

NEW GOETHE DOCUMENTS

BY PROFESSOR CHRISTOPHER WAAS

[Bibliographical data concerning the reprint from which the following material is taken is given under Books Mentioned.]

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Wenn man zwanzig Freyer zählet,
Keinen liebt, und alle quälet,
Alle liebt und keinen wählet;
Das ist eine stolze Lust
Für so eines Mädgens Brust.
Wenn so zwanzig bettelnd stehn,
O wie lebt sich's da so schön!
Ist wohl eine Wohllust grösser?
Doch im Ehestand sitzt man besser.

If a maid hath twenty suitors,
Loveth none and each one tortures,
Loveth all and no one favors,
That indeed is glorious sport.
Twenty suitors playing court
Must surely thrill a maiden's breast,
Yet marriage, after all, is best.

THESE teasing lines begin a German wedding lyric, written by the young Goethe to a former sweetheart. It will be sought for in vain even in the most complete editions of his works. We have Paul Zimmermann, the archivist of the Provincial Archives of Wolfenbüttel, to thank for the discovery of this delightful little poem. He will print it with eight hitherto unpublished letters of the young Goethe in *Das Braunschweigische Jahrbuch* for 1922. The originals of the letters also are in the archives mentioned.

As the title indicates, the newly discovered wedding-poem to Annette was addressed to Anna Katharina Schönpfopf of Leipzig, who married Dr. Christian Karl Hanne, some eighteen months after Goethe left that city. The letters that were discovered with this poem were written to Ernst Theo-

dore Langer of Breslau, the Leipzig friend to whom the author refers in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*. He later succeeded Lessing in charge of the Wolfenbüttel Library. During the great literary controversy that raged in Germany in 1797 and 1798, he was on the opposite side from Goethe and Schiller, and attacked his old friend with more vigor than consideration. However, this incident did not prevent Goethe from paying a tribute to his student-comrade in Leipzig, when he wrote *Dichtung und Wahrheit* in 1811 and 1812.

Any new discovery throwing light upon Goethe's youth is doubly to be welcomed; first, because it adds to our knowledge of the author during the incomparably stirring and strenuous years of the formative period of his development, and in the second place, because they enable us to estimate better the ratio of *Dichtung* to *Wahrheit* in his quasi-autobiography.

Langer appears in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* in the middle of the eighth book. He was the successor of Behrisch, who had lost his position as tutor with the Count of Lindenau on account of his intimacy with Goethe. But the new tutor likewise soon made the acquaintance at Leipzig of the sadly libeled student from Frankfurt, and gradually became as intimate with him as Behrisch had been previously. Indeed, he became more — his religious

guide. He tried, without sentimentality or emotional enthusiasm, to win his young friend away from his religious doubts and frivolous preoccupations, to serious faith in the Bible, and his efforts were not entirely without success.

The passages in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* relating to Langer, who does not again appear in the book, transfer the reader from Goethe's thoughtless gallantries in Leipzig to the chamber where he long lay critically ill in his father's house at Frankfort. Before he returned to Leipzig in 1768, a year and a half had elapsed. During the interval, he had on several occasions been close indeed to death. The deep influence of this experience and the kindly, unobtrusive counsels of his mother's noble friend, Fräulein von Kletenberg, had awakened in the youthful Goethe new religious interests. He felt drawn toward the Pietist Christianity of Count Zinzendorf, and joined the circle of this sect. According to *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Langer had prepared the way for this conversion during Goethe's previous sojourn in Leipzig. Now we have original letters which the grateful young student wrote from Frankfort to his elderly friend in Leipzig. They prove that when he wrote *Dichtung und Wahrheit* he did not invent this incident in order to round out an artistic composition, but that this is one of the happy cases where truth and literary art are in full accord. The letters also add something to our knowledge of the religious life in Frankfort in those days.

On September 8, 1768, five days after his return to Frankfort, Goethe wrote:—

... Everything is just about as I expected. My mother has come out openly for the Society; my father knows it and is perfectly satisfied; my sister has accompanied her to the experience meetings.

... I shall also go. The Ebersdorfer Song Book is very popular with this congregation.

In closing, Goethe promised to give his friend at an early date 'a full description of the Diaspora here.' In the second letter, which is one of two in the collection written in French, he thanks his friend, obviously out of a full heart, for what he has done for his spiritual welfare. This letter is dated Frankfort, November 9, 1768:—

... I shall always be indebted to you far more than you are indebted to me. You write that you are anxious to do all in your power to merit my friendship. Oh, don't do anything, or I shall be too greatly your debtor. You are the first man in the world who ever preached to me the true Evangel, and if God grants me the faith to make me a Christian, it is to you that I shall owe my first inspiration. God bless you for it.

