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Thomas Mann and his work

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THOMAS MANN AND HIS WORK
by
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"Thomas Mann and His Work"
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"Thomas Mann and His Work"

A. Introduction.

I. Reason for selection of subject.

For quite a number of years and especially since 1924, when I took, under Mrs. Annie Russell Marble of Worcester, a course on "Nobel Prize Winners in Literature," I have been particularly interested in the Nobel awards. My fondness for things German caused me to be more than ordinarily interested, when, in 1929, Thomas Mann was the recipient of the honor, although at that time I had read nothing by him and knew of him simply through reviews of his works.

My personal interest in the man and his work was aroused in 1930 by the first sample which I had the good fortune to read, namely "Tonio Kröger." The dual character of Tonio, writer and burgher, aristocrat and solid middle-class citizen, appealed to me, because I recognized in myself, to be sure, in a mild way, a kindred feeling. This feeling of sympathy made me want to read more books by Thomas Mann.

When selecting a subject for a thesis in modern German literature, it seemed, then, quite natural for me to chose a man, toward whose writings I was particularly attracted and who has, since 1929, become more generally known to the reading public of America, even though, for the most part, in translation.

It is with much pleasure that I proceed to indicate in this thesis some of my findings and some of my reactions toward the famous author and his works.

B. Body or Development.

I. The man himself as a background for his work.

a. A short account of Thomas Mann's life.

1. Special emphasis upon tendencies toward interest in "the marked man."

In treating the work of any writer, it seems necessary to have an understanding of the man himself, his parentage, his early training, and all the little things which have had instinctively a part in determining the current of his later thoughts and of his work. And so, first of all, I shall jot down important facts of my author's life, relying for my information, for the most part, upon his own writings and upon Arthur Eloesser's recent book, "Thomas Mann, Sein Leben und Sein Werk," an enthusiastic biography, published in 1925 in honor of Thomas Mann's fiftieth birthday.

Thomas Mann was born in Lübeck on June 6, 1875. Thither the Mann family had originally migrated from Nürnberg. Thomas Mann's great grandfather had been a grain merchant in the Hansa city and the business had been handed on to his descendants. From Lübeck Mann's grandfather had gone as consul to the Netherlands. His own father had served the city as senator. From his father's side, then, he inherited his burgher sympathies. To his mother, Julia Bruhn-Da-Silva,

daughter of a German planter in Brazil and of a Creole of Indian-Portuguese mixture, he owed his musical, literary, romantic, dreamy, artistic nature. The conflict between the matter-of-fact, business-like temperament of his father and the artistic temperament of his mother Mann distinguished early in himself. It puzzled him, caused him to meditate, and really colored his whole mental outlook. He has transmitted this dual temperament to many of his characters and throughout his life he seems to have been studying particularly the outsider, the Sonderling, the type of individual described by Professor Arthur Burkhard of Harvard as the "marked man." *

The childhood of Thomas Mann is an interesting study. In an essay called "Kinderspiele," the author tells of his playthings. One which he prized greatly was a little shop with counter and scales, corn loft and sacks. He had also a complete knight's outfit with helmet, lance, and shield. This, however, delighted him far less than a real husar uniform which had been made especially for him at the tailor's. Still he was not ardently interested in military equipment and felt no extraordinary pleasure in his collection of tin soldiers. On the other hand, he was very fond of his rocking horse, which he named Achilles, thus registering his approval of the Greek legends which he had heard. A fondness for animals and particularly for dogs awakened early in him.

* PMLA - Vol. XLIII, No. 2, June 1928

"Thomas Mann's Treatment of the Marked Man" - Burkhard

He had a collection of toy dogs of papier-mache and porcelain. This love for animals continued with him as is shown in "Herr und Hund." A puppet theater, too, was a source of great pleasure. This Thomas Mann refers to in connection with Hanno Buddenbrook and in the novelle "Bajazzo."

But toys were not absolutely necessary to his happiness. In his vivid imagination, he played many games without the assistance of material helps. It was very easy to arise in the morning a prince, and the game could be continued uninterrupted by instruction and the daily routine. Sometimes he played thus the part of Greek heroes or gods. Homer and Vergil appealed to him at an age when other German children were devouring the Indian stories of Cooper. Mann says: "Ich hüpfte als Hermes mit papiernen Flügelschuhen durch die Zimmer, ich balanzierte als Helios eine glanzgoldene Strahlenkrone auf dem ambrosischen Haupt, ich schleifte als Achilleus meine Schwester, die wohl oder übel Hektor darstellte, unerbittlich dreimal um die Mauern von Ilion. Aber als Zeus stand ich auf einem kleinen, rotlackierten Tisch, der mir als Götterburg diente, und vergebens türmten die Titanen den Pelion auf den Ossa, so grässlich blitzte ich mit einer roten Pferdeleine, die obendrein mit Glückchen benützt war." *

Thomas Mann was brought up by women, one of whom, his nurse, is described in "Buddenbrooks" as Ida Jungmann. When

* "Kinderspiele" in "Rede und Antwort" - Thomas Mann (390)

he entered school, it was hard for him to accustom himself to the masculine atmosphere. He turned out to be a poor student. This was not a matter of too grave concern to his parents, since, according to plan, the older brother Heinrich was to be the scholar of the family, while Thomas was to take over the ancestral grain business, in the management of which a cultural education was not exceedingly necessary. Mann carried away from his school life no very happy memories. His bitterness is shown in his description of the schooling of Hanno Buddenbrook. In an essay, the title of which is "Gegen das Abiturientenexamen," he also expresses his dislike for Prussian school methods and especially for the system of final examinations. Two sentences from the essay reveal thoroughly the tone of the whole. "Diese tagelange Schraubmarter, in der junge Leute, unter Anwendung schlafvertreibender Mittel, sich als wandelnde Enzyklopädien erweisen müssen, dieses Examen, bei dem die Mehrzahl der Examinatoren durchfallen würde, kann in seiner Inhumanität, sachlichen Schädlichkeit und ausgemachten Entbehrlichkeit nur aus Mangel an Sympathie mit der Jugend verteidigt werden. Wer die neun Klassen des Gymnasiums durchlief, dem sollte man mit einem anerkennenden Händedruck den Ausgang zur Hochschule freigeben und nicht noch ein halsbrecherisches Hindernis davorlegen." Mann does concede, however, that in the new German middle-school the type of teachers has improved from that described in "Buddenbrooks." *

* "Gegen das Abiturientenexamen" in "Rede und Antwort" - P. 378

Reading had always fascinated Thomas Mann. He began with fairy stories and Greek legends. As he grew older, his mother read to him from Fritz Reuter. Then he took up Schiller whose "Don Carlos" became his favorite work. The poems of Heine he enjoyed and also Goethe's love poems. Finally, much later, he read "Werther" and other prose works of Goethe. Even as an Untersekundaner he produced, with some comrades, a magazine called "Monatsschrift für Kunst, Literatur und Philosophie." A poem, "Zweimaliger Abschied," published in the magazine was later printed in the Leipzig "Gesellschaft."

When Thomas Mann was fifteen, his father died, the grain business was disposed of, and his mother left for Munich. There in 1893 Thomas Mann joined her. He obtained work with a fire-insurance company. At school he had read books beneath his desk. In the insurance office, a similar situation arose. "Er sass seine Pflichtstunden ab mit der Einteilung, dass er auf seinem Pult Formulare und unter seinem Pult an einer Novelle schrieb." * The result was "Gefallen" published in the "Gesellschaft." Then Mann gave up the office and attended lectures at the University of Munich with the idea of better fitting himself for his chosen profession. He had, by now, determined to become a writer.

Then followed a year in Italy, a year which gave him material for some of his later work. He took up his residence in Rome. Though exposed to the art of the Renaissance

* Eloesser, "Thomas Mann" - P. 49

in Italy, it is rather the classic which appeals to him. No pictures are particularly recorded in his works, but classic art is suggested by the beauty of the boy in "Tod in Venedig." While in Italy, Mann read and wrote. The result was some of his short stories and most of "Buddenbrooks."

In 1900 the author began his year of military service which, however, terminated early. Since then he has lived in Munich. He became an editor of "Simplicissimus." In 1905 he married Katja Pringsheim, daughter of a Munich University professor. Of the rest of his quiet life there is little to tell. His works speak for themselves.

In conclusion, I wish to quote indirectly and in English from his essay, "Im Spiegel," in which he mentions his inglorious school life, his half-hearted fire-insurance experience, his attendance at Munich University, his year in Italy, and his terminated military service. Rewarded properly, he should, he thinks, be squatting with other lost comrades in some anarchist club. But instead he has married a princess of a wife, whose father is a royal university professor. He is master of a large home with all modern improvements situated in an excellent location. He has three maids and a Scottish shepherd dog. He wears almost exclusively patent leather boots. He makes triumphal journeys, visits cities, invited by intellectual societies. In his native city he has won applause. His name is mentioned with uplifted brow. His autograph is sought for. And why all

this? He has not changed. He has just continued to dream, to read poetry, and to write. And for that he sits in glory. In his works he has always viewed the writer with extreme distrust. Indeed his astonishment at the honor society shows to the species will never end. He knows what a writer is for he himself is one. To quote directly: "Ein Dichter ist, kurz gesagt, ein auf allen Gebieten ernsthafter Tätigkeit unbedingt unbrauchbarer, einzig auf Allothria bedachter, dem Staate nicht nur nicht nützlicher, sondern sogar auf-sässiger gesinnter Kumpan, der nicht einmal sonderliche Verstandesgaben zu besitzen braucht, sondern so langsamen und unscharfen Geistes sein mag, wie ich es immer gewesen bin, - übrigens ein innerlich kindischer, zur Ausschweifung geneigter und in jedem Betrachte anrühiger Scharlatan, der von der Gesellschaft nichts anderes sollte zu gewärtigen haben - und im Grunde auch nichts anderes gewärtigt - als stille Verachtung. Tatsache aber ist, dass die Gesellschaft diesem Menschenschlage die Möglichkeit gewährt, es in ihrer Mitte zu Ansehn und höchstem Wohlleben zu bringen." * Such a situation is profitable and pleasant for Thomas Mann. Still it is not really proper. It must encourage vice and be a vexation to virtue.

