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THE NATURALISTIC PLAYS OF GERHART HAUPTMANN.

THE recent naturalistic movement in European literature had already reached the high water mark, when it gained a foothold and quickly attained a high degree of perfection in Germany. It did not receive general recognition ; but the foremost representative of the new style among the German authors, Gerhart Hauptmann, has, in spite of various digressions and the violent opposition which he met, always returned to naturalism and has above all others developed and perfected this new artistic form, especially in the domain of dramatic art. It was not during the last decades of the nineteenth century, that naturalism first made its appearance in literature, but naturalism is not always the same. In the first place all beginnings of artistic productivity must of necessity be naturalistic, since at that stage there are no aesthetic rules to guide the artist ; also among nations which have already attained a high degree of artistic culture, we find not infrequently isolated individuals, who, indeed, possess the ability and the desire to create works of art, but who have either no access at all, or only insufficient access, to the store-houses of the past and whose works therefore are apt to be naturalistic. A striking instance of this sort is Jeremias Gotthelf, well known for his tales of Swiss country life. Lastly, we meet naturalism as a re-action against the rigid uniformity of empty and lifeless conventionality in art. To this latter class belongs the movement, which even at the present day has not yet completely died out. It differs, however, widely from all previous revolts of a similar character, and many deny to the naturalism of Zola and Hauptmann the name of art. Still naturalism is art, just as well as idealism or realism ; whatever objections may be made to it. It would lead us too far, here to outline

the recent controversy between the naturalists and their opponents ; things remain moreover unchanged, at least as far as an agreement between the contending parties is concerned. Hauptmann has not, himself, set forth any new theory of art, nor was he the originator of the naturalistic movement in Germany. He rather followed in the wake of Arno Holz and Johannes Schlaf ; at the beginning of his career professing himself indirectly a supporter of their creed. Holz, the theorist of the naturalistic school, maintaining that our present system of aesthetics has been erected upon wrong foundations, and that it therefore is without any value whatsoever, has imposed upon himself the task of supplying the world with at least a basis for a new science of aesthetics, but has surely failed in the attempt. Permeated by the scientific spirit of the age, nothing short of the exactness of natural science will do for him, and accordingly he treats aesthetics as a social science. From the analysis of a single, and most simple case, he announces the following as the fundamental truth of aesthetics : 'Art has the tendency to be nature again. Art becomes nature to a degree determined by the conditions of reproduction and the manner in which they prevail in each specific case.' It is, according to him, the sole purpose of aesthetics to discover and formulate the natural laws or tendencies underlying all artistic activity, so that the artist through the knowledge thus obtained may be enabled to put himself into harmony with these natural tendencies, and so achieve a higher degree of perfection. The contention that art has the tendency to become nature again takes no account of the artist who consciously and intentionally idealises nature in his works ; or we must regard, not only the fashion in art at that particular period, education and training of the artist, and the influence of his associates upon him, but above all the idiosyncrasies of the artist, as conditions of reproduction. From the arguments of Holz it appears, moreover, that the most perfect likeness of a natural object should rank highest as a work of art. The artist, having once comprehended the intent of nature, should choose those materials, and

that method of forming them which will produce the most perfect result. Holz cannot deny to him the privilege of choosing any sort of material, and any manner of treatment whatsoever. But then a wax-figure of the degree of perfection now attainable would rank higher as work of art than a similar marble figure; for the former is beyond dispute nearer to nature than the latter. If we accept the views of Holz, we have no grounds on which to exclude photographs, moving pictures, and the like, from the realm of fine arts, no matter what the manner of their production. Holz tries to refute this argument by pointing out what effect it would have, if we should attach to a marble, or plaster of Paris statue a mustache of natural hair. But this argument is not at all to the point. Our objections to such a procedure result simply from the incongruity existing between the two materials in question, and the consequent disillusion. The fact is that any true work of art must contain something over and above external nature, something which has been born in the imagination of the artist.

The radical views and sweeping statements of Holz have certainly in no inconsiderable degree been the cause of the violent polemics directed against naturalism, and against Hauptmann, who, as mentioned before, subscribed at the beginning of his career indirectly to the views of Arno Holz. In the course of this discussion, many and serious charges have been preferred against naturalism in general, and the dramas of Hauptmann in particular. At the head stands the assertion that naturalism is nothing but an attempt to imitate nature, common reality, and therefore is not art at all. It is further maintained that the dramas of Hauptmann do not conform to the laws of dramatic unity, that they lack the proper distribution of guilt and retribution, or even entirely want these two elements; that they contain no immanent idea. Some assert that a catastrophe conditioned by the laws of nature, is not tragic, and that action resulting from the influence of environment is not dramatic. Others deny to Hauptmann psychological insight, and censure his dramas for lack of typi-

cal motives. Most frequent of all is the criticism that the poet represents with preference weak characters. Many of the terms commonly used in the discussions of literary art, are so old and time-worn, that they have faded in meaning. Often they are employed in a vague and hazy manner, and even if this be not the case, very few people interpret them alike. For this reason, and since the charges made against the art of Hauptmann apply in varying degree to nearly all of his dramas, it will be well to consider them one by one.

Is naturalism art? Stoekius¹ defines naturalism : ‘as an attempt to imitate or reproduce nature, or common reality, *i. e.* nature as it presents itself to the scientist or ordinary man.’ But nature appears certainly very differently to the ordinary man than it does to the scientist ; it appears in one form to the physiologist, in another to the psychologist, in spite of the close relation of the two. However this may be, it is impossible to copy nature, the attempt to do it is useless; for nature is infinite, the work of man finite. An approximation to a faithful copy of nature would be an astonishing feat, especially in the drama, whether also art, we need not determine. But how about common reality ? Often, after we have for years daily associated with a man, many of his acts are still incomprehensible to us, their motives lie hidden. In the drama on the other hand the ‘Why’ of every act is made clear. We may not approve of the motives which induce the respective character to act in a certain way, but we surely know them, if the playwright has been successful. And this the poet is to accomplish by presenting to us a faithful copy of real life?

A drama must represent to us, within the narrow limits of the stage and within a few stingy hours, characters in their essential nature. Any arbitrary segment, or several smaller segments from the life of a man would reveal to us, however, only a small portion of his character, even if so chosen as to

¹ Stoekius, A. *Naturalism in the Recent German Drama. With Special Reference to Gerhart Hauptmann.* (p. 2.) New York, 1903.

show us this man in unusually significant situations. It is quite evident that a poet could never solve the problem which confronts him by slavishly imitating reality. On the stage we have never anything more than an apparent copy of actual life, often not even that. The details of a drama are imitations of reality, but not the whole play. To select from the abundance of material which human life offers, to recombine what has been selected, so that it will make upon us the impression of a faithful copy of reality, this constitutes the art of the poet. In the first place, he must select from the multitude of characters which he might represent, a few whom he actually will put before us. Any person surpassing mediocrity in a good or an evil sense is the more suitable for representation, since we take a keener interest in unusual characters. It requires great ability on the part of the poet to arouse our interest for an average individual. Men endowed with great will power possess our sympathy in a higher degree than do weaklings. It does, however, not follow that a poet must limit himself to the representation of the former type. At least no such necessity results from the essential nature of the drama. The poet may also be permitted, if he choose to do so, to put before us a group of persons, without raising one or several above the rest. In such a case the different individuals must all possess, even though in a varying degree, the same significant traits of character; or the representation as a whole will be vague and indefinite. After the poet has selected his characters, he must make his choice among an almost unlimited number of actions, which in themselves have all the same value for the play. But the representation of action is not the end to be obtained; action is only a means to an end, and that action is of the most value to the poet, which reveals most of a given character.

Unity of action is consequently not an absolute necessity for a good drama. The claim for unity of action is insupportable, not because no such unity of action exists in real life, but because we can very well form a correct conception of a character from a number of single actions which are not united in any

way excepting in this that they all refer to the same individual. But it is certainly a serious defect in a drama, if through the action, or part of the action, an intense and tormenting expectancy is aroused, which ultimately is not satisfied. We are by no means adverse to the element of expectancy, on the contrary, we desire it; but intense expectancy and uncertainty easily become painful, if unusually prolonged, or if relief is made wholly impossible. This latter is exactly what happens, when we are dismissed from the play-house, with a weighty but unanswerable question tormenting our minds; for when the curtain drops after the last act, we depart forever from the characters and events of the play. Very few of us are inclined to furnish to such a question an answer by aid of our own imagination. The solution brought about by the poet may not meet our approval, we may even attack it, still we prefer it to no solution whatever. Since the action is only a means to an end, namely, the representation of character, it ought to be of the simplest kind possible, in order not to divert the attention of the spectator from the characters. A drama in which unusual complications and unexpected solutions play an important part, while the characters are sketched hastily or incorrectly, is without abiding worth. It is like a riddle; after we have found the solution it becomes indifferent to us, while a portrait of character possesses a permanent value. There is, then, nothing in the drama, which necessitates absolute unity of action, although a coherent composition is highly desirable. The unity of the characters must, on the other hand, not suffer in the least. The whole drama depends on it. Small defects we overlook; moreover, it can never be positively proved that in a certain play they exist, but if the poet commits a grave fault, if one of his characters becomes, so to speak, unfaithful to himself, he is no longer able to engage our interest and sympathy. Even the untrained observer feels in such a case very clearly, that the man who there on the stage laughs or weeps, rejoices or laments, does not obey the psychological laws, which govern all of us, that he is nothing but a puppet,

capable of speech. A radical and sudden change of character is not impossible; but in the drama it requires especially strong motivation. If such a change can in no way be made credible and comprehensible, it never should be put on the stage. A play with a skilful intrigue, or a spectacular piece passes, indeed, without objection on the part of the general public. Such plays satisfy certain desires, which are in themselves perfectly legitimate, as for instance the fondness for magnificent spectacles, or for the surprising; but dramatic art becomes then a simple accessory, while it ought to be the main purpose.

Guilt and retribution. Ever since the time of Aristotle it has been held that guilt is an essential element for any good tragedy. With the ancients guilt meant an offence against the gods, which not seldom was committed unwittingly. As the ethical views changed, the concept of guilt underwent a similar modification. Many of the world's greatest tragedies, however, do not contain a shadow of guilt in the true sense of the word. So critics and theorists have been obliged to give this term an entirely new meaning and interpret tragic guilt as a conflict with the unwritten laws of society, of custom; no matter what their moral import. Any one who deviates considerably from the common mass of humanity, or from the group of this mass to which he belongs, is almost bound to incur a tragic guilt sooner or later. By a series of mental gymnastics and hair-splitting arguments, guilt is then construed into all the master-pieces of dramatic art. There is nothing in the essential nature of the drama which makes guilt an absolutely necessary constituent, since it is indifferent, for the representation of a character, whether he suffers innocently or not. One of the arguments for tragic guilt maintains that the suffering of an absolutely innocent character would be unbearable to the spectator. Does an artificially construed guilt, detectable only by means of the most subtle theories, make it any more so? In real life we are in many instances unable to recognize a just distribution of guilt and retribution, but for that very reason, we are informed, do we desire it in the drama, to make up for

the apparent lack of it in real life. Our belief in a just and purposeful power, which guides the universe, might thereby be expressed, but, on the other hand, it would be a cowardly self-deception. We either deceive ourselves with regard to the apparent lack of justice and purpose in life, or with regard to the limited insight of our poor reason. But this would be entirely contrary to the purpose of dramatic art. It should not beguile us with imaginary creations, to make life more easily bearable to us; quite the contrary, it is to broaden our knowledge of life, to deepen our insight into human willing and feeling, and thereby enrich our own lives. It should make us more intensely conscious of the fact that we, too, are engaged in the struggle of life. For life is a struggle, not the struggle for mere existence, or the struggle of all against all, as some think, nor the struggle against sin; it is the ceaseless effort to free ourselves from the fetters, which hedge in our spirit; the striving for perfection. At least, this is what life ought to be. Every gain of knowledge through immediate perception signifies a growth of our being, a step upwards. But the simple comprehension of an abstract concept by means of the intellect does not possess this redeeming and ennobling virtue. Not until we have grasped a fact through our feeling, can we comprehend its full significance. This is especially true of the happenings of human life. In every one of us there slumbers an infinite number of possibilities. Some of them possess from the start more vitality, are more capable of development, than the rest; but our environment in early life plays an important part in determining which of these possibilities are to become actualities, which are to be suppressed. The latter, nevertheless, do not vanish from existence, some of them appear now and then plainly on the surface, others are seemingly hidden away forever. If we witness the manifestation of those possibilities in other persons, which are undeveloped in our own beings, a mysterious echo springs up within us, enabling us to understand the acts, the behavior of these persons. In real life the direct and indirect consequences, which such happenings

must have for us, largely determine our attitude towards them. If the same events are represented on the stage, these consequences are almost entirely eliminated, thereby we gain the largest possible freedom, to feel with the characters of the play, to comprehend the motives of their actions, to put ourselves unconsciously into their places. But even in this case there exists for every individual a more or less flexible boundary, beyond which he cannot go. When actions are represented on the stage, which are manifestations of those possibilities that are diametrically opposed to the very essence of our being, we can no longer feel with, and for the acting characters. Such traits of character so forcibly menace the existence and development of our own selves, that we assume the same attitude towards actions resulting from them, when represented on the stage, as we should in real life, with this essential difference, that we refrain from interfering with the course of events. It appears from this, that many things on the stage are still bearable, which we could not passively witness in real life. A drama, which represents nothing, except barely endurable actions, is of no value. We are in such a case neither able to understand the characters represented, through intuition, *i. e.*, through the emotions, nor does the play convey to us the abstract knowledge: such characters, such conditions exist; since we have nothing but the semblance of reality before us. The freer and nobler a man is, in the higher degree does he possess the capacity to feel with, and for others. To the old adage: 'To understand everything is to forgive everything' I can subscribe only if 'forgive' is not distorted to mean 'approve.' He, in whose character the menacing possibilities, manifested in the persons represented on the stage, form still a large, though not the predominating constituent, often turns with the more violence against these manifestations, because of the instinctive and correct feeling, that these possibilities might easily gain in him the upper hand and annihilate his present self.

The immanent idea we need to consider only very briefly. It is, in the end, nothing but a more or less sapient aphorism, as for

instance : 'Every sort of excess leads to destruction,' the idea embodied in Hebbel's *Maria Magdalena*; or one, known the world over, that of Goethe's *Faust*: 'Whoe'er aspires unweariedly is not beyond redeeming.' Every consistent drama contains necessarily some such idea. But Goethe surely did not write '*Faust*' for the purpose and with the intention of embodying this idea. The alleged fate of Doctor Faust called forth an echo in the poet, who was, if not as insatiable in enjoyment, certainly more eager in inquiry, than the legendary Doctor Faust; so Goethe's greatest work came into existence, and so, but only so, can one enjoy it—even without searching out the immanent idea.

