The Type of the Noble Criminal in the Novels of Schiller, Kleist, and Kurz
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THE TYPE OF THE NOBLE CRIMINAL IN THE NOVELS OF SCHILLER, KLEIST, AND KURZ

BY

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I. TYPES OF NOBLE CRIMINALS.

Among adventurous criminals in literature, doubtless the most famous representative is Robin Hood of England. He is a hero whose reputation for bravery, daring, open-heartedness, and general good-will toward the oppressed has won for him endless fame.*

Again, the Picaresque type of hero of Spain, with his parasitic dependence on society, and with his contempt for his benefactors, gives us a feeling of admiration blended with a tinge of dislike. His careless freedom fascinates us.

But in these types we see a definite aim behind the acts of the criminal characters. The Picaresque hero is simply independent, selfish, and wicked, but the Robin Hood type is trying in an unusual way to benefit society. He steals from the rich to endow the poor, and gives aid to those oppressed by an overbearing lord or ruler.

The benevolent criminal, robber, or murderer, has suffered some harm from society and takes it upon himself to obtain justice and satisfaction by punishing those in authority. Thus he arouses our sympathy, and we feel that his crimes, though revolting in themselves, have some ultimate good for their purpose.

The most important work in German literature containing a character of the benevolent-robber type is in Goethe's "Götz von Berlichingen" (1773). This drama is founded on events in the Peasant Uprising in Germany during the early sixteenth century. The "Götz" style of story met with great success and attracted the interest of contemporary writers to this fascinating field.

* Chandler's Literature of Roguery, p.55, Vol.I.
Among the works of especial worth which followed are Schiller's "Die Räuber" (1781) and "Der Verbrecher aus verlorenener Ehre" (1786). Another robber romance which, although not so well-known as the above-mentioned, still served as a model for innumerable followers is the "Rinaldo Rinaldini" of Christian August Vulpius which appeared in 1799. The next century brought two popular robber stories, namely, "Michael Kohlhaas" (1810) by Heinrich von Kleist, and "Der Sonnenwirt" (1854) by Hermann Kurz.

The aim of this paper is to consider the noble criminals in these works of Schiller, Kleist and Kurz with respect to the motives for crime ascribed to them by the authors, the development of the individual criminal himself, and the final effect of the hero's fate upon the reader.
II. "DER VERBRECHER AUS VERLORENER EHRE."

As a child, Schiller had heard of the deeds and fate of the famous "Sonnenwirtle" of Ebersbach. Besides the well-known traditions, he received in 1873 a detailed account of the affair from his teacher Jacob Friedrich Abel, son of the sheriff who had charge of the criminals. Three years later the story of Christian Wolf, as Schiller called his hero, appeared in the Thalia under the title of "Der Verbrecher aus Infamie", later "Der Verbrecher aus verlorener Ehre."

The following is a brief outline of the events as presented by Schiller: Christian, a backward, unattractive young fellow, the only support of his widowed mother, is in love with a girl of his own station. In order to get funds with which to make presents to his sweetheart, he becomes a poacher. Unfortunately he is apprehended by Robert, his rival, and in consequence he loses in fines the little he possesses. Eventually driven to illegal hunting in order to obtain food, he is again caught by Robert, punished by a year's imprisonment in the reformatory, and finally sentenced to three years in prison.

In the daily company of murderers and thieves, his youthful religious ideals are gradually changed and he returns a different man to his native town. With positive enjoyment he now hunts on forbidden ground, and kills his game only to let it lie and decay. But one day while so engaged in this evil pursuit, he comes upon Robert in the woods. He wavers a few moments between Conscience and Vengeance, but finally gives over to his lifelong hatred for the man to whom he attributes his bad fortune.
Fleeing from the scene of murder he meets a gypsy bandit who receives him with open arms and conducts him to a band of robbers. By a sudden turn of events the recruit becomes their chief. Plunged into robbery and crime, he lives an abandoned life for a time. Then, fearful of betrayal and gradually being overwhelmed by remorse, he separates from the brigands and seeks to regain his self-respect by offering to go to war for his ruler. Since his letters are disregarded, he tries to leave the country, but is captured in the attempt. He confesses that he is the much-feared Sonnenwirtle and implores the kind-hearted sheriff to be merciful, and to intercede for him with the authorities. Thus the story ends. It will be of interest to study the details of his character during this brief period of lawlessness.

A mere youth, Christian had, because of his ungainliness, to suffer again and again not only under the scorn of his associates, but also under the repugnance they felt in his presence. With his extreme sensitiveness and great pride, the fact of his ugliness cut deep into his heart. Too poor to buy lavish gifts for his beloved, and too proud to take a humble position, he was, in his futile attempts to win her, actually driven to steal. This was not a matter of pure lawlessness on his part, but something that he with his weak will could not resist, for, in Schiller's words, he had "nur einen Ausweg vor sich."

Yet, although all the world held him for a petty thief, and was, to all appearances, against him, he was, nevertheless, honest and trustful at heart, and later even tried, though unsuccessfully, to obtain any position, however insignificant, to earn an upright living. He wanted to be straightforward; he even humbled himself, but to no avail. He could not even become a
swineherd. Every door was closed against him.

Placed in the evil company of murderers and thieves, he could not do otherwise than catch the infection and charm of evil. They scorned and ridiculed him when he spoke reverently of God, and now his endeavor was to fall in with the mood of his new companions and at least win their approval. He says, "Ich betrat die Vestung als ein Verirrter, und verliesz sie als ein Lotterbube." After three years of association with practiced criminals, Christian was a changed man. Vengeance became his God and crimes his daily offering. Before imprisonment, he shrank from scorn; now he courted it. Before, he stole from necessity; now, from pure wickedness. He took a fiendish delight in poaching; and ready and waiting was the shot for the one who would chance to detect him. Had his three year punishment removed all traces of crime? No, the minute seed of youthful weakness had been nourished into a tree of criminal strength!

When on his return he saw again his native town and smiled at the children on the street, his pitiful attempt at friendliness met with no response. Even the children failed to return his smile. The fear of the little ones filled him with sadness and his penitent tears betrayed still a tender heart. Their disdain hurt his feelings more than the term of punishment he had just undergone.

But Christian tried to justify himself his own mind, tried to prove to himself that he was not the worst criminal on the face of the earth. And when he met the girl whose love he had tried in vain to win and found that she too had fallen, he rejoiced that he had at last found someone whom he could consider lower than himself. One sees that he really was ashamed of his
crimes and that he might have become an honorable man, if she had been an example of upright living for him and had been true to him in spite of poverty and all.

With his mother dead, with his small property gone to creditors, with no friends to greet and aid him, he could not do otherwise than develop his only asset, a love for unlawful hunting. He acknowledges that his infamy is his deposited capital upon the interest of which he could feast for a long time.*

He remembered nothing but that he was considered a criminal and now he wished to earn the name. He wanted to be worthy of his fate. He fairly revelled in poaching. Not only because he could support himself in this way, but also because it gave him a wicked delight in killing the game which belonged to the Herzog. So far he seemed to possess a childish pleasure in getting even with those he felt had wronged him. But this again was not pure wickedness for, in the moment when his most bitter enemy was placed in his power, Christian felt no instant desire to kill him. Vengeance and Conscience struggled in his breast. He realized that he could rid himself of this man forever, but he committed the crime only when the reason for it seemed blotted from his memory. He was stunned at the deed, rather than glad. "I could not imagine how I had committed such a murder." One can scarcely understand his nature when, after sadly examining his work, he took from the corpse a small sum of money to aid him in flight. A kind of inexplicable pride made him wish to be considered the personal enemy of Robert, and not a common thief.

