1914

The epigram and its use by Hebbel

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PART I.

THE EPICRAM.

It is inadvisable to attempt to offer a set-rule definition for this most elusive and most baffling little literary product. Word-analysis, though it does not suffice, does give us an insight into the original meaning of the word. The prefix, "epi" meant in Greek, "upon"; the suffix "gram" or "graph" meant anything that was written; from which we epigram- "anything written upon"- (originally) a stone or metal tablet. From this we obtain the derived meaning, anything written upon, in the sense of about, a subject; a definition by no means comprehensive or elucidatory.

The Standard dictionary defines epigram as a pithy or analytical phrasing of a shrewd observation as in "The child is father of the man" or in "How many are worthy of the light, and yet the day dawns". (2) - A short poem, serious or mocking, containing a satire, an antithesis or an eulogy. Webster says "An inscription, especially one in verse." This meaning is marked obsolete. In (2), a short poem treating concisely and pointedly of a single thought or event, often satirical in character.

The Encyclopedia Brittanica offers the following: The epigram is, properly speaking, anything which is inscribed. Nothing could be more hopeless than an attempt to discover or devise a definition wide enough to include the
vast multitude of little poems which at one time or another, have been honored with the title, epigram, and precise enough to include all others. The name epigram has been given first, in accordance with its Greek etymology to any actual inscription on a monument, statue or building; secondly, to verses never intended for such a purpose, but assuming for artistic reasons the epigraphical form; thirdly, to verse expressing with something of the terseness of the inscription, a striking or beautiful thought; fourthly, by unwarrantable restriction, to a little poem ending in a point, particularly of a satirical kind."

Mr. Booth, editor of a collection of epigrams under the title "Epigrams, Ancient and Modern", said, "In our age and in our language, an epigram is understood to mean a poem distinguished for its point, elegance and brevity", which we feel is an unfortunate as well as a narrow and technical idea.

John Davies in an excellent article in the Contemporary Review suggests: "It's own name ought at all times to define its scope and limits—to be used for the purpose of inscription or superscription, as in the case of votive tablets or memorial epitaphs; and from such use on brass or stone, to pass to the brief commemoration, in words to bright and minstrel fire, of noble deeds, important decisions, emotions of patriotism, affection, love, gaiety and mirth."

1- Rev. J. Booth.
2- U.M. 64
The following has been attributed, apparently without foundation, to Martial:

"Omne epigramma sit star epis acuolo illi.
Sint sua mella, sit et corporis exigui."1

Dodds has made a collection of epigrams and in his elaborate and scholarly introduction he explains that the epigram taken, as it were, bodily from the Greek should line up to the spirit in which it was born and developed in its own language. Since in Greek, epigram, epigraph and epitaph have substantially the same meaning and all were applied interchangeably to brief lyrics elevated in thought and having the "Lapidary concision" of an inscription, we should restrict ourselves to such purposes in building up the English epigram. For reasons that I shall develop later, Brander Matthews vigorously objects to this viewpoint.

The Century dictionary contributes thus: 1-In Greek literature a poetical inscription placed upon a tomb or public monument as upon the face of a temple or on a public arch. 2- In a restricted sense, a short poem or piece of verse which has only one subject, and finishes by a witty or ingenious turn of thought; hence, in a general sense, an interesting thought happily presented, whether

1- "These things must epigrams, like bees, have all--
A sting and honey and a body small."

-Riley.
verse or prose: a pointed or antithetical saying.

The great diversity of opinion as manifested by the various definitions renders an historical survey necessary. In this survey we shall set forth the most essential features of the Greek, Roman, French, German, and English epigram, and their trend of development in the various tongues.

HISTORICAL SURVEY.
(a) Data.

Classic philology has an account of an epigram from Elassona, the ancient Oloason, found in the epichoric alphabet of Thessaly. The forms of the letters indicate a date early in the fifth century B.C. This is the earliest that we have been able to discover and here we have a type of the original epi-gram. The earliest inscriptions that Williams' records fall in the eighth century.

In 1851, the celebrated traveller Burekhardt discovered an extraordinary temple in Nubia which upon subsequent excavation brought to light many colossal statues upon one of which an inscription in archaic Greek has been found. This is conjectured to have been written by two soldiers who were with the army of King Psammetichus and therefore about the year 664 B.C.

At the royal academy at Turin, there is a tablet upon which are a Latin, a Greek, and a Phoenician inscrip-
tion with the accompanying date, 160-155 B. C. This tablet was at the base of a bronze pillar and was ornamented with a laurel reath, many leaves of which are still intact. The inscription was a dedication to the God Asculapius. Here we have the best specimen of the earliest Greek model.

(b)- Nature of the Greek epigram.

In its birthplace, the epigram is distinguished by its sweetness, directness, and frank simplicity. It is bright and lively, but without guile; and though oftentimes pointed, it never shows any disposition to vex or offend. The essentials seem to have been brevity, completeness, adaptation of metrical form to the expression of thought. Pointedness was, to be sure, given due consideration, but it stood secondary to elegance and conciseness. The native charm of the Greek epigram is due perhaps to the rare felicity of expression, the nameless grace, the complete yet ineffably expressive power which pervades the whole. They do not lack refined wit and easy simplicity, and stand out as the best models for imitation, the choicest treasures for the field of ancient literature, the most characteristic if not the most elaborate of poetic achievements of the land of Hellas.

The epigram was such that it lent itself to the expression of almost any feeling or thought. It was an elegy, a satire or a love poem in miniature, an embodiment of the wisdom of ages, or a bon-mot set off with a couple of
rhymes. The well known inscription as Τερμολακε was one of the earliest and best which have come down to us.

"Go traveller, tell it in Sparta that we lie here in obedience to her laws."

"As to length of epigrams, the Greeks keep themselves almost always within bounds. If they often exceed two or three chapters, they seldom go beyond four; and those so conclude one thought in the briefest and most telling mode of expression, that we cannot find it in our hearts to begrudge them a space which they fill so well and so earnestly." 1

(c)- The Greek Epigram.

"Ransackers" of Greek Anthology have announced in round numbers five thousand epigrams by nearly five hundred writers. We have dwelt upon the refined spirit of the Greek muse. Let us try to explain why the Greek epigrammatists have been excelled. First, the Greek language is a better vehicle of brief, terse, and forceful expression. "It is comparable with American slang in its conciseness, the difference being that slang is not good literary English, while the old epigram used strictly literary Greek. The words are so closely wedded to the thought and the thought is so mirrored in the language, that the whole expression stands out clear-

1- Quarterly Review. Vol II.
ly and yet is so crammed with ideas that the mind familiar with the modern writing is bewildered by its compact simplicity. For the stream of modern life is no pellucid brook dashing down from some highland fastness in pristine purity; rather it is a mighty river charged with the waters of tributaries—turbid, full, many-mouthed, albeit, to quote Matthew Arnold 'with murmurs and scents of the infinite sea'". 1

And so the Greek epigrammatist likes to speak with exquisite elegance, to clothe some simple idea with the grace of finished language. His epigram is "multum in parvo"; a miniature. And the most striking feature of it is the absence of what modern writers consider the essence of the epigram—a sting. The sparkling concentrated distich or two intended to "leave behind a pleasant remembrance, through lightly touching some cord of sympathy whether it were love or mirth or occasionally a sense of the ridiculous." 2

The Greeks loved flowers and in appreciation of the musical sounds of many of the words, delighted to string together the names of flowers as beautiful as the flowers themselves. 3 But they loved the sea too, both

1- Living Age.
2- Contemporary Review, V. & L. 64
3- "White violets are abloom: Narcissus, too
And lilies of the dells, Zenophila,
Beloved of friends, among the flowers a flower,
Blooms in her youthful prime, Persuasion's rose
Laugh, meadows for your herbage: but the maid
Excels sweet breathing garlands."
in its quiet, sunny, rippling aspect, and as it broke the rocks in its foaming, raging, fury. The Greek lived close to nature and he loved her as a mother; and the depth of his feeling for her is shown in his songs to her. The epigrams of Plato are rich in fancy.

The Greek enjoyed life to the utmost. Misfortune is the work of destiny and the selfishness of the gods whom he very often addresses in loud lamentation.

From the Greek Anthology we have a picture of Pythagoras and this is perhaps one of the most famous epigrams in the collection. (Translation of it into Latin was made by Hugo Grotius).

Ipsum Pythagoram dat cernere pictor et ipsum Audires sed enim non cupid ipse loqui.

We do not wish to convey the impression that all specimens of the Anthology were of a monumental or commemorative type. There is a fair sprinkling of humorous epigrams found therein. Such is that about Asclepiades the Miser and the Mouse which came to him for lodging, not for board. Nor is it impossible to find in this vast collection some few which are virulently personal. There have always been jaundiced literary writers and some poor unfortunate has always thoughtlessly or unwittingly offended them, but these are the rare exceptions to a very general rule. It is the better, truer, finer type that has been instrumental in studding other literature with
"gems shining anew in fresh settings, and by undimmed luster, attesting original and enduring worth." ¹

The fact that Greece was the mother-country of the epigram must not be lost sight of. Surely it was sheer neglect or oversight of this fact that is accountable for the latitude and discrepancy that has crept into the epigram when introduced into other languages. Had all writers of the epigram sought out and studied the Greek models, there would be less misapprehension, not to mention a great deal less of deplorable literature which is unjustly dignified by the title epigram.

(c) - The Roman Epigram.

Explorers in the Latin anthology have found comparatively few exceptionally graceful or original epigrams; the epigrams brought from the "Attic clime where all poetry ripened of old so speedily, and so splendidly deteriorated when transplanted in a foreign land. The most considerable of Latin epigrammatists were of course Catullus and Martial. The former studied the Greek epigrams diligently, though for some reason he failed to catch the real spirit of his patterns. His attempts are brief, terse, and vigorous but they are tinged with bitter personalities and are very often savage and indecent. We mention Catullus here, not for the worth and merit of

¹ Contemporary Review.
his epigrams, but because Martial realizing the value of a precedent, puts these words of defense in his preface (Book I): Lascivam verborum veritatum, id est epigrammatum excusarem si meum asset exemplum sic scribit Catullus sic Marcus sic Paedo, sic Caesaelicus, sic qui quaque perlegitur." And so we see the epigram "vitiated by brutality and obscenity" sufficiently often by the Romans to give it a new and debased nature. We have admitted that there are just enough disfigurements in the Greek Anthology to give proof to the statement that Catullus found a model there, but we can make our own inferences concerning what an epigram should be, for we have seen that the Greeks did not seek to win fame through sharpening the arrow of smart and bitter words.

"Martial represents his age in epigrams as Horace does his in his 'Satires and Odes' though with more variety and incisive force. We know the daily life, the familiar personages, the outward aspects of the age of Domitian better than at any other age of Roman history and that knowledge we owe to Martial. He tells us the truth of his time without either the wish to protest against or exterminate it's vice; he lived in harmony with his age and that his life is not balmless as we are led to infer from his works adds nothing to his personal glory but beyond doubt does contribute to his skill in depicting truthfully the age in which he lived." ¹ Never was there

¹ Wm. Young Sellars- Encyclopedia Brittanica
a poet who did in a graver measure mar gifts of which here and there he furnishes brilliant indications of humor, ridicule, irony strong sense and sagacity,—by bowing to the low tastes of his age rather than by seeking to raise them to a higher standard. The accusation that Martial viewed life from it's baser and more pathological side grows out of epigrams devoted to such subjects as Aelia's four teeth—(1, 19), Maevia's cough, (11, 26), Accra's smell of last night's wine, (1, 23) Elopement of middle aged matrons from Baiae? (1, 62). Read these and draw your own conclusions.

Martial wrote fourteen books of about 100 epigrams each. The "Liber Spectaculorum" (The Show—Book) is devoted to eulogies of the generosity of the emporors who provided the "greatest shows on earth". The "Xenia"¹ (Friendly Gifts) and the "Apophoreta"² (Things to take away with you) are couplets to label or convey presents. The others are composed of epigrams of the standard type, with two blemishes—obsequiousness and obscenity.

Martial's style is made up of puns, parodies, antitheses, alliterations, echoes, and surprises. He allowed himself the greatest of freedom in the matter

1- Book, XIII.
2- Book, XIV.
of length. Not a few of his epigrams have a dozen (or more) lines.

Martial conceived the form of poetry to which he devoted his life, the epigram, to possess much more dignity and importance than we incline to allow it and in this field he has been called the prince of poets.

To hope to reflect in a translation the gleam and edge of Martial would be absurd. However, we have succeeded in embodying the thought in a few instances. 1

1- Esse nihil dicis quidque petis improbe Cinna
Si nil, Cinna, petis, nil tibi, Cinno; nago.
(Book III, p. 61).

Quid recitaturus circum das vellera callo?
conveniunt nostris auribus ista magis.
(Book IV, p. 41).

Qui recitat lana fauces et calla revinctus
hic se posse logui posse tacere negat.

Quod convivaris sine me tam saepe, Laperce
inveni noceam qua ratione tibi.
Irascor: licet usque voces mittasque rogesque
"Quid facies?" inquit. Quid faciam? Veniam.
The Epigram in French Literature.

Inasmuch as the greater part of the modern epigrams are modelled upon Martial, we should be surprised not to find them flourishing in the French tongue—the one which admits of most terseness and precision, and which is most easily adapted to a compact style of expression.

Among the French writers, Malherbe, Clement Marot, Jean Baptiste Rousseau and Voltaire are those especially well-known for their epigrams. These men furnish us miniature pictures of the people, their customs, manners, ideas, and, in short, the life of the age which they represent. As we all know, the tone of French society has varied greatly from time to time, and the epigrammatist has lost no opportunity to let fly his acrimonious shafts at the people and their weaknesses.

History enrolls Marot (1495-1544) as "Chameleon-like"; he is essentially a light, fickle poet, variable "as the shade by the light quivering aspen made." His tastes were epicurean so that his epigrams have been called models of elegant badinage. "His epigrams were highly esteemed and where they lack point at the close, as many do, then is diffused brightness of thought with his usual ease of expression. But many are indecent.

1-Wright—History French Literature, (P. 149).
He paraphrases many from Martial, and he took pains to excel in the short metrical expressions of compliment or jest. 1

Malherbe (1555-1628) has been called a master of epigrammatic force and "when one finds the secret charm which lies on the subtlety of his beauty of expression 2 it is clear that the French language contained nothing before him more genuinely polished and sublime." 3

He often introduced maxims or moral observations in brief couplets. 4

His idea of the content and form of the epigram is strikingly stated in an epigram. 5

2- Mais elle était du monde où les plus belles choses Ont le pire destin;
   Et rose, elle a vécu ce que vivent les roses
   L'esposè d'un matin.

"She lived in a world where the sweetest that blows Is first to decay;
   And rosegud, her life was the life of a rose,
   The space of a day."

4- Je vois bien éprouver qu'un déplaisir extreme Est toujours a la fin d'un extreme plaisir.
5- Our lines re-formed and not composed in haste Like marble polished would like marble last.

"She lived in a world where the sweetest that blows Is first to decay;
   And rosegud, her life was the life of a rose,
   The space of a day."

4- Je vois bien éprouver qu'un déplaisir extreme Est toujours a la fin d'un extreme plaisir.
5- Our lines re-formed and not composed in haste Like marble polished would like marble last.
Jean Baptiste Rousseau (1670-1741) one of the "Transition Authors" of the age following the death of Louis XIV. He was a lyric poet forced to live in a prosaic age. While he wrote songs and odes permeated by the spirit of a dignified moral philosophy, he composed many obscene and objectionable epigrams and verses to please the low tastes of his readers. His chief virtue lies in his art of versification. In Oeuvres he has two books of epigrams as he styles them. Following then are series of various verses under the title "Diverses" and here we find some shorter epigrams.

The grace, wit and point of Voltaire's (1694-1778) epigrams have done as much to make his reputation permanent as some of his more ambitious works. "He had many enemies, whom he hated as fiercely as he loved his friends. As we should expect under such circumstances he had many enemies and his satire when levelled at them stung to madness. Voltaire did study Greek Anthology as we see from his treatment of the epigram in his "Oeuvres" N3.

N. Vol. II.
N2. (Book I 30 epigrams of 10 verse each.
( Book II 27 epigrams of 8 verses each.
N3. Vol XVIII.
Under the head of Paésée Mêlée's we find most of Voltaire's epigrams. These are addressed to writers, artists, reformers and rulers; do not think that Voltaire slighted the fair sex. Some few receive charming notes of adulation, but there are many cruel and satirical thrusts scattered here and there.

THE EPIGRAM IN GERMAN LITERATURE.

Satire, the most virile form of literature in the 16th Century, assumed a new form in the 17th Century, one made popular by the Renaissance—the epigram. The greatest of German poets were not ashamed to stoop to epigrams and sometimes even aimed to reproduce the meter which Martial preferred.