* "Im Spiegel" in "Rede und Antwort" - P. 386, 387.

a. The novels.

In discussing the writings of Thomas Mann, I shall deal, first of all, with his novels, "Buddenbrooks," "Königliche Hoheit," and "Der Zauberberg."

1. "Buddenbrooks."

"Buddenbrooks" is rather remarkable, a long story involving many characters, which develop and grow old like real people. The fact that these personages are so real is, of course, the secret of the story's charm. Little characteristic phrases recur, pet expressions and gestures repeat themselves as in actual life, and one is continually thrilled by the repetition.

The theme of "Buddenbrooks" is revealed in its subtitle, "Verfall einer Familie." The story of the Buddenbrooks is exceedingly autobiographic, for it parallels in many respects that of the Mann family. The ancestral grain business, the old Buddenbrook house, Ida Jungmann, the official positions of succeeding Buddenbrooks - all are based upon real history. The conclusion, the death of little Hanno, however, diverges from the actual.

Three principal characters stand out prominently, Christian, Tony, and Thomas, whom we watch with interest to determine the part each will play in the decline of the family. Christian proves to be a ne'er-do-well, who is a total

loss so far as advancing the prestige of the Buddenbrook name. Tony, after an early, frustrated love affair, tries by two different marriages, both of which, however, prove unfortunate, to do her bit toward building up the influence of the Buddenbrooks. Her first marriage to Herr Grünlich reminds somewhat of the situation in Fontane's "Effi Briest." Thomas accomplishes the most for the firm. He takes over the business at his father's death and does his best to increase it, but he seems to be struggling against fate. He adds to his capital by his marriage to Gerda Arnoldsen, a former school friend of Tony, whom he really loves. She, even in her school days, is somewhat apart, musical, different, a feminine type of the marked man. Thomas says of his wife: "Dass übrigens auch Gerda Temperament besitzt, das beweist wahrhaftig ihr Geigenspiel; aber sie kann manchmal ein bisschen kalt sein ... Kurz, es ist nicht der gewöhnliche Massstab an sie zu legen. Sie ist eine Künstlernatur, ein eigenartiges, rätselhaftes, entzückendes Geschöpf." * Even in the supposedly prosaic Thomas, we have felt earlier in the book a tendency toward literature and away from business, though he keeps steadily on in his ancestral calling. This marriage of his shows the attraction which literature and music have for him. Yet he cannot enter fully into the feelings of his talented wife nor understand his little son and must, after all, remain a burgher to the end. In the two,

* "Buddenbrooks" - P. 384

Gerda and Thomas, we distinguish clearly the mother and father of Thomas Mann.

The story is colored throughout by Thomas Mann's own personality. His great love for the sea is revealed in the experiences of Tony Buddenbrook and later of little Hanno at Travemünde. Reaction of the North-German to the environment of Munich is shown through Tony's unhappy life there as Frau Permaneder. This is undoubtedly typical of Thomas Mann's own feeling toward Munich, before he has had time to adapt himself to his new surroundings. Perhaps Tony's words echo his own thoughts at this period. "Akklimatisieren? Nein, bei Leuten ohne Würde, Moral, Ehrgeiz, Vornehmheit und Strenge, bei unsoignierten, unhöflichen und saloppen Leuten, bei Leuten, die zu gleicher Zeit träge und leichtsinnig, dickblütig und oberflächlich sind bei solchen Leuten kann ich mich nicht akklimatisieren." *

Of especial interest to us is the boy Hanno Buddenbrook, who is partially Thomas Mann himself - at least, in his unhappy, painful school days, his fondness for Greek legends, for music, and for the theater. The death of little Hanno not only terminates the history of a family in decline, but is also characteristic of Thomas Mann's theory, introduced into almost all of his works, that the mentally gifted are really diseased, not normal, and cannot survive, that only the average and commonplace can continue to exist.

* "Buddenbrooks" Vol. I. P. 491

2. "Königliche Hoheit."

In the "Book Review Digest" for 1925, I came across the following review of "Royal Highness," taken from the "New York Herald Tribune":- "This novel is one of the dull-est books it has ever been my bad fortune to toil through. The style is as tedious as the court life it is employed to depict. The argument is unconvincing and without interest." *

One feels rather sorry for the reviewer and one wishes that the excellent background and sympathetic introduction provided by Arthur Eloesser's chapter upon "Königliche Hoheit" might have been at the disposal of the critic before reading the book.

Thomas Mann leaves us in this novel with the happy feeling that all is well. The book contains two main characters, Prince Klaus Heinrich and Imma Spoelmann, whose lives are joined in the happy conclusion.

In reading the life story of Prince Klaus, one is reminded forcibly of Meyer-Förster's "Karl Heinrich." This prince, too, had to live a life apart from the common and ordinary, except for his brief humanizing residence at the University of Heidelberg. In the end, however, Karl Heinrich submits to his destiny, bearing in mind the words of his dying uncle, which might almost have been written by our author himself. "Die Fürsten der Erde wohnen einsam auf

*"Book Review Digest" for 1925, from "New York Herald Tribune"

ihren Thronen, eine nie zu überbrückende Kluft trennt sie von allen andern, selbst von denen, die nach Geburt und Rang als Diener dem Throne am nächsten stehen. Und sie sollen einsam bleiben, sie müssen einsam bleiben, - darin liegt ihre schwerste Aufgabe, darin aber auch ihre Kraft. In einsamer Höhe stehen, das ist das grosse Geheimnis der Gewalt!" * In a word, a prince or a king must, by virtue of his position, be a man apart from the common and ordinary. Again, then, we have Mann's favorite subject in a slightly different form. Yet underneath, we feel that, in Prince Klaus, the author is writing allegorically his own life story.

In Imma Spoelmann, daughter of a German-American millionaire, we have, too, a person, who is apart from the multitude because of her father's wealth, who devotes herself to study to make up for this unavoidable apartness, who carries herself a little defiantly, haughtily, to conceal her unhappiness in her solitary state.

By the love of Klaus and Imma and by their marriage, the two are humanized. They feel a keener interest in the kingdom and a closer sympathy with its subjects. Klaus will, inspired by Imma, take up more enthusiastically the business of ruling. Moreover, the material comforts secured through Imma's wealth will add considerably to the prosperity of the kingdom. "Ende gut, alles gut!"

On the surface, it seems only a pretty story. But

* Meyer-Förster, "Karl Heinrich" - P. 213, 214

if we look between the lines, we find the life of our author, a man apart, different, musical, as is shown by frequent references to the opera, looking on at life, but not partaking of it. This apartness, the sad fate of a writer, is touched upon by Martini, a poet in the story, who says:-

"Der Lebensgenuss ist uns verwehrt, streng verwehrt, wir machen uns kein Hehl daraus - und zwar ist dabei unter Lebensgenuss nicht nur das Glück, sondern auch die Sorge, auch die Leidenschaft, kurz jede ernsthaftere Verbindung mit dem Leben zu verstehen. Die Darstellung des Lebens nimmt durchaus alle Kräfte in Anspruch, zumal wenn diese Kräfte nicht eben überreichlich bemessen sind. Die Entsagung ist unser Pakt mit der Muse, auf ihr beruht unsere Kraft, unsere Würde, und das Leben ist unser verbotener Garten, unsere grosse Versuchung, der wir zuweilen, aber niemals zu unserem Heil, unterliegen."*

How closely this description of a writer's destiny parallels the earlier quoted words of Meyer-Förster concerning the fate of a prince!

But to our author comes love. The little Imma of the story, to be sure somewhat transformed, is Katja Pringsheim, who became Thomas Mann's bride. The whole book is therefore really a paean of joy over the humanizing, ennobling effect of love upon one who, for long, has felt himself a Sonderling. Knowing the hidden meaning of the story one could not possibly regard the book as "dull."

* "Königliche Hoheit" - P. 243

3. "Der Zauberberg."

"Der Zauberberg" is the deepest of the three novels. In fact, it is so tremendous that one must "screw one's courage to the sticking-place"*in order to dare even a feeble attempt at analysis.

Before I started reading the book, I had heard many and varied comments upon it. I could not believe that a story which had its setting in a sanatorium for consumptives could, in any way, be interesting. Yet I found it, in the main, fascinating. Even now that considerable time has elapsed since my perusal of the book, my thoughts are constantly being drawn back to some striking character or situation. "Der Zauberberg" requires much time in the reading, but it is time well invested.

The plot, in brief, deals with an apparently average young man, Hans Castorp, who goes to Davos Sanatorium in Switzerland for a short visit to his cousin, Joachim Ziemsen, who is an inmate. But the young man's visit is prolonged, because of his own illness - prolonged almost indefinitely - until he is finally shaken out of his lethargy by the coming of the war. This, however, is a very meager outline of the book.

This novel gives opportunity for much meditation

* Shakespeare, "Macbeth" - P. 39

because of the hidden underlying meaning and the varying possibilities of explanation. Hans Castorp may be any average young man, who, planning a career, with his future rather carefully mapped out for him, through some trick of fate, gets side-tracked into a rut from which he perhaps never frees himself or is freed only by some mighty external jolt. We ordinary mortals tend to follow the line of least resistance and, in order to shake us out of our ratty humdrum life, mighty jolts are indeed necessary.

Another and deeper explanation of the symbolism might be given. Thomas Mann throughout his writings elaborates his theory of the "marked man," a person, above the average, apart from the ordinary and the commonplace, really, in a way diseased. In the "Zauberberg" Thomas Mann uses perhaps figuratively, in place of the intellectually gifted upon the heights, a group of the physically diseased. These diseased patients, also on the heights, form a little circle, apart, different from ordinary mortals, and quickly forget the human contacts of the "Flatland." They represent many nations from both the East and the West. Each individual is engrossed in his own pleasures and ailments, watching his own fever chart, listening when necessary to the story of his neighbors' distresses, but concerned primarily with himself, aware, to some extent, of the acuteness of the suffering of the others, totally ignorant of the deaths round about him, perhaps not even fully conscious of his own serious condition. Symbolically these people of various coun-

tries are perhaps the pre-war nations frittering away their time before the great disaster. To this diseased company comes the burgher, Hans Castorp, becomes tainted by the disease, and dallies on, even after he might be considered cured. Like Tonio Kröger, he is a "burgher gone astray," to be sure in a slightly different sense. Eventually, as we have said, the war recalls him to the "Flatland," to his earlier allegiance. Life triumphs over disease, death, or the spirit.