The next letter describes his first close relations with the Brotherhood in Frankfort. It similarly reveals the constant struggle in Goethe's heart between his religious sensibilities and his artistic impulses and ideals. The Zinzendorfers were, on the whole, people of too modest mental endowments for him. In Strassburg, after several efforts, he gave up trying to associate with them.

On November 24, 1768, Goethe wrote from Frankfort:—

The Brothers regard me as a man who has good intentions and is sensitive to higher things, but is still too much attached to the world; and they are right. I owe you much, Langer. It would have been impossible for all the priests in the world to touch a soul like mine, especially with the unevangelical slop we are getting from the pulpits to-day. Your love, your honesty alone could have accomplished it. ... I hope for the best. My active brain, my wit, my industry, my fairly well-grounded aspiration of eventually becoming a good author, are now, to tell you the truth, the greatest obstacles to my conversion, and to my more eager choice of

the path toward which Grace directs me. . . . The Congregation admits me to its circle with tacit connivance, as the angels admitted Abaddon to their circle at Golgotha.

A few weeks later Goethe had a violent relapse in his long illness. The crisis came on December 8, the birthday of his sister, Cornelia. When he was beginning to get better, he wrote to Langer, describing with the vividness of which he always was a master a wonderful hour of profound experience in the dear old house on Hirschgraben. This letter was dated January 17, 1769: —

. . . Much has happened to me. I have suffered and am again liberated . . . and if my body, as they say, has now better hope of a permanent recovery, because they have discovered the immediate reason for my illness, I know of no happier incident of my life than this dreadful experience.

A remarkable change has occurred, at least externally. Mellin [a mutual acquaintance from the Leipzig days and a member of the Brothers' Congregation, who was then residing in Frankfort] and several other of the Brothers sat up with me. My father, who was utterly exhausted, was much pleased at their consideration, and treated them most kindly and courteously. And since that time we have been somewhat more liberal in our religious observances. Day before yesterday, there was a meeting in our house, held, as you can well imagine, under a plausible pretext. Everything was prepared gorgeously, as for a fashionable social gathering — wine, sausage, and milk-bread on a side table, the *Frauenzimmer* lay on a table with the Ebersdorfer Song Books. One of the Brothers sat at the piano, playing the melody, two accompanied him with flutes, and the rest of us sang. Mellin and I stood a little behind the others, and could not see very well. 'Darkness must not be tolerated here,' I said, and lighted a chandelier directly above our heads, which made it light and cheerful. 'See,' I said to Mellin, 'that is symbolical of the New Jerusalem, when our cathedrals of stone become cathedrals of the spirit.'

There follows an affecting confession of the soul-struggles of the nineteen-year-old youth, and an observation upon the miraculous power of faith that recalls immediately what the elderly Goethe said to Eckermann on February 12, 1831, when he expressed his admiration for the beauty of the Bible story of Christ walking on the water, and Peter's lack of faith.

Just God, if thou wert not good. Langer, I often have my periods of mental distress and oppression. They are truly frightful. I am young, and on the path that will surely lead me out of the labyrinth. Who can promise me, though, that the light will always guide me as it does now, and that I shall never again go astray? In fact, I am afraid! Afraid! Always weak in the faith. Peter was also, by our standards, a righteous man, except for his timidity: Had he firmly believed that Jesus had power over Heaven, earth, and water, he might have walked on the water dry-shod; his doubt made him sink. You see, Langer, we are odd creatures. The Saviour has at length seized me. I tried to escape him; I ran so fast that he has but seized me, so to speak, by the hair. . . . No matter how long we wander in the wilderness, we both shall in the end [be saved].

In the summer of 1769, Langer visited Goethe at Frankfort on his way to Lausanne, and shortly afterward, on the twenty-first and twenty-second of September, Goethe personally took part in the Herrnhuter Synod at Marienborn, one of the old Zinzendorf places near Büdingen. He describes this in the fifteenth book of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*.

On November 30, he wrote to his friend, now in Switzerland, in French: —

Switzerland at last! What a change. . . . Whatever happens, I must approach France gradually, and the mixed dialect of Strassburg of which you spoke last September will afford me ample material for speculation at least, if it does not afford me pleasure. And in any case, the least agreeable university is the best place to work hard.