Any fair collection of German epigrams will make it quite clear that this language too admits of the free play of keen wit and sparkling bits of raillery as well as of the more beautiful and stately votive tablets. The Teutonic tendency to be didactic gives rise to a class but sparingly represented in French literature. From earliest times we find writers in the field of German Literature, who have felt called upon to reproach the spirit of the age. The early German Sprache were didactic axioms which in the hands of such men as Walther von der Vogelweide, were instruments for inveighing against a prevalent tide of political and moral corruption, and a lowering of public taste and conduct.

N Schelle, Leuen, Gruhe etc.
The names used to designate the garb of these didacticisms are various. Epigramme, from the original Greek word; Stachelreim, (first used we believe by Tassing) because the rhymed couplet was Martialian—hence closed with a sting; Sinngedichte, first used by Logan in 1645 because of the lyrical element that is held for him; gräme is likewise used to indicate the aphoristic nature of the content; while Goethe and Schiller named their couplets Xenien after Martial's Xenia. Hence, we find in the German epigrams, specimens of rare beauty and lyrical tendency, a host of didactic nature, and not a few satirical and humorous ones.

FRIEDRICH VON LOGAN (1640-55) has been called Germany's most gifted epigrammatist. It is true that his fame rests entirely upon his epigrams. He, too, was one of those neglected geniuses, who are not appreciated until years after they are dead. "His reputation really dates from 1759 when Rawler and Lessing unearthed and published his epigrams. He himself published the first sample of his epigrams under the title of "Erste Hundert Teutsche Reimen Sprüche" in 1638; but it was not until the year before his death that the chief collection followed. Solomon's von Golaw Deutscher Sinn-Getichte Drey Tausend" (1654). Although not nearly all of these 3000 epigrams and Spreäche were original they all left his hands with a distinctive mark set upon them. Francke tells us that not even Walter von der Vogelweide inveighed
more frequently against political and moral corruption
than the noble Friedrich von Logau. His standard for judging
he found in his own idealism. He must have been a wise and
keen observer of his time; he was earnest rather than
brilliant, avoided superficial witticism, and above all meant
exactly what he said. The Thirty Years War left Germany
in a pitiful condition. Literary taste was a negligible
quality; public spirit was dead; morals were at their lowest
ebb; and this is the age which Logau had to deal with. He
describes society as "a sea in which the weighty and solid goes
down while the light and frivolous is kept afloat". The
contending religious parties with their false piety offend
his ideals, and he doubts if Christ himself would find credence
if he should return to earth. "Himself an aristocrat by
birth, he inveighs against the immortality of Court life
which seems to him a hideous masquerade". He bewails
the aping of French fashions and mannerisms in Germany, for
he sees that a people's morality changes with its garb, and
a true patriot himself he attacks those imitators
vigorously.

It is Lessing (1729-1781) that we are
indebted for the clearest and best definition of the epigram
that we have. Lessing proposes that the epigram as a
complete and independent work of art should define the
monument as well as the superscription and that the definition
should not be entrusted to the title. In keeping with the
original use of the epigram, he makes the first verse take the

1 In an epigram entitled Heuchlerie. 2 "Da le neue Kleider, da le neue Sinnen.
Will siehe wandelt ausein, wandelt siehe sich innen."
place of the statue, the second the inscription upon it; or the first four lines the literary monument, the last two the inscription. He disapproves still more those epigrams where the point is wanting, than those where the exposition is left to the title. The twofold idea of the inscribed monument was to surprise and to explain, and Lessing gives the true epigrams the twofold delight which springs in curiosity and ripens in gratification. The attention must be arrested first so as to create a desire to investigate, to look further for the anticipated revelation. In a word, attention is first secured, then awarded. The more terse and vigorous the lines which introduce the subject, the more potent will be their appeal to curiosity and the more tenaciously will they cling to one's interest.

On the other hand the more novel and delightful the concluding thought, the more complete is our satisfaction, and the more do we feel repaid for the trouble we have taken to decipher the same. Thus we see that in order to be a true work of art, the latter part must interpret the subject matter presented in the first. Goedecke tells us that Lessing recognized in himself the inclination to attempt to write poetry of every type in order to find the sphere which really befitted him best; and when he came to the field of the epigram he deemed it sheer folly not to aim to imitate the best of its type—Martial. Many of his
"Simugedichte" were directed at actual people, and relations and conditions; generally speaking, he achieves only the form of his model, though he attempted to approach him in sharpness and biting acidity. Which was easy for him by virtue of the fact that he aimed his shafts at the counterfeit, at dissimulation, at the glassed over, for all of which he had no sympathy or indulgence. Lessing's epigrams are pleasing at first reading; pleasurable upon re-reading and many a line clings to our memory long after, so much of charm and of the element of the unexpected have they. 

The "Xenien" of Goethe (1749-1832) and Schiller (1759-1805) are among the most famous German epigrams. This joint production was published in December, 1797 and was at first intended to be directed against the offensive journals which not only catered to the low and depraved literary taste of the reading public, but attacked vigorously and disparagingly the literary journal, "Dicht. Horen", with which Goethe and Schiller were connected. Later they decided not to restrict themselves to offensive journals, but to take a shot wherever there was a mark. Every form of perversity whether political or literary, philosophical or theological, scientific, or artistic, every compromise, every lack of character, everything insipid was called before the bar of this court and in order that the punishment might be keenly felt the prisoners at the bar were

2. Xenien 12
3. Goethe, life of Goethe
4. Xenien 10
6. Xenien (Dicht. Horen) 41
characterized as clearly as possible not infrequently by the direct mention of names N5 N3.

N. Schiller was at the head, Goethe a contributor.

N3 Billschowsky: Life of Goethe.

N2 Xenien 12.

N4 Xenien 33.

N5 Xenien 10

N6 Xenien (Babülze Votivae 41)
The contents of the Xenien is well described by Schiller's words in his letter to Goethe: "Welchen Stoff bietet uns niche die Stolbergische, Sippechaft, Racknetz, Ramdohr, die metaphysiche Welt mit ihrem Ichs und Nichtich, Freund Nicold unser Geschworener Freind, die Leipziger Geschmacks Herberge, Thümmel, Göschchen, als sein, Stallmeister, und dergleichen dar".

"The authors did not wish to appear before the world as mere executioners, but as men with a positive creed, comprising things to be loved as well as things to be hated". N2.

As to the "Xenien" themselves, some few of them were very good, others little short of atrocious, particularly as to form. Neither Goethe nor Schiller can be granted a large vein of sparkling wit, though both dealt out satirical blows with singular deftness. Many of the epigrams are far fetched or clumsy, others are vacuous. The form of monodistich employed was a safe guard against diffuseness, but not against inanity. And so the duumvirate stormed on in the face of fanaticism, hypocrisy, selfishness, bombast, vulgarity, pretense and deceit. They implored sanity and moderation.

N. From Adolf Stein's Introduction of "Xenien."
N2. Calvin Thomas: Life of Schiller.
Even virtue was to be cherished moderately, i.e., without too much parade thereof. They stated in incisive and forceful epigrams what they themselves conceived to be sound theories of art.

"Die Xenien" are thoroughly characteristic specimens of German wit—they strike rather than sting. They do not have the keen stillettoc point of the French Epigram. They are overcharged with thought, too ponderous to have a very sharp edge. Some of them are half argumentative, and are designed to convince rather than to wound. Schiller and Goethe are careful to give due credit to what was noble and grand. For example, they say of Lessing:

Vormals im Leben ehrt ein wir dich wie einen der Götter
Nun du tot bist, so herrscht über die Geister dein Geist.


N2. "In thy lifetime we honored thee as a God of Olympus, now thou art dead, but thy spirit over our spirit still reigns."
Read in no stronger light than that which the appreciation of wit as wit throws on these epigrams, and not by the strong light of personal indignity or personal malice, the "Xenien" appear very weak productions. Hence, the only ones that can be taken out and read to-day with any degree of pleasure are the critical canons and philosophic ideas.

The name is obviously taken from Martial's Xenia which Goethe had been reading during the year previous to the appearance of the famous Musen-Almanach of 1797. This accounts for the type of epigram which prevails, and while many call the "Xenien-Kampf" a justifiable and defensive, we cannot but agree with what Goethe himself said of it (in 1804) seven years later, "What a vast amount of time I wasted with Schiller over the "Hours" and the "Poetic Calendar"....I cannot think of those undertakings without vexation wherein the world abused us and which were wholly without result for ourselves".

A small library might be collected of the works called forth by these epigrams. The sensation was tremendous. All the writers in the kingdom felt themselves personally aggrieved, and hence called upon to defend their outraged sense of honor in a scathing reply. Collections of these replies are published under the head of "Anti-Xenien"; and these are in many instances both interesting and clever. Hebbel said of the "Xenien": "Goethe and Schiller zeigten der erstaunten Welt das, die Leier ein Instrument ist, wo mit man unter Umständen auch um sich hauen kann".
And of the effectiveness of the Xenien-Kampf:

"Nach dem Xenienhagel der beiden deutschen Herzen
Ward es lebendig in Sumpf wie man es nie noch gesehen".

And:

Schiller and Goethe nieszen die SüdelWichte in Weimar,
Und der erbärmlichste Wicht warf sie mit Steinen
und Kat.

Doch was bewies der Spektakel? Wichts weiter als
dass das Noch viel kläglicher war als es sie beiden gemalt!"

The "Xenien" from the standpoint of Lessing's theory are faulty, for it is the exception rather than the rule when the title is not entrusted with the exposition necessary to grasp the meaning of the distich. From the standpoint of Greek Anthology, they are the record of unworthy and inglorious squabble, nothing more. It is then to the literary historian, that they are of greatest value for the picture they give us of literary Germany and her people at the time of the French Revolution. No history treats so specifically and in a manner so detailed with the lesser constellation—the satellites of the inimitable Dioscuri.

They give their reason for using the epigram as a missile in the following distich:

"Warum sagst du uns das in Versen? Die Verse sind wirksam.
Spricht man in Prosa zu euch, stopft ihr die Ohren Euch zu". [Xenien, page 176]
THE EPIGRAM IN ENGLAND.

"It is Martial whom the epigrammatists in English literature have taken as their model and therefore, to them, the primary meaning of the epigram is no longer a tiny lyric, lofty in sentiment and graceful in phrasing. It now describes an ingeniously turned witticism adroitly rhymed" N. Hence we must regard the English epigram not as a votive tablet, but as a sparkling retort.

Someone has said that the species epigrammatist is well-nigh extinct; that is not exactly true. There are plenty of epigrams, but few of them really deserve the title.

Pope (1688-1744) is generally conceded to have been among the English epigrammatists "Most to the manner born". Some even go so far as to say that he is the only one to earn the title at all. Byron (1788-1824) was a worshipper of Pope and hence did not scorn to turn his hand to epigram writing. The best products are found in "Don Juan".

N. Harper's 1903.
N2. "Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion".
"The times of the Revolution of 1666 were the great age of what we may call the historical epigram. The bitterness of political history found vent in satiric verse as well as in others less harmless outlets. Wm. and Queen Anne were unfailing subjects. But the epigrams of that day had more rancour than wit. Swift (1677-1745), of course, were the wittiest and the least decent."

Rare Ben Jonson, (1573-1637), Dryden, (1631-1700), Samuel Johnson (1707-1784), and Goldsmith (1728-1744) have been called cultivation of the epigram of a genial, sparkling and playful type. Thus we are often pleasantly surprised to find a charming couplet or two that some writer whom we have always considered a learned thinker and nothing beside, has thrown off pushed into an old drawer or scrap-book, and forgotten. The old collections are most valuable as illustrations of biography or political history.

The Universities have never wholly dropped the custom of epigrammatizing. Oxford used to keep a licensed jester on its staff under the name of Terrae Filius; his office was to satirize with the most unbounded license all the recognized authorities at each "Bachelor's Commencement". Dr. Johnson satirized the Whiggish Notions, Byron satirized Wordsworth's theory of poetry and prose. Lord Erskine satirized Scott's poem, "The Field of Waterloo", but there is no viciousness, no coarseness, no bitterness, nor on the other hand, is there great literary merit in these.
THE EPIGRAM IN AMERICAN LITERATURE.

Of American epigrams, Rufus Chaote says, "glittering generosities"; Emerson "blazing ubuquities". Of the modern American epigram there is not demanded the ancient ingenuity of sentiment, altho' the standard has not been necessarily debased. We shall not accept merely a versified pun or a rhymed anecdote as an epigram even tho' they may sometimes have a certain unexpected felicity as an excuse for existing at all.

There is no good collection of American epigrams, and yet there is no small number of our authors who have written epigrams, of varying degrees of merit, of course, some of which we are proud to present for comparison with those of our kinsmen across the sea.

Of the American poets, the two who are easily masters of the epigram are James Russell Lowell (1819-1891) and Thomas Bailey Aldrich (1810-1856). Longfellow (1807-1882) did not write many, but few of us have not read some of those which he did contribute. Emerson was epigrammatic in his prose, but he also wrote several fine lyrical epigrams.
SUMMARY.

The position and estimation of the epigram has shifted back and forth from time to time. To its earliest exponents, the Greeks, it was a flower blossoming sweetly and modestly in its quiet, peaceful nook, which they sought out and plucked as an offering to be laid at the shrine of their heart’s devotion: Catullus and Martial with their endless retinue of imitators found this form expedient in reliving their minds of all the turbid coarseness and envenomed malice; thence we deduct that they could not have held the epigram in the same high esteem. The French modelled upon the Latin types, largely, and to them, the epigram was a delightful conveyance for their showers of effusive superficialities, and inimitable flattery or for stinging sarcasm and cynical retorts. The Germans followed both the Greek and Latin types though usually in pursuit of didactic ends.

The English literature likewise abounds in epigrams of both types though we regret the great number of unworthy efforts. Because of the production of so many Martialian epigrams, we find such distinguished writers as Dryden and Addison holding the epigram in low esteem and even yet we can find traces of the idea that the "dignity of a great past is thought to be lowered by the writing of epigrams".
No doubt before the newspaper was invented the epigram so short, incisive, and forcible was in great demand and though now that demand would make the epigram superfluous, it will always be by virtue of its past, immortal. Few of us then are who upon careful examination, cannot bring to mind some tiny epigram that has unfluenced us more than the most stirring work of genius.

At the present time it is generally acknowledged that the power of the epigram has been great: We are largely moved by phrases, and often it is the most antique thought which has come down to our day that has the most remarkable influence over us. We value the epigram in addition to its significance for us (in so much as it touches upon our own experience) for the light it throws on the past. It is an expression of life, a picture of times long since forgotten and of which history is often very silent; and hence just as worthy of study as any other form of art which is a relic of the past. "And not only does it serve as a brief record of history, and a photographic glimpse at manners and customs, but is, in itself, a standing engine of commemoration for whatever is good, gallant, bright, gracious, and beautiful in that shape and fashion most adapted for everlasting remembrance".
FORM OF EPIGRAM.

As an inscription the epigram was a little note; sometimes a simple monogram; sometimes a single hexameter verse; and now, again, an elegiac couplet conveying the object of the memorial on which it was written. One writer found in the fifth and seventh books of Herodotus specimens of the single verse and of the couplet, as they were inscribed on tripods in Apollo's temple, at Thebes, which specimens the venerable father of history affirms are as old as Laius the son of Labdacus; and of the famous distichs inscribed on the tomb of those who fell at Thermopylae. Historical research has shown us that the first intention of the epigram was simply commemoration on stone, or marble, or brass, or other impressible substance. Such records, would, of necessity, be brief; and, of equal necessity, the wits of a writer would be strained to enshrine in fewest words the most telling praise and most crowning virtues of the object to which it was addressed. Here we have the origin of the neat turn and the pointed expression; and we can easily understand how the province of the epigram would so extend that gradually what had been peculiar to sepulchral inscription or votive offerings, would be transferred, by analogy, to the expression of
thoughts that might have been inscriptions and which, following the usual form, were handed down to posterity as poetic "garlands".

According to the definitions of the several dictionaries, we cannot restrict the epigram to verse, though there is an excellent article on the subject in Harpers' which asserts that the epigram, properly speaking, is thus restricted. This limitation is described as traditional, and due to the fact that from the earliest times it has been the custom to crystallize this form of condensed thought in verse, which was at first simply metrical but gained at a later and comparatively modern period, the advantage of rhyme. The psychological side of the situation is treated; all motions in nature, physiological or merely physical, being metrical, and all meter and verse originating in the measure and turn of the religious dance around the altar, by the Greek drama, we find here the originally literal phrase, metrical feet.

Brander Matthews draws the line of distinction between the later epigram and the earlier more classic form significantly. He separates "the distinctively poetic epigram with its slow trope and stately measure, and having grace and charm and haunting suggestiveness from some deeper trope of the imagination, from the epigram which has no poetic motive, and is only the effective snap of the whip"
slash" wherein indeed the finer effects of the imagination would prove a fatal distraction from the point of view.