Filled with remorse and tormented by his fear of death, Christian was a pitiful figure. He wanted sympathy and encourage-

* Cf. Goedeke p.70.
ment, and this he found when he met the gypsy. He craved the human friendship which his dark-skinned friend was so free in giving. He enjoyed being convinced that he had been mistreated, robbed of his rights, and down-trodden. He did not see the selfishness in the gypsies who said, "Now you are ripe, now I have you where I can make use of you." A certain inborn sense of right still lingered in his heart; his nature, though corrupted in the extreme, still had a ray of goodness to redeem it. With the love of adventure in him, he nevertheless hesitated. But only for a moment. His terrible deed surpassed everything he ever dreamed of doing and he yielded to his weak nature again.

With hope aroused again in his heart, he found a home and friends in the gypsy band. The brigands welcomed him joyfully and his life again seemed worth living. Honor and riches enticed him further and all that he had lacked heretofore, seemed only waiting for his eager grasp. He knew that eventually he would suffer for his murder, and said, "Here I could at least sell my life for a higher price."*

In the beginning he had been led into crime by a woman, and now, invited by the brazen glances of the gypsy girls, he accepted the leadership of the robber band. Now he gave himself unreservedly over to the enjoyment of a criminal career. He took delight in terrifying the inhabitants of the villages upon which he descended. Since he felt himself indeed wicked, he tried to be completely and thoroughly bad, and certainly he succeeded. People believed he was in alliance with the devil and he made every effort to encourage this belief. "His accomplices had to spread the news that he was in league with the devil, and prac-

* Cf. Goedeke, page 79.
ticed witchcraft." *

But this success as a criminal lasted only a year. Dis-
agreements, distrust and suspicion of members of the band, to-
gether with the uncertainty of the provisions overshadowed the
seemingly contented life of the leader. Now his fear of death
again beset him and, tormented by day and haunted by night with
the relentless doom he felt approaching, Christian again experi-
enced convincing accusations of conscience. He turned his hatred
from humanity, which he once thought had wronged him, to his own
self, and, he forgave all Nature and found only himself to blame.

Thus his views changed completely. He felt that he
could now live an honorable life, if given the chance. He really
recognized how terrible had been his life and he became discon-
tented with himself. He forgave society which had scorned him,
and saw only his numerous crimes. His faintest desire for crime
was entirely removed and he was cleansed from the very thought
of wrongdoing. At this time he doubtless entertained higher prin-
ciples of right and good than he had before his first crime.

So sincere was he in his endeavor to atone for the past,
that he allowed himself to be trapped into the hands of justice.
He begged the ruler to permit him to enter his army, for now he
no longer had a mere fear of death, but, as he said, "it is ter-
rible to die, without having lived!" He desired with all his
heart to be reconciled with his country. He acknowledged that he
had done wrong, and that no punishment could balance the crimes
he had committed. But even this submission was in vain. And
thus, disregarded by his ruler, he yet hoped to die a noble death
by escaping into the Prussian ranks.

* See Goedeke, page 80.
Finally, when captured and examined, his early confidence gave way to a sudden suspicion that he was followed by spies, and since "a bad conscience made him a fool," his attempted flight ended in imprisonment. Nevertheless, he still had faith in mankind, and trusted the paternal, gray-haired bailiff completely. So that, sorely alive to the need of a confidant, and his mind fixed on the one idea of squaring himself with his country, Christian disclosed his identity to the old official and begged for mercy.

Christian, as we see, was a child of misfortune. Never was he a favorite of society. No one cared for him or inspired him to noble deeds. By crimes alone could he obtain attention. And the Law did not remedy the evil of which it so quickly took cognizance. It looked only on its statute books and never once investigated the causes of the misdeed, or considered the environment of the individual criminal, which may have misdirected his youthful steps.

The reader is constantly impressed by the fact that Christian wanted, at all times, to please some one. Like any normal being, he craved praise and approval. First, his sweetheart's encouragement was his ambition, but he failed in winning it. Then, the scorn of the criminals with whom he was imprisoned, aroused in him the desire to please by wickedness. The satisfaction of his success in the latter pursuit was finally overcome by his fundamentally noble and just nature. Nevertheless, it was not an easy struggle, and his year's life of crime was not atoned for in a single day.

Christian was very strong-minded in all, whether his stand was right or wrong. For instance, he felt that the state had in-
jured him, and he took it upon himself to obtain vengeance. But, on the other hand, when he saw that he was the guilty party, he was equally as determined to pay his due to the state. Thus, he was fair in his transactions, and faithful to his convictions.

In conclusion, the study of Christian Wolf brings to light a vacillating character in a noble nature placed under conditions conducive to crime. But, he is, nevertheless, a character whose final appearance, carrying with it the victory of good over evil, and the triumph of social justice over individual rights, does not present the usual type of degraded brigandage and wickedness. Every deed of the hero is unavoidable; indeed, he seems forced to act as if by an invisible hand. In spite of his fear of death (which Christian gloriously conquers at the end) one is in full sympathy with him, and admires his steadfastness of purpose whether it be in good or in evil. His deep and abiding sense of justice does not hesitate to acknowledge, with regret, its mistaken efforts.
Like Schiller, Kleist received the outline for his "novelle" from a friend. Ernest von Pfuel told him the story of Hans Kohlhase, but he also had access to written reports, namely: (1) Diplomatische und curieuse Nachlese der Historie von Obersachsen, und angrenzenden Ländern, gehalten von Christopher Schöttgen und Georg Christoph Kreysig (Dresden und Leipzig 1731); (2) Die Märkische Chronic von Peter Haftiz; (3) Kurtze Erzehlung von Ursprung und Hehrkommen der Chur und fürstlichen Stämmen, Sachsen, Brandenburg, u.s.w. (Wittenberg 1579) by Mencius, and the Commentarii de Marchis et rebus Brandenburgicis by Nicolaus Leutinger at the beginning of the seventeenth century.*

Kleist followed these sources in the main for the important features of his story. However, he made changes to suit his purpose. For instance, the name of the hero, as mentioned above, was historically Hans Kohlhase, but Kleist used instead the "more full-sounding, rhythmical ringing, and, in respect to the given name, the more significant Michael Kohlhaas." ** He also changed the occupation of Michael from that of a merchant to a horse-trader, and gave his struggle an appearance of war by multiplying freely his small number of followers. Then too, the very event that caused the trouble was not the failure of Michael to present a pass as Kleist represents it, but the fact that it was thought he had stolen the horses.

In his deviation from the facts, Kleist had a definite

* Cf. Emil Kuh's Die Quelle der Kleistschen Erzählung "Michael Kohlhaas."

** Cf. Pniower, p.199.
purpose in view: to make every event a thread in the meshes of which Michael was drawn on to destruction.

