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WASHINGTON, D. C. For the National Era. FRANZ WERNER: A REMINISCENCE. BY EDWARD SPENCER.

Franz Werner was my first known friend at Heidelberg. He was, when I first knew him, a handsome man, of some twenty years; very dark black hair, that fell in heavy folds, as it were, and half-curled about a large square-shaped skull, and a broad, heavy brow, that was especially remarkable for the two deep wrinkles that traversed it horizontally; with a large, quick, wild, black eye, which was wont to dilate and glow under the least excitation, and which, when the sun shone, shone as bright as an artist's, that grew about but only half concealed the mobility and nervous susceptibility of his mouth. His lower face was square and hard in its lines. He was a well built man, broad-shouldered and firmly set, capable of prodigious exertion and displays of strength, when it pleased him—as it generally did—to make the effort. He was seldom spoken of as belonging to that category usually applied "men of genius," and, as such, was excused for being singular and eccentric. The world has such a repugnant faith in the doctrine of "compensation," that it cannot be persuaded that "genius" and "common sense" will ever unite to crown one individual.

Franz claimed to be descended from a certain famous Von Werner, who had ruled in a thirteenth century as robber knight, and the good feudal times, and he accounted for his own foundations of the Berserk spirit by saying, that some of the fierce old blood was still leavening in his turbulent veins.

His father, after seeing much of life and service, and after settling down as a small farmer, and marrying, had suddenly been roused by the stirring news from Greece; and, going off, had fallen gloriously at Mesolongi, leaving his wife and son with but a small competence. By great economy, Franz's mother had managed to support herself and educate her son. He had gone through the proper preparatory studies, and, when he entered the University, he was in his second year.

It is probable, though I advance this merely as a wild, turbulent fellow, who, if he had any talent, was not only lazy or too reckless to exert it, but—irregular, singular, capricious in his likes and dislikes, obdurate, proud, preserving decorum, either in dress, studies, or life. Franz had a great deal of the Berserk spirit, and was sure to be the chairman and loudest stirrer, the principal or second in half the duels; an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, and an eye for the Government, an abhorrence to the Prussian empire, and a hatred for the Prussian war, were to be found in his veins. Franz was sure to be the chairman and loudest stirrer, the principal or second in half the duels; an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, and an eye for the Government, an abhorrence to the Prussian empire, and a hatred for the Prussian war, were to be found in his veins.

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jolly night ceased our acquaintance and made us friends.

I specially found that his wild revelry and reckless dissipation was but an assumption, an out-growth, so to speak, under which was concealed a profoundly serious and decidedly melancholy nature. He drank and dissipated not to excite, but to deaden. This he did in his confessions, and it was only revealed to me in glimpses, half lights, that flashed through the darkness, as the rays of a star sometimes struggle fitfully from behind a storm-cloud. Oh how sad seemed his wildest madness to me who knew him, and knew why he was so madly wild! I was often fearful lest this extravagant conflict of actual and possible would evaporate in madness; perhaps it was madness.

Once he had returned to our rooms—we were chums at the time—very late at night, after a debauch of music, extra-ordinary and prolonged, even for him, and in which he had exercised all former performances of the kind, reproaching, as he claimed to have done, the middle-aged spruce of wild Prince Fuchler and his three brothers, so extensively filling the traditions of Heidelberg. I was busy with some mathematics when he burst in, hurraing, laughing, singing, fiddling, and yet not drunk. "I have had a terrible, terrible night, shall I confess it?—half hoping that I might be able to conquer him as he then was, and win the fame of so great a victory."

"I wonder who invented chess," said I, after we had smoked our five mugs. Franz laid down the violin.

"Hush!" said he, in a half whisper, "it is a sacred thing. The first Brahma gave it to the gods, and when he left them, as a consolation, he gave it to the human race, and I was the first to play it. I have played it for thousands of years, and I have won many a silver thaler for the Chinese."

"But they claim it," the Chinese indeed!

It is a spiritual game—one of our mysteries, sacred and holy, and it is not to be played for anything to do with it. They care for money, utility, like your apocryphal kinsmen, the Yankees—and we do not bet at all. No, it is a spiritual game, and it is not to be played for anything to do with it. They care for money, utility, like your apocryphal kinsmen, the Yankees—and we do not bet at all.

"I have never known chess in Europe—never. They make a mechanical matter of it, a thing of rule and technicality; but I tell you, Franz, it is a spiritual game, and it is not to be played for anything to do with it. They care for money, utility, like your apocryphal kinsmen, the Yankees—and we do not bet at all.

"Well, fratricide, some of his disciples are still there—ay, the very one, a tall, majestic old man, with white beard down to his knees, who for thirty thousand years of transmigration has been the most important of our works, and he was a man and a Brahmin, and it was the first Brahma taught his divine game. Hiss I seek, for him alone will I acknowledge my master."

"How did you learn all this, Franz?"

In a dream—a holy dream—checkmate. Now, comrade, you will not try to beat me again because I did not seem sober. Come, give me a glass of wine, and we will play the game. So saying, he pulled down a volume from his shelf, and commenced reading; while I retired to my bedroom, as it was very late.

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