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I hereby recommend that the thesis prepared under my supervision by Charles Rechenbach
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with a Brief Life of Their Author. Materials for a
Biography of Lichtenberg.

be accepted as fulfilling this part of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Approved by:

Edwin H. Jergel.

THE APHORISMS OF GEORG CHRISTOPH LICHTENBERG
WITH A BRIEF LIFE OF THEIR AUTHOR

Materials for a Biography of Lichtenberg

A dissertation submitted to the
Graduate School
of the University of Cincinnati

in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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by

Charles William Rechenbach

A.B. University of Cincinnati 1933
M.A. University of Cincinnati 1934

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Den redlichen Mann zu erkennen ist in vielen
Fällen leicht, aber nicht in allen....

(J944)

INTRODUCTION

There are few undertakings less profitable than the attempt to "play the angel of historical resurrection," as Hebel once phrased it. This is more true, probably, in literary history than elsewhere; for the poet or writer once "dead" to the established canon of presentability has a way of stubbornly clinging to the fact of his decease. There is no denying that oblivion is usually well deserved,

".... denn alles, was entsteht,
Ist wert, dass es zu Grunde geht."

Reason as one will on the laws of taste and the shifting standards of criticism, Mephisto still has the facts in his favor.

The present study accepts the charge of being such an attempted act of resuscitation: in some respects the rather violent dragging of an unwilling Lazarus from what must be a fairly comfortable and congenial tomb. Deep, and perhaps solacing too, is the well of forgot-

tenness -- for those who, like Robert Southey, longed for immediate fame and lasting renown; and deeper still for those who, during their lifetimes, fought shy of the popular fancy, sought only to meet their own requirements, to satisfy themselves, and naturally failed in that.

Georg Christoph Lichtenberg entertained no heady notions regarding the durability of his published work, such as it was; and his unpublished writings, the so-called "Aphorisms," were set down without thought of publication in their extant form. They were the product of a simple, uncalculating urge to write about, describe, analyze, and probe into anything and everything -- an impulse as natural to Lichtenberg as his utter inability to complete any considerable piece of prose on similar subjects. He planned, rather vaguely and airily, to organize these fragments into larger, ambitious works, and earmarked some of them for such a purpose. But these shows of practicality were sops to his conscience more than signs of genuine intention. The "Waste-Books" -- as he called the volumes in which he gathered these varia et diversa -- remained "waste-books" to the end. The balance was never drawn and entered in the formal ledger.

Yet such was the character of his mind that the fragments became little organisms with all the attributes of life, and even trivia took on a certain brightness and

charm when he chose to fix on them. Often the trivial is only seemingly so. Goethe, Lichtenberg's friend and correspondent, was struck by this truth and remarked that where Lichtenberg makes a jest, a problem often lies hidden.¹ Lichtenberg's was a keen and subtle mind -- one not too quickly to be judged by semblances; a mind too sharp for its own comfort, and too honest to be tempered by the pain it caused itself; an inward-turning mind that felt things and people as parts of itself, and dealt with them accordingly -- in all, a mind which, despite its great individuality, was in the best sense typical of the good Dix-Huitième: seeming modern at times, often strikingly so, yet with that strange, un-"modern," ironic ease and gentility that are always dying, but never dead, and constitute, perhaps, the ground-bass of true intellectuality in our own age no less than in Lichtenberg's.

It is this quality of his mind and temper that is revealed in his Aphorisms, and can hardly be analyzed; the quality which attracted Nietzsche and was among the factors that moved him to cite the Aphorisms next after

¹"Lichtenbergs Schriften können wir uns als der wunderbarsten Wünschelrute bedienen; wo er einen Spass macht, liegt ein Problem verborgen." (Sprüche in Prosa, Hempel Ed., XIX, 188.)

Goethe's Conversations with Eckermann in his famous list of German prose works worth reading more than once,¹ and which moved Hebbel to exclaim that he would rather be forgotten with Lichtenberg than immortal with Jean Paul.² It is a quality that cannot be adequately defined, but reveals itself freely and openly to the reader who can feel any kinship with it. It is part and parcel with a wonderfully adroit, easy, unobtrusive style, which takes an idea gently in hand, scrutinizes it carefully but considerately, and then releases it from further duress, to travel unlet through other minds into other styles. The thoughts and observations are in themselves worthy of Goethe's, Kant's,³

¹Menschliches, Allzumenschliches, Kröner Ed., II, Abt. 2, 109: "Wenn man von den Schriften Goethes absieht und namentlich von Goethes Unterhaltungen mit Eckermann, dem besten deutschen Buch, das es gibt: was bleibt eigentlich... übrig, das es verdiente, wieder und wieder gelesen zu werden? Lichtenbergs Aphorismen, das erste Buch von Jung-Stillings Lebensgeschichte, Adalbert Stifters Nachsommer und Gottfried Kellers Leute von Seldwyla, -- und damit wird es einstweilen am Ende sein."

²Friedrich Hebbel, Tagebücher (Werner's Ed.) III 3805, 125 (Nov. 1846): "Ich habe in der letzten Zeit viel von Jean Paul gelesen und Einiges von Lichtenberg. Welch ein herrlicher Kopf ist der Letztere! Ich will lieber mit Lichtenberg vergessen werden, als unsterblich seyn mit Jean Paul!"

³Kant was a good friend and correspondent of Lichtenberg's, and an ardent admirer of Lichtenberg's wit and intellectual integrity. In a letter to Stäudlin, professor of theology at Göttingen, he praises Lichtenberg's "hellen Kopf, seine rechtschaffene Denkungsart und unübertreffliche Laune" (cf. Karl Vorländer, Immanuel Kant, Der Mann und das Werk, Leipzig 1924, II, 208). Kant's personal

Grillparzer's,¹ Schopenhauer's,² Nietzsche's,³ and Thomas Mann's⁴ attention -- and they are not the ones to take brass for gold. But in the end it is the character of their author that stimulates and invites further inquiry. His wit

copy of the aphorisms (Sch.¹I-II) has been preserved (cf. Bouillier, Essai sur Lichtenberg, 144), and it is interesting to note the passages that he underlined in black and red pencil; these are indicated in the notes to the translated aphorisms.

¹ Grillparzer's Tagebücher abound in excerpts from, and references to Lichtenberg. For example, he comments (Werke, Sauer's Ed., Abt. II-7:58, p. 29f.) on Lichtenberg's description of Sterne's character, and concludes: "Nur ein Mann den ich so verehere als Lichtenberg konnte mich diess glauben machen!" And a consideration of the state of German professional philosophy and psychology (Werke, II-7:79, 35) moves him to exclaim: "O Lichtenberg Lichtenberg, warum wardst du deinem Vaterland so früh entrissen!"

² Schopenhauer was a consistent admirer of Lichtenberg's wit and acumen; he cites him frequently in Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung, in the Parerga und Paralipomena, and in his letters. In the essay Selbstdenken (Par. u. Par. §270 (Werke, Deussen's Ed. V, 542f.)) occurs the passage: "Man kann ... die Denker eintheilen in solche, die zunächst für sich, und solche, die sogleich für Andere denken. Jene sind die ächten, sind die Selbstdenker, im zwiefachen Sinne des Worts: sie sind die eigentlichen Philosophen ... Lichtenberg ist ein Muster der ersten Art: Herder gehört schon der zweiten an."

³ See above.

⁴ In his essay Kosmopolitismus (in the collection Bemühungen, Gesammelte Werke X, 275ff.), Mann speaks (p. 277) of the anti-cosmopolitan forces active in Germany, and concludes ironically: "Wir haben den Feind im Lande. Goethe, Lichtenberg, Schopenhauer: es hilft nichts, das ist bereits europäische Prosa, direkt, auf deutsch, aus erster Hand." And later in the same essay (p. 282) he says: "Sie wünschen zu hören, was ich dem kosmopolitischen Geiste verdanke. Ich antworte, dass ... ich den Kosmopolitismus oder Europäismus im wesentlichen auf deutsch erlebte und dass diese Erlebnisse Goethe, Lichtenberg, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche und Wagner heissen."

is not of the glittering, artificial sort. His creeds and opinions are no veneer, but go deep into the man himself. The two are inseparable; so much so that a severance of life and thought is almost as unfeasible in Lichtenberg's case as it is in Goethe's.

The following pages present a brief biography of Lichtenberg, and attempt to show something of the psychological unity that lay behind the obvious logical paradoxes in his personality. They are intended to do no more, and may not succeed in doing so much. More valuable, perhaps, will be the appended selection of Lichtenberg's aphorisms, translated for the first time into English.

A NOTE ON THE SOURCES

So far as possible, the source-materials used in the biography, and in the commentary on the aphorisms, are drawn from the aphorisms themselves. These Lichtenberg collected in a series of books¹ which, beginning with C, he himself designated by the successive letters of the alphabet.

The original books were long believed to have been lost, until Albert Leitzmann rediscovered them in the possession of Lichtenberg's grandchildren at Bremen in 1896.² Unfortunately, books G and H were not among those he found, and seem to have definitely disappeared; and of K only a few pages at beginning and end still remain. The standard critical edition of the aphorisms is Leitzmann's, published from 1902 to 1908 as numbers 123, 131, 136, 140, and 141 of Deutsche Literaturdenkmale des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts. The chronology of the books is as follows:

A	1765-1770
B	1768-1771
C	1772-1773
D	1773-1775
E	1775-1776
F	1776 1779

¹Chiefly leather-bound folio volumes, with the exception of the first (A-B), which consists of six small notebooks.

²Cf. Aus Lichtenbergs Nachlass, Vorwort Vf.

J 1789-1793
 K 1793-1796
 L 1796-1799

Accordingly, there is a gap of ten years, from 1779 to 1789, which is particularly unfortunate since the lost books must have included much important material on Lichtenberg's attitude toward the philosophy of Kant.

This loss, however, is partially mitigated by the fact that the editors of the original editions of Lichtenberg's collected works still had most of the missing volumes¹ at their disposal and used them rather liberally in compiling their editions of the aphorisms.

There are two of these editions. The first, in nine volumes including the scientific works, was prepared by Lichtenberg's elder brother, Ludwig Christian, in collaboration with Friedrich Kries, professor at the Gotha gymnasium, and was published by Dieterich at Göttingen from 1801-1804 (Sch.¹). The second, in fourteen volumes (excluding the scientific works, but including a larger selection of aphorisms), was edited by Lichtenberg's sons and published at Göttingen 1844-1853 (Sch.²). It was reprinted several times.

¹Vincent goes too far when he says (p. 260) that the aphorism-books were available in their entirety to Lichtenberg's sons. The editors of Sch.² expressly state (Vorrede V) that ".... die Papiere unseres Vaters nicht durchaus vollständig auf uns gekommen...."

Wherever possible, the references in the biography and in the notes to the translated aphorisms are to Leitzmann's edition, and are indicated by letter and number. For the missing volumes G, H, and K, it is necessary to refer to the earlier editions: i.e., Sch.¹ and Sch.², with volume and page citations; but since these editions are rather rare, collateral reference is occasionally made to one of the three easily obtainable modern selections: Reichel's (Reclam 1286-1289), Herzog's (2 vols., Jena 1907), and Vincent's (Kröner's Taschenausgabe). References to the published works are, so far as possible, limited to those included in these three modern editions.

Lichtenberg's letters are uniformly cited from the three-volume edition prepared by Leitzmann and Carl Schüddekopf (Leipzig 1901-1904; abbr. Ltz.-Sch.).

A BRIEF LIFE OF LICHTENBERG

Georg Christoph Lichtenberg was born July 1st 1742 at Oberramstadt, a small town not far from Darmstadt in the district of Hessa, which at that time was ruled by Landgrave Ludwig VIII, whose love of great hunting parties and elaborate court theatricals ruined the public finances, and whose neighbor in Hessa-Cassel, some thirty years later, hired out his subjects like oxen to do England's hard work in North America. That one of the freest thinkers of the age, on political topics and all others, should have been born in this atmosphere of petty, narrow-minded despotism is one of the small ironies made to order by history to spice the early pages of a biography in the old style.

Like Lessing, Mörike, Nietzsche, and a good many more in German literature, Lichtenberg was the son of a clergyman with the rural parson's traditional full quiver of offspring: he was the youngest of a family of eighteen! Of these only five, including Georg Christoph, seem to have reached maturity.¹

¹Bouillier, in his Essai sur Lichtenberg (p.5) has delved rather deep to discover a few facts on the lives of Lichtenberg's three brothers and one sister. Only one of these, Ludwig Christian (1739-1812), has some claim to remembrance as a minor diplomatic agent (Legationsrat) at Gotha and as co-editor of the first edition of his younger brother's collected works.

The father, Johann Conrad Lichtenberg, (1689-1751), must have been a rather remarkably erudite man for the post he occupied. He was the author of numerous theological and moralistic writings; composed the words for the music, both sacred and profane, sung in the Hessian Landgrave's chapel and at his table; and was apparently something better than a dilettante in the natural and exact sciences, especially astronomy,¹ with a tendency in the direction of the Enlightenment. He was fond, in the pulpit, of astronomical allusions and analogues, and some of his sermons must have been what the French are fond of calling oeuvres de vulgarisation in the crescent scientific knowledge of his day.² He took personal charge of the elementary schooling of his youngest son, and no doubt influenced Lichtenberg toward the interest in mathematics and physics which he was later to make his profession.

¹Kästner (Elogium Georgii Christophori Lichtenberg, p.13, note 3, and appendix) relates an episode reported by L.'s brother: "Qui haec mihi scripsit, frater defuncti, addidit, recordari se adhuc, quam placuerit seni, cum in gremio eius sedens, cometam anni XLIV, plurimum quos saeculum vidit maximum, animaduertisset."

²Cf. Bouillier, op. cit., p.4f.; Hentzschel, Lichtenbergs Lebensanschauung, p.3; and Leitzmann's note to A37. This evidence certainly justifies Hentzschel in contesting Meyer's suggestion (Swift und Lichtenberg, p.65) that Lichtenberg may have grown up in a pietistic atmosphere which perhaps accounted for some of his later religious mysticism.

Of Lichtenberg's mother Henrike Katharine, who died in 1764, little is known, except that she was herself the product of a parsonage¹ and that she was worshipped by her swarm of children. Jördens,² in the manner of his time, describes her as "a woman of no common stamp -- gentle, calm, and virtuous by temperament; sympathetic, industrious, and always cheerful. She lived by preference among her children and in a small circle of chosen friends. The observation of nature held a particular fascination for her. Converse on the magnitude and expediency of the universe and quiet glances into the starry sky were for her a form of worship." Abstract the floss, and we have a picture of a self-effacing, home-tied woman, of no great intellectual powers, but unfailingly kind, filled with a genuine native faith, and almost wholly absorbed in the lives of her too numerous family. Lichtenberg always retained a really deep affection for her, and could say some twenty years after her death: "The memory of my mother and her goodness has become a kind of cordial for me. I take it, and always with the best of results, whenever I am in any way tempted in the direction of wrongdoing."³

¹Cf. Kästner, op. cit., 1: "Matre, Eckhardi, metropolitani Bischoffsheimensis, prope Moguntiam (i.e., Mainz filia" Kästner describes her (ibid.) as a "prima doctrinae et virtutis femina."

²Lexikon deutscher Schriftsteller und Prosaisten, III, 334.

³Sch.¹I,26 (Gor H): Vincent's edition, p.22.

From early childhood, and probably from birth,¹ Lichtenberg was afflicted with a malformation of the spine, which became progressively worse and finally resulted in a pronounced hunchback. Most of his biographers² attribute his satiric turn of mind to this bodily disfigurement; and there is a temptation to apply the Adlerian psychology to his "case" and explain his sharply critical attitude and his zest for controversy as an "over-compensation" of a bodily defect. This conclusion, however, is more obvious than it is warranted. Lichtenberg was surprisingly untroubled by a sense of physical inferiority. Even in his private notebooks he rarely speaks of his deformity, and on the infrequent occasions when he does the tone is good-humored rather than bitter. While still in his twenties he wrote: "His body is such that even a bad painter could have drawn it better in the dark; and if it were within

¹Hess, Reichel, Hentzschel, and the author of the article on L. in Meyer's Konversations-Lexikon attribute the malformation to injuries resulting from a fall in early infancy. This seems to be a pure supposition, the only basis of which consists in a few general remarks, such as the reference to "Leichtfertige Wärterinnen" in the essay Ueber Physiognomik (Reclam 349). It seems more likely that the condition was congenital, in view of the fact that L. was the eighteenth child of his parents. Cf. Vincent, Einleitung xiv. and Bouillier, p.3.) Kästner (op.cit.,²) expressly states: A natiuitate debile ipsi corpus contigerat...." (the italics, of course, are mine), an assertion which apparently is based on a communication from L.'s brother (Cf. p. xvi).

²Beginning with Hess in the Allg. Deutsche Biographie.

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his power to change it, he would give it less relief in several parts."¹ And some two decades later he remarks in much the same spirit: "If heaven should ever find it needful and profitable to publish a second edition of me and my life, I could offer several comments not unuseful to the editor -- touching chiefly the design of the frontispiece and the plan of the whole."² Only once or twice is there a tinge of stronger feeling: for example, in the place where he speaks of his dislike for expressions of sympathy.³ His physical handicap was to a degree offset by the regularity of his features⁴ and the well attested natural grace and affability of his manners; but, however manfully sustained, it must as Bouillier says, have been a cruel source of chagrin and disappointment, "d'autant plus qu'il fut assez sensible à l'odor di femmina."⁵

¹B77.

²J639.

³Fl204: "Mir ist es eine sehr unangenehme Empfindung wenn jemand Mitleiden mit mir hat, so wie man das Wort gemeiniglich nimmt.... Diese Art Mitleidens ist ein Almosen, und Almosen setzt Dürftigkeit von der einen und Ueberfluss von der andern Seite voraus...."

⁴The existing pictures of L., like so many mediocre eighteenth-century portraits, differ so greatly that this is all that can be said with certainty of his appearance.

⁵Bouillier, loc. cit.

In 1745, Lichtenberg's father was appointed General Superintendent of the Hessian clergy and naturally took up residence at Darmstadt. He occupied this position for only six years, and at his death, in 1751, left the family in much straitened circumstances. It was, however, possible for Lichtenberg to attend the Darmstadt gymnasium, where he paid for his books by tutoring some of the other pupils in mathematics.¹ His interests, even at this early period, were chiefly devoted to the sciences, but he seems to have done a good deal of reading in literature and philosophy and to have won some recognition from the school authorities for his accomplishments in the latter. Toward the end of his years at the gymnasium he publicly delivered a German poem on "True Philosophy and Philosophical Extravagance."²

¹ Much later he describes this situation, with a hint of a long-nourished sense of injury, in a letter to his nephew Friedrich August (Ltz.-Sch. III, 15): "Ueber dem Studiren meiner 3 Brüder ist unser gantzes väterliches Vermögen hingegangen, und ich habe davon nichts erhalten; ich glaube nicht, dass ich über 10 Gulden in meinem gantzen Leben empfangen habe."

² Die wahre Philosophie und philosophische Schwärmerey. This early poem -- one of the few that L. wrote -- has not been preserved; but it is interesting to note that, at this early date, he was already inveighing against the same Schwärmerey that he was later to oppose in his famous condemnations of the Kraftgenies. He probably refers to this poem in Bl28, where he says: "Der Trieb zum Bücherschreiben, der gemeiniglich wie ein andrer ebenso starcker in die Zeit des ersten Barts fällt, hat sich bey mir etwas früher eingestellt. Mein erstes Jucken, wenn ich vom

The notices of Lichtenberg's childhood and adolescence are very sparse, but give reason to believe that the strange juxtaposition of rational skepticism and religious superstition which characterizes the later aphorist and satirist had deep roots in his personality. He states that after his sixteenth year he could no longer believe that Christ was the son of God;¹ but he also tells that, at about this same time or a little earlier, he once put a note "addressed to an angel" on the attic floor in the hope that the next morning he would find an answer to his query, "What are the Northern Lights?"² and adds the rather wistful comment: "If only some wag had taken it upon himself to answer the note!"

These two incidental remarks throw as much light on the growth of Lichtenberg's character as would a dozen pages of solid autobiographical fact: they reveal the development of his inquiring, highly critical mode of thought that accepted nothing on faith, and of the deeper irrational stratum of his mind which made him believe in spite of himself; which led to his mystical theory of metempsychosis,³ and moved him to "draw premonitions from

ersten Vers der Messiade zu zählen anfang, fiel in das sechste Jahr des deutschen Hexameters und ungefähr in das vierzehnte wenn ich mit meiner Geburt anfang."

¹F1207.

²L679.

³Cf. A87, D251, E470, F1207, Sch.²I,32, J277.

every event and circumstance and in a single day to make oracles out of a hundred different things."¹

The only episode of his childhood on which he dwells at any length² is his devoted love for a schoolmate -- an episode which reminds one of the schoolboy attachments that Thomas Mann describes in Tonio Kröger and The Magic Mountain, but which, in Lichtenberg's case, seems to have been without pathological significance.

One or two other notices suggest that the morbid melancholia of Lichtenberg's later years may have been foreshadowed in his early youth. He writes, for example, in one of his first aphorism-books: "As early as my school-days I entertained ideas of suicide that ran directly counter to those generally accepted; and I remember that once I disputed in Latin on suicide, and sought to defend it."³ From this point the idea of suicide can be traced in Lichtenberg's thought throughout his life; it was apparently one of the chief factors in his "knack for drawing from every contingency of life, by whatever name it is known, the greatest possible quantity of poison for my own consumption."⁴

¹J694.

²F1210: "Verliebt sich in seinem 10ten Jahr in einen Knaben namens Schmidt (Stadtschule primus), eines Schneiders Sohn, hört von ihm gern erzählen.... hat ihn nie selbst gesprochen. Kletterte nach der Schule auf eine Mauer um ihn aus der Schule gehen zu sehen."

³A117.

⁴Sch.²I,14 (Vincent's ed., 21).

In 1763, at the age of twenty, Lichtenberg entered the University of Göttingen. His record of proficiency in the mathematical sciences had brought him to the attention of the Landgrave of Hessa, who, always liberal with the public funds, happened on this occasion to find a really worthy beneficiary of his usually dubious largess. Lichtenberg was assigned a stipend and the privilege of Freitisch,¹ and left immediately for Göttingen, where, except for one long absence and several shorter ones, he remained for the rest of his life, as student and subsequently as professor.

The Electorate of Hanover, which was then (and until the accession of Victoria in 1837) in personal union² with Great Britain, was by far the most liberally and equitably administered district of Germany in the second half of the eighteenth century. The change from the duodecimo autocracy of Hessa to the relative freedom and

¹Poor students were by this dispensation provided with free board, usually at the expense of the ruler of their native province.

²In 1714, Elector Georg Ludwig, the great-grandson of James I on the distaff side, became George I of England and the founder of the Hanoverian Line, which still occupies the British throne. The first two Georges paid frequent visits to Hanover, and remained in such close contact with Germans and Germany that they did not find it necessary to master the English language. George III was the first of the line to make England his regular residence; it was he who established at London a Permanent Cabinet for Hanoverian Affairs, which acted in conjunction with a viceroy and a privy council on the continent.

progressive spirit of Hanover must have been a social and political revelation to Lichtenberg, who expresses his great satisfaction with life under a largely anglicized rule. "The liberty to think and write, without let or hindrance, in the interest of Truth is a prerogative of the region over which George¹ rules and on which rests the blessing of Münchhausen."² Here we can raise our voices and call a fool a fool, whether he lies in chains or is worshipped."³

The University of Göttingen, founded in 1737 by George II and usually called after him the "Georgia Augusta," was in Lichtenberg's time the youngest of the German universities, and the most liberal and progressive. At this period, as Richard M. Meyer says,⁴ it incorporated the best tendencies of the period "in which the old type of German scholar was developing into the modern scientist and researcher." In this process of evolution the most important function of Göttingen was to "re-envigorate German scholarship by the introduction into it of English modes of thought,"⁵ the broader, more

¹George III, who later became L's personal friend; see below.

²Gerlach von Münchhausen, the first Kurator of the university; see below.

³F710.

⁴Op. cit., 52.

⁵Ibid., 60.

practical English outlook, of which Lichtenberg was to be the most eager disciple.

At the time of Lichtenberg's arrival in Göttingen the faculty list of the university read like an honor-roll of eighteenth-century scholarship and science. The most notable characteristic of the professors with whom he came into immediate contact was their diversified interests and their public-mindedness: almost without exception they had made, or were to make, outstanding contributions outside of their academic specialty, either in political life or in literature, or both.

Gerlach Adolf, Freiherr von Münchhausen (1688-1770), the first "curator"¹ and the real founder of the University, not only established the Göttingen library and the Society of Sciences, but also served, after 1765, as the first president of the Hanoverian Ministry. After Münchhausen, the oldest and best-loved member of the faculty was the almost incredibly active Swiss, Albrecht von Haller (1708-1777), who really created the modern science of physiology, and was almost equally well known as a poet and novelist² and as a public figure in his native city

¹The so-called Kurator acted as the intermediary between the university administration and the Hanoverian government.

²He is probably best known for his long descriptive and didactic poems Die Alpen (1729) and Vom Ursprung des Uebels (1734) and for his odes, but he also wrote three political novels: Usong (1771), Alfred, König der Angelsachsen (1773),

of Berne.¹ Gottfried Achenwall (1719-1772), professor of philosophy and law, initiated the science of statistics which was to become of such great importance to all phases of government and politics.² Christian Gottlob Heyne (1729-1812), probably Lichtenberg's best friend among the faculty,³ developed the modern science of classical philology, in which the study of grammar and language is subsidiary to an interest in the whole spirit of ancient life and civilization. The theologian Johann David Michaelis (1717-1791) rendered much the same service to Biblical and oriental philology. Ludwig Timotheus, Freiherr von Spittler (1752-1810), professor of philosophy and ecclesiastical history, finally became curator of the University of Tübingen and Württemberg minister of state. August Ludwig von Schlözer (1735-1809), professor of political science, was one of the first German scholars to achieve influence over German public opinion and to intervene

and Fabius und Cato (1774). L. always remained a great admirer of the poet Haller; cf. Sch.³ I, 307 (Vincent's ed., 80), and the essay Ueber die Macht der Liebe (Vincent, 232), where he says: "Read Euler and Haller instead of Goethe."

¹After his academic retirement he served as Ammann, and did much to meliorate social conditions in his canton.

²Meyer (op. cit., 56f.) says of him: "Alle Lebensäusserungen zu beobachten...., vorläufig ohne jede bestimmte Absicht oder Beurtheilung -- das war das Ziel dieser.... so voll im Leben stehenden Disciplinen -- und es ist zugleich das Motto für Lichtenberg's Studien."

³L. corresponded regularly with him during his two visits in England and was apparently on intimate terms with both the professor and his family.

directly in the political life of the time. His Staatsanzeigen, as Meyer says,¹ marked the beginning of political journalism in Germany. He is most famous for the courageous, Zola-like part that he played in the heinous Waser affair,² which was publicized in the periodical that Lichtenberg later edited.³

After the death of Münchhausen and the retirement of Haller, by far the most widely known character at Göttingen was Abraham Gotthelf Kästner (1719-1800), Lichtenberg's instructor in mathematics, physics, and astronomy, and later his colleague.⁴ A man much overrated in his own day and later practically forgotten, Kästner was better known as an aphorist and a society wit than as a scholar. Yet even his literary work seems to a modern reader all too brittle and superficial, and Meyer does him no very great injustice when he states⁵ that, "apart from a few pointed epi-

¹op. cit., 57.

²Waser, a minor Swiss official, sent anonymous reports of the misgovernment of Zürich for publication in Schlözer's Staatsanzeigen. The authorship of these became known, and Waser was executed without trial. Schlözer's condemnations of this flagrant injustice were printed in Lichtenberg's Göttingische s Magazin der Wissenschaften und Litteratur (1781: II, IV).

³Cf. p. lxxviii.

⁴L. also attended the lectures of the mathematician Meister, and early cultivated both his and Kästner's personal friendship. Cf. Kästner, op. cit., 2.

⁵op. cit., 58.

grams,.... he wrote nothing but rhymed médiance and flat declamation"; and one of the sharp tongues of his own day¹ characterized him rather well as "the best mathematician among the poets, and the best poet among the mathematicians." Vain, irascible, and highly opinionated, he was, like Samuel Johnson, more esteemed as an impressive and excentric personality than as a scientist or writer. Unlike most of the Göttingen faculty, who were for the most part free-thinkers and rather international than otherwise in their outlook, Kästner was a notably pious Lutheran, though by no means a fanatic, and a very decided patriot and whole-hearted admirer of Frederick the Great.² He seems to have cared precious little for the really scientific aspects of his position, and allowed the actual experimenting and the work of astronomical observation to devolve gradually upon his two assistants, Erxleben³ and Lichtenberg, until finally he was the

¹The mathematician Gauss, as quoted in the article on Kästner in the Allg. Deutsche Biographie.

²One of his best-known epigrams concerns the Frenchman who inquired after a translation of ἡ τροχὴ. Kästner responded: "Nun wohl, Monsieur, wir können 'Rossbach' sagen." Cf. Becker, op. cit., pp. 28,33.

³Johann Christian Erxleben (1744-1777), the son of the first woman to receive the degree of Doctor of Medicine in Germany, was L.'s colleague until his death. His Anfangsgründe der Naturlehre was for years the standard physics text in German-speaking countries, and after his death was revised and republished by Lichtenberg in several editions (Cf. p.276).

counterpart -- if not the prototype -- of Lichtenberg's distinguished professor who "was still hanging on at the university -- like a handsome chandelier where no light has burned for twenty years."¹ In his declining years it might honestly be said of him that "a mind never stood still with greater majesty."² Yet he was a man of great, if not very fecund, erudition; and his Latinity was the object of general admiration. Lichtenberg compares him in one place with a dictionnaire encyclopédique.³

Kästner seems to have taken a great liking to Lichtenberg and helped to advance him in every way, although he did not spare him an occasional barb of what must have been a very unpleasant wit.⁴ Lichtenberg rarely speaks of him expressly as a scientist, and then quite non-committally, but he retained a great respect for him as a writer, and expressed the opinion that "among the Germans, Lessing, Wieland, and Kästner write the best prose."⁵ De-

¹Sch.2II,88.

²C24.

³B235.

⁴Occasionally the exposure to this wit moved L. to rather sharp utterances; cf. J714: "Mein grosser Trost, oder eigentlich was mir die süsseste Rache bei Kästners Sticheleien auf mich und andere gewährt, ist die völlige Ueberzeugung, dass nie ein grosser und ein guter Mann solcher Neckereien fähig war."--We are almost led to believe that some of Kästner's ill-humored jibes may have referred to L.'s deformity.

⁵B64.

spite the jealousy which Kästner later evinced toward his younger colleague,¹ he appears to have remained a good friend of Lichtenberg's until the end; and it was Kästner who, when he himself was over eighty, delivered the obituary discourse on Lichtenberg before the Göttingen Royal Society of Science.²

It is easy to see why Lichtenberg was perfectly at home in Göttingen, and why he declined an appointment at the University of Giessen offered him by his recent benefactor, the Landgrave of Hessa.³ Financial difficulties he did experience, but these were to be with him throughout his life, and they seem never to have greatly troubled him. His board was free, and he contrived to pay for his lodging by tutoring, reading proof for various Göttingen printers, and writing occasional verse.⁴ Regarding the

¹Cf. Bouillier, op. cit., 23: "Le vieux professeur, jadis renommé, n'avait pas su prendre à temps sa retraite, et continuait à faire des cours de plus en plus délaissés: d'où, son aigreur contre ses collègues plus jeunes et plus en vogue."

²Elogium Georgii Christophori Lichtenberg (Comment. Soc. Reg. Scient. Gotting. XIV, 1800). This is doubtless the most important single source for L.'s biography, since Kästner had known L. intimately ever since his arrival at Göttingen and corresponded with his relatives (cf. 2) for information on his earlier life. The original text and a translation are given in an appendix (pp. 247-285).

³Cf. Ltz.-Sch. I, 3f.; and Kästner, (op. cit., 3): ".... patria Giessam repetebat, praetulit nostram vniuersitatem literariam...."

⁴Ltz.-Sch. II, 237.

latter occupation he writes to Kestner¹ in 1766: "In honor of the union of the Swedish and German literatures² I wrote a very decent ode @ 4 reichsthalers, 16 groschen, which you will receive shortly. I had really agreed on 4 thalers even, but I charged a gulden extra for two satirical traits that I brought in at the beginning.... All in all, I've been writing an amazing amount of verse recently, and I find that putting camellias behind my ear is a great help."³

It is, however, obvious that he allowed nothing to impede the progress of his studies. So far as intellectual pursuits were concerned he erred, if at all, on the side of excess. His chief field of research was naturally mathematics and physics; but Lichtenberg could never have been content to specialize so exclusively, and he read and studied omniverously in ancient and modern literatures, philosophy,

¹Goethe's friend Johann Christian Kestner (1741-1800).

²The marriage of the Swedish professor Murray and the daughter of Professor Friederich.

³Ltz.-Sch. I, 2. None of these occasional poems has been preserved, but this is no great misfortune, to judge from the few extant poems published in Nachlass 117-133. L. was a rather clever versifier, but he certainly lacked all genuine feeling for poetry, a fact that is corroborated by his literary criticism so far as it bears on the lyric genre. This might be a condemnation if he himself had not been so well aware of his shortcoming. Gervinus aptly remarks (Gesch. der dt. Dichtung⁵, 204: "Er wollte unstreitig lieber kein Dichter sein als ein mittelmässiger; denn dieses schien ihm wie Horaz unter allen mittelmässigen Dingen das elendste zu sein. Warum er aber dennoch einige mittelmässige Verse machte? Er hatte gehört, jeder gute Kopf müsse einmal in seinem Leben Verse gemacht haben, und es sähe ihm gar nicht unähnlich, wenn er dieser Pflicht absichtlich Genüge geleistet hätte."

and history.¹ "Desultory reading has always been my greatest pleasure," he later affirmed,² and this was as true of his early years at the university as of his maturity. It is doubtful whether even Schopenhauer covered a broader territory. Subsequently, when he had acquired his fine technique of self-criticism, he asserts that, during these years, his interests were too widely diversified; that he had "a somewhat exaggerated notion of his own faculties,"³ and "drew the plan of his intellectual edifice on too large a scale."⁴ "In the years from 1763 to 1765 I should have been constrained to work at least six hours a day at the most difficult and serious subjects (higher geometry, mechanics, integral calculus); I could have gone far if this had been the case. But I never actually prepared myself to be a writer, read only what I wished, and retained only that which impressed itself on my memory without effort on my part, or at least without a definite purpose."⁵

Whether this extensive reading was really a fault is a question easily answered in Lichtenberg's case. Without it, he might have become a more learned physicist, whose name

¹Kästner says (*op. cit.*, 2): "Nullum doctorum neglexisse, a quibus in philosophia, naturae cognitione, literis ad humanitatem, orbisque notitiam pertinentibus proficere poterat, ostenderunt multifariae quibus inclaruit eruditionis specimina."

²J187.

³Sch.²I, 121.

⁴*Ibid.*, 19.

⁵*Ibid.*, 121.

would have been forgotten with the advance of science, but never the keen historical critic of affairs and the connoisseur of human nature in its evolution, since more depends here on breadth and depth than on intensity. But it is true that this slower, more organic method of rounding out a system of thought is less productive of immediate results and in the end more painful than the more direct means; and in middle age Lichtenberg could survey the course of his development and observe: "I have travelled the road of knowledge as dogs proceed when they go with their master on a walk -- a hundred times up and down the same stretch, and when I arrived I was weary."¹

Nevertheless, his progress seems to have met with the approval of the University administration, for in 1770² he was appointed professor philosophiae extraordinarius.³ (Lich-

¹J470.

²Previously, in 1767, he had published his first work, a series of observations on the Lisbon earthquake, in the Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen. Now, in 1770, he published as a "program" for the announcement of his public lectures, a treatise titled Betrachtungen über einige Methoden, eine gewisse Schwierigkeit in der Berechnung der Wahrscheinlichkeit beim Spiel zu heben (cf. Pütter, Versuch einer acad. Gesch., 174). Kästner (op. cit., 3) praises this pamphlet in terms that are equally applicable to all of L.'s later work: "Hoc primo specimen publico monstravit, quantum posset in exhibendis oculo bene valenti perspicue, rebus, quae vel natura sua obscuriores sunt, vel nimia et misera eruditorum diligentia, quam subtilitatem appellari volunt, obscurantur."

³It seems that L.'s appointment was due to the especial patronage of Münchhausen, since Kästner (op. cit., 3) refers to L. as "vltimus Professorum quos Gottinga debebat curae Munchhusii, eiusdem anni mense Nouembri ad coelites vocati."

tenberg himself preferred at this time to say professor philosophiae extraordinariae.) His first lecture dealt with the theory of conic sections, which was then counted among higher mathematical subjects.¹

The extra-academic reading in which Lichtenberg so avidly indulged himself previous to his appointment included a tremendous amount of English, as we can judge from the comments and excerpts in the earliest aphorism-books. He had always been an admirer of British life and British thought, and so thoroughly mastered the English language² that, from 1767 on, he was in effect University Tutor for the English students resident at Göttingen. It was to these contacts that he owed his first trip to England, during the Easter holidays of 1770, as the companion of two young Englishmen, Swanton³ and Irby.

¹Cf. Ebstein, Aus G.C. Lichtenbergs Correspondenz, p.3.

²His pronunciation was so perfect that, on his second English trip, even Garrick said that he would hardly take him for a foreigner. "Er [Garrick] sagte, Er hätte noch nie einen Ausländer so englisch sprechen hören, wie mich, und sollte mich kaum für einen halten" (Ltz.-Sch. I, 240). He was fond of using English words and phrases in his aphorisms, and sometimes corresponded in English (cf., for example, Ltz.-Sch. I, 31, 270ff.). His written English was at least as good as Schopenhauer's (cf. Arth. Schopenhauer's Nachlass, ed. Grisebach, III, 185ff.).

³The son of the deceased Admiral Swanton, and a private pupil of L.'s in mathematics (cf. Ltz.-Sch. I, 4).

After a very difficult journey lasting fifteen days,¹ they arrived in London April 9th. Lichtenberg was a little dazed by his first experience of a great city. "I am living now," he writes to Heyne,² "in such a state of confusion that I, who usually can fill pages with petty gossip, am in great embarrassment to clarify enough for only a small letter out of London and the hotchpotch of things that I could say. I have seen the sea, several warships of 74 guns, the King of England in all his pomp and circumstance with the crown on his head in the House of Parliament, Westminster Abbey with the famous tombs, St. Paul's Cathedral, the Lord Mayor in a great procession in the midst of a crowd of thousands all shouting 'Huzza! God bless him! Wilkes³ and Liberty!' -- and all this in only a week!" He lived during his stay at the town-house of Lord Boston, Irby's father. "I am living here," he explains,⁴ "in a house-

¹Ltz.-Sch. I, 5 and 8: "Auf der See habe ich zwey Tage und zwey Nächte zugebracht, und über 8 stunden in einem solchen Sturm, dass unser Vorder Segel riss, und die meisten Seeleute seekranck wurden...."

²Ltz.-Sch. I, 5.

³John Wilkes (1727-1797), the popular member of the House of Commons and publisher of the oppositional journal The North Briton. He was deprived of his seat in Parliament and arrested for lèse-majesté, but was reelected during his imprisonment. He was released in 1770, shortly before L.'s arrival in London.

⁴Ltz.-Sch. I, 6.

hold where I have no rest and no time to compose myself, quite as if I were at a court. I have to dress twice daily, take luncheon at half past four and dinner at twelve at night, usually in large gatherings."

When he writes to Dieterich a few days later,¹ he again complains of the impossibility of leading his accustomed simple life, and concludes: "I hope to be back soon, although a Darmstadt Oberförster would call my life here ideal, and I wish that some fat, hearty fellow, whose only pleasure in traveling is eating and drinking, could be in my place. In a word, I live (against my will, --that is the worst part of it) right royally,² and am convinced that, if I continued for a summer in this way, my tastes might be seduced and brought into an eternal dissonance with my pocketbook."

All in all, despite his visits to the British Museum³ and the Royal Observatory at Richmond,⁴ and his conversations with a few kindred minds,⁵ Lichtenberg's first ex-

¹Ltz.-Sch. I, 11.

²L. uses his favorite adjective expressive of luxury: churfürstlich.

³Ltz.-Sch. I, 10.

⁴Ibid. I, 13.

⁵Especially Lord Marchmont, whom he first met when he visited Parliament, and who later called on him at his quarters.

perience of English life impressed him chiefly with two facts. Of these the first was the abundance, luxury, and venality of British material existence. "In London," he says in the same letter to Dieterich, "anything can be bought -- both the things that cannot be got for money in other countries, and those that can elsewhere be had for nothing. Everything is set out, helter-skelter, for sale: at all hours of the day, in every street, and put up in every form -- dressed, bound, casked, packed, unbound, painted, preserved, raw, perfumed, in silk and in wool, with or without sugar. In short, what a man cannot get here if he has money, it will do him no good to hunt for in this mortal world." And the second item that inspired his admiration was the remarkable attractiveness of English women. "No sooner does he set foot in England (provided that he consists of something more than feet) than everyone alike -- student, professor, and bookseller¹ -- is struck by the exceptional beauty of the women; and the number of these beauties increases the nearer one comes to London. Whoever does not feel on sure ground in such surroundings has only one course to pursue. Let him take the next packet-boat back to Holland; there he is safe."

The Lord impressed L. as a great admirer of Wolfian philosophy and a competent judge of German letters and science. (Ltz.-Sch. I, 6-7, 9 -10.)

¹This again is for Dieterich's eye (Ltz.-Sch. I, 11-12).

This first trip to England, was, accordingly, little better than a rather strange and wild holiday-lark for Lichtenberg. He learned practically nothing of the real quality of British life, but only intoxicated himself, in the role of the typical provincial tourist, on the external show of metropolitan bustle and excitement and the novelty of high social life. It was not at this time that he acquired the taste for the more solid phases of English culture and enterprise that was later to make him so ardent an anglophile and so willing an apostle of British practicality and modernism.

At the end of four weeks he was again in Hanover -- with a new gratitude for the quiet and privacy of his study and the uneventful days of semi-rural Göttingen.

It was in May 1770, less than a month after his return from England that Lichtenberg was appointed Professor Extraordinary at Göttingen. His first public lectures were delivered shortly after.¹ He seems to have devoted a considerable part of his time during this period to astronomy. In the previous year, he and Kästner had observed the eclipse of June 19th, and published their findings jointly;² and now, in 1770 and 1771, Lichtenberg independently continued this astronomical research, pub-

¹Cf. p. xxxiv.

²Kästner, op. cit., 3, and Gött. gel. Anz. 1769, 665.

lishing accounts of two comets that he had observed,¹ and later preparing charts of their paths.² Kästner highly commends Lichtenberg's ability as a draftsman;³ and this, together with the free-hand diagrams and sketches,⁴ some of them rather complicated, which decorate the pages of his letters, leads one to believe that he was specially trained in this craft.

These private astronomical observations should, however, be regarded as Lichtenberg's avocation, so to speak; for between the years 1772 and 1774 he was entrusted with the execution of two official projects which, with his teaching, must have taken up most of his time. The first of these was a survey of the Electoral provinces, undertaken at royal command, for the purpose of determining the geographical positions of the important towns: Hanover, Osnabrück, Stade. For this work Lichtenberg was granted the use of a newly perfected quadrant from King George's private observatory at Richmond.⁵

Accordingly, Lichtenberg left Göttingen in March 1772 for his first observation-site, Hanover. Here, in

¹Gött. gel. Anz. 1770, p. 705, and 1771, p. 537.

²Ibid., 1774, pp. 97 and 249.

³Kästner, op. cit., 3: "Erat ipsi, quae non semper profundioribus studiis iungitur, facultas et patientia, figuras describendi, quae dum docent, etiam oculos delectant."

⁴These are reproduced in the Leitzmann-Schüddekopf edition.

⁵Cf. Kästner, op. cit., 4.

the capital of the Electorate, he seems to have enjoyed himself hugely, despite a temporary impairment of vision,¹ which recurred later in England,² but which in both cases was probably more imaginary than real. He dined out almost every evening, in the excellent company of Geheimer Sekretär Schernhagen, Kammerpräsident von Lenthe, and Otto von Münchhausen;³ and he informs us that, at his departure in July, he had to pay his respects to thirty families.⁴ Here, as in London, Lichtenberg was much esteemed socially; for we can be sure that he treated the guests at table to the wit that flows so freely in his notebooks and published writings.

On his way to his next station, Osnabrück, he stopped off at Bückeburg, where he spent several hours with Herder,⁵ who then was pastor at the court of Schaumburg-Lippe. We are given no account of their conversation, but can imagine that it revolved about Lavater, who at that time was just beginning to develop his pseudo-science of physiognomy.⁶ On

¹Ltz.-Sch. I, 30, 32, et seq.

²Cf. D629 and p. 190.

³The editor of the periodical Der Hausvater, to which L. refers in All0.

⁴Ltz.-Sch. I, 82.

⁵Ibid., I, 81. It is possible that Herder may have met L. previously in 1770, when he passed through Göttingen with his protege, the Prince of Holstein.

⁶L.'s first satire against Lavater, his Timorus, was published in 1773.

this subject, at least, Herder and Lichtenberg would have been in harmony; but we can hardly think that they would have agreed on much else. Herder's poetic mysticism and his excentric prose style¹ reflect a disposition that was incompatible with Lichtenberg's; and, correspondingly, the references to Herder in Lichtenberg's notebooks and in his published works are few and far between.