Hence, we are loath to designate anything in prose as an epigram, even though we grant freely that it possesses all the apparently essential qualities. We prefer to call it epigrammatic prose. The epigrammatic nature of Voltaire's observation, that a "Frenchman was across between an ape and a tiger, tiger predominating"; or Disraeli's remark that "the house of Pelham has been distinguished for the last century by an incapacity for statesmanship, and a genius for jobbing"; or Macauley's description of Atterbury's defence of the letters of Phalaris, as, "the very best book ever written on the wrong side of a subject, of both sides of which the writer was profoundly ignorant", the epigrammatic nature in all these is indeed obvious. Likewise, Emerson, Stevenson, Macauley, Rochester, Carmen Sylva, Mark Twain, Lincoln and our well known Kansan, Ed Howe, were undeniably more epigrammatic than many of their contemporary facts.

It is further necessary to discriminate between an epigram and a mere comic rhyme, for a rhymed pun is not an epigram. To illustrate, compare the two following versified thoughts and let your idea of the epigram be formed therefrom:

N. Living Age, — Rev. F. Booth.
"Tis well enough that Goodencough
Before the house should preach;
For sure enough full bad enough
Are those he has to teach".

"And moonstruck poets midnight vigils keep
Sleepless themselves, to give to others sleep".

---Pope---

SUBJECT MATTER OF THE EPIGRAM.

You have seen that the old Greek epigram was
dedicated to sepulchral inscriptions which were at first
merely informational in the nature; the later ones were
dedicated verses of praise very delicate and complimentary.

From commemorative offerings to "poetic garlands" dedicated
to living persons and contemporary events and things was
but a step and this was soon taken. In time it was the
instrument of the bard who made use of it in recording
events of interest, pointing neat compliments or in
stretching striking characteristics with telling phrases.

"The same point refurbished and fitted anew to its tiny
shaft has been shot again and again by laughing cupids or
fierce eyed furies in many a frolic and many a fray". N

The changes in tone and expression as fitted to the various
N. Encyclopedia Brittanica.
tongues in which they are written are due the characteristics of the particular individual and nation. Often simplicity becomes the commonplace, the sublime becomes grotesque the pathetic becomes ridiculous; and on the other hand sometimes a most ordinary thought is happily developed into one of unexpected beauty.

One devotee has said that a reader of the Greek epigram, with a previous intimate acquaintance with our best English literature, would readily admit the truth of the venerable, "There is nothing new under the sun". The influence of the original idea was drawn from these sources is best seen in the style and finish which it gains in the hands of certain masters of the art of poetry. Youth, beauty, gruth, gentleness, venerable age, nature, art— in fact all the virtues and graces as well as all the vices and follies are treated in the epigram as it develops in latitude.

Woman has always been a "shining mark for the hurtling shafts", though we have innumerable specimens dedicated to true and noble womanhood. Under Rev. E. Booth's head, "the panegyrical" we find a wide range of compliments to the fair sex, and in this class as we should expect, the dashing and debonair sons of France and sunny Italy, are most voluble.

From time to time the idea of surprise thru play on words developed to a great extent. Some are really
quite successful in gaining the success at which they aim but from the viewpoint of taste, frame, or ambition, who would care to be remembered by such vain triflings?

Attempts not a few, have been made to classify the existing specimens of epigram, but as every lover of epigrams must feel, their success is only partial.

Scaliger in his third book of his "Poetics" gives the ingenuous though rather superficial division in which the first class takes its name from mel or honey and adulatory; the second from fel or gell, hence bitter; third from acetum, or vinegar; the fourth from sal, or salt; while the fifth is styled the condensed, or multiplex. Herder has classified the epigrams' possibilities as expository, paradigmatic, pictorial, impassioned, artfully turned, illustrative and swift.

Rev. E. Booth classifies his collection as to materials under the heads humorous, witty, satirical, moral, panegyrical and monumental.

As a whole it seems that the simplest and most satisfactory classification must be according to the content— the subject matter.

PERILS AND ABUSES OF THE EPIGRAM.

From its very brevity there is no small danger of the epigram passing into childish triviality, a pun, or a senseless rhyme. A survey of the field gives
ample proof of this. In recent fiction there are instances which lead one to think that epigrammatic style is not an art but rather an industry. What has been success in one case becomes, when imitated, mechanical so that one critic has spoken, and outright, of the modern "epigram-mould". True, even here, we find clever and sparkling distichs, but these are purely accidental and the lamentable point of it all is that praise falls on good and bad alike. Thus we hesitate to chide the reading public for its depraved taste when it is constantly being "bidden to eat the apples of Sodom"; the depraved taste being established, it is found necessary to cater to it and so the evil grows. The brightness or, elegant turn of the ancient epigram gives way to a transitory shock or surprise and this is tainted no longer by the novelty or charm of the thought itself, but by perverting a truism or by putting a negative into an axiom or by transposing a common place moral, or by asserting the converse of the generally accepted. These do not surprise, do not amuse, and reveal all to plainly the "cog wheels which run the machine". There is an example of economics and literature intersecting to the damage of the latter; for there is no incentive to invention in such factory remodelling. It is unfortunate that these are called epigrams they are really the "hypocrisy of humor"; they promise laughter and produce boredom so that even blase'ness and ennui are tinged
with disappointment.

The satirical epigram with its underlying didactic purpose very often does good service prospectively, as well as for the time being, but there is danger of its running riot through misapprehension and misappreciation for truly "non omnia possumur omnes". The task of collecting all true and proper epigrams and of casting out all of ill-bred rudeness, of assaults on personal blemishes and defects, of bilious attacks giving needless pain and offence to estimable persons, would be a praiseworthy one. This would mean the careful elimination of cynical snarls, secret grudges, servility, coarseness and vulgarity, from the field; and would leave plenty of ready material for the funmakers. It would not eliminate lively and good humored hits at the characteristic foibles and freaks of either the masculine or the feminine members of society; for there is no reason why the "types" should not receive the standard chiding. Nor is there any need to exclude harmless and wholesome pleasantries aimed at affectation, love of position and power, prudery, flirtations, selfishness, jealousy and all forms of prevalent vices as shown in our social scheme. Such would be offensive to none and would provoke sincere and hearty laughter from the subject and the indifferent hearer alike.

The retention of such well known standard epigrams as deal with bad poets, "quack" doctors would
be harmless enough but we agree, most heartily with the suggestion that in the future it might be well if none were suffered to epigrammatize but such as were of ascertained good digestions, and such as had no need to look to a patron for a dinner; further let there be admonished to remember that the honey without aught else results in a diminutive lyric, while the "sting" without honey is merely a phillipic in two or four lines. We do not know the author so we pay our tributes to his lines.

"Cursed to the verse, howe'er so well it flow,
That tends to make one worthy man my foe;
Give virtue scandal; innocence a fear;
Or from the soft-eyed virgin steal a tear."
Accepting Brander Matthews's apt characterization of the epigram as the cameo of lyrical expression, let us turn first of all to a careful examination of Hebbel's lyrics. Under this head we include his sonnets, odes, elegies, songs and hymns—in brief, all poetry whose object is to give expression to thought as penetrated with emotion.

That Hebbel was one of the foremost German lyricists is a disputable matter, but that he was gifted with marked lyrical ability is undeniable. It is undoubtedly true that his lyrical productions have, for a number of reasons, been grossly neglected. Chief among these is the abnormal interest that Hebbel-admirers have taken in his dramas; secondary reasons are the nature of the content of the lyrics themselves, and the fact that such lyric writers as Heine, Uhland, and Goethe had as forerunner and contemporaries, reached the pinnacle of lyrical excellence and their masterpieces, as such, clouded the fame of the more serious Hebbel. For example, C. A. Buchheim, in his introduction to his well-known "Deutsche Lyrik" says: "I have endeavored to give a selection which is to represent only the lyrical poetry of Germany, as far as even this limited task can be carried out in so small a compass. Having started from this point of view, I determined to include the best lyrical productions only, and I may say
that I have carried out my resolution most impartially and conscientiously." "Buchheim's collection includes thirteen from Uhland, thirteen from Geibel, fifteen of Lenau's, sixteen of Schiller's thirty-one of Heine's and thirty-two of Goethe, as opposed to two of Hebbel. It is scarcely possible that Buchheim had not read the entire collection of Hebbel's lyrics, and we feel the more sure that such was not the case from the two¹ that he chooses to include in his book.

In general, it may be safely said that Hebbel, like Schiller, was partly too much of a philosopher and partly too much of a dramatist to be a thorough lyrical poet. Further, he is often too didactic, too overladden with the general tone of Weltschmerz which pervaded all the poetical literature of Germany during the entire nineteenth century. "In the course of time the feeling of Weltschmerz became more and more prevalent among the poets of Germany, and it may be said to form the chief characteristics of the latter half of the nineteenth century which in spite of that drawback, is one of the most brilliant of German lyrical poetry."²

Dr. Richard Maria Werner, who has made both an extensive and an intensive study of Hebbel gives us a more appreciative treatment of his genius. He characterizes the lyric thus: "Gefühle, Empfindungen oder Betrachtungen bei einem Anlass, durch ihn oder über ihn erhöhter Aufnahmsfähigkeit nennen wir lyrisch; den Ausdruck solcher Gefühle, Empfindungen,

¹- Sagen, O lieber Vogel mein, Sommerlied.
²- Buchheim XV. Introduction.
oder Betrachtungen in dichterischen Form: lyrische Poesie,"

He further specifies that the lyric be subjective, for otherwise the definition would be too narrow. "Hebbel", he says, "Nennt die Lyrik mit vollstem Rechte das Elementarische der Poesie, die unmittelbarste Vermittelung zwischen Subjekt und Objekt und bezeichnet als die 'beste Definition'; 'die lyrische Poesie soll das Menschenherz seiner schönsten edelsten und erhabensten Gefühle teilhaftig machen'. The contradiction in this is only an apparent one. Just in so far as the lyric is the most inseparable union of the inner and the outer, just so far can it count upon the most universal appreciation. It expresses what moves the human heart most deeply because it only speaks when it's own heart strings are most deeply stirred. It sings not to please, and therefore pleases all."

For the sake of comparison, let us state what other commentators say of Hebbel's lyrical contributions.

Richard Meyer says that all his poetry was but a commentary to his diaries, that subtle reasoning, scrutinizing, questioning, lies at the bottom of all his works, that all his life, Hebbel felt a strong craving for poetry, that his works constantly show that he thought in prose and translated his thoughts into poetry. 5 We should need only to

1- Lyrik und Lyriker. p 10.
2- Lyrik und Lyriker. p 10.
3- Tgb. 2687.
4- Tgb. 1307.
5- Richardt Meyer's Literaturegeschichte - pp,
read through the Tagebücher to be wholly convinced of this.

Gottschall 1 gives Hebbel’s lyrical power the quality of a counterpoise the honied insipidity and formless decadence of an age in which nothingness reigned supreme. He contrasts the contemporary lyric poetry as follows: "Opposed to, or in contrast with the flowery meadow of lyric poetry, is the lyric poetry of Hebbel- a spiritual mountain land with high, steep and rugged pinnacles of thought, swept by exhilarating, health-giving, and purifying air, and yet bathed with the warm evening-red of phantasy." He points out the cliff against which Hebbel’s Gedankenlyrik were often dashed to pieces as an abstract form with too direct a turning to the metaphysical. Further, he helps to explain the neglect of Hebbel as a lyric writer, by saying: "Hebbel kann nie ein Liebling des Volkes werden! Denn das Volk wird stets die Mühe scheuen sich in Probleme zu vertiefen, eine Mühe, die ihm der Dichter zuzumuten keineswegs nötig hat, um groß bedeutend zu erscheinen." 2

He grants Hebbel the title of a great dramatic thinker. "Um ein grosser dramatischer Dichter zu sein fehlt ihm wenig; aber dies Wenig ist weis- das Masz und der Zauber der Schönheit." 3

1- Gottschall Deutsche Litteratur etc.- pp. 269-272.
2- Gottschall - 269-272.
3-


1- Biese Deutsche Literaturgeschichte
2- " " p. 45
3- " " p. 48
4- Deutsche Literatur-Geschichte des menschlichen J. H.
Auch ein halbes Jahrhundert nach ihren Erscheinen waren sie noch nicht ins Volk gedrungen. Für sie erwachte das Verständnis zuletzt. Die Ursache liegt darin, dass fast allen Gedichten Hebbels das Sangbare Fehlt und dass ihnen die Herbigkeit des genialen Geistes eigen ist, dem sie ähnlich sind.¹

Gümelmann: "Hebbel's lyrical poems have been unduly neglected². It would idly to deny the presence of profound though in Hebbel's lyrics. With him, living was essentially agitated thinking, and his most characteristic experience was the intense passion that such thinking aroused. ----- Hebel ------ combined with his avowed objectivity, an insistent subjectivity.------- Just appreciation of Hebbel's art criteria goes far toward explaining his high estimate of his own poetic greatness, and tends to justify his persistent assertion of spiritual independence. ----- Hebbel banishes reflection from the realm of poetry, for the first because it stays where it should endow with life. ------- His poetic products are fruits of a supreme faculty of mysterious nature, a superior form of intuition. ------ We shall not stray far from his conception, if we define lyric poetry as symbolic expression of emotional moments in which the plenary self is markedly dominant, ----- The especial task of lyric poetry is to grasp and transmit momentary phases of human existence in their universal ratio.²

------- Hebbel follows tradition when he emphasizes feeling as the indispensable, the vital attribute in lyric poetry".³

1- Kummer - p. 361.
2- Tgb. 3641.
3- Gümelmann - p. 1-55
We have a reason\(^1\) to believe that Schiller influenced
Hebbel to a great extent in his earlier writings. Uhland was
instrumental in moulding his ideas concerning lyrical poetry;
he taught Hebbel that lyrical poetry expresses feeling for
objects, and not feeling for thoughts,\(^2\) and while he did not
immediately shake off the influence which Schiller's rhetoric
had wielded over him, he did submit to a gradual and complete
change.

II. PERIODS IN HEBBEL'S LITERARY DEVELOPMENT.

It is interesting to note the products of the different
arbitrary periods into which Hebbel's life has been divided:

First - Conflict with himself.
- Judith- (1840)
- Genoveva- (1841)
- Maria Magdelena- (1844)
- Der Diamant- (1843) (Comedy)

Second - Artistic confusion.
- Ein Trauerspiel in Sicilia- (1847)
- Julia- (1848)
- Der Rubin- (1849)

Third - Clarifying Period.
- Herodes und Miriamne- (1848)
- Epigrams etc.- (1848)
- Michael Angelo- (1851)

\(^1\) - Gubelmann "Schiller, the guiding star of his early years"
\(^2\) - Schiller's idea
\(^3\) - Modern language notes, Vol. V. -p. 311
Fourth — Maturity.

Agnes Bernauer (1852)

Gyges und sein Ring— (1854)

Die Nibelungen— (1867)

This will make clear the underlying reason for the atmosphere of stormy strife that shadows most of his lyrics and the clear crystal flood of his soul's spring that illuminates and makes lustrous the epigrams. This difference is further observable in a comparative study of the subject matter of the sonnets and epigrams. The sonnets deal with love, sin, beauty, mystery, nature, the soul, death, etc.; the epigrams fall into groups under the headings: Bilder, Gnomen, Kunst, Ethisches, Persönliches, Bunteres, etc.

IV. SUMMARY.

Summarizing, we may characterize Hebbel's lyrics as highly symbolical, suffused with sadness, gloominess and melancholy, laden with thought, very beautiful at times, at other times harsh and didactical, always original, powerful, and expressive of deep earnestness.

IV. HEBBEL'S THEORY REGARDING LYRICAL POETRY.

To show that Hebbel's theory and general understanding of lyric poetry was remarkably sound and valid, let me quote entries from his Tagebücher—, "The most important theoretical documents in German literature."

1- Meyer: Introduction to Herodes und Miriamne— p. xxv.
In the first place, Hebbel maintains that unless inner feelings grasp and hold him until he finds it impossible not to express the pent-up emotions, the "Dichter" really has no call to write poetry.


"Die Lyrik ist der reinste Ausdruck der Völker-Nationalität. 2

"Erst wenn sich das Gedichte von der geistigen Nabelschnur gelöst, kann man es beurteilen.

"Lyrischen Gedichte, die magen nun aus dem Geist oder aus dem Gemut hervorgehen, sind Blumen. 3

"Ich glaube wir Dichter in Deutschen Sprache sollen nicht sowohl nach positivem Wohlklang zu streben, als den Miszklang nach Kräften zu vermeiden suchen. 4

"Die echte Poesie dringt aus der Seele wie das heisse Blut aus der Adam die es selbst aufsprenge". 5

Here we have the same ideas as I suggested at the top of the page.

