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978-1-107-48657-7 - The Literary Relations of England and Germany: In the Seventeenth Century

Gilbert Waterhouse

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THE LITERARY RELATIONS
OF ENGLAND AND GERMANY
IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

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THE LITERARY RELATIONS
OF ENGLAND AND GERMANY
IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

by

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PREFACE

THE present volume is the result of researches prosecuted during my tenure of the Tiarks German Scholarship. My choice of the subject was inspired by Professor Herford's *Studies in the Literary Relations of England and Germany in the Sixteenth Century*, but when I submitted it to the electors I confess I had little idea of the extent of my task. My main intention was to supplement Professor Herford's chapters where necessary, but I also expected to find sufficient material in connection with the influence of the English drama in Germany and of German hymns in England to occupy my attention for the full period of my tenure. It seemed highly improbable that much evidence of intercourse in any other branch of literature would be forthcoming.

My researches had not been long in progress before I discovered that the work of Erich Schmidt, Brie, Rühl and Bergmeier had placed the old themes beyond need of further supplement¹. On the other hand, every day brought such additions to my dramatic bibliography that I was soon obliged to omit from my plan all discussion of the dramatic relations of England and Germany, with the exception of those dramas which deal with English or German history. The subject will easily fill another volume. As for hymns, the most important

¹ See Erich Schmidt: "Das Verhältnis der deutschen Volksschauspiele zu Marlowe's Tragical History of Dr Faustus." In *Sitzungsber. der pr. Acad. der Wiss.* 1900.

W. D. Brie: *Eulenspiegel in England*. (Palaestra, xxviii.) 1903.

F. Brie: *Die englischen Ausgaben des Eulenspiegel und ihre Stellung in der Geschichte des Volksbuches*. Breslau. (Diss.) 1903.

Ernst Rühl: *Grobrianus in England*. Berlin. Mayer und Müller. 1904.

Fritz Bergmeier: *Dedekinds Grobianus in England*. Greifswald. (Diss.) 1904.

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production of the century for Germany, I was unable to discover any trace of their appearance in England before 1720¹. The contents of this volume, therefore, differ considerably from my original conception.

Nor can I always lay claim to originality. This is indeed the first systematic attempt to collect all the evidence of literary intercourse between England and Germany in the seventeenth century, but several isolated points have been very thoroughly treated by other scholars and I have not hesitated to make the fullest use of their discoveries. I refer more particularly to the work of Urban on Owen, Fischer and Bohm on Weckherlin, Kipka on Mary Stuart, Eichler on Dryden and Wernicke, and Becker and Schmid on Barclay². Dr Schmid is at present engaged on a supplementary volume entitled *Barclays Einfluss auf die Literatur* and very kindly offered to place his manuscript at my disposal. If literature of a similar calibre had existed for all the seventeenth century authors discussed by me, this volume would have been little more than a compilation. As it is, I am thoroughly conscious of its shortcomings and shall welcome suggestions and corrections.

A complete list of the books and articles which afforded me assistance, however slight, will be found in the numbered bibliography in Appendix A, to which reference is made throughout the text. Appendices B and C contain further lists of books which I either consulted to no purpose or was unable to obtain.

The greater part of the work was done in the Royal Prussian Library at Berlin and I take this opportunity of tendering my warmest thanks to the Director, Professor Harnack, who granted me exceptional privileges, and to the Departmental Librarian, Dr Ippel, for their great courtesy and valuable assistance. For the same reason I wish to thank Dr Franke,

¹ J. C. Jacobi: *A Collection of Divine Hymns*. London. 1720. Enlarged and republished (in collaboration with J. Haberkorn) as *Psalmodia Germanica* in 1722. Further editions 1725, 1732 and 1765. See also the Moravian Hymn-Books of 1742, 1754 and 1789, and Julian: *Dictionary of Hymnology*. 1892. Bibl. 250.

² See Bibl. 82, 83, 136, 137, 148, 159 and 263.

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Professor Pietschmann, and Dr Lohmeier, Directors respectively of the University Libraries of Berlin and Göttingen and the Landesbibliothek at Cassel. Nor must I omit Professors Brandl and R. M. Meyer, of Berlin, and the Rev. H. F. Stewart, of St John's College, Cambridge, all of whom took the liveliest interest in my work and readily gave me information and advice. The same applies to Dr B. Neuendorff and Dr Traugott Böhme, both of Berlin. I am also obliged to the press readers for valuable assistance rendered during the correction of the proofs. Last but not least, I wish to thank, as many Cambridge students have done before me, my former teacher, Professor Karl Breul, for advice and assistance on every possible occasion and in every possible form.