From Osnabrück, Lichtenberg travelled by stage to Hamburg, where he took ship, in May 1773,² for the last station of his survey, the little town of Stade, located on the navigable River Schwinge some thirty or forty kilometers west and north. His sojourn here was uneventful enough, but was interrupted by an excursion that provided more than a little excitement. Since Hamburg was so close by, Lichtenberg made frequent trips there, and struck up an acquaintance with several army officers, with whom he agreed to take a pleasure cruise to the island of Heligoland.³ Early in September they set out,⁴ despite the warnings of the port officials; and a few hours after the party had left Cuxhaven a severe storm blew up. But they

¹Which moved L. to exclaim: "To write as Herder does is un-Christian toward posterity" (E453).

²Ltz.-Sch. I, 129.

³The island was then a Danish possession. It was taken by the English in 1807, and remained under English rule until 1892, when it was ceded to Prussia in exchange for Zanzibar.

⁴The following account is from a letter to Marie Tietermann (Ltz.-Sch. I, 166f.).

did not turn back to harbor, but anchored in a cove, where they lay for a day and a night. When they failed to return to Cuxhaven, and had not been sighted by arriving ships, it was thought that they had foundered, and a premature report to that effect was printed in the newspapers. The tale reached Göttingen and caused a great hubbub, until the rumor was settled by their return. Lichtenberg assures us that, on the trip, he acquired an excellent coat of tan and, in contrast with most of the party and the crew, was not at all seasick; but he gives no description of the island itself; probably he did not even land.

In the few days between his reincarnation and his return to Stade, Lichtenberg made a new acquaintance. He reports in a letter to Dieterich:¹ "At a coffee-house in Hamburg I told a few friends that I planned to visit Klopstock;² he heard of this, and forestalled me. We were together four times. He escorted me to my ship, helped me on to the ladder, and solemnly promised to fetch me off to Hamburg when I am ready to leave here."³

¹Ltz.-Sch. I, 168.

²After the overthrow of his patron, Count Bernstorff, by Struensee, Klopstock had left Copenhagen and settled in Hamburg, where he remained until his death, in 1803.

³This was written at Stade.

This was Lichtenberg's only meeting with Klopstock, who apparently did not keep his "solemn promise"; for in November Lichtenberg was again in Göttingen,¹ the survey completed, and there is no intervening reference in notebooks or correspondence to the poet of the Messiah. To judge from Lichtenberg's later comments on Klopstock and his poetry,² we can hardly believe that the four interviews were very cordial, and there was certainly no basis for a lasting friendship between the enthusiastic, high-flying poet and the keen-minded, practical scientist and man of affairs.

In this same year, 1773, Lichtenberg published his first satire, which he had composed two years earlier, his Timorus, or a Defence of Two Israelites Who Were Moved, by the Force of Lavater's Arguments, and the Attraction of the Göttingen Sausages, to Adopt the True Faith. This pamphlet, which impresses us today as long-winded and rather strained in its humor, was printed in Berlin³ under the pseudonym of Conrad Photorin,⁴ and marks the beginning of Lichtenberg's almost life-long campaign against the well-meaning, but rather addle-

¹Ltz.-Sch. I, 186.

²Cf. especially F69 and F752.

³In contrast with his other works, which were all published at Göttingen by his friend Dieterich.

⁴Obviously a Greek translation of Lichtenberg.

brained clergyman, Johann Caspar Lavater, who counted even young Goethe among his less ardent disciples.¹ At this time Lavater was not yet in full career on his famous physiognomical goosechase, but was imbued with a kindly, but misguided zeal to convert the whole globe to Christianity. As Goethe says, he was completely honest in his convictions, for "the idea of mankind that he had built up in himself according to his own humanity was so closely bound up with the conception of Christ which lived in him that it was to his mind inconceivable for a human being to live and breathe without being a Christian."² This fervent belief finally led him to the principle, "Either Christian or atheist,"³ and inspired him to numerous attempts at conversion, from which Goethe himself was not spared.⁴ But the chief object of his attentions was the Jew Moses Mendelssohn, Lessing's friend and the prototype of Nathan the Wise.

Despite its expansiveness, Lichtenberg's essay is a really noble defence of religious and racial tolerance in

¹Cf. Wahrheit und Dichtung III, 14.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid. "Ich erklärte darauf, dass wenn er mir mein Christentum nicht lassen wollte, wie ich es bisher gehegt hätte, so könnte ich mich auch wohl zum Atheismus entschliessen, zumal da ich sähe, dass niemand recht wisse, was beides eigentlich heissen solle."

the person of Mendelssohn, whom at this time¹ he greatly admired. In a contemporary aphorism² he expresses himself even more strongly on the subject: "What manner of man must this Johann Caspar Lavater be, who, after reading one of Mendelssohn's opinions, feels nothing but the wish that the author were a Christian! Why not wish him the whole Prussian cut and finish³ and be done with it? I might wish that such a one as Süß⁴ were a Christian -- or a Jew like Mendelssohn. But I have no more desire to see Mendelssohn a Christian than to have him a citizen of Zürich."

The greater part of Lichtenberg's time after his return to Göttingen was occupied in the second of the official duties entrusted to him by the university and, indirectly, the British-Hanoverian government. This consisted in preparing an edition of the unpublished works of the mathematician and astronomer Johann Tobias Mayer (1726-1762). Mayer, who is reckoned with Friedrich Wilhelm Herschel among the greatest astronomers of the century, was largely self-taught. He first made a name for himself as

¹For a more detailed discussion of this episode and of L.'s later change in attitude toward Mendelssohn and the Jews in general, see p. 207f.

²C37.

³L. was no fonder of the Prussian spirit than Heine was later on (e.g., in his Wintermärchen). When, during his astronomical survey, he visited Minden, he was quick to note the difference in atmosphere between the Prussian province and his own Hanover (cf. Ltz.-Sch. I, 83).

⁴The Jud Süß Oppenheimer of Feuchtwanger's well-known novel.

a geographer in the Homann Cartographical Institute at Nuremberg, and was called in 1751 to the philosophical faculty at Göttingen, where he remained, as a colleague of Kästner and Meister, until his death. He is known chiefly for his lunar tables (1752-1753) and his method of determining longitude at sea.

The task of editing Mayer's posthumous manuscripts had been in part essayed by Kästner, who published portions of them at various times;¹ but the bulk of the material was handed over to Lichtenberg,² who organized the various separate papers presented before the Göttingen Royal Society of Sciences, improved the diagrams, and prepared the whole for publication. The volume³ finally appeared in 1775, under the title: Tobiae Mayeri opera inedita. Edidit, et observationum appendicem adiecit Georgius Christophorus Lichtenberg. This edition contained Mayer's famous lunar chart and his Observationes astronomicae quadrante murali habitae in observatorio Gottingensi, of which a new edition, based on Lichtenberg's, appeared in London in 1826.

¹Cf. Kästner, op. cit., 4-5.

²Kästner, as usual, takes full credit for securing this commission for L., but it is more likely that the assignment was made directly by the King's Council for Hanoverian Affairs.

³The edition bears on the title-page the notation Volumen I. Apparently one or more volumes were to follow, but they did not appear. Kästner says (op. cit., 5): "Praeter haec edita, supersunt adhuc, quibus ordinandis et coniugendis ocium editori defuit, disiecti membra astronomi."

In 1774, Lichtenberg was created a member extraordinary of the Göttingen Royal Society of Sciences, and most of his later scientific works were published in the Commentationes of the Society. It was not until 1776, shortly after his return from his second visit to England, that he was installed as a regular member.¹

As early as November 1773, Lichtenberg was planning a second, longer sojourn in England. He writes at this time to Dieterich:² "It is now settled that I shall go to England, and I plan to spend the coming Easter in London. The arrangement is such that I shall be quite to myself.... And once I am there, I shall not leave so soon again -- not before three years." But he was to be disappointed both in regard to the time of his departure and the duration of his stay. It was not until autumn of 1774 that the Kuratorium of the University granted him his leave of absence and a special travelling stipend,³ and he was to remain for only a year and a half. The exact purpose of this second trip to England is not altogether certain. Probably he was sent for several reasons: to report personally to the King on the results of his work in Hanover, Bückeburg, and Stade; to be

¹Cf. Pütter, Versuch einer acad. Gesch. II, 174.

²Ltz.-Sch. I, 184.

³Cf. Bouillier, op. cit., 13.

on hand in London to present his edition of Mayer when it should come off Dieterich's presses; and finally to visit the English observatories and natural museums. In any event, September 1774 finds Lichtenberg again in London, and the ensuing months were to constitute the greatest extrinsic experience of his life.

After another unpleasant crossing he was well received in London, found temporary lodgings already prepared for him in the town-house of his friend Lord Boston, and dined on the second or third day after his arrival with his former student, Sir Francis Clerke.¹ He was to remain in the capital for only a little over a week, since the adjournment of Parliament made it possible for Lord Boston to take his guest with him to his country place at Hedsor in Buckinghamshire, which Lichtenberg describes as a "romantic estate in one of the most charming sections of England."² But in his short stay Lichtenberg contrived to see a truly amazing amount of the London sights; one wonders, in fact, when he found time enough to sleep, or even draw a long breath. He saw performances at Drury Lane and Foot's Theatre in the Haymarket, and vaudeville at Covent Garden and Sadlerswell's Theatre. At the latter place he tells us

¹Ltz.-Sch. I, 194.

²Ibid., 195.

that he could secure a seat only on the proviso that he hold a little girl of six on his lap,¹ but he enjoyed the rope-walking and pantomime none the less for his squirming burden. He also visited Cox's² Museum; climbed the steeple of St. Paul's, telescope in hand, and was much edified by the view; and attended three race-meetings.³ It seems probable that he was in need of a rest-cure by the time he arrived at Hedsor.

But there was no rest for the weary. His stay at Lord Boston's estate was short, and before the end of October Lichtenberg was in a bustle of social activity as the personal guest of George III at Kew in Surrey, the royal residence with the famous botanical gardens.

"I am with the King and Queen a few hours each day," he writes to Dieterich⁴ shortly after his change of quarters, "and have permission to stay here as long as I wish, to go to the city or to the country and return here, to make use of the observatory: in short, I am, in many respects, one of the King's most favored subjects." And to Baldinger⁵ he reports: "I occupy a Royal house to myself, sleep between

¹Ltz.-Sch. I, 196.

²This seems to be the manufacturer of physical instruments who is mentioned by Kästner, op. cit., 5.

³Ltz.-Sch. I, 200.

⁴Ibid.

⁵The editor of Baldinger's Neues Magazin für Aerzte, in which L. later published his Fragment von Schwänzen.

Royal sheets, drink Royal Rhinewine, and chew at least twice a week my Royal roast beef."¹ As soon as possible he presented a copy of Mayer's works to the King, and was pleased to send word to Dieterich that His Majesty had pronounced the typography equal to that of Baskerville.²

He freely availed himself of the King's permission to visit London, and even at this time initiated his practice of putting on his oldest clothes and mingling with the crowds. "In Covent Garden," he writes to his confidant Dieterich, "I circulated in an old suit of clothes amongst a mob intoxicated with patriotism, where the people of the one party screamed Vivat! and swung their hats, and the other half, instead of answering with Pereat! threw dead cats."³

Lichtenberg himself gives us an inimitable account⁴ of the manner in which he spent his time:

"When the weather is fair, I have wonderful days. I go to the observatory at Richmond or, if it is not quite clear, I stroll in the gardens. The winters here scarcely trouble one at all, and the gardens of Kew and Richmond are so filled

¹Ltz.-Sch. I, 202.

²Ibid., 201.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., 203. (From the letter to Baldinger cited above.)

with laurel and other evergreen shrubs and trees, in which so many birds sing and flutter, that I can hardly realize that this is the time of year when at Göttingen (in almost the same latitude) there are sleighs on the streets. Just the day before yesterday we had such weather, and I made a complete tour of the gardens here.¹ Some of the glasshouses were open; the birds were singing full-voiced; the gold and silver fish played in their pools; and at almost every step I saw, now near, now far, a golden pheasant or some other fowl skip across the path, which sometimes seemed to lead to a lake or stream, but turned of a sudden to reveal a pleasant dell or a graceful temple in the distance. The two hours that I spent, in the sweetest melancholy, on this walk passed by like minutes.

"This is my life when the weather is fine. But what do I do when it is foul? Saints in heaven! when there is fog, what a place this Kew turns into! The fogs are not only more frequent than at home and on the Rhine, but also thicker..... The Englishman pulls the collar of his great-coat up over his nose, and prowls about with his whims. Some utter prophecies; others get religion; and still others shoot themselves. And what of me? I sometimes sit

¹Written at Kew.

for hours on end in my inglenook, try to pick out faces and figures in the coals, and think of Göttingen; that is to say, not being either a bard or a shepherd,¹ I think quite simply of my friends. Happy the man who has an easy conscience under such a heavy sky -- and is not in love, or at least not with bad prospects. Else he cuts his throat like Lord Clive,² or shoots himself like one of my neighbors recently, or hangs himself as a pretty girl of sixteen did last Saturday. -- But very often I get up and take out my purse, and if there is good weather there I take a coach and fly to London for eighteen pence. (Since I came here I have done this fourteen times.) There I soon forget myself; and to give you some notion of why this effect is all but inevitable, I will draw you a hasty picture of an evening on the London streets -- including a few groups that are not often caught by so permanent a pigment as ink. I will take Cheapside and Fleet Street, as I saw them last week when I walked home to my lodgings from Mr. Boydell's house at a little before eight in the evening.

¹I.e., not like the Hainbündler or the idyllic poets in Salomon Gessner's manner.

²The Clive of the East India Company, best known from Macaulay's essay.

"Imagine a street about as broad as that of Weende,¹ but, if I include everything, about six times as long. On both sides, high houses with windows of plate-glass. The lower storeys consist of shops, and seem to be wholly of glass. Many thousands of lights illumine the silver-shops, print-shops, bookstalls: -- watches and clocks, glass and tin ware, paintings, finery and eyesores for the ladies,² gold, precious stones, steel-work, coffee houses, and lottery offices without end. The street looks as if it were lit up for a jubilee. The chemists and oil-shop men³ have put out glass vessels (in which Dieterich's neiduck could take him a bath⁴) filled with colored spirits that spread purple, yellow, verdigris-green, and sky-blue light over whole areas. The sugar-bakers blind the eyes with their chandeliers, and tickle the nose with their displays, at no greater cost than the trouble of turning both toward their windows. Here are festoons of Spanish grapes, alternating with ananas, draped around pyramids of apples and oranges. And about

¹A village near Göttingen, where the so-called Göttinger Dichterbund (Bürger, Voss, the Stolbergs, Hölty, Miller, Leisewitz, Claudius) was formed in 1772, the year before this was written.

²Frauenzimmer-Putz und -Unputz.

³Materialisten.

⁴Dieterichs Kammerhussar seems to be an allusion to the publisher's small son. (Cf. Ltz.-Sch. I, 214.)

and amongst slip white-armed nymphs, often unsupervised, with silken bonnets and silken trains to their gowns. These are cannily hired as extra attractions, and put amongst the pastries and tarts to whet the appetite when the stomach is full and rob the poor purse of its last shilling; for to stimulate the hungry and rich, the pastries and their atmosphere are enough. To the unaccustomed eye this seems a paradise; but one is well-advised to keep a sharp lookout. For scarcely do you stand still when a porter runs smack against you and shouts "By your leave" when you are already sprawled on the pavement. In the middle of the street roll chaise after chaise, carriage after carriage, and cart after cart. Through this din, and the humming and scraping of thousands of tongues and feet, you hear the chimes from the churchspires, the bells of the post-agents, the organs, fiddles, hurdy-gurdies, and tambourines of English Savoyards, and the bellying of those who offer hot and cold victuals for sale at the street-corners. Then you see a bonfire of chips and shavings rise storeys high inside a circle of jubilant gamins, sailors, and rascallions. And, of a sudden, someone whose handkerchief has been snatched from him gives voice with a "Stop thief!" and everyone presses and shoves -- many of them not to help catch the thief, but to avail themselves of the opportunity of taking a watch or a purse

for themselves. Before you know what's a-do, a pretty, well-dressed girl takes you by the hand with a "Come, My Lord, come along, let's drink a glass together;" or: "I'll go with you, if you please." Then an accident occurs forty paces away. "God bless me!" one sings out. "Poor creature," another. Then there is silence, and now is the time for pockets to be well watched. The whole crowd seems to pity the unfortunate -- and then all at once they are laughing again, because someone has fallen into the gutter. "Look there, damn me," says a third. And the procession moves on.... That is Cheapside and Fleet Street on a December evening."¹

Here we can see the difference between Lichtenberg's first English trip and the second. He is now intent on familiarizing himself with the whole of English life, the low as well as the high, and is building up that really astonishing knowledge of British society and the London rabble, with their respective foibles, which was to stand him in such good stead when he undertook his famous explanation of the Hogarth engravings.² In acquiring this

¹This passage is interesting not only in its immediate context as an historical document, but also as a suggestion of what Lichtenberg might have done if he had ever pursued his plan to write a piece of realistic fiction.

²Cf. p. lxxix *seq.*

experience he allowed himself to be frightened off by no talk of danger. "By now," he writes,¹ "I have acquainted myself fairly well with the people, and miss no opportunity to improve my knowledge in this respect. Sometimes, to my great satisfaction, I have heard Englishmen say that they would never take the risks that I take. When I feel the urge to explore, oaths and jabs in the ribs mean no more to me than stubble to the behemoth.... " Thus his second visit to England was a queer but fruitful combination of Kew and Cheapside (and sometimes Limehouse): of royal audiences, learned interviews, Shakespeare and Garrick, low vaudeville, horse-races, street-brawls, and observatories.

Lichtenberg himself sums up the situation adequately when he says: "In England I lived sometimes like a lord and sometimes like a travelling artisan."²

In February 1775, Lichtenberg took up semi-permanent residence in London, to his great delight, for as he says,³ "London is the place for me -- not so much because of the many diversions, for these are trifles, but because of the decency and respect with which a person is treated if only

¹Ltz.-Sch. I, 206.

²E67.

³Ltz.-Sch. I, 219.

he dresses fairly neatly and pays for what he eats and drinks." Again established in the center of English life, he made the best use of his opportunities to acquire new experiences and new acquaintances. "I see and hear so much," he tells Dieterich,¹ "that it will take me ten years to digest it all."

He attended the stormy sessions of Parliament when the members of both houses clamored for stringent action against the American rebels.² On one occasion, the crowd of visitors was so great that he found it necessary to stand for six hours in one spot and forgo his luncheon and tea.³ He also attended a meeting of the Royal Academy, where he was introduced by Markelyne and Price; spent a whole day at the Greenwich Observatory; and visited the celebrated Dr. Priestley,⁴ who performed several chemical experiments for his special instruction.⁵ Shortly after, he had occasion to meet, at a social gathering, the Corsican patriot, Pascal Paoli, "le babo," of

¹Ltz.-Sch. I, 219.

²Ibid., 221. (A letter to Heyne.)

³Ibid., 222.

⁴The discoverer of oxygen (cf. p. 199).

⁵Ltz.-Sch. I, 222.

whom he reports to Heyne:¹ "He is an extremely vivacious, handsome, ingratiating man. To judge from his manners, one might think that he had been reared exclusively for the court and had always lived there. I expected a Spartan when the servant announced his arrival, and in stepped such a fine, sweet-smelling Athenian as I have rarely seen before." He also contrived, by some means not explained, to take breakfast with the Tahitian Omai,² whom Fourneaux, Cook's companion, had brought back with him to England, and seems to have pumped him considerably regarding the customs of his native island.³ Nor did he fail to pay the customary "sentimental" visit to Laurence Sterne's grave.⁴

Lichtenberg also had frequent occasion to acquaint himself with some of the less gracious English customs, especially the British art of pugilism. "The morning before yesterday," he writes to his regular correspondent, Dietrich,⁵ "two fellows boxed under my window. I have often

¹Ltz.-Sch. I, 222f. Concerning Paoli and his later relations with Bonaparte, see Raoul Brice, The Riddle of Napoleon (New York, 1937), 4ff.

²Ltz.-Sch. I, 226.

³L. says (ibid.) that he gives a full account of their colloquy in a letter to Schernhagen, which, however, is not preserved.

⁴Ltz.-Sch. I, 219, 224.

⁵Ibid., 229.

witnessed this ceremony, but never did I see a more bloody encounter. The gore streamed from the one fellow's nose and mouth, coursed down his half-naked body, and finally down his arms and on to the other contestant, until the result was grisly to behold. Whilst they were fighting, the King and Queen came driving by in a phaeton, and passed so close that part of the crowd had to move to the other side; but they were no more abashed than if I had driven past. The one man was down six or seven times. By this I do not mean that he was thrown, but that the other hit him so hard on the head that he lost consciousness, sank to his knees, and collapsed. As often as he came to again -- the spectators shouting encouragement -- he ventured another round, until finally the crowd would no longer permit it, for fear that he might not rise again. Then the two shook hands, pulled on their shirts, and went their ways. But the one fellow was not the same man as before. He was blue and yellow in the face, and his eyes were swollen shut."¹

In October 1775, Lichtenberg took a short tour through the provinces, visiting Oxford, Bath, and Birmingham. His trip to Birmingham was made at Dieterich's request for the

¹This is one of the earliest descriptions in a foreign literature of an English boxing-match.

special purpose of calling on the celebrated Baskerville.¹ Upon his arrival, he learned that the printer himself had been dead for more than half a year, but the widow graciously showed him through the type-foundries and paper-rooms, and at his departure presented him with a Book of Common Prayer from her husband's press and several sheets of her specially smoothed paper for Dieterich's inspection. At Birmingham Lichtenberg also visited the famous lacquerware factories,² and at Soho in Staffordshire, the Bolton Works, where he saw a steam engine of novel and mysterious construction that intrigued his curiosity.³

At Bath, which he pronounced "the most beautiful place that I have seen in England and perhaps anywhere,"⁴ Lichtenberg was pleased to pick out some of the scenes described in Tobias Smollett's Humphrey Clinker.⁵ In Oxford, he was

¹Ltz.-Sch. I, 230f., 234. John Baskerville (1706-1775) is famous for the font that still bears his name. After his death, his types and matrices were bought by Beaumarchais, who used them for the great seventy-volume edition of Voltaire's works that appeared from 1785-1789.

²Cf. C219.

³Ltz.-Sch. I, 233.

⁴Ibid., 234.

⁵Ibid., 232.

well entertained by Professor Hornsby,¹ who lodged him for two days in his home, gave him free access to the observatory, and, at the conclusion of his visit, made him a present of a folio volume of astronomical tables.²

At Oxford Lichtenberg also made the acquaintance of Reinhold Forster,³ the traveller and naturalist, whom he briefly characterizes in a letter to Schernhagen:⁴ "He is a man in his best years, full of fire and courage. I think he could sail 'round Jupiter if he took a mind to do it. His memory is exceptional, and his knowledge of natural history is said to be equally remarkable. Toward his friends he is serviceable and modest, but once offended he is implacable. He treats his enemies to his own particular sort of wit which never fails to take effect -- that is, he fetches them a sound thwack across the head."

Arrangements had been made for Lichtenberg to leave England early in November at the latest, as the escort of

¹Cf. p. 275.

²Ltz.-Sch. I, 234.

³Forster was granted the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws by Oxford University, the only honor shown him for his work as naturalist on Cook's second South-Sea voyage (1772-1775). For the unhappy career of the elder Forster, see the account of his life in the biography of his son Georg by G.G.Gervinus (G. Forster's sämtliche Schriften. Herausg. von dessen Tochter VII).

⁴Ltz.-Sch. I, 235.

three young Englishmen¹ who were to study at Göttingen; but his charges fell ill of an epidemic cold, from which he himself was not spared,² and his departure was indefinitely postponed. The delay, as we can well imagine, was welcome. Lichtenberg enjoyed his last few weeks in England in much the same spirit as if he had had only so many weeks to live.

Toward the middle of October he attended a performance of As You Like It at Drury Lane, escorted by the King's favorite page, and was personally presented to the actor Garrick. He writes with considerable pride:³ "Now I have not only seen this remarkable man in his greatest roles, but also spoken with him."⁴ It was at this meeting that Garrick complimented Lichtenberg so highly on his English, saying that for a time he was uncertain whether he was a foreigner or a native.⁵

¹Two of these were nephews of the Duke of Ancaster; the other is unidentified.

²Ltz.-Sch. I, 243.

³Ibid., 237.

⁴Throughout his stay in England, L. attended the theater regularly and wrote accounts of the plays and the acting, especially that of Garrick, to his friend Boie, who published them in his Deutsches Museum under the title Briefe aus England. These should be counted among L.'s chief works, both as examples of his best prose, and as important historical documents on the London stage; but a discussion of them is beyond the scope of this biographical sketch. They are reprinted in full in the Reclam edition of L.'s Ausgewählte Schriften.

⁵Cf. p. xxxiv.

But a great part of Lichtenberg's time during his last days in England was spent in the company of the King and the royal family, where he was accepted, not as a devoted subject (which he unquestionably was), but as an intimate friend. He visited the royal household, played with the little princes,¹ and talked unconstrainedly with the King and Queen and the Prince of Wales, the later Regent. On one occasion, early in November, he was surprised by a morning call paid on him by George III at his lodgings. His servant was so flustered by the apparition of royalty that he admitted the King at once, notwithstanding the fact that his master was only half dressed. "I slipped on my coat in the other room," Lichtenberg says,² "left my stockings hanging, put on my shoes like slippers with the laces tucked in, and issued forth. Our conversation lasted for above a quarter-hour."

On Sunday, the 12th of November, he visited King George for the last time. ".... I was with him for three hours," he writes to Dieterich,³ "and before I left he told me many things that I shall never forget."

¹Cf. Ltz.-Sch. I, 238.

²Ibid., 243.

³Ibid., 243f.

He gave me a few books and 1200 thalers in gold. It is regarded as a sign of exceptional favor that he did not merely give me a draft for the amount, but delivered the money to me personally." And he concludes: "I do not want to go back to Göttingen, and I hardly think that I can ever be happy there."

But his cong   had expired; he had taken formal leave of the King and his English friends; and there was nothing to do but gather up his few belongings and his precious English keepsakes -- the royal presents, Baskerville's prayer-book, Hornsby's folio -- and take his last walks through the placid gardens at Kew and the well-loved moil and hubbub of London; then to gather together his little flock of prospective students, stifle the English homesickness that he began to feel before he ever left British soil, and board the packet for Holland.

With the new year he was again in G  ttingen. But the little semi-rural town and his quiet study had somehow lost much of their attractiveness.

He was never to return to England. The remainder of his life was spent at G  ttingen, and an uneventful and innocuous life it was. He planned a trip to Italy, which never materialized;¹ but one can scarcely believe that,

¹He and his friend Ljungberg had begun to plan this trip soon after Lichtenberg's return from England. In 1783 they almost started, but at the last moment Ljungberg failed to get his leave of absence from Copenhagen. (Cf. Ltz.-Sch. II, 205f.)

if his plan had been carried out, the languorous beauty of the land of the citron and the orange, with its dreamy vestiges of fallen splendors, would have had on him the rejuvenating effect that it had on Goethe. Lichtenberg's was a wholly different temper; his aspirations were always directed westward. It may safely be stated that he felt himself more an Englishman than a German (although, as he himself says, this spirit of patriam fugimus is in itself a thoroughly German characteristic¹). It was his constant desire to be back in England -- a desire which usually remained subterranean, but occasionally rose to the surface and took rather passionate expression. Ten years later, in 1786, he writes to the physician Girtanner:²

"Happy man, to be in England! My heart bleeds when I think that England still exists, and I cannot be there. Many times -- God forgive me my heavy sins -- I have been ready to pack up and turn myself into a German tutor. Who knows what will yet come of it, for I can confess to you that my removal from England is at times intolerable to me. Then I always ask myself why I have no money, and this question addressed to heaven is often so loud that my family hear it in the next room. Nowhere are human beings so respected as

¹Cf. E351.

²Ltz.-Sch. II, 265.

in that country, and there one enjoys, in mind and body, everything that we only dream of under the soldier-governments. -- Now I feel a little better."

In December 1775, immediately after his return from England, Lichtenberg was appointed full professor (professor ordinarius) at Göttingen;¹ and for the rest of his life he was in active service at the university, at first in mathematics alone, but after Erxleben's death, in 1777, as professor of experimental physics.² By 1787 his teaching schedule was a varied, and a rather exacting one:³ twice a year he delivered a full course of lectures on experimental physics, in the summer-semester at four o'clock, in the winter at two. Also he lectured during the winter-semester at four o'clock on astronomy, mathematical geography, theoretical geology, and meteorology, and at irregular intervals presented courses in pure mathematics and algebra.

There can be no doubt either of Lichtenberg's capability as a scientist or of his popularity as a lecturer. We can readily imagine that the public performance of phy-

¹Cf. Pütter, op. cit., II, 174.

²Kästner was quite willing to allow the experimental work to devolve on his younger colleague. Cf. Elogium, 6: "Ego certe faui Erxlebenio et Lichtenbergio, matheseos et adeo verae physicae peritis, benignioribus, in monstranda physica, etiam illis, qui eam doceri se, non vellent. Ipse, malui vt me doctorem colerent felices animae quibus veri certique scientia placeret."

³Pütter, op. cit., II, 176.

sical experiments provided him with plenty of stimulus to spontaneous humor, and his natural clarity of mind was coupled with a patience and an indulgence which made his courses popular even among the less gifted students. It is true that these latter qualities gave rise to a certain amount of unfavorable comment, and we are given an opportunity to see that eighteenth-century universities did not differ too greatly from our own; for, even then, students were quite willing, it seems, to curry favor with one instructor by belittling another, and the less popular professors were likely to take the popularity of their colleagues as a sign of shallowness and incapacity. Something of this old familiar tale is suggested when Kästner says:¹ "Skilled in mathematics, Lichtenberg was also able to lecture thoroughly and penetratingly on physics. Yet the more astute minds among his auditors remarked that he treated some things rather cursorily, out of consideration for those who never delved into the 'learned dust'." But however vain Kästner was, he was at least fair, and adds that, in his opinion, "this leniency should be condoned in a scholar who was fully capable of treating his subject more eruditely. The wisest of the lawgivers permitted to the Jews, because of the hardness of their hearts, many things which he would have pre-

¹Op. cit., 5-6.

ferred to forbid them; and similarly, Lichtenberg, in teaching physics, made some allowance for the many who, from the hardness of their heads, came only to watch the experiments."

But whatever opinion of him was cherished among the academic intelligensia, Lichtenberg's actual qualities were not underrated by those in authority. The best proof of this is the fact that George III entrusted his three youngest sons, Ernest,¹ August, and Adolph to Lichtenberg's personal tutelage in physics and geometry. He instructed them, in English, for six hours a week in 1785 and 1786, and received a royal stipend of 500 thalers. During this period the princes Ernest and August lived with their tutor.² At this same time, Lichtenberg also had among his students a Prince of Anhalt, a Comte de Broglie,³ and two professors, one from Lausanne and one from Edinburg.⁴

His two most famous students, however, were Alexander von Humboldt and the physicist Chladni. Humboldt audited Lichtenberg's lectures on physics in 1788-1789, attended a "privatissimum" on light, fire, and electricity,⁵ and re-

¹Who, after Victoria's accession, became King of Hanover.

²Ltz.-Sch. II, 244.

³A nephew of the great Marshal de Broglie.

⁴Ltz.-Sch. II, 245.

⁵Cf. Ebstein, op. cit., 3.

mained a good friend and correspondent of his former instructor.¹ Ernst Florens Friedrich Chladni,² the discoverer of the so-called Klangfiguren and the founder of the science of acoustics, was always willing in his later life to admit his indebtedness to Lichtenberg, and called him the "obstetrician" of his ideas.³

Lichtenberg himself can hardly be counted, along with his friends Herschel, Priestley, and Volta,⁴ among the great scientists of the eighteenth century. His chief contribution to physics was his De nova metodo naturam ac motum fluidi electrici inuestigandi commentatio,⁵ where he describes the so-called "figures"⁶ that still bear his name. In this treatise he used, for the first time, the terms.

¹Cf. Nachlass, 176ff.

²1756-1827. His Klangfiguren was published in 1787, his Akustik in 1802.

³Ebstein, op. cit., 3.

⁴Alessandro Volta (1745-1827), the electrician. L. knew him well, and says (Ltz.-Sch. II, 153f.): ".... bey einigen freyen Stunden, bey einem Abend Essen bey mir da wir bis gegen 1 Uhr zusammen schwärmten, habe ich gemerckt dass er sich sehr auf die Electricität der Mädchen versteht."

⁵Nov. Comment. Gotting. VIII, 1777; and Comment. Gotting. I, 1778.

⁶For a description of these and their significance, v. appendix, p. 278.

"positive" and "negative" electricity, and aided in the establishment of the dualistic theory.¹ This, of course, was an important contribution, and assures Lichtenberg a modest place in the history of his science; but on the whole he was a popularizer rather than an originator, and what he says of himself² as a mathematician is more generally true: "In mathematics he did not belong to the producing class, but to the retailers who sell by the ell and the pound."

In the background of Lichtenberg's scientific and literary work was a home-life that would have shocked the Victorian or Biedermeier, but was not considered out of the ordinary in the freer and easier eighteenth century. As a student, Lichtenberg had gone through the usual period of ephemeral affairs with servant-girls and Aufwärterinnen,³ and his sowing of wild oats seems to have continued into his English sojourns.⁴ His first serious attachment came later, in 1777,

¹Cf. J.G. Poggendorff, Geschichte der Physik (Leipzig 1879), 883. On Lichtenberg's scientific work in general, cf. also A. Winckelmann, Handbuch der Physik (Breslau 1893), III. Abt., 1. Theil, 51; August Heller, Geschichte der Physik (Stuttgart 1884) I, 271, II, 480-481 (a brief biography), 332; and P.F. Mottelay, Biographical History of Electricity and Magnetism (London 1922), 250.

²Jl105. (It is not certain that this aphorism is autobiographical.)

³The term applied to the customary housekeeper of Göttingen students. L. describes the typical representative in Bl66.

⁴Cf. El99: "Margate. Es geht da so wie in allen Orten, wo Bäder sind, man holt ein bisgen verlohrene Gesundheit und verliert sein Herz."

when he actually fell in love with the flower-girl, Maria Dorothea Stechard, "die kleine Stechardin," whose untimely death was one of the several tragedies in Lichtenberg's life. He himself tells the story best in a letter to his friend, the pastor G. H. Amelung:¹

"Last summer.... I suffered the greatest loss that I have ever suffered in my life. What I tell you no one must ever know. In 1777 (the sevens were really a bad sign²), I met a girl, the daughter of a burgher of this town; she was then a little above thirteen years old. Such a model of beauty and gentleness I had never seen in my life, although I had seen a good deal. The first time that I saw her, she was in the company of five or six others who, as children commonly do here, were selling flowers on the wall to passers-by. She offered me a nosegay, and I bought it. I had with me the three Englishmen who boarded and lodged with me. 'God almighty,' said the one, 'what a handsome girl this is!' I had noticed the same thing, and since I knew what a Sodom this nest is, I seriously considered how to dissuade her from such a business. At length I spoke to her alone, and asked her to call on me at home. She would visit no student's room, said she. But when she learned that I was a professor, she came one afternoon with her mother. To make a short tale of it, she gave up her flower-selling,

¹Ltz-Sch. III, 291ff. L. requested that this letter be destroyed.

²Cf. E100.

and stayed the day with me. Now I found that in this excellent frame dwelt a soul the like of which I had long sought but never found. I instructed her in writing and arithmetic and in other branches which, without making a sentimental affected body of her,¹ developed her understanding more and more. My physical apparatus, which had cost me over 1500 thalers, attracted her at first by its glitter, and finally its use became her chief amusement. Our friendship had now risen to its peak. She left me late at night, and came back at daybreak, and the whole day through she made it her business to keep my things in order, from my stocks to my air-pump -- and this with a heavenly gentleness, the very possibility of which I had not previously considered. The result was as you can surmise: from Easter 1780 on she was with me always. Her liking for this way of life was so great that she never went downstairs except to church and communion. She could not be brought to leave me; we were always together. When she was at church it was as though I had lost my eyes and all my senses. In a word, she was, without religious sanction (you will forgive me this expression), my wife. All the while, I could not look without the deepest emotion at the angel who had

¹leine empfindsame Geckin.

entered into such a relationship. The thought that she had sacrificed everything for me, perhaps without realizing the whole significance of her move, was intolerable to me. So I took her with me to table when friends called, always gave her the clothes her position required, and loved her more each day. My earnest intention was to unite myself publicly with her, and she began to remind me of this now and again. -- And then -- O God! this heavenly girl died. On the 4th of August 1782, at sunset. I had the best doctors, and everything possible was done for her. Think of it. And permit me to close here. It is impossible for me to go on."

That Lichtenberg was sincerely in love with the little Stechardin can hardly be doubted after one reads this, but it is not so certain that he felt any comparable emotion for Margarethe Kellner, the fruit-seller, who took her place a year or so later. Seventeen years younger than himself,¹ Margarethe seems to have been a typical Göttingen Aufwärterin, distinguished by no particular intellectual powers;² yet she served him devotedly, and Lichtenberg was

¹She survived him by half a century, dying in 1848 at the age of eighty-nine.

²L. never does more than mention her in his notebooks and correspondence.

always appreciative, if not really affectionate. Like Goethe and Hamann, he felt no compunctions about postponing the wedding ceremony. From 1784 on, he refers in letters to his "wife" although they were not married until five years later. Their union was an extremely fertile one, both before and after its consecration. The first child was born in 1786, and at his death Lichtenberg was the father of seven, four daughters and three sons. Of the daughters nothing is known except that they remained unmarried. The sons led undistinguished lives, all three becoming minor officials in the Hanoverian government.¹

To this rapid growth of Lichtenberg's family, and the corresponding increase in his financial responsibilities, we owe the greater part of his published literary work. He himself says that his two household deities were Fama and Fames,² and the latter was always the more insistent on sacrifice.

In 1777, at the death of the previous incumbent,³ he was very willing to assume the editorship of the annual Göttinger Taschen Calender with its supplement, Taschen-

¹The two eldest, Georg Christoph (1786-1845) and Christian Wilhelm (1791-1860), were the editors of the second edition of their father's literary works. -- I have not been able to discover whether any direct descendants are living at the present time. Some of the grandchildren were alive in the 90's of the last century, and it was at their home, in Bremen, that Leitzmann found the manuscript of the aphorisms.

²F407.

³His colleague Erxleben.

buch zum Nutzen und Vergnügen; for in exchange for his services the publisher, his good friend Dieterich, agreed to provide free lodging in his own home for Lichtenberg, his wife, and eventually his children. The term 'editor' as here applied is something of a misnomer. From 1777 until his death, a period of over twenty years, Lichtenberg simply wrote the publication in its entirety: the calendar proper, the court almanac, and the various articles "for profit and pleasure."¹ The only parts of it that were not his own work were the actual printing and the copper-plate illustrations provided usually by Chodowiecki or his imitator Riepenhausen, and these were under his supervision.²

The best known of the articles that appeared in the Taschenbuch was the essay Ueber Physiognomik wider die Physiognomen. Zur Beförderung der Menschenliebe und Menschenkenntnis.³ This is Lichtenberg's chief refutation of Lavater's⁴ absurd physiognomy, and shows its author in his characteristic role as advocate of reason and clarity

¹The issue for 1786, for example, contains the following articles: Ueber einige Fastnachts-Gebräuche unserer Vor-Eltern. Allgemeine Küchenezettel, Probe nach den neuesten Versuchen. Neueste Nachrichten von dem Frauenzimmer in Nieder-Egypten.

²For a further account of the Calendar and its great rarity on the book-market today, cf. appendix, p. 281f.

³It appeared in the issue for 1778, and was reprinted in pamphlet form in the same year. The title is a play on that of Lavater's ill-omened Physiognomische Fragmente zur Beförderung der Menschenkenntnis und Menschenliebe, Leipzig 1775-1778.

⁴Cf. p. xliv.

against misdirected enthusiasms and dangerous ambiguities. He states his purpose in the preface to the second edition:¹

"I wished to teach circumspection in the study of a subject in which error is more insidious and can become more dangerous than in any other, religion excepted; I wished to awaken distrust of that transcendental ventriloquism by which many can be made to believe that something said on earth comes from heaven...."²

Lavater ingenuously maintained that, to the adept (like himself), character was completely revealed in the features, and he believed with a kind of queer religious faith that such qualities as genius and criminality could be deduced from the faces of their possessors. His pseudo-science, although honestly and sincerely presented, was just such a hoax as the graphology that acquired so many adherents in the previous decade of our own century, and both are re-instated from time to time in the popular credulity. Against such nonsense Lichtenberg's logic and wit were merciless. To interpret character from the face, he says, is no more reasonable than to interpret handwriting from the shape of the physical hand. The features of the face, he explains in another place,³ bear the same relation to character as

¹Sch.¹III, 407.

²Cf. F660.

³F607.

the rhyme and meter to the content in poetry. The essay on physiognomy,¹ although it evoked violent remonstrations from the votaries² of the etherial Lavater, should be ranked among the truly great defenses of common sense and intelligent humanity. The philosopher Fritz Mauthner was one of the few in our own time who took the trouble to read it and assess its real value. "Sound human reason," he says,³ ".... found its champion in the wittiest of the Germans.... If we Germans had a national pride in our best works of the intellect, this essay would be as familiar to us as the masterpieces of Voltaire and Montaigne are to the French, and it would not be necessary for me to call special attention to Lichtenberg's masterpiece."

In 1780, Lichtenberg essayed another periodical, in collaboration with the ill-starred Georg Forster, the later revolutionist of Mayence. But this new journal, impressively titled Göttingisches Magazin der Wissenschaften und Littera-

¹He later inveighed, more satirically and less convincingly, against the same abuse in his once famous Fragment von Schwänzen (Baldinger's Neues Magazin für Aerzte 1785), in which the characters of men and beasts are read from the contours of their queues and tails.

²But even Merck, one of Lavater's best friends, felt obliged to defend Lichtenberg on this occasion. He writes to Lavater (May 17, 1778): "Ich kenne Lichtenberg von Person; er ist mehr als Witzling, er ist einer der denkendsten Köpfe." (Joh. Heinr. Mercks Schriften und Briefwechsel. In Auswahl herausg. von Kurt Wolff, Leipzig 1909, II, 114.)

³Wörterbuch der Philosophie II, 37.

tur, was allotted only a short lifetime. It appeared six times annually in the years 1780 to 1784, but only two issues were printed for 1785. Forster seems to have been willing to continue the collaboration, and writes as much in 1786,¹ after his removal to Wilna.² Why the magazine failed is not altogether certain. Lichtenberg provided it with some of his best essays on popular science, his biographies of Copernicus and Pope, his "Orbis pictus for German Novelists and Dramatists"³; other Göttingen professors (Pütter, Feder, Meister, Meiners, Blumenbach) contributed articles; Forster wrote of Captain Cook and the South Seas; and Chodowiecki furnished the illustrations. It did, however, acquire a name for political liberalism through Schlözer's contributions, particularly his condemnation of the Zürich government for the unwarranted execution of the patriotic Waser;⁴ and Lichtenberg himself probably added to the growing unpopularity of the journal by one of his less successful polemics.

¹Georg Forster's sämmtliche Schriften (Leipzig 1843) VII, 242: "Wie geht es mit dem Göttingischen Magazin? Sind Sie Willens es fortzusetzen, und zwar auf welche Art? Wollen Sie, dass es ferner unsre gemeinschaftliche Besorgung heissen soll, oder ist es Ihnen schicklicher und angenehmer, dass mein Name wegbliebe.....?"

²Where he taught at the newly established academy, and was wretchedly unhappy.

³For a complete list of the articles published by Lichtenberg in the Göttingisches Magazin, see Pütter, op. cit., II, 175f.

⁴Cf. p. xxvii.

The object of this outburst was Johann Heinrich Voss, the classical scholar and author of the 'idyll' Luise, who in his translations from the Greek employed the unsightly spellings Athän, Thäbä, in accordance with the new theory on the pronunciation of eta. This was only the peculiar but harmless form of orthographic pedantry that crops out occasionally in otherwise sound-minded scholars, especially the classicists; but Lichtenberg seized upon it and made it the subject of rather ill-proportioned satire and wholly unjustified personalities in his Ueber die Pronunciation der Schöyse des alten Griechenlands verglichen mit der Pronunciation ihrer neuern Brüder an der Elbe: oder über Beh, Beh und Bäh, Bäh.¹

Lichtenberg's last published work, and the one for which he was best known to his contemporaries, was his Explanation of the Hogarth Copper Engravings, which was first printed in the Taschencaender,² and later appeared serially in book-form.³ Here he describes the most important of

¹Gött. Mag. II (3), 454ff. (1781).

²In the issues for 1789, 1790, 1791, and 1794.

³Ausführliche Erklärung der Hogarthischen Kupferstiche mit verkleinerten aber vollständigen Copien derselben von E. Riechenhausen. Göttingen (Dieterich) 1794-1800. L. provided only the first five instalments, and the description was completed, between 1800 and 1816, by various other writers hired by the publisher.

Hogarth's social satires,¹ in a kind of running commentary with no stint of witty analogies and anecdotes. His experience of English life and his knowledge of all classes of British society made him ideally fitted for this task; and although his account, in which he tries to reproduce in words the effect of the pictures,² is rather too long-winded to suit the modern taste, it can be enjoyed today in much the same way that one enjoys Boswell's Life of Johnson or the novels of Jean Paul -- by the process of slighting the pudding and relishing the plums.