Hebbel's criticism of his predecessors and contemporaries alike, is fearlessly and defiantly given. For example he says: "Die frühere lyrische Poesie der Deutschen verschwamm im Allgemeinen: die jetzige wird am Affektierten zu Grunde gehen". 6 Also- "Der Teufel hole das was man heutzutage schöne Sprache nennt; es ist dasselbe in der Dramatik, was die sog. schönen Redensarten im Leben sind. Kattun, Kattun, und wieder Kattun". 7

1- Tgb.- I-111.
2- Tgb.- I-1549.
3- Vol 12- 228.
4- Tgb.- III- 3348.
5- Tgb.- I - 1063.
6- Tgb.- I - 1063.
7- Tgb.- I - 513.
His independence of thought and action, though sufficiently well known, is strikingly brought out in such statements as: "Der Dichter, der den Weltzustand, wie er ist, aufdeckt, muss nicht Liebe von seinen Zeit-Genossen fordern. Wann hatten die Leute denn ihren Henker geküßt?" 1

"Alle Dichten ist Offenbar in der Brust des Dichterer hält die ganze Menschheit mit all ihrem Wohl und Weh ihren Reigen, und jedes seiner Gedichte ist ein Evangelium worin sich irgend ein Tiefstes was eine Existenz oder einen ihrer Zustände bedingt, ausspricht" 2

Of form Hebbel has much to say. Indeed, he makes it quite clear that the content or matter, no difference what it's source, is great according to the form given it by the poet, 3 "The chief claim to distinction in Hebbel's work rests on its form." 4

"Aus meinen Begriff der Form folgt sehr viel, und das Verschiedenste. In Bezug auf die Lyrik: das Ganze Gefühlsleben ist ein Regen das eben heraus gehobene Gefühl is ein von der Sonne Beleuchtete Tropfen". 5 "Was ist doch ein Mensch dem die Form fehlt! Ein Eimer voll Wasser ohne den Eimer". 6

"Form ist der Ausdruck der Notwendigkeit".

**BRIEF DISCUSSIONS OF SOME OF HIS LYRICS.**

And now let us consider some of Hebbel's lyrics. The "Nachtlied", although not included in Buckheim's collection

1- Tgb.- III. 3777
2- Tgb.- I. 646
3- Tgb.- II. 2786
4- Gubelmann p. 43
5- Tgb.- II. 1953
6- Tgb.-III. 4343.
seems to us to be one of Hebbel's very best lyrics. The poem "Nachts" in the cycle of "Ein frühes Liebesleben" is praiseworthy both for its sad, still content and for Hebbel's fine treatment thereof.

The "Sommerlied" does indeed well justify its appearance in the "Deutsche Lyrik"; indeed few of us have not heard the last verse of the first stanza, although we probably did not associate it with Hebbel.

The sonnet to Ludwig Uhland shows Hebbel's power to give expression to natures softer lights, and the effects which the realm of tints and shadows had to charm the poet's pen even while he transcribes his feelings to paper.

The poems "Sehnsucht", "Auf die Sixtinische Madonna", "Mutterschmerz", "Abendgefühl", "Zum letzen Mal", "Ich und Du", and "Errinerung", - all of these and countless others stand as silent proclaimers of the enduring worth of Hebbel's lyrical muse. From this point on, we shall restrict ourselves to the treatment of our poet-philosopher's epigrams.

We would remind you that the "Epigramme" have been classified as failing in the "Clarifying Period" and especially during the years 1845-6.

1- Band- VI. p. 204.
2- Vol VIII. p. 9.
3- Vol VI. p. 283.
4- Vol VII. p. 127.
5- Vol VI. p. 226.
6- Vol VII. p. 147.
7- Vol VI. p. 214.
8- Vol VII. p. 12.
In his Tagebücher, in connection with the "Geburtstage meiner neueren Gedichte", Hebbel says: "Die Epigramme entstanden fast alle ohne Ausnahme in Rom und Neapel." ¹

A. - INFLUENCE OF OTHER EPIGRAMMATISTS.

That he made no study of Martial, Catullus, Greek Anthology, nor any of the classic epigrammatists we are quite positive, because nowhere in his Tagebücher do we find any comment to show that he was even interested in them. Further, the earlier part of his life in the literary world was not artistically complete enough to warrant the attempting of such epigrams as he later gave to his country's literature. He did study Lessing's dramas, and although we find Lessing's name frequently in the diaries, we do not find any reference to his epigrams. Nor does Logau seem to have influenced Hebbel. We do know that he and Heine were good friends, and that to Heine has been given the glory of being the first to introduce the feature of epigrammatic lyrics into German Literature. ² We also know that Hebbel was familiar with the Xenien of Goethe and Schiller, from the epigrams in which he commemorated the "Zenienhagel". ³

¹- Vol. III p. 325.
²- Buckheim Deutsche Lyrik, XV.
³- Vol. VI. p. 357.
Hebbel, however, said of the duumvirate: "Sie ziegten der erstaunten Welt das die Leder ein Instrument ist; womet unter Umständen auch um sich hauen kann."

Hebbel's expression is often epigrammatic in his dramas and other writings, and even though we state that the epigrams were written during the "clarifying period", we are forced to admit that the seed, i.e. the prosaic grasping and the frame was in many instances planted in the Tagebücher in the form of terse, clear-cut aphoristic comments. And these same prosaic seeds later blossomed into versified epigrams or gnomes of such excellence, singleness of drift and brilliancy of execution, as to make them, each and all, most beautiful and lasting. 1

Gottschall is more unreserved in his praise of Hebbel's epigrams than we should expect an unbiased historian to be. "Hebbel's sonnets and epigrams form the richest treasure house of his poetry......They stand out as of equal splendor with those of Goethe and Schiller... Hebbel is a master in the concise and pithy style of thought. Many of the epigrams are flashes from the depths of his view of the world--his world-philosophy. Others are golden Suren out of the Koran of worldly wisdom; still others are brisk and sharply cut gems or Charakter Köpfe.....Excellent is the poetry in a nutshell which Hebbel gives in the Kunst-epigramme.....We note with

1- Keat's Endymion.
amusement the vindication of the bizarre and the monstrosities that the practise of his dramatic muse cannot do without." 1

The following is the result of a brief comment which appeared in the diary in prose:

Die Poesie der Formen.

Was in den Formen liegt das setzte nicht dir auf die Rechnung:
Ist das Klavier erst gebaut, wecken auch Kinder den Ton. 2

Hebbel did not want the title "Realist", and it was only in his philosophy that he would admit that he was realistic. That he differed in his views from those writers whom the world dubbed "realistic" is quite obvious from his diary entrances, as well as from his "An die Realisten." 3

Hebbel's own opinion of his epigrams is worthy of consideration. On May 29th, 1845, Elise Lensing that he had written "uber 100 Gedichte" since his last letter, (March 30th). "Du wirst--------erstanut sein-----

3- Warheit wollen ihr, ich auch! Doch mir genügt es, die Thräne, Aufzufangen indes Bez ihr Schnupfen gesellt.
Leugnen lasst es sich nicht, er folgt ihr im Leben beständig.
von 100 Gedichten zu lesen das die Geschichte ja sonst
mir angenehm pflegen. Es sind Gedanken-Gedichte, die
nicht so zahlreich wie Haschbreken bei auf wenige: 10
Sonette (zum Theil sehr gelungen) einige Lieder und 90
Epigramme; aber Epigramme in einem höheren Sinn, in
welchen ich meine tiefsten Anschauungen über Kunst,
Sprache, Poesie u. s. w. niedergelegt habe, und zuweilen
sehr grosz, 30 bis 50 Verse. Sie werden Aufsehen erregen,
denn sie sind

must-tape
durchgehend polemisch, aber nicht polemisch wie Zeitungsartikel sondern wie das Feuer Natürlich, sind auch Schilderungen Italienischer Volks-und Lebends-Momente darunter, so wie Darstellungen problematischer Seelen-Zustände die sich nicht lyrisch sondern nur epigrammatisch aussprechen lassen.---------- Unter meinen Sonneten und epigrammen sind die bedeutendsten die über die Sprache. Ich glaube die neuesten, sondern zugeleich die letztten und tiefsten Idien ausgesprochen zu haben, 1

To Campe he sent (together with a few of his epigrams) a letter in which he said: "meinen neuen Gedichten darf ich wohl ein günstiger Pragnosticon stellen. Die Epigramme werden reizen und der übrige Inhalt des Bändchens wird befreidigen." 2

From Vienna, in April 1846, he sent Charlotte Rosseau a letter in which he said: "Meine italienischen Eindrucke habe ich in einen Band von Epigrammen und anderen Gedichten, die ich erst in einiger Zeit erschienen zu lassen beabsichtige, niedergelegt. Es werden sich meine besten Sachen darin finden, und ich muß meine Freude darauf verweisen." 3

Also in a review of the past year, he wrote in 1846: "noch in Italien das Buch Epigramme, das nicht sowohl augenblickliche Einfälle enthält, als prägnant ausgedrückte

1 Einleitung: Band VII pp. xxiiv-xxv.
2 " " " " xxv.
3 " " " " xxv.
Lebens Resultate, die vielleicht zu tiefsinng sind, um in einem weiten Kreise zu zünden,..."1

Hebbel made possible a clearer survey of his epigrams by forming seven groups or divisions, which are definitely set apart by virtue of their subject matter. As "Bilder," he presents those epigrams which deal with outer experiences, clothed with graceful thought-arabesques, and in which a part of the Italian impressions are given utterance. "Gnomen" includes those epigrams which, brief in form, arise to symbolical meaning, and which express concisely the conclusion of a great process of thoughtful reasoning. The group, "Kunst", offers the important points of the advance from general to the particular of Hebbel's aesthetics. The lines here are clear and distinct, the subject matter illuminated as it were. The "Geschichte" face significant political issues and refer to important events and occasions of the period in which Hebbel lived as compared with the past. In "Ethisches", he sets forth his moral precepts and since these comprise only the principal propositions and are devoted, of necessity, to the broader assertions, they admit of great condensation. The "Persönliches" include protests, wishes, aspirations and self-revelation of the poet, while the "Buntes wie eine Coda die Motive der früheren Gruppen durch einander schlingt."2

1 Einleitung: Band VII pp. XXVI.
2 " " " XXIV.
We shall take up our detailed study of these in the order in which they are given in the Gesammt-Ausgabe 1857:

- Epigramme und Verwandtes
- Neue Epigramme
- Flocken
- Einfälle
- Schmerz-Gedichte
- Epigramme (aus den neuen Gedichten)

Band VI

(1) Bilder.

We shall choose the most striking and most significant, "Bilder", pointing out as nearly as possible the underlying idea or motif with its origin in the Tagebucher.

The "Todtenopfer" was written on the occasion of the poet's visit to Mont Maitre in Paris, a brief account of which is given in the diary. That our poet was prone to think deeply over what to most of us passes as a most casual episode is shown by this entry, wherein he tells of plucking a red poppy here which causes him to reflect over a similar flower he had plucked long ago from the grave of his grandmother.

"Todtenopfer."

"Über den Kirchhof ging ich und pflückte von jedem der Gräber
Eine Blume mir ab, bis sie mir schwollen zum Strauss
Aber, was soll er mir doch—so rief ich, plötzlich erschaudernd—

1 Tgb. II p. 405
Es geht das Leben sich denn Zierde und Zeichen vom Tod?
Doch, da traf ich ein Grab, verwildert liegend und einsam.
Welchem jaglicher Kranz fehlte, der Welke sogar.
Nimm sie, ich sprach und streute die Blumen, die schlummernden Nächte.
Senden das Opfer durch mich, da es die Liebe versaumt."

It seems very probable that this solitary grave called to Hebbel's mind sad and bitter memories of a lone, uncared-for mound in far northern Ditmarsch, and that he placed this poppy here tenderly, silently to the memory of his unhappy mother.

The "Schwalbe und Fliege" arose from an incident related by Hebbel in a letter to Elise (August 7, 1844). He observed that we seldom notice or even think of fate in connection with the swallow unless some tragic event brings it to our notice. He was entering his room one morning when he noticed a swallow lying in his path. He picked it up. It was still warm so he took it into his room and, upon observing it more closely, found that it had choked in trying to swallow a very large insect. Later in the day he was moved to re-examine the dead bird. He opened its beak and took out the fly, which, in a few moments, recovered sufficiently to fly out of the window and away. As I have shown, this incident occurred in 1844; the "Bild" appeared in 1857. The poet tells the story thus:

"An dem heitersten Morgen entstürzte die fröhlichste Schwalbe
Plötzlich dem Himmel und sank todt zu den Füßen mir hin."

1 Tgb. Vol. VI p 327.
Mittags, der längst Erstarrten den Schnabel öffnend, 
erspaht ich
Eine Fliege im Schlund welche sie halb nur verschluckt. 
Diese zappelte noch, ich zog sie hervor, und, die, 
Flügel
Trocknend im Sonnenstrahl, schwirrte sie bald mir
davon."  

"Geschlossener Kreis" 2 is built upon a concept of 
the poet wherein he contrasts the wine grower who remains 
sober while others quaff his liquor, to the poet who is him­
self intoxicated with the joy that comes from knowing that 
others find intoxication in his productions.

"Bei der Bestattung des Herzop von Augustenburg" 3 
is the poet reflecting over the loud ringing of bells an­
nouncing the burial ceremony of the Duke. He sagely observes 
that the folk-custom of using the same means to express joy 
and sorrow—bells. "O, du glückliche Menge, dir kann es 
nimmermehr fehlen, Alles wird dir zum Fest, ganz, wie die 
Hochzeit, der Tod."

"Der Kreis" points back to a diary entrance, 4 where 
he records the idea of a convalescing old man to whom one 
last glance of the world has been granted. Hebbel further
voices his sentiments regarding death in Titus' words, Act V 
of "Herodes und Miriamne;"

"Allein ich muss den Heldensinn verehren, 
Der sich vom Leben scheiden lässt, als schiehe 
Die schöne Welt dir auf dem letzten Gang 
Nicht einmal mehr des flüchtigen Unblicks wert, 
Und dieser muß versöhn't mich fast mit dir!" 5,

1. Vol VI p. 328
2. Vol VI p. 328
3. Vol VI p 329
4. Igb III p 3310
5. lines 2966-2972.
"Der Greis." 1

"Bin ich wieder genesen und glaubte, sicher zu sterben?
Dank dir, gütiger Tod, dass du ein Umsehn mir noch
Wolltest vergönnt, ein letzter! Zu lange werd ich nicht
zögern!

Einen einzigen Blick! Erde wie bist du so schön!
Jene Thräne ist längst getrocknet, die mir zuweilen
Deiner Zauber verrüllt, morgendlich gänset du mich an!
Drüben spielt mein Enkel! Den heiligen Funken des Lebens
Trat ich ab an das Kind! Fort nun! Er bleibe ja zurück!

In October 1846, Hebbel records in his diary an
extract from a letter to Bamberg, in which he says: Nature
takes many liberties. She creates in mankind itself a nature
at the base of which, clearly lies a greater idea than is
visible of itself. She takes back the Freedom both within
the sphere of mankind and in addition in every subordinate
sphere of this greater sphere." 2 The meaning lying herein
becomes more clear in the light of the lines on "Nature und
Mensch."

"Oft schon kam es mir vor, Natur, als hättest du zu
zeitig
In dein Werk dich verliebt und die Vollendung versäumt.
Weil der Mensch dir gefiel, so bleibst du stehen beim
Menschen,
Und erwecktest in ihm nicht noch den schlummernden Gott.
Aber nun träumt er von dem, und weil er erwachend sich
wieder
Findet, wie eben vorher, fällt er zurück in das Thier." 3

"Auf dem Capital" expresses the poet's profound re­
verence of Caesar. As he stands on the very ground where
Caesar's feet trod of old, reverence and humility combine to

1 Vol VI pp. 329-30.
2 Igbl III - 3767
3 Vol VI p 331.
produce this couplet:

"Cäser entblößte sein Haupt und hatte sich selbst nicht
tzu grüssen:
Kann ich weniger thun, jetzt, da sein Schatten hier
weilt?"

While in Paris, Hebbel saw in the chamber of deputies
a most excellent copy of the Laocoon. In his diary he
records the event with the words: "I must confess however that
I have no taste for this most excellent group. The worms
do not even permit in me, indifference." We are reminded
here of Hebbel's great aversion to snakes. He expressed
great admiration for the work, Apollo, which he says surpasses
anything that he even could dream of. Of his feelings
we are apprised further in one of the Bilder: "Vor dem Laocoon."

"Michel Angelo hiesz als Wunder der Kunst dich, willkommen,
Weil du als Gegengewicht gegen den schönen Apoll,
Der dem Raphael trug und ihn verneinte, ihm dienstest;
Mancher sprach es ihm nach, aber er sagte zu viel.
Was die Wahrheit vermag, das zeigst du deutlich, o Gruppe;
Deutlicher zeigt du jedoch dassz die nicht Alles vermag." We are reminded
here of Hebbel's great aversion to snakes. He expressed
great admiration for the work, Apollo, which he says surpasses
anything that he even could dream of. Of his feelings
we are apprised further in one of the Bilder: "Vor dem Laocoon."