If these studies have thrown light into a dark corner of literary history and prepared the way for a thorough investigation of the literary relations of England and Germany in the eighteenth century, they will have realised the expectation of the author.

G. W.

LEIPZIG.

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ERRATA

- p. 16, l. 12, *for* 1640 *read* 1634.
- p. 26, l. 23, *read* Justum Lipsium.
- p. 49, l. 10, *for* Urban III *read* Urban VIII.
- p. 72, l. 18, *for* Carve Thomas *read* Thomas Carve (Carew).
- p. 87, l. 39—p. 88, l. 1. *Die Farben (oder Kennzeichen) des Guten und Bösen* is almost certainly a translation of Bacon's *The Colours of Good and Evil*. Correct accordingly p. 88, n. 1 and p. 102, n.

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INTRODUCTION

THE chief feature of the literary relations of England and Germany in the sixteenth century is the predominance of German influence over English. Miles Coverdale translated Luther's hymns, religious controversy gave rise to polemical dialogues which were translated or adapted for English use, and the same reception was accorded the Latin dramas of the German humanists. Yet the influence of Protestantism proved abortive in the end. Coverdale's *Goostly Songs and Spiritual Psalmes*, Roy's and Barlow's dialogue, *Rede me and be not wrothe*, were proscribed by Henry VIII, and a performance of Kirchmayer's papal drama, *Pammachius*, in the Hall of Christ's College in 1545 incurred the wrath of Gardiner. To quote Herford¹, "in lyric, in dialogue, in drama, the imaginative language which the genius of German Protestantism had shaped out for itself was caught up with fitful and momentary energy, and then as rapidly forgotten." The fate of the popular secular motives was different. The Ship of Fools, Faustus, Eulenspiegel and Grobianus became firmly established in English literature and survived until long after the close of the century.

In the eighteenth century the positions are reversed. From the very beginning a strong current of English influence sets in and quickly becomes an irresistible flood. After a supremacy

¹ Charles H. Herford: *Studies in the literary relations of England and Germany in the Sixteenth Century*. 1886. Bibl. 59.

N.B. All foot-notes which refer to books included in the numbered Bibliography (Appendix A) are indicated in the text by a small figure. For other notes the asterisk and other usual signs are employed.

A few titles which are mentioned only once throughout the text are given in full at the bottom of the page and do not re-appear in Appendix A.

of over half a century the influence of France is undermined and German literature receives new life and vigour. Milton, Thomson, Prior, Richardson, Young, Ossian, Percy, Shakespeare and others all appear sooner or later in a German dress, all play a part in the creation of a literature which may bear comparison with that of any country and of any age¹. It is the beginning of that cult of England and things English which, at first embracing literature alone, rapidly spread to industry, commerce and politics and is even now only beginning to decline.

If, then, at the commencement of the eighteenth century, we find England repaying with interest the debt contracted in the sixteenth, we may well ask ourselves what had happened in the meantime. With the exception of a few monographs, e.g. H. Fischer on Weckherlin, P. A. Becker and K. F. Schmid on Barclay (see Preface), there is little literature on the subject. The period has little attraction, as far as Germany is concerned, and receives scant attention in most histories of literature,—and with good reason, for the majority of the works of the age are absolutely worthless. They do possess a certain evolutionary interest but have no intrinsic value. The object, therefore, of the present volume is not to claim that German literature of the seventeenth century is, after all, worth reading for its own sake, but simply to trace the literary relations of England and Germany from the sixteenth century to the eighteenth, to follow the decline of German influence on England, to watch the two countries as they drift apart, to note that intercourse, although spasmodic, is never completely interrupted, and that finally, towards the end of the century, a connection is re-established which has continued to increase in strength down to our own time.

It is hardly necessary to state that many names of importance for the history of German literature will play a very minor part in these pages. Thus Opitz is for us little more than the translator of Sidney and Barclay, Fleming contributes one epigram, while Gerhardt does not appear at all. On the other hand many long-forgotten authors receive a prominence

¹ See Max Koch: *Über die Beziehungen der englischen Litteratur zur deutschen im XVIII Jahrhundert*. 1883. Bibl. 277.

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to which they would not have the slightest claim in any ordinary history of literature. My object throughout has been to discover what English authors were read in Germany and *vice versa*. Consequently I must ask my readers patiently to endure the fulsome prefaces of many insufferable busy-bodies for the sake of the sober reflections of a Morhof¹ or the romantic narrative of a Captain Henrie Bell².