Lichtenberg himself was far from satisfied with his Hogarth, which he regarded as a source of income and little else.³ He writes to Goethe in April 1794:⁴ "Within four weeks I hope to be in a position to send Your Excellency the first instalment of my Explanation of the Hogarth En-

¹Marriage à la Mode, Strolling Actresses Dressing in a Barn, A Modern Midnight Conversation, The Harlot's Progress, The Rake's Progress, The Effects of Industry and Idleness.

²L. states his purpose in the preface to the edition of 1794 (p. IVf.): "Was der Künstler da gezeichnet hat, müsste nun auch so gesagt werden, wie Er es vielleicht würde gesagt haben, wenn er die Feder so hätte führen können, wie er den Grabstichel geführt hat."

³Ibid., 108.

gravings. The copies are excellent; not a line is wrong; but the explanations are the more wretched by comparison. I cannot bear to look at the printed sheets. I think I had best apply for a post as a village parson's adjunct." Yet the Hogarth was at least a modest success, as Goethe indicates in his Tag- und Jahreshefte for 1795.¹

The singularly acid tone of this comment of Goethe's is owing to a peculiar circumstance that reveals one of the less Olympian aspects of Goethe's personality.

From 1792 to 1794, Goethe had been in regular correspondence with Lichtenberg regarding his work in optics and the theory of color. Their letters² are altogether friendly in spirit, if somewhat formal (especially on Goethe's side), Goethe posing questions on physical problems, and Lichtenberg answering them very fully and generously (considering the state of his health) and offering suggestions and references in the literature on the sub-

¹Sämmtliche Werke (Cotta 1840) XXVII, 50: "Lichtenberg's Hogarth und das Interesse daran war eigentlich ein gemachtes: denn wie hätte der Deutsche, in dessen einfachem reinen Zustande sehr selten solche excentrische Fratzen vorkommen, hieran sich wahrhaft vergnügen können? Nur die Tradition, die einen von seiner Nation hochgefeierten Namen auch auf dem Continent hatte geltend gemacht, nur die Seltenheit, seine wunderlichen Darstellungen vollständig zu besitzen, und die Bequemlichkeit, zu Betrachtung und Bewunderung seiner Werke weder Kunstkenntniss noch höheren Sinnes zu bedürfen, sondern allein bösen Willen und Verachtung der Menschheit mitbringen zu können, erleichterte die Verbreitung ganz besonders, vorzüglich aber dass Hogarth's Witz auch Lichtenberg's Witzeleien den Weg gebahnt hatte."

²Conveniently assembled by Leitzmann (Goethe-Jahrbuch XVIII, 32ff.).

ject. Goethe seems to have been very grateful, and sent Lichtenberg copies of Reinecke Fuchs, his translation of Cellini, and instalments of Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre, Lichtenberg reciprocating with his Hogarth. But suddenly their correspondence broke off, and the reason was a pique pure and simple on Goethe's part, as we can see from a significant letter to Schiller:¹

"What do you think of this? Lichtenberg, with whom I am corresponding on the optical matters of which you know (and I might add that we are on quite tolerable terms), does not even mention my experiments in his new edition of Brxleben's compendium,² although the only possible reason for putting out a new edition of a compendium is to take cognizance of new discoveries, and the editors are usually nimble enough at noting down everything in their interleaved copies. There are hundreds of ways of acknowledging a book like mine, if only in passing; but the great wit could not think of a single one in this case!"

Naturally the reason for Lichtenberg's "oversight" was the fact that he could not regard Goethe's optics as a serious contribution to physics. He was a firm adherent of the Newtonian principles, and modern science upholds his opinion.

¹November 21, 1795.

²Grundzüge der Naturlehre 6th edit. (cf. p. 276).

But Goethe's scientific work was the apple of his eye; he could not bear the slightest aspersion, overt or tacit, upon it; and the result was that for a number of years he took a particular pleasure in disparaging Lichtenberg. Even after the latter's death, his comments on him were considerably sharper than was necessary or warranted.¹ Gradually, however, the wound healed until finally, in the Sprüche in Prosa,² his praise of Lichtenberg is unqualified.

For perhaps the last ten years of his life Lichtenberg was practically a recluse, avoiding society and associating with practically no one but his family and his students, to whom he lectured in the little "auditorium" in his home.³ His only diversions were his reading and

¹Cf. his comment to Riemer in the Biedermann edit. of Goethes Gespräche (Leipzig 1909) I, 409 (March 1806): "Lichtenberg's Wohlgefallen an Karikaturen rührt von seiner unglücklichen körperlichen Konstitution her, dass es ihn erfreut, etwas noch unter sich zu erblicken.... Er war keine konstruktive Natur wie Aesop und Sokrates; nur auf Entdeckung des Mangelhaften gestellt." -- The tone is somewhat milder in the essay on Byron's Don Juan (Sämtl. Werke XXX, 151).

²Quoted on p. vi.

³Cf. Georg Forster's sämtliche Schriften VII, 209, where Forster (who at this time was teaching in Kassel) complains to L.: ".... ich muss eine Viertelstunde Wegs durch dick und dünn waten, um Collegium zu lesen, und bin also weit übler dran als ein Göttinger Professor, der sein Auditorium im Hause hat."

week-end jaunts to his garden-house on the Weende chaus-sée; but even the latter he often eschewed, and frequently remained indoors for weeks or even months on end¹ -- a practice that was frowned upon by his more energetic senior Kästner.² Throughout this period his health was gradually failing, and he was completely incapacitated from time to time.³ But it is difficult to say how much of this illness was real, and how much was due to the peculiar hypochondria, the "inward distortion,"⁴ which he says he studied like a science,⁵ and which he defines as "a knack for drawing from every contingency of life.... the greatest quantity of poison for my own consumption."⁶ But "even imagined diseases may become real,"⁷ and Lichtenberg gradually lapsed into a state of nervous lethargy which took the external form of extreme shyness and manifested itself internally as a morbid self-criticism that often amounted to self-castigation. "In my illness," he writes in the early 90's,⁸ "I

¹Cf. B139, D2, Sch.²I, 19.

²Kästner, op. cit., 8.

³Ibid., 6: "Perpetuo conflictatus cum valetudine numquam integra...."

⁴F699.

⁵Sch.²I, 14.

⁶Ibid.

⁷J1183.

⁸J320.

no longer think and feel, even about things, without feeling myself along with them as the main concern. In everything I am conscious of my suffering; everything is drawn into connection with my sensibility.... I see the whole world as a machine that exists only to make me feel in every possible way my illness and my misery. A pathological egoist.... Pusillanimity is the right name for my illness, but how does one go about getting rid of it? He who surmounts this deserves statues in his honor. But who dedicates monuments to those who make themselves out of old women into men?"

This hypochondria, which perhaps would better be called melancholy, naturally infringed upon his work, and the wit which once bubbled so freely became deeper, more sombre and stinging, less spontaneous. "Once, when I fished in my head for thoughts and ideas, I never failed to catch something; now the fish do not bite so readily. They are beginning to petrify on the stream-bed, and I have to chop them out. Sometimes I get them only a piece at a time."¹

It was now that the stratum of irrationality, which always was present in Lichtenberg and distinguishes him from the Nicolais and Abbts and Garves, rose to the sur-

¹Sch.²I, 23.

face and became prominent in his character. His mind occupied itself with the unconscious elements of human behavior, with the instincts¹ and dreams.² His thoughts dwelt continually on the phenomena of disease³ and death, and he often gave expression to them in passages that remind one of the later Catholicizing Romantics. He speaks in one place⁴ of the Ninetieth Psalm and the effect which it produced on him in Westminster Abbey -- "above me the solemn vaults, where daylight forever mourns in holy twilight; beneath me the vestiges of fallen splendors, the dust of kings; and all about me the trophies of death.... I felt the presence of the Judge, whom I might not flee even on the wings of dawn, with tears neither of joy nor pain, but of an ineffable faith in him...." And again he says:⁵ "In the halls of a Catholic temple, when sacred music resounded and kettledrums thundered, I, with my Protestant head and heart, have thought to hear the tread of the Almighty and wept tears of devotion." Until finally this spirit culminates in the passionate words:⁶

"If only the boundary were crossed! O God, how I long for the moment when time will cease to be time for

¹Cf. Sch.²I, 179, Sch.²II, 190, J589, L670.

²Cf. E490, Sch.²I, 26, etc.

³Cf. Sch.²I, 191, J208, J237, J581, J672, J969, J1183.

⁴Sch. I, 29.

⁵E191.

⁶J277.

face and became prominent in his character. His mind occupied itself with the unconscious elements of human behavior, with the instincts¹ and dreams.² His thoughts dwelt continually on the phenomena of disease³ and death, and he often gave expression to them in passages that remind one of the later Catholicizing Romantics. He speaks in one place⁴ of the Ninetieth Psalm and the effect which it produced on him in Westminster Abbey -- "above me the solemn vaults, where daylight forever mourns in holy twilight; beneath me the vestiges of fallen splendors, the dust of kings; and all about me the trophies of death.... I felt the presence of the Judge, whom I might not flee even on the wings of dawn, with tears neither of joy nor pain, but of an ineffable faith in him...." And again he says:⁵ "In the halls of a Catholic temple, when sacred music resounded and kettledrums thundered, I, with my Protestant head and heart, have thought to hear the tread of the Almighty and wept tears of devotion." Until finally this spirit culminates in the passionate words:⁶

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⁴Sch. I, 29.

⁵E191.

⁶J277.

me -- in the womb of the maternal all and nothing, where once I slept when tides washed the Heinberg, when Epicurus, Caesar, Lucretius lived and wrote, and Spinoza thought the greatest thought that ever entered a human mind."

He did not have so very long to wait. A disease from which he suffered annually,¹ combined with an inflammation of the lungs, finally proved fatal. He died on the 24th of February 1799, the last year of that "glazed and painted Porcelain Age of the world"² of which he was in many respects the most complete representative, and in which he was an amazed and sadly amused onlooker.

"The strangest creatures always lie on the borderline."³

¹"Morbi, qui annuatim fere stato tempore redibat, primus impetus." (Kästner, op. cit., 8.) The nature of this disease is not known.

²F563.

³D159.

SELECTED APHORISMS OF GEORG CHRISTOPH LICHTENBERG
IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION

A PREFATORY NOTE TO THE TRANSLATIONS

Die Vorrede könnte Blitzableiter
betitult werden. (F1004)

The following pages comprise a rather extensive selection from all the Aphorism-Books of Georg Christoph Lichtenberg -- the fullest and most representative, I think, that has appeared in translation.¹ My chief purpose has been to choose from the thousand-page Leitzmann edition, and the five or six hundred pages of the original editions, the aphorisms that retain the greatest interest for a modern reader and serve best to indicate Lichtenberg's character, temperament, and modes of thought, and to illustrate his wit and humor. But I have also tried to include a good deal of material that is valuable from an historical point of view, as revealing a highly individual and thoughtful attitude toward the literary, philosophical, and political movements in Germany, and in Europe at large, during the second half of the eighteenth century.

Any selection of this sort must to a degree be arbitrary and personal. The only escape from this horn of the dilemma is to impale oneself on the opposite: to present as large and

¹A collection of some two hundred aphorisms in excellent French translation was published by Victor Bouillier in 1914, and more than a hundred of Lichtenberg's aphorisms are included in Guido Torres' Pensieri di Goethe e Lichtenberg (Padua 1906). So far as I know, the present collection is the first in English.

varied an assortment as possible. Wer vieles bringt.... For the truth is that the translator of Lichtenberg finds that his hardest problem is to know where to stop. "La plupart des faiseurs de recueils de vers ou de bons mots ressemblent à ceux qui mangent des cerises ou des huitres, choisissant d'abord les meilleurs, et finissant par tout manger." The aptness of Chamfort's comment strikes home. The only perfect solution is the mathematically simple one of translating everything, and the translator who falls short of this can be assured that, of the criticism that he will inevitably receive, more than half will be well warranted.

I have attempted to reproduce faithfully Lichtenberg's very characteristic style, or rather this style as I see it. But the translation as a whole is prepared on the principle that there is hardly such a thing as a literal or a free translation, but only a good or bad one.

Schopenhauer once said that system almost always brings boredom in its train. But, in the case of Lichtenberg's aphorisms, its absence is likely to induce a feeling of confusion and surfeit that is surely worse -- as anyone knows who has tried to read through the monumental Leitzmann edition, where the only order is the chronological. Hence, as between boredom and confusion, I have chosen the former. The translated aphorisms are arranged in ten main groups --

although I am afraid Lichtenberg might say that I had to give some of them a fairly shrewd clout to make them fall "naturally" into these divisions. Within each category the arrangement is, so far as possible, chronological. In the case of the materials taken from the original editions of the Ver-mischte Schriften it is usually quite impossible to differentiate the aphorisms from the missing books G, H, and K, which are accordingly included in the separate sections after those from book F.

The sources of the individual aphorisms are indicated in the notes following the translation. These are, for the most part, factual, and attempt to interpret only when this seemed advisable.

ABBREVIATIONS

The alphabetical references to the Aphorism-Books are explained on p. xiv.

Ker. = Κέρως Ἀμαλθείας ("Horn of Plenty"), a supplement to Book B.

RA = Reiseanmerkungen, a supplement to Book F.

Sch.¹ = the first edition of Lichtenberg's Vermischte Schriften, edited by Ludwig Christian Lichtenberg and Friedrich Kries. Göttingen 1800-1806.

Sch.² = the second edition of the Vermischte Schriften, edited by Lichtenberg's sons. Göttingen 1844-1853. (The edition of 1867 is an unaltered reprint of this.)

The notation "s" indicates that the aphorism has been shortened from the Leitzmann text or the original editions.

Ltz.-Sch. = the three-volume edition of Lichtenberg's correspondence edited by Albert Leitzmann and Carl Schüddekopf. Leipzig 1904.

Gött. gel. Anz. = Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen.

Hog. = G.C. Lichtenbergs ausführliche Erklärung der Hogarthischen Kupferstiche. Göttingen 1794-1816.

Leitzmann = Albert Leitzmann's notes to his edition of Lichtenberg's Aphorisms. Berlin 1902ff.

Nachlass = Albert Leitzmann's Aus Lichtenbergs Nachlass. Weimar 1899.

Kästner = Elogium Georgii Christophori Lichtenberg in consessu Societatis Regiae Scientiarum recitavit Abraham Gotthelf Kaestner. Göttingen 1800.

Bouillier = Victor Bouillier, Georg Christoph Lichtenberg. Essai sur sa vie et ses oeuvres littéraires.... Paris 1914.

Gervinus = G.G. Gervinus, Geschichte der deutschen Dichtung, Leipzig 1853.

Hentzschel = Otto Hentzschel, Lichtenbergs Lebensanschauung. Leipzig 1910.

Herzog = G.C. Lichtenberg. Gedanken, Satiren, Fragmente, edited by Wilhelm Herzog. Jena 1907.

Hettner = Hermann Hettner, Geschichte der deutschen Literatur im achtzehnten Jahrhundert. Brunswick 1893.

Lauchert = Friedrich Lauchert, G. Chr. Lichtenberg's schriftstellerische Thätigkeit in chronologischer Uebersicht dargestellt. Göttingen 1893.

Reclam = the Reclam edition (Universal-Bibliothek 1286-1289) of Lichtenberg's selected writings, edited by Eugen Reichel (Eugen Leyden).

Vincent = G. Chr. Lichtenberg. Aphorismen und Schriften. Selected and edited by Ernst Vincent. Leipzig 1935.

I. AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES AND APHORISMS

I wish that each evening I might know the second of the past day when my existence had the least value -- that is to say, the moment when, if purity of intention and assurance of life were worth money, I would have been of the greatest worth.

I find with surprising pleasure in Herr Lavater's Prospects of Eternity,¹ that he has sensations similar to mine before going to sleep. Years before this book appeared I made this disclosure to Herr Ljungberg,² and earlier, while I was still in school, I told my friend Herr Esswein³ something of it, but never heard that he or Ljungberg had felt anything similar. My contemplations in this state commonly revolve about death or the soul in general and what sensation is, and end in wonder at the disposition of man. Everything is more feeling than reflection, and indescribable.

Why is it that at times we can rigorously cast off a secret anxiety, when the thought that we are under the protection of a most kindly providence has the greatest influence upon us, and yet often within the next half-hour almost perish from the same anxiety? At least this is the case with me, although I cannot say that in the second frame

of mind I view my anxiety from a new perspective or see other relationships. Not at all. If that were so I should never have wasted the effort of writing down this observation. I believe, rather, that the moral sensibility is different at different times, and stronger in the morning than in the evening.

He¹ was in the habit of calling his higher and his lower faculties the Upper and Lower Houses, and very often the former passed a bill which the latter rejected.

In the house where I lived I had learned the sound and pitch of every step in an old wooden stair, and likewise the rhythm that each of my friends beat out when he came to see me; and I must confess that I never failed to tremble when a pair of feet ran up the scale in a melody unknown to me.

The Character of a Person Whom I Know Well

His body is such that even a bad painter could have drawn it better in the dark; and if it were within his power to change it, he would give it less relief in several parts. With his health -- although it is not of the best -- this man has always been reasonably content. He has to a high degree the gift of making the most of his hale days. His power of imagination, his most faithful companion, never fails him then. He stands at the window, his head propped

in his two hands; and though the passer-by sees in him nothing but the melancholy moper, he often makes to himself the tacit admission that he has once more yielded in excess to pleasure. He has only a few friends. Actually his heart is open always to one present and several absent ones. His affability leads many to believe that he is their friend, and he serves them, too -- out of ambition and love of humankind, but not from that impulse which urges him to serve his real friends. He has loved only once or twice: once not unhappily, the other time quite happily. He won a good soul through his mere gaiety and lightheartedness, with the result that now he often loses both;¹ but he will always regard gaiety and lightheartedness as the qualities of his temper that have afforded him the most pleasurable hours of his life. And if he could choose another life and another temper, I do not know whether he would take others if he could have his own again. Even as a boy he thought very freely on matters of religion, but no more vaunted himself of being a free-thinker than of accepting everything on faith, without exception. He can pray with fervor, and has never been able to read the Ninetieth Psalm without an exalted, indescribable emotion. Before the mountains were brought forth is infinitely more to him than Sing, Immortal Soul.² He does not know which he dislikes more, young officers or young preachers; he could never live long with either. For social gatherings his body and his clothes are seldom good enough, and his opinions seldom³ enough.

He never hopes to rise higher than three dishes at noon and two in the evening with a little wine, or to descend lower than every day potatoes, apples, bread, and a little wine too. In either event he would be unhappy; he has never yet failed to fall ill when for a few days he lived outside these limits. Reading and writing are as necessary to him as eating and drinking. He hopes he will never lack books. He thinks very often of death, and never with repugnance. He wishes that he could think of everything with such equanimity, and hopes that, when the time arrives, his creator will gently claim from him a life of which he was the none too economical, but certainly no profligate possessor.

I would never wish to be the man who could hold as absolute sway over Germany as I over my writing desk. I would be sure to continue overturning inkwells and creating greater confusion through my efforts to keep order.

I know little about music and play no instrument. But I can whistle well, and I have had more profit from this than many others from their arias on flute and clavichord. I would vainly attempt to express in words what I feel when, on a quiet evening, I whistle with finesse In all my deeds,¹ and think the text to it. I am not fond of singing alone. When I come to the line And if you are resolved, I feel new

courage, zeal in abundance, and trust in God. With my faith, I could throw myself into the sea and not drown, nor fear a world of evil in the confidence of a single benefaction. -- Or, if I am in a sprightly mood, I whistle Though I too, through grief and pain, or When you meet a tender creature.²

The impulse toward book-writing -- which, like a certain other, usually sets in strongly with the appearance of the first beard-down -- made its presence felt a little earlier in my case. My earliest itch to write fell in the sixth year of the German hexameter, if I count from the first verse of the Messiah, and in my fourteenth year, if I start from my birth. This is a somewhat ticklish age, and parents and teachers have to keep a sharp eye on their children I found the language used in our family rather too plain; now and again I felt a lack of decorative adjectives, and fancied myself endlessly grown-up when I discovered a few, especially the ones I invented myself.

Sometimes I never leave the house for eight days at a stretch,¹ and live quite contentedly. An enforced house-arrest of an equal period would drive me into illness. When thoughts are free we move with ease within our circle; when thoughts are curbed, even those that are permitted come forth with timid mien.

My life never stood higher than in August 1765 and February 1766. This one summer and one winter were enough for me. I shall always regard this time as the focal point of my life's pleasures.¹

For a moment I think, "It might have bad consequences for you in the future if you act so." But then my emotions intervene, shouting "Nonsense!" And I am usually talked over before they have had their full say.

I have written up a fair amount aperçus and drafts; they await not so much the final hand as a few more rays of sunlight to bring them above ground.

Monday, December 10, 1770, I settled on Whim¹ as my motto. For in this world is it not whim even to wish to be what we should be? We are always something else that depends on the ways of former ages and our own -- a miserable accidens of a thing that is no substance. Is human nature a thing that has its head in paradise and its tail at the other end of eternity, and whose members are homoeomeria² of the whole?

A certain friend of mine¹ was in the habit of dividing his body into three storeys: the head, the breast, and the abdomen. And he often wished that the tenants of the highest and the lowest could get on better together.

Many things pain me that only hurt others.

His eyes strayed occasionally toward the frontier that separates Hanover from the land "from whose bourn no traveller returns."¹

In me the heart lies nearer the head by at least a foot than in other people; whence my great reasonableness. My decisions can be ratified while they are still quite warm.¹

There was more gall than principle in my project, and I tired of it long before it was carried out.

The learned Daille regretted that he had lost two years of his life, by which he meant the time he had spent in travelling.¹

Apart from the properties that he shared with various beasts, he had several in common with thermometers, hygrometers, and barometers.¹

Blindness noted. April 9, 1775.¹

He would have been able to make something out of his ideas if he had had an angel to organize them for him.

The merchants have their "waste book",¹ in which they enter helter-skelter everything that they sell or buy from day to day. From here the items are transferred to the journal, where they are arranged rather more systematically, and thence they finally reach the ledger at double entrance, according to the Italian method of book-keeping. Here each man has his separate account, first as debtor and then, opposite this, as creditor. Such a scheme deserves to be imitated by the scholars. First a book in which I write down everything as I observe it or as it occurs to me; then this would be transferred to another where the materials are better sorted and arranged; and finally the ^dl_eg_er could contain the linking-up of the separate items and the consequent presentation of the subject in polished form.

In England I lived sometimes like a lord and sometimes like a travelling artisan.¹

The man¹ took pains to pick out my flaws. Since the service rendered was not of the kindest, I think I have the just claim to idemnity, and ask no greater satisfaction than that he publish some of his own work.

My real purpose in going to England was to learn to write German.

On almost every page I have scattered seeds of ideas which, if they fell on the right soil, could bear chapters or even dissertations. My language is always simple, concise, and plain; and in cases where it is none of the three, my purpose is to make it impossible, or at least as hard as I can, for the German yarn-mongers in London to translate my essays into English.

I have often read my own more emotional prose with a rapture that covered my mortal shell with voluptuous goose-flesh. In the halls of a Catholic temple, when sacred music resounded and kettledrums thundered, I, with my Protestant head and heart, have thought to hear the tread of the Almighty and wept tears of devotion.

With my pen in my hand I have succeeded in storming redoubts from which others armed with sword and interdict have been repulsed.

The man goes too far, but I think I do the same. He enjoys listening to his own enthusiasm. But I like the sound of my own wit -- and my cold-blooded disdain of everything that springs from feeling.

Storks and cranes can hardly be as rare in England as Louisd'ors in his pocket. From time to time a half-

gulden appeared, like swallows in March, but vanished as quickly.

I have marked all my works with an FF. This is no jibe at the Pandects¹ and their confusion, but the initials of my household deities, to whom I give sacrifice each day -- Fame and Fames.

I see the grave on my cheeks. April 16, 1777.

It is always depressing for me when I consider that one can go too far in the investigation of some things -- so far, I mean, that it may be detrimental to our happiness. I have had first-hand experience of this. I wish that I had been less successful in my efforts to learn the ways of the human heart. I am far more willing than before, it is true, to forgive people their little spites and malices. If someone speaks ill of me in company, and especially if he does so only to amuse the guests, I cannot feel the slightest animosity toward him. I can say with complete honesty that it makes no difference to me -- provided that it is not done in hot blood, and that it is not crass calumny, which I do not think I deserve. -- But, on the other hand, the praise of others means too little to me; their envy is the only thing that still could please me. This should never be.... Here again we see the necessity of an harmonious growth

of the whole cognitive faculty. If one part is too much cultivated, it leads in the end to mischief, small or great.

I have long been writing at a history of my mind and my wretched body, and this with a forthrightness that will perhaps arouse in some a kind of vicarious feeling of shame. It will be told with a greater candor than any of my readers will be likely to believe. This is still a fairly untrodden path to immortality. (My only predecessor is Cardinal de Retz.¹) It will not appear until after my death, out of consideration for the malice of the world.²

Often, when an acquaintance passes, I leave the window -- not so much to spare him the trouble of making a bow as to spare myself the embarrassment of seeing that he makes me none.

Watching the faces of common people on the streets has always been one of my greatest pleasures. No magic lantern can approach this spectacle.

What a difference if I speak the words: Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God¹ -- in my chamber or in the hall of Westminster Abbey! Above me the solemn vaults, where daylight forever mourns in holy twilight; beneath me the vestiges of fallen splendors,

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the dust of kings; and all about me the trophies of death. -- I have uttered them in many places; in my bedroom they have often raised my spirits; never since childhood have I prayed them without emotion. But here an indescribable, but pleasant shudder ran through me; I felt the presence of the Judge, whom I might not flee even on the wings of dawn, with tears neither of joy nor of pain, but of an ineffable faith in Him.... Do not think, you who everywhere surmise, and surmise rather than read, that I write this merely in the vein of the fashionable melancholy. I was never quite able to read Young² when it was fashionable to read him, and now I still regard him as a great man when it is stylish to derogate him.

I have studied hypochondria -- made an actual business of it.

My hypochondria is, in essence, a knack for drawing from every contingency of life, by whatever name it is known, the greatest possible quantity of poison for my own consumption.¹

In society I sometimes played the atheist merely exercitii gratia.

The famous Howard¹ visited me. Why I really cannot say, unless he regarded my room as a kind of prison to inspect, since at that time I had not been outside the door in one and a half years.

Once, when I fished in my head for thoughts and ideas, I never failed to catch something; now the fish do not bite so readily. They are beginning to petrify on the stream-bed, and I have to chop them out. Sometimes I get them only a piece at a time.

It was either in the night from the 14th to the 15th, or from the 15th to the 16th of October 1779, when I dreamed that I saw a fiery cloud flying along beneath the Pleiades; at the same time the great bell at Darmstadt pealed out, and I fell to my knees and spoke the words: Holy, holy, &c.¹ My attendant sensations were ineffably great, and I would hardly have believed myself still capable of them.

L. was a good-hearted soul, only he did not always take the trouble to show it. My greatest fault, the root of all my discontent.

Sometimes when I read a good idea of mine in one of my old notebooks I marvel how it could have become so foreign to me and my system, and I take the same pleasure in it that I would if it had been written by one of my ancestors.

Nothing pains me more, in all the affairs of my life, than that I am compelled to look at the world as the common man does, although I know scientifically that he looks at it wrongly.

Nothing makes one age more rapidly than the ever pervasive thought that one is growing old. I feel this very plainly in my own case; it is one phase of my poison-sucking.¹

I have occasionally to be trimmed like a tallow candle, or else I begin to burn dim.¹

The weirdest ideas were always buzzing around his head, as if their queen were inside -- and that was not far from the truth.

Of all the curiosities that he had collected in his house, he himself was in the end the greatest.

I have only the highest admiration for the people who have nerves like four-penny ropes.

My aide-de-camp -- Adelung's Dictionary.¹

A girl, 150 books, a few friends, and a panorama of about one German mile in diameter constituted the world for him.

Desultory reading has always been my greatest pleasure.

If human beings were accepted at pawnshops, I should like to know how much I could get for myself.

He was abed with enteric cramps. This, according to the testimony of the best physicians, was his one and only malady. But the complaints which he thought he had were considerable in number: 1) a senile marasmus, although he was only forty-six;¹ 2) the beginning of dropsy; 3) a convulsive asthma; 4) a slow fever; 5) the jaundice; 6) dropsy of the chest. 7) He feared a stroke of apoplexy; 8) also paralysis of the right side. 9) He believed that his large arteries and veins were petrified; 10) that he had a polyp of the heart; 11) also an ulcer of the liver, 12) water on the brain (whoever reads this might well think that the 12th were the only well-founded fear), and 13) diabetes.

In my nervous affliction I have very often found that things which otherwise would have offended only my moral sense are now translated into the physical. Once when Dieterich¹ said, God damn me! I fell so ill that I had to forbid him my chamber for a time.

If only the boundary were crossed! O God, how I long for the moment when time will cease to be time for me -- in

the womb of the maternal all and nothing, where once I slept when tides washed the Heinberg,¹ when Epicurus, Caesar, Lucretius lived and wrote, and Spinoza thought the greatest thought that ever entered a human mind.²

The worst part of it is that in my illness I no longer think and feel, even about things, without feeling myself along with them as the main concern. In everything I am conscious of my suffering; everything becomes subjective; everything is drawn into relation with my sensitivity and illness. I see the whole world as a machine that exists only to make me feel in every possible way my illness and my misery. A pathological egoist. It is a miserable state of affairs. What I must do now is see whether I still have strength enough to overcome it; if not, I am lost. But this sort of disease has already become second nature to me, so to speak. Pusillanimity is the right word for my illness, but how does one go about getting rid of it? He who surmounts this deserves statues in his honor. But who dedicates monuments to those who make themselves out of old women into men?

Sometime I was not in a position to say whether I was ill or well.

I have travelled the road of knowledge as dogs proceed

when they go with their masters on a walk -- a hundred times up and down the same stretch, and when I arrived I was weary.

Ideas patter about in my head at night like rats and mice, and I have to get used to their scurrying before I can go to sleep.

When I think how many ideas I have had which I am convinced would please the best of men, but which I did not know how to utilize, and had no particular desire to utilize! And for this reason I must let myself be patronized by many a shallow-minded literator and compiler, or by the merely empirical crackpots and confusionaries, and yet am forced to admit that, to judge from my conduct, these people are not so very far wrong in their estimate of me. For how could they know what my indolence has kept secret from my notebooks. But when De Luc¹ writes me that there is never a letter of mine that fails to teach him something, this sets me above all the world's judgment -- but only in my own mind.

A character. To see only the worst side of everything; to dread everything; to regard even health as a state in which disease is merely unfelt -- I think I could limn no character more successfully than such a one.

I have made a rule that the rising sun should never find me abed as long as I am well. It cost me nothing to hold myself to this, for it has always been my practice never to lay down laws for myself until it is almost impossible for me to transgress them.

For several days now I have been living under the hypothesis (for I always live under one or another) that drinking at table is injurious, and my health is most excellent the while. There must be something to it, for never from any change in my life, or from any physic, have I so speedily and tangibly felt the good effect.

All in all, I have thought a great deal -- this I know. Much more than I have read. Hence I am ignorant of much that the world knows, and hence I often fall into error when I mingle with the world, and this makes me timid.

If heaven should ever find it needful and profitable to publish a second edition of me and my life, I could offer several comments not unuseful to the editor -- touching chiefly the design of the frontispiece and the plan of the whole.¹

Certainly one of the most remarkable traits of my character is the peculiar superstitiousness that makes me draw

premonitions from every event and circumstance and in a single day to make oracles out of a hundred different things. I need not describe it here, for I understand myself only too well. Each creeping insect serves to answer questions of my destiny. A strange quality in a professor of physics. But is this not founded in human nature, and only monstrously exaggerated in my case -- extended beyond the proportion of the natural admixture that is wholesome?

Like Esau, I sold my birthright -- admission to the faculty -- for a little peace of mind.¹

Despite my lassitude I have constantly grown in self-knowledge, without possessing the energy to improve myself. Indeed, I have often felt that this insight indemnified me for my indolence; and the pleasure that I took in the careful ascertainment of a fault in myself was greater than the vexation that the fault aroused in me. So much did the professor outweigh the man in me. Truly, the creator has fashioned some remarkable oddities with his clay.¹

He was never more systematic than in matters which were in no way the object of his surveillance. For instance, he regularly used a pound of snuff-tobacco every three weeks, although he did not make it a rule to do so.

If he had ever seriously taken a mind to be systematic in this he would probably have been very unsystematic.

A worry-meter, mensura curarum. My face is one.

I have often indulged for hours on end in all manner of reveries, at times when everyone thought I was hard at work. I feel the disadvantage of this so far as loss of time is concerned, but without this fantasy-cure¹ (which I generally take at the usual watering season) I would never have grown so old as I am today -- 53 years, 1 1/2 months.

I would give a part of my life to know the mean barometer stage in paradise.

II. CHARACTER AND PHYSIOGNOMY

People's faces are often ugly to the point of repulsiveness. Why is this? It is probable that the necessary differences in disposition and character could not be maintained without some such device. This may be regarded as an index to mind and temperament¹ -- an index which we perhaps should take more pains to read. To lay some sort of foundation for this difficult and diffuse science, one would have to inspect, among different nations, the greatest men, the prisons, and the madhouses; for these three categories are, so to speak, the three prime colors of which the others are commonly a blending.

What hidden laws and mysterious ways are those whereby nature alters the instincts of one and the same animal and makes him forget his previous ones. The chick creeps under its hen. Finally it becomes a hen itself and no longer creeps under, but is crept under. In all animals the external condition of the body and its sense organs is a function of the animal's activity and mode of life.¹ This is true of man too, but in his case when one of the

variable quantities increases, another may decrease, and contrariwise.

We might call habit a moral friction -- something that does not allow the mind to pass lightly over things, but binds it to them, so that it has difficulty in freeing itself.

On the fourth of July 1765, a day when a clear sky repeatedly alternated with clouds, I was lying in bed with a book. At first I could see the letters plainly; but of a sudden, and without my noting the movement, the hand that held the book shifted position; and since this shut off a little light, I concluded that a thick cloud must have passed before the sun, and everything seemed gloomy, although in reality the light in the room remained unchanged. Such is frequently the nature of our conclusions. We seek far afield for reasons that often lie close at hand, within ourselves.

I have always found that violent ambition and diffidence go together.¹

We often work hard to subdue a vicious emotion, but wish to retain our other, good ones. This comes of our

method of describing a person: we do not see his character as a very rightly organized whole which can assume various relative positions only in its parts, but look upon the emotions as loosely affixed beauty-patches that we can shift about and toss aside.¹

On a number of occasions I have noticed that I got a headache when I looked at myself for any length of time in a concave mirror.

Sometimes, when my nerves were on edge from drinking too much coffee and everything startled me, I could very plainly observe that I started before I heard the noise. This would seem to indicate that, in a manner of speaking, our ears are not the only organs with which we hear.

One morning not long ago I dreamed that I was lying awake in bed and could not get my breath. Thereupon I awoke, quite clear-headed, and realized that I felt only a very slight inconvenience from that source. Unpleasant sensations always seem greater to a merely sentient body than to one conjoined with a thinking mind; for, in the latter event, the very thought that the sensations are of no consequence, or that we could free ourselves of them if we wished, often detracts much from their unpleasantness. We frequently lie with our bodies in such a posture that the constricted parts cause us acute pain; but since

we know that we could shift position if we wanted, we actually feel very little. This corroborates an observation that I have made below¹-- that headaches can be relieved by pressure.

Death is a constant quantity, but pain is a variable that is subject to infinite increase. This is a proposition that the advocates of torture must grant, for otherwise torture is unavailing. Yet in many cases pain reaches a maximum, and is less than death.

Herr Guncke¹ can voluntarily contract and dilate the pupils of his eyes. In the former case he is unable to distinguish objects. (I had him repeat this experiment a hundred times.) Whether his volition operates directly on the uvea, or whether he actuates some other portion of the eye that responds more readily to the will, and the contraction of the pupil ensues mechanically -- this I don't know.

Prejudices are, so to speak, the mechanical instincts of man. By means of them he does, without any effort whatsoever, a great deal that he would be unable to think through to the sticking point.¹

Our life hangs so exactly midway between pleasure and pain that sometimes even those things may become deleterious that subserve the maintenance of our existence: a quite natural change of atmosphere, for example -- despite the fact that air is our normal medium. Yet who knows whether it may not be that much of our pleasure depends on this balancement. Such sensitivity is perhaps an important element of that which constitutes our advantage over the beasts.

In seeing and hearing, says Home,¹ we do not feel the direct contact of external bodies as we do in the case of the other senses. But if we had no eyes, perhaps the sensation of touch would quite as much seem to take place within ourselves; our eyes cause us to transfer the sensation to the place where we see that the cause lies.

To make ourselves fully aware of a happiness that seems of small consequence, we must always imagine that it has been lost and that we have just regained it. But to perform such experiments successfully requires considerable experience in all manner of suffering.

A general measuring-rod for merit or for the importance of a function -- a criterion that would indicate at once to men of all stations the true magnitude of an ac-

tion: this would be an invention worthy of a moral Newton. For instance: to drill a company before the commandant's house is certainly not as difficult as to sole a pair of shoes. (I know, of course, that honor is a kind of salary, to pay which the potentate levies a tax on the hats and necks of his subjects.¹ When an apprentice doffs his hat to an officer, it always seems to me that the boy is a kind of army paymaster. And how uncouth the officers who fail to give a receipt -- who do not doff their hats in turn.) And I maintain that to cut a suit of clothes well is without question more difficult than to play the court cavalier.... Some such scale of values -- which would certainly cost author and publisher their heads -- I should like to see printed. It surely exists in the mind of every honest man. One might take as the unity of proficiency the art of balancing objects on one's nose, since this skill is acquired with a fairly uniform rapidity; and we might measure the degrees of difficulty by the length in inches of a tobacco-pipe.

In a crime, that which the world calls the crime is seldom that which merits the punishment; rather, the fault lies at a certain point in the long series of actions through which it takes root, as it were, in our lives -- at the point where we find the particular action that was most dependent on our will, and which we could most easily have eschewed.¹

There are certain people who make friends easily with everyone, but quite as quickly turn love to hate, and then to love again. If we conceive of the human race as a whole in which each part has its place, such people are fill-gaps that can be thrown in anywhere. Among the persons of this type we rarely find great geniuses, notwithstanding the fact that they are most readily considered as such.

Spirits without a world outside them must be strange creatures; for, since the grounds for all their thoughts lie only within themselves, they must at all times be able honestly to entertain the strangest combinations of ideas. We call people mad when they cease to allow the order of their thoughts to be governed by the sequence of events in our normal world. Hence a careful observation of nature, or the study of mathematics, is certainly the surest remedy for madness. Nature, we might say, is the guide-rope along which our thoughts are conducted lest they go astray.

Dreams often lead us into circumstances and occurrences in which we would not be likely to become involved in the waking state; or they cause us to feel discomfitures, the possibility of which we might otherwise regard as slight and far-fetched, and in which we might for this very reason involve ourselves. Hence a dream often alters our decisions,

and safeguards our moral fond more effectively than all the precepts that reach the heart by a circuitous route.¹

We owe to the men of the world so many remarkable inventions in poetry, all of them originating in the reproductive instinct -- all the ideals of women, and the like. It is a shame that the passionate girls dare not write of the handsome young men, as well they could, if only it were permitted. As the matter stands, masculine beauty has never yet been delineated by the only hands that could perform the task with the proper enthusiasm. Probably the spiritual quality that a pair of enchanted eyes see in a body is manifested quite differently in the male body for the girls than in the female body for the men.

I have had the good fortune to live for six years in the city in Germany where perhaps the greatest number of original geniuses live together, at least in proportion to the space on which they are assembled. Most of them I knew well, or at least I had occasion enough to compensate for my want of personal association with a knowledge of certain traits of character which rarely become known outside the city in which such men live, but there cannot escape a moderate curiosity. I also have known "wretched writers,"¹ conceited young men of great diligence. I shall set down

here the observation I have made in both instances. Not only does the great genius pass judgment in company on matters that are not within his province; he also errs frequently in his own field, unless he is dealing with things that he has very often reflected upon, or in which mere erudition is the decisive factor. When thrown back upon his native resources, he possesses a certain quality of attentiveness toward everyday matters -- a trait that seems to be one of the prime characteristics of a great mind. This causes him to regard all occurrences as individua, and not to let them all pass by equally unnoted in the genere summo of common affairs (an artifice that is quite natural to weaker intellects).... In this respect a philosopher must to a degree imitate his creator and, at least within a narrow compass, see only individua. Naturally he does not regard everything so; before he could reach such a point he would have to be God himself. This mode of observation gives the genius a sure knowledge of the things about him -- a knowledge which is far from being always systematic, yet which suffices to distinguish the true from the false, not perfectly perhaps, but to the extent of a first rough segregation. This type of knowledge is undoubtedly commoner where there are no books. Where books exist, one can overleap certain stages, and the resulting knowledge never dissolves, so to speak, within the mind, never unites perfectly with it, but is fetched forth only upon necessity from a place where it lies divorced from one's

general system of views and opinions. How often this leads to error! The Ancients often possessed the former sort of knowledge. Everything that they knew composed a whole; and since it was the course of nature which gradually constructed this whole in them, they spoke naturally whenever they spoke. Their expressions were simple, for it was nature that spoke from their mouths. But let no one believe that he now can acquire simplicity through diligent reading of the Ancients. He can accustom himself to recognize it where it occurs, but it will never become flesh and blood in him; it cannot take on new forms in his mind. All that I say here -- which every reader should now be able to gloss for himself -- I have observed in many learned men, although it sometimes is obscured by a mass of erudition too suddenly acquired through reading.... The "wretched writer," or modern savant, does nothing but read; his erudite sentiments are not inherent in himself, but exist outside him. His petty soul, decked out in the trappings of a greater, is ill at ease. Hence the countless forms in which the bad writer appears; hence his fustian, his unevenness (the chief trait of bad writers), his affectation.

The essential man is like a bulb with many thousands of roots. The nerves are the only sentient part of him; the rest serves to maintain, and more conveniently propagate,

these roots. What we see is, therefore, only the pot in which the man (the nerves) is planted.

There are very few things of which we can acquire knowledge through all five senses.

It is really possible that, if parts of the brain which should be symmetrical are not so, this may be advantageous to the mind. We can make shift with only one eye, or with only one side of the brain. The other may indurate by chance, or undergo other changes which may alter the whole constellation of the brain in entertaining an idea. It is said that misshapen persons are often very astute. The deformed side continues to harden, and there ensues perhaps a corresponding one-sided alteration of the brain that is advantageous rather than deleterious to genius (which, as someone has said,¹ is in itself a pathological state). I have noticed that people in whose features there was a certain lack of symmetry were often the subtlest minds. If a certain likeness I have seen of Voltaire is to be trusted (and I am assured that it was cast of a mold made from the life at Mannheim), one side of his face is much shorter than the other, and the nose is crooked, although this is barely detectable. K.....r² looks much younger from one side than from the other. These very irregularities, which do not reach the point of offensiveness,

give these two remarkable faces a certain expression suggestive of the sting and acerbity that have made their writings so distinctive. -- A man with a spyglass for one eye and a microscope for the other would play a peculiar part among ordinary people.

We can see nothing at all of the soul if it is not revealed in the features. The faces of a great crowd of people might be called a history of the soul written in a sort of Chinese ideogram. As a magnet draws filings into a certain pattern, so the soul draws the features of the face, and the differences in their collocation indicate the variations in that which gave them this arrangement. The longer we observe faces, the better we perceive in the so-called insignificant ones the traits that make them individual.

At the comedy he always tried, whenever a laugh seemed to be in order, to catch the eye of someone who would laugh with him. When I noticed this, I never came to his rescue, but looked steadfastly aside.

It is absurd to say that at times we are really not disposed to do anything. I believe that the moment when we are strong enough to suppress a prime impulse, the urge to activity and industry, is the moment when we should be in a good way to undertake the strangest and greatest

things. This is a particular state of mental transport in which the mind sees quite as much of the peculiarly small as it does of the peculiarly great in the other kinds of transport and ecstasy. And if the latter states can be compared to the daring visions of the astronomer, the former one may equally well be likened to the labors of a Loewenhoeck.¹

Human vanity is a strange thing. It cannot be suppressed all at once. If you stop up hole A, it peeps out before you realize it at another hole B; and if this one is held shut, it takes its stand behind hole C, &c.

The modern man may be said to consist of two men put together: the natural man and the artificial, the one of which changes according to the immutable laws of nature and the other according to the variable laws of manners and fashion.¹ In describing human beings our chief care should be to distinguish the one from the other. In the natural man I include the main traits and contours of character: -- pensive, melancholy, quiet, lively; fop,² observer, he who discovers truths himself, he who adapts others' store of ideas to his own system of opinions. In the artificial man everything is merely superimposed, assumed, whether it be a compliment or a great philosophical truth; everything is strained and false. Eau de lavande, red heels on the shoes, &c.

The proper juxtaposing of qualities and actions, both good and bad, is one of the most difficult arts, and one which many great men have had to master in order not to lose all credit with the afterworld. A preeminent virtue and a preeminent vice side by side present a fairly good appearance from a reasonable distance. Covert, modest vices and prominent virtues will bear closer scrutiny. But quiet virtues and extremely loud vices are not good to look upon. This was the case with our K.¹

The prevailing character of his face was: sooner break than bend. This was manifested in a number of ways: the broad forehead, whose hardness one could see without needing to touch it; rather pendulous eyebrows that did not grant passage to the more sensitive aspects of that vicinity and generally concealed all slight changes of expression. This lent his face a certain constancy which always dominated the changes of the other features. The corners of the mouth turned downwards rather markedly; the chin was cleft by a notch that seemed to be a continuation of that above the nose. The hair -- for this, too, should be counted among the features -- always appeared to be in marvelous harmony with the face itself; so much so that one might believe that the hairs took their cue from the emotions: a smooth, rounded contour expressed placidity; a bristly confusion at the sides, a fluctuans sub pectore.