As Hebbel stood looking at the picture "Die Alexander-
Schlacht" the following idea came to him:

Seht dies köstliche Bild, ihr Maler, und lernt das
Geheimnis,
Wie sich die Fülle des Stoffs paart mit der Grösse
der Form." We are reminded
here of Hebbel's great aversion to snakes. He expressed
great admiration for the work, Apollo, which he says surpasses
anything that he even could dream of. Of his feelings
we are apprised further in one of the Bilder: "Vor dem Laocoon."

There is a delicate imaginative touch to the distich
in which Hebbel explains to himself the fact that the laurel
grows in Italy.

"Alles Herrliche trieb in diesem Lande die Erde
Darum hat sie sich selbst hier mit dem Lorbeer gekront." 5

1. Vol VI p. 332: Tgb. III 3367 (Taken bodily from Tgb.)
2. Tgb. II 2948.
The old story of the lazy servant who lay groaning on account of thirst rather than to get himself a drink is related in the "Tagebücher"; ¹ Hebbel seems to have had servants in his own home. He tells the story thus:

"In Albano."

"Unvergesslicher Bild! Ein Esel wollte verschmachten Zwar, der Brunnen war nah; aber es war ihm zu viel, Zwanzig Schritte zu machen, und es bedurfte des Führers. Ihn zu bestimmen, gepeitscht, trank er mit Geier und mit Lust."

¹ Tgb. III, 4618.

\[
\text{\text{\foreignlanguage{de}\text{"Unvergesslicher Bild! Ein Esel wollte verschmachten Zwar, der Brunnen war nah; aber es war ihm zu viel, Zwanzig Schritte zu machen, und es bedurfte des Führers. Ihn zu bestimmen, gepeitscht, trank er mit Geier und mit Lust."}}}
\]
Herein we find great condensation of thought and a wealth of meaning enshrined in few words. For example, who previously had ever compared the unfading laurel with the undimmed lustre with which man's fame lives on after him?

"Unverwelklicher Lorbeer in schnell erbleichender Locke! Welch ein gewaltiges Bild menschlicher Grösze und Kraft!" 1

Indeed, it is with sudden surprise that we read:

"Kein Gewissen zu haben, bezeichnet das Höchste und Tiefeste
Denn es erlischt nur im Gott, doch es verstummt auch im Thier." 2

In the diary for 1847 we find the entire thought of the following distich given at greater length and in prose: 3

"Tod, man kann dich nicht bannen, doch dafür kann man dich rufen;
Weil das Opfer verschmähte, bist du zum Sklaven gemacht."

We have a right to expect Hebbel to use tears, sorrow and suffering as a theme, for of all our poets none is better able to speak authoritatively on the subject. True, all humanity has its sorrow, but few there are who have been allotted a life such as Hebbel was compelled to make the best of. The following dedication to the "Doppelten Thränen der des Menschen" was rewritten several times before it met with

1 Vol. VI p. 338
3. Tgb. III, 4311.
the writer's full approval.

"Weinen muszt du im Himmel und weinen muszt du auf Erden
In dem nämlichen Thau spiegeln sich Wonne und Qual.
Aber die Thräne der Wonne verdunkelt sogleich dir den Himmel,
Während die Thräne der Lust nie dir die erde verhüllt." 1

"Der Wirbel des Seins" is at first glance almost as much of a "Wirbel" as the problems it discusses. Only in the light of its corresponding diary-entrance does it become clear. 2

The two following distichs need no comment.

Der Abend.
"Jeglicher Abend ergreift mich als wär' er der letzte von allen,
Der nach unendlichem Kampf ewige Ruhe verheiszt." 3

Die Scham.
"Schaam bezeichnet im Menschen die innere Gränze der Sünde;
Wo er errötet, beginnt eben sein edleres Selbst." 4

While in Munich 1838, Hebbel entered the following opinion in his diary. "Man is a continuation of the act of creation, an eternal "becoming", a never perfected being, who hinders the conclusion, the final perfection of the world." This idea though not entirely original is at any rate appreciated and believed by Hebbel and is further given expression in "Die Granze des Menschen." 5

"Wo die Matur die Erkenntnis vergönnt und Einblicht in's Wesen?
Wo sie deiner bedarf! Das ist nur selten der Fall!" 6

1 Vol. VI, p. 338.
5 Tgb. I, 1364.
6 Vol. VI, 339.
The seed of the following epigram is found in the diary as, "the branch still holds fast the apple, the wind cannot win it therefrom, and you are unable to reach it. Have patience, let it grow and ripen, then it will bend at your touch and cast its fruit at your very feet."

"An die Erde." 

Gönne dem Baum die Freude, gen Himmel zu wachsen, O Erde: Was er an Früchten erzeugt, wirst er dir doch in den Schoosz!

Surely, there can be no charge of brooding pessimism made of this conclusion:

"Der Schlaf."

"Alles wird uns Genuss, so schön ist das Leben gerundet Selbst der Tod, denn der Schlaf, ist der genossene Tod."

"They say that fortune is blind. But those who pursue her are none the less so. So Fortune becomes a blind leader of a blind race." This becomes, as a Gnome:

"Glück, sie nennen dich blind und werden nicht müde, zu schelten. Frage doch endlich zurück: Könnst ihr denn selber auch seh’n?"

Of universal application is the underlying truth in the conclusion addressed to mankind in

"Der Führer durch's Leben."

"Nie verbinde dich Einem, der das als Mittel behandelt, Was dir Zweck ist, du selbst bist nur ein Mittel für ihn." 

1 Tgb. III, 4281; Vol. VI, P. 340.
2 Tgb. III, 3339.
3 Vol. VI, P. 340.
On the twenty-fourth day of December, 1851, the spirit moved Hebbel to remark to his confident, the diary: "The more insignificant the man, the more proud he is of the fact that he is a man and vice versa. And I should say with right and reason in each case." This appears to better advantage as a gnome, thus:

"Je geringer der Mann, je grosser sein Stolz, das er Mensch ist.
Aber je grosser der Mann, um so geringer der Stolz, Caius fühlt sich gedeckt durch Julius Cäsar und rubelt,
Cäsar bezweifelt sich selbst, wenn er das Caius gedenkt." 1

There is bitterness, sarcasm, and yet withal, more than merely a grain of truth in "Jedermann in's Album."
The diary entrances are more caustic than the gnome. In the former he says: "How little good one really wishes for himself, when he wishes that he might find companions just like himself." 2 And, again, "One thinks of others in terms of himself. One says it lightly, though we can see therein what might result in the highest punishment, the heaviest curse, probably even crime." 3 The gnome reads:

"Was ich dir wünsche, mein Freund? Ich wünsche Allen dasselbe;
Finde Jeglicher den, der ihm in Innersten gleicht!
Bist du ein Guter, so kann dich der Himmel nicht besser belohnen,
Bist du ein Schlimmer, so straft ärger die Hölle dich nicht." 4

Closely allied in meaning is "Bedingtes Vertrauen:"
Heute trau ich dir noch, doch morgen nimmer, du bist nur,
Darum gut, weil du glaubst, dass es die anderen sind. 1
"Homo Sapiens" is a shrewd ironical thrust that
brings a smile of approval:
W Welch ein Narr ist der Mensch! In Allem muss er sich
spiegeln!
Selbst in Sonne und Mond hat er sein Antlitz entdeckt.
Selbsterkenntnis reminds us of the Goethe-Schiller
one on the same subject. The underlying idea is identical;
the thought is clothed in different garb here. There are
several diary comments on the subject. 2
Ob du dich selber erkennst? Du thust es sicher, sobald du
Mehr Gebrechen an dir, als an den andern entdeckst. 3
The value and beauty of "Gottes Rätsel" lies at the
very surface in:
Kinder sind, Rätsel von Gott, und schwerer, als alle,
zu lösen,
Aber der Liebe gelingt's, wenn sie sich selber be-
zwingt. 3

At a certain entertainment given at Hamburg by and
for publishers and literary lights, a lyricist, Dr. Wihl by
name, said to Hebbel, "How the great men's spirits must re-
joice to see us all assembled here in their honor!" To which
Hebbel records that he gave a stupid i. e. serious reply,
"as", he says, "is unfortunately too often the case with me."
When he wrote the following distich, he referred to this
occasion.

1 Vol. VI, p. 341.
3 Vol. VI, p. 342.
"Was der Größte sich denkt? Dies denkt er: Habe der
Teufel
Euer ganzer Geschlecht wenn ich das bin, was ihr
glaubt. 1

In the diary for 1854, Hebbel remarks: "How little
fragrance rests in a single violet: how much in a whole
bouquet!" Later he writes, fancifully:

'Drei der Grazien gibt's nur Eine Venne! Die Weilchen
will ich zum Strausze gereiht, aber die Rose allein.' 2

In August, 1842, Hebbel is more surprised that there
is such a scarcity of genius than if every one were gifted. 3

In Paris 1843, he is still wondering if mankind should not
have a right to more intelligence. 4 In Vienna 1854, he
conceives the idea of weighing man's flesh (body) as opposed
to his brains, 5 and finally he comes to the following con-
clusion:

"Gäbe es lauter Genius, ich würde mich gar nicht ver-
wundern,
Aber ich staunte schon oft, dass es so wenige gibt.
Dennoch ist es natürlich! Wie viel ist Muskel am
Menschen
Und wie Wenig Gehirn! So auch am Menschengeschlecht." 6

In December, 1836, Hebbel wrote to Elise Lensing
of a student who with his "empty, blotting-paper face" had
disturbed him as he was writing down a little poetry which
came to him as a bit of inspiration. "Just so," he said,
"has the most miserable worm ever contrived to spoil the
choicest wine---by falling into it." He later writes thus:

1 Vol. VI, p. 342; Tgb. III, 3517.
2 Vol. VI, p. 342; Tgb. III, 5239.
3 Tgb. II, 2581.
4 Tgb. II, 2787.
5 Tgb. III, 5241.
"Fürchte die schlechteste Fliege! Sie kann den edelsten Wein dir
Doch verderben: sie fällt eben hinein und ersäuft!"

The following stanza appears in the diary as an isolated thought: 1

"Ach wie lässt ein Menschenleben
Doch so wenig Frucht zurück!
Ob die Jahre, die entschweben,
Auch zum Hunderdsich verweben,
Alles, was sie dir gegeben
Zählt du auf im Augenblick!"

Obviously, this is the origin of the "Summe des Lebens."

"Jahre reihst du an Jahre, doch, was ein Jahrhundert dir brachte
Wenn du der Glücklichste bist, zählt die Minuten dir auf."

The tone of despair and complaint is easily accounted for. Hebbel's hardships have continued to fall in showers up to this time. The "clarifying period" is just in the process of beginning.

1 Tgb. III, 3577.
Hebbel's idea, as we have stated previously, is that the true poet bursts forth in song because it surges up within him until it wells over by sheer force of its own irrepressibility. Hence, a poet's outburst is wholly unconditioned by such artificial and external conditions as fame, appreciation of contemporaries, etc. To gain effect Hebbel puts this in the form of a "Gewissensfrage."

"Machte der Künstler ein Bild, und wüsste, er dauere ewig,
Aber ein einziger Zug, tief, wie kein anderer verstößt
Werde von Keinem erkannt der setzigen und künftigen menschen,
Bis ans Ende der Zeit; glaubt ihr, er liess e ihn weg.

Hebbel set forth in thirty lines the problem of the euphony and dissonance in language. The German language he observes is, in its totality, not soft, musical and beautiful; nor does the French fall harmoniously upon the ear. It is in comparison with the Italian that he makes this assertion.

"Schön erscheint sie mir nicht, die Deutche Sprache,
doch schön ist
Auch die französische nicht, nur die italische klingt.

The German language though not beautiful, is on the other hand not discordant and harsh except in rare cases and it is easy to see to it that it does not fall discordantly upon the ear, and he goes on:

Aber ich finde sie reich wie irgende eine der Völker,
Finde den köstlichsten Schatz treffender Wörter gehäuft,
Finde unendlicher Freiheit, sie so und anders zu stellen.
Bis der Gedanke die Form, bis er die Farbung erlangt
Bis sie sich leicht verwebt mit fremden Gedanken, und
dennoch
Das Gepräge des Ichs dem er entsprang, nicht verliert....
Viel sind der Sprachen auf Erden, schon dieses sollte
uns lehren,
Dass kine inneres Band Dinge und Zeichen verknüpft;....
Fand ein Goethe doch Raum in diesen gemessenen Schranken,
Wäre sie plötzlich zu eng für die Herzen von keut'?
"Die Poesie der Formen" has elsewhere been discussed
but we beg to include it with its companion "Kunst-epigramme."
"Was in den Formen schon liegt, das setze nicht dir auf
die Rechnung:
Ist das Klavier erst gebaut, wecken auch Kinder den Tan." 2

In August 1838, Hebbel notes the fact that in the
course of time every system of philosophy has suffered at
least partial annihilation. Art, alone, stands unchallenged
through the succeeding ages.

"Philosophie und Kunst."

"Ein system verschlingt das and're, doch neben dem Shakes-
ppeare,
Jung and frisch wie der Mai, wandelt noch immer Homer."
The following is merely an elaboration upon the idea
already advanced that a poet writes because he cannot do other-
wise:

"Freilich thut es dir noth, zu schaffen, ich klaub' es,
doch, leider!
Nt es der welt nicht not, dass sie besitzt was du
schauffst."

Of the imitators of Nature Hebbel says: "Man can-
ot attain the excellence of Nature. He either transcends
or is subordinated to her exact standard." 3

1 Tgb. III, 3346; Vol. VI, p 346-7.
2 Vol. VI, p. 348.
3 Tgb. III, 4404.
"Freund, ihr wollt die Natur nachahmend erreichen? O Torheit!
Kommt ihr nicht über sie weg, bleibt ihr auch unter ihr stehen."

Comment on the following, would be superfluous:

"Wisst ihr warum auch die Käfer die Butterblumen so gätcken?
Weil ihr die Menschen nicht kennt, weil ihr die Sterne nicht seht!
Schautet ihr tief in die Herzen, wie könntest ihr schwärmen für Käfer?
Seht ihr das Sonnensystem, sagt doch, was wäre euch ein Strauss?
Aber das musste so sein; damit ihr das Kleine vorzüglich
Tiefer, hat die Natur klug euch das Große entrückt."

Hebbel pays tribute to his beloved Schiller in telling phrases:

"Schiller in seinen aesthetischen Aufsätzen."
"Unter der Richtern der Form bist du die Erste, der Einzige
Der das Gesetz, das er giebt, gleich schon im Geben erfüllt." 1

There is no possibility of anyone misunderstanding what Hebbel means in

"Tieck als Dramen-Dichter."
"Wäre es wirklich so schwer, das Haus zum All zu erweitern?
Schlagt die Tände nur ein, Freunde, so ist es getan!" 1

In the following rather lengthy treatment of "Einem Ursprünglichen", the line

"Anzuschauen ist freilich in Kunst und Leben das Höchste," 1
stands out most prominently.

We introduce the two distichs devoted to Goethe
letting them stand upon their own merits.

"Goethes Biographie."

"Anfangs ist es ein Punct, der leise zum Kreise sich
öffnet,
Aber, wachsend, umfasst dieser am Ende die Welt." 1

"Goethe's Belobungen."

"Goethe hat ihn gelobt - Das heiszt: er hat ihn geedelt
Hat zum Baron ihn gemacht. Fürsten erlauben sich viel." 1

"Trost" arises from a fanciful conceit of our poet's
imagination which inspired him to write in his diary 2 "pearls
are always lost when they are dropped in a depth of soft snow,
but for how long?" It is changed only in appearance here:

"Perlen hast du gesät, auf einmal beginnt es zu hageln,
Und man erblickt sie nicht mehr; hoff' auf die Sonne,
sie kommt." 3

"Unsterbliche und Unbegrabene" is the best exposit-
tion of Hebbel's ideas-in-a-nutshell that we find in this
section. Diary comments. 4

"Trennt Unsterbliche nur von Unbegrabenen, Freunde,
Alle Unsterblichkeit hat nur ein einziges Maass!
Das ist unsterblich, was lebt, was unverlösliche
Funkeln,
Spruht, die noch zunden in eins, glaubt mir, das andre
ist tot.
So ist Homer unsterblich, und durch den Homer auch
Achilles,
Aeschylus, Sophocles so Shakespeare, ja Goethe sogar.
Aber Napoleon stirbt, wofern ihm ein spätes Jahrhundert
Nicht den Dichter erweckt, der ihm das Leben verbürgt.
Knaben werden's belächeln, was Alexander besiegelt,
Als er am Ganges rief: weh' mir, es lebt kein Homer." 5

Hebbel sets forth the following precept commending
Job-like patience as the best antidote for the virus of public

1 Vol. VI, pp. 350-51
2 Tgb. III, 4960.
3 Vol. VI, p. 351.
4 Tgb. II, 2076; Tgb. I 1370; Tgb. II, 2079.
disapproval.

"Künstler nie mit Worten mit Thaten begegne dem Feindel!
Schlendert er Steine nach dir, mache Statuen d'raus."