In the novel many characters, of course, appear. Those of lesser importance, like people whom we meet infrequently, do not win such a hold upon us. We notice little humorous details, superficial characteristics, but we do not attempt a thorough acquaintanceship. That is Thomas Mann's plan.

Several characters, however, stand out with great vividness. We learn to know them within and without. Of these main characters Martin Havenstein says in his biography of Thomas Mann, "Diese Gestalten sind individuell bis in die Haarwurzeln." * Seven persons, a "lucky" number, carry the plot of the story and attract, for the most part, our interest.

Chief of these major characters is the hero, Hans Castorp, whom Thomas Mann emphatically calls an average

* Martin Havenstein, "Thomas Mann" - P. 322.

young man. Yet, as one watches him, one notices tendencies away from the average. At the sanatorium he stands aloof, an observer with perhaps humanitarian instincts, but he is eventually drawn by his illness into the life common to the patients.

In contrast to Hans Castorp is his cousin, Joachim Ziemssen, a patient almost against his will, who puts in his time at the sanatorium, performing all the details of the treatment conscientiously with the one idea of a speedy return to the "Flatland." In the society of the diseased he never forsakes his allegiance to the common, the ordinary. He dies a hero for his cause.

Another character who dominates the book is the Italian Settembrini. He seems, first of all, to be a kind of warning conscience for Hans Castorp, and advises him against drifting comfortably into the sanatorium life. Settembrini is mentally gifted, an observer, yet, as shown by his advice to Hans, fully valuing the common and ordinary, in fact, humanitarian in his motives. He fights against his diseased condition or his tendency to become a marked man, returns again and again to the "Flatland," but is invariably drawn back to the "Heights."

In contrast to Settembrini is Naphta. Martin Havenstein points out that Settembrini plus Naphta gives Thomas Mann, or rather that the two represent the mental

conflict of the author. By frequent arguments each tries to win Hans Castorp to himself - Hans Castorp, who really, in the last analysis, typifies Thomas Mann.

A striking character is Hofrat Behrens, the commander-in-chief on the "Heights," who has himself been a victim of the disease. He realizes fully the futility of a cure in most cases, and the insignificance of this rarified life, but he coddles the inmates, makes their last days as comfortable as possible, and smiles ironically at each attempt to improve upon or break away from his treatment.

My discussion of characters becomes too long. Of the last two major personages Madame Chauchat represents the love element in the story. She it is who renders it easy for Hans Castorp to resign himself to sanatorium life. Though he almost never speaks to her, he is fully conscious of her presence and influence. She typifies the attraction of the East for the West. With her on her last return to Davos comes Mynheer Peeperkorn, the seventh of "my" major characters, for a time a semi-rival of Hans Castorp, infinitely human, firm in his belief that "living" is the sole duty of man.

Just as the sanatorium atmosphere wins a hold upon Hans Castorp, so it does upon the reader. In this, nature plays an important part. One is impressed immediately by the grandeur of the mountains, by the varying weather. Ev-

ery thing is topsy-turvy - snowstorms in summer and occasional periods of heat in winter. Sanatorium life is different from life down below. But like Hans Castorp one gradually takes the novelties for granted. One is drawn into the book completely. And yet, when it is finished, one is not satisfied. One feels the necessity of returning to it again. So much has been left behind, not fully comprehended! In that lies the greatness of the book. It is much too vast to be understood in its entirety by a single reading.

b. The novellen.

Thomas Mann's novellen are all, I think, carefully polished gems - diamonds, emeralds, rubies - each a different gem, but each a thing of excellence. Just as, in looking at a precious stone, one does not think of the effort expended to secure its perfection, so, too, in reading Thomas Mann's novellen, one is not acutely aware of the careful workmanship, but it is there, if one wishes to take the trouble to analyze. What I mean to say is that Mann's novellen give the impression of unconscious rather than labored perfection, even though one realizes that much deep thought has gone into the making of them.

Since it would be impossible for me to discuss all the stories, I have selected seven that impressed me as being outstanding. I have not attempted to arrange them chronologically, but have chosen them rather in the order that I learned to know them.

1. "Tonio Kröger."

First of all, then, I shall write about "Tonio Kröger." Just as I am glad that I began my acquaintance with our national capital by viewing it from the Washington monument and so getting my bearings before commencing my detailed explorations, so I am glad that I started my study of Thomas Mann's writings with "Tonio Kröger," the diamond of the novellen, for to me Tonio, more than any other character, typifies the author himself.

The wistful Tonio, child of a respected burgher father and of a sensitive, temperamental, musical mother, who has been brought by Tonio's father to the practical Hansa city from somewhere south on the map, finds early in life that he is made up of two contradictory forces, which fight continually for supremacy - the dignified, respectable, painstaking, plodding, northern type, happy in its simple pleasures, and the thoughtful, versatile, irresponsible, but brilliant spirit of the south.

Throughout his life is the ever-present, unsatisfied longing to be like the blue-eyed, ordinary people, like Hans Hansen and Ingeborg Holm, playmates of his youth. Things which worry him never trouble them. Hans finds school tasks enjoyable, is thrilled by a riding lesson and horses, and, like Ingeborg, delights in dancing, but he is not interested in "Don Carlos." Tonio, on the other hand, is bored

by home study, prefers music, dreaming, and writing poetry, and is awkward in dancing, however much he tries to be like the rest.

The writer personality, which does not fit itself readily to the common mold, is early indicated. Tonio is destined to be a "marked man," an observer and chronicler of life, apart from it, or if he participates at times to gain experiences common to all, forced by his inner nature to retire to himself again and continue his chronicles.

Instinct draws him to the South - to Munich. There to Slavic Lisaweta Iwanowna, on a day when the spring has stirred his emotions, he delivers a harangue about authors and artists in general. On his way to Lisaweta he has met a novelist, who, overpowered by the effect of spring, is hurrying to a café to counteract the influence, if possible. He, unlike Thomas Mann, represents the social type, which gets ideas and inspiration by mingling with the crowd. Perhaps Tonio should have gone with him, or, better still, have taken a walk, a diversion more in keeping with Mann's nature, but he goes to Lisaweta instead and frees his mind to her. It is really Thomas Mann who speaks.

Writers, it seems, are destined to stand apart from the pleasure of other mortals. As soon as they begin to participate, they sacrifice their time for reflection and for the crystallization of ideas. As soon as their feelings are aroused, they lose the calm, cool, dispassionate power of ob-

servation so vital to their success. This is Mann's central thought. Tonio elaborates it and mulls it over. Why should this all be so? Why must he be so uncomfortable with those blue-eyed ordinary people and yet long so ardently to be one with them? He is greatly shocked when Lisaweta, who is not blue-eyed and evidently not ordinary, tells him that it is because he is really a burgher, - a burgher, who has gone astray.

Soon the call of the burgher, of the North, of the sea, which is in his blood, causes him to go back to his old home and from there to Denmark to mingle with the kind of people from whom he has wandered away, with the Hans Hansens and Ingeborg Holms. Experiences similar to those of his youth occur. From Denmark he writes to Lisaweta the results of his journey. I quote with a few omissions the conclusion of the letter.

"Ich stehe zwischen zwei Welten, bin in keiner daheim und habe es infolgedessen ein wenig schwer. Ihr Künstler nennt mich einen Bürger, und die Bürger sind versucht, mich zu verhaften ... ich weiss nicht, was von beiden mich bitterer kränkt. Die Bürger sind dumm; ihr Anbeter der Schönheit aber, die ihr mich phlegmatisch und ohne Sehnsucht heisst, solltet bedenken, dass es ein Künstlertum gibt, so tief, so von Anbeginn und Schicksals wegen, dass keine Sehnsucht ihm süsser und empfindenswerter erscheint, als die nach den Wonnen der Gewöhnlichkeit.

"Ich bewundere die Stolzen und Kalten, die auf den Pfaden der grossen, der dämonischen Schönheit abenteuernd und den 'Menschen' verachten, - aber ich beneide sie nicht. Denn wenn irgend etwas imstande ist, aus einem Literaten einen Dichter zu machen, so ist es diese meine Bürgerliebe zum Menschlichen, Lebendigen und Gewöhnlichen. Alle Wärme, alle Güte, aller Humor kommt aus ihr, und fast will mir scheinen, als sei sie jene Liebe selbst, von der geschrieben steht, dass einer mit Menschen- und Engelszungen reden könne und ohne sie doch nur ein tönendes Erz und eine klingende Schelle sei

"Ich schaue in eine ungeborene und schemenhafte Welt hinein, die geordnet und gebildet sein will, ich sehe in ein Gewimmel von Schatten menschlicher Gestalten, die mir winken, dass ich sie banne und erlöse: tragische und lächerliche und solche, die beides zugleich sind, - und diesen bin ich sehr zugetan. Aber meine tiefste und verstohlenste Liebe gehört den Blondem und Blauäugigen, den hellen Lebendigen, den Glücklichen, Liebenswürdigen und Gewöhnlichen." *

So we have Tonio at last, realizing his fate, resigned to it, inclined toward the cold, the beautiful, the tragic, and the ridiculous, but proud of his burgher affection for the human, the living, the ordinary.

* "Tonio Kröger" - P. 120, 121, 122.

2. "Tristan."

Here again is a novelle dealing with a writer, but with one who seems not, like Tonio Kröger, to be interested in bringing himself into harmony with the human, living, and ordinary, but rather in drawing the human away from itself into a more exalted realm. To be sure, the boy Tonio does make such an attempt, slight and ineffectual as it is, when he tries to induce Hans to read "Don Carlos," but as Tonio grows older he is more concerned with getting himself into the magic circle of the blue-eyed.