Goethe was already planning to continue his studies at Strassburg when his friend visited him earlier in the autumn, and Langer had criticized the language — *le ton bâlard* — there. We already perceive in this letter Goethe's consciousness of returning health. The vivacity and exuberant spirits of his Strassburg student days are already foreshadowed. He continues: —

My health is steadily improving day by day. The state of my soul contributes not a little to this. I am content with the world. I always feel like studying, except afternoons when I have eaten or drunk too much, as occasionally happens.

Unhappily the letters from Strassburg, where Goethe arrived early in April, 1770, throw no new light upon his emotional and spiritual development. The great event in the first of the two letters, which was dated April 29 and May 11, 1770, was the arrival of Marie Antoinette, the young bride of the Dauphin, Louis XVI, and the public festivities on that occasion.

I have been swept off my feet in a flood of fun and folly. I am just beginning to remember again that I also exist. The last few days we have been mere adjectives to the Dauphine. How we play false to all our honest convictions before the gold-brocaded robes of royalty, which would look better on any straight-limbed man than on a bow-legged king. And yet when we are carried away with emotion, our pride and intelligence vanish. Our princes and our pretty girls know that, and do with us what they will.

This letter, and a few lines written on August 8 of the following year, 1771, just before he returned to Frankfurt, after completing his studies and receiving his degree, are all that we have from the Strassburg period. He sums up this experience to his old friend with the following words: 'My stay here has been very pleasant, and I have profited by it more than people realize.'

That is all. Not a word of Herder, of Sesenheim, of Shakespeare, of the Cathedral, of the folk song, of the new lyrics, of his own poetical projects! The explanation is an easy one. During the interval, Salzmann has usurped Langer's place as Goethe's confidential friend and confessor.

And yet Langer had already received an intimation of a new intellectual and artistic interest, that was to survive the *Sturm und Drang* period, and that forecasts the Goethe of classical maturity, the Goethe who yearned for Italy and the art of the ancients. This, let us hasten to observe, is in complete accord with *Dichtung und Wahrheit*.

It will be recalled that at the end of the eleventh book of that work, the young *licentiatus juris* just back from Strassburg visits the museum of ancient art at Mannheim. He stands in wonder before its forest of statues, especially the cast of the famous Laocoön Group. A flood of new and illuminating ideas sweeps into his soul, and he immediately, as he relates there, wrote down these thoughts in an essay addressed to his old teacher, Professor Oeser, at Leipzig. Some doubt has been expressed as to the authenticity of this incident. We now learn that the profound impression produced by the Laocoön group, and the resulting essay to Oeser, date from an earlier and hitherto almost unknown visit to Mannheim, late in October, 1769. In his letter of November 30 of that year to Langer, Goethe wrote: —

Toward the end of last month, I made a pleasant trip, with Mannheim as my destination. Among many other magnificent things that struck the eye, nothing so appealed to my whole soul as the Laocoön Group. . . . I was so profoundly impressed by it that I almost forgot to look at anything else. . . . I have jotted down a few ideas on the Laocoön Group that will

throw considerable light on a famous debate, in which many great men have made their voices heard. . . . In order to discuss the fine arts intelligently, one must be something more than a critic and spinner of fine hypotheses. I have written Professor Oeser telling him of my discoveries. I shall try to put them in order this winter, so as to be able to give them a final revision and a last touch next year, when I hope to pass through Mannheim on my way to Strassburg. What an experience it will be, when I go to Rome.

Goethe's intense interest in the artistic masterpieces of Rome and Italy became still keener at Strassburg, where he saw Gobelin tapestries displayed for the reception of Marie Antoinette, representing the cartoons of Raphael. He wrote on April 29, 1770:—

The Gobelins that have been brought from Paris to hang in some of the apartments have been a delightful surprise to me. Most of them are after Raphael, and are alone worth the trip, which I undertook for several reasons. The famous School of Athens is among them. It is useless to speak of such things; but I know this, that a new epoch in my experience dates from the moment I first saw it. Such a masterpiece is a fathomless reservoir of art. Several works by our modern masters hang in the same hall. There was all the difference of three centuries.

On to Italy, Langer! On to Italy! The year is not over yet. That is too early for me; I have not yet the knowledge that I need. I am still far too much behind. Paris should be my preparatory school, and Rome my university. For she is a real university; and when one has seen her he has seen all. For that reason I shall not hurry thither.