"An den Dichter."

"Dichter, ergreife die Stunde, sobald sie dir lächelt,
sie kehrt zwar
Immer wieder, jedoch nie mit dem nämlichen Gold."

In the diary for 1835 in his opening entry, Hebbel asserts that "the feeling which dies away in one’s breast is forever lost. Even the sunbeam does not produce it the psychic as in the physical world the same effect. And so every hour passes on into Eternity no matter how great or small its beginning, its tedious, middle part, and its awaited or fearful end." 1 Horace expresses the idea much more briefly and with even more force in his "Carpe diem."

"Dichter, ergreife die Stunde, sobald sie dir lächelt,
sie kehrt zwar
Immer wieder, jedoch nie mit dem nämlichen Gold." 2

The subject matter presented in "Lessing und sein Nachfolger" is given in the diary 3 in almost the same form that we find it here. Indeed, the prose entry is rhythmical and smooth. Hebbel enlarged it a little upon adding it to the "Kunst" collection.

"Lessings Auge umfaszte zugleich die steigende Sonne
Und den schüchternsten Halm, den ihr bescheidenster Strahl
Wachte im Schoosse der Erde, und sind die Dichter der Deutschen
Ausgeartet, so sind’s die, die sie richten, noch mehr." 2

1 Band I, 1.
2 Vol. VI, p. 352 .
3 Tgb. III, 5059.
In May 1851, the laconic statement, "Schiller ist ein Verdienst Napoleons", which comment blossoms later into:

"Schiller ist ein Verdienst des grossen französischen Kaisers, welches der Donnerer sich um die Germanen erwarb; Halte Napoleon nicht die Erde erschüttert, so waren Carlos, Fiesco, und Tell in der Geburt schon ersticken." 1

Herein we present Hebbel's versified opinion regarding the universality of genius:

"Shakespeare war kein Britte, wie Jesus Christus kein Jude, Denn, wie jegliches Land einen vertretenden Geist
In dem grössten Poeten gefunden, den es erzeugte,
Fand ihn die Welt in ihm; darum erschien er als Mensch." 2

The fickleness of the reading-public, and the freaks of Fortune rather than enduring worth establish the fame of the writer during his lifetime. We can almost see the half scornful, half-humorous smile which rests on the poet's face as he writes—

"Deutsche Literatur, du schmurrigstes Stammbuch der Völker!
Jeder schreibt sich hinein, wie es ihm eben gefällt." 3

and also—

"Lump giebt es beständig doch scheiden sich darnach die Zeiten
Oh man sie rühmt und beklatscht, oder sie nötigt zur Schaam." 3

Likewise, when he wrote "Guter Rath."

"Werde kein Dichter, mein Freund, wofern du ein Lump bist, du kannst dich Höchstens veredeln zum Schuft; reizt dich das würdige Ziel?"

1 Vol. VI p. 353; Tgb. III, 4951.
2 Vol. VI p. 354; Tgb. III, 3361.
3 Vol. VI p. 355.
Hebbel considers an analyzer of art, that is, an analytical philosopher of the theory of art as about as reasonable a thing as a blind man trying to go about a series of microscopic investigations. This view he sets forth symbolically in an epigram addressed to "Ein philosophischer Analytiker der Kunst."

Hebbel studied Aristotle's art critique and in comparing the German comedy of his time with Aristotelian comedy he said: Warum haben wir Neueren keine Komödie im Sinne der Alten? Weil sich unsere Tragödie schon so weit in's Individuelle zurückgezogen, dass dies Letztere, welches eigentlicher Stoff der Komödie sein sollte, für sie nicht mehr da ist." At another time he makes the criticism that comic figures of modern dramatists are only caricatures or droll mistakes on the part of the writer. The epigrams are:

"Was die Komödie sei? Die höchste und reichste der Formen!
Jede geringere wird ihr ja auf's neue zum Stoff!" 1

"Die Moderne Komödie."

"Wollt ihr wissen, warum uns die Echte Komödie mangelt?
Weil die Tragödie sie bei den Modernen verschlingt!
Individuen sind als solche schon komisch, an sich, schon, Wer sie noch steigert, der bringt meistens auch Fratzen zur Welt."

The idea in "Ton und Farbe" is not at all surprisingly original or startling, though we cannot remember seeing it in print before:

1 Tgb. II, 2393.
"Wo die Natur den Ton verleiht, da vergeht sie die Farbe, 
Wo sie die Farbe, gewährt sie immer den Ton. 
Denkt der Nachtigall und denkt des Flamingo, so seht ihr's; 
Aber das gleiche Gesetz waltet im Reiche der Kunst."

The candor of the sweeping assertion of the worthlessness of French and German literary contributors is enviable.

"Sure Romane und Dramen sind nichts, als lare Charaden, 
Kennt man das Wort, das sie los't, wirft man sie auch au die Wand."

In closing our treatment of this section, we desire to present three epigrams in which Hebbel succeeds admirably in making vivid and striking points in behalf of the poet. Hebbel's life and vocation make it possible for him to appreciate the troubles which beset the poet's thorny path and the personal touch gives color to the picture.

"Die Situation des Dichters."

"And're schaffen, damit sie das Leben sich sichern; 
Dem Dichter muss es gesichert sein, eh' er zu schaffen vermag." 1

"Dichterloos" refers particularly to the reception of Heine's "Reisebilder."

Lass dich tadeln für's Gute und lasz dich loben für's Schlechte; 
Fällt dir Eines zu schwer, schlage die Eisern entzwei." 2

Just what degree of consolation one can be expected to derive from this "Trost für Deutsche Autoren" is debatable.

"Deutsche Autoren, man lässt euch freilich lebendig verhungern, 
Aber tröstet euch nur, denn man begräbt euch in Speck." 2

1 Vol. VI p. 358.  
2 Vol. VI p. 359.
This epigram recalls to mind the one given elsewhere concerning Butler who asked in vain for bread while he lived, but received a most expensive stone (monument) after death.
In September 1844, Hebbel arrives at the conclusion that history up to the present time has won only the idea of the eternal Right, and that it will remain to the coming generations to be put into use. \(^1\) As an epigram, it appears:

"Was die Geschichte bis jetzt errang? Die Ewigen Ideen! Sie zu verwirklichen, ist nun denn ihr großes Geschäft."\(^1\)

Of the statesmen of his time Hebbel speaks rather disparagingly. He expresses the idea symbolically in: "Only the clouds concentrate the electricity in the air to a lightning flash; only the great spirits of the age, not the insignificant ones."\(^2\) Again,

"Kämpft mit jedem Gewitter, ihr habt die Waffen, nur nimmer
Mit der Elektricität, denn sie ist eins mit der Luft."

The discord and lack of German unity in political affairs jarred upon Hebbel's sense of fitness and yet he knew that things could not come to a satisfactory and permanent issue by patching up the tattered scraps gathered at random.

"Raubt dem Löwen die Klause, dem Adler die mächtige Schwinge,
Aber dem Stiere das Haupt glaubt ihr es gebe ein Thier?
Wein, das wächst nicht zusammen das kann nur zusammen verwesen,
Denn das belebende Herz hat noch kein Nagel ersetzt."\(^3\)

This group would be incomplete, Germanically speak-

1- Tgb. II, 3236; Vol. VI p. 360.
2- Tgb. III 3691; Vol. VI p. 360.
3- Vol. VI p. 361.
ing, without a distich devoted to "Friedrich der Grosze."
"Friedrich suchte die Kunst, nicht einzuschlafen, vergebens;
Andere haben die Kunst, nicht zu erwachen, entdeckt."¹

It would not require a great mind to come to the conclusion that "time does not stand still because man stops his timepiece, and despite the fact that the hour-hand remains fixed on the noon-hour, evening draws on apace."²

None the less, it seems to have been left to him to formulate. This idea occurs among his "Schmerz-Gedichte" thus:

"So wird man denn nicht klug auf Erden!
Da haltet Ihr die Uhren an,
Als könnt' es denn nicht Abend werden!
Nun wisst Ihr bloß nicht mehr das Wann! ³

In this group it stands—-

"Haltet die Uhr nur an und denkt, nun werd' es nicht Abend,-
Stand die Sonne schon still, weil es ein Kuster gebot?" ⁴

"Ein Erfahrungsratz" arose first as a comparison in Hebbel's mind between the French Revolution and a bloody morass dark, loathsome, and monster-inhabited. The horrors of the Revolution are only such as are always attendant upon war, and as inseparable from it as the creeping creatures are from their marshy bog-home.⁵ One can prevent such marshes from appearing, but once present, one must take for granted its living cargo. ⁶ At another time Hebbel speaks of the ele-

¹- Vol. VI p. 361.
³- Tgb. II, 3057.
⁴- Vol. VI pp. 360-1.
⁵- Tgb. II, 3240.
⁶- Tgb. III, 4716.
ment of the air with its sunshine, moon, and stars as contrasted with the marsh and its frogs, toads, and reptiles.

"Leicht ist ein Sumpf zu verhüten, doch ist er einmal entstanden, So verhütet kein Gott Schlangen und Holche in ihm." ¹

But the best of the "Geschichte" is the "Politische Situation", both because of its wonderful condensation of thought and because of the skill with which our poet evolved the rhetorical figure. There are two diary entries which touch directly upon this. In November 1846, Hebbel writes: "The earth is a vessel in process of shipwreck upon which the passengers are fighting for biscuits." ² In 1855, he describes the conditions thus: "Overhead the roof is burning; beneath, the earth is undermined, while between these the people are fighting desperately for possession." ³ And last and best the "Cameo":

"Oben brennt es im Dach und Unten rauchen die Minen, Aber mitten im Haus schlägt man sich um den Besitz." ⁴

¹- Vol. VI pp. 360-1.
²- Tgb. III 3300 - quotation.
³- Tgb. IV 5051.
⁴- Vol. VI p. 360.
ETHISCHES.

The stanza below is written at the foot of a picture of him which was given as a birthday gift to Karl Werner. As a moral precept of our poet it is worthy of attention:

"Stelle dich wie die auch willst; nicht wirst du die Feinde vermeiden,
Aber wie Thetis den Sohn, kannst du dich fei'm für den Streit.
Mache so ganz dich zum Träger des Guten, des Wahren, und Schönen,
Dasz man die Götter verletzt wenn man dich selber bekämpft." 1

Again we are driven to the diaries for a more complete understanding of the distich to the despiser of mankind. "A despiser of mankind is indeed, most despicable of man, for he would be incapable of entertaining any such feeling if he were able to discern not only the short-comings of others but also his own," 2 How could one come to a settled conviction of unworthiness of one's fellows, as a whole, if he remained noble to himself? 3 The distich based upon this idea is

"Wie? Die Menschheit willst du der Wichte wegen, verachten?
Bist du denn selbst auch ein Wicht? Oder nicht selbst auch ein Mensch?" 1

"Der Schlimmste Egoist."

"Egoisten sind Alle. Der schlimmste aber ist Jener Welcher nicht glaubt, es zu sein, weil es am Maasz ihm gebricht." 4

3. Tgb. III, 4806.
Whether Hebbel's visit in Copenhagen, his reception and subsequent life there give colour to this most general and sweeping statement, we cannot determine. We find the following statement in the diary: "There are egoists who are absolutely unable to see beyond their own most immediate circle and who on this account, when they are active in behalf of this circle, are firmly convinced that they labor for the general good. These are the worst because not even their own consciousness of the state of affairs can help them to determine their limits. At any rate, man is of necessity an egoist for he is a point and a point is lost in itself." 1 Which is characteristic of Hebbel's love of going a long way around to produce rather a doubtful figure.

The ethical imperative is merely a summing up of an unwritten ethical law; one, which is recognized and conceded to be true by all. And because, unfortunately, we assent to but do not practice this precept, the poet takes this occasion -- to chide? -- no, to remind us of our carelessness with regard to it:

"Deine Tugenden halte für allgemeine des Menschen, Deine Fehler jedoch für dein besonderes Theil!" 2

The following lines are closely related to the distich on the Egoist, in thought. In 1847, Hebbel jots down the idea, "men probably ask themselves sometimes of what

1- Tgb. II, 2637.
2- Vol. VI p. 364.
importance am I to my own sphere?' but seldom, 'of what importance is my sphere to a great one and this latter to the greatest of all?' Hence their self-confidence, pride, arrogance and at the same time their invaluable straining of nerves to gain the nearest goal. Did I not know so disturbingly well just what poetry is in and of itself, I should get a deal farther on as a poet." 1

"Mancher ist ehrlich genug mit ernst und Eifer zu prüfen, was er erst in dem Kreise, dem die Natur ihn bestimmt; Wenige haben den Mut, den Kreis zu prüfen und redlich Zu ermitteln, wie viel dieser in gröszeren gilt." 2

"Fietät" points back to the "Situation des Dichters," in that it calls our attention to a point of view wholly different from that commonly taken by the unsympathetic public.

"Etwas Mitleid den Künstlern und Dichtern, welche das Höchste Nicht erreichen; es sagt's ihnen kein Joseph voraus, Und sie müssen das Leben erst opfern um zu erfahren Dass es vergebens geschieht, darum verschont sie mit Spott." 3

"Der Gesetz" reveals Hebbel's attitude toward the law, "the recognized machine", as so many people chime in, in accord with Browning. (The in diary he says of this: "What is the just significance of law in every sphere? To give expression to the highest of which man is capable in his best moments, to the noblest of the individuals that make

1- Tgb. III, 3997.
2- Vol VI, p. 364.
3- Vol. VI, p 364.
up humanity, in order that it may help men in his moments of weakness, and protect humanity from its weaker individuals."  

"Das Gesetz".

"Was will ich vom Gesetz? Es soll das Höchste verlangen. Was der Beste vermag, wenn er die Kraft nur gebraucht. So beschützt es die Welt vor 'm Bösen und steht auch dem Guten Gegen sich selber bei, wenn ihm die Stunde versucht."  

In September 1840, Hebbel briefly ventures: "Die Lüge ist viel theurer, als die Wahrheit. Sie kostet den ganzen Menschen."  

Hence, Hebbel would advocate honesty not because it is the best policy, but because falsehood destroys the very fiber of the moral ego. Truth can at most lose for you only your personal happiness or fortune — a far more reparable loss.

"Lüge und Wahrheit."

"Was du theuerer bezahlst, die Lüge oder die Wahrheit? Jene kostet dein Ich, diese doch höchstens dein Glück!"

1- Tgb. III, 4720. 
2- Vol. VI, p. 364. 
3- Tgb. II, 2126. Trans. Falsehood is much dearer than truth. It is gained at the cost of the whole man.
While Hebbel could scarcely write without projecting himself into his work, these epigrams are purposely and more purely personal. In a reply to a letter from Gutzkow, early in 1854, he said: "As you know I have lived wholly within myself during my period of development and unfolding, because I felt the need of obtaining the pure and genuine resounding of the world in order to come to the most desirable self-knowledge and self-evolution. From which may have resulted a certain pride and obscurity in my relation toward my fellows, but I do not yet regret it because I may now say that, the two- and-thirty winds having stormed in fierce protest to their hearts' content, my laurel's now-remaining leaves, be they ever so few, shall remain to me permanently." 1

The corresponding epigram reads:

"Glaubt mir, es ist mir verhaszt, wenn alle Winde ihn zausen?
Nein, mir gehörnt nur das Blatt, was sie ihm lassen, mit Recht." 2

"The Selbst-critik Meiner Dramen" arose as a result of Hebbel's reflection over the reception of them by the public.

