home life of Goethe, the way in which his father misjudged him and the beautiful and complete sympathy which existed between his mother and himself. Goethe himself tells us of such a condition existing in his home and every biographer, no matter how brief his account of Goethe's life may be, has not failed to include it. Out of this situation Goethe pictured the Landlord as gruff and often ill-humored, constantly scolding and plaguing Hermann more often because of trivial matters which the son could not alter than because of anything really important. The landlord wished his son to be as fashionable and up-to-date as the best of the young men in their little town and because Hermann was modest and even bashful and cared little for show, his ways did not please his father and his own feelings were consequently hurt by the many scoldings which this called forth. Opposed to the father was a mother who believed that it was her duty to accept the son God had given her just as he was, that she should love him and care for him and not try to change —

his character or disposition to suit petty ambition. When the Landlord scolded his son, so that Hermann got up and silently left the room, the mother first reproached the father for his unkind words and then hurried away to comfort her son.* The next division of the poem, Canto IV, is generally conceded to be a tribute to the poet's mother. It is a beautiful picture of the close relation and harmony which existed between the poet and his mother and it is not at all unlikely that Goethe had revealed his whole heart to his own mother as completely as Hermann did in this Canto. After an extended search Hermann's mother finally found him under the pear tree, a favorite spot and one which played an important part in the poem. Here Hermann came to be alone in his grief, and the love and sympathy of his mother led him to tell her everything that was troubling him, and among other things, of his love for Dorothea, whom he had seen among the exiles. The mother's understanding of the son displayed itself when she planned to go with him and talk it over with the father, for without her aid, no doubt Hermann would not have had the courage to cross his father's wishes. In every speech there was an evidence of Hermann's love and devotion towards his mother, which cul-

* "Hermann und Dorothea", Canto III. 1.44-61.
minated in the words "Die Liebe der Mutter, sie selbst," where he spoke of his mother’s love as his most valued possession.

As evidence for the belief that Goethe and his mother are reflected in the relation existing between Hermann and his mother we turn to the words of Goethe’s mother, who after receiving a copy of the poem in writing her thanks said: "Ich trage es herum wie die Katze ihre Jungen." She was especially proud of "Hermann und Dorothea" "als das Werk, worinnen eine Frau Aja vorkommen soll." It is likewise known that the reading of this Canto before Schiller and his wife moved Goethe to tears. Unless the scene held peculiar memories or otherwise came close to the poet’s own soul, he surely could not have shown so great emotion in the mere reading of an epic. In the same connection Karoline von Wolzogen has said:

"Mit Rührung erinnerre ich mich, wie uns Goethe, in tiefer Herzbewegung, unter hervorguellenden Tränen, den Gesang, der das Gespräch Hermanns mit der Mutter am Birnbaum enthält, gleich nach der Entstehung verlas:

* "Hermann und Dorothea". Canto IV, 1.216.
** Heinemann—"Goethe" S.520.
*** " " S.16
1. " " S.520
'So schmilzt man bei seihen eigenen Kohlen', sagte er indem er sich die Augen trocknete.

The other reflections of personal experience which are found in Hermann und Dorothea are more conjectural than capable of absolute proof. It is at least noteworthy that Goethe described the meeting of the lovers as taking place at the well, a most romantic spot just beyond the village, and that in Werther he used this same setting, with its steps leading down to the well, the enclosing wall and overhanging trees. Whether Goethe had any particular memories connected with such a scene seems impossible to discover, but at any rate, he deemed it worthy of being used a second time and to the reader it is not only impressive but beautiful.

Another scene which Goethe used in "Hermann and Dorothea" is very probably a recollection of scenes of his early life in Frankfurt. Especially since the description occurs in Canto IV, which is a reflection of the harmony which existed between Goethe and his mother, this may be taken as an added weight to the argument. From the seat under the pear tree, the back of the house is visible with the gable window which designates Hermann's room. Also one sees the wide expanse

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* "Hermann und Dorothea" Canto VII. 1.37-47.
** "Die Leiden des Junges Werthers" 1 Abth.19 Band,S.9
*** "Hermann und Dorothea"Canto IV,1.19-21; 1.190.
of field which reaches to the city wall, through which a gate was made at some former time through special privilege, by the ancestor of Hermann who was mayor of the city. It is surely not a coincident that in Frankfort Goethe's room was at the back of the house, and from his window he loved to look out on the wide expanse which reached to the city wall. During Goethe's childhood his grandfather was mayor of the city of Frankfort, so while the ground which reached to the city wall did not all belong to Hermann's parents and no gate had been made through it, the other facts remain unmistakeably related.

