demical institution, founded by the reigning duke, and re­cently translated to his little capital of Stuttgard. This change took place at the special request of the duke, who, under the mask of patronage, took upon himself the severe control of the whole simple family. The parents were pro­bably both too humble and dutiful in spirit towards one whom they regarded in the double light of sovereign lord and of personal benefactor, ever to murmur at the ducal behests, far less to resist them. The duke was for them an earthly providence ; and they resigned themselves, together with their child, to the disposal of him who dispensed their earthly blessings, not less meekly than of Him whose vice­gerent they presumed him to be. In such a frame of mind, requests are but another name for commands ; and thus it happened that a second change arose upon the first, even more determinately fatal to the young Schiller’s happiness. Hitherto he had cherished a day-dream pointing to the pas­toral office in some rural district, as that which would har­monize best with his intellectual purposes, with his love of quiet, and, by means of its preparatory requirements, best also with his own peculiar choice of studies. But this scheme he now found himself compelled to sacrifice ; and the two evils which fell upon him concurrently in his new situation were, first, the formal military discipline and mo­notonous routine of duty ; secondly, the uncongenial direc­tion of the studies, which were shaped entirely to the at­tainment of legal knowledge, and the narrow service of the local tribunals. So illiberal and so exclusive a system of education was revolting to the expansive mind of Schiller ; and the military bondage under which this system was en­forced, shocked the aspiring nobility of his moral nature, not less than the technical narrowness of the studies shock­ed his understanding. In point of expense the whole esta­blishment cost nothing at all to those parents who were pri­vileged servants of the duke : in this number were the pa­rents of Schiller, and that single consideration weighed too powerfully upon his filial piety to allow of his openly mur­muring at his lot ; while on *their* part the parents were equally shy of encouraging a disgust which too obviously tended to defeat the promises of ducal favour. This sys­tem of monotonous confinement was therefore carried to its completion, and the murmurs of the young Schiller were either dutifully suppressed, or found vent only in secret letters to a friend. In one point only Schiller was able to improve his condition ; jointly with the juristic department, was another for training young aspirants to the medical pro­fession. To this, as promising a more enlarged scheme of study, Schiller by permission transferred himself in 1775. But whatever relief he might find in the nature of his new studies, he found none at all in the system of personal dis­cipline which prevailed.

Under the oppression of this detested system, and by pure re-action against its wearing persecutions, we learn from Schiller himself, that in his nineteenth year he under­took the earliest of his surviving plays, the Robbers, be­yond doubt the most tempestuous, the most volcanic, we might say, of all juvenile creations anywhere recorded. He himself calls it “ a monster,” and a monster it is ; but a monster which has never failed to convulse the heart of young readers with the temperament of intellectual enthu­siasm and sensibility. True it is, and nobody was more aware of that fact than Schiller himself in after years, the characters of the three Moors, father and sons, are mere impossibilities ; and some readers, in whom the judicious acquaintance with human life in its realities has outrun the sensibilities, are so much shocked by these hypernatural phenomena, that they are incapable of enjoying the terrific sublimities which on that basis of the visionary do really exist. A poet, perhaps Schiller might have alleged, is en­titled to assume hypothetically so much in the previous po­sitions or circumstances of his agents as is requisite to the

basis from which he starts. It is undeniable that Shak­speare and others have availed themselves of this principle, and with memorable success. Shakspeare, for instance, *postulates* his witches, his Caliban, his Ariel: grant, he vir­tually says, such modes of spiritual existence or of spiritual relations as a possibility ; do not expect me to demonstrate this, and upon that single concession I will rear a super­structure that shall be self-consistent ; every thing shall be *internally* coherent and reconciled, whatever be its *external* relations as to our human experience. But this species of assumption, on the largest scale, is more within the limits of credibility and plausible verisimilitude when applied to modes of existence, which, after all, are in such total dark­ness to us (the limits of the possible being so undefined and shadowy as to what can or cannot exist), than the very slightest liberties taken with human character, or with those principles of action, motives, and feelings, upon which men would move under given circumstances, or with the modes of action which in common prudence they would be likely to adopt. The truth is, that, as a coherent work of art, the Robbers is indefensible ; but, however monstrous it may be pronounced, it possesses a power to agitate and convulse, which will always obliterate its great faults to the young, and to all whose judgment is not too much deve­loped. And the best apology for Schiller is found in his own words in recording the circumstances and causes un­der which this anomalous production arose. “ To escape,” says he, “ from the formalities of a discipline which was odious to my heart, I sought a retreat in the world of ideas and shadowy possibilities, while as yet I knew nothing at all of that human world from which I was harshly secluded by iron bars. Of men, the actual men in this world below, I knew absolutely nothing at the time when I composed my Robbers. Four hundred human beings, it is true, were my fellow-prisoners in this abode ; but they were mere tauto­logies and reiterations of the self-same mechanic creature, and like so many plaster casts from the same original sta­tue. Thus situated, of necessity I failed. In making the attempt, my chisel brought out a monster, of which [and that was fortunate] the world had no type or resemblance to show.”

Meantime this demoniac drama produced very opposite results to Schiller’s reputation. Among the young men of Germany it was received with an enthusiasm absolutely unparalleled, though it is perfectly untrue that it excited some persons of rank and splendid expectations (as a cur­rent fable asserted) to imitate Charles Moor in becoming robbers. On the other hand, the play was of too powerful a cast not in any case to have alarmed his serenity the Duke of Würtemberg ; for it argued a most revolutionary mind, and the utmost audacity of self-will. But besides this ge­neral ground of censure, there arose a special one, in a quar­ter so remote that this one fact may serve to evidence the extent as well as intensity of the impression made. The territory of the Grisons had been called by Spiegelberg, one of the robbers, “ the Thief’s Athens.” Upon this the magistrates of that country presented a complaint to the duke ; and his highness, having cited Schiller to his pre­sence, and severely reprimanded him, issued a decree that this dangerous young student should henceforth confine himself to his medical studies.

The persecution which followed exhibits such extraordi­nary exertions of despotism, even for that land of irrespon­sible power, that we must presume the duke to have relied more upon the hold which he had upon Schiller through his affection for parents so absolutely dependent on his highness’s power, than upon any laws, good or bad, which he could have pleaded as his warrant. Germany, however, thought otherwise of the new tragedy than the serene cri­tic of Würtemberg ; it was performed with vast applause at the neighbouring city *of* Mannheim ; and thither, under