The story as told by Kleist is as follows:- Michael Kohlhaas was a horse-dealer of good repute and in general favor with his neighbors. Once when travelling with two beautiful black horses, he was forced to leave them as security at a castle where a pass was demanded of him by the Junker. When he reached Dresden, he discovered what he had secretly suspected, that the passport was not necessary. Returning for his valuable steeds, he found them in a miserable condition, the result of heavy work in the fields and cruel mistreatment. He was further enraged by finding that his trusty servant, Herse, had been terribly injured and driven from the Castle. With a deep love for his servant, added to his inborn sense of right, he promised that justice should be obtained. Neither the Court of Justice at Dresden nor the Kurfürst of Brandenburg would give heed to his petitions, since relatives of the Junker of the castle were in office at both places. Michael did not care so much for the horses as he did for the spirit of justice which he felt was lacking in the higher circles, but he was further enraged by the news that his horses were being used daily in the fields. He suddenly concluded an agreement for the sale of his property, as he did not want to own land in a country where his rights were not respected.

He was made more despondent because, in an attempt to obtain help from the Landesherr, his wife lost her life by being stabbed by a soldier. Now the strife was on in earnest, for he felt that the Junker was also responsible for the death of his wife. With mandates published explaining his case to the people,
and with volunteers added to his servants, he attacked the castle and morning saw only the walls standing. He set fire to the cities in which he heard the Junker was in hiding and the entire section lived in fear of destruction.

At last, Michael came under the influence of the Church. Martin Luther took part in the struggle, a personal interview between them followed and, moved by his earnest words, Michael decided to carry his matter into court, provided he was guaranteed safe-conduct. Since guard and amnesty were promised him, Michael resigned money, weapons and tools which he had taken from the Electoral district, and, having made arrangements for the re-purchase of his home, he sent for his children and went to Dresden.

While Michael was on the path to obtaining justice, Nagelschmidt, one of his former leaders in brigandage, had assembled a band, and was terrorizing the land; but by his straightforward manner, when called into the Gubernium, Michael convinced the Prince that he had no connection with his old friend. Now that his case seemed to be progressing nicely, he petitioned for a pass to leave Dresden for a few days. Since the pass did not arrive at all, he started out,—only to find himself a prisoner. This broke the terms of the amnesty, and changed the aspect of the situation.

Wishing to further test Michael, the Prince allowed a letter from Nagelschmidt to reach him. This had the desired effect, for, embittered by the new turn events had taken, he answered favorably, and planned to escape from the country. Thereupon he was tried and sentenced to death. Political disturbances made necessary his trial in Berlin and thither he was sent with his five children.
Accidentally the Kurfürst of Sachsen met Michael on the way to Berlin and talked to him. He saw that Michael wore a locket suspended by a thread around his neck. It was a charm which he claimed had saved his life in Dresden. The Kurfürst saw that it was a locket containing a secret which he wished to know, a locket which a gypsy fortune-teller had given Michael once in his presence. He tried in every way to obtain the note in it after they reached Berlin. He even had an old woman, representing the fortune-teller, sent to Michael to warn him to give it up. Moreover, Kunz, his confidant, picked out the original fortune-teller, and she was kind to Michael, and advised him, for his own good and for that of the children, to give up the note. He answered "I have no dealings with any one who has once broken his word to me."

And on the scaffold, in the very face of the Kurfürst, he read the note and then deliberately swallowed it.

Bravely he received the death blow, and he was buried amid the grief of the general public, which had hoped to see his sentence commuted to life imprisonment. The Kurfürst of Brandenburg, well-disposed toward the offender, immediately made known his intention of educating Michael's sons in his school for knight's pages. And, even though he had to pay for his transgressions with his life, Michael had the satisfaction of seeing his horses in their former glossy, perfect condition, given over to his sons as an evidence of the justice of his contentions.

In the first sentence of his story, Kleist gives us a picture of Michael's character using the words extraordinary, most just, and most terrible to describe him. Gentle and kind to his family, loved and honored by all of his neighbors, he carried virtue to the extreme, and his feeling for justice made him a rob-
ber and a murderer.

Michael was, therefore, an honest, upright man of thirty odd years who believed that he would eventually obtain justice from his superiors.

His first crime consisted in his attack on the Frankenburg Castle in order to compel the Junker to return his horses and fatten them. With this attempt failed, with pain and pity in his heart, he sent Herse, his faithful servant to search the neighborhood for trace of the Junker.

It is seen that Michael was not a cold, hard criminal but a loving, kind man with a tendency for helping himself when his political protectors refused him aid. By quoting from Michael's mandate, Kleist compels us to see vividly the wronged individual calling on every good person to do his part against the Junker, a common enemy of all Christians.

His passionate anger grew, on account of the murder of Herse in an attack on the Prinz von Vweiszen, and, warning the city of Leipzig that he was a champion of Archangel Michael, and that he had come to punish the intrigue of the world, he set fire to the city on three sides.

But at this point is found the influence of the great religious leader Martin Luther. Michael was deeply reverent, and he was visibly impressed by Luther's mandate, for as he read it, "the blood mounted to his face; he took off his helmet as he read it through."

When Luther told him that the authorities knew nothing of the injustice against him, that it was under-officials who had wronged him, Michael was sorry for his crimes and said, "If the
...Prince has not driven me out I will return to the society which he protects."

However he insisted on bringing his complaint before the court, and obtaining punishment for the Junker, return of his horses, and compensation for the injury done him and his Herse. Besides mere material things, Michael added that he wished to honor the memory of his wife, for her life had been sacrificed in this struggle.

Michael's trustful, just disposition stands out clearly in his unquestioning belief in the triumphing of right. He dismissed his followers with words of suitable advice, and surrendered as electoral property, the booty he had taken.

Michael was always considerate of the station of the person to whom he is talking, and conducted himself with respectful deference toward those in authority. He was tender and gentle with his children, and cared for them whether he was in prison or not. An ideal father, he never forgot his duty to family in his most trying situations. Straightforward and honest, Michael did not hesitate to acknowledge that the letter to Nagelschmidt was in his writing; but his stubbornness made him refuse to bring any evidence in his own favor.

In the final scenes of the story which deal with the supernatural, a mystical, inexplainable coloring is given to the account. To some critics the introduction of this ghostly element appears weakening, while others merely say that Kleist was following Leut-inger, one of his sources.*

Kleist balances with artistic skill, the impression of Michael on the people, with the real character of the man. For

* Cf. Pniower, p. 189.
instance, after showing how honorable Michael really was, he says, "The report that the destroying angel was there, the one who pursued the oppressor of the people with fire and sword, had brought all Dresden to his feet."

Michael never intended to leave the house in which he was making his home in Dresden, unless necessary business called him. In this amnesty, he was in every respect fair and square. Even when his horses, ill-kept, shadowy, staggering beasts, were brought before his eyes, he politely said that they were his property, and, with no antagonistic look or action, quietly left the place.

For twelve days he patiently waited for the pass for which he had petitioned the Prince. Then, when he started for a brief visit with a friend, he was halted by officers and taken to the government room. He knew that he had been guarded and spied upon, when the terms of his agreement did not so specify, and yet, to know definitely the condition of affairs he asked the Schloszhauptmann if he were considered a prisoner. When he received a decisive "Yes" he returned, without rebelling or inciting any commotion, to his home. Note that Michael did not seize this just occasion to bring about his escape from the officials. All the more powerful is his final act of revenge against the Lachsen Kurfürst, since this last blow could never be balanced by any punishment of earthly magistrates.