Not so Herr Spinell, the writer in this story. Here it is not a burgher who has gone astray, but, in Herr Spinell's opinion at least, the talented Gabriele Eckhof, who has given up her music to marry the common, very human Herr Klöterjahn and to become the mother of little Anton, a lusty, healthy child, who will evidently grow up to follow in his father's footsteps. All would have been well, had not an illness, anxiously belittled by her husband, brought Frau Klöterjahn to the Sanatorium Einfried, where Herr Spinell is staying, not so much as a patient, but rather as an observer.

The writer is attracted to her as she is to him. At least, in her leisure moments - and here in the sanatorium she has many - she muses upon him and his remarks. He is highly indignant that she has sacrificed her musical calling

and her health for this commonplace marriage, as he considers it.

We have, then, Herr Spinell placed in opposition to Herr Klöterjahn and little Anton, trying to draw Frau Klöterjahn away from the ordinary and the human to the sphere of the cool, the beautiful, the tragic, and at times the ridiculous. He feels called upon to write a reprimand to the husband, sketching Fräulein Eckhof's girlhood and brilliant musical prospects and censuring Herr Klöterjahn for inducing her to give up all this and become his wife. Herr Spinell adds also that he hates Herr Klöterjahn, his child, and the ridiculous but triumphant life he represents. He does not seem to realize that up to the time of his meddling interference, this commonplace marriage has been a very happy one.

The beautiful, uplifting music of "Tristan," which Frau Klöterjahn plays at the request of Herr Spinell, hastens the tragedy, her own death, which occurs while her husband is indignantly denouncing the bewilderedly listening Herr Spinell for his cowardly and uncalled-for letter. One sees Herr Spinell almost as a naughty child, who unthinkingly or with the best intentions in the world, has caused a dire catastrophe.

After the tragedy occurs, Herr Spinell goes for a walk to rearrange and calm his disordered thoughts. The

twittering of the birds, the garden with its pavilions and foliaged paths, the setting sun, the splendor of the heavens move Herr Spinell not at all. But suddenly ridiculous, hateful life arouses him and stages a triumph in the person of robust little Anton Klöterjahn, who, with almost no warning, laughs out and screams merrily into Herr Spinell's agitated thoughts. This Herr Spinell cannot bear. He turns and goes away, trying carefully to conceal by his hesitating step what is in reality a flight.

This novelle, it seems to me, represents symbolically the tragedy which may occur, if a passive dreamer and observer tries to mix himself into realities, that **he** does not understand. Indirectly it is, after all, a plea for the human and the ordinary.

3. "Unordnung und frühes Leid."

This novelle departs somewhat from the theme of "the marked man" and the outsider, from a Tonio who longs to be at one with the blue-eyed and the ordinary and from a Herr Spinell who looks down upon the ordinary and the commonplace. Rather in this story we are shown, for the most part, the usual and the human.

It is a professor's home in post-war Germany to which we are introduced, in reality, to the author's own family. Here a new light is thrown upon Thomas Mann, a Thomas Mann who is a keen and quizzical observer of children, for, of course, it is he who is the professor of our story.

Though the marked man is kept in the background, he is really unobtrusively here in the person of the professor himself, who during the party of the young people at his home keeps aloof, only appearing now and then as a matter of form and courtesy. He "cannot find himself right" in the merry chatter and amusements of the youthful guests. Tonio again!

In another way, too, the professor reminds us of Tonio Kröger. When Lorchen, his little daughter, after following in the dance the "shoving" Max Hergesell and his partner, carried away by her enjoyment, refuses to let herself be taken into her father's arms, he is painfully stirred. For the moment he hates the festivity which separates him from

his darling, just as Tonio jealously regrets the arrival of Erwin Jimmerthal and the interruption of his walk with Hans. But when Lorchen later in her bed, after having been permitted a short dance with Hergesell, weeps incessantly because Max is not her brother, the father feels a bit of joy once more that she clings to him and does not draw away. Such a joy was Tonio's perhaps when Hans, as he and Tonio continued alone their interrupted walk, said emphatically, "I can not stand Jimmerthal."* Lorchen's childish grief is calmed when Hergesell comes to say good-night to his little dancing partner and by morning this "early suffering" is erased from her mind. But with the professor the pang and suffering of the previous night is not so easily removed.

Thomas Mann gives, in his description of the party, a very clear picture of young Germany. One might well be in a group of Americans of the same age, except that in their case the party would be less likely to occur in a private home. The interests of the young people center about the victrola, the dance, the movies, folksongs and popular tunes, telephone calls, and golf. The professor's seventeen year old son desires to be a Kellner or else a restaurant dancer. The daughter Ingrid, eighteen years of age, favors the stage as career. Little Beisser, the mother's favorite, and Lorchen are as yet too young to be thinking of future occupations.

Thomas Mann gives us also in this story an idea of

* "Tonio Krüger" - P. 20.

living conditions, for a time, in Germany after the war. The limitation of certain foods - five eggs a week to one household, the careful scheming of the house wife, the two older children, and the servant Xaver to secure at least twenty, remind us of America and the sugar shortage. The professor drinks his "Achttausend-Mark-Dünnbier." He has kept, by virtue of his professor's salary, the telephone and, better than that, the villa, built before the war, a really comfortable home, but now somewhat out of repair, the life frame of the higher middle-class of pre-war days, in which they now live in a manner no longer appropriate to the house, that is, poorly and with difficulty, with worn and turned clothes. For the party the professor would like, after the Italian salad and the dark bread sandwiches, something tart-like, but that would be too extravagant and the young people would hardly expect it.

So in the midst of restricted conditions, the professor's family "carries on" with its parties and its own private amusements, laughing at all the humorous little incidents of daily life, "denn auch in diesen Zeiten muss man lachen, wenn etwas komisch ist," * a cheerful little snapshot of courage under depressing and difficult circumstances, a true lesson to us of America in our present crisis.

* "Unordnung und frühes Leid" - P. 19.

4. "Mario und der Zauberer."

"Ein tragisches Reiseerlebnis" is the subtitle of this story. Knowing that much of Thomas Mann's work is at least semi-autobiographical, one wonders a bit how far the facts of this novelle are based upon experiences and where the deviation from the real to the imaginary begins.

Here we meet one of Thomas Mann's most unique characters, Cipolla, a man far removed from the human and ordinary ideal of Tonio Krüger. He is a humpback, not, however, one to draw our sympathy and pity, like little Herr Friedemann, whom I shall mention later, but, on the contrary, a repulsive individual, a hypnotist, who unrelentingly and with malicious delight exerts his will upon his audience. He is so carefully drawn, so clear cut, so strikingly different, that even though he fills us with repugnance by his heckling ways, we can never forget him. It is as if we had been present and had watched events in person.

Hypnotism is in the air at the start. The good parents of the story with their two children are staying at an Italian resort in the height of the season. Some unknown force, perhaps the southern summer, perhaps merely inertia, holds them there long after they should have departed.

When the performance of a magician is announced, the parents yield, somewhat against their better judgment, to the

pleadings of the children to be allowed to see this celebrity. Or possibly it is the lure of the weird, the fantastic, and the mysterious, which draws them on, a hypnotic something, which they cannot resist.

The exhibition does not start at the scheduled time. Cipolla fails to appear. Long ago the children should have been tucked into bed. But the parents continue to delay their departure. Throughout the lengthy evening they feel prickings of conscience and realize that it is their duty toward the little ones to leave, but some peculiar, magnetic power compels them to stay on.

The delayed appearance of the magician, his sudden effective entrance, followed by his deliberation in going into action, when once arrived, his unprepossessing figure, the temporary hostility of some in the audience, Cipolla's dramatic and hypnotic power and his method of getting ascendancy over the spectators - all this is very vividly portrayed. We readers have, like some of those present, an uncanny, anxious feeling.

When Cipolla, strong in the realization of his influence, forces Signora Angiolieri, the hotel proprietor's wife to walk about at his bidding, much to her husband's distress, we feel that the hypnotist has gone too far. At his words, "Mein Herr, hier ist Ihre Gemahlin! Unversehrt, nebst meinen

Komplimenten, liefere ich sie in Ihre HÄnde zuruck," * one is definitely reminded of Maule, the carpenter, in Hawthorne's "House of Seven Gables" when, having hypnotized Alice Pyncheon, he says to her father, "Your daughter! Why, she is fairly mine! Nevertheless, not to be too hard with fair Mistress Alice, I leave her in your keeping." **

Then comes the last gruesome incident. The passively watching waiter Mario is called upon the stage. Cipolla cruelly ridicules Mario's love for his sweetheart, forces Mario to think that he, Cipolla, is the girl, and requires the fatal kiss which leads to the magician's death at the hands of Mario. Yet we feel sincerely that justice has been meted out. A person, so filled with scorn, so disdainful, so out of sympathy with the ordinary, the living, and the human, has no place with us other mortals. The marked man, the outsider, is removed. As little Anton with shrill childish laughter triumphs over Herr Spinell, so Mario triumphs over Cipolla, so life, the commonplace, triumphs over the unique, the different. Again Mann's favorite theory has been placed before us and we can almost see him writing at the conclusion the geometrical abbreviation, Q.E.D.

*"Mario und der Zauberer" - P. 115

** Hawthorne - "House of Seven Gables." - P. 248.

5. "Herr und Hund."

This story is entirely different from others by Thomas Mann. In it there is no conflict of the "marked man," no reference to aristocrat or burgher, except by way of contrasting an aristocratic predecessor with plebeian, unpedigreed Bauschan, the dog hero of the story. The reader is given a different viewpoint of Thomas Mann - a very pleasant viewpoint of an author who for his recreation turns to nature, to the great out-of-doors, and to his faithful friend and comrade, the nondescript, but highly entertaining Bauschan.

And Thomas Mann knows his companion thoroughly. His descriptions caused me to think continually of my own good collie, a former attendant on just such walks through woods and by water, only, in my case, the water was a pond, not a river. The description of Bauschan's patient waiting - a life made up of waiting for the next ramble - was so typical, his disappointment so keen, when the master was busy and could not walk with him or must go to the city where Bauschan could not follow, that I saw my beloved Fritz's reproachful eyes, when I should have been visualizing Bauschan's.

