

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The Historical Background: Goethe and England 1775-1850

For many years now editors and critics have suspected that Arnold's intimate acquaintance with the huge mass of Goethe's writings exercised a considerable influence both on his intellectual development generally and on the formation of his ideas on specific questions related to poetry and literature. This hypothesis was suggested not only by the frequent references to Goethe scattered throughout Arnold's works, but also by his own admission of indebtedness. In a letter to Cardinal Newman of 28 May 1872 he wrote:

There are four people, in especial, from whom I am conscious of having learnt—a very different thing from merely receiving a strong impression—learnt habits, methods, ruling ideas, which are constantly with me; and the four are—Goethe, Wordsworth, Saint-Beuve, and yourself.¹

The publication in 1952 of Arnold's note-books and reading lists confirmed that his reading of Goethe was a life-long interest.² Such distinguished Arnold scholars as Lionel Trilling, Kenneth Allott, William A. Madden, and David J. DeLaura have made a number of stimulating suggestions concerning Arnold's relationship with Goethe, but their comments were made only in a general way while pursuing other lines of inquiry, and as yet no full-length study devoted solely to this subject has appeared.³ The lack of any such work obviously represents a gap in Arnold scholarship, inconvenient to editor and critic alike, and it is the purpose of this study to go some way at least towards remedying the situation.

The task, however, is hazardous. Arnold spoke of his debt to Goethe, but in the same breath he mentioned three other influences, and elsewhere Emerson and Carlyle were cited as influences in a similar context.⁴ The note-books, too, are a sobering reminder that Arnold's thought was fed from innumerable sources and that a mind as independent and eclectic as his was not to be dominated by the influence, no matter how powerful, of one man. There is no easy way of avoiding that kind of misrepresentation, endemic in 'influence studies', in which exclusive, or nearly exclusive, attention is devoted to a single 'source'. Such exclusiveness necessarily brings with it the danger of exaggerating that source's importance. A dutiful critic will consult other known sources too, of course, but in doing so he is likely

to find his efforts rewarded by ever diminishing returns. Moderation, tact, and a healthy scepticism with regard to his own occupation are perhaps his best safeguards.

Before entering upon the main investigation, however, it should be profitable to put Arnold's interest in Goethe into a wider cultural and historical perspective. By giving an account of the English view of Goethe in early Victorian England one is in a better position to understand Arnold's particular response to the German poet. This historical background is itself a much-neglected field of study. Although nothing more ambitious than a rough sketch can be attempted here, it is a subject which initially will seem to take us some distance from Arnold himself. The view of Goethe which prevailed in England when Arnold first began to read his works was the outcome of a long and complex process of 'discovery'. With some account of this process completed one can then profitably turn to the immediate context of Arnold's relationship with Goethe—his family's connexions with Germany, his obscure student years at Oxford—and thence one is inevitably drawn into the better-charted territory of his young manhood, and the mature years of his middle and later life.

The growth of Goethe's reputation in England has its roots in the late eighteenth century. Before 1780 very little was known about German literature in England, and the main barrier to a better knowledge was, of course, the linguistic one. James Mackintosh of the *Edinburgh Review* wrote in 1813, 'Thirty years ago, there were probably in London as many Persian as German scholars'.⁵ The success enjoyed in England by Goethe's novel *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* is, therefore, all the more remarkable. Three years after its publication in Germany in 1774 there were already three different French translations and it was through one of these, that of a Monsieur Aubry, that the novel reached England. In the course of the next twenty years five more English translations appeared, though none was of any merit.⁶ To say that Goethe's novel achieved popularity is true, but it might be truer to say notoriety. The guardians of the public morals, not slow to detect any publication with an 'immoral tendency', seemed unable to find anything in *Werther* but an attempt to defend the practice of suicide. So sensitive was the question of the novel's morality that almost all its translators felt impelled to justify the honourableness of their intentions. John Gifford, for example, thanked the critics for their 'fervent zeal for the enforcement of morality' but assured them that their fears were misconceived and that 'could the following work have been possibly construed into an apology for suicide, the present edition of it would most certainly never have appeared'.⁷ The novel's success had little to do with the literary merits for which it has since come to be valued. It was read as an example of the kind of 'sentimental' literature which had been in vogue since the publication of Richardson's novels, *Pamela* (1741) and *Clarissa* (1748). Had Goethe written further sentimental novels they would certainly have been received avidly, but he

did not and so, for the British public, Goethe remained simply 'the author of *Werther*'.