Further, the interest in the hero is won from the very beginning by the flimsy story of the pass. One feels that Michael is justified in seeking satisfaction not only on account of the lie which caused him extra travelling, but also because of the cruelty to his horses. Another invention by Kleist is the death of Michael's wife, a sad occurrence so closely connected with his fight
for justice, that our sympathy is entirely with him.

Thus the picture one gets of Michael is that of a brave, just, and kind man. Considerate to his family, reverent toward his God, he has a nobility of character which almost overshadows his faults. Nevertheless, one cannot deny that he is stubborn in his determination to get vengeance at any cost, and in his refusal to give the note to the Sachsen ruler. This feeling for justice is not far from being a mania in his case. Indeed some of his placards* give one a fear as to his sanity. But by a clever interweaving of events, one is led to disregard his exaggerations and to experience only sympathy for him.

Therefore Kleist succeeds in bringing his hero before us in an appealing way. His one-handed struggle arouses our admiration; his losses move us to pity; while his final success, though colored with failure, ennobles him forever in our minds.

* Cf. his placards which announce him as a vice-regent of Archangel Michael.
"Der Sonnenwirt" of Hermann Kurz appeared in 1854. In length, as well as in the treatment of facts, it shows a striking contrast to Schiller's "Verbrecher aus verlorenener Ehre". However, since both stories are founded on the same identical incidents, the comparison is intensely interesting. Jacob Friedrich Abel, son of the sheriff who brought about the capture of the hero, gave his account of the events in his "Sammlung und Erklärung merkwürdiger Erscheinungen aus dem menschlichen Leben", which was published in 1787, the year following the appearance of Schiller's version of the same theme. It will be remembered that it was about 1783 that Abel had told the story to Schiller. Besides these sources, Kurz consulted the court reports in Vairhingen, the church records in Ebersbach, the Göppinger Akten and "Der Sonnenwirt" by Heinrich Ehregott Linck (1850). Another "Sonnenwirt" by Wüst appeared in 1851 in Reutlingen, but it was not important as a source.*

In the treatment of the facts by Kurz, Abel is followed very closely, many passages showing a careful copying of words and phrases, while in some cases one sees his care to avoid repetition by a variation of expressions. On the other hand, not limiting himself to the facts given by Abel, he rearranged the events in order to lead to the inevitable conclusion.

Kurz introduces Schiller's hero, here named Friedrich, as a young, embittered, yet tender-hearted fellow, who was leaving the reformatory with the well-wishing advice of Waisenpfarrer. With kindness toward humanity in his heart, and especially toward his gypsy friend, Friedrich came to his home. Although he could not

* Cf. Heynen.
fulfill his promise of work and support for his comrade in suffering, nevertheless he did all that he could for him.

The marriage of his sister, planned and carried out by his wicked step-mother, did not increase any toleration he may have had for her. He knew that she was a scheming, gossiping adventuress who was doing her utmost to wean the father from his children. But since he was not badly treated in his old home, he forgot the reformatory and the teachings of the old pastor. Now Friedrich showed his ever-increasing pride by refusing the Amtmännin's relative as a suitable wife, for, he said, "When I do marry, it must be with a free maiden. I will not take my wife from service."

Under the influence of his love for Christine Müller, daughter of a Hirschbauer on the edge of the town, he became very diligent in his work, and, "his inborn good-heartedness came victoriously to the front." On account of his attentions to Christine, he was looked down upon and criticized, and old misdemeanors were brought up against him and they said, "he had formerly had an inclination for wicked people and a propensity for wicked tricks". Much of Friedrich's trouble came through the gossip of the Pfarrerin Amtmännin and his stepmother. The Fischerhanne, the early sweetheart of Christine was the spy of the Sonnenwirtin, and reported to her every act of the Sonnenwirtle which could possibly be brought against him. Friedrich said, "The cold-blooded, jealous devil has followed me before,--and has sought out my path today also".

The father was advised by the Amtmann to send his son, who was reported to be stirring up excitement by his careless shooting and general misbehavior, to Frankfort. But Friedrich was firm in his determination to be true to Christine, and although he was
forbidden to marry her then, he fully purposed that eventually they would be man and wife. So sure was he that he loved her and that a marriage ceremony was only a formal act of law, that he considered himself already her husband in the sight of God.

But Friedrich was to be hindered as cruelly as possible from keeping his promise. For the advice of the Amtmann to the father was that upon his return, Friedrich should be allowed no communication with the girl, but be on parole, as it were, and in danger of being tried for old as well as new disturbances. Having promised not to see her, he broke his word only with the consent of the Sonnenwirt at the time when Christine was summoned before the church convention. Friedrich in face of the accusations of the church fathers against him, was firm in his declaration that he meant honorably by Christine and that they, before God, had sworn faithfulness to each other. Misunderstood and ridiculed on account of his ideas in regard to his relations toward Christine, he still showed a steadfastness of purpose by declaring that he, out of his mother's legacy, intended to pay all fines they might impose upon the accused girl. Again summoned before the elders on complaint of his father, Friedrich so defended himself and in such plain, truthful language confused the Pfarrer and the Amtmann that his case was transferred to higher authorities. But with a Resolution granted that Friedrich was legally of age, and with the banns twice announced in the church, everything which seemed favorable was suddenly changed by the discovery of the Amtmann that Christine's family was not free, but bound by the ties of serfdom. With hope gone, Friedrich's situation became well-nigh unbearable. Even his father began to deride Christine. But Friedrich would hear no evil of his promised bride and threatened his father's life with
the result that he was again sent to the reformatory. When he escaped and found his Christine who had also been punished, but was now in service, he rejoiced that his little family could now go into a new town and be happy. Christine was captured as she went into a town for food, and Friedrich made his way alone to the Müller home where the old mother betrayed him into the hands of officers for some money. He escaped, outwitted the guards, and hidden in an Inn, he heard the Fischerhanne swear to get the reward placed on his head. The people believed that he was in league with the devil, and shuddered at the very mention of his name. They further accused him of numerous crimes of which he was innocent. So great was their fear of him that "the reports had attributed to him a multitude of terrible crimes, before he had done anything wrong."* Christine too, did not spare him her lamentations over the happy life to which she had looked forward, and she made his failure even more difficult for him to bear.

Accidentally, coming upon his early comrade, the gypsy, the hearty welcome, the friendship and the admiration which he received, gave him fresh hope. Friedrich accepted the early offer of the band to become one of them on condition that they would tell him where there was a pastor who would unite him and Christine in wedlock. Thus was the promise to Christine fulfilled, although it brought the hero into a life of crime. Spurred on by black Christine, the gypsy whom he now learned to love, Friedrich aided in the attack on the Schultheisz. His wife persuaded him to leave the band, and just as he was going with her, a company surrounded them. He escaped, but she was captured and evidence was strong against her.