A pyramidal effect, with the base below and leaning slightly forward, indicated stubborn resolution. And, finally, a pyramid with the base above showed extreme perplexity and an approaching access of temper. In short, my observation of him revealed a spontaneous occurrence of everything that a somewhat speculative wigmaker would need to evolve a philosophy of crêpe, vergette, aile de pigeon, and à la rose.¹

Just as we outgrow a pair of breeches, we outgrow our friends, libraries, principles, and the like -- sometimes before they are worn out, and sometimes -- and this is the worst -- before we have new ones to take their place.

I hardly know how to phrase it, but the man had in his face a certain expression that might be called an inward-turning of the eyes of the spirit, and is an unfailing sign of genius.

The ability to test and teach oneself is very convenient, and is not so dangerous as shaving oneself. Everyone should acquire it at a certain age, for fear of someday falling victim to an ill-wielded razor.

He had that something about him which the Herrnhuter¹

styles an air of grace, the stay-at-home professor of theology terms piety, and the intelligent man of the world calls silliness and want of understanding.

Weaknesses cease to be harmful to us as soon as we recognize them.¹

Even though you have no desire to spread your branches over a broad acre, it aids your productivity to have driven your roots far afield.

I did not take this from Persius¹ myself, but found the passage cited in another place. If it should prove that he never made such a statement, I offer my apologies both to Persius and to my readers.

Man is perhaps half mind and half matter, as the polyp is half plant, half animal. The strangest creatures always lie on the borderline.

An affected earnestness that finally resulted in a moral paralysis of the facial muscles.

What most slackens the tension of the springs of action in ourselves is to see in possession of renown other people of whose unworthiness we are convinced.

The healthy thinker: the man in whom reflection is not a disease.¹

With a modicum of ability, flexible fibres, and a stiff¹ determination to appear eccentric, a man can do a great many crazy things in this world, if he is weak¹ enough to want to do them and idle enough to carry them out.

Someone could write a dietetics for the salubrity of the mind.¹

The first mental look that I take at a thing is very important. The mind surveys the thing darkly from all angles; which is often more valuable than a clear impression from only one.

When a man writes, we can tell at once whether he writes well or ill; but when a man writes nothing and holds his peace, no mortal soul can tell whether he does so from discernment or ignorance.

Ghosts will never keep your house untenanted. If a few simpletons vacate out of fear, other bigger ninnies will move in out of bravado.

There are people who sometimes boast of their candor.

They should, however, bear in mind that candor must flow from character, or else even those who esteem it when it is genuine must regard it as insolence.

No one can have bad taste, but some people have none at all.

Nothing is more conducive to peace of mind than the complete absence of opinions.

We raise our minds in hothouses.

There are people with faces so fat that they can laugh away under the lard, and even the greatest physiological conjurer can detect nothing; whilst we poor spindling creatures, who wear our souls directly under the epidermis, must always speak the language in which no one can lie.

Human nature is not so hard to understand as many a book-worm professor believes when he sits in his dressing-gown and rejoices to find one of Rochefoucauld's¹ comments true to life. I would even go so far as to maintain that most people understand human nature much better than they themselves realize, and make use of this understanding in their daily life; but as soon as they begin to write, the

devil gets into them: everything is so neat and Sunday-fied that we can no longer recognize the writers, and those who in all other circumstances are quite natural make faces like an old maid on her wedding day.

From time to time we find a certain quality in people's eyes that gives them the appearance of looking out of a mask. Professor Erxleben¹ has it, and Dr. Priestley² to a high degree. Might this be an external sign of the polygrapher?

If people would relate their dreams candidly, these would serve better than faces to reveal character.¹

A long period of happiness palls by its mere continuance.¹

If you would know what other people think regarding a matter that concerns you, you need only consider what you yourself would think of them under the same circumstances. Regard no one as morally superior to yourself in this respect, and no one as more obtuse than yourself. People notice more often than we imagine the things that we think we have concealed from them. -- Of this observation more than half is true, and that is saying a good deal of a maxim that one sets down in one's thirtieth year as I did this one.

The most entertaining area on earth for us is the human face.

Lessing's admission¹ that he has read almost too much for the health of his mind goes far to prove how healthy his mind really is.

When I read a German book printed in the Latin character I always have the feeling that I must first translate it -- just as when I take a book upside down and try to read it: a proof of the degree to which our thoughts are dependent on the signs that symbolize them.

The reason why people remember so little of what they read is that they think so little for themselves. When a man can repeat what others have expressed well, he usually has reflected a good deal himself -- unless his head is a mere pedometer, like so many of the heads that are celebrated for their phenomenal memories.

Something witty can be said against anything or for anything. In fact, a wit might well say something against this assertion that would make me repent of it.

Inure your mind to doubt, and your heart to tractability.

We can criticize the faults of a great man, but we must never for that reason criticize the man himself; he must be taken as a whole.

Good taste might be compared with the Wandering Jew.

There are people who are born with a bad conscience: with a red line¹ around their necks -- a hypothetical noose.¹

I am convinced that we not only love ourselves in others, but also hate ourselves in others.¹

We adduce against wine only the depraved actions to which it leads; but it also leads to hundreds of good ones that are not so conspicuous. Wine is a stimulus to activity; it fortifies the good in their goodness, the depraved in their depravity.

In my mind live the effects of long-departed causes.¹

Materialism is the asymptote of psychology.¹

If physiognomical science ever acquires the recognition that Lavater expects, people will have their children hanged before they do the deeds that will merit the gal-

lows. There will be a new kind of confirmation ceremony -- a physiognomical auto-da-fé.

The processes of the mind are another life and another world.

I have noticed very plainly that I am often of one opinion when I am lying down, and of another when I am standing -- particularly when I have not eaten much and am tired.¹

All impartiality is artificial. Men are always partial, and it is right that it should be so. Even impartiality is partial.

The face is to the soul as the meter is to the content in poetry.

People even draw themselves imaginary portraits of General Howe and Hancock. I think of Washington as a fairly corpulent man of medium height, with a swarthy and somewhat puffy face; a short blue coat with red facings, and rather weak legs.¹ I always see him standing, never on horseback or sitting. What gives me these ideas I do not know. An explanation of them from the most general principles would be fatal to physiognomy.

"It is too bad that it is not a sin to drink water," exclaimed an Italian. "How good it would taste!"

The basest and most vicious actions require intelligence and talent, and conversely the greatest deeds necessarily involve a certain insensibility which under other circumstances we call stupidity.

From a man's mistress we can deduce much of his character. We see in her his weaknesses and his dreams. We are not known half so well ex socio as ex socia.

What is sickliness (not sickness) but inward distortion?

Polybius distinguishes the cause, the pretext, and the inception of a war.¹ Of these only the latter two are commonly known. The same is true in other matters.

Discovering small faults and flaws has always been the mark of heads that rise but little, or not at all, above the level of mediocrity. The notably superior minds preserve silence, or raise their voices only against the whole; and the great intellects simply work without commenting.

In many a book by a famous man I would rather read what the author struck out than what he left in the text.

I have very often noted the following: when varied events occur, the days pass swiftly by, but the time spent, the sum of these days, seems long. And contrariwise, the more uniform our occupations, the longer the days and the shorter the time spent, their summation.¹ The explanation is not very difficult.

When you read the story of a great criminal, always thank the providence of heaven, before you condemn him, that you, with your honest face, were not set down at the beginning of a similar chain of circumstances.

The maxim of Rochefoucauld:¹ Dans l'adversité de nos meilleurs amis nous trouvons toujours quelque chose qui ne nous déplaît pas,² sounds strange, to be sure; but, whoever denies its truth either fails to understand it, or does not know himself.

As long as the memory holds out, a throng of individuals work together in a single mind and body: the youth of twenty, the man of thirty, and so on. But as soon as the memory fails, this whole generation of egos withdraws

and smiles contemptuously at an old helpless creature. I felt this very strongly in August 1795.¹

No more casual and fugitive judgments are passed than on the characters of men; yet there is nothing that requires greater circumspection. Nowhere are we less willing to wait until we can grasp the totality that really constitutes character. I have always found that the so-called "bad" people gain when we know them more fully, and that the "good" ones lose.

In timid persons an imagined incapacity may for a long time play the part of a real one -- in matters of the mind¹ as well as of the body.

Before you censure you should always see whether you cannot excuse.¹

I know the outward signs of affected attentiveness; it is the lowest grade of distraction.

In every man's character there is something that cannot be broken -- the skeleton of character; and any effort to change this is as futile as to teach a sheep to fetch.

We are greatly in error if we try to deduce the character and opinions of a man from what he says or does in society. We do not always speak and act before a tribunal of the wise. The pleasure of an evening may hang from a sophistry. After all, no one in his right mind judges Cicero's philosophy from his orations.

Man loves society, though it be only that of a burning candle.

It is true that all men procrastinate and repent of their procrastination. But I believe that the most industrious find as much to regret as the most indolent; for he who does most sees most clearly what he could have done.

Truly, men profit too little from their lives; hence it is no wonder that the world presents such a silly spectacle. How do we spend our old age? -- in defending our opinions, not because we actually believe they are right, but because we once stated publicly that we believed they were right.... Good heavens, if only the old would take to telling what actions we should avoid, and what they themselves should have done to become greater men than they are!

It jeopardizes the improvement of our minds if we are acclaimed for works that do not require our whole energy. When this is the case, we usually cease to progress. Whence La Rochefoucauld concludes that no man has ever done all that he could have done.¹ I think that this is for the most part true. Every human mind has a portion of indolence that predisposes it to do mainly the things that are easy for it.

Throughout my life I have found that, when all other means fail, the character of a man may be recognized in nothing so well as in a joke that he takes amiss.

Is there anyone among us who is not insane at least once a year -- when he is alone, and in his mind creates another world and circumstances other than those which actually prevail? Sanity consists merely in finding oneself again as soon as the curtain falls, and going home when the comedy is over.¹

Regarding the events of life, people do not think as disparately as they talk.

The healthiest and handsomest, most regularly proportioned people are those who are most complaisant. But the man with a flaw has a mind of his own.

To err is human, insofar as animals rarely or never err, or at least only the most intelligent among them.

Of all the actions that were precalculated in the world, two-fifths actually occur extemporaneously.

The famous wit Chamfort¹ was in the habit of saying: I have three classes of friends -- friends who love me, friends who care nothing about me, and friends who despise me. Very true!

A man can acquire anything if he sets about it rightly -- even courage. But it is better, one must admit, for him to be born with it.

First we have to believe, and then we believe.

Kings often think that their generals and admirals acts from patriotism and zeal for their own honor, when the fact is that frequently the whole motive to great deeds is simply a girl who reads the newspapers.

Boswell's Life of Johnson.¹ Johnson is a highly disagreeable, uncouth fellow, but just the sort of man from whom to learn the temper of mankind -- a crystallization undisguised by polish. What good to me are the cut stones?

What the tolling of bells contributes to the rest of the deceased I shall not venture to say. To the living it is an abomination.

Under psychological demonstrations we should read κύριε
ἐλέησον instead of Quod erat demonstrandum.

We should follow our feelings, and set down on paper the first impression that a thing makes on us. Not that it were my advice to seek truth in this wise, but because this represents the unfalsified voice of our experience, the result of our best observations; whereas we easily slip into a conscience-ridden routine of twaddle if we stop to reflect.

When someone does something poorly that we expected to be done well, we say: Why, I could do that well myself! -- There are few expressions that reveal so much modesty.

We certainly should not disavow all our instinctive likes and dislikes. Perhaps they are the last vestiges of the lost wisdom of a different generation of mankind.

I forget the greater part of what I read, just as I forget most of the things I eat, but I am none the less assured that both conduce to the maintenance of my mind and body.

People themselves do not actually circulate in society, but send in their stead dressed-up dolls which they clothe as they wish.

When I speak with someone, I notice at once whether he has elasticity or yields to every pressure exerted on him. Barbers are all soft. Kästner is hard. Meister¹ was elastic.

The fame of even the most celebrated men always grows in part from the purblindness of their admirers, and I am convinced that for such men the consciousness of being seen through by a small number who have less fame but more sense spoils all the pleasure of renown. A true, calm enjoyment of life is compatible only with truth.

If from the slight agreement that exists between external appearance and character (that is to say, between the exoteric and the esoteric man) we can deduce some similar condition in the works of nature, this is a poor consolation; for how few friends would remain friends if they could see each other's sentiments in toto.

It is a very wise dispensation of our nature that so many drastic diseases are not at all perceptible. If we

could feel apoplexy from its very inception, it would be counted among the chronic maladies.

The roofer strengthens himself perhaps with a morning prayer for the perils of the day. They are happy people who can do this.... Or he may achieve the same result with a dose of burnt cat's-brain.... Oh, if only we could sometimes know what gives men courage!

He scorns me because he does not know me, and I scorn his imputations because I know myself.

There are drastic diseases, of which one may die; there are also some which, although not necessarily fatal, can be noticed or felt without great study; and, finally, there are certain others which can hardly be detected without a microscope, but look fearsome when so viewed; and this microscope is hypochondria. I believe that if people would take the proper pains to study the microscopic maladies, they would have the satisfaction of being ill every day.

The form of chess, and even of the Talmud and the old scholastic philosophy, is good, but the substance does not amount to much. They exercise the mental powers, but what we learn from them is of no value.

Offensive and defensive pride.

It is a golden rule that we should never judge people by their opinions, but rather by what these opinions have made of them.

To recognize an honest man is in many cases easy, but not in all. The same is true here as of minerals, where a chemical analysis is sometimes necessary. But who takes the trouble, and how many have the ability, to make such analyses of character? Our hasty passing of judgment is mostly due to a natural human inertia; the more rigorous chemical system finds few partisans in practice.

I have gone through the index of maladies, and failed to find mention of worries and depressing ideas. This is a serious oversight.

One might be half tempted to classify men and their intellectual powers as we do minerals -- according to their hardness, or better, the ability that each possesses to cut or scratch another.

My body is that part of the world which my thoughts can alter. Even imagined illnesses may become real. In

the rest of the world my hypotheses cannot disturb the order of things.

Great conquerors will always be admired, and universal history will forever cut its periods to fit their lives. This is sad, but it is firmly rooted in human nature. In comparison with a large and powerful body, though a simpleton live inside it, a small one, though it house a great mind, will always seem contemptible, at least to the great majority of men. To prefer the great mind in the small body shows reflection, and only a few can ever aspire to that. At the neat-market all eyes are fixed on the biggest and fattest ox.

The worry-chest, the sanctum sanctorum of the most private economy of the soul, which is opened only at night. Everyone has his own. An article of furniture that is found in every household and every station of life.

People have their own peculiar ways of being wrong, and it is particularly common for mistakes to arise from a misguided sort of accuracy.¹

Each evening he performed toward his wife the conjugal duty of bragging. He tried to make it clear to her that he

was the foremost man of the town and perhaps of the nation.... There surely are several more of these conjugal duties. It is a wife's obligation to leave the assessment of her husband's importance to her husband himself -- to believe him implicite, or at most tone down the estimate a little now and again when sound common sense requires it. The husband's duty is to believe that his wife is the most faithful on earth if she says so.

In most people incredulity in one matter is founded on blind faith in another.

III. PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

When we do as the metaphysicians so often do, and believe we understand something that we do not understand, we might style this affirmative nescire.

It is hard to explain how we arrived at the ideas that we now possess. No one, or only a very few, are able to say when they first heard mention of Herr von Leibniz;¹ and it is much more difficult to determine when we first acquired the idea that all men are mortal. This thought does not come to us as early as we might believe. If it is so difficult to indicate the origins of things that take place within us, what success can we expect when we try to deal with things apart from ourselves?

The discovery of the most significant truths is dependent upon a delicately balanced power of abstraction, and our everyday life is a perpetual striving to render us incapable of this. Everything is knack, habit, routine -- varying only in degree from person to person; and the business of philosophers is to un-learn these little blind tricks that we have acquired through observation from childhood on.

In a good many of the sciences the attempt to find a general principium is often probably quite as fruitless as would be the effort to find in mineralogy a common primordial whose composition would account for the development of all minerals. Nature creates no genera and species; she makes individua. And only our shortsightedness makes it necessary for us to seek out analogies, so that our minds may hold much at once. Such conceptions become increasingly false as we extend the range of our fictive generalities.¹

The greatest things in the world are produced by others that we deem of no importance -- little causes which escape our notice, and which finally mount up.

The superstition of common people springs from their early, and all too zealous instruction in religion. They hear of mysteries, miracles, works of the devil, and think it very probable that the like might occur everywhere, under any circumstances. If, contrariwise, they were first shown nature herself, they would be more apt to regard with reverence the supernatural and mysterious in religion; for now these qualities are so commonplace in their minds that they would not think it strange if they were to hear that today six angels walked across the street. (Also, the pictures in Bibles are nothing for children.)

We find pleasure only where we recognize purpose. At least our eyes and ears judge according to this principle. At first the wing of a butterfly is pleasing because of its regular coloration; we gradually come to accept this as a matter of course; and then it begins to provide a new pleasure when we see that it is made up of feathers. Quartz is more pleasing than amorphous sandstone. -- If we would arouse pleasure, we must look for this quality in things.

In demonstrating the possibility of many things one must not resort too quickly to an appeal to a Perfect Being; for as soon as we believe, for instance, that God implants the power of thought in matter, we can no longer prove that there is a god apart from matter.

To observe in a new light the things that lie before our eyes each day, or better, to look at them through a magnifying-glass, is often a means of successfully educating the world. "Diversions" like Ledermüller's¹ could be written in the province of ethics. Such a microscope would reveal incredible things. Look into Home.² -- Rousseau says: Le goût est le microscope du jugement.³

If substances have attributes that can be represented to others, then we can at one and the same time be members

of various worlds, without the consciousness of being in more than one; for the attributes of substances are, so to speak, permeable. Thus it is possible for us to die and live on in another world.

One can look upon the human race as a polyp; and, if so, one has the gist of my system of metempsychosis.

In order to transform a piece of flesh into earth again, so that it may be of use to other vegetables or animals, nature not only causes it to disintegrate through putrefaction, but has created other little creatures to eat it up. She could perhaps have achieved her ends without these animalcules; but through them the sum-total of pleasure in sentient creatures is increased in the world. And we are probably justified in assuming that at all times the pleasure of sentient substances in the world is at a maximum so that, if it increases in one species, it decreases in another.

If the abstract truths that our reason apprehends with few or no preliminary sensations could be so arranged as to show the transition to the applied truths, this would provide a usable metaphysic. Our metaphysic, however, is still without knowledge of this transition.¹

The disposition of our nature is so wise that past pain, as well as past enjoyment, awakens pleasure. And further, since we are more apt to foresee a future joy than a future hurt, we may observe that the sad and the pleasant sensations in the world are not even equally apportioned, but that there is actually a surplus on the side of pleasure.

The dispute over meaning and being that has wrought such havoc in religion¹ would perhaps have been more beneficial if it had been carried on in other provinces; for it is a common source of unhappiness that we believe that things are what they only mean.

Life may be regarded as a line, with various twists and turns, which is superimposed on a straight line (the limit of life). Sudden death is a perpendicular at the end of this line. Illnesses run parallel to it.

Human happiness consists in a proper relation of the qualities of soul and mind and the emotions. If one of these grows unduly, all the rest suffer. This gives rise to numberless mixtures. What we call a great thinker may be quite as much a monstium as a great gambler -- but a useful monstium. Thus Savage¹ and Günther² were true monstrosities. The man who lives placidly and contentedly is the standard

of the human species; and such a man will rarely make any great progress in a science, since a machine contrived for many uses is seldom so well suited to any one of them as a mechanism designed for only a single purpose. Hence it is as wisely ordained that only a few people should be geniuses as that not everyone should be deaf or blind. Newton³ was in mind a macrocheir; he could reach higher up.

There incontestably may be creatures whose organs are so delicate that they are incapable of reaching through a beam of light -- just as we are unable to reach through a stone, since the effort would destroy our hands.

Perhaps a thought is the cause of all movement in the world, and the philosophers who teach that the world is an animal may have reached their conclusion by this route. Perhaps they only failed to express themselves as precisely as they should. Our whole world is nothing but the effect produced upon matter by a thought of God.

As early as my schooldays I entertained ideas of suicide that ran directly counter to those commonly accepted; and I remember that once I disputed in Latin on suicide, and sought to defend it. I must, however, admit that the inner conviction of the propriety of a thing has its ultimate

foundation in an obscurity, which is extremely difficult to clarify, or at least seems so, since the disparity of the clearly expressed utterance and our unclear emotion makes us believe that we have not yet found the right answer. In August 1769, and in the ensuing months, my thoughts dwelt more constantly on suicide than ever before; and I always concluded that a man whose instinct of self-preservation is so weakened that it can so easily be overpowered may take his own life without guilt. If a wrong has been done it lies much further back. In my case a perhaps too vivid picture of death, its beginning, and its essential simplicity, is responsible for this attitude. Those who know me only from large gatherings and not from intimate association will think it strange that I can say such a thing. But Herr Ljungberg knows that it is one of my favorite thoughts to remember death, and that sometimes this idea so takes possession of me that I seem to feel rather than think, and half-hours pass like minutes. This is no thick-blooded self-torment that I give way to against my will, but a spiritual voluptas that I enjoy sparingly, since I fear at times that it might give rise to the well-known lich-owlish love of contemplation.

Non-existence is for the natural scientist, or at least a certain class of them, the equivalent of non-perception.

The peasant who believes that the moon is no larger than a plow-wheel never stops to think that at a distance of a few miles a whole church looks like a mere white spot and that the moon, on the contrary, always seems of the same size. What keeps him from connecting these ideas, all of which he has separately? In his everyday life he probably connects ideas by more complicated ties than these. This observation should serve as a caution to the philosopher who perchance is still a peasant in certain respects. We think early enough, but we no more know that we think than we know that we grow and digest our victuals; many ordinary people never arrive at this knowledge. A careful observation of external things easily reconveys us to the starting-point of observation, ourselves; and, conversely, the person who fully discovers himself will readily turn to the observation of the things about him. Be heedful, perceive nothing without profit, measure and compare -- this is the whole law of philosophy.

All that we see, do, or think, we must try to reduce to such clarity that we can meet at least the most common objections that may be raised against it. Then we can add it to the fund of our knowledge. No contested goods must ever be counted in our stock. If a fact that is generally accepted is not compatible with our system, it may be that we still lack elementary ideas, and the acquisition of these is always a great gain.

Human philosophy in general is the philosophy of one particular man corrected by the philosophies of the others, even the fools -- and this according to the rules of a rational appraisal of degrees of probability. Propositions on which all men agree must be true; if they are not true, then we have no truth at all.... As soon as this ceases to be the case, we have an individual philosophy and not one that has been ratified in the council of humanity. Even superstition is local philosophy, and it too has its vote.

Becoming wise consists in acquainting oneself more and more thoroughly with the errors to which the instrument with which we perceive and judge is potentially subject. Circumspection in judgment is the quality that should be commended nowadays to all and sundry. If every ten years we could get only one incontestable truth from every philosophical writer, our harvest would be rich enough.

We are probably too hasty in inferring an omniscient being from the judicious disposition of the mechanical instincts of animals. He needs only to be wiser than ourselves.

This is as certain as that $(a - x) \cdot (a + x) = a^2 - x^2$.¹

After the model of μεταφυσικά we could form a προ-
φυσικά, and this would be geometry.

It is ridiculous to say "mathematical" method; we should say "natural," for this alone is applied in mathematics. It is quite as if we were to say that the masons on the Tower of Babel worked according to the sch^eme of the Pandects.¹

In the eyes of a wise man nothing is great and nothing small, especially when he is philosophizing -- provided, naturally, that he is neither hungry nor thirsty and that he has not forgotten his snuff-box, if he uses one. These conditions being fulfilled, he could, I think, write treatises on keyholes that would sound as important as a jus naturae and would be equally instructive. The moral universale is no less manifest in the little everyday farthing-facts than in the great ones -- as the few adepts are well aware. In a single raindrop there is so much that is good and artful that an apothecary could not afford to part with one for under half a gulden.

He had much philosophy -- or common sense that looked like it.

If an angel should ever initiate us into his philosophy, I think there would be some propositions that would sound like $2 \text{ times } 2 = 13$.

The commonest opinions and those which everyone takes for granted are often the ones that most deserve to be verified.¹

I had only begun to read Lavater's answer to Herr Mendelssohn's letter¹ when I felt an indescribable vexation. Nothing is more repugnant than to see an imprudent man commit an error that might have extremely unpleasant consequences for honest people, and then repent of it with perfect equanimity and in terms that plainly show how well pleased he is with himself, the whole affair arising from a mere titillation and in the spirit, so to speak, of a literary prank. I felt like saying: "Go to, wretched babbler, and dally if you will with your own peace of mind, but leave your betters alone. What manner of man must this Johann Caspar Lavater be, who, after reading one of Mendelssohn's excellent opinions, feels nothing but the wish that ~~that~~ author were a Christian! Why not wish him the whole Prussian cut and finish and be done with it? I might wish the such a one as Süß² were a Christian -- or a Jew like Mendelssohn. But I have no more desire to see Mendelssohn a Christian than to have him a citizen of Zürich."

We Protestants think that we are now living in very enlightened times as regards our religion. What if a second Luther should arise? Perhaps our age will yet be called the Dark. One can sooner turn or stem the wind than fix the sentiments of men.

The conversion of criminals before their execution might be compared with the process of cramming fowls. We fatten them up spiritually and then cut their throats to keep them from apostasizing.

God created man in his image. That is probably as much as to say that man created God in his.¹

When I consider something first as body and then as mind, this creates a dismaying parallax.¹ He was wont to call the former the somatocentric and the latter the psychocentric branch of a thing.

Have we not already been resurrected once? -- from a state in which we certainly knew less of our present condition than in the present we know of the future. Our previous state is related to our present as the present to the future.

God created man in his own image, says the Bible.
The philosophers do the reverse, and create God in theirs.

Our world will yet become so subtilized that it
will be as ridiculous to believe in God as it is today
to believe in ghosts.¹

The world must not be very old if men cannot yet fly.

I hardly believe that it will be possible to prove
that we are the work of a highest Being, rather than put
together for pastime by a very imperfect one.¹

Our world, which is so beautifully bedecked with
grass and trees, may for this very reason appear to the
eyes of a being higher than ourselves as a ball coated
with green mold. The loveliest starry sky looks empty
when seen through an inverted telescope.

Body and soul: a horse yoked with an ox.

There is a great difference between still believing
something and believing it again. Still to believe that
the moon exerts an influence on vegetation betrays stu-
pidity and superstition, but to believe it again reveals
philosophy and reflection.

Our life can be compared with a winter day. We are born between 12 and 1 at night; it is not light until 8, dark again at 4 in the afternoon, and at 12 we die.

The thought once occurred to me that Saturn -- which looks more like a broken orrery¹ than a planet -- might have served as the model for our solar system and been thrown aside when it was of no further use.

If I rightly know the genealogy of Dame Knowledge, Ignorance is her elder sister. And does it so smell to heaven if one takes the elder sister when the younger is at one's beck and call? From all who know her I have heard that the elder has her own peculiar charms -- that she is a good, fat wench who makes an excellent wife for the very reason that she sleeps more than she wakes.

A prime rule in philosophy is to make no deus ex machina; to assume no senses, no instinct, so long as we can make shift with association and mechanism.

What is the conformation of the earth and the fields but a chart on which we can read all the forces that have acted upon them?¹

The philosophers use the word "soul" as the algebrists their x,y,z, or we¹ the word "attraction." Perhaps it is merely a word, like "opinion," "condition."

I am convinced that if ever God should create a man as the magistri and professors of philosophy conceive of one he would have to be consigned to the madhouse on the first day of his life.

The shape of the surface of a country -- its mountains, valleys, &c. -- is a history written in natural characters of all the changes it has undergone. Every grain of sand is a letter, but the language is for the most part unintelligible to us.

There might be an animal whose brain is the sea, and who would call the north wind blue and the south wind red.

In God's mind, thoughts are colors; in ours they are pigments.

The world is always either too lenient or too harsh in its judgments.

Long before we could interpret the most common phenomena of the physical world, we began to use spirits to explain them. Now that we have a better knowledge of the causal connections, we explain one phenomenon from another. The only spirits that we have left are God and the soul; and all that remains of the soul is, as it were, a ghost that haunts the infirm shell of the body. But does it accord even with the present circumscribed state of our intelligence to believe that the things which, in our opinion, cannot be brought about through the agency of things that we know must necessarily occur by other agencies than those we know? This is not only a false, but an absurd piece of sophistry. I am thoroughly convinced that we know nothing even of that which lies within our power of comprehension; and there is every likelihood that, beyond this, there is much that the fibres of our brains cannot represent to us. Modesty and circumspection are the qualities that most become us in philosophy and especially psychology. What is "matter" as the psychologist conceives of it? Probably no such thing exists in nature. He kills matter, and then proclaims that it is dead.

True, unaffected distrust of human powers in all respects is the surest sign of intellectual strength.¹

It is not so much that the oracles have ceased speaking as that humankind has ceased to hearken to them.

Doubt should be nothing more than alertness, or else it can become dangerous.

It is very possible that inside the brain there are still other organs that deserve the name of eyes, ears, and so on. The active ether imparts its motion to the nerves of the retina. Now it is no longer active ether, but active neural fluid,¹ and the latter is in the world which I am. The former took place in a world which I am not.²

Everything is equal and adequate unto itself; each part represents the whole. Sometimes I have seen my whole life in an hour.

If Reason, the daughter of heaven, dared to judge of beauty, then disease would be the only ugliness.

Few such lines have been written as some in the Fourth Psalm. How infinitely much is expressed in the words:....
commune with your own heart upon your bed.... Offer the
sacrifices of righteousness and put your trust in the Lord!
 A whole religion!

A pure heart and a clean shirt. (A pure heart is one excellent thing, and a clean shirt is another.)

Truth has a thousand obstacles to surmount before it may come unscathed onto paper, and from paper again into the head. Liars are its weakest foes. The enthusiastic romancer who views, and writes of, all things as honest folk do when they have looked too deep into their cups; the hyper-refined, affected connoisseur of humankind who sees, and wills to see, a man's whole life in his every action, like angels in a monad; the good, respectable man who believes all manner of things out of decency, who never probes or verifies anything he has learned before his fifteenth year, and builds the little that he has acquired upon an uncritical foundation -- these are the dangerous enemies of truth.

Euler¹ says in his Epistles on Various Physical Subjects that it would thunder and lighten quite the same if no human being were present for the lightning to strike. This is a very common statement, but I must admit that it has never been easy for me to grasp it fully. It always seems to me that the concept of being is something borrowed from our own thought processes, and that if there were no sentient and cognitive beings, nothing at all would be.²

Church spires are inverted funnels to guide prayers into heaven.

Instead of saying that the world is reflected in us, we should say rather that our reason is reflected in the world.

What am I? What should I do? What can I believe and hope? -- Everything in philosophy can be reduced to this.

Things that are very uncommon seldom remained unexplained for long. The inexplicable generally is no longer uncommon and perhaps never was.

We are aware of certain ideas that do not depend on ourselves. Others believe that at least our own being is dependent on ourselves. Where shall we draw the line? We know only the existence of our sensations, ideas, and thoughts. We should say It thinks, as we say It lightens. Even cogito says too much, if we render it I think. Postulating the I is a practical expedient.¹

I wish that I could disaccustom myself to everything and begin to see, hear, and feel anew. Habit is the ruination of our philosophy.

We must believe that everything has a cause, just as the spider spins her web to catch flies. She does this before she knows that there are such things as flies.

There are truths which strut about in such gala raiment that we are almost tempted to call them lies, but which are none the less pure truths.

What is really Christian in our religion is the soul of all religion. The rest is body.¹

The new discoveries in philosophy are almost wholly discoveries of new errors.¹

Premeditated virtues do not amount to much. Feeling or habit is the thing.¹

In far too many cases the noble simplicity of the works of nature has its origin in the noble myopia of him who observes them.

The ordinary man, with his church-going and Bible-reading, confounds the means with the end. A very common error.

If religion is to have a good taste for the masses, it must retain some of the haut goût of superstition.

Might it not be a good idea to declare a closed season on theology starting with, say, the year 1800, and to forbid the theologians to make any more discoveries?

We have more titular philosophers than real ones.¹

What we say of the advantages and disadvantages of the rational Enlightenment could be well symbolized in a Fable of Fire. Fire is the soul of inorganic nature; its moderate use adds pleasure to our lives; it warms our winters and brightens our nights. But the light must come from candles and torches. Streets lit up by burning houses are poorly illumined. Also, children must not be allowed to play with fire.¹

The carved saints have had more effect on the world than the living ones.¹

I should like to know how many people the Bible has quite literally supported -- commentators, printers, and bookbinders.

At Königsberg in Prussia; that is, the district to which we owe the only true cosmology, the only true philosophy, and the only true tactics.¹

The Catholics formerly burned Jews, without ever considering that their Holy Mother of God was of this race; nor do they consider today that they worship a Jewess.

It was not a kindly act towards his readers on Kant's part that he wrote his book¹ in such a style that it has to be studied as if it were a natural phenomenon.

How did men ever arrive at the idea that they were free? It was a noble thought.

Our theologians are working with might and main to make the Bible into a book in which there is no common sense.

In the intelligence of God there are only rules, or really only one rule with no exceptions. Since we are ignorant of this supreme rule, we manufacture general rules which are not this at all. It is very possible that what we call rules are exceptions, perhaps even to the minds of conjecturable finite creatures.

I believe that the Spinozist and the Deist differ only as the Newtonian and the Eulerian differ on the theory of color.¹

The belief in God is instinctive; it is as natural to man as walking on two legs. It may indeed be modified in some, or even suppressed in some. But, regulariter, it is present, and is indispensable for the intrinsic concord of the faculties.¹

He had learned to play a few pieces on the metaphysics-organ.

Nothing shows me so clearly the devious ways of the learned world than the circumstance that Spinoza¹ was so long regarded as a wicked, rascally fellow, and his opinions as dangerous.

I have long thought that philosophy will eventually be consumed in its own fire. Metaphysics is partly burnt away already.

Only the egoist and idealist doubts that there are creatures praeter nos. But that we transform the praeter into extra, regard creatures praeter nos as extra nos, and think of them as distinct in space, seems to be a form assumed by our peculiar sense-perception. But might not the praeter nos, as well, be a form of the sensory faculty?

Granted that the New Testament contains the doctrines of Christianity in their entirety, I think it could be

proved with geometrical exactitude that the Catholic religion cannot be called Christian. Whether any of the Protestant sects deserves the name may remain an open question. It would be safe to wager a million against one that, if the query were put to an assembly of the most intelligent men of all nations, their decision would be that Catholicism is no more Christianity than modern Italian is ancient Latin.

An idea that I read today in the Brunswick Journal is not bad -- that if the Bible were succinctly written, we would be far in arrears in every sort of enlightenment. But it is an old idea. I believe that it once occurred even to me. Nathan the Wise¹ amounts to much the same thing.

It is truly amazing that on our vague conceptions of causes we have built belief in a god of whom we know nothing and can know nothing; for any theorizing on an author of the world is always anthropomorphism.

The theories of the physical world (the earth) presuppose a raw lump of matter which gradually evolved and improved; those of the moral world depart from a patriarchal perfection which gradually deteriorated. I think that the development in the second case was no better than

in the first. That the uncultured man is in many respects the superior of the civilized is not surprising; nor that the child is in many ways superior to the man.

Mineralogy is the osteology of the earth. Fire and electricity are the neural fluid.¹

God, this great qualitas occulta.

Turn the matter as we will, philosophy is always a kind of analytical chemistry. The peasant uses all the principles of the most abstract philosophy, only they are tangled, obscured, constrained, or 'latent,' as the physicist and chemist say. The philosopher gives us the 'pure' principles.

We see in nature not whole words, but always only the initial letters; and when we have amplified them and try to read, we find that the new words, so-called, are in turn merely the initial letters of others.

If someday a higher being were to tell us how the world began, I should like to know if we would be in a position to understand him. I think not. The explanation would hardly include anything about origin, for that is mere anthropomorphism. It is even very probable that,

apart from our minds, there is nothing that corresponds to our conception of origin whenever it is not used of relations of things to things, but of objects in and for themselves.

The New Testament is an auctor classicus, the most solacing vademecum ever written. For which reason every village in Christendom is fittingly provided with a professor to expound this author. That many of these professors do not understand their text is a tribulation that this auctor has in common with other auctoribus. But the book differs mightily from others in that blunders in its exegesis have even been canonized.¹

We now have four principles of morality:

- 1) the philosophical: Do what is right for its own sake -- out of respect for the ethical law.
- 2) the religious: Do it because it is God's will -- for love of God.
- 3) the human: Do it because it promotes your happiness -- for love of yourself.
- 4) the political: Do it because it promotes the welfare of the great society of which you are a part -- for love of society, in consideration of yourself.

There simply is no other way to worship God than to fulfil one's obligations and to act in accordance with the

laws that the reason prescribes. That there is a God can, in my opinion, mean only that, despite the much-vaunted freedom of my will, I feel constrained to do what is right. What need have we of any other God? There He is!

Reason, at present, looks out beyond the realm of vague but warm emotions, just as the Alpine peaks peer out above the clouds. They see the sun more clearly and distinctly, but are cold and sterile. The reason is vain of its loftiness.¹

The desire to find the truth is creditable, even though we err on the way.

The human race has gone so far by now that they even have a science¹ in which all new inventions are inventions of new errors and all new discoveries are discoveries of old errors.

Herr Kant certainly deserves no small credit for having cleaned house in the physiology of our minds, but this more minute knowledge of the muscles and nerves will give us neither better pianoforte players nor better dancers. It sometimes seems to me as though the acclaim with which the Critique of Pure Reason was received moved him to go too far subsequently.

Is our conception of God anything more than personified inconceivability?

IV. LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

It is certain that we often spend years before we understand the true significance of a word in our mother tongue. In "significance" I include the meaning that intonation may produce. The meaning of a word -- to express myself in mathematical terms -- is given by a formula in which the intonation is the variable, the word itself the constant quantity. Here is opened up a means of infinitely enriching languages without increasing their vocabularies. I have found that the expression Es ist gut is enunciated in five distinct ways, each time with a different meaning, which often is determined by still a third, variable quantity, the facial expression.¹

It is a quite unavoidable defect of all languages that they express only genera of ideas, and rarely say adequately what they mean to say; for if we compare our words with the things they designate, we find that the latter proceed in quite different succession from the former. The qualities that we note in our minds and characters are so intimately conjoined and coalesced

that it is no easy matter to define the boundary between any two. The words expressing them are not of such a nature, and two successive and related qualities are expressed by verbal symbols that give us no hint of a relationship. There should be a means of declining words philosophically -- that is, of indicating their relationships by inflection. In analytical geometry we refer to an indeterminate portion of a line a as x ; the remainder, however, we do not call y , as in ordinary life, but $a - x$. This is the reason why the language of mathematics has so great an advantage over our usual speech.

Herr Magister Wilkes¹ does not write altogether badly. To write really badly is to write in such a manner that, in its unevenness, the work of the artist neither fits forward into human nature, nor has any longer a backward connection with the human artist, and thus hovers midway between the two -- too bad to be human, too perspicuous to be superhuman, and too German to be viewed as the work of some orang-outang.

It has always seemed to me that the really bad writers should be left unmolested in the learned journals. The learned journalists fall prey to the error of the Indians, who regard the orang-outang as one of their own kind, and consider his natural muteness as a piece of obstinacy from which they try to dissuade him with frequent beatings.

There is a certain type of book -- and we have a great abundance of them in Germany -- that does not frighten one away from reading, or put one suddenly to sleep, or depress the spirits, but in the space of an hour transports one into a certain state of lassitude which bears some resemblance to the listlessness that one feels a few hours before a thunderstorm. If you lay the book aside, you feel no inclination to take up anything else; if you begin to write, you write in the same vein; even good books seem to take on this lukewarm inanity if you begin to read them. I have found from my own experience that there is no speedier remedy for this condition than a cup of coffee and a pipe of Varina.¹

Prophetic Glimpses into a Book Catalog
of the Year 1868

Abbt:¹ On Merit. Paris, 1867.

Treatise on the so-called German societies common in the last century, and the question as to whether there was one at Jena -- a fact which is disputed.

On the art of criticism in and after the Great War; the military tactics of the journalists; and the so-called offensive-critiques in general.²

Gleim's³ Collected Works, with coppers by the best masters in and out of Germany. Vienna, 1868.

Interpretation of a difficult passage in a letter discovered at Erfurt, in which mention is made of an Anti-

Criticus. The author proves that this was not a book, as the separatist B. tries to maintain, but a term of opprobrium in the taste of those times, like Anti-Christ in theology.

An answer to the query as to whether Herr Wieland wrote anything but the Comic Narratives and Agathon.

History of the Economic Societies of the previous century, the resultant decline of agriculture, the famine in the writing profession, and the consequent prevalence of the translator-mentality in Germany.

The proposal of J.B.C., shoemaker of Augsburg, to curve shoesholes in a cycloid, with a supplement in which the author maintains, against Herr Winckelmann, that the Vatican Apollo does not have a good "boot-foot."

On the Invective Employed by the Ancient German Anti-Christ and Anti-Criticus. Erfurt, 1860.

The report of G.C.M., Royal Court Tailor at, regarding the comet that he has observed for two months in his observatory, together with a description of a needle that suddenly became magnetic.

Report of the German Mathematical Mission to England. London.

The Gist of Heumann's⁴ Works. Göttingen, 1860. 3 signatures 12 mo.

La philosophie du Sieur Newton en quatre-vint-neuf sonnets.

Histoire des peuples de l'Europe écrite dans le stile des fameuses Tändeleyn du Sieur Gerstenberg.⁵ à Paris.

Le même ouvrage pour l'usage des dames, où l'on a soigneusement évité les récits des batailles et des événements qui rebutent le beau sexe.

Winckelmann,¹ Hagedorn,² and Lessing have imparted a wholly new spirit to our German critics. Formerly we said of a bad copper engraving: "The engraving is bad." But now the critiques have more vigor. They might com-

ment thus on a coeur dame: the face has too many locales; the eyes have with the eyes of Juno, which the cardmaker sought to attain, only the size in common -- nothing of the quiet fire that made Paris reel, nothing in them of a heaven which opens and closes with them. However ideal the mouth, the locks of the hair are French. They do not play enviously about the full cheeks. Stiffened in a fixed position with rich pomade, they seem to pay small heed whether they conceal too much or too little. In her figure there is nothing Greek; she might please a Serian.³ We regret to note the lack of that slim lithe-ness which, when she averts her face, might seem to offer us the warm, elastic bosom. The hands are as if distorted with rickets, and seem immobile. The coloring is that of a bad painter who paints on fresh plaster and who, to give one spot a gentle glow, leaves seven others in glaring contrast. In short, we find in the whole coeur dame not the slightest trace of the genius which with a single stroke compels us to regard canvas as our fellow man, to feel pity at his mute sighs, and at the sight of his painted tears to pay the highest tribute of human emotion -- to weep living tears.

If there are birthmarks on the mind, Herr W....'s¹ mother must certainly have read a passage in the martyro-

logy² of Herr Professor Philippi, where we are told of a certain type of writer. We shall not indicate the location of this passage for fear that some pregnant person might feel a strange craving to look it up.

Our modern critics recommend a noble and artless simplicity of style, but fail to lead us to this noble simplicity by their own example. All they can do is refer us to the Ancients -- a procedure which, perforce, opens up pitfalls. Not everyone who is to write nobly and simply is capable of reading the Ancients; this would surely be asking too much. But of him who sets such a requirement we can with right ask more. He must explain himself. The majority of those whose styles are censured as not simple enough could always detect in themselves while they were writing a certain vigilant care to let nothing intrude that might be bad. Now that it is their desire to write quite nobly and plainly, they relax their vigilance, with the result that all manner of vulgarity intrudes itself. To write simply and with nobility demands perhaps the highest concentration of the faculties since, when all the powers unite in a desire to please, nothing more readily insinuates itself than the strained and the labored. Moreover, this style requires a quite peculiar mode of regarding the

things of this world -- a mode that is more the mark of a sensitive and appreciative mind without great erudition, than the product of a study of antiquity. In any event, I believe that it is futile to try to make one's first acquaintance with simplicity through the writings of others. Whoever knows so much Latin that he can read Horace¹ without faltering, and with a genuine pleasure that goes deeper than the separate thoughts and maxims; and who senses that, despite the surprise occasioned by sudden and startling beauties, his feelings always keep pace with the Horatian -- such a one may subsequently read Horace for his instruction, and will then be better able to develop the potential beauty within himself. But the man who has merely heard that Horace is beautiful; who reads him without finding him in harmony with his own feelings; who notes a few of his mannerisms, and proceeds to imitate him -- this man must either be an extremely sly conniver, or his efforts cannot fail to turn out badly. Such a writer no sooner composes a line than he thinks he has surpassed his model; and this because he looks upon the beauties of Horace as absolutes existing in and for themselves, never considering that they bear to human nature a certain relationship of which he is ignorant. In other words, he does not know where lies the point below which no beauty, and above which no simplicity is possible.

Something to Create a Stir in
a Certain Learned Journal

The following was sent to us for advertisement.