The beginning of the century is for Germany a period of absolute stagnation. The popular, we might almost say plebeian, interest in literature has waned, religious controversy and petty intrigues occupy the attention of bishops and princes, the language of scholars is Latin and the leisured classes read Boccaccio and Ronsard³. In a word, German is at its lowest ebb. Half the words in use are borrowed from Latin or French and supplied with German endings*. Vernacular literature is practically non-existent. Poetry consists of sickly eulogies of patrons, dull paraphrases of the Psalms or insipid eclogues and pastorals in imitation of the Italians. To quote Lemcke⁴: "The poetry of the age lacks vigour, rummages in text-books and fails to find matter. It is pedantic, counts syllables and imitates foreign fashions. Whatever it touches is turned, not to gold, as it should be, but to wood. Tame, inartistic, formless, colourless, it lives a weary life. And yet it is the age of Shakespeare and the great, impetuous English dramatists. It is the age of Rubens, the age of Kepler,—just to indicate the strength of the Germanic races in art and science. And yet the Germans of this epoch were not deaf to the merits of poetry. On the contrary, they torment and torture themselves in the quest. It is a veritable search for the Holy Grail. They try the most various ways, inquire,

¹ Bibl. 255.² Bibl. 193.³ According to Karl Borinski: *Die Poetik der Renaissance, 1886* (Bibl. 50), Italian was actually the Court language of South Germany, e.g. in Hessen and at Vienna, French was spoken at Stuttgart, English at Heidelberg.* Koberstein (Bibl. 35) quotes Moscherosch: *Gesichte Philanders von Sittewalt, 1642* (Zugabe zum ersten Teil): "Wenn man eines neusüchtigen Deutschlings Herz öffnen und sehen sollte, würde man augenscheinlich befinden, dass fünf Achtel desselben französisch, ein Achtel spanisch, eins italienisch und kaum eins deutsch daran gefunden werden."⁴ Carl Lemcke: *Geschichte der deutschen Dichtung neuerer Zeit*, p. 5, 1871. Bibl. 47.

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seek and struggle with good will, enormous pains and right lamentable success."

As the years roll on, the influence of Italy gives place to that of France, so that, roughly speaking, the first quarter of the century may be said to be the period chiefly of Italian influence and the last quarter almost solely that of French, while both are equally operative in the middle of the century. The influence of Dutch literature, more particularly that of the Renaissance drama, spreads more or less over the first sixty years, and we must also note a strong Spanish influence about 1650. Last and least comes the influence of England.

Here I must repeat that the object of this volume is not to prove that the literary relations of England and Germany in the seventeenth century are more important than has hitherto been supposed, assuming the matter to have received some consideration, but to give a precise explanation of the nature of those relations. Many reasons, not the least being the flourishing state of literature in France and Holland, caused Germany to be in a sense cut off from intercourse with England. This being so, emphasis must be laid on the fact that the part played by Italy and France in the history of German literature during this period is immeasurably greater than that of England.

It must not be supposed that the corrupt state of the German language at the beginning of the century was altogether unregretted and disregarded. No evil state of things can continue interminably and a few patriotic spirits soon felt that the neglect of the national tongue was a disgrace not to be endured. The splendour of Italian literature kindled here and there the fire of emulation and active efforts were made to cultivate the German tongue and place it on a level with its rivals. These took the form of Sprachgesellschaften or "Language Societies," the first and most important of which was founded in 1617 by Prince Ludwig of Anhalt-Cöthen at the suggestion of Caspar von Teutleben, who proposed as a model the Florentine Accademia della Crusca (1582). The principal object of the society was to be the cultivation of the German language, and three rules were drawn up, as follows:

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Firstly,

All members of the Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft, irrespective of rank or religion, must be honourable, intelligent and wise, virtuous and courteous, useful and entertaining, affable, and moderate in all things; when they meet they must be amiable, cheerful, and friendly, and just as it is strictly forbidden at the meetings for one member to take in bad part an offensive word from another, so must they on the other hand be firmly pledged to refrain from all unseemly remarks and vulgar jests.

Secondly,

The first duty of the members must be, above all things, to preserve and cultivate most carefully, in speech, writing, and poetry, our beloved mother-tongue in its true form and proper meaning, without admixture of foreign patch-words; also as far as possible, especially within the Society, to insure that this principle be in no way infringed but rather obediently complied with...