* See Sonnenwirt, p.28, part III.
But Friedrich had moments of remorse and repentance which waged battle with his strong feeling of injured citizenship. He felt that he had been pushed, unmercifully, out of society, and that nothing could save him to an honorable life. Into the range of the gun which he held aimed at a stag, came the figure of a man, the Fischerhanne. All the suffering he had endured came back to him. There was the man who had sworn to capture him, to bring him back, dead or alive, to the law whose injustice had driven him into a world of crime. He was then tempted to the avenging deed, because he felt justified in taking upon himself the right of judge in his own affairs, and furthermore, he thought there was no better way of consecrating his new life of crime. Possessed only by the thought that he must kill this man, Friedrich forgot his hatred, his revenge, all—and aimed at him in obedience to the dark voice which compelled him to shoot.

After this murder, Friedrich hidden in a tree, talked to his father as the latter was walking down the road. He told him that he would trouble him no more, that he felt himself sinking into an abyss of sin. He said he forgave him for not properly caring for him in his youth. But Friedrich himself recognized that he was now irrevocably entering a different life, "a life that seemed to him a veritable Hell!"

Led on by black Christine as his gypsy companion was called, Friedrich plunged into robbery and two additional murders terrorized the country, although he was guilty of only one of them. But he was not thoroughly wicked. He tried to take from those who had too much, from those who were proud and arrogant, and, as for taking lives, he did it only in self-defence. He really endeavored to keep his hands clean from blood.
The spark of self-respect kept ever alive by his sense of justice, made him leave the gypsy band, when plans were made for a general uprising against all law and order. "He now wanted to re-instate himself as a useful member of society, and considered entering the army, but instead of being received as a Prodigal, he was spurned and warrants were sent out for his arrest.

Finally Friedrich was captured as he rode on a borrowed horse into a strange town. He admitted his identity and begged for mercy. Sometimes he was fierce and raging, other times he was mild and gentle. Repentent, yet knowing his weakness for evil, he warned the officials against himself. With deep emotion he confessed his crimes to his pastor, and remembered again the never entirely forgotten teachings of his beloved mother. Although he blamed his father for not allowing him to marry Christine and thus saving him this life of crime, nevertheless he forgave him and longed for his blessing. He became more cheerful as time went on, and he even frequently was so happy that he himself feared insanity. In the disclosures he made against the unsuspected people who bought the goods of the robbers, he sought to help cleanse his country from these evil doers. Throughout his confession he recognized clearly his own weaknesses and acknowledged that from youth he had been acquainted with these folk and led into their life while he was quite young. "He was early led into these houses of robbery, and driven to steal, before his understanding told him it was wrong. In his most promising years he had been drawn into such places," he acknowledges in the confession he wrote in prison. *

But for only three years he had been in the power of black

* See Sonnenwirt, p.150, Part III.
Christine, and yet at 31, when he wrote the above, he felt that at the best time of his life he had been led astray. His last sentences shielded the poor robber who played into the hands of the rich, respected, and unsuspected criminal, and he advised the public to rid itself of the greatest rascals, and not merely kill off their tools.

Sentenced to the most terrible death, Friedrich heard his doom unmoved, and tried in vain to comfort his black Christine whose fate was only a trifle less cruel. She, however, could grasp none of his faith in God's mercy, and went to her death, still cursing him and the world. Friedrich bade his first wife a repentant farewell, sent his blessing to his children, and with a nobility almost transfigured, commended his soul to God.

Friedrich Schwan, the hero of Kurz's "Sonnenwirt" is the only son of an Innkeeper, moderately wealthy, but very stingy and narrow in his views. As a boy, he was never cowardly, but if caught and punished for any of his tricks he never struggled or wept.*

He is a character whose study traces the life of a headstrong, independent, tho easily led, boy. From early episodes, one can see clearly that he was good-hearted, fair, but wickedly mischievous. His father encouraged him in his pranks; he willingly paid for the damage done by his lively son, and was proud of his cleverness. Here is a first cause of Friedrich's downfall, the loose discipline of his home.**

Add to this, the evil influence of a designing step-mother

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*p.9,III.
who cared nothing for the boy and only wished to see him in trouble so that she would inherit all the property. Friedrich, with his father turned from him, with no one to care for him, could do nothing but take the road of least resistance.

But his downward path was not precipitous. Christine's love aroused an earnest ambition in his heart.* His proud refusal to marry the Amtmännin's relative made a bitter enemy for him, and she (Amtmännin) with his step-mother formed a combination against which he was powerless. Law and Home thus became his enemies. His love for Christine was true and honorable, and she expected to become his wife. Friedrich was, however, still a minor, and his father refused to permit the marriage. In all the trouble which followed, Friedrich was filled with only one idea, to marry Christine as he had promised. He had no weak will when once he had set his heart on an object.

With a keen sense of justice, he saw that his step-mother was doing all in her power to increase the friction between father and son. He knew that the Fischerhanne$ was her spy, and not friendly to him. But still he could not endure hearing a scathing remark about him. His extraordinary standard of justice forbade him to even think of an enemy with an unfair way. When some one accused the Fischerhannes of picking up a coin which was not his, Friedrich said "Der Fischerhanne$ is not my friend and will never be, but I would think twice before calling him a thief without foundation and every proof." **

His pride further angered his father, and the latter driven by his wife to find every possible fault in Friedrich, made life

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* Cf. Sonnenwirt, p.72, Part I.
** See Sonnenwirt, p.82, Part II.
intolerable for him. He said that he had been treated more as a vagabond, who slept on the straw, than like the son of the house.

When Friedrich moved the food from his father's house to the home of the poverty-stricken Hirschbands one sees only the proof of his early belief that stealing was depriving strangers of their property, and not the taking of family possessions.*

He could not allow even his father to speak questionably of his bride-to-be and defended her name by asserting that they considered themselves man and wife. Driven to desperation at the mention of Christine's dishonor, he actually preached to his father on the teachings of Jesus Christ. He did not hesitate to criticize the attitude of the self-satisfied society of which his father was a representative. Then quickly changing his mood, upon the further scorn of his father, he lost control of himself and attacked him with a knife. He was not aware of what he did, but was driven to it by the increasing insults and slanderous remarks.

Friedrich was bitter in his denunciation of the religion and politics of his time.** With undeniable truth he stated the conditions of society. Down-trodden and ostracized, he had in himself the foundation of clean, upright citizenship. He saw through the sham and deceit of so-called religious veneer, and knew that, at heart, he was more sincere and more earnest than his opponents. Instead of helping the fallen, the Pfarrer held his opinions with the society which criticized rather than aided. "Is a Pastor not for the purpose of helping to make good the wickedness of society?"***

Thus, Friedrich was ahead of his time of his ideas of

social relations. In all the troubles he had, he saw that the complicated, dependent notions of right and wrong were at the bottom of it. Narrow and suspicious were all the representatives of his townspeople with the exception of the Invalide who alone really gave a liberal and unbiased view of the situation. But driven out of home, and deprived of friends by the despotic control of official and social leaders, Friedrich, although he knew that stealing did evil only to demonstrate his power and terrify those who had mistreated him. Friedrich was not wicked at bottom, but had noble though misunderstood principles. He did all he could to impress upon his small son, the full meaning of a criminal life, that robbery was wicked, and that the best and only advice he could give him, was to be brave and honest; and further, he compelled the child to promise that he would not become a thief. With words of praise for Christine, he told the boy that his mother was good and worthy of honor, and that his father was not so bad as people said he was but, "Ein Dieb sollst und darfst du mir nicht werden, das verbiet ich dir hoch und teuer." *

If Friedrich were a thorough criminal he never could have had the staunch friend he had in the Invalide, the one man who seemed to see the situation as it really was. He knew that Friedrich was a victim of circumstances, that he really was not responsible for the reputation he had been given. Even before he stole anything, except from his father, the report of his misdeeds had been so exaggerated that the people feared him. "And the name has preceded him like a black shadow, and I should not be surprised if finally he followed it and walked in its steps," said the Invalide.