Göttingen. Simply enclosed in a wrapper, without letter or other means of identification, a number of copies of a certain book were addressed to the editors. The title is: Comparisons of Famous Men. Part I. At the outset we foreboded no good, and our premonitions were warranted. The first two men are King Henry IV and Winckelmann;¹ the second pair is King Charles XII and Privy Counselor Klotz.² We shall indicate briefly the similarities which the author thinks he detects. Winckelmann was destined to succor good taste in Germany, as Henry IV to succor the Protestants. To perform their tasks more successfully, both had to turn Catholic; but to all appearances neither actually did. Battle of Ivry: History of Art. Guise: Casanova. Ravallac: Archangeli. Second pair. Both quite good men from the start; both vain of success, intrepid, unlucky. Neither was created to rule. The first was perhaps an immortal freebooter; the other, an inimitable controversialist. Both were not what they sacrificed everything to appear: the first, no great hero; the second, no great scholar. Both had few, but venturous partisans. March through Poland: dash from Jena through Göttingen to Halle. Glorious sojourn in headquarters at Altranstädt:

interim at Halle. Battle of Pultawa: Lessing's Antiquarian Letters. Flight to Constantinople, Fredrikshald:.... Alta nocte premit deus.³

This took place while Herr Klotz¹ was still sitting on Parnassus over the affaires de guerre.

Everyone should study at least enough philosophy and belles lettres to make sensual pleasure more enjoyable. If this were taken to heart by our country squires, court cavaliers, counts, and the like, they would often marvel at the effect a book can produce. They would hardly believe, how much Wieland increases the headiness of champagne. His frequent "rosy hues," his "silver gossamer," his "linen mists" can further sublimate even the enjoyment of a good strapping village wench.

In the following ode we have the most conclusive evidence that Swift was a madman even before he began to rave in public.¹

A classification of the various sorts of styles. Among the Germans, Lessing, Wieland, and Kästner write the best prose.... Abbt¹ can be included here, and Riedel²-he will someday be included. This is the Regal style. Then comes

the Small Regal. This is written by a few journalists, rather naturally, but at times crudely. Then the Small Modern, written by the gentlemen who recommend that we read the Greeks, but frighten away by their example the readers whom their precepts might have won over. Great Modern, or Miséricorde, is divided into two branches, viz.: Miséricorde philosophante and larmoyante. The larmoyante is the supposed Young-esque prose. Augsburg Standard: this includes everything said and thought in the vein of Abraham a Santa Clara,³ whether it has the approbation of an emperor or not. Also, Reiske's translation⁴ is written in Augsburg Standard. In poetry we must distinguish still another main class of style which the English call Grub-Street.⁵

When people can no longer hear us think, we must speak. As soon as we can again presuppose thoughts identical with our own, we should cease to speak. A book that observes this principle is Sterne's Journey.¹ But most books contain, between two noteworthy points, only the commonest of common sense -- a heavily drawn line where a dotted one would have sufficed. Then too, it is permissible to express one's thoughts if they are expressed in a distinctive form; but this is really included under the first comment.

Letter. I always think of Richmann¹ when I experiment with something, even if only in play; and that per-

haps is the reason why he comes to my mind now, when I am about to make trial of telling you the news about the inhabitants of our Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. So I inform you at the outset that you shall hear nothing of our courts. Also, I shall never mention the place where I am writing. You shall not know it until I see you again.

The ancient writers have been sifted through so many centuries. How many of our great authors will the year 18.. throw out with the chaff?¹

There is something in us that is almost as hard to cast off as the old Adam; something that impels us always toward the artificial and that other quality so closely related with the artificial, the mean and low. And what is this? Answer: we are not constrained to become individua in our thinking. We begin to read too early;¹ and even granted that it is the ancient writers whom we read, how are we to keep a child from learning merely -- as Herder says² -- to think what the Ancients thought rather than to think as they thought? Liberty and property³ -- these we must maintain. A man will always write well absolute when he gives himself in what he writes; but the wigmaker who wants to write like Gellert,.....,⁴ who affects Winckelmann's style and assumes a learned air, will write poorly. Why is it that so often the Low-Saxon peasant

with his plattdeutsch naivetés pleases the connoisseur of the beautiful, and the young clergyman fails who, in mournful accents, tries to light our way to Golgotha through a quite pellucid dark, and lets us gape at the Crucified?⁵

He had outgrown his library, as one outgrows a vest. Libraries, by and large, can get to be too tight or too loose for the mind.

Imitation, it seems to me, is always a very ticklish matter. Suppose that my turn of mind points north and my model points in the same direction. Then good: we shall make a little quicker progress to the point which we would probably have reached sooner or later alone. But what if I point east and my model north? Now the whole thing that we produce in partnership becomes an un-cardinal, north-easterly equivoque. Or I point south and my model north.... Heaven preserve us! we stand stock-still and never budge!

To publish a book only when one has something "well-rounded" to say is human vanity. Is the sphere the only beautiful figure? I regard the spiral as the shape best suited to a book, and I wrote in this pattern long before I knew that Hogarth had written about it, and before Tristram Shandy had advertised his manner en ziczac or ziczac à double ziczac.

The heaviest excise in Germany still falls on satire. From a candid memoir of three signatures in manuscript the author must certainly deduct, in his cooler moments, three percent for thely state government; at least five for Herr von and his potent influence; ten percent for the consistory (the anathema-duty); and, in addition, patrons' imposts in the bailiwicks, all told eight percent. In the end, the author has only a caput mortuum of a satire, which no one who has more than two hundred thalers income can take to heart, and which those who have less will never read.

He always preferred a parrot's talk to a professor's, and next to epigrams that were not too difficult, he liked best to listen to canary birds. Graun's Passion¹ was less attractive to him than Smite me not in all thy wrath² when whistled by a finch. In poetry he had that spurious sentimental taste which takes a greater toll among young geniuses nowadays than the smallpox among children, and not infrequently leaves scars when cured. A veritable dry-rot³ of the mind, which in the end transforms the patient into what he terms a confidant of the Graces and a sensible man calls a coxcomb.

He dealt in his book with a subject that had already been treated pretty thoroughly. He mowed where Kästner had mowed before him, and gave us only a sort of after-math.¹

To work up something in prose or verse is at times as easy as to shave oneself or dress one's hair.

There is a fault that the merely witty writer has in common with the wholly bad one -- that he does not generally illuminate his subject, but uses it only to display himself. One learns to know the writer and nothing else. However much it may sometimes go against the grain to omit a witty period, this must be done if it does not flow inevitably from the substance of the matter treated. This tribulation gradually inures wit to the check-rein that reason must apply if both together are to do credit to themselves.

It is commonly believed that to be a bel esprit one must live a little disolutely and fatten one's genius, so to speak, on corrupt morals.

All that ~~that~~ B.¹ asked of Heaven was not so much the peace of Abraham's bosom as the privilege of sitting in David's lap and reciting to him the odes of Ramler and Klopstock.

Bad writers are in the main those who strive to express their inane thoughts in the phraseology of good ones. If they would be content to clothe their thoughts in the words

appropriate to them, they would always contribute at least something to the good of the whole, and be an interesting subject for observation.

He will write best who writes so as to meet the approval of the sensible individuals of the class that he hopes to reach and instruct. General rules of procedure in this respect can never be formulated.

Really, only that book is deserving of the name which contains something new.

He might be called the wren among writers.¹

The idea still has too much free play inside the phraseology. I pointed with a ferrule, when I should have used the tip of a needle.

Herr S....¹ entered the Temple of Fame through the gate of history, and it seems that now he is about to creep out again through the postern of poetry.

The critics have built a little wooden chapel that they call the Temple of Fame, where they spend the whole day hanging portraits and taking them down again, with such a din of hammering that a person cannot hear himself think.

Nowadays three bright remarks and a lie make a writer.

He wrote eight volumes. He would certainly have done better to have planted eight trees or begotten eight children.

Today we have books about books and descriptions of descriptions.

That which was to be done in the world in the Shakespearean manner was done for the most part by Shakespeare himself.¹

I should like Swift as my barber, Sterne as my hairdresser, Newton at the breakfast table, and Hume with my coffee.

Like some writers, who first deal their subject-matter a shrewd clout, and then say that it divides into two parts of its own accord.

It takes no remarkable amount of wit to write so that others need a great deal of wit to understand you.

Nature has melted down the great coins -- Gellert, Hagedorn, and the rest -- and seems to be giving them back to us in the form of small change.

I give you this book as a mirror in which to see yourselves, not as a lorgnette through which to look at others.

Aristotle has remarked that of all kinds of writers the poets are most fond of their own works.¹

Tacitus and Clarendon¹ can do it, but you cannot. (Both men who served in high positions, but very different in style: Tacitus very terse; Clarendon long-winded and flat.)

All men of intellect have a tendency to express themselves briefly, to say quickly what is to be said. Hence language provides no poor criterion of the characters of the nations. How difficult it is for a German to translate Tacitus! The English are more concise than we, or at least their good writers are. They have a great advantage over us in that they have distinct words for the species in cases where we use the genus with a limiting modifier, which leads to prolixity. It would do no harm if we counted the words in every period and tried always to express ourselves with as few as possible.

There must be a spiritus rector in a book or it is not worth a heller.

Burke¹ in his speeches reproduces the forms of argumentation far more perfectly than Goethe the forms of Shakespeare; and the one acquired the name of a great orator and the other the name of a second Shakespeare in the same way that the woodlouse became a millipede -- simply because nobody took the trouble to count.

To learn to speak a foreign language well and really to speak it with the genuine accent of the people, one must not only have a good memory and a good ear, but must also be something of a fop and a tomfool.

The pagan Tacitus,¹ who, with Hebraical finesse, looked deep enough into every action to find the devil at the bottom of it.

The almost Lessingesque¹ form that fits the content as if poured on.

He lapsed into a silly cavilling, the criterion of the bungler, who, like the village barber, takes great pains with the separate hairs and leaves the whole peruke in confusion.

It is no trick to say something briefly if, like Tacitus, you have something to say. But when a man has

nothing to express but writes a book anyway, and gives the lie to Nature and her Ex nihilo nihil fit, I call that an accomplishment.

In our enlightened times, when to despise Voltaire¹ is the criterion of philosophical attainments, and to patronize Wieland the mark of literary discernment.

A first-form boy who worships Goethe and spits on Wieland.

In the Thousand and One Nights¹ there is more sound reason than many of those believe who have learned Arabic, or else we should probably have translations of the other volumes.

There is a difference in meaning between promesse and Versprechung: the latter is kept, the former is not. French words in German have a use. I wonder that no one has noted it. They give the German idea with an addendum of wind, or in a courtly sense.

The premeditated mortising and concatenation of the whole, which is the real mark of the master in dramatic art, and which we so greatly admire in Lessing.¹

That all jocularitv is absurd is maintained mostly by old theologians and old professoribus juris, who think that everything is serious that is said with a serious face or in a serious style. In fact the opposite is true, for there is no doubt that, of a hundred absurdities, ninety are presented with a straight face. We often can learn more from the facetious writings of capable minds than from a great many serious ones. They propose with a smile many things which are meant in earnest but have not yet been so carefully verified as to merit serious expression, and which it is very possible that others may utilize in all earnestness.

Götz von Berlichingen would no sooner be produced in Drury Lane than the cardinals would ordain a village priest in St. Peter's.

To write as Herder does is un-Christian toward posterity.

Hartley's requirements of a good writer are: plainness, sincerity, precision.¹

What must be the effect upon a people of not learning foreign languages? Probably something similar to the effect that a complete withdrawal from society produces in an individual man.

There is no surer way of making a name for oneself than to write of things which give an appearance of being important, but which a sensible man would not be likely to take time to investigate.

I believe that five hundred fools like Goethe are not worth a single Griesebach.¹

If it is permissible to write plays that are not intended to be seen, who is there to keep me from writing a book that no living soul can read?

They say that our prose moves so proudly and our poetry walks at so humble a pace. But is this such a lamentable state of affairs? Prose has gone afoot long enough (pedestris oratio), and it seems to me that it is high time for poetry to dismount and give prose a chance to ride.

What a book could be written about Shakespeare, Hogarth, and Garrick!¹ Their geniuses are somehow similar: intuitive knowledge of men of all conditions made intelligible to others by word, burin, and gesture.

I read The Thousand and One Nights,¹ Robinson Crusoe,² Gil Blas,³ and The Foundling⁴ with a thousand times greater

pleasure than The Messiah.⁵ I would give two Messiahs for a small part of Robinson Crusoe. Our poets may have genius, but most of them do not have common sense enough to write a Robinson Crusoe.

If our young people would make a practice of writing only one poem for the head to counteract three for the heart, we might have some hope of seeing, in our old age, a man who had both heart and head -- the very rarest phenomenon. Most have rarely any more light in their heads than is necessary to reveal that there is nothing else there.

The reversed parturiunt montes¹ delights the public, and writers must learn to observe it.

She died of the furor Wertherinus.¹

Whoever fails to use his talents for the instruction and betterment of others is either an ill-disposed man or an extremely narrow one. The author of Suffering Werther must be one or the other.

In Persia womenfolk are excluded from poetry. They say: If the hen tries to crow we must cut her throat.¹

I am confident that in Germany alone there are more writers than all four continents put together actually need for their wellbeing.

Everything after its kind is a rule that should everywhere guide the critic.

They hope to raise a new tower to storm the heavens, but their tongues are already falling into confusion. Apollo cannot brook it.¹

In our fashionable poets one can so easily see how the word produced the thought. In Milton and Shakespeare the thought always creates the word.

Language developed from the mewling of the child, as the French gala gown from the fig-leaf.

Shakespeare is generally difficult to understand completely, for even the learned commentators often fail to understand him; and to translate him well is in many places quite impossible, because of his metaphors rich in secondary connotations, of which the best translator can render only a few. To understand Shakespeare requires not only a profound knowledge of the English language such as very few

foreigners can attain, but also an acquaintance with the customs of the people, which is still harder to acquire.... I wish that a German who knows his own nation and the English would give us a little treatise on Shakespeare's expletives, and translate them by their nearest German equivalents.

Compare the soul-strengthening Lives of Plutarch¹ with the well-written but enervating Werther² and the jejune Cloister Tales.³ Such men could never write a Robinson Crusoe.⁴

That Garve¹ stopped writing is as great a loss to our literature as that Lavater ever began.

I cannot deny that my distrust of the taste of our times has mounted to reprehensible heights. The daily spectacle of people acquiring a reputation for genius, as woodlice came by the name 'millipede' -- not because they have so many feet, but because most of us are unwilling to count up to fourteen¹ -- has brought me to such a pass that I believe no one until he has been put to the test.²

What makes the polygrapher is often not a plethora of knowledge, but a certain happy liaison between his energy

and his discrimination, by virtue of which the latter invariably approves of anything that the former produces.

His inkwell was a veritable Temple of Janus.¹ So long as it stayed corked there was peace in the world.

A preface might well be titled: Lightning Rod.

Sterne does not stand on a very high plane, and is not on the noblest course. Fielding does not stand quite so high, but moves on a much nobler path. It is the road that someday the man will tread who will be the greatest writer the world has seen, and his Foundling is certainly one of the best books ever written. If he had only been able to make us feel a little more sympathetically toward his Sophia, and if he had sometimes been more laconic in the places where we hear only the author himself, this book would probably be surpassed by none.

It is a sure sign that a book is good when our appreciation of it increases as we grow older. A boy of eighteen having the desire, the opportunity, and -- what is most rare -- the ability to express what he feels would pass on Tacitus some such judgment as the following: "He is a difficult writer who draws good characters and gives excellent

descriptions now and then; but he affects obscurity, and often impedes the progress of the narrative with remarks that are not very pertinent. You have to know a great deal of Latin to understand him." -- At twenty-five, provided that in the interim he has done more than read, he might say: "Tacitus is not the obscure writer that I once thought he was. But I am beginning to see that Latin is not the only thing you have to know to understand him. You have to have a good deal to give before you can take much from him." -- And in his fortieth year, if he has come to know the ways of the world, he will say: "Tacitus is one of the greatest writers who ever lived."

The more one learns to distinguish rationally in a language the more difficult it becomes to speak the language. In speaking there is much that is instinctive; this end cannot be reached by reason. It is said that certain things must be learned while we are still young. This is true of those who cultivate their reason to the detriment of all their other powers.

Those who could imitate well are not likely to be imitators.

It is a fact that a great many people read only to evade the necessity of thinking.¹

It is a poor compensation for the parents when a boy whom they have carefully brought up turns out to be a poet. A quarter-hour's serenade in return for years of attention. Parents who discover that their son wants to choose poetry as his profession should not spare the rod until he either gives up verse-making or becomes a great poet.

It has always seemed to me that the value of the moderns as compared with the ancients is weighed on an untrue balance, and that the latter are acceded superiorities which they do not merit. The ancients wrote at a time when the great art of writing badly had not yet been invented, and merely to write was tantamount to writing well. They wrote truly, as children speak truly. Nowadays, when we come to our right senses in our sixteenth year, we are already possessed, I might say, by an evil spirit. This we must first exorcise -- by our own observations and by a struggle against opinion and prejudice and the potency of fourteen years of education¹ -- and then resume the natural husbandry of our native abilities. Hence it is certain that to write naturally requires more strength and determination now than in the earlier ages of the world -- now, when to write naturally is almost unnatural. Homer surely did not know that he wrote well, and no more did Shakespeare. Our good modern writers must all learn the fatal art of knowing that they write well.

The greatest obstacle opposed to the fame and immortality of many authors -- a greater by far than the spite and malice of all the critical journals put together -- is the fatal circumstance that they must print their works on the same material that the grocer uses to make spice-bags.

There can hardly be in all the world a stranger merchandise than books: printed by people who do not understand them; bought by people who do not understand them; bound, reviewed, and read by people who do not understand them. And now, to cap the climax, written by people who do not understand them.

The only fault of very good books is that they are usually the cause of so many bad or mediocre ones.¹

It is a shame that we cannot scrutinize the learned viscera of authors, in order to ascertain what they have eaten.

All too often nowadays when we say that a book is a "popular presentation" we mean that it enables the public to talk about a subject without understanding it.

A nation can appear from its literature to be much more intelligent than it actually is, for a people may con-

tinue to write the language of their fathers long after they have begun to lack their fathers' acumen. The metaphors in our language all originated in wit, and now the very unwittiest use them. The orientals, in speaking their figurative tongues,¹ think no more than we. In the same way, people often adopt, without knowing it, the external manners of their betters. The most highly figurative languages must in time lose their tropic quality, and crystallize into mere symbols that often approach the purely arbitrary ones.² Hence a thorough knowledge of language and languages may be very useful.

When a man makes a little use of another's ideas, the critics all howl, "Stop thief!" -- This looks to me like the practice of certain urchins: when one of their number steals a ride on a stage, all the others, who are unable to share his pleasure, sing out to the coachman, "You've got one behind!"

Whenever anyone reads aloud a section of the Messiah,¹ he always inadvertently skips a line -- and yet the passage, as he reads it, is always greatly admired.

Some time ago it was the fashion, and perhaps still is, to add to the titles of novels the words, "A true history."

This is an innocent deception. But the failure to print "A Novel" on the title-pages of a good many recent histories is not so innocent a one.

Is it not strange that a literal translation is almost always a bad one? And yet anything can be well translated. This shows what it really means to know a language completely: it means to be thoroughly acquainted with the nation that speaks it.¹

If Rape of the Lock is translated Lockenraub,¹ half of the wit is lost already. And heaven knows how much is lost in the poem itself!

Perhaps a higher race of spirits "keep" our poets as we keep nightingales and canary birds -- and take pleasure in their song for the simple reason that there is no sense to it.

Of all books the one that would most deserve to be banned would be a catalog of forbidden books.

One of the greatest discoveries that the human intellect has hit upon in recent times is, in my opinion, the art of criticizing books without having read them.

It seems that nowadays there are only draft-oxen; there are no auerochses¹ left. Now we have only draft-poets; there are no auer-poets left.

We speak of the eagle-eye of the critics. In some cases it would be better to speak of their dog-nose.

It had the effect that good books ordinarily have: it made the stupid more stupid, the wise more wise; and the thousands of others remained unchanged.

A writer who needs a statue to immortalize him does not deserve even a statue.

I have often seen how crows perch on a hog's back, keep a sharp lookout, and, whenever he digs up a worm, swoop down, seize it, and then return to their old position. An excellent symbol of the compiler who digs and the canny writer who, without great effort, turns the product to his own advantage.¹

Perhaps we will eventually go so far as to mutilate human beings, like trees, in order to obtain improved fruits of the mind. The castration of singers¹ is a step in this direction. The question is whether it might not be possible to produce painters and poets in much the same way.

An edict to the effect that no noteworthy book may be printed without a full and complete index would be a very beneficial one.

Very few people send books into the world without firmly believing that now everyone will put aside his pipe or light it afresh and prepare to read them. Such an honor is not in store for me; and I do not merely say this, for that would be easy, but actually believe it, which is somewhat more difficult and has to be acquired. Author, typesetter, proofreader, and censor may read a book; perhaps a reviewer, too, if he sees fit. Thus, out of thousands of millions, this makes exactly five.¹

We Germans commonly write a kind of mestizo style.

In the writings of celebrated authors but mediocre heads one finds at most only that which they set out to convey; whereas in the work of systematic thinkers, who encompass everything in their minds, we see always the whole and how it bears on each of its parts. The former seek, and find, their needle by the light of a brimstone match, which illumines only one spot, and that right charily; while the others ignite a torch whose light spreads far and wide.

Children and fools speak the truth, so they say. I wish that every capable head who feels a propensity for satire would bear in mind that the best satirist is always something of both.

I consider reviews as a kind of children's ailment which, to a greater or less degree, affects all new-born books. I know of instances when the most healthy ones died of it, and the puny ones survived. Often the attempt is made to ward it off with amulets in the form of prefaces and dedications, but this is not always efficacious.¹

The merit of refining the sugar which other nations have planted and boiled down is the merit of most of our celebrated German authors.

The present day is prime for a Cervantes. Cervantes' times are here, but Cervantes is wanting. The harlequins are with us, but we lack the wooden sword.

A review¹ of Kotzebue's The Noble Lie² concludes: It is an eternal shame that a man of such excellent parts, who tries to be a moral poet, should possess such a perverted moral sense, employ so little reflection to veri-

fy his ideas, and (from an aesthetic point of view) betray such unrefined taste. -- This peculiar praise is given him on the strength of a few good scenes! The reviewer should have said that K. has neither moral sense nor understanding nor taste. There may be a few good scenes in the piece, but who can know where the scoundrel and noble liar stole them, and presumed to make them his own with some slight alteration?

In many people verse-making is a pubescent affection of the mind.

The English word swift expresses the idea of rapidity better than geschwind, celer, ὠκύς , &c.; but the French vite, vite is almost more descriptive of the action.

Sterne should have written on the title-page of his collectanea:¹ Here colors are ground.

Jean Paul¹ is sometimes intolerable, and will become still more intolerable if he does not soon reach the point where he must rest. He spices everything with Cayenne pepper, and will soon come to the pass that I prophesied to Sprengel.² To make his cold joint palatable, he will have to sauce it with molten lead and red-hot coals. If he turns about and recommences ab ovo, he will become great.

Jean Paul tries to win the applause of his readers by a coup de main rather than a systematic campaign.

I would rather read Fielding's plays than the masterpieces of Corneille and Racine -- because the former are real masterpieces.

The nets with which the critics fish for faults in books should have meshes so large that they let pass faults up to a certain magnitude, and do not hold everything. This wretched business of filtering....

V. EDUCATION

It is a fault in our system of education that we begin certain disciplines so early. They overgrow the mind, so to speak, and hem the way to new knowledge. The question is whether it might not be possible to fortify the powers of the mind without applying them to any particular science.

God forbid that man, whose teacher is all of nature, should ever become a lump of wax in which a professor imprints his sublime image!

Non vitae sed scholae discimus: a cogent apothegm^h of Seneca¹ that fits our times.

Education is procreation of a different sort.

He was an excellent boy: when he was barely six he could recite the Lord's Prayer backwards.

If we could only educate children to the point that everything unclear would be wholly unintelligible to them.

If Tyche, with her adroit hand, did not play her part in our educational system, what would ever become of the world?

It has always saddened me to observe that in most of the sciences at universities so much is taught that serves no other purpose than to qualify young men to teach other young men the same things. Greek is taught so that the students may teach it again; and so it goes -- from the teacher to the student, who, in turn, can expect no more than to become a teacher and rear other teachers.

Nowadays we try so hard to disseminate knowledge. Who knows: perhaps in a few centuries there will be universities whose aim will be to restore the old ignorance.

We must keep children in a cage, but make the cage as pleasant as possible for them. Anyone who is to be a great violinist must practice eight hours a day from the time that he can first hold a fiddle. This is the cage that he may not leave, but inside it everything must be made very easy for him.

A teacher or professor cannot educate individuals; he educates only species.

Our miserable system of education, which makes it necessary for us to spend the second half of our lives forgetting what we learned in the first.¹

I fear that our all too painstaking methods of education will yield us dwarf fruit.¹

There are places where the virtues still grow wild.

VI. UNIVERSITY AND SCHOLARSHIP

Moved by simple impulse and interest, some great genius begins to perform an operation with especial success. Since it is difficult, he is admired; and the admiration stimulates others to imitate him. Then someone finally demonstrates the practicality of the pursuit. Such is the origin of sciences.

The following sciences bring

Bread and honor:	No bread and no honor:	Honor and no bread:	Bread and no honor:
Jurispru- dentia	Metaphysica	Poesia	Advocatia
Medicina	Logica	Belles Lettres	Oeconomia
Theologia	Critica.	Mathesis ¹	Anatomia
Analysis in- finitorum.		Philosophia.	Writing and arithmetic.

Logica palaestrica, metaphysica terminologico-visionaria,
and critica gladiatorio-offensiva.

Acceptance into learned societies is a kind of canonization during one's lifetime, or an apotheosis of which Seneca's words are still true: Olim res magna erat deum fieri, jam fama minimum fecit, etiam pessimum quemque illum adfectare.¹

People often become scholars for the same reason that some become soldiers: because they are good for nothing else. Their right hands must earn their bread; so they lie down, we might say, like bears in winter, and suck out of their paws.

Comparison of a few men with books. Kästner: a Dictionnaire encyclopédique. Colom:¹ Le mécanisme de la délicatesse du stile françois. Lowitz:² Avis au lecteur sur quelque chose qui va paroître bientôt, avec un avis concernant le second avis. Achenwall:³ La richesse de l'état ou précis à peu près théorique de l'intérêt public. Weber:⁴ Qu'en dira-t-on? Hollmann:⁵ The Ancient. Last Volume. Heyne:⁶ Monumenti inediti.

Nowadays it has become the fashion to regard book-writing as the end of study. Therefore many learn in order to write, instead of learning in order to know. That which one buys only to put back into trade at the first opportunity never means much to us and was never really ours.

We might regard the German learned societies as laboratories in which the old professors keep the young coxcombs in a kind of mild spirit-solution, so as to

maintain them in their delusion of being great intellects, and to find links for the chain that binds the scholar to the copyist.

The too rapid accretion of knowledge, without much thought behind it, is not very profitable. Erudition may run to foliage, without bearing fruit. We often find very shallow minds that house an amazing store of facts. That which we must find out for ourselves cuts a path through the mind that can be used on other occasions.

Jacobi,¹ you must not think that your craft is more important than that of the man who lacquers coffee-tables in Birmingham.

The learned disputes at the University of Zezu¹ are managed in a unique fashion. The Curator had a little house built on top of a mountain half a mile outside the city. The roof is modelled after the shape of his skull, as that of the Odeum after Pericles';² whence the draymen and postilions refer to it as the Ox-Head. If two professors begin to quarrel, the coat of one is draped over a statue, and the other berates it quite alone, without spectators or auditors, and scolds, slaps, jostles, pinches, bites, and jerks it as much as he wants.

A half-new invention with a quite new name.

Professors at the university should hang out signs like the innkeepers'.

In the Learned Republic every man wants to rule; there are no aldermen. This is very bad. Every general must, so to speak, draw up the plan of attack, stand sentry, sweep out the guardroom, and fetch water. No one is willing to work into another's hands.

The doctoral ceremony is a kind of confirmation-day of the intellect.

The most zealous defenders of a science, who cannot stand the slightest aspersion on their calling, are usually those who have not gone far in it, and are secretly aware of this defect.¹

A few weeks ago at Göttingen¹ a man came to my door who could make a new pair of silk stockings out of two pairs of old ones, and offered me his services. We professors are masters of the similar art of taking two old books and making a new one out of them.

Where you now have a history of the lepidoptera there is room for Plutarch's Lives, which would fire you to great accomplishments.

I would rather know the history of the arts and crafts than everything that Linné¹ ever wrote or thought, knows, knew, and forgot again.

The fathers send their little octavos to Göttingen, and some years later get back quartos in body and soul.

Many a man torments himself his whole life long, and studies himself frigid and impotent over the development of some author's opinions. I grant that a lifetime was needed to work out the author's system of ideas, and to cleanse it of the spots left by botching emendators -- all this is true. But it takes only a quarter-hour of good, healthy thought to see that the whole business is not worth three pence.

I do not believe everyone who tells me that he loves Homer, and least of all the professional Greek scholars, who show too little intelligence in other respects to lend plausibility to their assertion in this one.

I do not think that among the German academic youth, so-called, the sum-total of empty heads has ever been greater than it is now. This is the reason why there are so many young Werthers -- not because the book is a masterpiece, but because these innocent young numbskulls¹ are putty in anyone's hands. They skip off without paying their landlords, and weep over Gellert's² grave; they draw silhouettes, and scent the dew of Golgotha. A Protestant, metaphor-mongering Gassner³ could use them to invoke or exorcise demons; or they could serve Hancock⁴ as stakes to peg off his rascally republic. They have no character. Indolence, ignorance, and inexperience in all that warrants the name of earnest erudition have stultified them for everything except speculation on the instincts. From this they have built a natural history, an aesthetic, a philosophy; and here they hope to find all nobility of soul, and make a heaven on earth.

To bury a book in the university church.

Janet McLeod¹ is the name of the girl who ate nothing for several years in a row. People who for ten years have taken no intellectual nourishment, apart from a few scholarly crumbs, occur even among professors, and are no rarity.

In the word Gelehrter we are given to understand only that a man has been much taught, not that he has learned much. Hence the French say, with the aptness that always distinguishes this nation, not les enseignés, but les sçavans; and the English, not the taught ones, but the learned.

I think that nowadays the history of the sciences is cultivated too minutely -- to the great detriment of science itself. The product is avidly read; yet it leaves the mind, not empty, but without any real vigor, for the simple reason that it fills it too full. Whoever has felt the urge, not to cram his brain but to fortify it, to develop his powers and potentialities and expand his energies, will have discovered that nothing is mentally more enervating than a conversation with a so-called "literator" in a science; a man who has not thought much himself in the field, but knows a thousand and one little historical and bibliographical details. It is almost like reading out of a cook-book when one is hungry.

I believe, too, that among thinking men -- men who are aware of their own worth and that of their science -- the so-called history of literature will never meet with any great success; for such men would rather think themselves than know what others have thought. The saddest part of it is that as the predilection for "literary re-

search" increases, the power to extend the science itself decreases; yet the pride in the possession of the science grows apace. Such people fancy themselves to be more in possession of the science than the actual possessors. It is certainly a well-founded observation that true knowledge never makes its possessor vain, but that only those are puffed up with self-esteem who are themselves incapable of contributing to the science, and hence devote their time to elucidating its obscure history, or acquire the knack of telling off everything that others have done -- in the delusion that this chiefly mechanical occupation is real work in the science itself. I could adduce examples, but these are unpleasant matters.¹

Astronomy is probably the science in which the least has been discovered by chance; where the human intellect appears in its full magnitude; and where man can best learn how small he is.

There is no sort of erudition and no literary pursuit that might not be compared with a trade or some kind of hand-labor. In the realm of scholarship, we have road-repairers -- a useful occupation, but not remunerative. We have slaves who, with sweat and groans, press out and refine the sugar for others' banquet-boards. There are

those who melt down Greek coins and cast modern stuff from the amalgam. There are street-cleaners, beadles, town-criers, barbers who claim to be surgeons, and many others.

I think that some of the greatest minds who ever lived did not read half as much or know anything near as much as some of our mediocre scholars. And many of our very mediocre scholars would have become greater men if they had not read so much.¹

There is no greater hindrance to one's progress in the sciences than the desire to feel the benefits too early. This is very characteristic of cheerful characters; and for this reason they rarely accomplish much, for they relax their efforts and become dejected when they see that they are not getting on. They would, however, have "gotten on" if they had used less energy and more time.¹

Mathematics is a noble science, but often the mathematicians are not worth their salt. In this respect mathematics is rather like theology. The practitioners of the latter craft, particularly when they hold office, lay claim to an especial credit-balance of sanctity and a closer kinship with the Godhead, although many of them are the veriest good-for-nothings. And, similarly, the so-called

mathematicians demand that they be regarded as profound thinkers, although their number includes some of the greatest dunderheads discoverable, unfit for any calling that requires reflection, or for anything that cannot be directly accomplished by that simple combination of symbols which is more a matter of routine than of thought.¹

A man chooses himself a topic, illuminates it with such light as he has, and then writes in a certain tolerable, namby-pamby style his everyday observations, of the sort that any schoolboy could make, but could not express so neatly. For this mode of writing -- the favorite of mediocre and sub-mediocre heads -- I have no better name than dissertation-prose. At best, only that is elaborated which any rational person would have thought at the mere mention of the subject.

We grow such young doctors nowadays that "doctor" and "master" have almost risen to the dignity of baptismal names. Also those who are granted these "honors" often acquire them as they do their baptismal names -- without knowing how.

The man was working at a system of natural history in which animals were to be classified according to the shape

of their excrement. He had made three classes: the cylindrical, the spherical, and the placental.

He was continually making exerpts, and everything he read went out of one book, apast his head, into another.¹

He was still hanging on at the university -- like a handsome chandelier where no light has burned for twenty years.¹

He kept shop in other people's ideas. He was a professor of philosophy.¹

In every faculty¹ there should be at least one capable man. If the hinges are of good metal, the rest can be wood.

An infallible remedy for toothache -- one that would give immediate relief -- would probably be of as great, or greater value than the discovery of a new planet.

Our ancestors' healthy appetite for food seems to have transmuted itself into a not quite so healthy appetite for reading. Formerly the Spaniards crowded around to watch the Germans gorge themselves, and now the foreigners come to watch us study.

I think it was Rousseau who said that a child who knows only his parents knows not even them aright.¹ This idea could be applied to many other kinds of knowledge, or even to all that are not of a wholly pure character. Who knows only chemistry knows not even that aright.

In mathematics he did not belong to the producing class, but to the retailers¹ who sell by the ell and the pound.

The physicist's purpose is to work into the hands of the mathematician.

The man who cannot reason extemporaneously on his special subject, but must first dive into his excerpta or his library, is certainly an artefact. Nowadays we have a trick for becoming famous that was unknown to the Ancients, who thought that genius was the only means to this end. Most of our celebrated scholars are pastes, not gems. But their renown does not amount to much. Their works will be forgotten, like Cicero's poetry, which even his immortal prose could not sustain.

A somewhat testy philosopher -- I believe it was Hamlet, Prince of Denmark -- once remarked that there

are plenty of things in heaven and on earth of which there is not the slightest evidence in our compendia. If this simple man (who, as you well know, was not in his right senses) was making a subtle jab at our compendia of physics, he may confidently be answered: Well and good, but by way of compensation there are plenty of things in our compendia for which there is not the slightest evidence either on earth or in heaven.

Every individual receives at birth a chance in the grand lottery of invention, in which it is certain that the greatest prize had not yet been drawn at the end of the year 1798.

VII. THE NATIONAL CHARACTERS

The German lies so exactly midway in character between the Frenchman and the Englishman that our novel writers are prone to describe one of these two when they wish to paint a German with a fairly bold brush.

The general taste of the Englishman runs at present to Wilkes¹ and Liberty, roast beef and plum pudding, Milton and Shakespeare; or at least it is hard to find an Englishman who does not favor one of each pair. Most of them have a predilection for all six.

Billingsgate -- the place where the fishwives of London congregate, and where much fine wit goes to waste.

Our art cabinets are all full of ivory tankards -- a proof of the favorite propensity of our beloved ancestors. A piece of ivory which the Greek would have carved into an Apollo, they hollowed into a tankard.

August 10, 1769. When I introduced Sir Francis Clerke¹ to Professor Förtsch,² who at that time was

prorector, the professor delivered a long Latin oration, with much formality and rhetorical finesse. When he had finished -- for I did not want to interrupt -- I said, "Your Magnificence, Englishmen do not understand our Latin." -- He did not seem much put out.

The English geniuses precede the fashion and the German trail along after.

They do the deeds and we translate the accounts of them into German.

Porter is the consolation of the common people. It keeps them from reflecting too deeply in the word "liberty," and even makes them less sensitive to the taxes that are imposed on them.¹

Gunkel.¹ He had the cheerful disposition of the Rhinelander combined with Cisleinanean² inertia.

Is there any country but Germany where people learn sooner to turn up their noses than to wipe them?

The character of the Germans in two words: patriam fugimus.¹

If countries took their names from the words that the traveller hears first, England would have to be called Damn-it.

The English have no character of their own, says Hume.¹
And day by day my conviction grows that he is right.

I have no doubt that in a year's time in England twice as much port wine is drunk as grows in Portugal in the same period.

It would probably have been a good thing for Vienna if the French had got that far in the autumn of 1796.¹ I do not mean the barbarians, but the witty, ingratiating officers. Perhaps they would have improved the race somewhat; for if the Austrian ewes are to give better wool, they must get French rams to tup them, or else they will stay numbskulls.

A Frenchman is a very pleasant person at the period when he begins for the second time to believe in God.

Herr Kant -- as Herr Lehmann¹ tells me -- was wont to say, when he spoke of the contributions of the various na-

tions to the sciences, that the Germans provided the roots and the bole, the French the flowers, the English the fruit, and the Italians the leaves.

VIII. POLITICS AND SOCIETY

No prince's favor will ever establish the worth of a man; for it is a conclusion based on more than a single experience that a ruler is usually a degenerate man. The one in France bakes pastries and tricks honest girls. The King of Spain, to an accompaniment of trumpets and kettle-drums, rabbits to pieces. The last king of Poland, the former Elector of Saxony, shot darts from a blow-gun at the arse of his court fool. The Prince of Löwenstein, after a great conflagration, bewailed only the loss of his saddle. To please a certain, dancer, the Landgrave of Cassel follows the suite of a prince who is not much more than himself, and is duped by the paltriest people. The Duke of Württemberg is a madman. The King of England makes[?] Englishwoman P.....¹ The Prince of Weilburg bathes publicly in the Lahn, and most of the other potentates of the world are tambours, fouriers,² sportsmen. And these are the highest of men! How, then, can we expect the world to progress even tolerably? What is the good of the Einleitungen ins Commerzien-Wesen,³ the Arts de s'enricher par l'agricul-

ture,⁴ the Hausväter⁵ if the lord over all is a fool who knows no higher authority than his stupidity, his caprice, his whores, and his valets de chambre? Oh, if the world would only rouse itself! And though three millions were to die on the gallows, their deaths would bring happiness to some fifty or eighty millions.... Thus spake a wigmaker of Landau in the public house; but he was rightly put down as quite mad. He was taken into charge and, before he could be jailed, beaten to death by a sergeant of constabulary. The sergeant lost his head.

Classification. I subdivide the public thusly: people who have no salary at all and no fixed incomes -- poor devils; people who have under 500 thalers salary but regular incomes; people who have over 500 thalers; people who rise into the thousands and are "of consequence." These are the four classes in the natural order, and the fourth is the greatest. Hence I solemnly declare in the presence of this assembly that never in my writings have I spoken or thought anything against the fourth class, or even against the third, and that never shall I speak or think anything that might cross the interests of this august class. The second class is assured of my friendship as a fellow member. But the first.... This is a limitless field for the German satirist. There are poor devils everywhere, and probably will be as long as the world lasts.

A preposition cannot invest with merit the postpositum to which it is preposed. This is the merest truism. You must see yourself, Herr Baron, that the statement

Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz, invented the method of infinitesimals

or Herr von Leibniz invented, &c.

says not a tittle more than

Leibniz invented the method of infinitesimals,

except that in the first case we cannot help thinking that his tutor must have helped him with it.

He wore the livery of hunger and distress.

I would need only to be a king in order, with my modest talents, to be called L. the Great.

All cannot be well in the world when men have to be governed by chicaneries.

Sa Majesté très Voltairienne. The King of Prussia.

In the words Vox populi vox Dei there is more truth than we are accustomed to put into four words nowadays.

The tablets of chocolate and arsenic on which the laws are inscribed.

Uncritical respect for old laws, old customs, and old religion is the root of all evil in the world.

Make trial, if you wish, of writing a satire against the reigning groom of the chamber, against the natural son, or the natural son's bastard, or the bastard's whoreson. You will make the hangman's acquaintance. Upon the whole, if you want in Germany to write satires against people of high station, I have two pieces of advice to offer you: either choose some from the Old Testament, or apply previously for a position somewhere between the tropics; and if neither course suits you, hold your tongue.

The public weal of many lands is regulated by a majority of votes, although everyone is willing to admit that there are more bad people than good.

The liberty to think and write, without let or hindrance, in the interest of truth is a prerogative of the district over which George rules and on which rests the blessing of Münchhausen.¹ Here we can raise our voices and call a fool a fool, whether he lies in chains or is worshipped.

There is hardly a cobbler in Germany whose opinion on the outcome of the American war¹ is not more reliable than Lord George Germaine's.²

When we break a murderer on the wheel, we might ask ourselves whether we are not the victims of the same delusion as the child who strikes the chair against which he has stumbled.

I would give something to know for whom the deeds really are done which are publicly proclaimed to have been done "for the Fatherland."

I cannot say whether, if things change, the change will be for the better. But this much I can say: things must change if they are ever to be good.

The country in which the churches are magnificent and the dwelling-houses ramshackle is as far on the way to perdition as the land where the churches are tumble-down and the houses turn into castles.

To build a republic from the materials of a demolished monarchy is a hard problem. It cannot be solved until every stone is re-cut, and this takes time.

We, by the ill-grace of God, day-laborers, serfs,¹
negroes, socagers, &c.

Franklin, the inventor of the disharmonica between
England and the New World.

I have read somewhere that reflection on states is
facilitated if we regard them as individual men. Accord-
ingly, the nations are children; and as long as they
are such, monarchy is best for them. But when children
grow up, they no longer brook such treatment, for then
they not infrequently grow wiser than their fathers.

Enlightenment in all the levels of society consists
really in a correct appraisal of our essential needs.

Flee Diogenes and dread the lantern, says Haller.¹
Now we could say: Flee Mirabeau and dread the lantern.²

The art, which is so widely practised nowadays, of
making people discontented with their lot.

Have a people the right to change their form of
government? A great deal, both good and bad, has been

said on this question. I think the best answer is this:
Who is there to stop them once they set their minds on it?

The machine with which they now cut off heads in France, and which was actually used to execute a certain Vasseur, the murderer of General Théobald Dillon,¹ is called the guillotine.²

I should like to know what would happen if someday word were to come from heaven that the Good Lord would presently dispatch a commission of plenipotentiary angels to travel about in Europe like the English circuit judges, and issue verdicts on the great controversies for which there is no earthly adjudicator but the right of the stronger. What would become of some of our kings and ministers? Many a one, rather than await the outcome, would beg leave to take a berth on a whaling voyage or breathe the pure air of Cape Horn.

Affection and fidelity toward an upright man is much more intelligible to humankind than respect for even the best of laws.

The French Revolution will leave behind it much good, of whatever sort, which otherwise would never

have been brought about. The Bastille is gone, and the infamous insect that Herr von Born¹ describes in his *Monachology*² has been sulphured down a little.

If a war lasts twenty years, it may well last a hundred; for it now becomes a status -- polemocracy. The people who have tasted peace die off.

What manner of beast a soldier is can be clearly seen from the present war.¹ He lets himself be used to establish liberty or to suppress it, to depose kings or maintain them on their thrones; against France, for France and against Poland!

Marat is the simpleton who has written about fire and light¹ -- the physician in ordinary to the Count of Artois. I reviewed his book eleven years ago in our *Advertisements*,² and I have his work on electricity.³

There is great foment in France, but whether wine or vinegar will result is still uncertain.¹

The liberty of the English is distinguished from ours in Hanover in that there it is guaranteed by law, and here depends upon the magnanimity of the king.

Hence it cannot be undermined except by corrupting the members of parliament; which now seems to be the case. The war against the colonies¹ is being waged contrary to the popular consensus. How good it would be if we could weigh votes instead of counting them.

I still believe that it is better not to reform at all. This only arouses animosity, envy, and disdain.... Absurdity disappears of its own accord; and that which nature abhors, so to speak, will never grow again.

Today (October 20, 1796) I am reading The Political Zodiac, or The Signs of the Times, by Huergelmer (Strassburg, Georg König).¹ The book is well written, and contains, whether as the author's personal opinions or in the form of excerpts from others, the best that can be said against the present-day great and the monarchies; some of it is probably irrefutable. But if we allow popular governments to establish themselves everywhere, other conditions will probably arise which the reason can no more condone than the present ones; for that the republican system is quite without flaw or blemish is a dream, a mere idea. What would happen if it were to be put generally into effect? Speaking without prejudice, I believe that the world will forever be tossed by re-

volutions from one system into another, and that the duration of each will depend upon the temporal goodness of the subjects. We can draw no conclusions from America, since they are too far removed from other countries that think differently, and those on that side of the earth who are other-minded have not enough support to maintain themselves. In the end, limited monarchy seems to be the asymptote....² But there, too, everything will always depend on the goodness of the subjects, et sic in infinitum.