A play written to demonstrate a certain hypothesis, or to make propaganda for or against certain views, customs, or institutions is very apt to fall short of its aim or be only of ephemeral value. A comedy of this sort will hold its own longer than a serious drama. I doubt whether three hundred years from now Ibsen's social dramas, powerful as they appear to us, will be appreciated as much as Moliere's *Tartuffe* or *Les Femmes Savantes* are, at the present time.

The concept of the tragic is a subject very much debated, very indefinite, and is variously defined. Volkelt¹ declares human greatness essential for producing the tragic effect. Human greatness he defines as a perceptible surpassing of the average in some one significant and valuable direction. Through this 'some one' his definition attains a praiseworthy breadth, loses, however, in precision. The terms 'significant' and 'valuable,' on which his whole definition really hinges, will hardly be interpreted alike by very many. His further arguments are much to the point, but do not furnish any positive standard. This lies in the nature of the case. To train the judgment is all that can be accomplished. He who does not prefer to repeat blindly the opinions of others must ultimately decide according to his own feeling, whether a drama is tragic or not. Elster²

¹ Volkelt, J. *Aesthetik des Tragischen.* (p. 65.) München, 1897.

² Elster, E. *Prinzipien der Litteraturwissenschaft.* Erster Band. (p. 282.) Halle, 1897.

finds, the tragic effect is produced by the contrast between expectation and outcome. Without just and great hope for happiness or success, even the most intense suffering is only piteous, he declares. Further on he holds, that only the destruction of extraordinary possessions and powers, both material and spiritual, will suffice to produce the tragic effect. The contrast between expectation and outcome as tragic element is present in many dramas, in which a destruction of extraordinary possessions does not occur. If, however, we make the destruction of such possessions and powers the basis of classification, the unspeakably sad fate of thousands is no longer tragic, but only piteous and lamentable. But what does it matter whether one calls a drama tragic or piteous, if only we can say that by it we have been touched to the quick? Most critics, moreover, censure Hauptmann's plays not so much because of lack of human greatness in the characters, but rather because the catastrophe is conditioned by the laws of nature and not by fate, and therefore fails to produce a tragic effect. Let us investigate the validity of this charge. The ancients were aware that there existed an intimate relation between the destinies of members of the same family, also that the fate of man was strongly influenced, if not wholly determined, by forces lying outside of his own being. As an explanation they offered the curse of the gods, which descended from the parents to the children and children's children, even down to the remotest offspring; and the inexorable decrees of fate. These views were not mere inventions of the poets, but deeply rooted in the belief of the masses. We have translated practically the same views into new terms, designating these forces, which are so potent in shaping our lives, as influence of environment and heridity. To the poet, however, we refuse the right to employ these motives in his plays in the same manner in which the ancients used fate and the curse of the gods, because determinism leaves no chance for the manifestation of the human will, it is alleged. It represents man as the resultant of definite and known natural forces. This assertion is far from

being correct; the respective natural forces are not known to us, at the most, they are theoretically knowable. From actual, positive, and complete knowledge we are still remote; whether we shall ever obtain it, is very doubtful. But even if we assume that we are already in possession of it, that we can positively determine the natural and, if you choose, purely mechanical forces, the resultant of which is the individual man, it would still not do away with the fact that we will, that from this willing, inner and outer conflicts result, and that all our actions and perceptions arouse in us emotions, for all of us approximately the same or very similar, and which manifest themselves in different individuals in a similar manner. We are, moreover, able to draw rather positive inferences from the behavior of others with regard to the emotions which stir them, and, to a certain extent, to participate in these emotions. The existing limitations I have already pointed out. That much, the most absolute materialist must admit, if he in his own consciousness is anything but a mere automaton. Schultze¹ insists that, aside from the influence of environment and heredity, an unknown quantity, "X," the personal equation of the psychologist, be taken into consideration. I fully agree with him, but am of the opinion that the existence or non-existence of this unknown quantity is of only subordinate importance as far as dramatic art is concerned. As already indicated, the personal equation exists also for the materialist, with this distinction, that he considers it possible to account for it without depriving it thereby of its individual character; in as much as all life is to him nothing but the inevitable result of the inter-action of mechanical forces. Whether this unknown quantity is knowable, or whether it will for ever defy the grasp of the human mind, with or without this quantity, it still remains true that we think, will, and feel. Even if these mental states were nothing but epi-phenomena, we all know from personal experience, that they are often painfully real facts of the individual conscious-

¹ Schultze, S. *Der Zeitgeist der modernen Litteratur Europas.* Einige Kapitel zur vergleichenden Litteraturgeschichte. (p. 14.) Halle a. S., 1895.

ness. But a deterministic view is said to paralyze the human will. Certainly only the will of the weakling, and he will collapse under misfortune, whether he holds a fatalistic or deterministic view of the world ; the strong individual on the other hand will be roused to opposition by adversity. Laios sacrifices his son, Oedipus, without hesitation. The magnitude of the sacrifice proves the potency of his fear ; the act in itself, however, implies that he doubts the absolute power of fate, otherwise the sacrifice of Oedipus would be meaningless. Laios, then, hopes to change his destiny, by opposing his own feeble will to the decree of fate. Similarly a determinist will struggle against the forces which threaten him, provided he is a strong character. He may more justly hope for victory than the fatalist, for the philosophy of the former teaches him that the simple ability to will and to act, the firm belief in his own power actually insures the success, even if his will were nothing but a must. The great mass of the people has, however, not yet comprehended the real significance of the deterministic doctrine. Many make use of it to excuse their weaknesses and faults, but no one ever rejects recognition and reward for his supposedly praiseworthy deeds on the basis, that they are nothing but the inevitable result of the inter-action of mechanical forces. If I had to choose between fatalism and determinism, I should decide without hesitation for the latter, for the ability to believe in his own power insures to the determinist at least partial success ; even if he does not reach the goal, he cannot well arrive at the opposite extremity, as may so easily happen to the fatalist. It appears, then, that fatalism must needs have a more paralyzing effect upon the human will than determinism correctly understood.

The opponents of naturalism involuntarily furnish proof of what deep roots the conviction, that environment and heredity are potent factors in determining our destinies, has taken among the present generation, when they endeavor to explain the works of a naturalist by the descent and environment of the poet, and when they speak of the harmful influence such works have upon

the readers. These views are by no means new, but their corroboration through the discoveries of science gives them new value. The same science, however, has designated much of the abnormal as pathological ; and, since the abnormal especially attracts the dramatist, poets have dared to use the pathological as motives for their plays. To this it is objected that the pathological is not typical enough to meet with general understanding. It seems to me it is frequent enough in our civilization, to make it to the average person a comprehensible and credible motive. It will be almost impossible to find a pathological phenomenon which stands more isolated than the rare fate of Oedipus or Hamlet. As long as a motive is credible and comprehensible, the tragic nature of the catastrophe resulting from it is not diminished, of whatever sort this motive may be. If the tragic element is lacking in the drama with a pathological motive, it is not because of the latter, but because of the nature of the characters represented. The destruction of a weakling will never produce a tragic effect, even if heaven and hell should conspire to destroy him. It is, I am inclined to think, a mistake to seek, for instance, in Ibsen's '*Ghosts*,' the tragic element in the ruin of Osvald Alving. But what of the fate of Fru Alving ? To the most of us the suppositions of this play seem much more probable and credible than the motives of many classic tragedies ; but the nature of the motives cannot possibly affect the tragic aspect of the resulting suffering. Fru Alving is compelled to marry an incorrigible debauchee without knowing his true character. When she discovers it, as she inevitably must, she flees for protection to the man whom she loves, of whose love she feels assured, and he, in the name of human and divine authority, leads her back to her husband. She sees no rescue for herself; but her only child, her son Osvald, she must protect. To remove him from the harmful influence of his own father, she consents to a complete separation from her son. Not to poison his soul, she hides from him the true character of his father, yes, creates in him the belief that his father is an ideal man. To save the

name 'Alving' from disgrace, she conceals her sufferings even from the eyes of those who are nearest to her. At last the hour of release approaches. Her husband dies, Osvald is recalled and arrives in apparently excellent health. In his happiness Fru Alving hopes now to find her reward ; but just as she stretches out her hand after the costly prize, the phantom of her hope vanishes and horror and despair stare her in the face. Sad, piteous, but not tragic, because of the pathological motive ! Well, it is useless to argue about the matter. By way of precaution I must state, that I, by no means, class Ibsen with the naturalists. I selected his *Ghosts* for the purpose of illustration, since this play is more typical as regards pathological motives than any play of Hauptmann.

Dramatic action. "A 'milieu-drama' is, strictly speaking, a contradiction in terms, because we can have no action and development of character in it. In such a drama there can be shown only the effect of the milieu upon the character ; the character itself remains passive. The very idea of a 'milieu-drama' is anti-dramatic. In a drama the characters have a primary position. Dramatic action ought to start within the characters." These assertions, made by Stoekius,¹ I have found no where else in such positive and dogmatic form. A proof of the correctness of his views he does not offer, probably accepting that offered by some authority. I have never met a satisfactory proof and consider it, moreover, impossible to give one. From Lessing,² to whom Stoekius refers, he cannot get any support for his statements, excepting for the next to the last sentence. But just in the tragedy, Lessing considers the characters of secondary importance. "Dramatic action ought to start within the characters." Entirely independent of the influence of their surroundings ? Impossible ! All our actions are nothing but re-actions upon perceptions, which come from without. Our individual character determines only the manner and the degree of these re-actions. If we look closely, we find

¹ Stoekius. *op. cit.* (p. 23.)

² Lessing. *Dramaturgie.* (51. Stück.)

that just in the ‘milieu-drama’ the action starts within the character, more so than in any other drama. Under influence of the milieu, we cannot well understand anything else, than the gradual, continuous influence of the practically stable conditions of the environment upon the character. If, through this influence, the individual is incited to an unusual act, we have to seek the explanation of this act in the peculiar character of the person in question; much more so than in case of an exceptional act called forth by an exceptional stimulus. Each action is determined in the first place through the stimuli coming from without, and only secondly through the individuality of the acting character. Not so much the action itself, as rather its specific form and its magnitude are determined from within. It is probably from this consideration that Lessing assigns more importance to the characters in comedy than in tragedy, for in the former comparatively normal stimuli incite to unusual behavior, while in tragedy the stimuli are usually abnormal. Action starting purely from within does not exist. A drama consisting of an arbitrary succession of enormous deeds, of which it does not reveal, or at least suggest, the inner motives, is entirely inartistic. It is much easier to represent a murder than to show why it was committed. The ‘Why’ and the ‘How’ of an action and not the action itself are of chief interest. Any action which defies reasonably life-like representation, does not belong on the stage, for a drama must produce the strongest possible illusion; and a poorly represented action invariably causes a disillusion. There is no danger that we will ever forget that we are in a theater, as some seem to fear. Long recitals of heroic or monstrous deeds, such as we so frequently find in the Greek and French tragedy, are epic, not dramatic and do not properly belong upon the modern stage; for it is not the purpose of the drama to relate, but to represent and thereby make the event more real and life-like to us. Shakespeare’s plays are comparatively free from epic passages and possess an abundance of action. The motives of these actions are more often suggested than revealed. But

the insight of this poet into human nature was so penetrating, the suggestions are so striking, the necessary amplification is so clearly before our eyes, that we can never go amiss. The abundance of action in Shakespeare's dramas finds its explanation in the eventful period, in which the poet lived and which preceded his birth. In those times it was the usual thing to sever the knot, nowadays we endeavor to untie it. Whether this change in attitude indicates advance or retrogression in the development of the human race, I dare not say.

Hauptmann's alleged lack of *psychological insight* is a far more serious charge than all the rest. Some insist that his characters are put together after the fashion of mosaic, and the poet is said to have admitted on a certain occasion, that this actually is his method of work. However this may be, the most of Hauptmann's more important characters are very consistent. If he did not conceive them by intuitive imagination, he must needs have composed them in accordance with his conscious or unconscious psychological insight. Without such insight, a poet can no more create a credible, *i. e.*, consistent character, than a blind man can create an ideal of feminine beauty from a number of models, each of which meets the artistic demands only with reference to some one part of the body.

Altogether incomprehensible to me is what Stoekius¹ says on this point. Here it is: 'Man is to Hauptmann, as to every naturalist, a mere natural object. He can reproduce any other object of nature just as really and truly after careful observation. He is no psychologist. Take, for instance, Fuhrmann Henschel. That character gives us an overwhelming impression of reality. And yet, in the drama we do not find any inner development of his character. Hauptmann has paid no attention to his psychological make-up, he does not represent any soul-battles of the unhappy man. Why, then, is this character so true to life in spite of that?' 'In *Die Weber* we find a similar defect in the second act. It is admirably shown

¹ (*op. cit.* p. 29 ff.)

how the old Baumert changes from an humble and timid creature to a rebel. But the change is shown only in its external physiological bearing. Not the smallest part in the chain of physiological causes and effects is omitted ; but the transformation is not shown psychologically.' Is there any other means of gaining insight into the processes of consciousness of another individual than the physiological evidence ? Certainly not. A normal individual very rarely analyzes the various states of his own consciousness, unless he happens to be psychologist or philosopher ; still more rarely does he announce the findings of such an analysis to others, allowing for the same exceptions as above. Nor is this necessary in order to learn his inner life. We are able to draw pretty positive conclusions from the behavior of a man, *i. e.* from physiological evidence, with reference to the accompanying psychological phenomena. In real life, this is often very difficult, since a multitude of details presents itself simultaneously to us. We know not what act will ultimately most interest us and are therefore not able to select and note those details which mark the incipient development of the action. In the drama the poet has selected for us, and as soon as we admit that the physiological chain is complete, we have also grasped the psychological parallel. If the representation makes upon us the impression of reality, it does so because it appears to us as the parallel of a consistent succession of psychological happenings. As long as we have not grasped the mental development, we have not the least right to declare that the representation of the physical, or physiological events makes an overwhelming impression of reality. It has been hitherto a frequent method of dramatic poets to put into the mouths of their characters an analysis of their own mental states. The dramatists probably resorted to this means, because it is much easier to give a verbal description of mental phenomena, than to represent them on the stage by means of the accompanying physiological and physical happenings ; or because the dramatists did not attribute to their public the ability to draw reliable inferences with regard to the psychological state of an individual from the external evidence.