Herein lies, I think, one of Thomas Mann's particular charms - his ability to cast a romantic gleam about humble, ordinary experiences such as are peculiar to us all, and the power to make them exceedingly readable. No one who has ever

gone strolling with his dog can fail to be enthusiastic over "Herr und Hund."

Certain pictures from the whole stand out with marked vividness: the first meeting with the unkempt Bauschan at the mountain inn; the incident of the sheep who persisted in joining Bauschan in his walk and only by stratagem was returned in safety to his stable; the scene near the ferry house with the master on the bench, watching the ferry traffic, the ferryman's beplumaged cock perched on the back of the bench, and the good Bauschan resting in his favorite place upon his master's foot; the animal clinic with its indifferent, saddened occupants, including Bauschan, who could not at all understand the reason for such enforced imprisonment; and lastly the various hunting or semi-hunting scenes, in which exercise, not the booty itself, was the main objective.

As a fitting setting for the rambles, we are introduced to the minutely described parkland, divided, like all Gaul, into three parts, "the region of the river and its immediate bank on the one side, the region of the slope on the other, and the wood region in the midst." * Perhaps some who read simply for story or incidents may object to the inclusion of such a detailed description. Perhaps Thomas Mann himself doubted the wisdom of it. At any rate, he says almost apolo-

* "Herr und Hund" in "Novellen, Band II," - P. 277

getically: "Ich bin der Landschaft anhänglich und dankbar, darum habe ich sie beschrieben. Sie ist mein Park und meine Einsamkeit: meine Gedanken und Träume sind mit ihren Bildern vermischt und verwachsen, wie das Laub ihrer Schlingpflanzen mit dem ihrer Bäume."* To me, however, the inclusion needs no apology. Rather, I rejoice, since thereby we are shown Thomas Mann as a keen observer of nature.

From this book we learn that Thomas Mann, like so many authors, must have a "withdrawing room,"**where he can recreate himself. For this he chooses the great-out-of-doors, and there in solitude or attended only by his faithful Bau-schan he gains renewed strength for further vigorous mental effort.

* "Herr und Hund" in "Novellen, Band II" - P. 301

** Thoreau - "Walden" P. 157

6. "Der kleine Herr Friedemann."

This is again a tragic story of a marked man, this time, however, not a writer or an artist, but a little humpback, deformed since a fatal fall in infancy, but in spite of deformity, a person of calm resignation, passively happy in the delights which books and music afford. Of love he has given up all thought. Then, after his thirtieth birthday, an officer and his wife, Gerda, take up their residence in the town. Unwillingly little Herr Friedemann is attracted to the woman. He struggles against his infatuation and, scorned by her, he rather awkwardly and pathetically drowns himself in the river^{where} whose shore they have been sitting together. Again a triumph for the commonplace!

This is one of the earliest of the novellen, 1897, but it is, I think, artistically rather perfect. I like especially the tiny nature descriptions, which are inserted at telling moments. Following the performance of an opera, during which Herr Friedemann occupies the same box with Gerda and her husband, the poor little man passes an uneasy night and awakens early from a troubled doze. But gradually a feeling of peace and confidence comes over him, to which nature seems attune. The birds twitter. The sky is shining blue. And again, after Herr Friedemann's slight breakfast, from which he gains further strength and faith in his power of resistance, reference is made to the twittering of the birds and

the blue of the heavens. Later, as he sits upon a bench by the riverside, whither he had arrived in his walk after a call upon Gerda, he resolves to let fate take its course. Round about, the birds still twitter and above a heavy, velvet-blue heaven gleams. In the garden on the last night when he walks with Gerda, the chirping of the crickets takes the place of the twittering of the birds. Finally, after the tragic-pathetic moment when Herr Friedemann crawls partially into the water to drown, we read these lines, tremendously impressive under the circumstances: "Bei dem Aufklatschen des Wassers waren die Grillen einen Augenblick verstummt. Nun setzte ihr Zirpen wieder ein, der Park rauschte leise auf, und durch die lange Allee herunter klang gedämpftes Lachen." *

The story in itself is perhaps not so unusual, but the style, the careful carving out of incidents and descriptions, yet in such simple language, makes the whole stand out in one's memory with great vividness.

* "Der kleine Herr Friedemann." in "Novellen, Band I," - P. 38

7. "Der Tod in Venedig."

At the beginning of "Der Tod in Venedig," the autobiographical note is strong, somewhat changed from the actual, to be sure, but one can easily read between the lines the experiences and opinions of Thomas Mann.

The hero, Gustav Aschenbach, son of a law official of Silesia and of a Bohemian musician's daughter, his reputation fully made, must live up to the high standard of writing which he has set for himself. This is no easy task. It requires discipline. It is necessary to work carefully in short daily periods upon many individual inspirations, persistently and tenaciously, to produce the smooth flowing whole which his readers admire and suppose so comfortably and so quickly secured. Aschenbach has taken for himself not much time for relaxation and travel, but suddenly he feels that he needs variety, change. He settles upon Italy and finally upon Venice as his destination.

Arrived in Venice, he needs a gondolier to take him to his hotel. The peculiar person whom he hires follows a circuitous route to reach his goal. But the seat of the gondola is comfortable. An enchantment of laziness seems to go out from the low-backed upholstered armchair, so gently rocked by the oar-strokes of the self-willed gondolier. Aschenbach experiences much the same feeling which Hans Castorp has in

in his balcony chair at Davos Sanatorium. The charm of Venice begins to work upon him.

Never has he given way to his emotions, but has kept himself coolly aloof from life in order to be able to study it objectively. But here in Venice a change takes place in him. His interest in a handsome little Polish lad at the hotel, who can be frequently seen playing upon the beach, causes Aschenbach to prolong his stay in spite of a fatal plague, which has broken out.

It is a peculiar infatuation which he has for the child, to whom he hardly speaks at any time. It reminds one to a certain extent of Hans Castorp and Madame Chauchat. The fascination, in this case, comes from the remarkable beauty of the boy, which continually forces Aschenbach to think of a piece of Greek sculpture. "Sein Antlitz, bleich und anmutig verschlossen, von honigfarbenem Haar umringelt, mit der gerade abgefallenden Nase, dem lieblichen Munde, den Ausdruck von holdem und göttlichem Ernst, erinnerte an griechische Bildwerke aus edelster Zeit, und bei reinster Vollendung der Form war es von so einmalig persönlichem Reiz, dass der Schauende weder in Natur noch bildender Kunst etwa ähnlich Geglücktes angetroffen zu haben glaubte." *

* "Der Tod in Venedig" in "Novellen, Band II" - P. 381

In "Der Tod in Venedig" one realizes especially how much Thomas Mann has interested himself in Greek legends and mythology. Many are the classic references which appear. "Little Phaeacian" * Aschenbach calls the boy, and speaks of "the head of Eros of Parian marble." ** Mention is also made of the Elysian fields, Socrates, Phaëdrus, Zeus, Semele, Orion, the steeds of Poseidon, Hyacinthus, Narcissus, and others, and a wild, bacchic dance is introduced into a dream of Aschenbach's. One especially striking sentence is the following: "Nun lenkte Tag für Tag der Gott mit den hitzigen Wangen nackend sein gluthauchendes Viergespann durch die Räume des Himmels, und sein gelbes Gelock flatterte im zugleich ausstürmenden Ostwind." ***

Love for the sea, particularly a writer's love for it, is well described in the following passage: "Er liebte das Meer aus tiefen Gründen: aus dem Ruheverlangen des schwer arbeitenden Künstlers, der vor der anspruchsvollen Vielgestalt der Erscheinungen an der Brust des Einfachen, Ungeheuren sich zu bergen begehrt; aus einem verbotenen, seiner Aufgabe ge-

* "Der Tod in Venedig" in "Novellen, Band II" - P. 385

** " " " " " " " " - P. 386

*** " " " " " " " " - P. 402

rade entgegengesetzten und ebendarum verführerischen Hange zum Ungegliederten, Masslosen, Ewigen, zum Nichts. Am Vollkommenen zu ruhen, ist die Sehnsucht dessen, der sich um das Vortreffliche müht; und ist nicht das Nichts eine Form des Vollkommenen?" *

Though the plague threatens, Aschenbach carries on to feast his eyes upon the beauty of the boy. Thus the situation remains for a time. Then the author begins to feel ill. At this critical point, the approaching departure of the Polish family is announced. The last day Aschenbach retires to his post near the sea. He is an interested observer of a wrestling match between the boy and a playmate, and when the lad, beaten, wanders off in solitude by the shore, Aschenbach gazes after him fascinated. The boy is impelled to glance back. It seems almost a beckoning glance. The writer starts up as if to follow, but is overtaken by death. Again life and this time beauty has triumphed over the "marked man," over the intellectual.

* "Der Tod in Venedig" in "Novellen, Band II" - P. 388

c. The play.

1. "Fiorenza."

Thomas Mann seems not to have interested himself particularly in the writing of dramas. In this field "Fiorenza" is his only work. It has been called by one critic,* not a drama, but rather a dramatic novelle, a characterisation which seems to me very apt.

In "Fiorenza" I found less of Mann's personality than in any other of his works. Perhaps this is due to the historic basis of the piece. Yet the choice of subject, at least, reflects Thomas Mann's particular interest, "the marked man," for certainly the friar Savonarola is decidedly unique and remote from the sympathies of his time, a veritable storm-center of protest against the ways of the Florentines in general.

There is something about Italy which has taken a close hold upon many of the great German writers. Thomas Mann is no exception to the rule. It has been stated that to Mann the pleasure-loving, art-fostering Florence was, in a way, comparable to German Munich with its wealth of painting and sculpture and its love for the beautiful.* At any rate, the pomp and splendor of Florence at the time of the Medici family, the luxury of the court as contrasted with the poverty of the masses, the rise to prominence of the obscure friar,

* Eloesser

who, in his days of power, rails from the pulpit of San Marco at the extravagances of the wealthy and admonishes a return to Christ and simplicity of living - all this is vividly brought before us by the author.

