

But I wish some one would attempt a _tragic history of literature_,
showing how the greatest writers and artists have been treated during
their lives by the various nations which have produced them and whose
proudest possessions they are. It would show us the endless fight which
the good and genuine works of all periods and countries have had to
carry on against the perverse and bad. It would depict the martyrdom of
almost all those who truly enlightened humanity, of almost all the great
masters in every kind of art; it would show us how they, with few
exceptions, were tormented without recognition, without any to share
their misery, without followers; how they existed in poverty and misery
whilst fame, honour, and riches fell to the lot of the worthless; it
would reveal that what happened to them happened to Esau, who, while
hunting the deer for his father, was robbed of the blessing by Jacob
disguised in his brother's coat; and how through it all the love of
their subject kept them up, until at last the trying fight of such a
teacher of the human race is ended, the immortal laurel offered to him,
and the time come when it can be said of him

"Der schwere Panzer wird zum Flügelkleide
Kurz ist der Schmerz, unendlich ist die Freude."

THE EMPTINESS OF EXISTENCE.