Now and then we meet with the assertion that it is, at any rate, not the task of the poet to show us the world as it really is, but as it appears to him. This is, however, idle talk. The world is for no one, whether he be a poet or not, by a hair's breadth otherwise, than it appears to him. Whether the poet ought to show us the world, not as it appears to him, but as he desires that it should be, is an entirely different proposition. An idealistic representation of life is just as legitimate as a realistic picture of it. The former has an elevating influence, provided we remember not, perhaps, that we are in a theatre, but that the respective representation willfully and knowingly idealizes real life. In a period in which poetic art offers only idealized pictures of the world, there exists great danger, especially for sensitive and highly imaginative individuals, of fleeing from the adversities of life into a land of dreams, and there seeking and finding a happiness, which makes them indifferent to the conditions of reality. But a permanent dreamer is a useless member of society, not only in the material sense, but also in the struggle of the race for spiritual growth. He who again and again intoxicates himself with imaginary deeds of virtues, soon loses the ability to act virtuously. Emotional states which are frequently produced, but not allowed to discharge themselves in a normal way, that is through action, soon lose their dynamic value.

Analysis of mental states and reflection are, in the idealistic drama, often the only means of representation, since the poet desires to represent things, which exist only as states of consciousness. On the other hand, it is the aim of the naturalist to represent the inner life only by means of the physiological phenomena, and he can only then make use of analysis and reflection, when they are strictly in keeping with the respective character. The naturalist makes larger demands on himself, on the actors, and on the public, than has been customary thus far. Knowledge, however, gained in this manner is of particular value, since we obtain it directly, *i. e.* through our feeling and not through the intellect. To be sure it often

happens that the poet is not understood by a large part of the public, or even by the entire public. The ability to perceive intuitively, that is through the emotions, varies greatly in degree and manner in different individuals, while there is less divergence in common every day perception through the intellect. It appears, then, that Hauptmann's method has misled many critics into questioning his psychological insight. But I repeat once more, if we declare that the physiological representation of a certain character is complete and produces an overwhelming impression of reality, we have consciously or unconsciously grasped the mental states, which find their manifestations in the physiological phenomena.

The lack of typical motives in Hauptmann's works has already been touched upon. It seems to me, all that we can justly demand of any motive, is, that it should be intelligible, probable, credible. The cause of the suffering may be ever so rare, if we are only able to enter into the resulting emotions.

The weakness of Hauptmann's characters. It is unfortunately true, that our poet represents seemingly with preference weak individuals. The causes of it lie in Hauptmann's character and the conditions of the times. In our present society a firm will, decisive and bold action, have become somewhat rare. We endeavor continually to lessen friction between members of the same social groups, or between those of different social groups; we try to avoid open conflicts, hold peace conferences, and the like. Now and then we still meet an individual, who strives openly and directly towards his goal, but the most prefer the round-about way, if thereby they can avoid interference with others and on the part of others. All sorts of euphemistic terms have been invented for this method, as adaptability, diplomacy, business capacity, etc. The German system of education and government has perhaps a tendency to crush out individuality, to transform each one into a model citizen. But in direct opposition to this tendency stands the almost stubborn courage of conviction, so characteristic of the German people. In all walks of life there are to be found

strong personalities, people willing to make any sacrifice rather than renounce their convictions, or act against their principles. It is therefore not due to the scarcity of strong-willed men, that Hauptmann is given to representing individuals lacking in will-power; nor does his pessimism wholly explain his preference. It may be attributed in part to the shy and highly emotional nature of the author, to which is also due the fact that Hauptmann is far more successful in representing women, and strong women at that, than in representing men. A study of his plays will easily convince us of this significant fact.

The causes of naturalism are by no means obscure and a short review of them will therefore suffice. Materialism, the scientific spirit and the social tendencies of our age, the reaction against the conventionality and the hollow idealism of the last generations, in short, the sum total of the conditions of the present and recent past is the soil from which naturalism has sprung. It is certainly a mistake to ascribe the origin of the naturalistic movement in Germany to a few literary men, who desired to make for themselves a name; it was deeply rooted in the life of the nation. The choice of subjects finds a similar explanation. For the materialist king and beggar are but two, although different, representatives of the same species. Science emphasizes the influence of environment and heredity upon the character, and the poet seeks those factors where they are most pronounced, that is in the lower and lowest classes of society. The social and philanthropic movements of our age have also brought the fourth estate to the foreground and to this must be added, in the present case, the morbid preference which Hauptmann has for the dark side of life. The realists of the middle of the last century have repeatedly treated similar subjects, but in an essentially different manner. Hauptmann is much more relentless in the presentation of the repelling and strives for strict objectivity.—It must be remembered that objectivity is a relative term.—He avoids putting an analysis of their inner life into the mouths of his characters and uses reflection only then, when it is in keeping with the character

and the situation. He does this even at the risk of not being understood. All actions which cannot be represented in an approximately lifelike way, he banishes from his plays. With regard to the scenery, Hauptmann often makes strong demands. Even the perfected stage-technique of the present time, cannot always satisfy these demands.

While I am of the opinion that many of the charges preferred against naturalism and against Hauptmann are ill-founded, and that naturalism cannot be disposed of by denying to it the name of art, I desire in no way to advocate its cause. The movement is, moreover, already a thing of the past, but it has exerted a very important influence upon German literature, and has left behind it a permanent impression. Many of the dramatic productions of the last ten years have been strongly affected by naturalism. In my subsequent analysis I shall not again refer in detail to disputed points which have been considered in the preceding paragraphs.

Promethidenloos. The year 1885 designates in the history of German literature the outbreak of the recent 'Storm and Stress.' The same year Hauptmann made his first appearance before the public with a poem, which bore the pretentious title *Promethidenloos*. It was modeled after Byron's *Childe Harold*, but, unfortunately, it possessed none of the merits of this great master-piece. Hauptmann soon came to this conclusion himself and withdrew the poem from print a few months after its publication. He even had those copies destroyed which were still in the hands of the publisher and the book-dealers.

Promethidenloos was in every respect a true product of the 'Storm and Stress.' The very character of the dedication to the 'Seven,' probably then the most intimate friends of Hauptmann, betrays this. The following is a somewhat free translation :

'What we have felt, what we desired,
Our duty is to tell.
The veins of time are filled with gold
Instead of blood, glowing and bold,
As yours and mine does swell.'

Joined hand in hand firmly abide
And feel you are one whole.
That one the path, on which you stride,
That one the glowing, surging tide,
Which fills your every soul.
For light and truth, rise blood with might
And throb my heart so hot.
Thou courage proud of battle and fight
Desert, desert us not !'

These few lines are the keynote of the whole poem, which is a striking embodiment of the radical, high-soaring idealism, the overbearing self-esteem and the exaggerated notions of the mission and importance of a poet, then prevalent among the German literary youth.

In thirteen songs of very unequal length the poet relates to us his experiences on a journey to Italy in the year 1883, hiding himself under the transparent disguise of a youth named Selin, like Childe Harold, a pilgrim. The poem is invaluable as a self-confession of the author and as a literary document of the times, for much which it contains is not peculiar to Hauptmann, but rather to the period of which *Promethidenlos* is a product. The author's hatred of the school, which has profited him little or nothing, his altruism, his keen interest in social problems, especially in that of the fallen woman, all this we find in the epic; and also Hauptmann's more personal characteristics, his doctrinarianism, his sincerity, energy and will-power. Its artistic value is very small, the few bold figures of speech and happy phrases which it contains cannot atone for the lack of concreteness and clearness, and the rhetorical bombast of its often labored verses. It is therefore no wonder that at the time of its appearance *Promethidenlos* passed almost unnoticed.

Before Sunrise. Not until four years later did Hauptmann again choose to face the public, this time with a drama, which bore the title *Before Sunrise*. It can hardly be doubted, that the poet thereby wished to predict the dawn of a new day in the realm of literary, especially dramatic, art. As far as

Hauptmann himself is concerned, this day has turned out somewhat dark and gloomy; though, no other dramatic author has thus far rendered its light still more obscure through some great, poetic deed.

The works of Zola, Tolstoi and Ibsen had in the meanwhile exerted their influence upon Hauptmann; Bjarne P. Holmsen's (Arno Holz and Johannes Schlaf) *Papa Hamlet* and other sketches had furnished a model for a new literary style, from which Hauptmann derived many suggestions. The poet dedicated the first edition of *Before Sunrise* to the author of *Papa Hamlet*, as an expression of his gratitude for the decisive suggestions received. In his drama he first applied in a measure the method of Holz and Schlaf to dramatic art, and so it happened that the beginning of the naturalistic drama was dated from the appearance of *Before Sunrise*; although this work does not essentially differ from the works of the older school, excepting in the choice of subject and the liberal use of colloquial language and of dialect.

It is a sad picture, which the poet unfolds before our eyes. Helene Krause, the younger of the two daughters of the farmer Krause, has been brought up in the Moravian colony Herrnhut, at the wish of her deceased mother; but has returned to her parental home in Witzdorf. The conditions, which exist there at the time of her return, are horrible. Her father, an embruted drunkard, who, like the most of his neighbors, has suddenly become rich through the coal discovered beneath his soil, spends day and night at the village inn. His second wife entertains adulterous relations with an idiotic young farmer, Wilhelm Kahl, whom she wishes to join in marriage with her step-daughter, Helene. But she also tries to play the lady, and in her ridiculous conceit has engaged for herself a companion, Frau Spiller by name, a sycophant of the worst kind. Krause's older daughter, the wife of an engineer, Hoffmann, is, at the time of the play, likewise at home to await her delivery, and her husband is, of course, with her. Hoffmann is a shrewd, unscrupulous rascal. He has married the wealthy farmer's

daughter for the sake of her money only, after having forced a rival into suicide, and has even managed to reap the rewards of the latter's industrial undertakings. With the farmers of Witzdorf he has, when they were all intoxicated, concluded an ingenious contract, through which he has monopolized the sale of the coal from their mines and he is now well on the way toward becoming a millionaire. His wife is addicted to strong drink and their first child has become the victim of an unnatural craving for alcohol at the tender age of three. But Hoffmann takes life philosophically and hopes to find consolation for the shortcomings of his wife through his youthful, pretty sister-in-law. Helene naturally detests the thought of marrying Wilhelm Kahl, although she does not yet know of his improper relations to her step-mother. The attentions and courtesies of Hoffmann she readily receives, because of her loneliness. There is not a single young man in all Witzdorf, who could be a suitable companion for her; nothing but rich, stupid, drunken land-owners, and poor, uncultured, envious miners. Hoffmann possesses, at least, polish, and his baseness Helene has not yet discovered.

Into these conditions comes unexpectedly at the very beginning of the play a stranger, Alfred Loth, a former schoolmate of Hoffmann, a social dreamer, and, just at present, reformer and apostle of total abstinence. He comes to Witzdorf to study the economical condition of the miners and write a monograph on the result of his investigations: but is naive enough to claim hospitality from Hoffmann, on the ground of their former acquaintance, although he has learned that the good man has become a capitalist and unscrupulous oppressor of the working people. Alfred Loth has read his Darwin, and not in vain, hence he has decided to marry only a woman of unquestionably sound stock, that is, to govern his choice ultimately by strictly scientific principles. Alcohol he considers the worst enemy of the human race; his arguments he substantiates by quoting Bunge. He also demands that the woman, who should love him, should make a confession to him

on her own accord. Such ideas he expounds, half an hour after his arrival, as table-talk. That all those sitting with him at supper, with the exception of Helene, are habitual drunkards, our doctrinaire does not even suspect in spite of the clearest indications. He also mentions a brutish, old drunkard, whom he has seen in the village inn and when, amidst the embarrassment of the others, Wilhelm Kahl with stupid laughter blurts out: 'Why, to be sure, that was the old man,' Loth utterly fails to comprehend the remark.

Upon Helene he makes a deep impression and shows, on his part, a condescending interest in her. He explains to her his lofty programme, which embraces nothing less than the salvation of all mankind. Sensibly enough he does not expect that his ideals will be realized during his life-time, and since, 'so to speak, he could seat himself at the table only as the last of all,' he has renounced all earthly bliss. Helene takes everything he says at its face value, and however ridiculous this theorist may be, he rises head and shoulders above all others, with whom the girl has come in contact. No wonder that the inexperienced creature yearning for love, becomes at once enamoured of him. She has accidentally discovered the licentiousness of her step-mother, and the sensuality of Hoffmann's feeling for her. The old Krause would be brute enough to defile his own daughter, instead of protecting her. Helene suddenly realizes that she is sinking deeper and deeper into the mire. Loth appears to her as an ideal man and, knowing his views she courageously confesses to him her affection, as he is about to leave, so that she may not lose him. The passion of the self-denying, rational Loth is immediately kindled; a quite touching, but also quite sentimental love scene follows, and the two agree to leave Witzdorf together at once. In the midst of her bliss, Helene is troubled by the fear, that her hope may come to naught. Loth has not yet discovered that her father is a demented drunkard, in spite of various circumstances and remarks which seem unmistakably to indicate this. Helene's avowal of the humiliating fact is delayed by her natural shame

and finally prevented by the approaching delivery of her sister. On account of this event, Doctor Schimmelpfennig comes into the house of Krause and there meets Loth. The doctor is an old university chum of Loth and, like the latter, a confirmed Darwinist. As soon as he realizes how matters stand between Loth and Helene he informs his friend fully of the state of affairs existing in the Krause family and Loth sacrifices his young love without hesitation. He writes a short note, annulling the engagement just concluded, and then departs without seeing Helene again. When the poor girl discovers and reads the note, she is seized with despair, snatches up a hunting-knife and rushes into an adjoining room. A servant girl, who soon after enters this room in search of Helene, comes quickly out again screaming frantically. From the hall one hears the drunken bawling of the old Krause, who has just returned from the inn where he has spent the night. So ends the play.

There is but one attractive character in the whole drama, Helene Krause. From the little we learn about her mother, we must conclude that she was a gentle, meek woman and her daughter has inherited much from her. Helene's education in the peaceful, pietistic colony of Herrnhut, far remote from the affairs of the world, has unfortunately not strengthened her for the battle of life; hence it is not surprising, that, with gloomy resignation, she accepts the conditions, which she finds, upon her return to the house of her father. Her passive suffering is entirely in keeping with her character, and the training which she has received. The latter also explains her leaning towards sentimentality. When we consider her loneliness, the hopeless conditions of her surroundings, and the preponderance of the emotional in her being, we find the unusual confession of her love, and her last, despairing deed not at all unnatural. Bartels¹ is of the opinion, if Helene were a really healthy being, she would not have collapsed under the comparatively light blow of fortune. Of a self-relying, resolute, young

¹ Bartels, A. *Gerhart Hauptmann.* Weimar, 1897 (p. 46.)

woman we certainly should presuppose this. Helene, however, does not belong to this class, and I doubt very much whether we ought to designate indiscriminately as mentally and morally unhealthy, all those, who are not equal to the adversities of life. Helene does nothing to help herself and merely wonders at the hateful, sullen looks of the miners, without ever divining the cause; for energy and penetration are not her strong points. But Hauptmann has well understood how to show us her kindness to the poor. In the fourth act—a subdivision of the five acts into scenes does not exist—the poor wife of the coachman steals away with a potful of milk, when one of the servant girls calls after her: ‘Be quick! Someone is coming,’ but another girl adds reassuringly: ‘Never mind. It is only our miss.’ The poet has here skilfully, in an entirely concrete manner, characterized Helene, and his method is certainly artistic, in spite of the fact that the little scene has no direct bearing on the plot. The similar introduction of the imbecile Hopslaber, however, is out of place, since it serves only to characterize a minor figure of the play, Wilhelm Kahl. It is, to be sure, very significant of the latter, that he interrupts with his idiotic jokes the report of Frau Spiller about his rival Loth; but for the drama this circumstance is meaningless, especially since Kahl, after this occurrence, practically disappears from the play. The whole is nothing but a naturalistic blunder. The dramatist must select and there is no other standard for his choice than the suitability of a certain detail for the representation of a given character, and the relative importance of the characters of the play in question. If the several characters of a drama vary greatly in importance, the minuteness of their representation ought to be proportional.