* See Sonnenwirt, p.9, Part III.
Then again, when Friedrich broke into the Pfarrer's house and stole some of the vessels which belonged to the church, his thoughts were not criminal and premeditated, but were done on the spur of the moment, and were thoughtless as well as foolish. He knew that the servant in the Inn would find the articles in the straw next morning. Everyone knew that the Sonnenwirtle could do such tricks and blamed him. A professional criminal would hide his booty and escape. Friedrich was a wild, clever fellow whose life might have been turned into the right channels if some one with influence had been interested in him. But the only one who cared for him was his Christine, and for her and her honor he became the criminal which people had long considered him.

What then finally makes him a real criminal? Without a doubt it is the unsympathetic, heartless, unjust treatment of society. Try as he can, he never pleases. Even Christine becomes dissatisfied, and in spite of her love, she often upbraids him. Therefore in order to adjust matters in some way to please her, he thinks of the gypsy's promise to aid him in distress, and the die is cast. "Was bleibt mir sonst übrig?" *

He pays for the information in regard to the pastor who marries him by joining in a robbery with the gypsy band. How eager he is to keep his promise to Christine! But--it leads him to a new, an easy life, and into this life he tries to lead his wife. She however knows how to persuade him to come with her, she sees into the future, and warns him of his tragic end. She cannot help but see that she is the cause of his downfall. He threatens to marry black Christine if she forsakes him. But with the picture

* See Sonnenwirt, p.35, Part III.
of the gallows before his eyes he is finally won over by the love of his wife. Driven from her by the fear of arrest, he returns to the evil life he has led. Alternately repentant and revengeful, he wavers in the decision he has made. His thoughts will not allow him rest or sleep. Never has he done anything worse than rob and now in this state of remorse comes the opportunity to obtain revenge on the Fischerhanne.

With the murder of this lifelong enemy, his real entrance into the criminal world takes place. Before this time his crimes have been small, and could easily have been forgotten if only society were kindly disposed. Now he recognizes the fact that he actually has entered this new lawless life completely, and therefore he gives himself over entirely to his chosen career. Friedrich is sincere in his complete separation from his home. He feels himself out of the bounds of father's care and aid, and is no longer a boy, but a man, independent, and responsible only to himself. But, driven from society, Friedrich, the robber, does not lose his ever present sense of justice. He steals from those who have plenty and he gives to the poor that which he has taken from the rich. Never does he injure his victims and his only murders are those of absolute necessity.

Finally, Friedrich withdraws from the band because their plans are too revolutionary and too dangerous to the former members who are imprisoned. He sees ahead, and decides that too long has he been unfaithful to his country and therefore he writes a letter of warning to an Amtmann, hoping to obtain mercy in this way for himself and black Christine who has been captured some time before. He really repents and earnestly desires to leave his
wicked associates forever. No chance is given him and his capture and sentence only show that the law finally wins. His confession is sad, yet hopeful. He knows his faults as well as anyone else, but more than that, he realizes the causes of his downfall.

Friedrich was a very good prisoner. His nature was always honest at bottom, and he therefore protected the jailers against himself by warning them of any possible means of escape. It appears that he feared losing his control and breaking away again. He was a normal captive in that he was not entirely subservient to his fate. His emotions changed from anger to joy during his imprisonment. Just as he felt his lot to be, nevertheless he could not at times keep from bemoaning the circumstances which had led to his fall. On his way to death he told Christine not to let his father be too easy on his little Friedrich, but "er solle dem Buben doch Streng sein."

Indeed Friedrich was glad of his capture; he feared death only in the beginning of his career. Now that he was reconciled to God and man he had no dread of the gallows. Open and frank in his entire life, he met death with the same bravado, and the impression he finally leaves is that of a victory over all weakness and crime.

To sum up the character of Friedrich. He is a wild, good-hearted, misunderstood boy whose deeds are exaggerated to his own destruction. He is brave and fearless.* His nature is complicated, but his friends can be sure that he is true to them. He has a quick, uncontrollable temper, a fact which he himself realizes. A man of his word, he enters a life of crime so as to keep a sacred promise. His sincerity is genuine and his confidence

* Cf. p.61, Part III.(v5-8) Fischer's Kurz.
in mankind unusual in so mistreated a being. He is an untamed, though gentle creature whose energies are misdirected. With the proper supervision he might have become an upright, respected citizen. But because he does not accept unquestioningly the narrow decrees of social custom, and defends himself so logically, though unsuccessfully, in face of accusations, he is considered a criminal and receives only fear in place of the support and sympathy he craves. His views are too broad, too sensible to be appreciated by the limited minds of his associates.

Yet his characteristics are not all good. He is no saint. His faults, however, are those of any normal man. But he sees these failures himself and finally tries to overcome them. The early lax treatment of his father when replaced by a sudden strict intolerance can not help but place the boy in an undecided, irresponsible frame of mind. His parent is only a law to him and displays no sympathetic consideration or understanding. The average quick tempered, weak-willed boy can do nothing but rebel, and fall into evil ways, and seek companions whose influence easily leads him farther from the laws of society and into a law of liberal rights and self-centered justice. Yet one can see no other way for Friedrich. Every attempt he makes to live honorably is thwarted. Church, government, and home turn against him. His plea for justice and leniency is flatly denied. He recognizes his weakness, yet no one offers to aid him in his struggles. Christine is selfish. She does not go with him to another land where he might begin life anew. Feeling himself bound to her as the father of her child, he seeks to support her by hunting. Why does he not leave her and accept the aid of his father? Because his promise to marry her is the uppermost thought he has, and as soon as the
opportunity is offered he keeps his word. For, cut off from every
friend, with no one to care for him, except Christine, and she
invariably complaining, his friendly, trustful nature returned to
his gypsy companion, who alone had promised to aid him in trouble.
One sees into the very heart of Friedrich and realizes that he is
a noble character, a man whose crimes have been exaggerated, who
early as a boy was careless and mischievous but never a hardened
criminal. It seems that behind every wrong deed there is a ray of
goodness which cannot, try as it may, overcome the evil. Even
when Friedrich voluntarily decides to become a professional rob-
ber, the reader does not blame him. There is nothing else he can
do; there is only one path open. He has our sympathy even in
crime!

Such a master is Kurz in his delineation of his hero's
color that one feels with Friedrich the hopelessness of his
struggle. He is driven on deeper and deeper in crime, yet one
always admires him. Even his death is his triumph and not a vic-
tory for law. One experiences no feeling of just retribution at
his punishment, but rather a crowning of his lonely life. In
spite of his misdirected energies he has advanced, broad, and
noble ideals.