A personal, more intimate touch to the whole is secured by the introduction of the beautiful Fiore, who really typifies the laxness of Lorenzo's court. She is singled out by the friar for special invectives because of her spectacular and irreverent fashion of appearing late at the cathedral, and her skeptical manner of listening to the preaching. In telling the invalid Lorenzo of this affront, Fiore reveals her earlier connection with the friar in his youth, describes him as a moody, studious person, who interested himself not at all in the pursuits of his fellow young people, but who finally falls a prey to Fiore's enticing charms and, spurned by her, leaves his home abruptly and enters a cloister from which his rise to prominence is spectacular, gigantic.

The introduction of this unhistoric incident has been questioned by some. Arthur Eloesser, biographer of Mann, believes that it weakens the character of Savonarola to owe his rise to power and influence indirectly at least to an unhappy love affair, that his achievements should emanate from himself alone without the aid of an external force. To me it seems that the use of the incident makes Savonarola's scorn of degenerate Florence and its pleasure-seeking, licentious inhabitants all the more effective, just because

of the bitter personal touch unconsciously woven into his disapproval, the disapproval of a man who, but for a lucky chance, might have been drawn into the general whirlpool. It gives a double excuse for Savonarola's vindictiveness.

The climax of the play is reached when, through the agency of Fiore, Savonarola comes to the palace. Effective is the meeting of the two opponents, the one, champion of beauty, the other, of Christ, rivals, each eager, but with such different motives, for leadership in Florence. Lorenzo, sick at heart over his approaching, dreaded death, would indeed have spiritual help from the monk. Three things Savonarola insists upon: repentance, restoration of unjustly acquired property, and lastly renunciation by Lorenzo of leadership for his house in Florence. The last is too much. The patron of beauty flames up, demands the arrest of the monk, and dies in his passion. At this dramatic moment news comes that the city is in revolt, fears for the safety of its priest, and demands to see Savonarola. Looking down upon the corpse of Lorenzo, the monk says calmly, "Hier bin ich." * Then Fiore, evidently foreseeing the tragic fate of Savonarola, utters the following impetuous words: "So höre dies! Steh ab! Das Feuer, das du entfachst, wird dich verzehren, dich selbst, um dich zu reinigen und die Welt von dir. Graut dir davor - steh ab! Hör' auf, zu wollen, statt das Nichts zu wollen! Lass von der Macht! Entsage! Sei ein Mönch!" *

* "Fiorenza" in "Novellen, Band II" - P. 225, 226.

But to her Savonarola replies simply, "Ich liebe das Feuer." * He will follow his fate to the end. Again life, the commonplace will triumph.

Although "Fiorenza" should perhaps not be classified as one of Mann's great works, it is nevertheless carefully planned and carried out, and is very effective in silent reading. To be sure, there is lack of action, such as is now demanded in a dramatic piece, but the pageantry, costuming, and elaborateness of setting would doubtless do much to make amends for such a lack. From Arthur Eloesser we learn that "Fiorenza" was given in Munich and in Berlin without being especially impressive, but that, when it was later produced in Vienna in 1918, the words of Savonarola fell upon listening ears with particularly poignant power, in view of the terrible upheaval in Europe. So it is the mood of the audience which makes or mars the success of a dramatic work, and that mood depends primarily upon external conditions. How truly this explains the fate of some of our venerable masterpieces in this scientific, mechanical age! And the pity of it is that we, in the midst of our many gains, do not realize the greatness of our loss. To one who can transport himself into the past to the time of Savonarola, Thomas Mann's "Fiorenza" will certainly appeal.

* "Fiorenza" in "Novellen, Band II" - P. 226

d. The essays. ^{read?}

I have of Thomas Mann's essays the following collections: "Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen," "Rede und Antwort," "Bemühungen," and "Forderung des Tages." These give a clear idea of the versatility of Mann's culture. In addition to commemorative speeches, book reviews, and biographies, there are comments upon some of Thomas Mann's own works and many essays in which he gives us his ideas upon a variety of timely subjects. All are written in a very interesting, readable style, careful pieces of work, which show Mann's depth of thought. I shall, from each collection, select one or more essays for particular review or comment.

1. "Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen."

"Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen" consists of a series of essays, in which Thomas Mann attempts a justification of Germany's stand in the World War. The volume is also, in part, a defence of the writer himself against his own brother, Heinrich, who, Martin Havenstein asserts, is not at all a real German in sympathy.*

The war phrase, "Make the world safe for Democracy," has evidently sounded in Thomas Mann's ears. The following words concerning democracy and civilisation are of particular interest in explaining the theme of the book. "Der Unterschied von Geist und Politik enthält den von Kultur und

* M. Havenstein - "Thomas Mann, Der Dichter und Schriftsteller"

Zivilisation, von Seele und Gesellschaft, von Freiheit und Stimmrecht, von Kunst und Literatur; und Deutschtum, das ist Kultur, Seele, Freiheit, Kunst und nicht Zivilisation, Gesellschaft, Stimmrecht, Literatur."* By civilization Mann implies a certain standard of education and living, not so lofty but that the masses can aspire to it. Culture, on the other hand, is to him of a much higher standard, less easily obtained by the more gifted few - a thing more individual.

Mann further states: "Ich bekenne mich tief überzeugt, dass das deutsche Volk die politische Demokratie niemals wird lieben können, aus dem einfachen Grunde, weil es die Politik selbst nicht lieben kann, und dass der vielverschrieene 'Oberigkeitsstaat' die dem deutschen Volke angemessene, zukömmliche und von ihm im Grunde gewollte Staatsform ist und bleibt."** Later, to be sure, Thomas Mann writes "Von deutscher Republik" in a different vein. But at the time of the writing of the "Betrachtungen" he feels that Germany, a consistently protesting nation, is making a defensive stand against a premature democracy - a democracy which may eventually come, but for which Germany is then in no wise disposed or ready.

In the chapter, "Der Zivilisationsliterat," Mann registers a protest against German writers, like his brother, who lean in sympathy toward France and Democracy. The rad-

"Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen"

* "Vorrede" - P. XXXV, XXXVI ** "Vorrede" XXXIV.

ical "literat" of Germany, so he thinks, belongs body and soul to the Entente, to the imperium of civilization. "Ihr Patriotismus bekundet sich dergestalt, dass sie die Vorbedingung der Grösse, oder, wenn nicht der Grösse, so doch des Glückes und der Schönheit ihres Landes nicht in seiner störenden und Hass erregenden 'Besonderheit,' sondern, um es zu wiederholen, in seiner bedingungslosen Vereinigung mit der Welt der Zivilisation, der Literatur, der herzerhebend und menschenwürdig rhetorischen Demokratie erblicken, - welche Welt durch die Unterwerfung Deutschlands in der Tat komplett würde: Ihr Reich wäre vollendet und umfassend, es gäbe keine Opposition mehr gegen sie." *

And yet, after all, Thomas Mann acknowledges, he has within himself some elements - perhaps literary - which would urge Germany toward this so-called progress. "Denn Literatur ist demokratisch und zivilisatorisch von Grund aus; richtiger noch, sie ist dasselbe wie Demokratie und Zivilisation. Und mein Schriftstellertum also wäre es, was mich den 'Fortschritt' Deutschlands an meinem Teile - noch fördern liesse, indem ich ihn konservativ bekämpfe?" **

And with this semi-question we have again, uncertain and groping, the dual character of Thomas Mann.

"Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen"

* P. 18

** P. XLVII - "Vorrede"

2. "Rede und Antwort."

From this collection, which appeared in 1922 but of which the individual essays had been published at different times earlier, I have chosen several for particular consideration. First of all, because it has become so widely known and has been at times unfavorably criticized, I have selected "Friedrich und die grosse Koalition." This essay, which was printed at the beginning of the Great War, has as its subtitle "Ein Abriss für den Tag und die Stunde." Though Mann makes no definite comparison, one feels, as one reads, that the author, by explaining or trying to justify the policy of Friedrich toward Silesia and toward Maria Theresa of Austria, is indirectly attempting to justify the procedure of Germany's emperor at the beginning of the World War.

The essay gives the author an opportunity to deal with his favorite subject, the marked man, for most certainly Friedrich is a man apart, destined by his dual nature to be a mystery, a riddle of history. Apparently a man of letters, he strays by accident of position into military life. But within him remains the literary-military conflict, and interest in literature and culture is not completely lost, as is conclusively proved by his patronage of Voltaire.

Thomas Mann explains with much detail the turnover in alliances among the great powers of Europe, with newly risen Prussia acting as a kind of balance, until, due to the machinations of Kaunitz of Austria, who won France to the Haps-

burg side, Friedrich finds himself alone, except for the assistance of war-engaged England, face to face with the great coalition.

Thomas Mann says a great deal about Friedrich's policy against the coalition. Neither he nor history can prove which to consider it, aggressive or defensive. Mann admits that a rising power is always an aggressor against existing powers. Since, however, Prussia was really hemmed in by the intrigues of its opponents and in danger of annihilation, Friedrich's policy might, in the last analysis, be considered defensive. Taken literally, since Friedrich, even though in defense, made the first move, the attack should be regarded as aggressive. Yet really, after all, one lone hand against five must necessarily be defensive. So Mann argues without reaching a conclusion and leaves as a last point on the side of aggressiveness the statement that the most desperate defense saves itself necessarily by an attack.

The violation of Saxony's neutrality Mann tries to justify on the ground that Saxony was not at heart neutral, that her sympathies were with Austria, but that she was afraid to admit her true feelings in the matter and rather played up to her position of outraged neutrality. Whether, then, the policy of Friedrich, aggressive or defensive according to one's view, is justified or not, Thomas Mann gives us a very vivid picture of the great man with his back, so to speak, against a wall, facing the combination of his enemies.