Alfred Loth, whom the poet evidently intended for the central figure of *Before Sunrise*, is essentially a failure. He ought to know, that, with an investigation of the conditions of the miners from his, *i. e.* from the socialistic point of view, he renders a very undesirable service to the capitalists; how can he make himself comfortable in the house of the man whom

his pamphlet will harm most? It borders on stupidity, that he, in addition to this, even requests Hoffmann's assistance in these investigations. His friend takes this for impudence, but it is merely incapacity to comprehend the real significance of the situation. One of the first things Loth does after his arrival is to borrow a sum of money from Hoffmann, apparently only for the purpose, that he may tear the check a few hours later with lofty indifference. The whole scene savors strongly of 'von Trast-Saarberg,' the rodomontade count in Sudermann's *Honor (Ehre)*. What sort of a descriptive work Loth would produce, we may infer from his utter inability to interpret correctly, what he sees in the house of the Krauses. But there are such abstract and blind enthusiasts. That he impresses Helene, is quite natural, also that he so readily responds to her love; but his ultimate course of action is entirely inconsistent with his character. Through the first four acts Loth appears as a rather radical idealist, in the last act he is an absolute rationalist. The natural thing for Loth 'number one' would be to marry the girl, despite the fact that her nearest relatives are incorrigible inebrates; the more so, since she herself had not fallen a victim to this vice. To renounce her and, at the same time, rescue her from her misery lies, of course, beyond the power of this dreamy reformer; but his sudden resolution to break off the engagement stands in direct contradiction with all we know of him.

It seems to me the evolutionist got the better of the poet in this instance. Hauptmann wished to represent the baneful influence of alcoholism, and to produce thereby a tragic effect. To this end the sacrifice of Helene was necessary, and this could only be brought about through the unfeeling, cowardly action of Alfred Loth. The resulting consequences have been disastrous to the drama. Landsberg¹ is of the opinion that Loth must either marry Helene or seek, together with her, liberty in death. Landsberg has been enchanted by Ibsen's

¹ Landsberg, H. *Los von Hauptmann.* Berlin, 1900 (p. 27.)

heroes and he sees in the great Norse playwright the Messiah of dramatic art. But this liberty found in death is a very questionable thing. In a drama it is usually nothing but a makeshift and a confession that the respective persons are neither able to endure the existing conditions, nor find a solution for the conflict tormenting them. In very rare instances, voluntary self-inflicted death may be the only possible outcome, but it is, and always will be, a desperate means of solution. Landsberg is apparently a materialist, but however this may be, two possibilities exist; either the individual consciousness suffers no interruption at the hour of physical death, *i. e.*, we do not lose our identity; or the individual consciousness is destroyed, the 'Ego' ceases to be. In the first case there can be no freedom, no escape from the consequences of the past; in the second we have only 'non-existence,' which, of course, is not identical with freedom. For Loth there exists no need of making an immediate test, of his own free will, as to which of the two it will be. To bring about such a solution would be arbitrary in the extreme. We are to overcome the difficulties which may beset us, not to avoid them by deserting the ranks; and this we demand also of the characters of a drama. Woerner¹ holds that Loth's character is not really inconsistent, that 'here, as often in real life, the self-confident moralist is stronger only in his teachings than is his devout listener,' (Helene). This is true, but one of the main points of Loth's programme is the uplifting of the race, through selective breeding—for this is really what it amounts to—and because of this he sacrifices Helene, in order that he may not be unfaithful to his principles. As far as his theory is concerned, there lies no inconsistency in his decision. But if these principles are so inviolably sacred to him, he should not recklessly rush into the 'blind alley.' In the first four acts of the drama it becomes very evident that sentiment largely determines his actions; he preaches reason, but obeys his heart. In the last

¹ Woerner, U. C., *Gerhart Hauptmann*. 2. Aufl. Berlin, 1901 (p. 8.)

act, however, he suddenly turns out an unbending rationalist, and in this lies the inconsistency.

Of the remaining persons of the play, Hoffmann is best drawn, but he possesses not a single lovable characteristic, nor is he deep, and we may hence spare ourselves the trouble of an analysis. Helene very soon recognizes of what sort is the feeling with which Hoffmann regards her; else she might with his assistance have recovered from the cruel blow, to be, however, only the more surely and rapidly ruined by him. Her fate would seem inevitable, if only Loth's action resulted necessarily from his character. The old farm-laborer, Bleibst, is a very realistic representation of his type, likewise Wilhelm Kahl is credible. Frau Krause and the cringing Frau Spiller are somewhat exaggerated. Schlenther¹ and also Mahn² find that Doctor Schimmelpfennig resembles Doctor Relling in Ibsen's *Wild Duck*; but this can hardly be said. Relling knowingly and intentionally leads the people to self-deception, in order to make life more bearable to them, and he sincerely wishes that 'the devil would take Gregors Werle with his ideal demands.' Schimmelpfennig, on the contrary, is a relentless champion of Darwinism and the truth. Whether or not the people perish from it, evidently matters very little to him. He is on the whole rather shadowy and, next to Loth, the worst drawn character of the play.

Hauptmann has termed *Before Sunrise* a social drama and thereby he, no doubt, wishes to indicate that the conditions represented in the play are, at least to some extent, typical; but this is not the case. There is nowhere so degenerate a community as this Witzdorf is represented to be; the poet has exaggerated to prove his point. I am convinced, that, in the whole Giant Mountains, not a single farmer could be found whose horses and even cows are fed from mangers of marble

¹ Schlenther P. *Gerhart Hauptmann. Sein Lebensgang und seine Dichtung.* 4. Auflage. Berlin, 1898 (p. 92.)

² Mahn, P. *Gerhart Hauptmann und der moderne Realismus.* Berlin, 1894 (p. 9.)

and racks of German silver, although Helene assures Loth that there are several of these in Witzdorf alone. But even if we take everything that is said about this village for truth, the abnormal conditions of this place should not furnish material for a social drama. The poet has moreover shown us nothing but the household of the Krauses. The miners, the degenerate landowners never appear on the stage, and even when spoken of, it is only in the most general manner. But discussion of social problems and the breadth of the 'milieu' certainly do not suffice to make a social drama of a play.

With reference to the stage *Before Sunrise* has a number of merits: a clear, lively, although somewhat too lengthy exposition, very effective conclusions of the different acts, with the possible exception of the fourth act, and a plot which has been carried out with great consistency. On the other hand it has also a great blemish, namely, the inconsistency in the character of Alfred Loth. The play differs from the customary, modern drama in the choice of the subject, in the emphasis given to the representation of the secondary characters, in the unsparing, even exaggerated presentation of the repelling, and in the use of dialect and colloquial language. The last fact is, in itself, a merit of the drama, for the poet has succeeded in characterizing the different persons through the language which they use; and in indicating or suggesting, through pauses, repetitions, and the like, many a hidden psychological phenomenon. The dialect of the Giant Mountains, which the poet uses very freely, is unfortunately intelligible only to a comparatively small number of persons and moreover cannot be adequately represented on the printed page by the ordinary symbols of speech-sound. All this makes the play less comprehensible and so less effective for many.

When the poet wrote this work, he certainly thought in the first place of the reader. Otherwise the exhaustive stage directions of the play would be quite superfluous. Much that is contained in them, has no significance for the actual representation of the play whatever. For instance: 'It is the Farmer

Krause, who, as usually, is the last one to leave the inn,' or 'He (Bleibst) lights a match on his leather trousers, to rekindle the short pipe, which almost never comes out of his mouth,' or 'This makes her appear to him so lovely, that he wants to use the moment to embrace her.' Such marginal notes by the poet, of which there are dozens in this play, cannot be represented. The same applies to the following and similar word-paintings intended to heighten the mood : 'Through the door-way one sees far-stretching cloverfields and level meadows, through them runs a meandering brook, the course of which is marked out by alders and willows. In the horizon a single mountain-cone. The larks have begun to sing and their unceasing warbling comes now from near by, now from a distance to the farm-yard.' Many of the peculiarities of Hauptmann originate in his desire to reach the reader or spectator more through the emotions than through the intellect, which is certainly a poetic method. On the stage it is not always sufficient and occasionally fails entirely.

Before Sunrise clearly shows the influence of foreign literature. Tolstoi's *Power of Darkness* has furnished the chief model ; the general atmosphere of this play is the same as that pervading *Before Sunrise*. From a purely dramatic standpoint the former is far superior to the latter. In Tolstoi's drama crime results from crime with almost inevitable necessity, but this can by no means be said of Hauptmann's play. To be sure, Nikita, the main character of *The Power of Darkness*, also becomes inconsistent at the very close of the play, but the drama, as a whole, does not suffer so much from this defect, as does *Before Sunrise*, from the inconsistency in Loth's character. Hauptmann's play also reminds us of Zola's *L'assommoir* and *La terre*; particularly in the unsparing representation of the brutal and repelling. Ibsen's *Ghosts* may have encouraged the young author to embody his views on evolution in a drama, but these views themselves he had derived from a different source, as will be shown.

But while the influence of foreign authors is quite evident in
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Before Sunrise, the essence of the play is Hauptmann's own property. Close observation of real life has been the chief source, and we shall in the course of our studies make the discovery, that Hauptmann is not successful, where reality does not furnish him the immediate model for his work. He is, then, not so much naturalist from choice, as rather from the necessity imposed upon him by the limitations of his talent.

When the mining industry in the Giant Mountains was still less developed than at present, it repeatedly happened that in a particular locality the impecunious owners of the sterile soil became suddenly rich without any effort on their own part, through the discovery of coal beneath their fields. This has resulted, with rare exceptions, in the degeneration of the respective individuals, and the young Hauptmann has had, no doubt, more than one opportunity to observe the deleterious effects of what would seem at first sight a blessing. These observations formed the nucleus of the play. But we have really in this drama two distinct classes opposed to, and contrasted with each other: the native element and the men of the world. The latter are represented by Alfred Loth, Doctor Schimmelpfennig, and the Engineer Hoffmann. Helene Krause cannot appropriately be classed with either group. Hoffmann is the prototype of an unscrupulous, cunning, unprincipled upstart, a figure not infrequently met with, and he needs no explanation. Loth and Schimmelpfennig are the outgrowth of the discussions of scientific and sociological questions, in which the author indulged, when at Jena and perhaps also at later periods. Loth in particular is more of a book than a man. But we must not identify him with the author, for Hauptmann could not well subscribe to some of Loth's statements, as for instance the following: 'They (Zola and Ibsen) are not poets at all, they are nothing but necessary evils, Fräulein Krause. I am really thirsty and demand from literary art a clear, refreshing draught.—I am not sick. What Zola and Ibsen dispense is medicine.'—Most of this so-called medicine is more pleasant to take than what Hauptmann has

to offer.—The author has, however, lent to the reformer Loth his own hatred for all sorts of vice and his doctrinarianism. By the uncalled-for sacrifice of Helene he, presumably, intended to show us Loth as a man of firm convictions and of great will-power. Doctor Schimmelpfennig is more of a rationalist than his enthusiastic friend, but there is nothing in him to convince us, that he actually stands entirely above the possibility of becoming entangled in matters, which he has theoretically condemned long ago, as for instance in matrimony ; although he censures Loth for his weakness in this respect. No matter how we interpret the statements, which the author put into the mouths of these two characters, and no matter with which of them his sympathy chiefly rests, we must come to the conclusion that his views of the world are still very immature and too dogmatic, but we must admire the resoluteness with which he sacrifices everything to his conviction.

Before Sunrise appeared in print during the summer of 1889, and on October 20 of the same year it was put on the stage for the first time in the Lessing theater at Berlin by the ‘Verein Freie Bühne.’ The piece met with violent opposition and, at the same time, with unbounded admiration, though it deserved neither the one nor the other. The apostles of a new literary creed and their numerous disciples at once proclaimed Hauptmann to be their leader, and he still holds a leading position in spite of the fact, that many who helped to put him on the pedestal, have since tried to take him down.

The Peace-Festival. In less than a year, a second play followed, which the author dedicated to Theodor Fontane, the aged realist, who had endorsed Hauptmann’s first drama as a work of considerable merit. The views concerning this second play are most conflicting ; some pronounce it the best drama Hauptmann ever produced, others declare it to be the worst. If anything *The Peace-Festival* is still more gloomy than *Before Sunrise*. Determinism rules supreme in this piece, the human will is but a straw, the characters of the drama,

excepting two, act not as they *will* but as they *must*. And still, though they also are aware of this fact, they consider themselves responsible for their deeds. The action, the conflict of the play takes place entirely within the persons and Hauptmann deemed it advisable to refer, on the title page, to Lessing's view with regard to this sort of action, as expressed in his *Discussions of the Fable*.