Thirdly,

As an appropriate sign of gratitude for the honour of membership, all members are requested to wear, on a parrot-green ribbon, a gold medal, with the palm-tree and motto of the Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft on one side; on the other the member's own emblem with his name and motto; so that they may the more easily recognise one another at the meetings and that the highly laudable object of the latter may thereby be made known¹.

The first President of the Society was Ludwig of Anhalt. He was succeeded in 1651 by Duke Wilhelm of Saxe-Weimar, under whom the society prospered exceedingly. By 1662, according to Neumark², it numbered seven hundred and fifty members, including Karl Gustav, Count of the Rhenish

¹ These rules are quoted by Otto Schulz: *Die Sprachgesellschaften des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts*. 1824. Bibl. 44.

² *Der Neu-Sprossende Teutsche Palmenbaum*, 1668. Bibl. 42. Herdegen (Bibl. 43) says the book did not actually appear until 1673 owing to delay in printing the copperplates.

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Palatinate, afterwards King of Sweden, 3 Electors, 149 Dukes*, 4 Margraves, 10 Landgraves, 8 Counts Palatine, 19 Princes and 35 Barons (Freiherren). After Wilhelm's death the same year the fortunes of the society waned and it gradually died out.

Other societies were rapidly founded in imitation of the Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft. In 1633 the Aufrichtige Tannengesellschaft was established in Strassburg by Jesaias Rompler von Löwenhalt. Among its members were Johann Matthias Schneuber, Professor of Poetry at Strassburg, and Georg Rudolf Weckherlin, but its life was short. The Teutschesinnte Genossenschaft of Hamburg was the creation of that restless, orthographical crank, Philipp von Zesen (1643)†. It survived until 1705. Another Hamburg society was Der Elbschwanen Orden, which was founded by Johann Rist in 1660 and expired with him seven years later. The Pegnesischer Blumenorden‡, founded in 1644 by Georg Philipp Harsdoerfer at Nuremberg, is more important for us than the rest. Not only did many of its members travel in England at different times, but they made a special cult of pastoral poetry and we consequently find them very familiar with Sidney's *Arcadia*. For this reason I shall postpone further discussion of the Pegnesischer Blumenorden until I come to deal with the influence of Sidney in Germany.

In spite of the number of these societies their influence was really very slight. It cannot for a moment be compared with that of La Pléiade in France. In fact, it is no exaggeration to say that no member of any of them produced anything of sufficient merit to survive to our day. Of course, the earlier literary historians do not share this opinion. Herdegen¹, for example, says: "Just as the last century (i.e. the seventeenth)

* In the list of admissions for 1641 I notice the following interesting entry: "Octavio Piccolomini Aragona Hertzog zu Amalfi Der Zwingende. Die kleine Monraute. Zuentwafnen." (p. 272.)

† Born at Fürstenau, Anhalt, c. 1619. Lived chiefly in Amsterdam and Hamburg, where he died in 1689. Member of Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft (or Palmenorden).

‡ So called from the River Pegnitz at Nuremberg.

¹ Johann Herdegen (Amarantes): *Historische Nachricht von dess...Hirten und Blumen-Ordens...Anfang und Fortgang...* 1744. Bibl. 43.

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is distinguished from other ages both by the large number of famous and learned men, who came forth like those heroes from the Trojan horse, and by the magnificent works they published as eternal memorials of their excellence, so also was it remarkable for the fact that many learned societies came into existence, some of which gradually died out, whereas others have made the progress they desired down to the present time." (I. p. 1.)

Perhaps the most interesting feature of these Sprachgesellschaften is the evidence they afford of a revival of interest in literature on the part of rulers and princes. "In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries we see poetry gradually pass from the narrow circle of the nobility into the hands of the citizen guilds, in whose charge it receives an excellent cultivation during the sixteenth century. But with the commencement of the seventeenth scholars soon obtain almost entire possession of poetry and of every force that tends thereto, and while they are seeking to put themselves and their work under the protection of the German princes, we see poetry again falling under the influence and returning to the circle of the nobility." (H. M. Schletterer*.)

Literature, with the exception of religious lyrics, is no longer popular in spirit; it is merely a pastime for scholars and pedants, a means of currying favour with the great. Indeed, popular literature was almost an impossibility in the seventeenth century. For thirty years Germany was convulsed with one of the most disastrous of civil wars. In 1619, on the death of the Emperor Mathias, the Bohemians refused to acknowledge Ferdinand II as their king and chose instead Frederick V, Elector of the Palatinate and son-in-law of James I. The short struggle between the two princes, ending with the defeat of Frederick, the "Winter King," at the battle of Prague (1620), constitutes the first phase of the war. Frederick's marriage with the Princess Elizabeth (1612) is one of the most important connecting links between England and Germany in the seventeenth century and it seems more than

* Introduction to *Johann Rist, Das friedewünschende Deutschland und Das friedejauchzende Deutschland*. 1864.

probable that a thorough study of the movements of the numerous members of the Electoral house will add considerably to our knowledge of the dramatic and theatrical relations of the two countries*.