Kurz has given to German literature its most perfect noble
criminal. His 'hero' develops before us logically. One sees his
very soul, torn by doubt and fear, yet ever steady in its grasp
on the right as he saw it. Not everyone can have the same views
that Friedrich has, yet one can not help but realize that he is
earnest and just. A victim of circumstances as he is, his fate
seems unavoidable. "We see how Kurz has turned the whole affair

* See Sonnenwirt, p.34, Part III.
in the favor of his hero in order to free him from blame, to bring him closer to the readers, and to mark him as a man originally honorable, whom environment and circumstances have driven into a life of crime."*

* See DeutschLiteratur-Zeitung, page 870, Apr. 4, 1914.
V. CONCLUSION.

In considering the sources of the three typical stories, one sees that Schiller alone was seemingly without official records for his facts. Both Kleist and Schiller had their interest aroused in their heroes by the accounts given by friends. All three failed to follow events in their historical sequence.

The study of the styles of the writers brings out interesting comparisons. Schiller uses a didactic, argumentative style enlivened by the direct quotations from Christian's confession. Kleist uses direct narrative with very little dialog. His single sentences are blocks in the construction of the story, and every word counts in the picture he places before the reader. In Kurz's method of treatment one finds a descriptive style, with more characters, a larger canvas, more detailed pictures, and excellent dialog.

Schiller's attitude toward his hero is that of an onlooker. He seems to be merely relating facts to bring out a lesson. He uses powerful words, good argument, excellent analysis of the psychological changes, but notwithstanding he impresses one as a cold observer.*

Kleist appears as a story-teller. He confines himself to facts, but seems more vitally concerned with his hero than Schiller does. In spite of this fact, he treats Michael with a quiet objectivity even though one feels his throbbing interest in his character.

Kurz has a union of the characteristics of both of the other writers in his relation to Friedrich. One sees in him the

* Cf. Minor, p.470, Vol.II.
observer as well as the fellow-sympathizer. Unconsciously one analyses the 'heroic' nature in the unfolding of his story.

Now as to the 'heroes' themselves in these novels: Christian was at no time a social favorite, Friedrich was liked by a few of his associates, while Michael was a man of good standing in the community, oldest of all, and the least affected by his surroundings.

Christian was neither encouraged nor restrained by his widowed mother, but Michael was upheld in his stand by his wife. Friedrich's family were antagonistic toward him from the first.

In contrasting the first crimes of the various characters, it is noticed that Christian's law-breaking was against society in general, Michael's against an individual on account of a personal grudge, and Friedrich's offense was directed upon his family.

All of the 'heroes' showed tendencies toward religion. They were not unprincipled, irreverent, hardened rascals. Indeed, their standards were in many respects superior to those of their associates. Friedrich, for instance, gave vent to a most just criticism of the law, church and society, but at the same time, he showed his early religious training.

Since each of our heroes wanted justice, it will be interesting to investigate the result of their demands. Christian is finally convinced that he did wrong, that the state should punish him, indeed, that his crimes outweigh any penalty that he may suffer. So thorough is his repentance that he forgets his former bitterness toward his land. Michael is revengeful to the last. His death is a triumph in that he repays the Sachsen ruler for breaking the amnesty, but on the other hand, law and
order win a victory, for he suffers on account of his general crimes against the people. True it is, his horses, the cause of all the uprising, are returned to him, and in so much he does obtain justice, but he also pays the price with his life. Friedrich, whose chief enemies were the officials and church men, succeeded in terrorizing their hearts by his thefts and scares. They kept him from being a man of his word and so his vengeance consists in punishing them. However in his case, the hand of the law was also strong enough to grasp him and demand of him his life. Thus in each novel, the reader judges for himself whether or not the hero has just reasons for rebellion, whether or not he succeeds in satisfying himself, and finally, whether or not the state is fully justified in taking his life.

Another feature common to the three novels is the introduction of the gypsy element. In the "Verbrecher aus Verlorener Ehre", the gypsy is first met immediately after Christian has killed Robert. Thus the influence of the gypsy is present only in the last part of the story. Friedrich, however, is affected by the friendship with his wandering companion from the time of his second release from the reformatory. In this way, his opinions are modified by the acquaintance and later the every day contact with this type of a reckless robber. In addition, Friedrich's relation to the gypsy band is of more than three year's duration, while Christian's is limited to about one year. Kurz gives much more of an idea of the effect of the gypsy organization than does Schiller. One can see how Friedrich's character is changed by his association with these people. Nevertheless, he still keeps his just attitude toward humanity, and refuses to rob the poor, or to commit murders and outrages against those
who are innocent. Therefore in "Der Sonnenwirt" and in "Der Verbrecher aus Verlorenener Ehre" the gypsy serves as a means for the hero to carry out his ideas of revenge. Michael is also influenced by a gypsy, but by a woman of that dark-skinned people. He is aided too, by her in obtaining his satisfaction in regard to the Duke of Sachsen. She, however, wants to save his life, and encourages him to give up to the Duke the secret she had given him. The mysterious, supernatural element in also introduced by Kleist in connection with the gypsy woman, who signs herself as "Deine Elizabeth." This gives a weird effect to the close of the story, as his dead wife's name was Elizabeth, and provides a good method of suspense before the catastrophe. In the "Verbrecher aus Verlorenener Ehre" as well as in the "Sonnenwirt" one finds magic powers ascribed to the heroes on account of their cleverness and quickness. Leutinger and Haftiz, sources of Kleist's novel, ascribe unusual talents to their heroes also, Haftiz introducing a number of ghostly effects. * Without a doubt the wandering life of the thousands of homeless people after the thirty years war, had its effect on German literature, and therefore it is not surprising to find the gypsy playing an important role in the stories now considered. This free, easy-going, lawless rabble could easily lead an outcast farther from his country. **

All of the 'heroes' show a common characteristic in their trustful confidence in their superiors and relatives: Christian, in his, to the bailiff; Friedrich, in his betrayal of the gypsy band and Michael, in his unhesitating faith in the Saxon ruler.

One sees that in spite of the mistreatment of society, the crim-

* Cf. Pniower, pp.195,196.

** Cf. Kürnberger, p.175.
inal never loses his belief in mankind, although, seemingly everyone is turned against him. But this trust does not characterize the relation to their fellow-robbers, for toward them each one of the 'heroes' shows a trace of suspicion and dislike, not perhaps unmixed with envy.

These criminals were not wicked for the mere pleasure of doing wrong. They revolted at the thought of entering a life of crime. Christian, on being taken to the robbers' hiding place, hesitated, and seemed about to refuse to enter this life. He compares the refuge of the gypsies in this way:— "Es erinnerte mich deinenken an den Abgrund der Hölle, woraus keine Erlösung mehr ist." * Similarly, Friedrich after the murder of the Fischer-hanee, knew that there was no longer any rest for him in a decent, upright life. The following few words give his view of the ascent of the mountain, "unwiederruflich einem Leben zu verfallen, das ihm selbst als die Hölle erschien." ** Michael was no practical criminal, and it was his faith in the power of justice which drove him to his mad deeds against the unsympathetic and unfair government. His crimes were forced upon him by his inborn feeling for his own rights as against the oppression of the wealthy titled class, represented by the Junker von Frankenburg. In each case there was a one-hand struggle at first and later a powerful uprising against united foes.