It is on a Christmas eve. We have to follow the poet to a lonely country-house, lying on the outskirts of the village Erkner, a suburb of Berlin. In a large, uncomfortable hall, paved with flagstone, Frau Doctor Scholz and her unbidden guest, Frau Buchner, are busy decorating a Christmas tree. The former is a woman of forty-six, but appears much older; continually complains and whines, and makes life miserable for herself and others. Frau Buchner is entirely the opposite; she possesses an indomitable optimism, is of a cheerful and helpful disposition, and appears youthful by the side of Frau Scholz, although the difference in their age is only four years. Presently Auguste Scholz comes home from a Christmas celebration for the poor of the village. She is only twenty-nine, but already the worst of old maids: nervous, quarrelsome, peevish, discontented, and the poet makes haste to establish once more the equilibrium by introducing Ida Buchner, twenty, blooming, kind, and always cheerful. Frau Buchner and her daughter have come, much to the discomfort of Frau Scholz and Auguste, to establish peace and harmony in the home of Doctor Scholz. This home has been shattered for many years, a real family-life indeed has never existed here. Doctor Scholz is a well-educated man, has travelled far and wide, he has even been in Japan. At thirty-eight, he married a poor girl of sixteen, from mere fancy, and brought her to the lonely country-house. There they have lived together for thirty years, children have been born to them, but Doctor Scholz soon entirely withdrew from his family, devoting himself to his studies and keeping strictly to his own apartments on the second floor of the spacious house. There are three children

in this strange family. Auguste, the oldest, and two sons, Robert and Wilhelm, now twenty-eight and twenty-six respectively. Doctor Scholz never concerned himself about his daughter, but the boys he had tried to fill with knowledge long before they outgrew their knee-trousers. Ten hours they had to spend daily at their books, although they resisted vigorously such treatment, biting and scratching the old Friebe, the factotum of the doctor, whenever he was ordered to drag them up-stairs to their study-room. The mother always took the part of the boys, and finally the doctor became disgusted and decided to let the brats grow up without training. For five years they were left entirely to themselves, just during the period of approaching adolescence, and, as a result, fell into all sorts of vices. At last Doctor Scholz, troubled by his awakened conscience, sent the boys to a private school, a sort of reformatory, in spite of the mother's opposition. From there they ran away, as might have been expected, and an attempt to send the younger one, Wilhelm, to America also failed. From that time they have made their own way through the world. Robert found a position in a factory, as clerk and composer of sensational advertisements; Wilhelm became a musician. Although living at odds with their father, they now and then visit their home. On such an occasion Wilhelm brings with him an acquaintance, like himself a musician, and Frau Scholz plays duets with the stranger day after day. Thereby the jealousy of the husband is aroused, and he expresses his suspicions to the servants of the house. Wilhelm overhears such a conversation and in his anger forgets himself so far as to beat his father. On the same day father and son leave the house and Frau Scholz and her daughter have since lived alone. The older son, Robert, pays every Christmas a short visit home and this year has come as usually. Nothing has been heard of Doctor Scholz since his departure, which is now six years ago, nor has Wilhelm kept up since then any connection with the members of his family. He has always suffered from remorse and has lived without

happiness or hope, until he met Ida Buchner, and quickly won her love. Ida is the only child of Frau Buchner, who herself regards the attractive young man with somewhat more than maternal affection. When she learns that family troubles are the cause of Wilhelm's depression, which does not fully yield even to her daughter's love, she resolves to set matters aright, and, supported by Ida, does not rest until Wilhelm consents to revisit his paternal home at the present Christmas time, to regain the peace of his soul. Frau Buchner and Ida have come a few days before in order to put the Scholzes in a mood of reconciliation, and smooth the way for Wilhelm, in which undertaking they are, however, not very successful.

Robert, who has become a cynic, tells Frau Buchner without provocation straight to her face, that he is unable to comprehend how she can endure the life at the home of the Scholzes, but she is too simple and meek to take offense at this. When Robert declares that, if his father is not quite so indifferent to him as to any fool, it is, because he is, in a sense, the product of his father's folly, Frau Buchner is indeed at the end of her wit. Still, to a new, personal insult, which Robert inflicts upon her, she only replies: 'Robert, I know that I have a special mission. That protects me like a charm. From the bottom of my heart: you have not insulted me.' Almost too much lack of temper!—Nevertheless even this fails to make an impression upon the confirmed cynic, and we can foresee that the intended reconciliation, the peace-festival, will be thwarted by the behavior of this fellow.

While all, Robert excepted, with widely different feelings, to be sure, await the arrival of Wilhelm, in stumbles Doctor Scholz. He comes home, because he instinctively feels that the hour of his death is near at hand. His behavior, his utterances, plainly indicate that he suffers from the delusion that everybody is conspiring to persecute him; insanity of persecution, as the psychologists call this mental disease. That Frau Scholz, the uncultured, worried, scared, little woman, fails to interpret these symptoms correctly, cannot surprise us. All

the others have withdrawn to leave husband and wife to themselves, since they are meeting again for the first time after so long a period. Frau Scholz begins where she left off six years ago, *i. e.*, by making complaining reproaches. Scholz is not inclined to defend himself. ‘Upon guilt follows atonement, upon sin follows punishment,’ he declares mysteriously. But he soon cuts short the conversation, going to his apartments, where his old, trusty servant Fribe supplies him liberally with wine, cognac and cigars. Mother and daughter are little pleased with the return of Doctor Scholz. Auguste declares it is just as if someone had returned from the grave—most people would rather not have their relatives return from there, after so long an absence—and Frau Scholz laments that her husband will soon be through with the wine and the cigars, and that she, in her old days, will have to suffer from his whims. Before the two have yet recovered from their surprise, or rather consternation, Wilhelm arrives. When he, alone with Ida, enters the house of his father, the scene of his wretched childhood, and of his offence, he collapses in hopeless despair, overcome by his recollections. Frau Buchner and Ida try to re-establish his self-confidence and even then do not abandon him, when he makes a sort of general confession and relates what has happened between him and his father—which Frau Buchner, at least, has already learned from the other members of the family—and how infamous a life he has formerly led. Urged by the two women, he at last resolves to ask his father’s pardon. When father and son stand in each other’s presence, Doctor Scholz at first shrinks back, his face expressing hatred and distrust, but as soon as he recognizes the intention of the repenting son, he tenderly and sincerely pardons him. Wilhelm collapses under the mental strain, but through the affectionate care of the old doctor, he is soon brought out of danger. All, even Robert, are deeply moved and it comes to an explanation and reconciliation between the brothers.

But the spirit of peace does not long prevail. The Buchners have arranged a rather child-like Christmas celebration with

tree and presents, which makes the Scholzes feel very uncomfortable, since they no longer possess the necessary simplicity and purity of heart, to surrender themselves to such impressions. Robert refuses in an insulting manner to accept a present from Ida—the reason we shall see later—and thereby irritates his brother. Still worse, when Ida sings a very simple Christmas song in an adjoining room, Robert begins to scoff. A quarrel ensues between him and Wilhelm, in which Auguste takes Robert's part. Doctor Scholz bids her to leave the room, and when Robert now interferes, he orders him out of the house. The mother, trying to shield the son, thoroughly arouses the anger of the aged man, and when Wilhelm attempts to appease him, his mania suddenly breaks forth. He fears Wilhelm will beat him, flees whining from him and finally collapses. Robert now leaves the house, but not without destroying, before he goes, the self-confidence and hopefulness of his brother. Wilhelm, as a result, renounces Ida, lest he make her unhappy by marrying her; but she will not give him up. The more rudely he repulses her, the more tenderly she pleads with him, until she finally conquers. Led by her he enters the adjoining room, where his father has just breathed his last sigh.

Hauptmann has very appropriately called this play a family catastrophe. These five people so closely connected by the ties of nature, forming one of those almost inseparable units, which we consider the very foundations of all our social institutions, cannot but inflict pain upon one another. They must do so, whether they choose to or not. At least the poet wishes to give us this impression and he has drawn his characters essentially true to life. Such families really do exist. If upon any one of the Scholzes falls a larger degree of guilt than upon the rest, this one is Doctor Scholz. This is neither the common opinion of the critics, nor does it seem to be the view of the poet. Of course he is still a confirmed evolutionist and tries to show that Doctor Scholz has become what he is, because his wife failed to understand him. It is quite evident that she

can never have been a spiritual companion to him, but this does not exonerate him. Scholz is a man of experience, culture, learning; and he out of his own initiative, chose for himself a mate. No one can censure the poor, young girl for accepting his proposal. Was it not the duty of the mature man to decide in advance whether or not this girl would be an acceptable life companion for him, or whether she would at least be susceptible to education? The difference in the age of the two is no positive reason for the failure they made of matrimony. On the contrary the youthfulness of the bride pre-supposes pliancy of character, and if Doctor Scholz still enjoyed only a reasonable degree of vitality, it lay largely in his power to shape the course of his married life. Although women mature, in every respect, earlier than do men, a girl of sixteen has not yet completed the development of her character, and much can be done to mould it. It does indeed indicate deplorable spiritual poverty, when Frau Scholz believes she is doing her share, if she provides her husband with nice, warm socks, palatable food, and so forth; but she has taste for music, and other elevated preferences might have been easily inculcated in her, if Scholz had been the proper man to do so. The methods, which he employed in educating his children, explain why he was unable to educate his child-wife. But granted he had been equal to the task, or even that he had made all reasonable effort and still had not been able to fashion her character, it would nevertheless have been incumbent on him to find a way in which to live durably with his family. The blame for all that has happened falls largely upon him, the cultured, educated, experienced, mature man, not upon the foolish young girl. It was unwise of the mother to take sides with her children against their father; 'Mother pulled at my left arm and father at my right arm,' Wilhelm relates. Very significant of the narrowness of the man is the fact, that he never troubled himself about the bringing up of his daughter. A once very popular, and still practised educational method, of which Doctor Scholz also makes use, was to

send unmanageable boys to America; simply to get rid of them and save the family name from possible disgrace.

Robert and Wilhelm understand splendidly how to explain why and how they have become what they are. The former is far better off than his brother in as much as he knows how to keep from himself, under ordinary circumstances, any annoying feelings, for he is a rationalist, that is, he has become such in the course of time. Wilhelm is predominantly emotional and therefore suffers horribly from the recollections of his past. We cannot hope much for him from the future, for he has inherited too much from his father. Utterances like this (in a stern, repelling tone) 'Let me alone, that you don't understand;' or this, (harsh and passionate) 'Yes, yes, yes! That is the same old story—I don't understand you, I don't understand you!—Mother and father, too, have spoken different languages all their lives. You don't understand me! You don't know me! etc.' addressed to his bride, make us fear the worst. There are also positive indications that he suffers from the same mania, which possesses his father. But this is a matter of course, for the author's ideas are still strongly colored by the various evolutionary theories, imbibed at Jena and elsewhere. Much for the future happiness of Wilhelm depends on whether or not material cares will be spared to him, in case he establishes a family; for he is, in spite of his idealism, not the man to rise above the material.

Ida's attitude is too self-sacrificing, but still credible; less so the indomitable optimism of Frau Buchner, even if we assume, that the fates have been hitherto most kind to her. Her own, more than maternal love for the young musician does not furnish an explanatory motive for her indefatigable endeavors. Through her strong affection for Wilhelm, Hauptmann has introduced a highly ambiguous motive into the play, which serves no purpose, for we know Frau Buchner too little, to form a correct estimate of the import of this affection.

The stage directions are still more copious in this piece than in *Before Sunrise* and hardly any more to the point, *i. e.*, direc-

tions, which the actor or stage manager actually may carry out, and not mere remarks of the author. Many are mere suggestions and seem like a rough sketch of the characters, made by the author more for his own use, than for the benefit of the reader, and so they do not belong in the finished play. It has indeed been stated, that in *The Peace-Festival* Hauptmann surrenders everything to the actors, but this is hardly the proper way of expressing it. Anything, which the actor, through his attitude, through gestures, play of the features, the masque, and so forth, can express, the poet need not express in the dramatic dialogue. He even ought not to express it, if he feels reasonably assured that the average spectator will get the point without the help of the dialogue. If the dialogue is to do it all, a phonograph will suffice to recite the play. However the author must be certain, that his stage directions not only stand on the paper, but that they can also be carried out. In *The Peace-Festival* Hauptmann makes great demands on the actors, and on the spectators as well.

The language of the play is still more colloquial, more abrupt, than that of *Before Sunrise*. It is often impossible to establish the logical connection between less important passages, and many will deem this a grave fault. Still, judging abstractly, it is none, for the language and mode of expression is under the given conditions entirely in harmony with the character of the persons, who use it. Just through the abruptness of their remarks we get a good picture of these people, and while we do not always comprehend the meaning and import of what they say, their characters are sharply defined. The play possesses very delicate psychological analysis, life-like representation and a consistent development of the plot.

Bulthaupt¹ acknowledges the last item to be true only as far as and including the reconciliation of father and son in the second act.—The play has but three acts and no subdivision into scenes.—The remaining part he declares, as I think, unjustly,

¹ Bulthaupt, H. *Dramaturgie des Schauspiels.* 4. Band. 3. Auflage. Oldenburg und Leipzig, 1902 (p. 489.)

to be inconsistent. The behavior of Robert is the vital point in this question. Robert has developed his cynicism as a means of self-protection from the emotions, which threatened his peace of mind. In the beginning he was certainly as emotional as Wilhelm, perhaps even more so, and just for this reason he had to invent a means of defence. He himself says: 'In former times I have had similar experiences—but as soon as I noticed, that those states were getting the better of me, I usually without hesitation turned my back upon them.' It is by no means rare, that a sensitive individual becomes a cynic.—We need only call to mind the case of Heinrich Heine.—On this particular occasion, that is, when Wilhelm begs and obtains his father's forgiveness, an unusual event has gotten the better of Robert, and what is the result? He himself describes it: 'I have again for the first time in years an ungovernable desire to spit upon myself.' Such a feeling nobody can endure long, and each one will try to rid himself of it after his own fashion. He, who is of a certain religious disposition, goes to the mourners' bench and repents, and possibly carries his head higher than ever afterwards, because it is written: 'that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.' Robert establishes his peace of mind in a different manner, namely, by withdrawing again as soon as possible behind his cynicism. Nothing could be more natural for him. Soon after a new temptation besets him. Ida offers him a present, a pipe, and he refuses briskly to accept it. The author has clearly indicated that Robert is not indifferent towards Ida. Of whatever nature his affection may be, he cannot possibly win the girl and he therefore considers it wise not to accept a present from her. It would be too apt to spoil his humor, 'when he sits in his cozy little office, his back towards the stove, his legs crossed beneath the table' and then lights the pipe presented to him by Ida. From his point of view it would have been very foolish to accept the present. Still he might just as well have taken it and afterwards destroyed it. Oh yes! if only this were not

more difficult to do than to refuse it from the start. Robert's act is perfectly consistent with his character and philosophy. The simple, child-like Christmas song of Ida is indeed very little suited to the atmosphere of the place, but it is nevertheless pretty much in keeping with the previous behavior of the Buchners, and therefore we cannot reject it without also rejecting these two characters. Even serious men return on Christmas eve for a few hours to the simplicity of their childhood, and here we have to deal with two women, who are little else than big children. Ida certainly sings this Christmas carol not so much for its thought, as for the sake of the expression with which she can render it. She may have practised it for weeks, possibly under the direction of Wilhelm, and sings it now, although it is not suited to the occasion, or rather to the audience, because she has prepared no other. We could, moreover, introduce almost any other Christmas carol, less in the spirit of a child, instead of the one in question, without changing a single word of the dialogue. Robert does not want to give himself up to a sentimental mood, lest he should again feel 'a desire to spit upon himself;' and so he scoffs. That Wilhelm is offended at his brother's remarks, we should expect. Passionate as he is by disposition, he becomes, of course, unjust in his anger. The further development of affairs is entirely consistent. The final collapse of Doctor Scholz has been well enough prepared and motivated by the author to make it seem credible. To be sure the last act neither brings out a new side of any of the characters, nor does it furnish an acceptable conclusion. I find neither a grave inconsistency in the last part of the play, nor do I consider the development absolutely inevitable, that is, the brothers might have exercised a little more self-control during the few hours, in which they were thrown into each other's company. But if the different members of the family had staid together only a few days, some friction would have been sure to occur, and the final breakdown of Doctor Scholz was only a question of brief time, even without an unusual excitement to hasten it.