In a country N.N.¹ whenever war breaks out the king and his counselors must sleep as long as hostilities continue over powder-casks installed in special chambers of the palace which everyone is free to inspect and ascertain whether the night-light is burning properly. The casks not only are sealed with the seals of the popular deputies, but also fastened to the floor with straps which likewise are sealed in all due form. Every evening and every morning the seals are examined. It is said that since the establishment of this custom the wars in those parts have ceased altogether.

I have long been convinced that in families consisting, for instance, of man and wife, four to eight

children, a chambermaid, a couple of housemaids, a few servants, a coachman, &c., or even in smaller ones if a few aunts are tolerated -- I am convinced that here the same situation prevails as in the greatest nations. There are treaties, terms of peace, wars, changes in the ministry, lettres de cachet,¹ reformatiions, revolutions, &c.

It is very sad that the endeavor to reduce social ills produces so many new ones. It seems that we commonly are better acquainted with the virtue of the remedy than with the nature of the substance to which it is applied.

Since we strike up the Te deum laudamus when peace is restored, nothing could be more natural than to sing a Te diabolium damnamus at the outbreak of war. Would it not be worthy of a poet to write a Te diabolium, and of a composer to set it to music?

The French are as strong in telemachy as in telegraphy.¹ We could call Bonaparte the telemachus, the far-fighter, who divides up provinces without having conquered them.²

Experimental politics: the French Revolution.

We must wait and see what will become of the French Republic (1796) when the laws have slept themselves out.

Germany has behaved in a very Christian fashion toward un-Christian France. After having been dealt one slap, she turned the other cheek.¹

Now (in April 1798) something could be written on the theme of the proverb: He went to Rome, but did not see the pope.¹

Ca ira, Ca-ira, Kahira, Cairo.¹

IX. EPIGRAMS

(A considerable number of aphorisms which could properly come under this heading have, because of their subject-matter, been included in other sections.)

A fool who fancies that he is a prince is, in reality, distinguished from the prince only in that the former is a negative prince, and the latter a negative fool. Viewed without sign, both are the same.

When he had to use his mind, he felt much the same sensation as the right-handed man who suddenly finds it necessary to do something with his left.

He took neither the quite broad nor the quite narrow path to eternity, but struck out, with frequent prayers and a good table, on a middle course that we might call the Spiritual-Electoral.¹

Liscow¹ says very neatly that, to become a bad writer, a learned man needs only to take his head between his legs and leave everything else to the natural gravity of his body.

The commonalty ruins itself through the flesh that lusts against the mind, and the scholar through the mind that too greatly lusts against the body.

With only a single tongue this woman was in her own person a Fama. What heights she would have reached if she had been thousand-tongued!

Blood which through forty quarterings had coursed under a vest of its own was now flowing for the first time beneath a borrowed one.

Every man has, in addition to the other, his moral backside,¹ which he does not show unless necessary, and which he covers as long as possible with the breeches of propriety.

The only masculine thing about him he was kept by propriety from revealing. Mi si nihil aliud virile, sexus esset.¹

Count Kettler:¹ His pronunciation was like Demosthenes' when he had his mouth full of pebbles.

Wit and whimsy, like all corrosives, must be used with discretion.

He moved as deliberately as an hour-hand in a crowd of second-hands.

"Did you enjoy yourself at the levee?" -- "Excellently. Almost as well as if I had been in my own chamber."

He had taken as a fundamental rule of conduct the anti-Shaftesburean¹ principle that one should never be too familiar with oneself -- probably because he foresaw that the inevitable result would be self-contempt.

Her face was so beautiful and so devout that she could convert Lamettries¹ and seduce apostles.²

The dear Lord must be very fond of us, since he always comes to us in such bad weather.

A three-groschen piece is always better than a tear.¹

A mind never stood still with greater majesty.

I noted on his face the misty look that always appears when one has the delectable sensation of feeling superior to others.

There once was a man who wanted to break the flies in his chamber of the habit of eating sugar. This cost

him more than half a pound of sugar, and there were still some left who rather liked it.

If people should ever begin to do only what is necessary, millions would die of starvation.¹

As foolish as it must seem to a crab when he sees a man walking forwards.¹

A grave is still the best bulwark against the storms of fortune.

When a book and a head collide and there is a hollow sound -- is it always in the book?¹

The man had so much sense that he was practically good for nothing.¹

I know the sort of man you mean -- all mind and theory, and can't sew a button on his own breeches.

A handful of soldiers is more efficacious than a mouthful of arguments.

If the human race should suddenly become virtuous, thousands would have to die of starvation.

A book is a mirror. When an ape looks in, one can hardly expect an apostle to shine forth.¹

A small town where every face rhymed with the next one.

To make intelligent people believe that you are what you are not is in most cases more difficult than actually to become what you wish to seem to be.¹

God makes animals; man makes himself.

Man is so perfectible and corruptible that his reason can make him a fool.

There is a kind of transcendental ventriloquism by which men can be made to believe that something said on earth comes from heaven.¹

There were really only two people in the world whom he loved with warmth. The one was his greatest flatterer, and the other was himself.

A donkey has always seemed to me like a horse translated into Dutch.

I have several times been criticized for faults which my critics had neither the wit nor the energy to commit.

It is a sure sign that a man has grown better when he is as willing to pay debts as to collect them.

Being in love with oneself has at least the advantage that one will not have many rivals.

When the heart is not full, the mouth runneth over.¹
I have found this more often true than the opposite statement.

To swear an oath is a greater sin than to break one.¹

Where moderation is a fault, indifference is a crime.

How happily many of us would live if we cared as little about other people's affairs as we do about our own.¹

There are people who can believe anything they wish.
Those are happy creatures! ¹

Is it not remarkable that, so long as the public lauds us, it is a qualified judge, but as soon as it criticizes us it becomes incompetent to pass opinions on works of the intellect?

It was a shame. However fine the suit of clothes he wore, his thrifty, submissive face always made people think it was his only one.

There are certain animals that grasp with their tails, and there are certain others that wag with their hands.

He had no character of his own; and if he wanted one, he had first to assume it.

He not only did not believe in ghosts; he was not even afraid of them.

We do not eat one another; we only slaughter one another.¹

In the eyes of certain people, a man of intellect and perception is a more odious creature than the most patent scoundrel.¹

We live in a world where one fool makes many fools, but a wise man makes precious few of his kind.

Sophistication¹ is one of the most contemptible forms of ignorance.

Who has less than he desires must know that he has more than he is worth.

Non cogitant, ergo non sunt.

It always grieves me when a man of talent dies, for the world needs him more than does heaven,

In this world one may live from soothsaying, but never from truth-saying.¹

It is eloquence that precedes conviction, and strews its path with flowers.

There is probably no one on earth who, if offered a thousand thalers for turning scoundrel, would not rather remain an honest man for half the price.

It is almost impossible to carry the torch of truth through a crowd without singeing somebody's whiskers.¹

The highest possible attainment of experienced, but fundamentally weak minds is the ability to discover the frailties of better men.

Whoever paints a target on his garden gate is sure to attract marksmen.

It is enough to justify a man's existence if he has so lived that for the sake of his virtues he merits forgiveness for his vices.

Since both¹ were licensed dispensers of the true specific against offended honor, they fraternally dosed each other with it, and thus the complaint was happily remedied, to the satisfaction of both.

The words in which Johnson indicates Ford's¹ character are quite worthy of this over-pious, but otherwise honest churchwarden: "I have been told that he was a man of great parts; very profligate; but I never heard that he was impious."² This turn, especially when used of a pastor, is as much as to say: "I have heard that he was a wolf, but never that he went about without sheep's (or shepherd's) clothing."

This is true everywhere, but nowhere more true than in England: to do right in the world requires very little knowledge; but in order to do wrong with impunity, one must have studied law.

The fact that churches are used for preaching goes far to explain why most of them have lightning-rods.

He kept grinding away at himself, and in the end grew dull before he could take a sharp edge.

Is it not strange that men are so willing to fight for a religion, and so unwilling to live by its precepts?

X. JOCOSERIA

This is the title that L. gives to the second of his "waste-books" (B; Leitzmann I, 41).

The animalcula infusoria are bubbles with propensities.

Epitaph. I died very young, notwithstanding the fact that on the paternal side I was rather closely related with Death. I lived only fifteen yeats, and my father was a doctor.

He was so full of wit that, to his mind, any idea was good enough to serve as go-between for any other pair of ideas.¹

In women the location of the point d'honneur coincides with the center of gravity. In men it lies a little higher up the trunk, somewhere in the vicinity of the diaphragm. Hence the elastic fullness of this region in the male when he essays glorious deeds, and the flabby vacuity in the same region when he undertakes petty ones.

He was in his fifty-fourth year -- the age when, even in poets, reason and passion begin to confer on terms of treaty and generally establish peace before long.

Her petticoat was red and blue with very wide stripes, and looked as though it had been made out of a theater curtain. I would have given a great deal for a good seat, but there was no performance.

Barbarism is a deluge which the meretricious wit and cynicism of a few Roman wits brought upon the arts and sciences. It has not completely dried up in the course of almost two thousand years. Even in Germany there are still puddles here and there as big as lakes, where no dove would ever sight an olive-twigg.

It is a question which is more difficult: to think or not to think. Man thinks by instinct, and everyone knows how hard it is to suppress an instinct. Hence, mediocre minds do not merit the contempt in which they are beginning to be held in all nations.

Is it so improper that a human being goes out again into the world by the same portal through which he first entered it?

Professor Philosophiae Extraordinariae.

I shook all manner of ideas around in my head until the following happened to come out on top.

Once when Kästner, Gellert, and several others were walking together, the conversation turned to the office that each of them would most like to occupy in a republic. The pious Gellert, with his saintly artlessness and without a ghost of ulterior motive, announced that his greatest pleasure would be to prepare young ladies for the matrimonial state. Since Kästner was present and later bruited the story about, poor Gellert had to suffer from it for a whole year.

The one sister took the veil and the other the cod-piece.

This is as natural to man as thinking or throwing snowballs.

Here is a task that would make Patience herself tear out her hair.

It would be no wonder, forsooth, if Time were to throw his hourglass into the face of such a rogue.

He was as startled as if he had seen a licet with the indicative.

Everything grows more refined. Music was formerly noise, satire was pasquinade; and where we say today, "Kindly permit me," we once dealt a good solid clout behind the ears.

What the French call carrying the mind in a sling.¹

A Louisd'or in the pocket is better than ten in the bookcase.

It is quite in keeping with the order of nature that toothless animals have horns. What wonder if this often turns out to be the case with old men and women?

He was a true practitioner of Lallus' art,¹ for he could argue on a subject for hours at a time without understanding a word of it.

I warn all and sundry to beware of the year 1777. London still remembers its 1666.¹

Beautiful nests of departed idess.

What is L.....'s¹ Physiognomy but a four-legged eagle without wings, and his Prospects of Eternity but a cherub with an ape's head?

We, the tail of the world, have no idea what the head has in store for us.

It rained so hard that all the pigs were clean and all the people were filthy.

The roads become wider and more beautiful, the nearer one approaches this hell (London).

Poetry, like crabmeat, turns out well only in the months that have no r's in their names.

He combined in his own person the attributes of the greatest men. He always carried his head on one side, like Alexander, and always had snarls in his hair, like Caesar. He could drink coffee like Leibniz; and once he was well settled in an easy chair, he forgot food and drink, like Newton, and had, like him, to be roused. He wore his wig like Dr. Johnson, and like Cervantes he always left one of his breeches buttons unfastened.

I wonder what would happen if sometime the Ten Commandments were suspended in London for as long a time as it takes a clock to strike twelve?

Whenever he raised his voice, all the mousetraps in the neighborhood went off of their own accord.

This beautifully glazed and painted Porcelain Age of the world.

There he sits, and picks and rummages about in the quisquilliae¹ of the times.

Everything has its weekday and its Sunday aspect.

What we call 'devil's dung'¹ the Persians call 'food of the gods.'²

He marvelled that cats have holes in their fur at the exact spots where their eyes are located.

A. Hasn't the girl a noble bosom? B. Yes, indeed. Just what Horace meant when he spoke of a bene praeparatum pectus.¹

He had an especial predilection for the words that do not commonly appear in dictionaries.

He swallowed a great deal of wisdom, but it seemed that it all went down the wrong way.

Anyone who could command a tornado and a few hundred thousand hornets could cut a broader swath than Alexander and half a million troops.

The American who first discovered Columbus made a bad discovery.

The most extraordinary thing about the idea is unquestionably this: that if he had had it a half-minute later, he would have had it after he was dead.

One man procreated the idea; another lifted it from the baptismal font; a third begat children with it; a fourth visited it on its deathbed; and a fifth buried it.

He could pronounce the word "succulent" in such a way that when you heard him you would think you were biting into a ripe peach.

The soup was so dreadful that one would only have needed to be a general or a king to suspect that one was the victim of a poisoning plot.

After a Thirty Years' War with himself he finally came to terms, but the time was lost.

Thetis¹ embracing Bacchus would make an excellent emblem for our wine taverns.

A young lady, hardly twelve fashions old.

Human society can be divided into three classes, viz.,
 the: 1. neque ora neque labora,
 2. ora et non labora, and
 3. ora et labora.

His instruction in Latin he entrusted to a magister a latere.

The thunderstorm looked so fearsome as it approached that there were some who claimed they saw cherubim's heads and trumpets sticking out of it.

D.....¹ sometimes talks such nonsense that one can hardly believe he does it with his mouth.

His wife presented him with a child, which some persisted in regarding as apocryphal.

Figuratively: He always wears spurs, but never rides.

Excommunication was a kind of sublime "Pox take you!" that the pope wished his errant sheep.

Now that the political pope¹ has fallen, and the spiritual will soon follow after him, it might be asked whether we ought not elect a medical one. I mean a kind of medical Dalay Lama, who would heal diseases by a simple laying on of hands, or by the remission of his excrement and sputum. I think that such a one could really cure illnesses by the mere words: I am the Lord, your Doctor.

In Cochin China, when anybody says doji ('I am hungry'), everyone runs like mad to get him something to eat. In a great many provinces of Germany, a pauper could say 'I am hungry' and it would do him no more good than if he had said doji.

The astronomer can answer the question as to whether the moon is inhabited with about the same degree of cer-

tainty with which he knows who his father is, but not with the same assurance with which he knows the identity of his mother.

He strode ahead with pride and dignity, like a hexameter; and his wife trotted along behind like a little pentameter.

Formerly we christened the church-bells; now we should christen the printing presses.

No word of the Gospels has been more consistently followed in our day than: Become as little children.¹

Long before the French Revolution he unfurled the tricolored nose.

If necessity is the mother of diligence or invention, the question remains: Who is the father, or the grandmother, or the mother of necessity?¹

His cough was so hollow that with every hack one thought to hear a triple resonance: floor, chest, and coffin.

He seemed to be a wood-turner's project rather than real flesh and blood.

Truly the art of book-printing is a kind of Messiah among inventions.

NOTES ON THE APHORISMS

I. AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES AND APHORISMS

Page 8: A57.

- A120. ¹Goethe's friend Johann Caspar Lavater (1741-1801; one of the "prophets right and left" in Diné zu Coblentz), with whom L. engaged in heated controversy on the subject of Lavater's proposed science of physiognomy. The work referred to, Aussichten in die Ewigkeit (1768-1778), was one of which L. had no very high opinion (cf. E292).
- ²Jons Matthias Ljungberg (1748-1812), a Swede by birth, was one of L.'s most intimate friends. They studied together at Göttingen (cf. Kästner, Elogium, 3). Ljungberg later accepted a professorship at Kiel, and was subsequently appointed financial adviser to the Danish court.
- ³Heinrich Bernhard Esswein, a schoolmate of L.'s at the Darmstadt gymnasium.

A123.

Page 9: B65.

- ¹L. frequently speaks of himself in the third person, and sometimes refers to himself by the pseudonym Lion. Sometimes, however, the pronoun he is simply generic, and refers to no particular person.

B75.

- B77. ¹A reference^a to the financial difficulties from which L. suffered throughout his life.
- ²The first line of Klopstock's Messias: "Sing', unsterbliche Seele, der sündigen Menschheit Erlösung,...." For L.'s opinion of this poem, v. also F69 and F752.
- ³A space is left here in the manuscript.

Page 11: B81.

- B93. ¹Paul Fleming's well-known hymn, In allen meinen Taten, best known from Bach's Cantata 97.
- ²It has not been possible to identify these two songs. L. gives the title of the second in English.

Page 12: B128.

s

- B139. ¹This certainly was nothing unusual, to judge from Sch.²I,19, where L. remarks that on one occasion he did not leave his room for one and a half years.

Page 13: B152.

- ¹The reference here is obscure, but doubtless L. alludes to two of the rather numerous love-affairs in which he indulged as a student. As Bouillier points out, L. was not, despite his deformity, insusceptible to the odor di femina.

B206.

B290.

- B338. ¹L. uses the English word. Cf. Emerson, Self-Reliance (Carpenter's Ed., p. 93): ".... I would write on the lintels of the door-post, Whim. I hope it is somewhat better than whim at last, but we cannot spend the day in explanation."
²Vincent (p. 263) defines this unusual word as "replicas in miniature" (Abbilder im Kleinen). The Greek word that one would expect (ὁμοιομερία) does not occur in Pickering's Comprehensive Lexicon; L. may have coined it.

- B339. ¹L. undoubtedly refers to himself. Cf. the analogous aphorism B65.

Page 14: B383.

- B414. ¹Hamlet III,2. L. naturally quotes the line in English.

- C19. ¹Cf. Erklärung der Hogarthischen Kupferstiche I,14: "Kopf und Herz kommen hier einander um eine ganze Spanne näher. Was das arme und warme Herz brütet, gelangt hier noch arm und warm, wie es ist, zum Kopf, und eine geometrische Spanne wird zu einer moralischen Meile."

C44.

Page 14: D2.

¹From the Vermischte Briefe (Germ. trans. Leipzig 1750-1760) IV, 118, of the Danish Dramatist Holberg. -- In his later years L. was much averse to travelling, and often stayed in his quarters for a week at a time, or even longer (cf. Bl39, Sch.²I, 19). He agrees with Goethe's Manto, whose principle was: "Ich harre, mich umkreist die Zeit," and with the sentiments that Thomas Mann expresses in his Pariser Rechenschaft.

D461. ¹L. refers in several other places (cf. L557) to his extreme sensitivity to climatic conditions.

D629. ¹This was written during L.'s second trip to England. L. actually thought that he was in imminent danger of blindness, and visited one of the leading eye-specialists of London, who assured him that the complaint was not serious, and frightened him with an excessively high fee, which he subsequently lowered. The whole episode evinces the hypochondria of which L. himself was perfectly well aware.

E9.

Page 15: E46. ¹"Sudelbuch, Klitterbuch, glaube ich, im Deutschen." (L.'s note.)

E67. ¹From a collection of observations and remarks titled Besondere, den Charackter der Engländer erläuternde Züge.

E82. ¹This does not seem to be a reference to any particular person. Rather, the whole aphorism is an expression of that peculiar love of polemics which characterized L. and led to the well-known controversies with Lavater, Voss, and others.

E143.

Page 16: E188.

s

E191

s

Page 16: E419.

E438. ¹An example of the candid self-criticism which was never wanting in Lichtenberg.

F143.

Page 17: F407. ¹The Justinian code of civil law, the Corpus Iuris Civilis, which, for reasons sufficiently obscure, was commonly referred to during the Middle Ages as FF. The two letters may have been a corruption of the Greek initial Π.

F484.

F507.

Page 18: F803. ¹Jean François, Cardinal de Retz (1614-1674), the enemy of Mazarin. His Mémoires appeared in 1717. For L.'s opinion of them, v. also F749.

²It would seem from this statement that L. had at least partially prepared an autobiography as an independent work distinct from the autobiographical notes in the Aphorism-Books. If so, this invaluable work is lost. Perhaps it was deliberately destroyed by L.'s brother or sons, because of the very candor which L. mentions, and which would doubtless have constituted its chief value.

F1170.

RA 2

Sch. ²I,9. ¹Psalm XC, L.'s favorite page of the Old Testament (cf. B77).

²The author of Night Thoughts, one of the English predecessors of the "sentimental" movement (die Empfindsamkeit) in eighteenth-century German literature -- a movement which L. opposed, and even derided, but with which he was intrinsically in sympathy, as he suggests here.

Page 19: Sch. ²I,14.

Page 19: Sch.²I,14. ¹Hebbel (Tagebücher, Werner's ed., I 672, p. 149, April 1837) provides an interesting commentary on this aphorism, and incidentally on his own frame of mind at this period of his life: "Jener edlen Gift-Einsaugungskunst, deren Lichtenberg in seinen Schriften gedenkt, hab' auch ich mich befleissigt und bin darin, dünkt mich, für mein Alter (seit März 24 Jahr) schon weit genug vorgerückt. Es kommt aber hinzu, dass ich (wovon Lichtenberg wenigstens keine Meldung thut) das Gift recht geschickt wieder von mir geben kann, freilich nicht sowohl, um Anderen, was nur nebenbei geschieht, ihre Stunden zu verderben, als, um mir manche durch das süsse Gefühl, einmal des Stricks und Schandpfahls zugleich würdig gewesen zu seyn, recht zu würzen. Hierin ist nicht die geringste Uebertreibung. Wollt' ich mich von diesem Punct aus einmal schildern, so gäb' es gewiss eine Art Character, von dem Jeder, der ihn bedauerte, zugleich bedauern würde, dass er sich nicht überwinden könnte, ihn anzuspeien. Vielleicht ist's meine Pflicht, es zu thun."

Sch.²I,15.

Page 20. Sch.²I,19. ¹John Howard (1726-1790), the prison-reformer, best known for his State of Prisons in England and Wales (1777). In the period between 1775 and 1787, he visited most of the important penal institutions on the continent, and it was during this tour that he visited L.

Sch.²I,23.

Sch.²I,26. ¹I.e., "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." (Rev. IV,8.)

Sch.²I,26.

Sch.²I,30.

Page 21: Sch.²I,31.

Sch.²I,33. ¹Cf. Sch.²I,14.

Page 21: Sch.²I,40. ¹Cf. Sch.²II,99.

Sch.²II,83.

Sch.²II,84.

Sch.²II,89.

Sch.²II,108. ¹Johann Christoph Adelung (1732-1806), whose philological work did much to standardize German usage, and who exerted a considerable influence on Schiller and Goethe. L. probably used his Grammatisch-kritisches Wörterbuch der hochdeutschen Mundart, 5 vols., Leipzig 1774-1786.

Sch.²II,151.

Page 22: J187.

J193.

J208. ¹This, of course, establishes the date of this aphorism as 1788/89.

J237. ¹The Göttingen bookseller and publisher, Johann Christian Dieterich, who provided L. and his family with lodgings in exchange for L.'s work as editor of Dieterich's Göttinger Taschen Kalender and Göttingisches Magazin der Wissenschaften und Literatur. The publisher and his wife were L.'s most intimate friends during the last thirty years of his life.

J277. ¹A hill near Göttingen.

²The famous ἐν καὶ πᾶν. As Bouillier comments (p. 119f.), L. was, with Jacobi, among the first to re-discover Spinoza in the eighteenth century. For a detailed statement of L.'s attitude toward Spinoza and pantheism, y. Ltz.-Sch. II, 281ff.

Page 23: J320.

J440.

J470.

Page 24: J508.

- Page 24: J540. ¹Jean André de Luc (more properly Deluc), official reader to George III, had been a close friend of L.'s since his second English journey.
- J595.
- Page 25: J618.
- J619.
- J620.
s
- J639. ¹The allusion is, of course, to L.'s deformity, his hunched back and extremely short stature. -- It is very possible that L. was influenced here by the self-composed epitaph of Benjamin Franklin, which he quotes in F732: "The body of Benjamin Franklin, Printer, (like the cover of an old book, its contents worn out, and stript of its lettering and gilding) lies here, food for the worms; yet the work shall not be lost, for it shall (as he believed) appear once more, in a new and most beautiful edition, corrected and revised by the author."
- J694.
- Page 26: J762. ¹Cf. Ltz.-Sch. III,32: "Nach Michälis Tode wurde mir die Stelle in der Facultät angetragen, ich habe sie aber ausgeschlagen. Das war in meinem gantzen Leben meine Sache nicht, und ist es jetzt noch viel weniger. Dieses Ausschlagen ist aber nicht unerhört, ich habe darin einen Vorgänger an Schlözern gehabt...." (September 9, 1791.)
- J935. ¹L. says: "Der Himmel führt seine Heiligen wunderbarlich." The play on the common expression ein wunderlicher Heiliger, 'a queer duck,' is hard to reproduce.
- J999.
- Page 27: J1056.

Page 27: L226. ¹This strongly resembles the therapeutic method of "free associations" employed in modern psychiatry.

L557.

II. CHARACTER AND PHYSIOGNOMY

Page 29: A4. ¹Seelen Charackteristick.

A24. ¹As Leitzmann indicates (I,177), this aphorism to a considerable extent anticipates the Lamarckian idea of organic adaptation.

Page 30: A32.

A35.

A45. ¹Or, in the terms of modern psychology, the feelings of inferiority and superiority complement each other.

A46. ¹L. was a firm believer in what the Adlerians call the "psychic unity of the individual." The relation between good and bad qualities of character, as L. describes it here, is the same as that between truth and error as Goethe formulates it in his Sprüche in Prosa (Von Loeper's no. 140): "It is as true as it is remarkable that truth and error spring from a single source. It follows hence that often we dare not disturb error for fear of prejudicing the truth with the same gesture."

Page 31: A48.

A49.

A51. ¹Apparently the aphorism to which L. refers has not been preserved.

Page 32: A52.

A54. ¹The Göttingen dealer in antiques and bric-a-brac, Jonas Kunkel (or Gunckel), who died in 1768. L. regarded him as an ideal "original" character, and planned a satirical novel in the English manner based on his life. The novel was never written, but a great deal of material for it is preserved in aphorism-books A and B.

A55. ¹Quoted by Fritz Mauthner, Wörterbuch der Philosophie, Leipzig 1923², II, 194.

Page 33: A59.

A67. ¹Henry Home (1696-1782), the moralist and aesthetician. At this period L. was reading his Elements of Criticism, which appeared in German translation in 1765.

A68.

A75. ¹Cf. Schopenhauer, Aphorismen zur Lebensweisheit (Kröner Taschenausgabe, p. 107n.): "Der eigentliche Grund, aus welchem die Regierungen scheinbar sich beeifern, das Duell zu unterdrücken und, während dies offenbar, zumal auf Universitäten, sehr leicht wäre, sich stellen, als wolle es ihnen nur nicht gelingen, scheint mir folgender: Der Staat ist nicht imstande die Dienste seiner Offiziere und Zivilbeamten mit Gelde zum Vollen zu bezahlen; daher lässt er die andere Hälfte ihres Lohnes in der Ehre bestehen, welche repräsentiert wird durch Titel, Uniformen und Orden." -- It seems probable that Schopenhauer was unconsciously influenced by Lichtenberg in this interpretation.

Page 34: A80.

¹This was one of Grillparzer's favorite passages from L. He quotes it in full in two places in his Tagebücher (Werke, Sauer's ed., Abt. II7:855, p. 320, and Abt. II8:1339, p. 144f.), and on the second occasion adds the comment: "Herrlicher Stoff zu einem Trauerspiel!"

Page 35: A86.

A102.

- A116. ¹This idea comes startlingly close to the Adlerian theory of the dream as a "safeguard" or an unconscious strengthening of conscious resolves.

Page 36: A130.

- B22. ¹An allusion to Chr. Ludwig Liscow's "elende Skribenten" (cf. the satire, Die Vortrefflichkeit und Notwendigkeit der elenden Skribenten.)

Page 38: B35.

Page 39: B37.

- B54. ¹L. probably had in mind the physician Unzer, the editor of the medical journal Der Arzt. Cf. B374: "Dass das Genie eine Art von Krankheit ist hat HErr Untzer so vortrefflich in seinem Arzt bewiesen...."
²Kästner.

Page 40: B67.

B95.

- B102. ¹The Dutch scientist, Antony van Leeuwenhoeck (1632-1723), who first began to develop the possibilities of microscopy.

Page 41: B119.

- B134. ¹For the general idea of human artificiality L. frequently uses the French word costume. This is rather analogous to Carlyle's use of "clothes" in Sartor Resartus.
²Stutzer, one of the favorite objects of L.'s satire. He himself defines and translates the term (B175): "Ein Wort von sehr schwimmender Bedeutung. fr. petit maître, engl. fop, coxcomb, buck, sagt zuweilen auch so viel als Cicisbeo...."

Page 42: B147. ¹Probably Kästner.

B153. ¹Various styles of eighteenth-century wigs.

Page 43: B249.
s

B263.

B275.

B309. ¹The religious sect founded by Moravian emigrants at Herrnhut in Saxony, on the property given them by Count Zinzendorf; from this center the sect spread throughout the world, especially to America and South Africa.

Page 44: D29. ¹By weaknesses L. frequently means what we would call today neuroses, psychoses; and in this aphorism he comes close to the psychiatric principle of modern "depth"-psychology, especially the Freudian and Adlerian school. Cf. Dr. Alfred Adler, "Compulsion Neurosis," International Journal of Individual Psychology, vol. II-4, 19: "The cure.... must consist in reconciling the patient with the problems of life. He must be made to see the defects in his life-style.... Only self-knowledge can achieve these results."

D108.
s

D113. ¹Aulus Persius Flaccus (34-62 A.D.), a Roman satirist of the Silver Age. (Cf. Mackail, Latin Literature, 178f.)

D159.

D207.

D215.

Page 45: D237. ¹This reminds one of Novalis, Hölderlin, Kleist, Nietzsche, and the others in German literature, in whose case reflection actually proved to be a disease.

Page 45: D243. ¹L. adds: "'Stiff' and 'weak' must be improved."

D248. ¹This is reminiscent of Goethe's half-serious belief in the psychic and physical harmfulness of certain sorts of reading-matter. Cf. Briefwechsel zwischen Goethe und Zelter (Berlin 1834), VI, 305: "This poet [the Swabian Pfizer, to whom Heine refers so contemptuously in Atta Troll] seems to me to possess real talent and to be a good sort of man. But as soon as I started to read him, such a dull stupor came over me that I quickly laid the book aside; for, with the danger of cholera so imminent, a person should take care to avoid all depressing and enervating influences."

D271.

s

D283.

D290.

D497.

Page 46: D639.

s

E62.

E99.

E171.

E216. ¹François, duc de la Rochefoucauld (1613-1680), the celebrated epigrammatist. L. appears to have been well acquainted with his Maximes, but refers to him very rarely.

Page 47: E447. ¹Johann Christian Erxleben (1744-1777), L.'s colleague at the University of Göttingen.

²The unitarian clergyman, chemist, and physicist, Joseph Priestley, with whom L. became acquainted during his second trip to England (v. p. lvii). He was the discoverer of oxygen and several other important chemical elements and compounds. In 1794, he emigrated to Pennsylvania.

- Page 47: E490. ¹ Another instance of L.'s anticipation of the basic ideas of modern depth-psychology. The aphorism is actually a good statement of the principle underlying Freud's and Stekel's interpretation of dreams.
- F6. ¹ This reminds one of Goethe's famous couplet:
"Alles, alles kann ich ertragen,/ Nur nicht
eine Reihe von schönen Tagen."
- F13.
- Page 48: F87.
- F113. ¹ Briefe antiquarischen Inhalts, 54.
- F129.
- F169.
- F173.
- F261.
s
- Page 49: F267.
- F271.
- F365. ¹ It is impossible to reproduce in English the German assonance Strich: Strick. -- One is involuntarily reminded here of the Walpurgis-Night phantom in Faust I.
- F446. ¹ Heinrich Heine alludes to this aphorism in a letter to Varnhagen (1826): "Lichtenberg sagt sehr treffend, dass wir uns selbst in andern nicht so wohl lieben als auch hassen können." (Karpeles' Ed., VIII, 485.)
- F477.
- F482. ¹ Added, probably at a later date, is the exclamation: "Meine liebe Mutter!!!!!!!" -- The aphorism calls to mind the importance attached by modern psychiatry to the long-lasting effects of childhood experiences (so-called "traumatic" experiences, etc.).

Page 49: F485. 1

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The mathematical term "asymptote" is applied to a line which, if extended infinitely, would continue to approach another infinitely extended line without ever actually meeting it. This is certainly a keenly prophetic epitome of the development of scientific psychology up to the psycho-analytic movement. Cf. F422: "Unsere Psychologie wird endlich bey einem subtilen Materialismus stille stehn, indem wir immer von der einen Seite (Materie) mehr lernen und von der andern über alles hinausgegriffen haben."

F517.

Page 50: F537.

F552. 1

This, and a few other similar aphorisms, are sometimes adduced to demonstrate L.'s essentially materialistic outlook, for example by Max Dessoir (Geschichte der neueren deutschen Psychologie, Berlin 1897, p. 62; cf. Schaefer, G.C. Lichtenberg als Psychologe und Menschenkenner, Jena 1898, p. 27.). This, however, is jumping rather too rapidly to conclusions. These aphorisms seem rather to indicate L.'s awareness of what we would now call psycho-physical interaction; and if he stressed either phase unduly, it seems to me that he erred on the psychic side (cf., for example, J1183.). On the whole, L. believed in Goethe's "geeinte Zwienatur," the indivisible psycho-physical unity of character and personality.

F573.

s

F607.

F622. 1

Apparently L. never discovered how very wrong he was. -- For the general content of the aphorism, cf. F678.

Page 51: F669.

F682.

F696.

F699.

Page 51: F741. ¹III, 6: 'Αλλ' ἔστιν ἄνθρωπον τὰ τοιαῦτα
μὴ διειληφότων ἀρχῇ τὶ διαφέρει καὶ πόσον
διέστηκεν αἰτίας καὶ προφάσεως.

F820.

Page 52: F989.

F1012. ¹It is interesting to observe that this is al-
most the diametrical opposite of Thomas Mann's
explanation in The Magic Mountain.

F1196.

RA 5. ¹L. refers to La Rochefoucauld in only three
other places in the aphorisms: E216, Sch.²I,
176, and J268.

²Edit. of 1665, no. 100; Souday's ed., p. 103.

Sch.²I,33. ¹Underlined by Kant in his copy of Sch.¹
I-II.

Page 53: Sch.²I,67.

Sch.²I,130. ¹A keen insight into a psychological truth
which is part of the stock-in-trade of the mo-
dern psychiatrist, especially the Adlerian.

Sch.²I,152. ¹Lichtenberg's modification of the famous
French adage: "Tout comprendre est tout par-
donner."

Sch.²I,166.

Sch.²I,166.

Page 54: Sch.²I,168.

Sch.²I,169.

Sch.²I,171.

Sch.²I,175.

Page 55: Sch.²I,176. ¹This is not an exact quotation of any single maxime. It is closest to nos. 30 and 243 of Souday's ed.: "Nous avons plus de force que de volonté; et c'est souvent pour nous excuser à nous mêmes, que nous nous imaginons que les choses sont impossibles." -- "Il y a peu de choses impossibles d'elles-mêmes; et l'application pour les faire réussir nous manque plus que les moyens."

Sch.²I,178.

Sch.²I,179. ¹This is one of many evidences of L.'s remarkably sane and advanced view of the nature of mental health. He would certainly agree with Stekel when he says (Traumdeutung, Vorwort): "Fliessend sind die Uebergänge zwischen Krankheit und Gesundheit, und jeder ist in irgend einer Hinsicht krank."

Sch.²I,182.

Sch.²I,191.

Page 56: Sch.²I,191.

Sch.²I,196.

Sch.²I,199. ¹Sebastien Roch Nicolas Chamfort (1741-1793), "journalist and wit, who seems to have been the quite legitimate son of an Auvergnat grocer named Nicolas, but who found entrance into society easier for M. de Chamfort, natural son of an unknown father...." (Crane Brinton, The Lives of Talleyrand, New York 1936, p. 46). The pensée that L. refers to is from the collection Caractères et anecdotes (Oeuvres complètes, ed. Auguis, Paris 1824, II,105: "Dans le monde....vous avez trois sortes d'amis: vos amis qui vous aiment, vos amis qui ne se soucient pas de vous, et vos amis qui vous haïssent.")

Sch.²I,199.

Sch.²I,200.

Page 56: Sch.²I,200f.

Sch.²I,283. ¹The first edition appeared in 1791; the second in 1793. L. borrowed the first edition from the Göttingen library in September 1791 (cf. Ltz.-Sch. III,32). For other opinions on Johnson -- all in much the same vein -- see J767 ("der schwer gelehrte Bär Dr. Johnson") and Hog. II, 52n.

Page 57: Sch.²II,85.

Sch.²II,107.

Sch.²II,136.

Sch.²II,169.

Sch.²II,190.

J120.

Page 58: J181.

s

J423. ¹Albrecht Ludwig Friedrich Meister (1724-1788), professor of mathematics at Göttingen. For L.'s very high opinion of him, v. Sch.²II, 124ff.

J503.

s

J580.

J581.

Page 59: J589.

J644.

J672.

J727.

Page 60: J764.

J943.

Page 60: J944.

J969.

J1137.

J1183.

Page 61: L37.

L38.

s

L418.

¹In his Sprüche in Prosa Goethe says: "We would have a better knowledge of many things if we did not wish to know everything so precisely." (Von Loeper's ed., no. 36, Hempel XIX, 26.)

L624.

Page 62: L670.

III. PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

Page 64: A5.

A9.

¹The philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz (1646-1716). L. refers to him chiefly in his quality as mathematician (cf. B149).

A11.

s

Page 65: A17.

¹The content of this aphorism is reminiscent of several of Goethe's Sprüche in Prosa; e.g., no. 399 of G. v. Loeper's ed. (Werke, Hempel ed., XIX): "Was ist das Allgemeine? Der einzelne Fall. Was ist das Besondere? Millionen Fälle."

Page 65: A19.

A28.

Page 66: A44.

A58.

A74. ¹A microscopist well-known in the eighteenth century (cf. Allg. Deutsche Biographie XVIII, 117). The work to which L. refers is his Mikroskopische Gemüts- und Augenergötzung, Nuremberg 1761-1762.

²Cf. p. 196.

³Héloise I, lettre 12.

A83.

Page 67: A87.

A88.

A93. ¹For L.'s later opinion of metaphysics, cf. J600.

Page 68: A103.

A105. ¹The controversy over transsubstantiation and consubstantiation in Christian theology.

A106.

A107. ¹The English poet Richard Savage (1698-1743), whose unfortunate life Johnson narrates as the introduction to the edition of his works. Karl Gutzkow based one of his numerous tragedies on Savage's life.

²Christian Günther (1695-1723), the lyric poet, "ein haltloser Mensch, gutmütig, aber voll ungezügelter Begierden, ging schon 1723 im 28ten Jahre seines Lebens zugrunde" (Scherer-Walzel⁴, 285).

³The famous English mathematician and physicist whom L. consistently admired and regarded as the highest type of genius (cf. J265 and note).

Page 69: A112.

A114.

Page 69: A117.

Page 70: A118.

Page 71: A121.

A124.

Page 72: A127.

s

A128.

B34.

B116. ¹This is an example of L.'s propensity for drawing analogies and illustrations from the fields of mathematics and physics -- a characteristic of his style -- and also shows his faith in the validity of mathematical truth. Later, when his skepticism had reached its height, he could say (J915) that he was obsessed by "ein ausserordentliches, fast zu schriftlichen Tötlichkeiten übergehendes Misstrauen gegen alles menschliche Wissen, Mathematik ausgenommen...."

Page 73: B144.

B185. ¹Cf. p. 191.

B190.

s

B201.

Page 74: B238.

Ker.16. ¹Cf. Goethe's Sprüche in Prosa (Hempel edit., XIX, no. 520): "Die grössten Schwierigkeiten liegen da, wo wir sie nicht suchen."

C37. ¹In 1769, Lavater, in an open letter, demanded that Moses Mendelssohn either refute the proofs of Christianity forwarded by the French philosopher Bonnet, or else become a Christian himself. Mendelssohn responded in another open letter, and it is Lavater's answer to this that L. refers to here. L.'s own public answer to Lavater, and his de-

fense of Mendelssohn, are contained in his Timorus (Berlin 1773), which bears the subtitle: "Vertheidigung zweier Israeliten, die, durch die Kräftigkeit der Lavaterischen Beweisgründe und der Göttingischen Mettwürste bewogen, den wahren Glauben angenommen haben" (Sch.²III, 79ff.); L.'s attitude toward Mendelssohn and, as reflected in this particular case, toward the Jews in general, underwent a peculiar development. In the 70's and early 80's he was one of Mendelssohn's most enthusiastic admirers; perhaps he even overrated him a little as a philosopher. As late as 1786, he expresses his unqualified admiration in a letter to Nicolai (Ltz.-Sch. II, 271): "Das Leben Mendelssohn's müsste unter Ihren Händen ein Fundamental-Werck für die Menschheit werden. Tolerantz, wahre Gottes-Erkenntniss, wahrer Protestantismus.... C hätte ich doch Mendelssohn gekannt wie Sie...." But in the ensuing ten years his opinion changed altogether, and in 1798 he could say (L590): "Mendelssohn ist viel zu viel erhoben worden. Hätte er in einem ganz jüdischen Staat gelebt, so würde er ein sehr gemeiner Verbreiter ihrer abgeschmackten Ceremonien u.s.w. geworden seyn." And, similarly, in the last two aphorism-books there are a number of comments on the Jews and their religion which are as drastically phrased as they are peculiar in their logic. How such a tolerant, clear-sighted mind as Lichtenberg's came to approach so closely the crass, unreasoning anti-semitism that has become a morbid outgrowth on modern German social life and thought is, as Bouillier says (p. 134), an "énigme qui sans doute ne sera jamais déchiffrée complètement." But L., like Meyer's Hutten, was most decidedly not an "ausgeklügelt Buch," but a man with more than one "Widerspruch."

² Joseph Süß Oppenheimer (1692-1738), the Jewish financial adviser and minister of Duke Karl Alexander of Württemberg. His life has been treated in literature by Hauff and Feuchtwanger.

Page 75: C146.

C204.

Page 75: D198.

¹Cf. D272. Hebbel's note (Tagebücher, Werner's edition, II-1971, p.33, April 1840), "Es wäre doch seltsam, wenn nicht Gott die Welt, sondern die Welt Gott geboren hätte," is probably a reflection based on this aphorism of L.'s. Cf. also Goethe's Sprüche in Prosa (Hempel ed., XIX, no. 216): "Der Mensch begreift niemals, wie anthropomorphisch er ist." This is one of the similarities between Goethe's Sprüche and L.'s aphorisms that G. v. Loeper notes in his introduction (*ibid.*, lln.); others will be cited later in the notes. Eugen Reichel calls attention to still other similarities (cf. Goethe-Jahrbuch X, 328).

D199.

¹An apparent change in the position or conformation of an object caused by a real change in the position or point of view of the person observing it.

D251.

Page 76: D272.

D326.

¹This is certainly not to be taken literally, as a statement of L.'s opinion. It is rather an ironic jibe at the ultra-rationalists who actually believed it. The aphorism-books provide evidence in abundance of L.'s deeply religious temper and his belief in the necessity of faith in God, however this God is described or defined (cf., for example, J266).

D404.

D409.

¹Cf. Chamfort: "Le monde physique paraît l'ouvrage d'un être puissant et bon, qui a été obligé d'abandonner à un être mal-faisant l'exécution d'une partie de son plan. Mais le monde moral paraît être le produit des caprices d'un diable devenu fou."

D465.

s

D650.

E52.

Page 77: E210.

E365. ¹A clockwork model of the solar system named
s after the Earl of Orrery (ca. 1700).

E417.

E456.

E465. ¹In connection with this anticipation of mo-
s dern historical geology, v. also F33.

Page 78: E468. ¹Leitzmann prints wie, which seems to be a
s misprint for wir; L. refers, of course, to
the physicists.

F32.

F33.

s

F33.

s

F34.

s

F284.

Page 79: F321.

F323. ¹But L. later modifies this statement by de-
fining more closely what he means by "dis-
trust" or "doubt"; cf. F443.

Page 80: F410.

F443.

E448. ¹Nervensafft.

²In his philosophical aphorisms L. frequently
draws this distinction between "the world
that I am" and "the world that I am not,"
which resembles Fichte's Ich and Nicht-Ich.

F474.

Page 80: F759.

F865.

Page 81: F877.

Sch.¹I,171.

Sch.¹II,12. ¹Leonhard Euler (1707-1783), professor of mathematics and physics at St. Petersburg. The work of which L. speaks is apparently the Lettres à une princesse d'Allemagne sur quelques sujets de physique et de philosophie (Berlin 1768-1772).

²Cf. Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung (Brasch's ed., I,294), where he says: "Demnach drängt sich von selbst die Aufnahme auf, dass die Welt, so wie wir sie erkennen, auch nur für unsere Erkenntnis da ist, mithin in der Vorstellung allein, und nicht noch einmal ausser derselben," and adds in a footnote: "Ich empfehle hier besonders die Stelle in Lichtenberg's vermischten Schriften," and cites this aphorism in full. -- Also Hebbel (Tagebücher, Werner's ed., I-657, p.145, March 1837) quotes this aphorism with the notation: "Eine höchst merkwürdige Bemerkung Lichtenbergs."

Page 82: Sch.¹II,375.

Sch.²I,71.
s

Sch.²I,81

Sch.²I,89.

Sch.²I,99. ¹This is, in substance, a précis of Kant's Paralogismen der reinen Vernunft (Kritik der reinen Vernunft, Gross' ed., I,297ff.). The aphorism is quoted and interpreted by Mauthner (Wörterbuch der Philosophie I, 254). The cogito refers, of course, to Descartes' famous formula Cogito ergo sum.