With what unerring pedagogical instinct Goethe wrote! Rome had already become in advance the goal of his educational pilgrimage. How long it was before he felt himself worthy to tread the soil of the promised land! This passage from the Strassburg letter

to Langer will always remain an important contribution to the record of events leading up to Goethe's Italian journey.

Goethe's allusions to literary subjects in these letters to Langer are not so significant. They all relate in one way or another to Leipzig. For instance, he wrote to his friend on November 24, 1768:—

Remember me kindly to Professor Gellert. Please thank him in my behalf for the unmerited affection with which he has honored me. I should have written him long before this had I not feared that a letter from a man who had never proved himself worthy of his attention might bother him more than it would interest him.

Some fragments of Goethe's translation of Corneille's *Le Menteur* have been preserved. This translation has always been attributed to the Leipzig period, but so far as I am aware, we have hitherto had no definite proof of this. This is now supplied in the letter of November 24, 1768, in which Goethe mentions to his friend a new one-act play in verse, without giving the title. It is extremely probable that this relates to the first draft of the *Mitschuldigen*, which his sister Cornelia mentioned in a letter of the same period. Goethe says:—

I am writing a dreadful lot just at present, partly because I am in the mood, partly because I have nothing better to do. Last week I wrote a one-act afterpiece in verse that you shall have as soon as it is copied. Do you know how you invited this misfortune? You praised my translation of *Le Menteur*, and you must not praise an author if you do not want to read more of his work.

Goethe busied himself during his invalidism at Frankfort printing the first collection of his lyric poems, which we are accustomed to call the *Leipziger Liederbuch*. Its publication at Leipzig was delayed by numerous corrections. He wrote on January 17, 1769:—

These rascally songs make me more trouble than they are worth. At Leipzig they are playing the fool with their eternal corrections. It seems as if God did not want me to become an author.

When at last, in 1770, he found himself the real author of a printed book, he was decidedly proud of his achievement. He sent a copy to Langer, together with an undated letter from which we quote the following: —

So here are my songs. I hope your regard for me will make you esteem them more than their merits deserve. The history of my heart in little miniatures! If ever there were poems that violated Batteux's principles they are these; not a line of imitation, all natural. Therefore they will always be a monument to my youth for me and for my friends.

In this letter he also enclosed his marriage poem to Annette, the first stanza of which we print above. Goethe says regarding this: —

'Good Night,' which I enclose and which is not to be printed until the marriage, will show you that we consider the marriage so near that we are exercising our pen with it.

However, when on May 7, 1770, Käthchen Schönkopf married Dr. Hanne, Goethe's 'Carmen' did not grace the festal board. In those gallant days, people tolerated all sorts of things at weddings, even a little coarseness; but the teasing banter of her former suitor could scarcely gratify the bride, to say nothing of the happy bridegroom. Goethe's marriage poem closes thus: —

*Zwar mit Freuden und mit Scherzen
In zwei kopulirten Herzen,
Ist's wie mit den Hochzeitkerzen.
Glenzend leuchten sie im Saal
Und verherrlichen das Mahl,
Aber, so nach zehnen Uhr
Bleiben kleine Stumpffen nur;
Damit leuchte dir zu Bettel!
Gute Nacht! Schlaf wohl, Annettel!*

'Tis true that joy and jest shine bright in
Loving hearts when thus uniting,
Like the wedding candles lighting
Brilliantly the festal hall
And shedding radiance on all.
But after the clock strikes ten
Only smoking stubs remain.
Therefore, ere their bright flame dims,
Good night, Annette! Pleasant dreams!

HIGH FINANCE IN THE TIME OF CÆSAR

BY GEORG BRANDES

[No chapter in Georg Brandes's Cæsar Julius Cæsar, as yet available only in its original Danish, is of more timely interest to readers of to-day than the one in which the noted critic discusses the financiers who ruled the destiny of Rome and her vast domain. It is here rendered into English for the first time.]

DURING the last two centuries of the Republic, its wealth exerted an increasing influence on Roman legislation and private and public affairs. In all that had to do with politics, the financiers occupied places of greater and greater importance. Innumerable powerful companies were organized to carry on the business of the State, and

these not only rivaled in importance the political corporations, but sometimes overshadowed them. And while the members of these companies held no public office they were called *maximi, ornatissimi, amplissimi, primi ordinis* (excellent, highly honored, of high standing, of first rank).

These companies were engaged in