I have already indicated that, nevertheless, I am not satisfied with the conclusion. In *Before Sunrise* Loth and Helene had a perfect right to expect with reasonable certainty a happy life, should they have become husband and wife. It pleased the author to have it otherwise, to prove his proposition. On the other hand, there is strong and positive evidence that a fairly smooth course is only to be expected for Wilhelm Scholz and Ida Buchner under most favorable conditions. Hauptmann saves Wilhelm, the diseased, while he sacrifices the healthy Helene. Does he, going on the supposition that Helene was after all seriously tainted, wish to indicate that a woman may well redeem a man, but that a man cannot redeem a woman? Or has he in the interval between the appearance of the two plays come to see that the demand for absolute health on the part of both parents is untenable?

Both *Before Sunrise* and *The Peace-Festival* contain too much of what is barely durable, to meet with our full sympathy. The counter-poise is not nearly strong enough to make us forget all the mere wretchedness. *The Peace-Festival* is the more typical of the two, despite the fact that it is only a family catastrophe, and has purely pathological motives. The Scholzes are more frequent in our nervous age than the Krauses. Society, however, may hope to recover from the evil of nervousness, since people begin to learn to use science not only to explain mental deterioration, but also to prevent and, as far as possible, cure it.

On the stage, *The Peace-Festival* has met with scant success, since it makes too great demands on both the actors and the spectators, as already mentioned. As far as the classic unities are concerned, the play is perfect; aside from the breadth of 'milieu.' The scene is, throughout, the large hall in Doctor Scholz's house, and the action could without crowding of events, or stretching of the imagination, take place in the space of time which is required to present the play on the stage.

The Peace-Festival is a rather weak imitation of Ibsen's *Ghosts*; not only with regard to the subject matter, but also in

the structure and technique of the play. In both these dramas heredity is the central idea, the plots of both are simple and the causes of the conflict lie in the far past. Ibsen's *Ghosts* also conforms strictly to the laws of unity of time, place and action. The particular phase of heredity dealt with in this drama is perhaps even more repelling than that of *The Peace-Festival*; but in the latter the general level is lower and the tragic element is therefore much weaker than in *Ghosts*. Some critics indeed maintain that the catastrophe is not in either of these dramas tragic at all.

Lonely People. With his third drama Hauptmann at last conquered the public stage; although the play held its place only for a short time, chiefly because it deals with somewhat problematic characters. It is, like *The Peace-Festival*, only a family catastrophe.

The locality is a villa on the Müggelsee in Friedrichshagen, near Berlin. There resides Johannes Vockerat, Doctor of Philosophy, together with his young wife Frau Käthe. He has, like his predecessor, 'doctor medicinae' Scholz, the misfortune not to be understood by his wife; but, worse still, no one else of those about him, takes any interest in the 'philosophic-critic-psycho-physiological work' with which he is wrestling at the time the play opens. Small wonder, if we consider the abstract nature of his pursuit, which is all Latin and Greek to common mortals. But why did not Vockerat take up his abode in a university town, since he feels the need of having someone with whom he may share his ideas. There he could easily have found people who would have taken an interest in his stupendous work. As things are he has become irritable and discouraged because of his spiritual isolation. Still all will take a turn for the better now, for a son has been born to him; and the parents of Johannes Vockerat, at least, expect that this event will bring about a wholesome change. This hope we can hardly share, judging from the behavior of Doctor Vockerat at the baptism of his infant son, with which event the play opens. The family, the pastor, and an intimate

friend of Vockerat, the painter, Braun, are about to sit down to the conventional luncheon, when a strange, young lady, Anna Mahr, makes her appearance in rather unceremonious manner. She is a German Russian, studying philosophy at Zürich, and passing through Berlin wishes to call upon the painter Braun, with whom she has become acquainted in Paris. Not finding him at his home, Anna Mahr makes bold to hunt him up, and here she is in quest of him. Of course, there are excuses, protests, an invitation to stay for luncheon, refusal on her part, urgent request by all, and her final consent. Doctor Vockerat recognizes in her at once his spiritual affinity. He leaves no stone unturned to have her stay at his house for some time, and she at last agrees. Soon Vockerat has eyes only for her, neglecting his young, patient, and unselfish wife. Frau Käthe has not yet completely recovered from child-birth, and now, seeing how matters are developing, she slowly pines away, and at the same time her mind begins to waver. When Anna Mahr feels that, with all but Johannes, she is no longer a welcome guest, she prepares to leave. But Vockerat will not have it and persuades her at the very station not to depart yet. Upon this the old Frau Vockerat, Johannes' mother, summons her husband per telegram, that he may bring his son back to a sense of duty; and moreover explains the situation candidly to Miss Mahr, begging her to depart for Käthe's sake. Anna Mahr does now leave after a passionate farewell from Johannes Vockerat; but the latter cannot endure the separation, and drowns himself in the Müggelsee. We are given to understand that Frau Käthe will not long survive the catastrophe. This is briefly the story of the play.

Its temporary success was due to its conventional form, and the circumstance that it stands on a higher level than the preceding two plays of Hauptmann. Landsberg¹ finds that *Lonely People* deals with the same motive as *The Peace-Festival*, but it moves in a higher sphere, saturated with

¹ Op. cit. p. 33.

inward nobility. He pronounces *Lonely People* the aristocratic counterpart of the preceding plebeian drama. Unfortunately Landsberg's judgment is based on external appearances. U. C. Woerner in her monograph about Gerhart Hauptmann very justly describes the language of Doctor Vockerat as uncultured. To be sure this fact alone would be no argument against his spiritual refinement, but it certainly betrays anything but inward dignity when he assures his wife of his faithfulness in such terms as: 'I am a knave, if I ever . . .' or when he remarks: 'Those friends whom I could drive away from me . . . those friends, to speak frankly . . . they may go to the deuce.' The two old people are too narrow to be considered as representatives of this inward nobility, the painter Braun is lazily indifferent and *blasé*; thus only Frau Käthe and Anna Mahr remain. The former, as far as her intellect is concerned, not above the rest, is a very sympathetic figure. Anna Mahr may perhaps possess inward nobility, but unfortunately she has also many shortcomings. Woerner with good cause declares her to be unwomanly, certainly a serious defect. Even if this be unjust, Anna Mahr and Frau Käthe alone cannot lift the whole play into a loftier sphere. All the minor characters with the exception of the pastor are quite superfluous.

We direct our attention first to Doctor Johannes Vockerat. He is one of these twofold beings so often met with in periods of transition; or would it be better to say: periods of unrest; since the pendulum always seems to swing back again in this strife between intellect and emotions for supremacy. An advanced thinker, full of lofty ambitions, but without sufficient energy and will-power to realize them, in his emotional life still swayed by views of the past, which his reason scorns; and hemmed in by the rules of convention, which he dares not disregard; such he appears to us. His reason and emotions are continually at war with each other. Worst of all, he is absolutely selfish; everyone is to humor him, to adapt himself to his nature. The way in which he treats his young, con-

valescent wife is indeed brutal. As in the case of Doctor Scholz the question occurs to us: why did he marry Frau Käthe? Nothing is so repulsive to him as her patient, 'maddonna-like' ways, which really are the very essence of her being. He, the psychologist, certainly should have become aware of them before his marriage. But to be sure he needed, above all, her money.—'For my nature I am not to blame,' is his ready excuse for his rudeness. His passion for Anna Mahr starts far too suddenly to be of a purely spiritual nature. Mahn¹ is polite enough to take Vockerat's word for it that, in spite of his affection for Anna Mahr, Vockerat does not cease to love his wife. Schlenther,² too, finds Vockerat's relations to Anna Mahr unobjectionable, because Platonic, and adduces such feeble arguments as the fact that they address each other to the very last as 'Herr Doktor' and 'Fräulein Anna.' Even if their relations are Platonic, the fact remains that he cruelly neglects his wife, who only recently has born him a son, and from whose estate he derives his income. But Vockerat's relations to Anna Mahr are by no means as ethereal, as the author would have us believe. After conversing with her for five minutes, he has already fathomed her whole being, and is convinced that Frau Käthe could learn much from her. Instead of showing special regard for the young mother, he compels her, much against her own will, to invite her very rival to her board and hearth. His selfish disregard for others is almost without bounds, and still his kind heart is declared to be his enemy. It requires faith to believe this. His sporadic, sentimental overflows really result from lack of will-power. Though he insists that, through his association with Anna Mahr, his love for Frau Käthe has become deeper, the only attention he has to bestow upon the latter is, at the most, an offending remark, as for instance: (with comic surprise) 'Why! Dear me! What a sight you are again! Pitiful! Just exactly like a sick chicken.' This is hardly a very delicate, affec-

¹ *Op. cit.* p. 19.

² *Op. cit.* pp. 119 and 123.

tionate, and refined remark for a husband to make, to console his pining wife, who eats her heart away for him. Worse still Anna Mahr is standing by, a picture of health, her cheeks red from the crisp morning air, from which she has just come with the Doctor. When Frau Käthe comes to him with a letter from her banker, who inquires if he may sell some of her stocks, since they otherwise would be without money in the morning, he snaps at her : 'As soon as things have for once become somewhat clear in my mind—then you come—and grab right into it—with hands as clumsy as those of a teamster. . . . That thereby you destroy for me a whole chain of thought, linked together with infinite pain, that doesn't occur to you for a moment. . . . My work takes precedence. It comes in the first, second, and third place, and then the practical may come too, for ought I care.' Mahn finds greatness of character, energy, clearness, and high aims in Johannes Vockerat. Oh, for the lantern of Diogenes ! Of course, he who believes Vockerat's high sounding phrases will have no difficulty in seeing all this, and still more in him. He may be aspiring, but his aspirations are vague and indefinite ; nor has he any notion about the means by which to obtain his aims, and energy and perseverance he has least of all. His work makes no progress until Anna Mahr supplies the vital spark. Thinking seems, according to his own statement, to be a most laborious process with Johannes Vockerat. And he does not even possess self-confidence. When taking leave of Anna Mahr, he cries out : 'Whence am I to get faith in myself ? Who assures me that I am not struggling for nought ?'

He promises his father that he will rally his moral forces, he vows to Anna Mahr that he will bear the burden ; but she is scarcely gone before he takes the fatal plunge. How is this possible, if he really does possess the qualities ascribed to him by Mahn ? I fully agree with Woerner that there exists no reason for Vockerat to commit suicide, if we consider his love for Anna Mahr as Platonic. His nervousness and the provocation of the moment would then be the sole causes of his rash act.

Anna Mahr is not altogether a credible character. It has already been mentioned that Woerner declares her unwomanly. The way in which she introduces herself is indeed rather singular; still more so the resolution to prolong her stay after she has taken leave of the whole family and is on her way to the station, though she knows all but Johannes wish her to go. For her coming, a plausible motive could easily be found; but the fact that she unconcernedly remains where she is not a welcome guest could only be explained by her passion for Johannes Vockerat. Of what nature her affection for him is is hard to judge. But she confesses, herself: ‘If it were possible for Käthe . . . to live . . . by the side of me—even then—. . . I could after all not trust myself. In me . . . in us there is something which we more feel than discern, which is hostile to these pure relations and which will overpower them in the course of time.’ There is in addition the episode with the picture and the passionate farewell scene; neither of which appears especially Platonic. Even Anna Mahr herself conceives of purely spiritual relation between men and women only as a future possibility. She remarks: ‘Let us assume . . . in a most general way . . . a new and perfect state is preconceived by someone. This state exists for the present only in sentiment . . . an exceedingly tender, young plant, which must be guarded with utmost care. . . . Do you not think so, too, Doctor?—That this plant should mature while we live we dare not hope. To transmit the germ to posterity, that we may be able to accomplish.’ The ascetic spirit of Hauptmann is speaking out of this passage. He has left it to us to imagine the details of this superhuman state of affairs. Indeed Doctor Vockerat declares: ‘Then the human, and not the animal part of our nature will predominate.’ This is an admission that the animal in us will be present, though only in the second place. Vockerat’s terminology is rather inaccurate, especially for a doctor of philosophy. Animal and human are neither contrasts nor complements. The former is an essential constituent of the latter; without it, we should cease to be

human. The contrasting and yet complementary parts of the concept *man* are body and mind, or soul, if you choose. No degree of elevations will rid man of his body, with its many needs and limitations, while here on earth. Whether the physical part of our being will ever be subordinated to the spiritual with the great mass of the people, may well be doubted ; with the select few this subordination has already been accomplished, and it is not mere hopes alone with which we can console ourselves. The wisdom of Anna Mahr, too, is shallow and common-place, for instance her remark about the 'breath from the twentieth century ;' as if there were to come an entirely new era in the history of mankind, just because we have completed another century according to our arbitrary reckoning ; or that other remark regarding 'What Pope Leo the Tenth has said about the conscience.' It seems rather strange that the strong woman is more than passingly attracted by the effeminate Johannes Vockerat. For it certainly was the intention of the author that we should interpret Anna Mahr as a strong character. But neither she nor Johannes Vockerat seems to be swayed by elementary passions. The latter is plainly of the class of people, so detestable to Schiller, who do not possess stamina enough to be positively good or evil. Bulthaupt¹ assumes indeed that the two are overpowered by their passions. This is the most credible and obvious interpretation of the psychological problem with which we are dealing. But this brings Anna Mahr, too, down to the common level. She breaks the heart of Frau Käthe without the courage to maintain her conquest. Or did she fail to comprehend why Frau Käthe was pining away from day to day? A young women of twenty-four who possesses an academic education, and has travelled far and wide should possess more insight. From whatever point we consider Anna Mahr, she is far from the ideal woman.

Frau Käthe is very real and by no means as insignificant a little body as the author would have us believe. She is

¹ *Op. cit.* p. 496.

unselfish, warm-hearted, and yet practical. That she does not understand anything of her husband's pursuits is no reproach to her, nor does this give to him the right to sacrifice her. Because of her unassuming character, she allows herself to be persuaded that she is unworthy of her husband; the author condemns her, so to speak, out of her own mouth. But we reject her own testimony, since we know only too well that it results partially from her modesty, and partially from constant suggestion. Judged purely as a human being, she is far superior to Johannes Vockerat.