Page 82: Sch.²I,104.

Page 83: Sch.²I,107.

Sch.²I,107.

Sch.²I,107. ¹This aphorism might serve as the motto of Lessing's Nathan der Weise. It reminds one of Goethe's magnificent words: "There are only two religions: the one acknowledges the holiness that dwells in and about us, quite without form; the other worships it in the greatest beauty of form. All that lies between is idolatry." (Sprüche in Prosa, Hempel ed., XIX, no. 462.)

Sch.²I,108. ¹Cf. L727.

Sch.²I,142. ¹Against Kant's formalistic ethics. Cf. Hentzschel, 41.

Sch.²I,190.

Sch.²I,195.

Sch.²I,199.

Page 84: Sch.²II,101.

Sch.²II,105. ¹Cf. Sch.²II,112 and E422: "The real philosophers and the titular ones." Lichtenberg was no fonder than Schopenhauer of the "Professorphilosophie der Philosophieprofessoren."

Sch.²II,145. ¹Cf. J948: "I should like to propose as the symbol of Enlightenment the well-known sign of fire (Δ). It gives light and warmth; it is indispensable to the growth and evolution of all that lives; but -- if improperly handled, it also burns and destroys."

Sch.²II,185. ¹Underlined by Kant in his copy of Sch.¹I-II.

Page 84: Sch.²II,194.

Sch.²VI,149.

¹The cosmologist is, of course, Copernicus, of whom L. wrote a short biography (Sch.¹VI); the philosopher is Kant. Vincent (p.276) suggests that the tactician is Johann Wilhelm von Achenholz, a Prussian officer in the Seven Years War and author of a Geschichte des siebenjährigen Krieges (1793); it seems likely, however, that L. uses "Prussia" in a broader sense, and refers to Frederick II. In either case, the ironic implication is obvious. L. was consistently anti-militarist.

Page 85: J98.

J255.

¹I.e., the Kritik der reinen Vernunft (1781).

J261.

J262.

J264.

J265.

¹Cf. L.'s 6th ed. of Erxleben's Anfangsgründe der Naturlehre, 373 (as cited by Leitzmann IV,257): "Leuchtende Körper können eine gewisse Farbe zeigen, wenn sie der Newtonischen Theorie zufolge nur eine Art von Lichtstrahlen allein, wenigstens nicht alle sieben zugleich ausstrahlen, als in welchem Falle sie dem Auge weiss erscheinen würden. Nach der Eulerischen Theorie hängt die Farbe eines leuchtenden Körpers davon ab, ob seine Theilchen dem Aether Schläge von einerley bestimmten oder von verschiedenen Geschwindigkeiten eindrücken."-- Cf. also J267, where L. says of Spinozism and Deism: "Beyde Systeme führen so gewiss einen verständigen Geist auf Eins hinaus, dass man, um zu sehen ob man in dem Spinozismus richtig ist, sich des deistischen bedienen kann, so wie man sich des Augenmasses oft zur Probe der gnausten Messungen bedient."

- Page 86: J266. ¹zur inneren Wohlgestalt, with the alternative reading: zur Wohlgestalttheit des Erkenntnisvermögens.
- J488.
- J504. ¹Cf. J277 and note.
- J600.
- J623.
- J631.
s
- Page 87: J822. ¹Lessing's play first appeared in 1779.
- J921.
- J951.
- Page 88: J1111. ¹Nervensaft, the same term that L. uses in E448.
- J1266.
- J1345.
- J1346.
- K18.
- Page 89: L27. ¹The following aphorism (L28) is really a note on this: "The canonized blunders of the Church Councils."
- L193.
- L273.
- Page 90: L404. ¹This, like Sch.²I,142, is directed against the inadequacy of Kant's ethical principles. Cf. Hentzschel, 41.
- L419.
- L727. ¹L. refers here to philosophy (cf. Sch.²I,108).

Page 90: L734.

Page 91: L737.

IV. LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Page 93: A89.

¹L. was intensely interested in all the phases of what we might call abstract linguistics, and especially in the relation of word-form to word-meaning and of word-meaning to reality; in other words, he anticipated to a high degree the Sprachkritik of Fritz Mauthner, who himself is quite willing to acknowledge his indebtedness to L. (cf. Wörterbuch der Philosophie, I, 254, 260, 279, 551; II, 37, 194; III, 454). A dissertation could be written on this single phase of L.'s thought. On a similar subject, cf. A109.

A109.

Page 94: B11.

¹Christian Heinrich Wilke (died 1776), instructor in philosophy at Leipzig; known as a polygrapher, and for his love of controversy. L. adds the s to his name probably in playful analogy with that of the contemporary English politician John Wilkes (cf. p. xxxv).

B12.

Page 95: B15.

¹Tobacco from Varinas (Barinas) in Venezuela (cf. Varinaskanaster).

B16.

¹Thomas Abbt (1738-1766), a popular philosopher of the Enlightenment.

²L. delighted in ridiculing the petty squabbles among the various critics and critical journals of his day.

³Johann Wilhelm Ludwig Gleim (1719-1803), the chief representative of the so-called Berlin

"Anacreontic" school of poets. L. consistently admired his verses, which are all but forgotten today, excepts in histories of literature.

⁴Christoph August Heumann (died 1764), professor of theology at Göttingen, and an almost incredible polygrapher.

⁵Heinrich Wilhelm von Gerstenberg (1737-1823), the author of Ugolino. The Tändeleien (1759) were his first literary work.

Page 96: B17.

¹Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717-1768), the famous author of the Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums, which exercised such a great influence on the classical period of German letters.

²Friedrich von Hagedorn (1708-1754) was much better known as a poet than as a critic. It is questionable to what work of his L. has reference.

³A member of a negro tribe of Senegambia.

Page 97: B19.
s

¹Probably the Wilke(s) referred to in B11.

²Christian Ludwig Liscow's series of satires against the half-crazed professor and publicist Philippi.

Page 98: B20.

¹Horace was L.'s model of poetic excellence, as Tacitus was his criterion of economical prose.

Page 100: B23.

¹Henry IV of Navarre defeated the Catholic League at Ivry in 1590, and three years later turned Catholic himself, whereupon Charles de Guise, formerly his chief opponent, submitted to him. He was murdered in 1610 by Ravailiac. -- Winckelmann was converted to Catholicism in 1754; the painter Casanova became his friend. He was murdered by Archangeli in 1768.

²Charles XII of Sweden waged war against Poland. Hostilities were concluded in 1706 by the Peace of Altranstädt. In 1709 he was defeated by the Russians at Pultawa, and fled

to Turkey. He was killed at Fredrikshald in 1718, during an expedition against Norway. -- The controversialist Klotz was professor first at Jena, then at Göttingen (where L. knew him), and finally at Halle. He was severely criticised by Lessing in his Briefe antiquarischen Inhalts.

³Horace, Odes III, 29, ll. 29-30: Prudens futuri temporis exitum / Caliginosa nocte premit deus.

Page 101: B38.

¹Christian Adolf Klotz (1738-1771), the philologist and critic, well-known for his polemical bent, whom Lessing attacked in the Briefe antiquarischen Inhalts. He had at one time been professor at Göttingen (1763-1765), and L. knew him personally.

B41.

B43. ¹The extraordinary "ode" to which L. refers, and which he quotes in full, may be found in Swift's Works, Sheridan's ed., XXIV, 71.

B64. ¹The popular philosopher to whom L. refers in B16.

²Friedrich Just Riedel (1742-1785), professor of philosophy at Erfurt and editor of the Bibliothek der elenden Scribenten.

³The Viennese priest (died 1709), famous for the wit and whimsy that he allowed himself in his sermons.

⁴Johann Jakob Reiske (1716-1774), Greek scholar and Arabist. His translation of the orations of Demosthenes and Aeschines appeared from 1764-1769.

⁵L. adds, by way of explanation, "... und dieses ist der Winckelsängerstül."

Page 102: B82.

¹Laurence Sterne, the author of Tristram Shandy and A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy. L. was at first an ardent admirer of Sterne, but after his English sojourns, during which he learned at first hand of Yorick's very un-admirable character, his opinion changed (cf. Sch.²I, 169, 184, and the comment of Grillparzer quoted on p. viii).

Page 102: B87.

- ¹The St. Petersburg physicist, Georg Wilhelm Richmann (1711-1753), who was killed while performing an electrical experiment. On the risks run by the German satirist of the late eighteenth century, v. also B132.

Page 103: B90.

- ¹L. uses the rather unusual word Wirrstroh, which is not cited by Heyne, and which Sanders (III, 1244^o) cites without reference and defines as "das beim Dreschen zerknickte (zerrüttete), krumm und wirr in Bündel gebundene Stroh."

B91.

- ¹L. throughout agrees with Schopenhauer, who says (Ueber Lesen und Bücher) that "a moment's thought is worth an hour's reading." On this topic, cf. also Sch.²I, 282.

²In his Fragmente über die neuere deutsche Literatur (Sämtl. Werke I, 383).

³L. uses the English words.

⁴The dots in Leitzmann's text apparently represent a blank space in the manuscript.

⁵These words are underscored in the manuscript.

Page 104: B108.

B122.

B127. ¹Tristram Shandy VI, 40.

Page 105: B132.

B186. ¹Der Tod Jesu, composed to Ramler's text. First produced in 1760.

²Straf mich nicht in deinem Zorn. From a chorale by Albinus.

³Dörrsucht.

B224. ¹Grummet.

Page 106: B283.

B305.

B356.

- Page 106: B396. ¹L.'s and Goethe's friend, Heinrich Christian Boie, whose enthusiastic admiration of Klopstock and Ramler was well known.
- B398.
- Page 107: C179.
s
- C229.
s
- C297. ¹One of L.'s favorite similes.
- D94.
- D105. ¹The reference is doubtful. Leitzmann offers a theory (II, 278).
- D106.
- Page 108: D137.
- D173.
- D201.
- D240. ¹A thrust at Goethe and his Götz von Berlichingen.
- D246.
- D270.
- D329.
- D331.
- Page 109: D611.
- E15. ¹Nicomachaeian Ethics 10,7,3: Πᾶς γὰρ τὸ οἰκεῖτον ἔργον ἀγαπᾷ μᾶλλον ἢ ἀγαπηθεῖν αὐτὸν ὑπὸ τοῦ ἔργου ἐμψύχου γενομένου. μάλιστα δ' ἴσως τοῖτο περὶ τοὺς ποιητὰς συμβαίνει.
- E17. ¹Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon (1608-1674), author of A History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England (1702).

Page 109: E39.

E50.

Page 110: E69.

¹Edmund Burke (1730-1797), the English author, orator, and statesman. -- The millipede figure is used again in F962.

E173.

E180.

¹Of all prose writers, Tacitus was without a doubt L.'s favorite; he refers to him in many places (cf. E220, Sch.¹I, 257, etc.).

E203.

¹L. was a consistent admirer of Lessing as a prosist, and took his part in the Klotz and Goeze controversies; he was personally acquainted with him (cf. F403, "Herr Lessing bey mir"; and the letter from Lessing published by Leitzmann, Nachlass 171).

E205.

E220.

Page 111: E228.

¹L. was a constant reader of Voltaire; he cites him repeatedly, especially in the later aphorism-books (F, J, L).

E229.

E254.

s

¹Cf. F69 and note. It is interesting to observe that in these tales L. was more attracted by the Arab forthrightness and and factuality than by the Persian imagination.

E332.

s

E425.

¹One might observe that L. admires in Lessing the very quality that led Lessing himself to conclude that he was no poet at all.

Page 112: E432.

E437.

Page 112: E453.

s

E474. ¹Theory of the Human Mind, London 1775, 151. These three qualities, plus conciseness, were certainly L.'s chief criteria as well.

E506.

Page 113: E509.

F8. ¹Cf. D20. The ancestor of the critic and literary historian Eduard Grisebach. He served in the Seven Years War under Ferdinand of Brunswick, chiefly as a mediator in the exchange of prisoners of war, and died in 1773, as a high official in the public finance at Hanover. L. thought so highly of him as to say: "Die Namen solcher Männer müssen nicht etwa unter dem Titel Leben gewissenhafter Richter und Advocaten der Nachwelt zugestellt werden wollen, die sie gewiss unter dieser Adresse nicht erhält. Man muss diesen Personen nicht einen Leichenstein auf einem Stadt Kirchhof errichten, sondern muss sie unter die Könige begraben."

F10.

F21.

F36. ¹L. actually did write about two of these. To his own generation he was probably best known for his Ausführliche Erklärung der Hogarthischen Kupferstiche (Göttingen 1794ff.) and his Briefe aus England (in Boie's Deutsches Museum, 1775), which consist in large part of descriptions of Garrick's acting. His comments on Shakespeare are limited to the aphorism-books and incidental remarks in the Briefe aus England.

F69. ¹The famous collection of Arab-Persian tales, the Alf lailah wa-lailah, which L. knew probably from one of the German versions of Galland's very un-Arabic French translation 1704-1717); cf. E254.

- ²Daniel Defoe's novel, which appeared in 1719, and was translated into German in the following year and frequently thereafter; to judge from the aphorisms, L. read it in English.
- ³The picaresque novel by Alain-René Le Sage; first published 1715-1735, but not translated into German until 1856.
- ⁴Fielding's novel Tom Jones, or the History of a Foundling (1749), still known in German as Der Findling; it was not translated into German until 1848. For L.'s opinion of this book, v. also F1065.
- ⁵Klopstock's religious epic Der Messias (1748-1773), which L. heartily disliked. Cf. F752, where he says: "Klopstocks Messias kan nur, dünckt mich, alsdann schwer scheinen, wenn man das darin finden will, was das Geschrey der Zeitungsschreiber und der Barden hinein gelegt hat. Mir kommt es vor, als wenn das Gedicht nicht zu schwer, sondern zu leicht, oder deutlicher, nicht zu tief sondern zu seicht wäre."

Page 114: F103.

- F185. ¹Horace's line (Ars poetica 139), Parturiunt montes, nascetur ridiculus mus, referring to the well-known fable of Aesop.
- F231. ¹A play on the medical term furor uterinus. Cf. F521: "Furor Wertherinus könnte von ὀρεσπο [sic], ὀρεσποινος [sic], hergeleitet werden und das bringt es mit uterinus noch mehr zur Correspondentz."
- F350.
- F376. ¹Adapted from Jean Chardin's Journal du voyage en Perse et aux Indes orientales (Amsterdam 1686).

Page 115: F409.

F456.

- F488. ¹A thrust at the Kraftgenies and their misuse of the German language -- the verbal extravagance and hyper-energy that is parodied in Klinger's Sturm und Drang. Cf.

F499: "Es ist als wenn unsere Sprachen verwirrt wären; wenn wir einen Gedanken haben wollen, so bringen sie uns ein Wort, wenn wir ein Wort fordern, einen Strich, und wo wir einen Strich erwarteten, steht eine Zote." -- The comment in F488 is followed by the English verses: "... and in derision sets / Upon their tongues a various spirit, to raise / Quite out their native language, and, instead, / To sow a jangling noise of words unknown. / Forthwith a hideous gabble rises loud...." (Milton, Paradise Lost, XII, ll. 52-56.)

Page 115: F492.

F516.

F564.

Page 116: F662.

¹Cf. F261.

²Here for the first time L. is at least willing to admit Goethe's virtue as a stylist.

³Klostergeschichte is altered from Siegwart Leitzmann III, 483) -- i.e., Johann Martin Miller's Siegwart, eine Klostergeschichte (cf. Hettner III, 1, 365f.).

⁴Cf. F69.

F780. ¹Christian Garve (1742-1798), Gellert's successor at Leipzig; a popular philosopher who is quite forgotten today, but whom L. admired and greatly overrated. What attracted L. in Garve's rather shallow essays was doubtless the simplicity and clarity of style.

F962. ¹The same figure occurs in E69.

²Cited in full by Mauthner, Wörterbuch der Philosophie I, 592.

F987.

Page 117: F991. ¹The Roman Temple of Janus remained closed whenever no war was being waged in any part of the empire.

Page 117: F1004.

F1065.

Sch.¹_sI,257.

Page 118: Sch.¹I,278.

Sch.²I,132.

Sch.²I,171.

¹Underlined by Kant in his copy of Sch.¹I-II.

Page 119: Sch.²I,224.

Sch.²I,278.

¹This reminds one of the comment of the contemporary French philosopher Georges Sorel: "Pendant vingt ans, j'ai travaillé à me délivrer de ce que j'avais retenu de mon éducation; j'ai promené ma curiosité à travers les livres, moins pour apprendre que pour nettoyer ma mémoire des idées qu'on lui avait imposées." (Anthologie des philosophes français contemporains, Paris 1931, 34.) -- Cf. also J148.

Page 120: Sch.²I,282.

Sch.²I,283.

Sch.²I,288.

¹Cf. Nietzsche, Menschliches Allzumenschliches (Werke, Kröner, 1. Abt. II,165): "Jeder grossen Erscheinung folgt die Entartung nach, namentlich im Bereiche der Kunst. Das Vorbild des Grossen reizt die eitleren Naturen zum äusserlichen Nachmachen oder zum Ueberbieten; dazu haben alle grossen Begabungen das Verhängnisvolle an sich, viele schwächere Kräfte und Keime zu erdrücken und um sich herum gleichsam die Natur zu veröden."

Sch.²I,300.

Sch.²I,306.

- Page 120: Sch.²I,306f. ¹L. knew no Hebrew or Arabic or Persian, but was a great admirer of these languages and their literatures, especially the Old Testament and The Thousand and One Nights, so far as he could acquaint himself with them through German, French, and English translations.
²I.e., the mathematical and astronomical symbols.
- Page 121: Sch.²I,308.
- Sch.²I,310. ¹I.e., Klopstock's poem. For a more general statement of L.'s opinion of this work, v. F69 and F752.
- Sch.²I,312.
- Page 122: Sch.²I,324. ¹Goethe's says: "In translating, one advances to the untranslatable, and at that point he really discovers the foreign idiom and the foreign nation." (V. Loeper's ed., no. 614, Hempel XIX, 129.)
- Sch.²II,39. ¹Despite L., Pope's poem is generally known in German by this title.
- Sch.²II,40.
- Sch.²II,69.
- Sch.²II,73.
- Page 123: Sch.²II,84. ¹A kind of bison like the wisent, which once was common in Europe, but now is extinct. (Cf. Nibelungenlied: "Dar nach sluoc er schiere einen wisent und einen elch,/ starker ure viere und einen grimmen schelch." (St. 107 of Bachmann's Mhd. Leseb.)
- Sch.²II,117.
- Sch.²II,159.

Page 123: Sch.²II,178.

J2. ¹Underlined by Kant in his copy of Sch.¹
I-II.

J31. ¹Which continued to be practised in Italy
s as late as L.'s time. Cf. Voltaire's Can-
dide, XII: "Je suis né à Naples.... on y
chaponne deux ou trois mille enfants tous
les ans; les uns en meurent, les autres
acquièrent une voix plus belle que celle
des femmes...."

Page 124: J40.

J238. ¹Quoted by Schopenhauer in a letter to Blu-
menbach.

J324.

J496.

Page 125: J722.

J832. ¹One of Richard Wagner's favorite quotations
from Lichtenberg (cf. Glasenapp, Das Leben
Richard Wagners, Leipzig 1911, VI, p. 59f.).

J976.

J1108.

J1205. ¹In Nicolai's Neue allgemeine deutsche Bib-
liothek II,1,6lff.
²Die edle Lüge (1792), a sequel to Menschen-
hass und Reue.

Page 126: K15.

L62.

L184. ¹The miscellaneous observations and aphor-
isms found among Laurence Sterne's liter-
ary remains. -- The comment is equally ap-
plicable to L.'s own "waste-books."

- Page 126: L589. ¹L.'s acquaintance with Jean Paul Richter apparently dates from L511, where he lists his published works.
- ²Cf. D278. Matthias Christian Sprengel was at that time a student of Schlözer's at Göttingen, and later became professor of geography at Halle.

Page 127: L612.

L602.

L697.

V. EDUCATION

Page 129: A81.

F37.

F666. ¹Epistles 106, 11. For an elaboration of this idea, see Sch.²I,277.

Sch.²I,198.
s

Sch.²I,219.

Sch.²I,221.

Page 130: Sch.²I,222.

Sch.²I,277.

Sch.²II,99f.

J28.

J61.

Page 131: J148. ¹Cf. Sch.²I,278.

L347. ¹L. adds the very characteristic note: "cum grano salis ad besser zu werden."

Page 131: L645.

VI. UNIVERSITY AND SCHOLARSHIP

Page 133: A64.

B141. ¹I.e., mathematics.
s

B143.

B183. ¹Ludus de morte Claudii 9,2. L. follows Erasmus' text. In modern editions the passage is shortened: "Olim, inquit, magna res erat deum fieri; jam, fama, mimum fecisti." -- L. writes numinum for minimum, which, as Leitzmann suggests (I,226), is probably a mere lapsus.

Page 134: B219.

B235. ¹Professor of French at Göttingen.

²Cf. Appendix p. 264 .

³Cf. p. xxvi .

⁴Professor of philosophy and mathematics.

⁵Professor of physics.

⁶Cf. p. xxvi .

B279.
s

B301.

Page 135: C194.
s

C219. ¹The poet Johann Georg Jacobi (1740-1814), whom L. had known since his student days. At this time Jacobi was professor of philosophy and rehtoric at Halle.

Page 135: D179.

¹This is the name of a mythical country invented by L., who planned to describe it in a satirical novel after the manner of Swift.

²According to Plutarch (Modern Library ed., p.193) this witticism had its origin in a passage from Cratinus' comedy, The Thracian Women: "So, we see here, / Jupiter Longpate Pericles appear, / Since ostracism time, he's laid aside his head, / And wears the new Odeum in its stead."

Page 136: D232.

D245.

D479.

F18.

F49.

¹An excellent commentary on this is a passage from C.G. Jung's foreword to W.M. Kranefeldt's Die Psychoanalyse (Leipzig 1930): "Wissenschaft bedarf der äussersten Unsicherheit als eines Lebenselementes. Wo immer sie eine Neigung zum Dogma und damit zur Unduldsamkeit und zum Fanatismus zeigt, wird ein höchstwahrscheinlich berechtigter Zweifel zugedeckt und eine nur allzu begründete Unsicherheit wegbehauptet."

F135.

¹This was written in England.

Page 137: F261.

s

F261.

s

¹Karl von Linné (Linnaeus), the famous Swedish botanist (1707-1778).

F278.

F433.

F481.

Page 138: F494.

- ¹Schafengel. The meaning of the word is obvious enough, but it does not occur in any of the dictionaries.
- ²Christian Fürchtegott Gellert (1715-1769), Goethe's professor at Leipzig; the transplanter on German soil of the English "sentimental" novel and the French comédie larmoyante.
- ³Johann Joseph Gassner (1727-1779), a famous charlatan priest who attributed diseases to the presence in the body of evil spirits and demons, and travelled about pronouncing charms and incantations.
- ⁴John Hancock, the signer of the Declaration of Independence, and at this time president of the American Congress. L., as a staunch Hanoverian, opposed the American Revolution, and subsequently -- unlike Kant -- scorned the upstart "Spitzbubenrepublik."
- ⁵The entire aphorism is interesting as a contemporary description of the public that received the Storm-and-Stress literature.

F874.

F959. ¹I can find nothing about this prodigy.

Page 139: F1203.

Sch.¹II,302. ¹Cf. Schopenhauer, Parerga und Paralipomena, "Ueber Lesen und Bücher" (Sämtliche Werke, Deussen's ed., V, 623): "Gegen die heut zu tage herrschende Monomanie Litterargeschichte zu lesen, um von allem schwätzen zu können, ohne irgend etwas eigentlich zu kennen, empfehle ich eine höchst lesenswerthe Stelle von Lichtenberg Bd. 2, p. 302, alte Ausg."

Page 140: Sch.²I,273.

Sch.²I,279.

Page 141: Sch.²I,282. ¹Underlined by Kant in his copy of Sch.¹I-II.

Page 141: Sch.²I,286. ¹Cited in full by Grillparzer in his Tagebücher (Sauer's ed.) Abt.II-7: 197 (1816?).

Sch.²I,288f. ¹On the same subject, cf. Sch.²I, 292f.

Page 142: Sch.²I,317.

Sch.²II,70.

Sch.²II,71.

Page 143: Sch.²II,83. ¹Bouillier, the French translator of L., apparently had difficulty with this aphorism, and finally rendered it thus (p. 180): "Il faisait constamment des extraits, et toutes ses lectures passaient d'un livre dans un autre, sans passer par sa tête."

Sch.²II,88. ¹It seems probable that this refers to Kästner.

Sch.²II,112. ¹Cf. E422 and Sch.²II,105.

Sch.²II,145. ¹I.e., each of the four divisions of the old German university: the Fakultäten of philosophy, theology, law, and medicine.

Sch.²II,194.

J670.

Page 144: J838. ¹Émile V: "L'enfant qui ne connaît que ses parents, ne connaît guère ceux-ci."

J1105. ¹L. uses the English word. -- The aphorism may be autobiographical.

J1329.

L69.

L153.

Page 145: L671.

VII. THE NATIONAL CHARACTERS

Page 147: B30.

B60. ¹John Wilkes, the radical politician and publicist who later became Lord-Mayor of London (cf. p. xxxv).

B63.

B70.

B210. ¹One of L.'s best friends among the English students at Göttingen; cf. Ltz.-Sch. I, 94, 194, 220, 249, 275, 368.
²Professor of theology at Göttingen.

Page 148: C51.

C341.

E67. ¹From a series of observations and remarks titles Besondere den Charackter der Engländer erläuternde Züge.

E79. ¹The Göttingen curiosity-shop proprietor whose life L. at one time planned to recount in the manner of Fielding. The fragments on this subject are collected in Sch.²III, 15ff.
²Göttingen lies in the valley of the river Leine. L. was fond of forming pseudo-classical compounds with this name. Cf. Sch.²II, 111: "Es war mir auf dem Garten immer eine Freude, des Sonntags so die schönen Leinathenienserinnen vorbeigehen zu sehen."

E313.

E351. ¹Virgil, Eclogues 1,4.

Page 149: F316.

F675. ¹Of National Characters (Philos. Works III, 252); cf. D228.

Page 149: J137.

L85.

¹I.e., after the battle of Lodi and Napoleon's occupation of Milan. L. did not live to see the entry of the French into Vienna in 1805.

L543.

L674.

¹Whose acquaintance L. had apparently made through Kant (cf. Ltz.-Sch. III, 215).

VIII. POLITICS AND SOCIETY

Page 152: A110.,

¹This passage was carefully obliterated, probably after L. made the personal acquaintance of George III, and is quite illegible. A friend of Leitzmann's tried to restore it with chemicals, but without success.

²Sic. Sc. fourriers, 'quartermasters.'

³Probably L. uses this title generically; it has not been possible to find a specific work of this name.

⁴By Pommiers; cf. Gött. gel. Anz. 1768, 518.

⁵The periodical edited by Otto von Münchhausen, with whom L. was acquainted (cf. Ltz.-Sch. I, 21).

Page 153: B133.

Page 154: B149.

s

B194.

B321.

B381.

B387.

D10.

Page 155: D337.

D366.

E186.

F51.

F710. ¹Cf. p. xxv .

Page 156: F788. ¹I.e., the American Revolution.

²George Germaine is altered from North
(Leitzmann III, 494).

Sch. ²I, 239.

Sch. ²I, 246.

Sch. ²I, 246.

Sch. ²I, 253.

Sch. ²I, 253.

Page 157: Sch. ²II, 105. ¹The last serfs in Germany were not
freed until 1832, the year of Goethe's
death! (In the Saxon Upper Lusatia.)

Sch. ²II, 110.

J212.

J231.

J565. ¹Die Falschheit menschlicher Tugenden, 244.

²Cf. the revolutionary warcry "À la lan-
terne!" The lamp-posts were used by the
Parisian mob as improvised gallows.

J874.

s

J949.

s

Page 158. J1017. ¹An Irishman in French service who was as-
sassinated at Lille in 1792.

²The guillotine was officially adopted by the Convention in 1792. L. was somewhat morbidly interested in its history and use, and published an essay on it, Ein Wort über das Alter der Guillotine, in the Gött. Taschen Calender for 1795 (Sch.^{IV},492).

Page 158: J1126.

J1136.

J1147. ¹Ignaz, Edler von Born (1742-1791), once a Jesuit, withdrew from the order, studied geology, and became curator of the Imperial Natural History Museum at Vienna.
²Specimen monachologiae methodo linnaeana (Vienna 1783), a satire on the monastic orders.

Page 159: J1156.

J1157. ¹Written late in 1792 (November? cf. J1165).

J1181. ¹Recherches physiques sur le feu. Paris 1780.
²Gött. gel. Anz. 1781 (Zugabe), 177.
³Recherches physiques sur l'électricité. Paris 1782. -- Jean-Paul Marat was assassinated by Charlotte de Corday July 13, 1793, about half a year after L. wrote this.

J1223. ¹Written in 1793, the year of the execution of Louis XVI.

RA 4 ¹I.e., the American Revolution. This was written in 1775, during L.'s second sojourn in England.

Page 160. K21.

s

L34. ¹Der politische Tierkreis, oder die Zeichen der Zeit. I can find no book of this title by the author indicated. Leitzmann (V,48) refers to a book of this name by

Rebmann (publ. in Altona in 1796). L. may have secured a pirated edition of this.

²Cf. F485 and note.

Page 161: L58. ¹Nomen nescio or nomen nominandum.

L105. ¹The infamous French warrants of arrest, by virtue of which a man could be thrown into the Bastille without charge or trial.

Page 162: L234.

L280.

L312. ¹By "telegraphy" L. apparently means the so-called "optic telegraph," or system of semaphores, developed in Paris by the brothers Chappe in 1793.

²This was written in 1797; and seems to refer to the Preliminary Peace of Leoben (April 18) and the Peace of Campo Formio (October 17), by which Austria ceded Napoleon the Lombardy and the Left Bank of the Rhine in exchange for the release of Venetia.

Page 163: L320.

L417.

L437. ¹The two "slaps" are probably the campaigns of 1792 (Valmy, Jemappes) and Napoleon's victories over Austria in 1797.

L446. ¹The allusion is, of course, to Napoleon and his victorious Italian campaign of 1796-97; the Treaty of Tolentino, with the papacy, was concluded in February 1797.

L676. ¹The Ca ira was the famous revolutionary marching song. Kahira = القاهرة, the Arabic name of Cairo, which was occupied by Napoleon in 1798. L. was very fond of such fanciful resemblances of words, and a number of examples occur in practically every aphorism-book.

IX. EPIGRAMS

Page 165: A108.

B1.

B4. ¹den Geistlich-Churfürstlichen. For a comment on life at the ecclesiastical courts during this period, see K. Tschuppik, Maria Theresia (Amsterdam 1934), 415.

B9. ¹Ueber die Vortrefflichkeit und Notwendigkeit der elenden Skribenten.

B21.

Page 166: B24.

B42.

B74. ¹L. uses the English word.

B184. ¹Petronius, Satyricon 19,4. The passage, in Bücheler's ed., reads: "Tres enim erant mulierculae, si quid vellent conari, infirmissimae, scilicet contra nos, quibus si nihil aliud, virilis sexus esset."

B209. ¹The Kettlers were in L.'s time the ruling family of Courland. It is not clear to which member of this family he refers.

B228.

B254.

Page 167: B262.

B269.

B325. ¹The atheist Julien Offray de Lamettrie (1709-1751), who served as personal reader to Frederick II, and whose writings were publicly burnt in France.

²L. first cast this aphorism in verse (B294): "Andächtiger und schöner als Lucinden / Wird man nicht leicht ein Mädchen beten sehen; / In jedem Zug lag Reue für die Sünden / Und jeder reizte zum Begehen." But he says, "Das übelgerathene Epigramm musste in folgendes umgeschmelzt werden," and gives the above version, followed by a citation from Shakespeare: "'Tis too much proved that with devotion's visage / And pious action we do sugar o'er / The devil himself....." (Hamlet III,1.)

Page 167: B354.

C21.

¹L. himself provides the commentary to this in Sch.²I,151: "Sympathy is a poor sort of alms-giving."

C24.

C337.

C345.

Page 168: C368.

¹Cf. E211.

D123.

¹This reminds one of Gellert's well-known fable, Das Land der Hinkenden.

D141.

D396.

¹Cf. Orbis pictus (Herzog II, 178). Cited by Schopenhauer, Aphorismen zur Lebensweisheit (Kröner), 121.

D447.

¹Cf. Chamfort: "Des Qualités trop supérieures rendent souvent un homme moins propre à la société."

D448.

s

E95.

s

Page 169: E211.

Page 169: E213. ¹The same aphorism occurs in a slightly altered form in F111. It is cited by Schopenhauer, Aphorismen zur Lebensweisheit (Kröner), 121. -- Bouillier comments (p. 163): "... il n'est guère douteux que le miroir ne fût Shakespeare, et le singe, l'auteur de Götz von Berlichingen." This seems a little far-fetched, in view of the generality of the phrasing. L.'s comments on Goethe at this period are usually anything but veiled (cf. E69, E437, F8, etc.).

E286.

F50. ¹Cf. the preface to the 2nd ed. of L.'s essay Ueber Physiognomik (Sch.¹III, 417).

F430.

F531.
s

F660. ¹The "transcendental ventriloquist" is Lavater. Cf. the preface to the 2nd ed. of Ueber Physiognomik, and Mauthner, Wörterbuch der Philosophie II, 37.

F982.

Page 170: Sch.¹II, 378.

Sch.²I, 24.

Sch.²I, 43.

Sch.²I, 129.

Sch.²I, 131. ¹Based on Luke VI, 45, in Luther's translation: "... wess das Herz voll ist, dess gehet der Mund über." The King James version is differently phrased: "... of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

Sch.²I, 149. ¹Cited by Mauthner in his Wörterbuch der Philosophie I, 342.

Page 170: Sch.²I,166.

Sch.²I,169. ¹Underlined by Kant in his copy of Sch.¹I-II.

Sch.²I,171. ¹Underlined by Kant in his copy of Sch.¹I-II.

Page 171: Sch.²I,284.

Sch.²II,69.

Sch.²II,84.

Sch.²II,84.

Sch.²II,86.

Sch.²II,88. ¹This is probably the most cogent expression of L.'s unremitting hatred of war.

Sch.²II,177. ¹A keen commentary on this is given by Hebbel (Tagebücher, Werner's ed., IV-6057, p. 244, January 1863): "'Manchen Menschen -- sagt Lichtenberg -- ist ein Mann von Kopf verhasster, als der declarirteste Schurke.' Natürlich, und mit Recht. Denn gegen die Schurken kann man sich schützen, auch wird er bestraft, wenn er Uebles thut. Aber, wer schützt uns gegen den Mann von Kopf und wer bestraft ihn, wenn er 'unser's Nichts durchbohrendes Gefühl' so recht brennend in uns erweckt? Die Katzen fangen erst Funken zu sprühen an, wenn man sie streichelt und das braucht man nicht zu thun. Aber jene blitzen von selbst und wenn man sie schlägt und stösst, giebt's erst recht ein Gewitter." -- Schopenhauer quotes this aphorism (Nachlass, Reclam IV,353), and gives two interesting analogues from Helvetius and Chamfort.

Page 172: Sch.²II,177.

J233. ¹Superklugheit.

J289.

J362. ¹A play on the Cartesian principle: Cogito ergo sum.

Page 172: J520

J765. ¹Wahrsagen: Wahrheit-sagen.

J783.

J1209. ¹Underlined by Kant in his copy of Sch.¹
I-II.

Sch.²II, 84. ¹The same aphorism occurs in a longer form in L.'s Vorschlag zu einem Orbis pictus für deutsche dramatische Schriftsteller, Romanendichter und Schauspieler (Sch.²II, 200): "It is impossible to carry the torch of truth through a crowd without singeing a beard or a wig here and there"; and the same idea is adapted to a different context in F401.

Page 173: J96.

J594.

J1014.

Hog. III, 73. ¹Two London fencing masters who fought a duel that proved fatal to both.

Hog. II, 52. ¹Cornelius Ford, a well-known London clergyman of the time. There is a characterization of him in Boswell's Life of Johnson (1st ed. II, 263).

²Sir John Hawkins' Life of Johnson, 2nd ed., 2; cf. J184.

Page 174: Hog. I, 8.

L67.

L556.

L701.

X. JOCOSERIA

Page 176: A100.

Page 176: B86.

B97. ¹The aphorism may be autobiographical.

B135.

Page 177: B179.

B212.

B220.

B303.

B364.

Page 178: B380.

B388.

Ker.4. ¹L. doubtless heard this anecdote from Kästner himself.

C4.

C155.

D242.

D250.

Page 179: D371.

D483.

D498. ¹Avoir l'esprit en écharpe.

D505.

E45.

E56. ¹Hebbel (Tagebücher, Werner's ed., I-655, p.145, March 1837) provides a note on this aphorism: "Ars lulliana, die Kunst, von allen Dingen sinnlos zu schwätzen, ist eine Erfindung von Raimundus Lullus, einem berühmtesten Scholastiker des 13. Jahrhunderts."

E100. ¹The year of the Great London fire.

Page 179: E123.

s

Page 180: E292. ¹Lavater's.

F53.

F99.

F205.

F211.

F213. ¹Cf. L468.

Page 181: F299.

F478.

F563.

F653. ¹'Odds and ends, offscourings.'

F672.

F1090. ¹Teufelsdreck = asafoetida. The German word is well-known in English from Carlyle's Sartor Resartus.
²From Bomare's Dictionnaire raisonné universel d'histoire naturelle I,402.

Sch.²I,168. ¹Probably a thrust at the Leibniz-Wolfian natural philosophy.

Sch.²II,74. ¹Underlined by Kant in his copy of Sch.¹I-II.

Page 182: Sch.²II,81.

Sch.²II,82.

Sch.²II,82.

Sch.²II,84.

Sch.²II,84.

Page 182: Sch.²II,86.

Sch.²II,87.

Page 183: Sch.²II,87.

Sch.²II,89.

Sch.²II,105. ¹I.e., the sea-nymph, as representing
water.

Sch.²II,117.

Sch.²II,144.

J55

J145.

Page 184: J153. ¹Dieterich.

J494.

J627.

J702.

J926. ¹Probably Louis XVI. This was written in
1791.

J1122.

L31.

Page 185. L73.

L177.

L433. ¹Matthew XVIII,3.

L455.

L497. ¹L. answers his own question in L521: "If
need is the mother of invention, then war,
the begetter of need, must be the grand-
father of invention."

L596.

Page 186: L597.

L663

APPENDIX

E L O G I V M
GEORGII CHRISTOPHORI LICHTENBERG
IN CONSESSV SOC. REG. SCIENTIARVM
RECITAVIT
ABRAHAM GOTTHELF KAESTNER
D. XX. APRIL MDCCLXXXIX.

Commentationes Societatis Regiae Scientiarum Gottingensis XIV (1798-1799).
Gottingae apud Joann. Christian Dieterich.
1800 -- I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to Dr. Rodney P. Robinson, who was kind enough to read the manuscript of the translation, and offered many valuable suggestions.

Cum anno saeculi ad finem vergentis quinquagesimo primo, institueretur Societas scientiarum, ornandis et augendis physicis, mathematicis, historicis, qui singula harum doctrinarum genera occuparent, nominati sunt inter Gottingenses duo, et totidem externi. Ita, quae vocatur classis mathematica, habuit Segnerum et Mayerum. Ad me, tunc in Academia patria docentem, literae, quibus sodalis extraneus adsciscerer, statim post initium societatis scriptae sunt, quo contigit vt inter illos primo loco nominer, cum maior, et antiquior esset selectio Samuelis Koenig, et Ioannis Friderici von Vffenbach, cuius gratia tunc lex duos singularum classium sodales extraneos constituens migrata est, eius viri bibliotheca et instrumenta iam Gottingam ornant.

Inter praesentes sodales locum inde ab anno saeculi LVI occupo, ante me aderat Lowitzius, post accessere Meisterus et Lichtenbergius.

Ex his mathematicis, qui intererant conuentibus societatis, Gottinga abierunt, Segnerus Halam, Lowizius Petropolin, ad coelites Mayerus, Meisterus, et iam quoque Georgius Christophorus Lichtenbergius.

Mea quidem sors, inde a prima iuuentute, Cyparissi fuit, lugere alios, et adesse dolentibus, ita in nostra sodalitate moerens loquutus sum de physicis Roederero, Erxlebenio, de mathematicis Mayero, et Meistero, extremus labor incumbit, dicendi de Lichtenbergio.

In loco Hassiae Darmstadiensis, Oberramstadt dicto, natus est Lichtenbergius, anno MDCCXXXIV. I. Iulii. Patre, tunc eius metropolitano, post, Superintendente Generali Darmstadiensi. Matre, Eckhardi, metropolitani Bischoffsheimensis, prope Moguntiam filia, vltimus octodecim liberorum. Eidem, a quo vitam acceperat, debebat cum fratribus, maius quidpiam, prima doctrinae et virtutis femina.

Grauatatus pater et iis quae ad munus suum pertinebant et aliis negociis, quod otium ipsi daretur, ingeniis filiorum formandis tribuit./ [2] Naturae notitiam, quantum caperent, puerorum animis instillauit, erectos vt ad sidera tollerent vultus, monuit.

Qui haec mihi scripsit, frater defuncti, Ludouicus Carolus, Archiuo Ducali Gothano praefectus, nostrae Societati arctioris amicitiae vinculo iunctus, addidit, recordari se adhuc, quam placuerit seni, cum in gremio eius sedens, cometam anni XLIV, plurium quos saeculum vidit maximum, animaduertisset.

Post mortem patris Gymnasium Darmstadiense frequentauit, non amplius noster, praeceptore vsus egregio qui id tum regebat Wenkio.

A natiuitate debile ipsi corpus contigerat, vt parum idoneus videretur vitae generi negotioso, etiam erudito, quod praeter animum laboris patientem firmam quoque valetudinem postularet. Sic datum ipsi est, mathesi inprimis vacare, et naturae contemplationi, priuata industria, quam adiuuarunt duo fratres aetate maiores.

Munificentissimus in iuuenem fuit Ludouicus VIII Hassiae Landgrauius, diligentiam sustentans quae aliquando terrae natali prodesset, vel vniuersitatem literariam Giessensem ornando, vel Rheni qua perfluit Hassiam litora tuendo, id enim ad mathesin pertinere, intelligebat sapiens Princeps, quod aliis in terris, tardius animaduersum est. Gottingam studiorum caussa accessit anno LXIII in mathematicis me praeceptore vsus et Meistero, mox utroque, quod facile obtinebat egregius iuuenis, amico. Nullum doctorum neglexisse, a quibus in philosophia, naturae cognitione, literis ad humanitatem, orbisque notitiam pertinentibus proficere poterat, ostenderunt multifariae quibus inclaruit eruditionis specimina.

Nominatim, rerum naturalium thesaurum, qui tunc Büttneri erat, iam nostrae vniuersitatis literariae est, mon-

strante possessore et illustrante, cognouisse, retulit mihi studiorum necessitudine coniunctus Lichtenbergio, Erxlebenius. Quae ambo simul de terrae motu anno LXVII obseruarunt, narraui in nouis nostris literariis et monui, Lichtenbergium, iam tunc in obseruationibus astronomicis exercitatum succussioni tempus circiter sex secundorum tribuisse, quod minutum dixerunt, qui subtiliores temporis partitiones ignorant.

Post obitum Tobiae Mayeri, qui initio anni LXII accidit, obseruatorii cura demandata est Lowizio et mihi; Lowizius, confecto accurato instrumentorum quae tunc aderant catalogo, mihi reliquit aedes astronomicas./

[3] Absoluuntur obserationes sic coelestes omnes, angulorum, et temporum mensuris; igitur quomodo instituendae sint facile intelligit quilibet matheseos gnarus, si detur ipsi instrumenta tractare, habitus autem exercitio comparatur. Ita occasionem noscendi instrumenta et addiscendi vsus illorum, praebui auditoribus meis eius rei cupidis, inter quos primi erant Lichtenbergius, Klügelius, Ljungbergius, qui singuli, quantum inde profecerint, mox ostenderunt. Venerem, solem intrantem 19. Iun. LXIX mecum obseruarunt Lichtenbergius et Ljungbergius cum occidens sol reliqua nobis subtraheret, cometam, parum fauente atmosphaera, quantum poterat spectauit Lichtenbergius anno LXX; alium anno LXXI; sub exitum anni

LXXIII et initium sequentis visi viam inter fixas delineatam societati obtulit. Erat ipsi, quae non semper profundioribus studiis iungitur, facultas et patientia, figuras describendi, quae dum docent, etiam oculos delectant. Plures quas mihi dedit Lunae picturas, maculis eo ordine signatis, quo a telluris umbra tegendas calculus docuerat, amici et artificis reliquias seruo.

Lichtenbergium, patria Giessam repetebat, prae tulit nostram vniuersitatem literariam, titulo Professoris extraordinarii ornatus anno septuagesimo, Maio mense exeunte, vltimus Professorum quos Gottinga debebat curae Munchhusii, eiusdem anni mense Nouembri ad coelites vocati.

Liceat et hic grata mente recolere, Principis Hassiaci liberalitatem, qui, collata in Lichtenbergium, non imputauit ipsi, et, vt extra natalem prouinciam, inseruaret communi patriae Germaniae, lubens permisit.