"Zu moralisch sind sie! Fur ihre sittliche Strenge Steh'n wir dem Paradies leider schon lange zu fern, Und dem jüngsten Gericht mit seinen verzehrenden Flammen Noch nicht nahe genug. Revig bekenn' ich euch dies." 3

1- Tab. III, 5221.
2- Vol. VI p. 366.
In 1850 Hebbel was in Hamburg during the summer. Whether because of a feeling of inferiority in the presence of the great poet-dramatist, or whether from sheer indifference, we are not told, but we do know that Hebbel found that one of his old friends had become estranged from him. With combined bitterness and sadness he writes:

"Deine Freunde sind jung, es wird dir mit ihnen ergehen, Wie mit den Früchten dem Baum: reifen sie, fallen sie ab." 1

The motif underlying "Meine neuen Gedichten" is artistically concealed in this pretty fancy:

"Blumen will ich nicht mehr! So rief ich und hatte die Keime
Mit den erquetschenden Stein gerne für immer erstickt. Aber sie spannen die Wurzeln gelassen weiter und schlingen
Um ihn selbst nun als Kranz farbig und frisch sich herum." 1

We are fond of believing that Hebbel's expressions of discontent, complaint, and suffering were confidences made to his diary rather than to the unsympathetic public at such times as he found it impossible to keep silent. The pent-up feelings could burst forth in all their fury on the calm, white, silent page, while Hebbel relieved of his load, could seek his former peace of mind and heart in refreshing slumber. On the sixteenth of September 1845, he wrote to Elise from Paris: "That a man I am! The quiet, peaceful mussel in which I may hear only the distant roar of the breakers, is too narrow and confining for me; the sea

with its powerful lashing of mountain-high waves, is too broad and deep." 1 The sense of power causes him to revolt at the restrictions which poverty and ill-fortune exert though he is not yet courageous enough to enter the thickest of the fray. The distich expressing his state of mind at this time is followed twelve years later by a happy contrast—a picture of domestic felicity, literary appreciation and recognition by the public:

(1) "Gott're ich ford're nicht viel! Ich will die Muschel bewohnen.
Aber ich kann es nur dann wenn sie die Ocean rollt."

(2) "Gott're Öffnet die Hände nicht mehr, ich würde erschrecken,
Denn ihr gabt mir genug: hebt sie nur schirmend empor."

1- Briefwechsel I p. 165.
In the following epigrams of variegated tone and color, we obtain some of Hebbel's choicest bits of sage, droll, or philosophiest observations, as the case may be.

Friends, he tells us, cannot render impartial and unbiased judgment; though often times they are most unjust because of their very impartiality. 1 When a former friend of his gave a very severe criticism of Genoveva, Hebbel remarked that it gave him a great sense of relief to know that even the friends of his youth were such severe judges, adding: "to praise would be to be partial." 2 The distich is:

"Unpartheiisch ist ein Freund wohl noch nie gewesen, Aber ungerecht wird er nicht selten aus Furcht." 3

In January 1851, Hebbel exclaims with scornful indignation, "To deliberately produce a picture according to the law established by the majority! Ach! the majority!!!" 4 While in the latter months of the same year the idea comes to him in this form: "Just as the earth, as earth is unable to produce apples and grapes but must first have trees and vines, just so little can people, as such, produce great and lasting works of any kind without first producing great individuals. Therefore, you crowd of levellers, respect and

1- Tgb. III 4601
2- Tgb. II 2612, 2613.
3- Vol. VI p. 368
4- Tgb. III 4790.
tribute for the Kings, Prophets, and Poets." 1 Hence, we have "Der Genius."

"Nimmer in tausend Köpfen, der Genius wohnt nur in Einen,
Und die unendliche Welt wundert zuletzt doch ein Punct,
Nicht durch Stimmmehrheit sind Himmel und Erde entstanden,
Nie auch ein groszes Gedicht, oder ein ewiger Bild." 2

"Verschiedene Consequenzen" brings to our attention the fact that these "modern times" are, in certain respects, not so very remote from those in which an Alexander, a Martial, or a Caesar lived. The diary entrance reads: "As Brutus cried out, "Virtue is an empty name!" he did not thereby renounce himself to a life of viciousness, but thrust his sword into his bosom to extinguish the last sparks of virtue that remained there." 3

"Tugend, du bist nur ein Name! spricht Brutus und tötet sich selber;
Cajus merkt sich's, bricht ein, raubt und betrinkt sich für's Gold." 4

In a number of instances we find Hebbel likening death and its release of the spirit from the body to the complete loss of consciousness in sleep. 5

"Frommer Spruch."

"Wie von den einzelnen Mühen und Lasten des Lebens im Schlummer,
Ruht man von Leben Selbst endlich im Tode sich aus."

1- Tgb. III, 5013
2- Vol. VI, p. 369.
3- Tgb. III, 4718
4- Vol. VI p. 369.
5- Tgb. II, 2715.
The following distich on, "An Oath and its Interpretation," together with the diary comments 1 and the words of Miriamne 2 in reply to Herodes expressed desire that she give an oath to take her own life if he lose his, enables us to see Hebbel's opinion of the value of an oath: That the man's inner self is what must be built upon, not his words even though sworn to God, himself.

"Glaubt's du, weil er dir's schwur, er werde dich nun nicht betrügen?
Nein, er gelobte dir nur, Gott zu betrügen, wie dich."

There is nothing extraordinary about the epigram which we are about to introduce, except the simplicity of style and the homely truth it expresses. The additional thought in the diary is that if one insists on setting his watch by the sun, he will cry in vain to the sun if he come too late, thereby. 3

"Willst du menschlich mit menschen in Städten der Menschen verkehren,
Stelle die Uhr noch dem Turm, nicht nach der Sonne, mein Freund!"

Or, in brief, when in Rome, live as the Romans!

While at Munich, 1838, Hebbel writes a very earnest and sincere appreciation of the Lord's Prayer. "It is heavenly," he says. "How high, how divine is man when he prays, 'Forgive us as we forgive our debtors';........and so it is in the fullest sense of the word a work of art." 4

1- Tgb. II 2419
2- Herodes and Mercamme Act I (Scene 5, lines 479 following)
3- Tgb. II, 2015.
4- Tgb. I, 1334.
"Willt ihr beten, so betet, wie Jesus die Jünger es lehrte!
Manches Gebet zwar giebt's, welches zur Läuterung führt:
Dieses setzt sie voraus; will's Einer, ohne zu heucheln,
Beten, so muss er sich erst vollig vollenden als mensch."

Karl Rahl was a poor, struggling artist whom Hebbel befriended and who later painted a likeness of his benefactor and made him a present of it. As he stood gazing thoughtfully upon the work, Hebbel remarked: "Now I am more than my likeness, soon it will be far more than me." 1

"Bild, jetzt bin ich zwar mehr, wie der, doch magst du dich trösten,
Denn in der kürzesten Frist wirst du schon mehr sein,
wie ich."

Hebbel's feeling concerning the excessive stress laid upon one's descent is not at all to be wondered at, when one considers the vast numbers of men of marked inferiority of mind and body as well, with whom Hebbel was thrown in contact, and to whose imbecile prating of their spotless family escutcheon he was constantly forced to listen.

"Thörigter Stolz auf Ahnen! Du bist mir verhaszt an Geschlechtern,
Aber an Völkern noch mehr. Drückend empfand ich's in Rom." 2

Hebbel regretfully bewails the fact that life continues to go on in its peculiar see-saw fashion and that death is so often attended with so great unpleasantness:

1- Tgb. III, 3728.
2- Vol. VI, p. 373.
"Vergeblicher Wunsch."

"Eines finde ich abscheulich: dass sich das Leben nicht, steigert,
Dass dem höchsten moment meist ein geringerer folgt!
Eins sage sternen vor Freude, warum nicht Alle? Du
Täntest
Keine schongere Glut, uns zu verjüngern, Natur." 1

"Originalität" scarcely needs any further exposition.

"Waren die Menschen in Innern, wie in den Gesichtern
verschieden;
In das reizendste Spiel löste das Leben sich auf.
Aber, da malt sich die Welt auf gleich Weise in Allen,
Und der Wahnsinn kaum macht sie noch originell." 2

In February 1850, he wrote: "Die Schauspieler
dürfen in Deutschland schon wagen, kein Gedachtnes zu haben,
den das Publicum hat keins." 3 This concentrates upon "Der
Deutsche Mime";

"Freilich hat der Mime in Deutschland selten Gedachtnis
Aber er braucht es ja nicht; hat doch sein Publicum
Keins." 4

"When one enters a room, where there is a bouquet
of mignonette, he is sensible of their delicate fragrance;
if he remain for a time he gradually loses consciousness of
the sweet scent. So it is with everything in life!" 5 Only
another incident which goes to show our poet's deliberate
tendency to read a moral or meaning into even the most ordi-
nary experience. In terms of "Im Großen, wie im Kleinen",
it stands:

1- Vol. VII p. 373
3- Tgb. III 4682
4- Vol VI. p. 374
5- Tgb. III 4468.
During a rather annoying storm, Hebbel passed a blind beggar whom he was prompted to succour, but owing to the fierceness of the storm he refrained from stopping long enough to do so. A moment later the storm blew a piece of dust in his eye which reminded him of the beggar and he retraced his steps and made the offering. He seemed to feel that the dust was blown into his eye by the wise eye of Providence to punish him and to give support to the blind beggar. This episode is told in "Ich und der Blinde."  

Heine and Hebbel were speaking one day of Dante's "schrecklichen Ferzinen", in which so many fools and evil reprobates were in-carcerated. Hebbel makes a note of this adding, "The poet can look up, but---and let him be prudent lest he abuse the privilege---cannot set free again."  

He therefore embodies this idea in

"Warnung."

Reizt den Dichter nicht! Er kann Sich fürchterlich rächen.
Und es entzieht ihm den Laden Keiner, nicht einmal der Tod!
Denn, so wie sein Käusz dem Freund unsterbliche Ehre Sichert, so sichert sein Tritt diesem unsterbliche Schmauch."  

1- Vol. VI p. 375.
2- Tgb.
Even illness has its compensating qualities. Through it we first learn the value of health and good spirits—the sheer joy of being alive. 1

"Krankheit, dich auch preis'ich. Zur reine Freude am Dasein, Welche nicht wünscht, noch bedarf, bist du der einzige Weg." 2

The beggars that were the rule in Hebbel's time seem to have had the same characteristics that those we are most familiar. 1

"Bettler, dich rufe ich um und gebe dir doppelt, du hast mir, 2 Eh' du das Guld noch beseh'n, das du empfingst, schon gedankt."

"Als ich einen todt'en Vogel fand" points back to "Schwalbe und Fliege" although it treats of the incident from an entirely different point of view. There is a fine touch of pathos in Hebbel's feeling here.

"Vöglein, todt's, du darfst nicht hier am Wege verwesen! Immer das reizendste Bild hast du dem Wandrer geeweckt, Wenn er dich hörte und sah, und solltest die Schrecken der Schrecken Jetzt ihm enthüllen? O nein! Eilig begrabe ich dich!" 2

Human nature with its great and countless infirmities and inconsistencies was an open book to our poet-dramatist and we are made to feel the ironical scorn with which he presents not his opinion, but the situation: One threw a plank to a companion during a terrible shipwreck, by means of which the latter came safely to land. Upon reaching

1- Tgb. III, 4554.
2- Vol. VI, p. 277.
terra firma he asked of his rescuer: How much did the board cost? 1 In "Buntes" it appears as "Ansgleichung."

"Einem warf ich im Schiffbruch ein Brett zu. Vom Tode gerettet,
Sprach er: Was kostet das Brett? Dankbar bezahl' ich das Holz!"

"Der verborgene Kaiser" portrays the idea contained in the words: People always have their chief leader but how seldom do they know him (their king?)

"Ihre Könige kennen die Völker der Erde: sie rollen Stolz in Carossen daher, Trommeln und Fähnen Voran;
Aber sie haben zugleich auch einen verborgenen Kaiser,
Welcher am Brunnen vielleicht selber das Wasser sich schöpf't,
Und, sei dieser ein Künstler; ein Denker oder ein Weiser,
Daß das Jahrhundert vergeht, trägt er die Krone allein."

1- Tgb. II, 1841.
2- Tgb. III, 4842; Vol VI p. 378.
NEUE EPIGRAMME.

Inasmuch as this list is both long and of diversified content, we have endeavoured to present here only those which will serve to broaden and make clearer the conception that we have tried to build up of Hebbel, the epigrammatist.

"Du bist allein" is apparently the sober reflection of mature man, over a span of years in which the preponderance of bitter experience is marked. The tone is similar to that of the previously discussed "Prophezeihung."

"Ohne Gefolge betrittst du die Welt, und ohne Geltete Gehst du wieder hinaus; sei denn getrostet, o Mensch, Wenn dich im Herbst die Freunde, wie Spatzen und Schwalben verlassen, Denn in der bittersten Noth war noch ein Jeder allein." 1

Hebbel, as a student of human nature, discovered that one of the greatest and most common mistakes was that men strive most zealously to gain an end, which when gained they first seek to evaluate. 2 This idea he encloses in "Zur Erinnerung;"

"Denke den Göttern, o Mensch, wenn das warum Du am Morgen kämpfstest auf Leben und Tod, Dicht nicht am Abenderdruckt." 3

Hebbel had little patience with the world's trouble-makers. He knew that trouble was an unavoidable and a seemingly necessary evil, but he had no words of sympathy for those who found a hair in their soup for the simple reason that they shook their heads so constantly that one finally fell in. 4

1- Vol. VI p. 444
2- Tgb. III, 4069
3- Vol. VI p. 444.
4- Tgb. IV, 5550.
"Mancher findet nur darum ein Haar in jeglicher Suppe, weil er das eigene Haar schüttelt, so lange er iszt." 1

Reluctantly, we submit this cynical summing up of the frailty of human nature, as Hebbel found it.
"Zwölf Apostel und doch nur ein einziger Judas darunter? Würde der Göttliche heut', zählte er mindestens elf!" 2

Whether the "Philosophus teutonicus" is a shaft at some particular philosopher or at German philosophy as a whole, we have no clue. At any rate, it must be conceded that it can be applied to a number with equal suitableness.

"Wundert's Dich, dass er noch immer so faselt? Ich kann es begreifen!
Wenn er sich selbst nicht versteht, glaubt er, ein Genius spricht." 3

Hebbel has written concerning a letter which he received from Ferdinand Kurnberger, an epigram, built upon the comment: "I have made the discovery in it, that Mr. Kurnberger has become a famous man, and at the same time, not without profit I hope, how a famous man speaks of himself: it sounds as methodical as Caesar's Gallic War. The letter is noteworthy proof that the heads of self conceit grow faster than a hydra's." The epigram, he calls "Goethe's Genius."

"Goethen hör' ich mit Freuden von seinem Genius reden,
Denn der Himmlische führt neben dem Dichter die Welt.
Aber, Ihr Anderen schweigt und rühmt Euch höchsten des Nases
Die die Natur Euch verlieh; diese genügt für das Haus." 4

The idea enclosed within the lines called "Amor and Hymen",

1- Vol. VI p. 444
2- Vol. VI p 445
3- Vol. VI p 446
4- Vol. VI p 446.
is to be found in the old epigrams of the Romans and Greeks although Hebbel may never have read any of them:

Amor fehlen die Augen, doch Hymen ist doppelt verschen,
Zeus verlieh ihm auch die, welche der Blinde entbehrt. 1

It would be wrong to say that Hebbel had no sense of humor. True, he does not strain himself in any obvious struggle to produce hysterical guffaws from his reader.

He would be incapable of editing the humorous columns of any of our daily newspapers, with any degree of success; for his is the quiet, serene humor that brings a great, genial smile, a general glow of satisfaction and then—further reflection. For example, he makes this note in his diary:

"For the two very reasons for which Caesar wore a crown of laurels, it is denied me; I have neither conquered the world, nor have I lost all my hair." 2 Later he gives the world "Lorbeer und Perücke."

Caesar deckte den Scheitel, Sobald ihn die Jahre ihm bleichten
Mit dem unsterblichen Zweig, welcher ihm heute noch grün't;
Ludwig rief den Friseur, und dieser erfand die Perücke
Für das bedürftige Haupt, dem es am Kranze gebrach." 3

Hebbel was in his earlier life an enthusiastic admirer of Lord Byron. He learned to value him more highly, he tells us through the greater intimacy that he felt for him after perusing his diaries and letters. 4 "Byron's

1- Vol. VI, p. 447.
2- Tgb. III, 4319.
3- Vol. VI, p. 447
4- Tgb. II, 2347.
wonderful and abnormal personality lessens the impression of his of his poetry for a great portion of his readers because they consider as hypochondriacal whims of the individual what really is the incisive truth of the century." In 1845 he discusses a number of Byron's poems. He criticizes the poverty of ideas and the sameness of content. "Mazeppa", "Parisini", and several minor poems he finds thoroughly trivial. "Don Juan" is his masterpiece of subjective treatment of individual analysis in a world of possible though most extraordinary experiences. He criticizes the treatment of "Manfred", comparing it to the manner with which "an anatomist who had neglected to make an ocular inspection would treat the body of a horse which he called a lion's body." As a young man he said of Byron: "He is really nothing short of a genius. He would probably not have been so great a poet had he not been so great a sinner." This stands in strong contrast to the statement entered in the diary just twenty years later: "Lord Byron's poetry, as a whole, appears to me to be a deliberate long-drawn out suicide out of sheer spleen. The noble lord saws away

1- Tgb. II, 2604.
2- Tgb. III, 3487.
3- Tgb. III, 3934.
4- Tgb. I, 35.
without ceasing, at his throat, but always with the
back rather than with the edge of the razor." ¹ And
six years later: "From the viewpoint of the energy
of his thoughts and descriptive power———thoroughly
trivial." ² He embodies his mature views of Byron
and his works in a series of distichs. Of Byron he
says:

"Der Dichter."