His strictly religious parents are of the opinion that the lack of belief in the young couple is the root of all their ills. Frau Vockerat, practical, kind, yet resolute, is surprisingly well drawn; the father, however, seems somewhat exaggerated, and is decidedly weaker than his spouse, which cannot greatly surprise us in a play of Hauptmann. In the last act the action of both parents appears highly improbable. When they, in a most agitated scene, have prevailed upon their son to return to the path of duty, they leave him immediately; apparently for no other reason than to give the author an opportunity to bring Doctor Vockerat once more alone face to face with Anna Mahr. His parents ought to know that promise and intention differ with him widely from execution, and that he needs someone in this crisis who by compulsion will supply a substitute for the lacking will-power. If Johannes were not left to himself in the critical moment, the passionate farewell scene would not be possible, and the catastrophe might be averted.

The painter Braun, radical in his views, but indolent and apathetic, cannot well win anyone's sympathy. Vockerat's attitude towards him seems indeed to indicate a change of view in the author. Radical demands are ever amiss, and Doctor Vockerat could only be commended, if he were given to compromising as Braun says he is. But he does not really strive to reconcile conflicting views; his actions are always prompted by momentary impulses and temporary moods, to be regretted, and repeated at the next occasion.

The influence of Ibsen's *Rosmersholm* upon *Lonely People* is unmistakable, but Hauptmann lags far behind his model. The mild, yet consistent and resolute Johannes Rosmer becomes the wavering, effeminate Johannes Vockerat, who is continually whining for 'a little bit of kindness ;' the unscrupulous, shrewd, determined Rebekka West changes into an improbable young woman with academic training, advanced views, and lofty but vague aims ; the depraved but ingenious Ulrich Brendel finds a counterpart in the apathetic painter Braun ; Frau Käthe is Beate resurrected. In the construction of the plot Hauptmann has departed somewhat from his model.

While quite acceptable from a conventional point of view, *Lonely People* is really a step backwards; chiefly because of the weakness of the main character. The author has endeavored to convince us that Johannes Vockerat perishes because of the conflict between an old, narrow and unsympathetic view of the world, and a new, more liberal and aspiring one. Yet we take away with us the impression that he becomes the victim, not perchance of his ungovernable passion, but of his own indecision and utter lack of will-power, and this is hardly tragic. The silent, meek suffering of Frau Käthe appeals far more to us than the nervous fits of Doctor Vockerat. Anna Mahr will scarcely win our sympathies for the new woman.

The Weavers. We have seen that Hauptmann, in his first three dramas, departed from the old standards only in his choice of the subject, in the form of the dialogue, and in the importance given to the minor characters. In *The Weavers* he broke entirely with the traditions of the past, and created practically a new species of dramatic art. This piece does not even possess a main character which might be considered as the center of the whole. It is a 'milieu drama' pure and simple, a succession of independent scenes, which only, through the atmosphere common to all of them, and through the circumstance that they all serve a common purpose, appear as a whole. Each of the five acts has even a separate list of 'dramatis personae.' Ever changing like the pictures of a

kaleidoscope—to be sure, beauty we must dispense with—the disconnected scenes pass before our eyes. The different characters have each something distinct and individual, some of them we meet in all five acts; but while in one they are the central figures, in the others they are pushed into the background. The whole play, however, is pervaded by an almost indefinable something, an immaterial entity, the typical essence of the Silesian weaver population. Like a spectre, pale and with lustreless eyes it hovers above the different scenes, and unites them into a whole. It makes us even forget the lack of a coherent plot, at least while we are reading the play, or witnessing its performance. More than one critic has refused to recognize *The Weavers* as drama at all; but even if it be none, it still remains a work of art. To be sure, if excluded from the realm of the drama *The Weavers* cannot be placed in any of the existing categories, but even if we regard the piece as drama, it stands entirely alone and will probably not soon find a companion.

The time of the play is the fifth decade of the nineteenth century, but its spirit is that of the present. We are to witness the appalling death-struggle of a small social group, the weaver population of the slope of the Owl Mountains (Eulengebirge), doomed by the change in the methods of production, the economical conditions, and the concentration of wealth and power. This struggle still goes on at the present day, unnoticed by the world at large, except at periods of extreme suffering, when the cry of the afflicted is heard beyond the narrow boundaries of their native district. It is such a spasmodic convulsion, which the author makes almost tangible for us in his play.

It is pay day. At Peterswaldau, in the large, general office of the manufacturer, Dreissiger, a crowd of people is waiting to deliver the goods they have woven, to receive their meager pay, and take with them material for another web. The men are dwarfed, stoop-shouldered, shrinking; the women feeble, care-worn, emaciated; we see also a number of sickly children

in the crowd who have come instead of their parents to deliver the goods. On the faces of all lies a despairing apprehension, a silent dread ; the behavior of the people is cringing, servile, without a trace of self-respect. Behind the counter are the several clerks and the cashier. In the order of his arrival each one of the weavers presents his goods to Pfeifer, the head clerk. He inspects the quality of each piece with gauge and magnifying glass, and does not fail to find fault with each one. An apprentice then weighs the goods, and Pfeifer announces to the cashier the wages he is to pay—from twenty-five to thirty-five cents for three weeks of unceasing toil. To be sure the purchase power of our American dollar is greater in Germany than here at home, and was still more so sixty years ago ; but it needs no argument to show that such wages are inadequate to supply even the most absolute needs of the people. One poor woman begs pitifully for a few cents in advance on the next web, and pleads that her husband is an invalid, and that she has a number of children to support ; a weaver implores Pfeifer not to deduct this time the twelve cents, which he received on the last pay day in advance ; but they speak to deaf ears. The clerks have become hardened to such scenes and make foul jokes about the wretchedness of the poor people. Pfeifer declares that he has no authority to grant any advance, or the like, and the proprietor is, of course, too busy to be accessible to his employees. With stupid resignation everyone takes his pay, until the turn of Bäcker, an unusually robust, young weaver comes. Thirty cents is the price accorded to him for eighteen days of hard work. Indignantly he declares that this is nothing but a beggarly gift, and when Pfeifer bids him be silent, he makes a contemptuous reply. Pfeifer becomes angry and calls Dreissiger, the proprietor, who appears quickly and, upon explanation, orders Bäcker to leave the office ; but the latter defies even the authority of the almighty Dreissiger, and denounces him as an extortionist who uses his employees in such a manner ‘that not even a few crumbling bones are left of a man, by the time he gets through with him.’ This is not

the first time that Bäcker has made himself obnoxious. A few days before he with several other young fellows had passed the house of Dreissiger, singing the 'Weavers' song,' a complaint of their sufferings and an accusation of the wealthy manufacturers. Dreissiger decrees that he shall not get another lick of work in his factory, to which Bäcker replies that it does not matter to him, whether he starves to death at the wayside or at the loom. He is about to leave the office, when a boy of eight, who has come seven miles, or more, to deliver a heavy load of flannel, suddenly collapses. As the little fellow comes somewhat to himself under the care of those around him, he whispers: 'I'm hungry ;'—this is the sole cause of his fainting. Dreissiger pales, but pretends not to have understood his words. He hurries the child into his private office and soon returns, telling the people that the whole affair meant nothing and that the boy is already on his feet again. The blame for the occurrence he puts upon the parents of the child, and finds it unpardonable, that they should have sent the little fellow so long a distance with so heavy a load. In future he will have to forbid the delivery of the goods by children. When anything happens to such a child the manufacturer is blamed for it, and he has troubles enough of his own. People know little of his sleepless nights and the immense risk he runs. At last he calls on those present to bear witness that he has always treated his employees most humanely. Of course, they, to a man, affirm it; the rebellious Bäcker has gone. Dreissiger announces that, on 'certain conditions,' he is going to employ two hundred more weavers to help the people of the district through the present crisis, even if he should lose money in doing so. When several appeal to him for a few cents in advance, he quickly withdraws, saying that this is Pfeifer's business, Pfeifer, who a few minutes ago declared, he had no authority in such matters; but he has authority enough and to spare to inform the weavers that these 'certain conditions' are a 15% reduction of all wages.

In the second act the home of one of these weavers is

depicted. Huddled together in a little, low room are Frau Baumert, a complete invalid in middle life, her idiotic son, a lad of twenty, her two daughters, Emma and Bertha, twenty-two and fifteen respectively, and a boy of four, the illegitimate child of the older girl. The author describes with great minuteness the poverty of the place, the disproportionate appearance of the idiot, the rags, in which the old woman is bundled up, the scanty dress of the girls. It is at the sunset hour of a summer evening, but the people are still working. Frau Baumert and the lad are spooling, the girls weave. The head of the family had gone early in the forenoon to deliver the finished work, but has not yet returned. With trembling Frau Baumert thinks of the awful possibility, that her husband might have stopped at the village inn, but the girls feel assured that their father would not do this. A neighbor's wife comes in and begs for a handful of flour; she has not a bite to eat for her nine children and her husband lies ill. But the Baumerts have not even a crust in the house to give to their own boy, who clamors for bread, and the poor woman leaves again with a threat of suicide.

At last Baumert arrives and with him a young relative, Jäger by name, who has just been discharged from the army. Jäger has brought home with him a new suit of clothes, the enormous sum of ten dollars in cash, nay even a silver watch, and the poor weaver family cannot wonder enough at his success; especially since in his boyhood he was a regular good-for-nothing, that is, he had vitality enough to be unruly and play the truant, an uncommon thing with the children of the weavers. The girls now set about preparing the supper. Baumert has taken with him in the morning his little dog, and had it killed, that they might make a meal of it, rather than that it should starve to death. To kill the creature himself he did not have the heart. The old Ansorge, who is the nominal owner of the hut, but is indebted for all that it is worth, comes in, too, at this point. He is a bachelor and lives with the family, having taken them as renters. Although he has no one

to provide for, he cannot manage to earn a living. Jäger produces a quart of liquor and sends for a second, when the bottle is empty. While the supper is being cooked the people carry on a general conversation. With brutal frankness Jäger asks Emma, who is the father of her child. The fifteen year old sister replies without embarrassment: ' Didn't you know the weaver Finger ? ' and the mother adds: ' We had given him lodging in our little room—they had but one—he really did intend to marry her, but unhappily he was already in the last stages of consumption. I warned my daughter often enough, but did she listen to me ? Now he is dead and gone long since, and she must see how she can manage to bring up the boy.' Then Frau Baumert complains that she is paralyzed and that she has to suffer terribly. ' It is going bad with her. She cannot last much longer,' says the husband, and Bertha remarks: ' We have to dress her in the morning and undress her at night. We have to feed her like a little child.' All this is said in an indifferent, matter-of-fact way. The daughter does not blush, when her fall is discussed, nor does the mother feel offended at the seemingly heartless remarks of her husband and the children. Jäger declares that the dogs on the streets in the cities are better off than the poor weavers. He then goes on, boasting of his career as a soldier, and of his knowledge of the world. The rich are to blame for the existing misery and the only way to readjust matters is by rising in rebellion ; for from the government no help can be expected.—The meat is done now and the old Baumert begins to eat it, out of the frying-pan, with his fingers. Chewing he explains: ' Two years ago I went to the Holy Communion for the last time. Soon after I sold my church clothes. With the money we bought a piece of pork and since then I haven't eaten any meat.'—Nor ought he to eat any now. His weak stomach cannot endure this unusual treat. He must leave the room and returns, weeping because he can not even enjoy what he gets by chance. The dog, namely, was not really his, it had only strayed to his house a few weeks before. A compassionate anger now boils

up in Jäger, he accuses the manufacturers of cruel extortion and then reads the already mentioned ‘Weavers’ song.’ Baumert repeats every complaint, reiterates every charge and, partially through the influence of the liquor, works himself up to a state of frenzy, which also takes possession of the old Ansorge and Jäger. Psychologically the three men already constitute a mob, but one essential element is still lacking: the consciousness of irresistible power, which rises from mere numerical strength.

The wanting element is supplied in the next act. In the inn at Peterswaldau the landlord, a ‘drummer,’ and the village joiner are discussing the situation of the weavers. The stranger expresses his surprise at the display he has seen at the funeral of a poor weaver. Surely people, who can bear such expenses, cannot be on the point of starvation. But he is told that the clergy insist on pompous funerals, since on such occasions the contribution box yields a rich harvest. A rag-peddler has come in and joins in the conversation by suggesting that the high birth- and death-rate among the weaver population makes the business of the village joiner lucrative, for there must be coffins and some how they must be paid for. The peddler then gives a graphic description of the conditions existing among the weavers. He visits every house of the district and ought to know the true state of affairs; but the drummer objects that his tale does not tally with the reports, which, according to the newspapers, the officials sent by the government to look into the matter have made. No wonder! Those gentlemen never go beyond the main portion of the village, where the finest houses stand, lest they should soil their patent-leather shoes. In the meanwhile Jäger and a number of weavers have come in and Jäger at once orders two quarts of whisky. He can pay for it, just as well as any drummer. The stranger feels the taunt and rejoins. ‘I beg your pardon, young man, you seem to do a prosperous business!—‘I cannot complain. I travel for a clothing house. I divide the profits with the manufacturer. The more hunger the weavers suffer, the better I am

off. 'The bigger their need, the larger my profits,' is the reply. Jäger with his loose tongue, his ready wit, and his self-confidence founded on ignorance, is the right man to instigate these wretched weavers to open violence. A few begin to sing the 'Weavers' song.' When the landlord objects, the blacksmith Wittig, who has just come in, remarks deridingly: 'Never mind! Just let them perform a little comedy; barking dogs don't bite.' Wittig is a revolutionary fanatic, Robespierre is his man, for him the weavers are much too tame. With stinging sarcasm he excites the crowd. An old weaver, a religious crank, is moved by the 'spirit' and begins to prophesy: 'Do ye not associate with the rich and the mighty. There lies a judgment in the air. The Lord Zebaoth. . . ?'

In the midst of the general tumult, in comes the village police. To-day his uniform commands little respect. Bäcker and Wittig at once begin to ridicule him. He makes haste to deliver his message; under severe penalty the magistrate forbids the singing of the 'Weavers' song.' 'He has no right to forbid us anything,' declares Wittig, and, at a sign from Bäcker, all begin to sing the obnoxious song.