This statement by Mann is especially significant:
 "Es gehört mehr Nerv dazu, einer Übermacht von Rechtsgefühl die Stirn zu bieten, als einer überlegenen Truppenmacht zu trotzen. Friedrich musste sich sagen, dass, wenn er unterläge, der Hohn und die Freude der Welt grenzenlos sein würden; dass ihm in diesem Falle nicht nur niemals Gerechtigkeit zuteil werden würde, sondern dass er dann auch tatsächlich in Unrecht würde gewesen sein. Eben deshalb war es bitter nötig, dass er siegte. Er war nicht im Recht, sofern Recht eine Konvention, das Urteil der Majorität, die Stimme der 'Menschheit' ist. Sein Recht war das Recht der aufsteigenden Macht, ein problematisches, noch illegitimes, noch unerhärtes Recht, das erst zu erkämpfen, zu schaffen war. Unterlag er, so war er der elendeste Abenteurer, 'un fou,' wie Ludwig von Frankreich gesagt hatte." *

Friedrich, by his high-handed beginning had aroused hatred for himself and for Prussia. Yet he persists in the course which he has wisely or unwisely begun, and gradually, because of his courage in the face of defeat and his gamy and persistent opposition to his enemies even in adversity, the public begins to watch him with more favor. He is referred to as "der alte Fritz." His own words seem to be confirmed: "Man bezahlt einen Seiltänzer, aber man gibt nichts für einen Menschen, der zu ebener Erde auf der Strasse geht, und es gibt Ruhm in der Welt nur für die, welche die grössten Schwierigkeiten überwinden." **

"Friedrich und die grosse Koalition" in "Rede und Antwort"

* P. 175

** P. 179

And at last it seems that "fate" is won over by Friedrich's plucky efforts. Russia unexpectedly goes over to the side of Prussia. Then a few more victories and Friedrich is secure in his position. He keeps Silesia. He loses not a single village. Prussia is intact, but at tremendous cost of money and troops.

Mann concludes his essay by saying of Friedrich: "Er musste unrecht tun und ein Leben gegen den Gedanken führen, er durfte nicht Philosoph, sondern musste König sein, damit eines grossen Volkes Erdensendung sich erfülle." *

As I have said already, Thomas Mann has been criticized for defending, under cover of Friedrich and the invasion of Saxony, Germany's position in the late war. It seems to me, however, that Mann is not really writing his own opinion but is rather trying to see things through Friedrich's eyes. That he attempts, in a way, a justification, makes me feel that he is trying to quell his own doubts and to crystallize his own views in the matter. Yet the author in a short essay called "Carlyles 'Friedrich'" states - "Ich machte meinen Helden so naturalistisch schlecht, dass die Arbeit patriotischen Freunden im ersten Augenblick für unpublizierbar galt." ** Perhaps what one might consider sympathetic treatment of Friedrich is merely ironic. At any rate the essay compels thought.

*"Friedrich und die grosse Koalition" in "Rede und Antwort"- 191

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**"Carlyles 'Friedrich'" in "Rede und Antwort"-P. 193.

"Über 'Fiorenza'", also contained in "Rede und Antwort," is a short letter to a Catholic newspaper, in which Thomas Mann answers the criticism that he is anti-catholic and that he has, in "Fiorenza," written a glorification of the Renaissance. Mann states emphatically that his hero is not Lorenzo, but Savonarola, and that though his hero appears not until the end of the piece, his spirit is present and dominates the work throughout. I quote two sentences from the letter. "Niemandem vielleicht in ganz Italien war damals das Christentum ein Erlebnis, ein Wille, eine Weltanschauung, eine Leidenschaft, - niemandem ausser dem einen Mönch, dem Helden meines Stücks, der in der Tat einer der leidenschaftlichsten und radikalsten Christen aller Zeiten gewesen ist. In ihm, dem Heiligen von San Marco, gelangte das Christentum zur persönlichen Macht,- und dieser heroische Vorgang war in erster Linie der Gegenstand meiner Dichtung." *

"Chamisso," another essay in "Rede und Antwort," I found of great interest. Again Thomas Mann runs true to form in his selection of material. The two-fold nationality of Chamisso, French by birth and German at length by choice, is a point which attracts Mann to this author. The essay contains a short account of Chamisso's life and his lyric productions, but the main emphasis is upon the fantastic story, "Peter Schlemihl," which deals with the adventures of a shadowless hero. Mann says, "Der Schatten ist im 'Peter Schle-

* "Über 'Fiorenza'" in "Rede und Antwort"-P. 350

mihl' zum Symbol aller bürgerlichen Solidität und menschlichen Zugehörigkeit geworden." * With the loss of the shadow Schlemihl becomes a marked man, different, apart from his more ordinary fellow beings. Once more Mann has returned to his favorite topic.

Under the title "Über 'Königliche Hoheit'" Thomas Mann writes in behalf of his novel, which, it seems, had roused the ire of a German prince, who then felt it necessary to defend his rank against the reproach of being considered apart and outside the world of real life. The gist of Mann's reply is contained in the following sentence: "Die anspruchsvolle Analyse des fürstlichen Daseins als eines formalen, unsachlichen, übersachlichen, mit einem Worte artistischen Daseins und die Erlösung der Hoheit durch die Liebe: Das ist der Inhalt meines Romans, und voller Sympathie für jede Art 'Sonderfall,' predigt er Menschlichkeit." ** He goes on to state that his book does not aim to be a mirror of twentieth century court life, but is rather an instructive fairy tale, which represents symbolically through its characters the progress of individuals toward democracy, the commonplace, and love. As such it should give no offence.

From this essay one learns, too, that shortly after

* "Chamisso" in "Rede und Antwort"-P. 225

** "Über 'Königliche Hoheit'" in "Rede und Antwort" - P. 346

"Tonio Kröger" was published, Thomas Mann received from an artist a sketch representing a king, wrapped in a Spanish mantle, sobbing solitary upon his throne. Thus, Mann says, the artist pictured in advance, before even the book was written, the novel "Königliche Hoheit."

The theme note for the work was obtained from the words of Karl VII in Schiller's "Jungfrau von Orleans," where he refers to the poet-king René. "Drum soll der Sänger mit dem König gehen, sie beide wohnen auf der Menschheit Höhen." * Though in "Königliche Hoheit" supposedly writing of a prince, Thomas Mann is in reality, since kings and writers are akin, partly writing of his own inner feelings and of his own life.

In this explanatory essay, the author further answers in the following way the question, "Who is a writer?" "Der, dessen Leben symbolisch ist. In mir lebt der Glaube, dass ich nur von mir zu erzählen brauche, um auch der Zeit, der Allgemeinheit die Zunge zu lösen, und ohne diesen Glauben könnte ich mich der Mühe des Produzierens entschlagen." **

* Schiller - "Die Jungfrau von Orleans" - P. 24

** "Über 'Königliche Hoheit'" in "Rede und Antwort" - P. 347

3. "Bemthungen."

Most interesting in the collection entitled "Bemthungen" is the long essay, "Goethe und Tolstoi."

From "Tonio Kröger" I have already quoted the following: "Denn wenn irgend etwas imstande ist, aus einem Literaten einen Dichter zu machen, so ist es diese meine Bürgerliebe zum Menschlichen, Lebendigen und Gewöhnlichen."* It is this fundamental, ever-present belief which Thomas Mann has in mind when he tries to explain why Goethe and Tolstoi are greater in their work and appeal than Schiller and Dostojewski.

Schiller and Dostojewski are mighty in the realm of the spirit, of the intellect, pure and simple. Their work is cool, lofty, a thing of the "Heights." Goethe and Tolstoi, on the other hand, are writers of nature. Their appeal is consequently greater, since they are nearer to Mother Earth and like the giant Antaeus renew their strength from her.

This contrast, so far as Schiller and Goethe are concerned, comes home to me very forcefully, for just now I am reading Schiller's "Jungfrau" for the sixth or seventh time (I have really lost count), and for the first time Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister." The difference between the two, between Spirit and Nature, is here marked. Yet I should very much dislike to throw Spirit into the discard.

* "Tonio Kröger"- P.121

Spirit and Nature supplement each other and appeal to varying moods. They overlap in the same person even. Both are very necessary.

In this connection the first paragraph of Martin Havenstein's "Thomas Mann, Der Dichter und Schriftsteller" seems particularly appropriate. "Auf den Höhen unserer Literatur begegnen wir immer wieder der merkwürdigen Paarung zweier verschiedenartiger Dichter von hoher, exemplarischer Bedeutung, eines naiven, naturhaften, seiner selbst gewissen und eines intellektuelleren, zweiflerischen, suchenden, der den angeborenen Mangel durch Bewährung einer grossartigen 'Leistungsethik' beinahe wettmacht: neben Goethe stand Schiller, neben Keller C. F. Meyer, neben Gerhart Hauptmann steht Thomas Mann. Es ist, als wollte die Natur uns, dem Volke Hegels, auch am Beispiel des Dichters immer wieder zeigen, dass die Idee sich notwendig spaltet, wenn sie in die Wirklichkeit eingeht, dass sie sich nur in Erscheinungen offenbaren kann, die aufeinander angewiesen und berufen sind, sich zu ergänzen, sowie Mann und Weib zueinander gehören und erst in gegenseitiger Verbundenheit die Idee des Menschen voll zur Anschauung bringen." *

From the second paragraph, too, of the same work I borrow two short sentences. "Alles, was Thomas Mann über die

* M. Havenstein - "Thomas Mann, Der Dichter und Schriftsteller"

Problematik der künstlerischen Existenz geschrieben hat, vor allem die ausgezeichnete Abhandlung über 'Goethe und Tolstoi,' ist eine Fortführung der Erörterung, die Schiller mit seiner berühmten Schrift "Ueber naive und sentimentalische Dichtung" begonnen hat. Wir spüren hier beinahe überall, dass Thomas Mann, aller Unterschiede ungeachtet, an Schillers Seite gehört, und dass neben ihm Gerhart Hauptmann steht, wie Goethe neben Schiller stand.**

In his championship of Goethe and Tolstoi, writers of nature, against Schiller and Dostojewski, men of spirit, Thomas Mann is after all simply facing again his own problem, that continual groping for the human, the ordinary, the blue-eyed - a problem temporarily solved in his novel, "Königliche Hoheit," but nevertheless constantly reappearing in varying form.