One finds a striking similarity in the broken advance of criminal tendencies in Friedrich and Christian. Each one has an active conscience which accuses him of his misdeeds, and makes

*See Schiller, ed. Goedeke. p.77.

** Cf. Sonnenwirt, p.107, Part III.
him repent for a time, but which is not strong enough to overcome the revengeful nature of the man. The life of crime is, then, not an even, smooth course, but one of fluctuations. When he is overcome by pangs of remorse and regret, the time is ripe for reform, but another added grievance plunges him into a fiendish revolt against his oppressors. This vacillating mood is not evident in Michael, as his age and stability of purpose prevent its introduction. His changes in viewpoint are due to reason rather than emotion. In all three characters, however, one sees a noble nature at times blackened by crime, but finally, one whose purity transcends his most cruel deeds. This is their redeeming feature, the ever-present ideal which, though it led them into a life of crime, nevertheless, still was powerful enough to lift them out of their mistakes, and convince them of the rights of society. One overlooks their faults in the light of their acknowledgement of misdirected effort. Their sense of justice not only was applied to their fellow-men, but also turned upon themselves.

The development of the criminal novel, when traced by the study of Schiller, Kleist, and Kurz in the three works here considered, is indeed marked. The "Verbrecher aus verloren er Ehre" is a one-man story, one character, Christian alone, being of any interest whatsoever, to the reader. One knows little or nothing of mother, sweetheart, and neighbors, for they have no active part in the story. We know nothing of the town in which Christian lived and we have no idea of the people there or the characteristics of that particular place or time. In "Michael Kohlhaas", one still finds the one character strong and dominant, but a little more importance given to the secondary actors than in Schiller's work. For instance, the wife, Martin Luther, and the gypsy for-
tune-teller, play no insignificant part in the development of the plot. But, on the other hand, there is no detailed picture given of the life of the middle sixteenth century by the introduction of the additional characters. In fact, these characters are types, and from their personality, and from their bearing toward the hero; one must draw conclusions as to the environment. However, in "Der Sonnenwirt", Kurz uses many characters, each of which occupies an important place in the village life of the eighteenth century in Germany. The Sonnenwirt himself is a typical Innkeeper, an excellent representative of the narrow-minded, strict, society-governed "bürger". One can picture distinctly to oneself, the pompous, deceitful wife with her ever-ready cutting remarks. With well-drawn, full-colored strokes, Kurz introduces the men who frequent the Inn, and especially telling is his portrayal of the Invalid and the Fischerhanne—the former with his weak body, but with a strong voice to defend Friedrich, the latter a conspirator with the Sonnenwirtin, and the bitter enemy of the 'hero'.

The village life with its gossip, its criticisms, and its limitations, is cleverly set before us. The lack of individuality is very marked. One lived only to come up to the standards of Church and Law, and not to develop any independent spirit. No one could say or do anything without the entire village soon hearing of it by way of the Inns or women's chatter. The only break in the monotony of this colorless life was the visit of a nobleman, or a rebellion against custom and law as Kurz pictures in his novel. The outside world was a closed book to the villagers, and their self-satisfied contentment kept them from any troublesome investigation of unnecessary progress.

The "Verbrecher aus verlorener Ehre" is the compilation
of a number of events, related very tersely, and with very little conversation to enliven the action. There are no long descriptive passages, and the main idea is simply to relate facts and to demonstrate the influence of circumstances upon the 'hero'. In "Michael Kohlhaas", Kleist uses dialog sparsely, and his descriptions are limited to a very few words, which, however, give perfectly the picture he wishes to place before us. The action is rapid, and no unnecessary word or phrase delays the advancement of the events. Kurz's work, in sharp contrast to these two, presents an excellent use of lively dialog and artistic descriptions which carry the action forward, as well as provide an admirable setting for the story. Not only are we interested in the 'hero', but we are also concerned with the conversation and attitude of his townspeople in their relation to the development of his character and in the parts they play in the final catastrophe. Kurz makes one see that Friedrich is a lively, energetic fellow hemmed in by the conventionalities of his time. He does not tell one that Friedrich is a victim of environment, but he gives us an idea of Friedrich and of his home; then, by the home life, shown in conversation as well as in description, the reader himself feels the bonds of custom which hold the hero, and which eventually cause his downfall. Compared with Schiller's mere statement of Christian's discord with his surroundings, Kurz's method is not only more successful in winning the reader, but also a more artistic style. Then again, by means of the gossiping women, the church convention, the dances, the gypsies, one feels that Friedrich lives among actual people, and is not a book hero like Christian. The life that stirs the pages of Kurz is lacking in Schiller. In Kleist one finds action and life enough, but not a background for the scene. Only a very
few people are brought into the story, and all of them representative of various groups of society, but with no definite relation to each other. Kleist suggests the surroundings in this way without the use of long descriptions.

From the introduction to the "Verbrecher aus verlorenen Ehre", the reader knows the fate of the 'hero'. Every act bears directly upon the final outcome and follows logically the growth of criminal weakness in Christian. In Kleist, however, one is hoping against hope to see the final catastrophe averted; with clever suspense, he makes the reader believe that there is yet a chance for Michael to escape punishment. For this purpose the second trial in Berlin is introduced together with the gypsy fortune-teller. There is a constant interchange of hope and fear that arouses the interest of the reader to a great extent in the final result. Kurz's account proceeds deliberately and with very little change in the definite outcome of the events. The thirty-eighth chapter,* which brings the feature of suspense into the scene, breaks off the interest in the story, and weakens the otherwise strong conclusion in the following chapter.

Considering the three stories in their final impression on the reader, one sees a great improvement upon the two earlier ones evident in Kurz's work. His portrayal brings into play the entire village, and its surroundings. Not only are we instructed by the recital of events and the effect of environment on a given character, but we are further enlightened as to the life and customs of the time. So vivid and true to human nature are his character sketches that, with Friedrich, we rebel under the sarcastic words of the Sonnenwirtin, and with him defend his stand.  

* See Isolde Kurz, page 194.
ards against the narrow ideas of the Amtmann and Pfarrer. Kurz's treatment in other words is broader and more detailed than that of either Schiller or Kleist. His work is more interesting to the average reader, since it is not in a didactic, moralizing tone, but rather brings its lesson by suggestion. One cannot deny that his characters are real, live, active people, typical of their time, and drawn with true artistic skill in appearance as well as in action. They think and act, and are not mere exponents of an idea which the author wishes to present.

In spite of the difference in structure and treatment, these three novels have, as a fundamental trait, the same main idea, the rebellion of the individual against society. Kleist's hero, exasperated by the refusal of his individual rights becomes a champion of human liberties, a worthy follower of Karl Moor and Götz von Berlichingen. The 'heroes' of Kurz and Schiller have been cast into misery and crime by their fellow-men, and turn upon them for revenge. But the underlying motives are the same in all, rebellion against the established order of things. No matter how noble is the character of the man, no matter how high his ideals are above those of his associates, he must pay the penalty for rebelling against society and for becoming a law unto himself.
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