That these years of war were unfavourable to the interests of literature is obvious. Their effect on the language has been well summed up by Walter¹. The Thirty Years' War was not the cause of the corruption of the German language, as might be supposed from the polyglot nature of the armies engaged. It merely brought to a head the importation of foreign words which had begun many years before. Signs of this decay are already apparent in Wolfram's *Parzival* and Williram's (d. 1085) *Paraphrase des hohen Liedes*. Aegidius Tschudi (1505—1578) holds the "Cantzler" and the "Consistorische Schryber" responsible for the irruption of foreign words into the vocabulary. Then comes the influence of Italian commerce and the Latinization of proper names. Walter observes: "Before the League of Smalkald (1530) the German princes used only Latin and German in their intercourse with France... But when this League fell into difficulties and the help of France was sought, then things changed. Francis I (d. 1547) wrote in French to the Elector Johann Friedrich of Saxony and from 1551 a knowledge of French was indispensable to the latter's Privy Councillors as well. The conscious pride in their language which the Germans had hitherto shown in their dealings with France was gone."

As other factors in the decay of German must be mentioned the decline of the Protestant universities and the emigration of German students to Italy and France, the rise of Calvinism, the translation of *Amadis* (1582), the spread of Roman law towards the end of the fifteenth century, the accession of Charles V and the consequent irruption of Spaniards and Italians into Germany. The war, owing to its disturbing effects on court and university life and the babel

* See Alois Brandl: Zu "Shakespeares Totenmaske" und "Ben Jonsons Totenbild." In the Shakespeare-Jahrbuch for 1911.

¹ Joseph Walter: *Über den Einfluss des 30-jährigen Krieges auf die deutsche Sprache und Literatur...* 1871. Bibl. 48.

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of tongues spoken in its camps, served to accentuate these tendencies.

We cannot wonder, therefore, that during these terrible years literary intercourse with a comparatively distant country like England was reduced to a minimum, although sympathy with the Electress Elizabeth and her unfortunate husband caused the course of the war itself to be eagerly followed in this country* and its main incidents were, as we shall see, reflected in various ways in English literature. Moreover, when the Peace of Westphalia (1648) brought the long struggle to a close, England herself was in the throes of civil war and it became Germany's turn to assume the part of spectator. Hence, we must not be surprised to find that the literary relations of the two countries are of an extremely spasmodic nature. One or two movements, it is true, e.g. the influence of the English comedians, can be traced more or less continuously throughout the century, but as a rule we find that those English authors whose works were read in Germany (there is very little to say of German authors in England)† were translated into German, sometimes through the medium of French or Latin, achieved a sudden and furious popularity and were almost as rapidly forgotten. This is especially true of Sidney, Owen, and Barclay, although the latter has received occasional attention during the last two centuries¹.

Although the wars of the century caused a certain amount of emigration of men of letters to England, they interfered on the other hand with literary intercourse, inasmuch as they restricted the movements of travellers. For this reason it has

* A periodical, *Weekly News from Italy, Germany...*, published by Nathaniel Butter, Nicholas Bunne, and Thomas Archer, made its first appearance on May 23, 1622.

† I mention here once and for all a few books of a very miscellaneous character:

Conrad Gesner: *The Historie of the Foure-Footed Beastes...Translated by Edward Topsell*. 1607.

Adam Olearius: *The Voyages and Travels of the Ambassadors from the Duke of Holstein to the Duke of Muscovy and King of Persia*, 1632–1639. Translated by John Davies. 1662.

Numerous medical works are quoted by William London as being translated from German writers. See Bibl. 1. On the other hand, some English books of travel, e.g. by Raleigh, Robert Knox, were translated into German.

¹ See K. F. Schmid: *John Barclay Argenis...* 1904. Bibl. 136.

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been found necessary to deal with travellers in two groups, representing the beginning and end of the century respectively. As far as English travellers in Germany are concerned, the middle years have nothing to offer, excepting a few reports of British officers who served in the continental armies.

In the first chapter, therefore, an attempt is made to estimate the value of the earlier travellers as literary intermediaries.