Praelectiones indicauit scripto germanico, ad probabilitatis calculum pertinente. Quaeritur, cur spem praegrandis lucri, puta plurium centenorum millium thalerorum, nemo sanus, emturus sit precio si cum lucro comparetur fere euanescente, vt 50 thaleris? Intricant hoc, dum explicare conantur d'Alembert et Beguelin. Prudentem virum considerare, quanti facturus sit iacturam, eius, quod spei fallaci impendit, post

Danielem Bernoullium et Cramerum, monet Lichtenbergius. Hoc primo specimine publico monstravit, quantum posset in exhibendis oculo bene valenti perspicue, rebus, quae vel natura sua obscuriores sunt, vel nimia et misera eruditorum diligentia, quam subtilitatem appellari volunt, obscurantur./

[4] In prouinciis Germaniae quae sub Rege Electore felices sunt, Gottingae situm Tobias Mayerus observationibus astronomicis determinauerat, idem pluribus in locis fieri, iusserat Princeps, scientiarum non protector solum, sed eruditus et idoneus arbiter. Quod quomodo peragendum sit, cum Societatem exponere iuberet Consilium Regis, Electoratus salutem curans, ego, annuentibus Sodalibus, censui Lichtenbergio rem committendam.

Similiter, interprete dom. Demainbray, qui priuato Regis observatorio Richmondii praeerat, obtinui, vt regia munificentia quadrans, insignis artificis Sissoni opera elaboratus, illi negotio destinaretur. Ita Lichtenbergius annis LXII; LXIII; positus definuit Hannouerae, Osnabrugi, Stadae. Dixit de his suis laboribus anno LXXVI in consessu Societatis, cui anno LXXIV adscriptus erat.

Quae de Lunae facie adfecta reliquerat Tobias Mayerus, vt Gottingae seruarentur, dabat petitis meis Consilium Regium: Haec cum aliis Mayeri Manuscriptis in Observatorio custodiebantur.

Ex manuscriptis, vt aliqua innotescerent mathematicis, quoties dabatur occasio curavi. Non tamen potui sola edere quae legebantur; nudas scilicet formulas, quarum analysin aut demonstrationem, aliis certe chartis seruauit, mihi nunquam visis. Haec cum mihi essent ex ingenio restituenda caussas euolui, circuli diuisoris, quo in delineanda, stereographice tellure utitur, praecepta positum quadrantis muralis examinandi, item anguli in plano inclinato capti, ad horizontalem, reducendi.

Cur non in publicum prodirent relictæ a Mayero, erant qui quaererent, immodestius interdum quam deceret, non enim cogitabant aliam esse eruditorum conditionem quam mulierum Hebraearum quae ipsae obstetricandi habebant scientiam, et antequam ad illas accederent Sephora et Phua, pariebant.

Spondit tandem auxiliatrices manus, insignis noster bibliopola Dieterich, chartas Mayerianas Lichtenbergio tradidi. Ita magno splendore typographico prodiit Operum Mayeri Volumen quo continentur absolutae omnino dissertationes aliquae Societati scientiarum/ [5] exhibitae, illis illustrandis adiecit aliqua Lichtenbergius, item duorum typorum Lunarium, quos Mayerus relinquerat minorem, eum meridianis et parallelis selenographicis distinxit et macularum catalogum addidit.

Praeter haec edita, supersunt adhuc, quibus ordinandis et coniugendis ocium editori defuit, disiecti membra astronomi.

Angliam bis inuisit, annis LXX et LXXIV. Demainbrayo Regis iussu interroganti, quae hic acta essent Venere solem intrante, socios conatuum meorum nominaueram. Sic Regi innotuerat Lichtenbergius, Rex illi priuati sui obseruatorii vsum permisit, et eum saepius colloquiis dignatus est, eruditione refertis, in quibus, cum aliquando de Newtono ac Leibnitio ageretur, et quae sint cuiusuis partes in reperto infiniti calculo, gratum sibi professus est Rex, quod vterque in terris vixerit, quas ipse iam tueatur.

Scripsit Lichtenbergius ex Anglia, quae iuuarent amicos, quae ad me peruenerunt, vt a pluribus legerentur curauit, veluti, de praestantissimo Hornsbii obseruatorio, de ingenti barometro cui constructor Coxius perpetui mobilis nomen dedebat.

Ita iam tunc effecit, magis adhuc postea, vt nobis prodesset iter suum Britannicum.

Polycarpus Erxlebenius, Chemiam, Regnorum quae vocantur naturae historiam, Physicam experimentalem, tradebat, singulas has cognitionis naturae partes, breuiariis complexus, quae idoneis iudicibus probabantur: Is cum ἐνδοξος ἀλλ' ὀλιγοποιος anno LXVII obiisset, experimentorum instituendorum prouinciam suscepit Lichtenbergius, adhibens etiam librum amici, cuius secundae editioni, paucis mensibus superuixit auctor, Lichten-

bergii opera, quater deinde prodiit, additis semper, quae crescens indies scientia postulabat.

Quam propenso ad naturam inuestigandam esset animo, vidi iam, cum me docentem audiret, et machinulis quae tunc in potestate eius erant solerter vteretur.

Itaque, spartam nactus quam ornare et vellet et posset, tum vniuersitati nostrae literariae profuit, iuuentutem docendo, tum celebritatem eius auxit, inter naturae scrutatores illustris, collecto etiam et ordinato apparatu, quem addendum thesauris, quibus communi vsui, diues est Georgia Augusta, indicarunt eius tutores.

Mathematicis instructus Lichtenbergius, poterat solide et acute dicere de physicis: Animaduerterunt tamen erectioris ingenii audito/ [6] res, eum remissius quaedam tractasse, eorum in gratiam, qui nunquam attigerant eruditum puluerem. Excusandam credidi, hanc doctoris qui seuerior esse poterat lenitatem. Legislatorum sapientissimus, quae vetare maluisset, permisit Iudaeis, propter duritiem cordis ipsorum; ita, physicam tradens, multis, qui spectatum experimenta veniunt, dat aliquid, propter duritiem capitis ipsorum.

Ego certe faui Erxlebenio et Lichtenbergio, mathe-
seos et adeo verae physicae peritis, benignioribus, in

monstranda physica, etiam illis, qui eam doceri se, non vellent. Ipse, malui vt me doctorem colerent felices animae quibus veri certique scientia placeret.

Indefesso in capiendis experimentis, non solum talibus quibus spectatores delectaret, sed etiam quae ipsi naturae arcana patefecerent, occurrebant nondum visa aliis. Ita naturam ac motum fluidi electrici inuestigandi noua methodo vsus est, ex figuris quas in electrophoro generat, quae ipsae permanentes reddi possunt. Cuius prima specimina, offerenda societati mini commisit, ipse morbo impeditus, anno LXXVII, vberius ea de re disseruit annis LXXVII et LXXVIII.

Anno LXXX exhibuit Societati observationes super dubiis quibusdam circa aptitudinem vulgatae mensurae sortis, quae breuius exposuerat in programme quod ante indicaui. Earum mentio fit in historia Societatis, commentationibus inserendas, non tradidit.

Scilicet, inter Societatis nostrae commentarios, eius, pauciores leguntur, quam expectari posset. Perpetuo conflictatus cum valetudine nunquam integra, plurimis laboribus gravatus, dissertationibus frequentius exhibendis, non sufficere vires suas existimabat. Qua in re quantum se ipsum falleret, et peccaret nimia modestia, raro in eruditis nostri temporis vitio, saepius eum reprehendi.

Pluribus tamen modis profuit Societati, Nunciabantur ipsi quaecunque fiebant in physicis et artibus a physica pendentibus, de illis frequenter ad Societatem retulit, vt de Boltonii inuento, imprimendi litteras atramento scriptas, de Pauli Ergata, de machina Anglorum/ [7] ad impraegnandam aquam eo quod tunc aer fixus vocabantur, iam aliis pluribus nominibus venit, abundat enim eruditio nostri aevi innumeris nouis, si non semper inuentis, certe vocabulis.

Etiam, cum desideraretur mathematicorum sententia, de machinis, aut de mensuris geographicis astronomia duce instituendis, mihi et Meistero adiutor adfuit.

Quaestiones classis mathematicae alternatim mecum proposuit. Illam postremo, cuius responsum vltimi saeculi anno expectatur. Quas motus leges seruet ebullientis aquae vapor per canales datos.

Scriptorum ad varia literarum genera pertinentium syllogen, socio Georgio Forstero instituit anno LXXX; cuius sex fasciculi prodierunt hoc anno, et totidem quolibet sequentium, post primum anni LXXXV; nullum noui.

Diu iam mos inualuit, annuos libellos edere, quos in pera secum gestent elegantiores homines, icunculas insertas contemplantur, varia in illis cum voluptate legant, interdum etiam aliquid discant, calendarii no-

men quod his libris tribuitur in memoriam mihi reuocat Ouidianum:

Pars minima est ipsa puella sui.

Gottingense Calendarium, vt, quantum fert natura librorum eius generis, et delectet, et prosit, effecit Lichtenbergius. De physicis, mechanicis, astronomicis, disseruit, perspicue et suauiter, ita, fere expertes harum rerum, allexit et docuit, eruditioribus, noua exhibuit, vel ex amplo quod ipsi erat literarum commercio, vel, suo ingenii acumine, subtilius examinata.

Hogharti ridiculorum et vitiorum picturas, plus quam dimidio saeculo admirantur Britanni. Eae, vt e tabulis aeneis expressae sunt, omnes et singulae, difficilius vel ibi reperiuntur vbi prodierunt. Probabile igitur erat bibliopolae consilium, dandi illas nobis, forma paulo minore, sed vbi nihil desideraretur veritatis et iucunditatis, quod reddere possit multis iam speciminibus notus artifex Riepenhausen.

Est vero Satirarum ea conditio, vt diu supersint, iis quas impugnarunt, vel personis vel moribus. Ita Horatii aut Iuuenalis multa non intelligerentur sine Grammaticorum scholiis, ipsius Boilauii multa non sine Brosseto.

Illustrandis Hogharti operibus aptior reperiri non poterat Lichtenbergio. Is peritus morum Angliae et historio-

larum paucioribus/ [8] notarum, anecdotata vocant, imaginum quas cum voluptate spectabat, diligens et acutus examinatore, quod penicillo et graphio praestiterat Hoghartus, ipse calamo aequavit.

Dixi de Lichtenbergii scriptis quae vel ad Societatem nostram propius pertinent, vel maioris paulo sunt voluminis. Omnia nominare, non est huius vel loci vel temporis. Illorum catalogum sine dubio ab ipso auctore exhibitum, usque ad annum LXXXVII, habet Perillustris Pütteri Historia Georgiae Augustae.

Corporis debilitas effecit, ut totum se literis posset dare in quibus eminuit. Quo tempore docentes hic audiret, vix tristissimum morbum superavit. Valuit tamen melius quam ipse exspectabat, in itineribus astronomicis, et britannicis.

Quod mihi visum est indicare contra sedentariam vitam annorum seniorum, proprie enim loquendo non egrediebatur museo, sed ultimum cuiusvis septimanae diem et primum sequentis, agebat in horto sub urbano rheda eo vectus.

Ob animi in perferendis corporis malis constantiam, ob assiduitatem raro interruptam, et frequentiam scriptorum, ipso quidem opinante non nisi a morbi continuo impetu excusandorum, ceterum multis quae vegeto animo atque corpore, ederent alii, superiorum; Sperari poterat, eum diutius inter nos futurum.

Neque, eam spem vt omnino perderemus effecit, morbi, qui annuatim fere stato tempore redibat, primus impetus; sed is iam vota nostra frustratus est, et accedente pulmonum inflammatione d. XXIV Februarii horis matutinis, eripuit Lichtenbergium, nobis sociis, amicis, iuuenibus discendi cupidis, orbae lugenti familiae.

Scriptor tamen superest, mathematicis et physicis, etiam pluribus aliis, qui sola amoeniora legunt, non ea, quibus, vt eleganter francogalii, tempus perimatur sed quae ornent ingenium, fugere vitanda doceant, et virtutem amabilem exhibeant.

THE OBITUARY DISCOURSE IN HONOR OF
GEORG CHRISTOPH LICHTENBERG,
PRONOUNCED BY
ABRAHAM GOTTHELF KAESTNER
AT THE SESSION OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF SCIENCES,
APRIL 20, 1799.

(Two months after Lichtenberg's death.)

When, in the fifty-first year of the century which is now drawing to a close, a Society of Sciences was founded to lend distinction to, and increase the honor of physicists, mathematicians, and historians, two representing each of these disciplines were chosen from among the professors at Göttingen, and an equal number from other places. Thus, what is called the Mathematical Section comprised Segner¹ and Mayer.² To me, who at that time was teaching in the university of my native province,³ a letter inviting me to become a corresponding member was written immediately after the establishment of the Society; so that it happens that I am named among the charter members, although the celebrity of Samuel König⁴ and Johann Fried-

¹Johann Andreas von Segner (1704-1777), professor of medicine at Göttingen until 1755, and subsequently at Halle.

²Johann Tobias Mayer, professor of mathematics and economy at Göttingen, and one of the most celebrated German astronomers of the century (cf. p. xlv ~~224~~).

³Kästner was born at Leipzig and taught at the university there from 1739 to 1756; Lessing was among his students at Leipzig.

⁴1712-1757; professor of philosophy and mathematics at the University of Franeker, and at the Military Academy of the Hague.

rich von Uffenbach¹ was greater and of longer standing. In the latter's favor the law providing for only two corresponding members of each section was altered. His library and instruments now adorn the University of Göttingen.

Among the present members I hold my place from the fifty-sixth year of the century; before me Lowitz² was elected, and afterwards Meister³ and Lichtenberg entered the Society. Of the mathematicians who used to attend the meetings of the Society, Segner and Lowitz have left Göttingen, the former for Halle, the latter for St. Petersburg; Mayer and Meister are deceased; and now Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, too, is dead.

Truly my lot, even from early youth, has been that of the cypress:⁴ to mourn others and to solace the suffering. Thus, in our Society, it has been my sad duty to pronounce discourses at the deaths of the naturalists

¹1687-1769; Imperial Counsellor and Burgomaster of Frankfurt a. M.; he was well-known as a collector of mathematical and physical instruments.

²Georg Moritz Lowitz (1722-1774), astronomer and physicist; professor of mathematics at Göttingen from 1754-1763; later professor at St. Petersburg. He was murdered by Cossacks while engaged in a survey of the Volga valley.

³Kästner's colleague at Göttingen; cf. p. 204 .

⁴The tree sacred to Pluto, and used symbolically at funerals.

Roederer¹ and Erxleben,² and the mathematicians Mayer and Meister; and now my latest task is to speak of Lichtenberg.

Lichtenberg was born on the first of July in the year 1744,³ at a place in Hessa called Oberramstadt, not far from Darmstadt. His father was at that time pastor of this town, and subsequently became the Superintendent-General of Darmstadt. His mother was the daughter of Eckhard, pastor of Bischoffsheim, near Mainz. Lichtenberg was the last of eighteen children. To her who gave him life, he, along with his brothers and sisters, owed something even greater than life; for she was a woman outstanding for learning and virtue.

His father was burdened both by the matters pertaining to his position and by other affairs; yet he used as much leisure as was allotted him for developing his children's talents./ [2] He instilled in the minds

¹Johann Georg Roederer (1726-1763), professor of medicine and director of the obstetrical hospital at Göttingen; after Haller's death he took over the professorship of anatomy and surgery. Kästner edited his Opuscula medica collecta (Göttingen 1763).

²Lichtenberg's colleague; cf. pp. xxviii, and 275f.

³This date is incorrect, but was the one which L. himself employed (cf. Fl207, Sch.²1,6, and Herzog I,3 and note: "Wahrscheinlich gebe ich mich zwei Jahre geringer an, als ich wirklich bin."). According to the baptismal record (v. Sch.²1,6 note), the correct year of birth is 1742.

of his boys as much knowledge of nature as they were capable of assimilating, and prompted them to raise their faces upright to the stars.

Ludwig Karl, the brother of the deceased, who wrote these things to me -- director of the Ducal Archives at Gotha, and joined in close bonds of friendship with our Society -- added that he himself remembered how much it had pleased the old man when, sitting in his lap, he noticed the comet of the year 1744, the largest of the many which the century has seen.

After the death of his father, Lichtenberg attended the gymnasium at Darmstadt (our friend could afford nothing better), where he profited from the tutelage of Wenk, an excellent teacher, who was then in charge of the school.

From his birth he was afflicted with a weak constitution,¹ so that he seemed little suited for a business career, or even for a scholarly life, which requires robust health in addition to a mind capable of enduring toil. Thus he had much leisure, which he employed chiefly in the study of mathematics and nature, largely independently, although his older brothers helped him.

¹Kästner obviously refrains from mentioning L.'s deformity as the source of his "weak constitution." The phrase "from his birth" is noteworthy as the sole reliable evidence that the deformity was not acquired, as most of the editors claim, through a fall resulting from the carelessness of a nursemaid.

Ludwig VIII, Landgrave of Hessa, was most generous to him in his youth, encouraging a diligence which might at some time be of benefit to his native land, either redounding to the honor of the University of Giessen, or safeguarding the shores of the Rhine as it flows through Hessa; for this is a function of mathematics. (The wise ruler then realized what was not until later noticed in other districts.) In the year 1763, when he came to Göttingen to attend the university, he availed himself of Meister's instruction in mathematics, and also my own; and presently he enjoyed the friendship of us both, for this excellent young man easily won our esteem. But that he neglected none of the professors from whom he could benefit in philosophy, in the knowledge of nature, in humane letters, and all that pertains to a knowledge of the world was evinced by examples of that diversified erudition for which he later became famous. I learned from Erxleben, who was united with Lichtenberg in student friendship, that they were thoroughly acquainted with the naturalia which were then in Büttner's¹ possession and are now the property of our

¹Probably Christoph Andreas Büttner (1708-1774), theologian, mathematician, and astronomer.

university, the owner demonstrating and explaining the collection to them and they reporting to me. The observations which these two made on the earthquake of the year 1767 I have reported in our new publication,¹ and I mentioned that Lichtenberg, who even then was proficient in astronomical observations, had assigned the earthquake a time of about six seconds, which those call a minute who are unacquainted with the finer divisions of time.

After the death of Tobias Mayer, which occurred at the beginning of the year 1762, the management of the observatory devolved upon Lowitz and me. At the completion of an accurate catalog of the instruments then at our disposal, Lowitz left the observatory to me./

[3] All celestial observations are accomplished by the measurement of times and angles. Accordingly, anyone at all versed in mathematics will at once understand how such calculations are carried out, if one has the proper instruments at hand -- proficiency developing with practice. Hence I provided any of my auditors who so desired with the opportunity of acquainting themselves with the instruments and their use. Preeminent among them were

¹Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen 1767, 401.

Lichtenberg, Klugel,¹ and Ljungberg,² each of whom presently gave evidence of the extent to which he had profited from this experience. On the 19th of June 1769, Lichtenberg observed with me the transit of Venus,³ but the setting of the sun prevented us from observing the whole of the eclipse. In the year 1770, Lichtenberg observed as much as he could of a comet,⁴ the atmosphere not being very favorable; and he observed another in the year 1771.⁵ Toward the end of 1773, and in the beginning of the following year, he demonstrated before the Society a chart of the path among the fixed stars of one of the comets he had observed.⁶ He had the ability and the patience -- which is not always associated with profound studies -- to prepare and present diagrams that were both instructive and pleasant to the sight. Several drawings of the moon which he gave me -- the moon-spots noted in the positions in which, although they are concealed by the shadow of the earth, calculation has proved they must be located -- I cherish as mementos of my friend their maker.

¹Georg Simon Klügel (1739-1812), later professor of mathematics and physics at Halle.

²Lichtenberg's lifelong friend; cf. p. 188 .

³Gött. gel. Anz. 1769, 665.

⁴Ibid., 1770, 705.

⁵Ibid., 1771, 537.

⁶Ibid., 1774, 97, 249.

His native province requested Lichtenberg to remove to Giessen; but he preferred our university, and was distinguished in 1770, at the end of May,¹ by the title of Professor Extraordinary. Thus he was the last of the professors appointed while Göttingen was still under the supervision of Münchhausen,² who died in November of the same year.

It may be permitted to recall here with gratitude the generosity of the Hessian ruler, who did not demand from Lichtenberg a requital of the favor bestowed on him, and freely granted that he serve the common fatherland of Germany outside his native province.

Lichtenberg announced his public lectures in a German program dealing with the calculation of probabilities.³ The thesis of the study is that no one of sound mind would purchase a chance on a very large sum, for instance several hundred thousand thalers, at a price of, say, fifty thalers, which, in comparison with the potential

¹Ibid., 1770, 713.

²The first administrator of the University of Göttingen; cf. p. xxv.

³Betrachtungen über einige Methoden, eine gewisse Schwierigkeit in der Berechnung der Wahrscheinlichkeit beim Spiel zu heben. Göttingen (Dieterich) 1770; Sch. IX; cf. p. xxxiii note 2.

gain is almost negligible. D'Alembert¹ and Beguelin² confuse the matter when they attempt to explain it. Lichtenberg, following Daniel Bernoulli³ and Cramer,⁴ advises a prudent man to consider how much he will gain by forgoing that which hangs upon a fallacious hope. He demonstrated in this first public specimen of his writing how adept he was at clearly revealing, to the perspicuous eye, things which are either rather obscure by nature or are obscured by the excessive and deplorable zeal of scholars whose desire is to acquire a reputation for subtlety. /

[4] Among the provinces of Germany which are happy under the rule of the King-Elector,⁵ Tobias Mayer fixed upon Göttingen as the site for his astronomical observations, the King having ordered these to be made simultaneously in several places; for the King was not merely a patron of the sciences, but was himself a fit and learned judge of them.

¹Jean le Rond d'Alembert (1717-1783), mathematician and philosopher; co-editor with Diderot of the famous Encyclopédie.

²His work on this subject appeared in the Mémoires de l'académie de Berlin 1767, 382ff. (cf. Sch.¹IX, 14); L. also mentions him in a letter to Goethe, Oct. 7, 1793 (Leitzmann, Briefwechsel zwischen Goethe und Lichtenberg (Goethe-Jahrbuch XVIII, 39).

³1700-1782; professor at Basel.

⁴Johann Ulrich von Cramer (1706-1772), jurist and mathematician.

⁵I.e., George III, King of England and Elector of Hanover.

When the King's Council,¹ in the interest of the Electorate, requested the Society to explain how this project was to be executed, I resolved, with the assent of the Society, that the matter should be entrusted to Lichtenberg.

Likewise, through the mediation of Mr. Demainbray,² the director of the King's private observatory at Richmond, I arranged that, by royal generosity, the quadrant which had been perfected by that consummate craftsman Sisson³ should be employed in the survey. This task Lichtenberg performed in the years 1772 and 1773. He defined the positions of Hanover, Osnabrück, and Stade, and reported on this work in 1776,⁴ at a meeting of the Society, of which he had been a member since 1774. As to the completed works of Mayer dealing with the configuration of the moon, the King's Council, at my request, granted that they be preserved at Göttingen. These, together with others of Mayer's manuscripts, are kept at the observatory.

I have edited portions of these manuscripts as often as I was given the opportunity, so that new things might be

¹The Council of Regency for Hanoverian affairs; cf. p. xxiii .

²Stephen Charles Triboudet Demainbray (1710-1782), electrician and astronomer, who held the position of Royal Astronomer from 1768 until his death (cf. Dictionary of National Biography V, 780f.).

³No one of this name is listed in the Dict. of Nat. Biog.

⁴Novi Comment. Soc. Reg. Sc. Gotting. VII (1776), 210.

made known to mathematicians. I was, however, unable simply to publish the manuscripts as I found them, for they consisted of bare formulae, which Mayer had doubtless analyzed and demonstrated in other papers that I had never seen. When such expositions had to be restored, I worked out, according to my abilities, an explanation of the circle-divider which he used in depicting the earth stereographically;¹ the rules for examining the positions of the wall-quadrant;² and likewise the rules for reducing to the horizontal an angle observed on an inclined plane.³

There were those who asked why the works left by Mayer were not made available to the general public -- some more importunately than was fitting; for they did not realize that the condition of scholars was different from that of the Hebrew women, who themselves had knowledge of midwifery and gave birth before Shiprah and Pua came to their aid.⁴ Our worthy bookseller Dietrich⁵ put his resources at our disposal, and I handed over Mayer's manuscripts to Lichtenberg. Thus there

¹Dissertationes mathematicae et physicae. Altenberg 1771.

²Astronomische Abhandlungen. I. Samml., III. Abh., §186.

³Ibid., I. Abh., §208.

⁴Cf. Exodus I, 19.

⁵Lichtenberg's publisher and landlord; cf. p. 193 .

appeared, in splendid typographical format, a volume of Mayer's works,¹ consisting for the most part of the separate papers presented before the Society of Sciences, / [5] in illustration of which Lichtenberg added certain other things, and also the smaller of two lunar charts which Mayer had left and which Lichtenberg augmented with lunar meridians and parallels, and to which he added a catalog of the lunar spots.

In addition to these works which now were published, there remained a number of scattered, fragmentary notes on astronomical subjects which the editor lacked the time to assemble and arrange.

Lichtenberg visited England on two occasions, in the years 1770 and 1774. When, at the King's request, Demainbray questioned me as to what had been done in Göttingen at the time of the transit of Venus, I mentioned those who had assisted me in my researches. Lichtenberg having thus been brought to the royal attention, the King granted him the use of his private observatory and often favored him with learned interviews. When at times Newton and Leibniz were discussed in these conversations, and the question arose as to the part that each had played in the discovery

¹Tobiae Mayeri opera inedita vol. I. Edidit, et observationum appendicem adiecit Georgius Christophorus Lichtenberg. Göttingen (Dieterich) 1775.

of infinitesimal calculus, the King expressed his satisfaction that both had lived in countries under his rule.

The letters which Lichtenberg wrote from England contained things that pleased his friends, and I arranged for those addressed to me to be made available to a greater number:¹ -- for example, his description of the most excellent observatory under Hornsby's management,² and of the huge barometer to which Cox, its maker, had applied the name of perpetuum mobile.³ Thus he contrived at that time, and to an even greater extent later on, to make his sojourns in England profitable to us.

Polycarp Erxleben taught chemistry, the discipline which in the British Isles is called "natural history," and

¹In other words, he published sections from Lichtenberg's letters in several periodicals (see below). We discover from L.'s correspondence (Ltz.-Sch. I, 223) that Kästner did not trouble to secure L.'s permission, and L. rather indignantly writes to Heyne: "Es war nicht schön von Herrn Kästner gehandelt, dass er Dinge aus meinem Brief hat drucken lassen, ohne dass ich es, ich will nicht sagen erlaubt, sondern nur gantz von Ferne gewünscht hätte. Die Nachrichten waren nicht an den Director der Societät, und auf diese Art war es auch gantz wider den bisherigen Gebrauch, sie drucken lassen. Ausserdem ist die Beschreibung des Barometers so abgefasst, dass sie, wie Alembert von der Logick sagt, nur denen brauchbar ist, die sie nicht nötig haben. Ich hoffe, er wird es nie wieder thun...."

²Boie's Deutsches Museum, Jan. 1776, pp. 79-84. Kästner published this without mentioning L.'s name (cf. Lauchert, Lichtenbergs schriftstellerische Thätigkeit, 5). This letter also included comments on the younger Forster's journey with Cook. -- Thomas Hornsby (1733-1810) was professor of astronomy at Oxford, and founder and first director of the present Radcliffe Observatory.

³Gött. gel. Anz. 1775, 97.

experimental physics. These various aspects of the knowledge of nature he treated in handbooks which are approved by those best qualified to judge of such matters. When he died in the year 1777, ἔνδοξος ἀλλ' ὀλιχρόνιος, Lichtenberg took over the experimental physics, and even made use of his friend's book,¹ the second edition of which the author survived by a few months. Subsequently, as revised and edited by Lichtenberg, this book appeared four times,² always with the supplements required by the progress of science.

How well adapted Lichtenberg's mind was for the investigation of natural phenomena I noted while he was still attending my lectures and manipulating the devices of which he was in charge.

Accordingly, having found the Sparta which he had both the desire and the ability to adorn, he first was useful to our university as an instructor of students, and later added to its fame by his renown among the observers of nature, and also through his service in collecting and organizing the scientific apparatus which the university's administration saw fit to add to the treasures for general use, and in which the Georgia Augusta³ is now rich.

¹Anfangsgründe der Naturlehre; cf. p. xxviii.

²The 3rd edition (1784) appeared with the notation: "Entworfen von Joh. Chr. Polycarp Erxleben. Mit Zusätzen von G.C. Lichtenberg." 4th ed., 1787. 5th ed., 1791. 6th ed., 1794: ".... mit Verbesserungen und vielen Zusätzen von G.C. Lichtenberg."

³The name by which the University of Göttingen is still commonly known; cf. p. xiv.

Skilled in mathematics, Lichtenberg was also able to lecture thoroughly and penetratingly on physics. Yet the more acute minds among his auditors remarked / [6] that he treated some things rather cursorily, out of consideration for those who never delved into the "learned dust."¹ I think that this leniency should be condoned in a scholar who was fully capable of treating his subject more eruditely. The wisest of lawgivers² permitted to the Jews, because of the hardness of their hearts, many things which he would have preferred to forbid them; and similarly, Lichtenberg, in teaching physics, made some allowance for the many who, from the hardness of their heads, came only to watch the experiments.

In any event, I favored Erxleben and Lichtenberg, who, skilled in mathematics and hence in true physics, were more obliging than I in demonstrating physics even to those who had no desire to be taught it. I myself preferred to have about me for instruction those happy souls desirous of knowledge of truth and certitude.

Lichtenberg was indefatigable in making experiments -- not only those which delighted the onlookers, but also some that revealed things held secret from nature itself; for

¹Eruditus pulvis: the dust in which the ancient mathematicians traced their figures.

²The reference is, of course, to Moses.

things invisible to others were manifest to him. Thus he employed a new method of investigating the nature and motion of the electrical fluid, based upon figures¹ which he produced in the electrical medium, and which could be rendered permanent. The first examples of this method he entrusted to me to present before the Society in the year 1777,² since he was then incapacitated by illness. In 1777 and 1778,³ he treated this subject at greater length.

In 1780, he presented before the Society his observations on certain doubts regarding the probability of common estimates of chance,⁴ a topic on which he had dwelt briefly

¹The "Lichtenberg Figures," as they are still called in modern works on physics and electricity. Cf. P.F. Mottelay, A Biographical History of Electricity and Magnetism, London 1922, 250: "The figures, which bear his [i.e., Lichtenberg's] name, are produced by tracing any desired lines upon a cake of resin with the knob of a Leyden jar and by dusting upon the cake a well-triturated mixture of sulphur and red lead. These substances having been brought by friction into opposite electrical conditions, the sulphur collects upon the positive and the lead upon the negative portions of the cake: positive electricity producing an appearance resembling feathers, and negative electricity an arrangement more like stars." Cf. also p. lxi seq.

²Gött. gel. Anz. 1777, 569.

³De nova methodo naturam ac motum fluidi electrici investigandi. (Novi Comment. Soc. Reg. Sc. Gotting. VIII, 1777, 168; and Comment. Soc. Reg. Sc. Gotting. Classis math. I, 1778, 65.) This, Lichtenberg's chief contribution to science, appeared posthumously in German translation under the title: Von einer neuen Art, die Natur und die Bewegung der electrischen Materie zu erforschen (Sch. IX, 49ff.).

⁴Gött. gel. Anz. 1780, 481.

in the program of which I spoke above.¹ Mention of these was made in the transactions of the Society,² but he did not turn them over for inclusion in the Commentationes.

I might add that, among the records of our Society, fewer works of Lichtenberg are found than one might expect. Constantly troubled by ill-health, and burdened with many labors, he did not consider his strength equal to the task of presenting numerous dissertations. I frequently chided him for his shortcomings in this respect; for he often sinned from an excess of modesty -- a rare vice in the learned men of our time.

He was, however, of great advantage to our Society in many ways. Whatever was reported to him of the progress of physics and the allied sciences he frequently presented before the Society. He spoke, for instance, concerning Paul's³ invention for printing letters written with ink; Bolton's⁴ works; and the English machine/ [7] for impregnating water with what was then called "fixed air,"⁵ but now is known by several other names -- for the

¹P. [3] .

²Comment. Soc. Reg. Sc. Gott. 1780, 13.

³Gött. gel. Anz. 1780, 673.

⁴An English manufacturer with factories near Birmingham. L. was especially interested in a steam-engine which he had invented. (Cf. Ltz.-Sch.I, 233)

⁵Gött. gel. Anz. 1776, 473.

knowledge of our day abounds in countless innovations, if not always in inventions at least in new words.¹

Moreover, when the opinions of mathematicians were solicited on devising machines and effecting geographical measurements by astronomical means, he was always called in to assist Meister and me.

Alternately with me, he proposed queries for the mathematical section of the transactions. The latest of these was expected to be answered in the last year of the century: "What laws of motion through given channels are observed by the vapor of boiling water?"²

In the year 1780, in collaboration with Georg Forster,³ he began a periodical devoted to the various branches of literature.

Six numbers appeared in that year, and an equal number in each of the following; I know of none after the first of the year 1785.⁴

¹This is reminiscent of Lichtenberg's own remark: "Eine halb neue Erfindung mit einem gantz neuen Nahmen" (D232).

²Gött. gel. Anz. 1798, 1902.

³1754-1794; the son of the eminent traveller and naturalist, Johann Reinhold Forster (cf. p. lxi). The younger Forster was also a naturalist of repute, having accompanied Cook on his second South-Seas voyage, in the capacity of botanist. He married the daughter of L.'s good friend Heyne.

⁴Göttingisches Magazin der Wissenschaften und Litteratur. Herausg. von G. Ch. Lichtenberg und Georg Forster. Göttingen bey J. Ch. Dieterich. 1780-1785.

For a long time now it has been the custom to put out little annual volumes for fashionable gentlemen to carry about with them in their pockets, to study the pictures¹ which they contain, amuse themselves by reading the varied articles included in them, and even learn something occasionally. The name of "calendars" which is applied to these books recalls to my mind a line of Ovid:

Pars minima est ipsa puella sui.²

Lichtenberg rendered the Göttingen Calendar³ as pleasant and as profitable as the nature of a book of this kind permits. He wrote succinctly and entertainingly about

¹I.e., the copper engravings illustrating the latest fashions, etc. The great part of the plates for L.'s Calendar were provided by Chodowiecki.

²Usually the calendar or almanac section of these publications occupied only a few pages; the remaining hundred or so were filled with fashion plates, genealogical tables of the royal and noble families, and miscellaneous articles, usually very light in character.

³Göttinger Taschen Calendar - Taschenbuch zum Nutzen und Vergnügen, bey J. Ch. Dieterich. L. followed Erxleben as editor of this annual, for which he wrote over 2000 pages between 1778 and 1799. In remuneration, he and his family were given free lodging in the home of the publisher Dieterich. The Taschencalender, published in attractive little volumes in 16mo, is now exceedingly rare and is much sought after by bibliophiles. It also appeared in French translation (by Isaac de Colom du Clos, professor of French at Göttingen) under the title: Etrennes pour l'utilité et l'agrément du Lecteur par M. Lichtenberg.... à Göttingue chez G.C. Dieterich. The Princeton University Library has copies of the German edition for 1786, 1788, 1794-1796; the Univ. of Penn., for 1783, 1787, 1791; Harvard, for

physics, mechanics, and astronomy. Thus he stimulated and instructed those who were practically ignorant of these subjects, and to the more erudite he presented new facts gleaned either from the abundant knowledge of literature which he possessed or from searching analyses originating in the acuity of his own nature,

For more than half a century the British have admired Hogarth's¹ drawings of follies and vices. Complete sets or individual copies of these engraved on copper are somewhat difficult to obtain, even in the land where they appeared. Accordingly, it was the sound advice of a book-seller that they be made available to us, slightly reduced in size, but not lacking the original veracity and charm, which the eminent engraver Riepenhausen² was able to reproduce in numerous copies.

It is a peculiarity of satires that they long outlive the objects of their attack, whether persons or customs. Much of Horace and Juvenal cannot be understood today without the scholia of the grammarians, and

1779, 1789, 1790; and Columbia, for 1792-1793, 1797-1799. The Columbia University Library also has copies of the extremely rare French translation for 1798 and 1799.

¹William Hogarth (1697-1764) was probably the most popular English artist of the eighteenth century. He was, and is, best known for his series of engravings illustrating the foibles of 18th-century life and society: The Harlot's Progress, The Rake's Progress, Marriage à la Mode, etc.

²Ernst Ludwig Riepenhausen (1765-1839), an imitator of Chodowiecki. He is known chiefly for these copies of Hogarth's engravings. (Cf. Bryan's Dictionary of Painters and Engravers IV, 223.)

even in Boileau¹ there are many things that are unintelligible without the aid of Brosette.²

No one better qualified than Lichtenberg could be found to elucidate Hogarth's works. He was well acquainted with the customs of England and the little stories known only to a few/ [8] (they are called anecdotes), and was a keen and careful critic of the pictures, which he observed with pleasure. That which Hogarth had executed with brush and burin, Lichtenberg equalled with his pen.³

I have spoken of Lichtenberg's writings which pertain in the strictest sense to our Society, and of those which fall within a little larger category. This is not the time or place to list all of them.

The History of the Georgia Augusta by the distinguished Pütter contains a catalog, doubtless prepared by the author himself, of these works up to the year 1787.⁴

¹Nicolas Boileau Despreaux (1636-1711), the author of the Art poétique. The first of his satires appeared in 1660.

²Claude Brosette (1671-1743); his Oeuvres de Boileau, avec des éclaircissements historiques appeared in 1716.

³Ausführliche Erklärung der Hogarthischen Kupferstiche, mit verkleinerten aber vollständigen Copien derselben von E. Riepenhausen. Göttingen, in der Dieterich'schen Buchhandlung. 1794-1816. Of the twelve instalments of this work, L. provided the first five.

⁴Versuch einer academischen Geschichte von der Georg-Augustus-Universität zu Göttingen 1788. II. Theil, §126. -- The author, Johann Stephan Pütter (1725-1807), was professor of jurisprudence at Göttingen.

The infirmity of Lichtenberg's body permitted him to devote himself entirely to the writings in which he excelled. When he was still attending lectures here, he barely survived a very severe illness. Yet his health was better than he himself expected during his astronomical trips and his British sojourns.

It seems to me inadvisable to pass a sedentary life in one's active years: -- for properly speaking, Lichtenberg hardly ever went out of his study except for spending the last day of each week, and the first of the following, in his garden outside the city, transported thither in a carriage.

His fortitude of spirit in enduring physical illness; his rarely interrupted industry; the frequent appearance of his writings (the faults of which he himself, to be sure, felt could be excused only on the grounds of continued ill-health, although they were superior to many published by men of sound mind and body) -- all these evidences of vitality gave us reason to hope that he would be with us for a long time to come.

The first attack of a disease which recurred every year at almost the same time did not cause us to abandon this hope altogether; but this attack, together with an inflammation of the lungs, frustrated our hope; and, in the morning of the 24th of February [1799] , Lichtenberg

was snatched away from his colleagues, his friends, the students eager for his instruction, and his bereaved family.

But Lichtenberg the writer still remains: not only for the mathematicians and physicists, but also the many others who read only his lighter works, which do not serve -- as the French so elegantly say -- to "kill time," but embellish talent, teach the avoidance of vices, and reveal a kindly virtue.

.....

Versuch einer academischen
Gelehrten-Geschichte von der Georg-Augustus-
Universität zu Göttingen
vom geheimen
Justitzrath Pütter

Zweyter Theil von 1765. bis 1788....

Göttingen

in Vandenhoeck-Ruprechtischem Verlage 1788.

[§126, p. 174] Georg Christoph L i c h t e n b e r g, geb. zu Oberramstadt im Darmstädtischen 1744.¹ Jul. 1., studierte seit 1763. zu Göttingen, hielt sich 1770. 1774. 1775. in England auf, ward zu Göttingen 1770. prof. philos. extraord., 1775. ord., auch 1774. ausserordentliches und 1776. ordentliches Mitglied der Societät der Wissenschaften. Als Professor war er zu Göttingen (den Aufenthalt in England abgerechnet) 17. Jahre 1770-1787. alt 26-43.

I. Seine Schriften sind: 1) Betrachtungen über einige Methoden, eine gewisse Schwierigkeit in der Berechnung der Wahrscheinlichkeit beym Spiel zu heben, 1770.; 2) Berechnung der Mondsfinsterniss im Oct. 1771. nebst einigen Betrachtungen, Hannoverisch. Magaz. 1771.; 3) Neue Versuche mit Polypen im Hannoverischen Magazin 1773.; 4) Timorus, d.i. Vertheidigung zweyer Israeliten, die durch die Kräftigkeit der Lavaterischen Beweisgründe und der Göttingischen Mettwürste bewogen, den wahren Glauben angenommen haben, von Conrad Photorin, der Theologie und belles lettres Candidaten, Berlin 1773. 8.;

¹Cf. p. 265, note 3.

5) Tob. M a y e r i opera inedita vol. I. edidit et obseruat. appendicem adiecit, 1774.; 6) Briefe aus England, im Teutschen Museum 1776. 1777.; 7) Obseruationes astronomicae per annum 1772. et 1773. ad situm Hannouerae, Osnabrugi et Stadae determinandum institutae, in den Nov. Comment. Soc. Reg. Scient. Goetting. tom. VII. p. 210.; 8) Epistel an Tobias Göbhard in Bamberg, 1776. 8.; 9) Friedrich Eckard an Tob. Göbhard. 10) Seit 1778. gibt er den Göttingischen Taschencalender heraus mit Abhandlungen, z.B. in dem Calender für das Jahr 1778. über die Physiognomik &c. (In den folgenden Jahrgängen kömmt, ausser verschiedenen astronomischen Abhandlungen, Berichtigungen / [175] populärer Irrthümer &c. eine Erklärung der H o g a r t h i s c h e n Kupferstiche von ihm vor, welche noch immer fortgesetzt wird. Auch hat er den Ch o d o w i e c k i s c h e n Kupferstichen dieses Taschenbuchs die nöthigen Erklärungen beständig beygefügt); 11) Ueber Physiognomik, wider die Physiognomen, zur Beförderung der Menschenliebe und Menschenkenntniss, II. vermehrte Auflage, 1778. 8.; 12) De nova methodo, naturam ac motum fluidi electrici inuestigandi commentatio I. et II., 1779. 4. (Stehen auch in den comment. nou. societ. Goetting. 1777. et 1778.) In Gesellschaft des Prof. F o r s t e r s ist von ihm herausgegeben: Göttingisches Magazin der Wissenschaften und Litteratur 1780., 6. Stücke;

1781. 3. Stücke; 1782., 3. Stücke; 1785., des vierten Jahrgangs erstes Stück. Von ihm sind darin folgende Aufsätze: 13) Ueber eine Naturerscheinung an Herrn D. Erxleben (1780. St. 2); 14) Einige Lebensumstände von Capt. James Cook, grösstentheils aus schriftlichen Nachrichten einiger seiner Bekannten gezogen; 15) Vorschlag zu einem Orbis pictus für Teutsche dramatische Schriftsteller, Romanendichter und Schauspieler, nebst einigen Beyträgen dazu (1780. St. 3.); 16) Gnädigstes Sendschreiben der Erde an den Mond (1780. St. 6.); 17) Einige Betrachtungen über die Mondsflecken (1781. St. 1.); 18) Ueber die Pronunciation der Schöpse des alten Griechenlands, verglichen mit der Pronunciation ihrer neuern Brüder an der Elbe; oder über Beh, Beh und Bäh, Bäh (1781. St. 3.); 19) Anmerkungen über einen Aufsatz des Herrn Tib. Cavallo in den philosoph. Transact. (1781. St. 4.); 20) Noch ein Wort über Herrn Ziehens Weissagungen (1781. St. 5.); 21) Nachricht von einigen Eudiometrischen Beobachtungen (1781. St. 6.); 22) Ueber Herrn V o s s e n s Vertheidigung gegen ihn im März des Teutschen Museums 1782. (1782. St. 1.); 23) Uebersetzung von Popens Leben, (ebendas.); 24) Electriche Versuche (1782. St. 2.); 25) Brief an Herrn Forster über die electriche Versuche (ebendas.); 26) Ueber die aerostatischen Maschinen (1783. St. 6.); 27) Nachricht von den Lebensumständen Herrn Wilh. Herschels, des Entdeckers des neuen Planeten (1783. St. 3.); 28) Bemerk-

kungen über eine Abhandlung über das Derenburger Echo, (ebendas.); 29) Sendschreiben über die Polypen, an Herrn Prof. F o r s t e r , (ebendas.); 30) Antwort auf das Schreiben eines Ungenannten über die Schwärmerey unserer Zeiten, (ebendas.); 31) Simple jedoch authentische Re- / [176] lation von den cürieusen schwimmenden Batterien &c. (ebendas.); 32) Briefwechsel mit Herrn Ritter M i c h a e l i s über die Absicht oder Folgen der Spitzen auf Salomons Tempel (1783. St. 5.); 33) Bemerkungen über ein Paar Stellen in der Berliner Monathsschrift Dec. 1783. die Ziehensche Weissagung und Herrn Prevosts Abfertigung derselben betreffend (1783. St. 6.); 34) Orbis pictus erste Fortsetzung (1785. St. 1.); 35) E r x l e b e n s Physik mit Zusätzen, 1784. 8. Neue Auflage 1787. 8. Ohne verschiedener Aufsätze im Hannoverischen Magazin, dem Teutschen Museum und mehrerer Recensionen zu gedenken.

II. In seinen Lehrstunden trägt er alle halbe Jahre die Experimentalphysik vor im Sommer um 4., im Winter um 2.; alsdann aber um 4. Astronomie, mathematische Geographie, Theorie der Erde und Meteorologie; daneben in unbestimmten Stunden bald reine Mathematik, bald Algeber &c.

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