The fourth act brings the climax. Dreissiger has company and is therefore the more exasperated by the derisive demonstrations of the weavers, who, in a body have marched from the inn to his house. While Dreissiger goes out to check the tumult, Pastor Kittelhaus—he and his wife are the only guests—discusses the uproar of the people with the 'candidatus theologiae' Weinhold, the tutor of Dreissiger's children. Weinhold, an idealistic youth, pleads the cause of the weavers, but Kittelhaus warns him not to meddle with things, which do not concern him. A pastor has to care for the immortal souls of the people, and not for their mortal bodies. Dreissiger returns, the tumult in the street increases, and the singing is heard in the room. The good pastor is shocked to find that even old men are in the crowd. 'They trample the law of God under foot. Will you still defend them?' (to Weinhold) and he, 'Certainly not, my dear pastor. That is, sir, *cum grano*

salis. After all, they are hungry, ignorant wretches. They express their dissatisfaction in their own way.' This is more than Dreissiger can endure; the young enthusiast is told to leave the house immediately. Now in comes the village magistrate in full uniform; Dreissiger has sent for him to obtain the official approval of his own somewhat arbitrary measures. He has, namely, ordered his dyers to catch one or the other of the ring-leaders of the mob, since the policeman is not able to make an arrest. Of course, the magistrate approves the measure and presently the policeman reports the arrest of Jäger, who is ushered in by five robust dyers. He is, however, quite at ease about his fate and replies with insolence to the questions of the magistrate. The pastor succeeds in making some impression upon Jäger by reminding him of the pains he has taken, to teach him to walk in the narrow path. But Jäger thinks they are even; he has done his share by putting a dollar into the contribution box, when he was confirmed.—A very fine touch! There are in those regions people at the present day, who believe that their pastor can dole out salvation to whom he pleases, and that they may buy it of him, if they only have the price.—Finally Jäger declares he has become a Quaker and no longer believes anything. From the street, shouts are heard, demanding the release of the prisoner; but they shall fool themselves, says the magistrate. Jäger is bound and led off, the magistrate and the police escorting him, with drawn sabres. Dreissiger and the pastor agree that the enthusiasts and philanthropists, by continually prattling about humanity, have incited the weavers to rebellion. The people have again and again been told, in what misery they live and at last they really believe it. But it is to be hoped that the present disturbances will ultimately benefit the manufacturers, that is, that the government will adopt measures to protect their industry from foreign competition.

In the meanwhile the mob has freed Jäger, beaten the magistrate and the police, and they even abuse the preacher, when he ventures to pass through the crowd, hoping to pacify

them by his presence. The mob is, of course, only heard, and its actions we learn from the remarks of those watching it from the windows. The infuriated people now demand that Pfeifer, the head clerk, be delivered up to them ; he rushes to his master for protection. Johann, the coachman, has used his wits, and has, without orders, hitched his best team to the closed carriage ; announcing this, he urges haste, since the people are about to lay siege to the rear gate of the yard. Frau Dreissiger becomes hysterical, falls on the neck of the coachman, and implores him in the most endearing terms to save her and her children ; but Dreissiger takes matters more coolly, at least he does not forget to secure his valuables from the safe before he goes. Scarcely have all made their escape, when the front door gives way and the crowd rushes in. The curtain drops as the men are about to begin the work of general destruction, having recovered somewhat from the amazement caused by the unthought-of splendor of the mansion.

In the fifth act no further development takes places. It serves only to conclude the play with a powerful contrast. It is on the morning after the tumult in Peterswaldau ; the scene is a weaver's cottage in the neighboring village of Langenbielau. The old Hilse, a faithful Christian, an old veteran and a loyal subject, has just finished his morning prayer in humble submission and in gratitude. Although he has not an abundance to be thankful for ; although he is suffering extreme want like all the rest, he is meek and contented. When the rag-peddler Hornig comes in and relates what has happened the day before, and that the mob is on its way to this village, the old Hilse is amazed, and does not want to believe it ; but his seven year old grand-daughter furnishes evidence. She comes in with a silver spoon, which she has picked up on the road to Peterswaldau. All the weaver children have silver spoons. The old man becomes furious, wants to beat the thievish grandchild, and orders his son Gottlieb to carry the spoon at once to the police-office. Gottlieb's faith is not so unshaken as that of his father ; but he is meek enough to be easily restrained from

joining the rebels, who have now arrived, and call on every weaver to turn out to their support. His wife, however, catches the spirit of the mob, and rushes out. Gottlieb follows her in a frenzy, but not until a squad of soldiers, which has arrived, fires into the crowd.

The old Hilse: 'Gottlieb, Gottlieb!' Mother Hilse (blind): 'Where is Gottlieb?' The old Hilse: 'To the devil, he is.' Voice from without: 'Go away from the window, father Hilse.' (A stray bullet from the first volley has found its way into the house, and the soldiers make ready to fire again.)

Hilse: 'Not I! And if all of you get stark mad (speaking to his wife with growing ecstasy). Here my heavenly father has placed me. Isn't it so, mother? Here we will sit and do what's our duty, and if all the snow turns black.'

He begins to weave. A volley is fired. Fatally wounded the old man reels back and then falls forward upon the loom. Without, the frantic mob repulses the soldiers with a hail of stones.

I have given a rather detailed summary of the play to show what methods the author employs. If anything, they are concrete. The characters of this drama need not concern us, but by so much the more, the sources from which Hauptmann drew his material. In the lines, dedicating the play to his father, he says: 'Your stories about grandfather, who in his younger years, a poor weaver, sat at the loom like those depicted, have become the nucleus of my work.' This is then one source, certainly the one from which the poet drew his inspiration. For be the value of "The Weavers" as drama ever so small, the piece remains nevertheless a truly poetic production, and the author could never have created it without glowing inspiration. It requires more than mere literary skill, power of observation, and clever combination to write such a work. Nor can we demand that Hauptmann should have set forth all the concurring economical forces which brought about the rapid decay of the weaving industry. If he had attempted it, his play would have become a sort of handbook of social

economy, and a most incorrect representation of the time with which it deals. Before the middle of the nineteenth century there were few people who knew anything about economy, and of those surely none were to be found in Peterswaldau or Langenbielau. Hauptmann desired to show us the poor weavers, what they had suffered, and how they came to revolt. To understand them we must look upon the world with their eyes, not perchance with the eyes of John Stuart Mill. But while the author has not been guilty of exaggeration, it is very evident that he has no sympathy with the manufacturer and those who stand on his side. History is another source. From it Hauptmann has taken all the main facts and even some of the names in slightly changed form. Zwanziger has become Dreissiger, Dierig has become Dittrich, and so forth.—After the Wars of Liberation, Russia, Austria, and Prussia formed the *Holy Alliance*, the watch-word of which was reaction. The people, exhausted by the struggle against Napoleon, had too much to do with private affairs, to concern themselves about politics. A short-sighted, narrow-minded bureaucracy soon ruled supreme. The welfare of the masses was not a matter of concern to the officials, who considered it their sole duty to execute the existing laws ; their sympathy was with the upper classes. The weaver population of the mountain districts in Central Silesia became quickly impoverished, when the manufacturers began to introduce machines and to substitute cotton for flax. The labor-saving machines made a large number of hands superfluous and the capitalists availed themselves of the opportunity to reduce the wages of the hand-weavers to mere alms. The manufacturers also formed rings to control the price of labor and some even established a truck-system, compelling their laborers to buy the necessities of life at the factory store. They reaped thereby large profits and began to live in luxury. The majority of them were themselves the descendants of poor weavers. Often the father had sat at the loom and earned a humble living, while the son, through shrewdness and unscrupulous methods, had amassed a small fortune, lived in a

mansion, and kept lackeys, coachman, horses, and carriages. This explains the cruel, greedy, and short-sighted extortion of these manufacturers, which perhaps has never been equaled by any member of the landed nobility in Germany ; and also the intense hatred of the weavers against their oppressors. For such is human nature, that most men will endure the yoke of a master, whose authority has become sacred through its mere duration, with far more patience, than that of a man who has risen above them from their own ranks ; on the other hand, newly acquired power is ever apt to be abused.

For the oppressed weavers there existed at that period no means of self-defense. The press was under strict censorship and the officialdom favored the manufacturers, the latter, moreover, did not really overstep the boundaries of the civil laws. But by and by the wretched conditions of the Silesian weavers became known beyond the confines of their native district, and aroused pity and severe comment on the methods of the manufacturers. When the weavers learned of the compassion which their sufferings excited everywhere, they became more keenly aware of how unworthy a life they led, and, with the sympathy of thousands to back them, they formed a delusive conception of their own power. In addition to all this the air was full of revolutionary ideas. So it came to an uproar in 1844, which centred about Peterswaldau and Langenbielau, two populous villages, having now 7500 and 16,000 inhabitants respectively. Two companies of soldiers sufficed to quell the outburst ; the weavers hungered on, and still hunger.

Thus we have come to the third source, whence Hauptmann obtained the details and local characteristics of his drama ; *i. e.*, the present, or very recent past. The conditions of the weavers have changed, but relatively they have become little better. In Peterswaldau and Langenbielau the obvious contrast between rich and poor has largely disappeared, but higher up in the mountains in the little, tumble-down huts, with their windows on the level with the ground, with doors, which a normal person cannot pass through without stooping, with their straw-

roofs, so low that one can easily reach them with the hand, there is still plenty of wretchedness. In the villages on the south-eastern slope of the Owl Mountains a hand-loom is even at the present day still to be found in operation in many homes of the working people, although the most of the weavers now earn their meager living in a factory. The habitations are crowded, men and women, young and old, the members of the family and often a boarder or two, sleep together in the same room. Intermarriage between individuals closely related by blood is very frequent. The race is dwarfed, birth and death rate are high, as is also the number of illegitimate children. We still find also the same lethargic indifference. Often a mother sees clearly what her daughter is to come to; but it is the common fate, and if she warns the girl, she does all that is in her power. The moral sense of these people has become greatly blunted. During the winter months—and the winters are long at that altitude—the people are often on the verge of starvation. During the winter from 1890–1891, if I remember correctly, there was a veritable famine in the county (Kreis) of Neurode; fortunately the increased ease of communication and the philanthropic spirit of the age did much to alleviate the suffering. It may seem strange, that the people do not leave the district and seek work elsewhere. A number indeed do so, but the general degeneracy of the people and their utter impecuniousness oblige the most of them to stay where they are; for they would never be able to compete with others not hampered by these disadvantages, as they should have to do, in case they should leave their homes. Only the most vigorous dare to take this step, thus leaving the weaklings behind. The strange attachment to the native soil, so common among mountaineers, is a less potent cause, which makes these people cling to the spot where they were born. We have then three main sources: early impressions fraught with sentiment, the historical accounts of the pitiful uprising of the weavers, and the conditions existing in those districts at the present day.

Hauptmann has been accused of having misrepresented

Dreissiger and his helpers; but the historical accounts hardly lend any support to this charge. If we bear in mind the descent of these manufacturers, we will be better able to understand their cruel greed, and will be less inclined to censure the poet for exaggeration. Still, some will say, though all this be true, Hauptmann ought to have represented the typical manufacturer and not have patterned his characters after these isolated instances; or, still better, he ought to have represented the manufacturer, not as he is, but as he ought to be—at the expense of the weavers, at the risk that these latter shall lose our sympathy, that is, in order to defeat his own purpose.

The psychological part of the play Hauptmann has handled with great skill; whether by virtue of intuition, or by dint of his knowledge of the psychology of the crowd, I dare not say. It is, for instance, a very fine touch that Luise Hilse is the first to disregard the warning of the old Hilse, not because he has less authority over her than over his son, but because she is a woman and therefore the more ready to obey her instincts unheedful of the dictates of reason. The third act of *The Weavers* is a fine study in crowd psychology, also parts of the second and the fifth. The objection that the weavers accomplish nothing, that we clearly foresee that they will go back to their looms and hunger, is very true; but I do not see why a poet should be under obligations to solve the problem which he puts before us, especially if this problem does not admit of an immediate, reasonable solution. Those, moving exclusively in the realm of ideas, would, no doubt, have found one; but it is a question whether it would have been acceptable or born with the power to convince. The different traits of character, rather than characters, which the author represents, are very striking. The sober-minded innkeeper Welzel, for example, and his silly-headed wife, who aids and abets in every possible manner the conceited notions of her pretty daughter, are well depicted, and remind us of the parents of Luise Millerin in Schiller's drama. Correct is also the action of the coachman, who uses his circumspection in the interests of his master, without wait-

ing for orders. In Germany the house-servants of the wealthy are, in fact, themselves a privileged class, do consider themselves so, and naturally identify their own interests with those of their masters.

The Weavers was published in January, 1892, in two editions, one written completely in dialect, the other a version approaching the modern High-German more closely. On February 26, 1893, the play was put on the stage by the 'Verein Freie Bühne,' but from the public theatres in Germany it was banished until 1894, the first public representation occurring on September 25th of the same year in Berlin. The sentiment for and against the drama was at first very strong. The Socialists hailed it as an attack upon the capitalists, and the opposing element condemned it as such. Hauptmann's attitude towards his own work was, however, not influenced by any political motives, but depended wholly on his strong personal sympathies, and, perhaps also, antipathies, the causes of which are very obvious.

Although the events represented in the play occurred more than half a century ago, its spirit is entirely modern. It is the general change undergone by values of all kinds, which plays a very important part in *The Weavers*. The right of the masses has practically conquered the divine right of kings. Old beliefs are tottering, formulas have lost their charm. The old Hilse says: 'The endless anxiety and toil, which we call life, these I would gladly depart from. But then, Gottlieb! then something is to follow—and if one forfeits that too—then all is lost.'—'Who knows, what then follows, when one dies. Nobody has seen it,' is the sceptical reply. But in the mind of the old man there is no doubt, or rather he will not allow any doubt to take root there. 'I warn you, Gottlieb! do not question the only hope which is left to us poor. Why should I then have sat here at the loom and toiled with might and main forty years and more? and should have passively witnessed how that one over there (the manufacturer) lives in pride and luxury—and coins money out of my worry and

misery. To what purpose, I pray? Because I have a hope! I have something in all my wretchedness (pointing through the window.) You have your share here—I, mine, in another world :—that is what I have thought. And if I should be tortured to death—I abide by my conviction. He has given us this promise. A judgment shall be, but not we are to be the judges :—Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.' This hope for reward, for vengeance of their wrongs, has made life easy to the poor, through the course of centuries ; but at the present day it has lost much of its power. Few are those, who any longer stay at the post, where God, *i. e.* accident of birth, has placed them, come what may ; and who suffer passively in the hope of earning heaven thereby. People have come to see that God helps him who helps himself. The social and political beliefs of the people have changed even more than their religious convictions. The rapid transformation of long-used values shakes the very foundations of the social and political institutions in Western Europe. *The Weavers* reflects some phases and aspects of the resulting struggle, and in this lies the chief significance of the play, however great or small its artistic value may be. Future generations will regard it as an historical document.

JOSEF WIEHR.

(*To be continued.*)