Conclusion.

"Hermann und Dorothea" then, has less of personal experience than "Iphigenie" and "Tasso". Such a conclusion is justified by Goethe's own words written in a letter to Meyer Dec.5,1796 explaining his purpose and method in writing "Hermann und Dorothea": *"Ich habe das reine menschliche der Existenz einer kleinen deutschen Stadt in dem epischen Tiegel von seinen Schlacken abzuscheiden gesucht, und zugleich die groszen Bewegungen und Veränderungen des Welttheaters aus einem kleinen Spiegel zurück zu werfen getrachtet." Goethe was always frank with himself and the world and if he wrote from any other viewpoint or wished to portray something different from that which he stated, why did he not say so? In 1823 Goethe said to Eckermann:** "Alle meine Gedichte sind Gelegenheitsgedichte, sie sind durch die Wirklichkeit angeregt und haben darin Grund und Boden. Von Gedichten aus der Luft gegriffen halte ich nichts."

"Hermann und Dorothea" is readily seen to be governed by this principle of Goethe's. As has been already pointed out, it was founded on reality and had as its foundation events from real life which were woven together into a

* Briefe: IV Abth.11 Band,S.271.
beautiful whole. Goethe's own figure "the epic crucible" may be more fully understood when one realizes that in this epic he cast together past and present, history and imagination, experiences of his own life and events from the lives of others. The poem is in fact a melting pot where all these elements are blended into a unified plot. The story is charming and simple and seems as Richard M. Meyer points out, by no means to contain a "symbolischer Fall".

Goethe was not contented with portraying the narrow circle of family life. He tried to reflect larger events of the world in this narrow circle and therefore he made his characters typical. The characters are pure and simple and thus productions of the highest art. That the characters are typical is most clearly seen from an analysis of the two central figures. Hermann is not a character that is clearly drawn and distinctive as Clavigo and Werther had been. He was not, as Prof. Robertson explains:* simply a German youth, but the German youth, whose character was made up of parts of the whole so that he might represent not only the peasant youth, but the son of aristocracy; not only a character of the eighteenth century, but one who endures for

** Goethe and the Twentieth Century, J.G. Robertson, p. 68.
all time. The same is true of Dorothea. She has no peculiarly distinctive qualities but possesses the ideal qualities compounded in equal measure. It is this fact that bears as strong evidence as any other to the conclusion that the poem was not written so largely out of Goethe's own experience.

There has always been discussion as to the exact location of the town where the action takes place. Goethe's statement* on the subject gives no more evidence: "Da wollen sie wissen, welche Stadt am Rhein bei meinem "Hermann und Dorothea" gemeint sei. Als ob es nicht besser wäre, sich jede beliebige zu denken! Man will Wahrheit und verdirbt dadurch die Poesie." This thought may be carried over to other phases of the analysis. We pull apart the sections of the poem to find its construction, and thus destroy its beauty. It is after all, best to follow Goethe's advice and to allow each one to think as he pleases. We seek reality, wish for truth and thus destroy the poetry.

Conclusion

An analysis of the personal element in "Iphigenie", "Tasso" and "Hermann und Dorothea" has proved that these three works are "fragments of a great confession." The amount and intensity of the personal element differs but it is present in each work.

Of the works under consideration "Hermann und Dorothea" which was written last, was found to contain the least amount of personal experience. It is true that it also has a great deal but it is outweighed by the material drawn from literary and other secondary sources. It was found to be the least subjective of the three works and this would seem to indicate that in later life Goethe grew away from the tendency to make his works conform so exactly to his own experiences. "Iphigenie" was shown to have been based almost exclusively on one incident in the poet's life, and "Tasso" was found to be the richest of the three in subjective material. Any one of these three considered by itself would be sufficient to prove that Goethe was one of the most personal of poets.
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