Yet, the point perhaps is not whether nature or spirit is more important in the development of mankind. Rather, Mann thinks, it is the effort which counts. To quote exactly from "Goethe und Tolstoi:" "Worauf es ankommt, ist aber, dass nichts zu leicht falle. Mithelose Natur, das ist Roheit. Mitheloser Geist ist Wurzel- und Wesenlosigkeit. Eine hohe Begegnung von Geist und Natur auf ihrem sehnsuchtsvollen Weg zueinander: Das ist der Mensch." **

* M. Havenstein - "Thomas Mann, Der Dichter und Schriftsteller"

P. 1, 2.

** "Goethe und Tolstoi" in "Bemühungen" P. 101.

4. "Forderung des Tages."

Under the title, "Unordnung und frühes Leid," Mann gives us some interesting information and tells us also his reason for writing the story. It is really a kind of filler. After completing a long work, an author likes to follow it by a shorter one in order to taste again at once the joy of finishing something. So "Der Weg zum Friedhof" followed "Buddenbrooks" and "Unordnung und frühes Leid" succeeded "Der Zauberberg."

By many the story is considered a document of German burgher after-war life. Indeed, the story has been translated into French under the title "Au temps de l'inflation." As a matter of fact it is no longer typical, and was even in 1925, at the time when it was written, already historic, for the action took place some years before the recording of it.

Since the story deals with old and young in a setting of "Unordnung," Mann hit upon the appropriate idea of making the hero, who is a representative of the old and who tells the story, a professor of history.

"Ist Schiller noch lebendig?" Evidently this question has been raised and Thomas Mann proceeds to answer it. In the first place, he calls this a genuinely German question. No Frenchman would think of inquiring whether Corneille and Racine yet live. But to ask if Schiller still lives is not much different, after all, from asking if the Germans are

still a people of culture. Schiller is reflected in scenes of Wedekind and in the prose of Wassermann. Moreover, when Germany took up Dostojewski, it took up Schiller, for Dostojewski, like Ibsen, was a great admirer of Schiller; in fact, he may be considered the Schiller of the East, the classic counterpart to Tolstoi, as Schiller is to Goethe. Thus Mann refers again to the contrast which forms the basis of the essay upon Goethe and Tolstoi. Yes, Schiller still lives!

Since up to now, I have for the most part dealt with the content of the works, I must, before concluding this portion of my thesis, add a few words concerning Thomas Mann's style. I have already mentioned the careful, but not objectionably careful, workmanship. I must mention also Mann's humor, his nature descriptions, his musical, at times, almost poetical flow of words. Especially characteristic is the repetition of descriptive phrases with reference to particular persons. These recurring motifs are scattered throughout the books. One comes to look for them. Mann's writings possess sincerity, vividness, realism. "Seine Kunst macht das nie Gesehene sichtbar und das hundertmal Gesehene zum nie Gesehenen." * Thomas Mann in his "Betrachtungen" writes: "Romantik, Nationalismus, Bürgerlichkeit, Musik, Pessimismus, Humor,- diese Atmosphären des abgelaufenen Zeitalters bilden in der Hauptsache die unpersönlichen Bestandteile auch meines Seins." ** And all these characteristics of Mann's being we find mirrored in his works.

* M. Havenstein - "Thomas Mann, Der Dichter und Schriftsteller"

III. The man, judged by his contemporaries.

a. Viewpoints from contemporary books and magazine articles.

It seems rather necessary to include in this thesis a short section dealing with contemporary opinion of Thomas Mann and his works. With this purpose in mind, I have consulted both American and German reviews, especially those written in 1929, the year of the Nobel award. Of the two, the American articles, on the whole, are less enthusiastic, perhaps because of a lack of knowledge and sympathy with things German. The chief objection offered is the length of the novels. This is readily understood. In a life of our quick tempo, reviewers, like all other individuals, probably wish to arrive speedily at their goal. A Thomas Mann novel is no vehicle for rapid transit. I was pleased therefore to find in the "Outlook" for November 27, 1929 the following statement:- "In an era of slap dash fiction writing, Mann has the courage to be, not only profound, but thorough going."* Notwithstanding the length of his novels, American reviewers generally admit that the choice of Thomas Mann for the Nobel award was, on the whole, satisfactory. One wonders, however, if this is not said in a more or less sheep-like acquiescence to European opinion, without particular investigation.

* "Outlook", November 27, 1929 - "Thomas Mann"

I was interested to note the attitude of "Die Lese-
stunde," magazine of the "Deutsche Buch-Gemeinschaft." In
the issue of October 16, 1929, Hans Waldmann, before the
time of the Nobel award, champions Arno Holz as a candidate.
In a later issue, December 5, 1929, after the announcement of
the award, H. Siemer, while expressing the best wishes of the
"Deutsche Buch-Gemeinschaft, cannot help regretting the too
early death of Arno Holz, who, so the writer feels sure,
would otherwise have received the prize.

In the "Lesestunde" of August 1, 1930, however, I
read with interest Julius Bab's article on "Buddenbrooks," in
which he stresses Thomas Mann's humor as follows: "Diese
Gabe, ohne die vielleicht ein grosser Erzähler gar nicht ex-
istieren kann, die Fähigkeit, bis ins Kleinste zu beobachten
und über die Kleinheit der einzelnen Züge innerhalb des
grossen Ganzen dann zu lächeln, dieser Humor ist es, der das
Gefälligste, das Liebenswertigste an den "Buddenbrooks"
bringt, der sicher am meisten dazu beigetragen hat, die Be-
liebtheit der "Buddenbrooks" im deutschen Bürgerhaus zu be-
gründen, ihren Erfolg auszubreiten." *

Of rare value is the appreciation of Thomas Mann in
"German After-War Problems" by the late Kuno Francke.

* "Lesestunde", August 1, 1930 - "Buddenbrooks" by Julius Bab

"Among all contemporary German writers of fiction, Thomas Mann stands out as a solitary and unique figure. From the year 1901, the date of his first great novel "Die Buddenbrooks" until the beginning of the war, keeping conspicuously aloof from the sentimental emotionalism of the Herzogs and Frensen, steadfastly maintaining his careful, serious, austere manner of observation, his profound insight into character, his sure grasp of the things of the outer world, he allowed to be published only such productions of his as came fully up to the standard of his own judicious and severe self-scrutiny. During the war, he refused to be drawn into any kind of hysteria, seeking solace in retirement and deep studies upon the basic qualities of German national achievements and failures. But not until a year ago, seven years after the armistice, as a man of fifty, has he given us, as the finished product of a whole decade of work, thought, investigation, suffering, and striving, what perhaps will go down in history as the most subtle spiritual reflex of an age of convulsions, disruptions, and cataclysms - the two-volume novel, 'Der Zauberberg' "* Then follows a careful analysis of the novel and in conclusion these words: "I felt the power of an artist who, concentrating his whole being upon his work, dis-

* Kuno Francke - "German After-War Problems"-P. 117, 118.

ciplining his will and his imagination, presenting life with perfect detachment and sovereignty of mind, has by his mastery of himself created something which communicates to those who enter into his work the same firm and self-controlled state of feeling. And, as a German, I could not help being proud that a work of such calm greatness and fundamental nobility should have sprung from the soil of harassed and distracted Germany." *

From Friedrich Mörker's "Zur Literatur der Gegenwart" I select the following passage. "Thomas Mann besitzt eine meisterliche Gestaltungskraft. Seine Dichtungen werden gewiss einen dauernden Wert als vollendete Darstellungen ihrer Zeit - als Zeitspiegel haben." **

From "Dichtung und Zivilisation" by Fritz Strich I include a brief excerpt. "Von Thomas Mann sprechen, das heisst: von uns, von unserer Zeit und unserem Volk, von unserem Schicksal und unserer Sendung sprechen." ***

Lastly, I quote from the conclusion of Arthur Eloesser's biography. "Wir sehen auf Thomas Mann als auf eine Spitze europäischen Geisteslebens; wir stützen uns auf ihn

* Kuno Francke - "German After-War Problems" - P. 127

** Friedrich Mörker - "Zur Literatur der Gegenwart" - P. 46.

*** Fritz Strich - "Dichtung und Zivilisation" - P. 162

als auf einen Beauftragten deutschen Wesens, der unser Erbe an Humanität verwaltet, der unsern Anteil am brüderschaftlichen Besitz des Menschen vermehrt. Deutschlands Geltung beruht in diesem Augenblick der Weltgeschichte auf seiner geistigen Leistung, auf der Bewährung seiner inneren Kräfte. Wir grüssen Thomas Mann als einen betrauten Führer, den sein Volk braucht, als einen Meister, den Europa bewundern gelernt hat. Wir grüssen den Dichter, der, immer tiefere Wurzel im Leben fassend, ein Weiser wird, mit der frohen Zuversicht, dass ein mannhaftes Wachstum von stiller Bereicherung, von strenger Entsagung, sich noch reiche Fruchtfolge vorbehalten hat." *

I have quoted over-much under the heading of contemporary opinion. But I believe that the actual words of authors are more expressive than a garbled restatement of my own would be. In the main, so far as I can determine, persons who have read Thomas Mann's works thoroughly and sympathetically are fully convinced of his greatness. Belittling remarks come rather from those who have read superficially or have been unable to adjust themselves to Mann's viewpoint.

* Arthur Eloesser - "Thomas Mann, Sein Leben und sein Werk"
P. 207, 208

C. Conclusion.

I. General summary.

a. Personal reaction toward Thomas Mann and his writings.

In this thesis, I have given the reason for my personal interest in Thomas Mann and his work - an interest, which has grown constantly as a result of further reading. I have tried to show how Thomas Mann's inherited temperament naturally attracted his attention to the "marked man." In discussing the novels, novellen, drama, and essays, I have attempted, wherever possible, to point out Thomas Mann's repeated use of the Sonderling as contrasted with the "blue-eyed," average human being. I have stressed Mann's idea that life and that which is commonplace triumphs over the mentally gifted, the sickly, the diseased. I have also mentioned Mann's careful, musical, poetic style, at times humorous, always sincere. Lastly, I have quoted, for the most part, favorable comments from contemporary writers and have found that the consensus of reliable opinion seems to recognize the "inspiration and perspiration," which, combined, have produced the literary genius, Thomas Mann.

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