

New members

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Goethe and Lavater were by no means the only young men of their time to combine love of country with intellectual citizenship of the world. It was this common interest which made the two recognise an affinity between them. Lavater read with delight the unknown young Dr. Goethe's *Gotz von Berlichingen*, saw in him the stuff of genius and asked his help with the writing of the *Physiognomic Fragments*, the difficulties of which were growing unmanageable.

A deep and close friendship resulted, in which Lavater taught Goethe to love and understand Switzerland, while Goethe enticed Lavater to Frankfurt and the German courts, so that he might see the best in the German mind under the French varnish of the age. Each of the friends remained what he was, a convinced patriot, yet beyond that, both were convinced "brothers of mankind," whose father's house was one comprehensive mind.

As regards Lavater in particular, he was able to combine his loyalty to the characteristically Swiss form of Protestantism with a generous appreciation of Catholic doctrine on the one hand and a fine tolerance of the Enlightenment on the other. He never attempted to conceal his opinions, whether in speech or writing, and thus he created a platform for all religious convictions which the conflicting creeds, one and all, recognised as an inestimable benefit. People saw in Lavater's tolerance "the Swiss democratic spirit," and Switzerland herself, which was in the fashion in any case at the time, came in for yet greater adulation because Lavater, in spite of his understanding of the widest issues, remained stubbornly faithful to his Swiss heritage.

In a general way, however, he was not regarded as a typical specimen of his native country. Indeed, for a generation he was actually something like a symbol of his age. Few men of the eighteenth century achieved a popularity to compare with his. His sermons and hymns ran into huge editions, and spread all over the world in translation, while his diaries, which set a literary fashion, gave the world a noble example of a high-minded patriotism allied to a broad-minded citizenship of the world.

Yet it was Lavater himself who undermined his own standing in the eyes of men. He did so as the result of a psychological bent which was both a great gift and a disaster to him. He had a genuine talent for hypnotism and suggestion and realised many times that he was able to produce effects on other people which he could only explain as miracles. The strain of feeling that he shared with charlatans and mountebanks, with plain citizens, with believers and unbelievers, gifts which he believed to be his by the grace of Christ as the "heritage of the apostles" was almost too much for him to bear.

(To be continued)

NEW MEMBERS

Since April last the following compatriots have been enrolled as new members:

Miss B. Kunz, 42 Ariel Street, Stratford.
Miss M. Busser, P.O. Box 33, Stratford.
Miss V. Schaufelberger, 7 Judges Bay Road, Auckland.
Mrs. D. Luond, Oeo R.D., Manaia.
Miss J. A. Battig, c/o Mrs. Dickel, Rotherham.
Mr. J. L. Dettling, Mokoia.
Mr. A. Schuler, Hastings Road, Mangatoki.
Mr. W. Hohl, Salon Airini, Warkworth.
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