Welch ein schmurriges Bild! Man sieht ihn von Morgen bis
Abend.
Tachten uneschieszen, und doch kommt es zu Keinem Duell." ³

Of "Kain und Himmel und Erde", he says, "Aber du
zeigtest uns nur, wie man die Farben gebraucht," in­
stead of "wie sie entstehen". "Childe Harold", he bids
go on his way with his so called anguish, which Hebbel
insists does not exist in his heart. "Lara" likewise
receives a scoring, and "Christian und Conrad" and
"Parasina" are passed on with "Xenienisch" frankness. Luci­
fer is bidden make himself scarce but the advocates of
German philosophy are given a thrust in this distich:

Lucifer, gründlichster Teufel, der philosophiert, wie
ein Deutscher
Weische von hinnen, doch nicht ohne den Sardanapel. ⁴

Six distichs are devoted to "Don Juan" in which
the poet represents himself as speaking with Don Juan:

1- Tgb. IV, 5390.
2- Tgb. IV, 6194.
3- Vol. VI, p. 448.
4- Vol. VI, 449-450.
"Don Juan"

Don Juan, spanischer Junker, der uns die Schleier vertheuert,
Weil er so viele zerreiszt, sag' mir, was schleichtest Du davon? 1

"Seine Antwort."

Hast Du vielleicht mir im Stillen den Scheiterhaufen errichtet?
Spare das Feuer, mir hat längst schon ein And'rer geheizt. 1

"Ich."

Nein, ich habe für Dich die frischesten Rosen gebrochen
Und für den Dichter den Zweig, welcher Unsterblichen ziemt. 1

"Er."

Wie? Du jagtest noch eben die nobelsten Helden von dannen,
Welche sich schämen für Gott, dass er nur Menschen erschuf? 1

"Ich."

Ja, ich hoffe die Heuchler, die, um sich nur selbst nicht zu waschen,
Spähen nach Sonne und Mond, wo sie ein Flecken entstellt. 1

We have observed previously that Hebbel spoke very harshly at times of his contemporaries and of the unequal judgments rendered by the fickle public. The "Ophelia in der Literatur" is really quite an applicable comparison:

Wie die Verrückte im Hamlet die Blumen, vertheilt Ihr die Kränze
Unter die "Männer der Zeit", aber Ihr seid bei Verstand. 2

The inference is plain enough! In the diary the brief

1- Vol. VI, 449-450.
2- Vol. VI, p. 453.
entry is: The German nation distributes her laurels as Ophelia distributed her flowers."  

The "Frage" is one of the best in this entire list and as such needs no further introduction:

Glaubst Du, der höchste Gedanke des grössten der Menschen auf Erden
Käme dem göttlichen bei, welchem er selber entsprang?  

The following distich has been said to have been directed against Schopenhauer and his philosophy in reply
to some disparaging criticism of the latter. We do not find anything in the diaries to verify or disprove the statement.

Alle verneinenden Geister verirren sich leichter, wie andre,
Essig schlägt häufiger um, als der erquickliche Wein.

A strikingly naive and original thought is advanced in the poet's words: "I see in the highest and noblest individuals not a superfluity of virtue but a superfluity of power. What is virtue? A beautiful name for the simplest thing---wholesomeness."  

We can shout and tear our hair and preach of virtue to our heart's content, but until we make clear that what we mean by that abstract term is unconditioned wholesomeness, we are as the "sounding brass and the tinkling cymbal."  

1- Tgb. IV, 5502.
2- Vol. VI p. 453.
3- Tgb. I, 1772.
4- Corinthians II, Ch. XIII.
Tugend nennt Ihr's, die Freude des Andern, wie eig'ne, zu fühlen?
Unermessliches Glück scheint mir's und großes Talent! 1

Not very long before Hebbel's death he wrote in his beloved diary this half-confessional generalization, "Youth demands that the day bring forth something, Age is content when the day robs him of nothing."  2 From which comes, "Unterschied der Lebensaltar."

Hat Dir der Tag was gebracht? So fragt sich am Abend der Jüngling;
Hat dir der Tag was geraubt? fragt sich der Mann und der Greis. 3

"Newton als Greis" arose from a diary note in which Hebbel remarked, that the fact that Sir Isaac Newton busied himself during the latter period of his life with the Apocalypse, was a proof that the mere solution of the world-of-appearance was no longer sufficient to satisfy him. 4

Newton versenkte sich fromm als Greis in die Apocalypse, Moleschott spättelt darob, aber ich finde es schön. Freilich, die Wahl war schlecht, doch hatte er's endlich begriffen,
Dasz Mann die Tiefe der Welt durch den Calcull nicht erschöpft. 5

Hebbel passed judgment on the new French dramas by saying that their moral resembled the orange sticking out of the mouth of a roasted pig. 5

1- Vol. VI. p 454.
2- Tgb. IV. 5687.
3- Tgb. IV. 6278.
4- Vol. VI. p. 399.
5- Vol. VI. pp. 456-7
There are a number of elucidatory passages in the diaries. In February, 1842, he sets forth the view that a higher advantage must always be purchased at the expense of a lower and more humble one. The civilized man has no longer the keenness of eye and ear that we see in the savage; the most illustrious spirit who oversees the great affairs of the world may often fail to rule his own household wisely. A few years later he jots down: "Great men must of necessity be misunderstood by their inferiors." In 1858 he adds to what he has already said: "How Nature establishes an equilibrium between the great men and the small? To the former she gives the consciousness of their deficiency, to the latter she denies it." Again, not long after, "the peasant does not realize that he lacks a Shakespearian brain, but Shakespeare feels that he lacks the marrow of the peasant." It seems scarcely possible to condense the thought expressed in these statements into four brief lines, yet we note with pride and pleasure the ease and skill with which they are finally polished and cut down by our master

2- Tgb. II, 2496.
3- Tgb. III, 4470.
4- Tgb. III, 5096.
5- Tgb. IV, 5679.
epigrammatist.

Nie begreift der Kleine den Groszen doch mag er sich trösten,
Denn der Grosze begreift eben so wenig ihn selbst.
Aber ein Goethe vermisst zuweilen die Füste des Bauern,
Während der Bauer gewiss Geothe's Gehirn nicht begehrt.

(9) "FLOCKEN."

Here and there in the "Gedichte", we can discover an unusually striking and characteristic distich, standing out distinctly over its companion verses, by virtue of its extraordinary content. Fragment four in the "Nachlese" concludes with the lines,

Was dem Staupe gehört, dassz musz sich Staube vermählen
Doch, den unendlichen Geist fesslt kein endliches Band. 1

Among the "Flocken", stand several very fine examples of Hebbel's ability to condense the thought of many a long tract or sermon into a very few, very full and very forceful lines.

"An den Menschen."

Willst du den Aetna ersteigen, so schaue nicht in den Abgrund,
Dass du nicht schwindelst, empor richte gen Himmel den Blick
Strebst du, göttlich zu werden, so schaue nicht auf die Ketten,
Welche zur Erde Dich zieh'n, schau' auf die Krone am Ziel. 1

The contents of the above distichs are neither new nor startling and yet many an able poet or preacher has

1- Vol. VII, p. 44.
devoted page after page to the expounding of the simple truth found therein.

"Hoffnung" is one of the best of the "Flocken". The verses are charged with thought, symbolically presented, and are smooth, euphonious and pleasingly pensive.

Sehst du den Ackermann je, der in die brausende Meerflut, Hoffend auf günstige Ernt, köstlichen Saamen gesä't? Dennoch schämst du dich nicht, in's Meer der trügrischen Zukunft, Weinend, bringt er nicht Frucht, Saamen der Hoffnung zu strü'n? ¹

We all know the expression, "rose-coloured glasses" and its meaning, and we also know people who have become accustomed to viewing the world with blue-clouded glasses; hence, the thought contained in the following distich is not new, but is only clothed in different words. The distich is:

"Blick auf die Welt."

Durch ein Vexirglas erscheinen verzerrt dir Dinge dir alle: Also ein düsteres Herz sicht eine düstere Welt." ²

Hebbel was not always serious; and although we concede that frivolity was "a thing unknown" to him, we can give adequate proof to show that he did turn to the more trivial forms and subject-matter at times.

¹- Vol. VII, p. 47.
(10) "Einfälle"

And this recreative levity appears to a great extent in the "Einfälle". The first one in the list strikes the Martalian tone, or we might say the tone of Lessing as we have indicated previously.

"Rosas Schönheit."

Rosas Schönheit, glaubst du, werde schwinden
Freund, ich sage nein,
Denn, was schwinden soll, muss doch vorher wohl sein?
Und wer kann an Rosa Schönheit finden? 1

while The pair of couplets below are a supposed conversation between Hebbel and Barbeck concerning a paper which the former is reading:

H.
Mein Gott, was ist das ein Geschmier,
Von den grössten Schnitzern wimmelt's schier. 2

B. (Yawning)
Wie glücklich ist doch der daran
Der sie, wie ich, nicht sehen kann. 2

We would kindly ask that you observe the tone of the following: "An Scribax."

Wer auszerte nicht Mitgefühl
Bei deinem neusten Trauerspiel!
Nicht Mitleid bloss, mein heiszer Schmerz
Durchzuckt mir mächtiglich das Herz,
Doch, armer Scribaz, über dich,
Das (ach!) dein Werk so jammerlich! 2

1- Vol. VII, p. 54.
"Der grosze Stax" and "Der Unübertreffliche" retain the spirit of those already referred to. Unfortunately, we have not been able to ascertain who the most excellent scribbler is, but we shall submit the dedication rather to show the spirit than the personal tinge.

"Der grosze Stax."

'Staz würde grosz? Du glaubst daran?'---
Ich schware darauf, fürwahr,
Wenn er's gleich als Dichter nicht werden kann,---
Er wird es sicher als Narr, 1

"Der Unübertreffliche."

'Unübertrefflich will ich werden!'
Sie scheinen's jetzt schon mir,
Denn Schlechter's sah und sieht man nimmer wohl auf Erden
Als Ihr Gedicht sich nennendes Geschmier! 1

Hebbel has set apart a short list of distichs under the general heading, "Schmerz-Gedichte." These are no more pervaded with the atmosphere of grief and sorrow than a great number of those that are not so classified. In fact, the majority of Hebbel's"Gedichte" would fall under this heading if they were to be classified according to content. Accordingly, let us surmise, that this group was composed during a time when Hebbel felt certain qualms of rather a painful nature. We have chosen the most typical i.e. mournful, ones for this paper. There is nothing peculiar-
ly cheering in the following assertion:

Dasz Ihr Bucb selbst nicht erkennen, das scheint Euch so sehr zu bekümmern;
Menschen, Ihr lebt nur dadurch, dass Ihr nicht wiszt, was Ihr seid! 1

Nor does the one we are about to quote give any encouragement to those who may already be doubtful as to the preponderance of good in the life of man. The criticism that he made of Byron, i.e., that Byron seemed to be an individual wholly dissatisfied with the order of events in the world in their relation to his life, could be pointed out significantly and seemingly in connection with:

Ach, wie lasst ein Menshenleben
Doch so wegen Frucht zurlick!
Ob dieJahre, die entschweben,
Auch zum Hundert sich verweben,
Alles, was sie Dir gegeben,
Zählst du auf ein Augenblick! 2

The other distich that we are offering is not so redolent of funeral wreaths and the attendant oppressive-ness. All three of these have been taken bodily from the "Tagebücher."

Warum der groszen Seele selbst noch mancher Fleck geblieben?
Dasz sie das Schlechste kann verzeihn, und das Beschränkte lieben! 3

From this comparatively short collection, we have selected only enough to round out the subject matter already presented, i.e., those of such merit as to add to the glory of the author as already established. There are a number in this list that express the thought so clearly and completely as to require no introduction. Among these stands "Die Techniker in der bildenden Kunst."

Bilder ohne Ideen und Verse ohne Gedanken
Vor der ewigen Kunst gelten beide mir gleich. 1

Of Goethe, and his ideal of Beauty he says:

Einen Garten zwar hat er in die Welt sich gegründet,
Aber wahrlich die Welt selbst nicht zum Garten gemacht. 2

Of gratitude, Hebbel speaks frequently in his diary. In 1835 he expresses the opinion that gratitude should be one of the most important and most desirable of virtues, with the possible exception that it be still greater not to urge to strongly our claims upon gratitude from others. 3 The identical idea is entered just a year later, though in slightly different words. 4 In 1842, apropose of the subject, he remarks that Napoleon expressed

3- Tgb. I, 11.
4- Tgb. I, 222.
himself on the subject of gratitude to the effect that
man is not so ungrateful as he is charged with being; that
the difficulty lay in that benefactors expect too much. 1
In the "Neue Gedichten" he records this summing up of
the situation as follows:

Varest du wirklich die schwerste der Tugenden, wie man versichert?
Eine schwerere noch giebt es: das Danks nicht zu viel
Für die Gabe zu fordern und nicht, zu stolz, zu gestehen,
Dass er dem Himmel dankt, wenn er den Armen beschenkt. 2

"Novalis", he says, "had the whimsical idea that,
because the whole world affected him artistically, he should
make the whole world the object of his "Poesie" 3 This
idea is balanced in this list by the distich:

Was die Sonne bestralt, das male, aber sie selber
Male nimmer, sie geht nie in ein Bild Dir hinein! 4

In the same diary note he says: "Jean Paul called
him of right a poetical Nihilist." 5

The note of discontent concerning the spirit and
condition of the German theatre is prevailing strongly
here:

Längst erschienen die Geister auf unserm Deutschen Theater,
Wann wird endlich dem Geist zu erscheinen erlaubt? 5.

There is, indeed, much force and truth to the poli-
tical epigram "An die Deutschen."

1- Tgb. II, 2451.
3- Tgb. I, 1711.
Hebbel was always deeply moved by music. In 1839 he wrote: "I scarcely ever weep because of pain and seldom through anger. But through beautiful music or the sight of a healthful happy child, tears force themselves into my eyes." 

While even earlier he had confessed that he could not bear to listen to music for more than a quarter of an hour at a time.

The reason was, he believed that when the depths of one's soul are stirred they are either tormented or made cold and unresponsive. Pain lay especially in the prolongation of intense emotion.

"Beim Anhören einer Musik."

The consolatory observation of the pedestrian who observes half enviously that the cavalier will reach his

2- Tgb. I, 1328.
3- Tgb. I, 25.
destination sooner though at greater risk of breaking his neck, is the basis for the distich "Erwiederung."

Schneller komm'ich zum Ziel! So ruft der prahlende Reiter, aber der Wand'rer versetzt: leichter auch brichst du den Hals. 2.

The thrust given to curiosity and love of excitement as a general trait of human nature shows us that it is after all not so different in the different centuries and among the various nations. Martial's neighbors enjoyed his and their other neighbors' troubles just as genuinely as Hebbel's did or yours and mine do.

Wo zwei Menschen sich küssen, da schleichen die Andern vorüber, wo sie sich prügeln, da steh'n Alle als chorus herum. 3

We are glad to be able to give the following statement of the author to prove that he did appreciate the value of good, hearty, whole-souled laughter.

Der Lachen ist die best aller Gaben, ein guter Mensch ist meistens der, der lacht, und jene, die nicht lachen können, haben ich weite -- And're weinen schon gemacht. 4

The precepts presented in the three following distichs are of universal appreciation, and while they are not new to us, it is right and good that they be set before us again in an attractive fashion, lest we forget!

1- Tgb. III, 4330.
4- Vol. VII, p. 239.
"Glücks-Bestimmung."

Willst du dem Schicksal begießen; so lerne Dich selber regieren.
Lenkst Du bedachtsam den Kahn, raubst Du den Winden ihr Spiel. 1

"Der Taucher."

Sprich, warum steigst Du hinab in nachtumschatteten Abgrund?
Perlen such ich mir, sie birgt die Tiefe allein. 2

"Gedanke."

Wandle geradeste Wege? sie sind die kürzesten immer,
Pfade der Wahrheit und Kraft führen Dich sicher zum Ziel! 2

And last and best of all we present the distichs

"Grosz sei in Einem! " This is one of Hebbel's best contribu-
tions, the result of reflection and deliberation in a
man of a wide range of personal experience, a man of acute
powers of observation, a man of clear mind and clarified
vision---and this man---a poet and a philosopher!

Nicht un's Weite, und nicht in das Einzelne splitt're
die Thatkraft,
kleines nur wirkt, wer stets kleines nur denket und will.
Sammle dein geistiges Licht für einen grossen Gedanken,
Herrlich und gross, wie er selbst, wirst Du vollenden ihn
dann,
Nur, weil die Strahlen, erhellend den Weltraum, einet die
Sonne,
Ist sie Sonne, und thront herrschend und segnend im All. 3

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