Not only did Goethe's novel fail to stimulate any curiosity about the author, but it also did nothing to direct public attention to the peculiar blossoming of a national literature in Germany. The beginnings of English awareness of German literature can really be said to date from 1788, for it was in this year that Henry Mackenzie (1745-1831) delivered to the Royal Society of Edinburgh an address entitled 'An Account of the German Theatre'. In 1788 Mackenzie was an established literary figure, the author of an enormously successful novel *The Man of Feeling* (1771), and his word carried weight. Mackenzie, who knew the German theatre only through French translations, was particularly impressed by Schiller's *Die Räuber*, but his comments on Goethe are less than flattering. He complains that the action of some of Goethe's plays is 'libertine and immoral'. 'From the author of *Werther*', he adds, 'this does not surprize'.⁸ These reservations, however, did not deter him from learning German or from publishing in 1792 a translation of Goethe's play *Die Geschwister* (1776). Walter Scott, who was among the audience at Mackenzie's lecture, recalled that the paper 'made much noise, and produced a powerful effect'.⁹ It was evidently seminal. In 1790 a new magazine entitled *The Speculator* was established in London by 'N. Drake and another' with the declared intention of keeping its readers informed about German literature, and certainly it is very difficult to account for the sudden burst of interest in German drama in England in the 1790s, without reference to Mackenzie's lecture and the new magazine.

The suddenness with which this interest in German drama manifested itself is quite remarkable, but although Schiller's and Goethe's *Sturm and Drang* works, *Die Räuber*, *Kabale und Liebe*, *Fiesco*, *Don Carlos*, *Götz von Berlichingen*, were among those translated during the decade 1790 to 1800, the true nature of the enthusiasm for German plays is revealed by the popularity of the works of August von Kotzebue (1761-1819), who was the only German dramatist to be produced successfully on the English stage. There is no record of any play by Goethe being performed, and the only plays of Schiller to be acted publicly were adaptations of *Die Räuber* and *Kabale und Liebe*.¹⁰ Translators and producers were clearly interested only in the 'sensational' type of play—the sentimental, the Gothic, or the violent. Needless to say, this was material sure to outrage the very same moral sensibilities which had taken such a dislike to *Werther*, and in 1799 Hannah More published her widely read and highly influential work, *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education*, in which she attacked the current popularity of German plays. Mrs More saw German literature as part of a grand design to undermine the principles of Christianity on which the strength of the nation was founded, and she made this stirring appeal:

Those ladies who take the lead in society are loudly called upon to act as the guardians of public taste as well as public virtue, in an important instance. They are called upon to oppose with the whole weight of their influence, the irruption of those swarms of publications that are daily issuing from the banks of the Danube;

which like their ravaging predecessors of the darker ages, though with far other arms, are over-running civilised society . . .¹¹

Nor was Mrs More's voice alone in protest, for to some the dramatic productions of Germany appeared dangerously republican in sentiment.

After 1796, when the English government's negotiations with France broke down, the country lived in a constant state of crisis and alarm at the prospect of impending invasion. Anything foreign was an object of suspicion, and a magazine entitled *The Anti-Jacobin Review* conducted a scurrilous campaign against all German writers. Its basic objection to them was that their political sympathies were 'jacobinical' and that their plays had 'an evident tendency to excite discontent among the lower classes of society, by representing *obscurity* and *virtue*, *rank* and *vice*, as close and inseparable associates'.¹² But the magazine also attacked the moral character of German writers: 'the greater part of the Literati are men of profligate lives and abandoned characters. Their works . . . are replete with licentious imagery, voluptuous descriptions, and scenes grossly indecent and immoral'.¹³ Goethe was the object of a particularly malicious slander when a letter was printed, supposedly from an English reader in Germany. The correspondent informed the magazine that the author of *Werther* publicly kept a mistress 'devoid of beauty, delicacy, and fidelity' and described him as 'avowedly a man of pleasure' with 'not a single grain of morality in his composition'.¹⁴ Just as the public acclaim of German writers had been indiscriminate so now was the condemnation. The whole of the so-called 'German school' came under attack, but it is significant that the accusations of immorality were always directed against Goethe. Schiller's reputation in this respect remained untarnished. As early as 1800, therefore, the myth of Goethe as an immoral writer was firmly established and, as we shall see, it persisted under varying guises far into the nineteenth century.

After 1800 the flood of translations and reviews in the periodicals ceased abruptly. It is of course possible that this abrupt cessation and the *Anti-Jacobin* campaign were both concurrent reflections of the inflamed patriotism generated by the political situation, but it is more likely that the attacks were at least partly responsible for bringing the heated enthusiasm for things German to its sudden end. Certainly, whatever the reason, Goethe and German literature were almost completely forgotten in England for the next thirteen years.

There were, of course, a few individual men in England who had a far better knowledge of German language and literature than most of their contemporaries. Such men were William Taylor of Norwich and Henry Crabb Robinson. Taylor was born in 1765 of a wealthy merchant family. At the age of sixteen he was sent to Detmold in Germany where he learned the language at first hand from a Lutheran pastor and he acquired there an interest in German literature. He returned home in 1782 and after nine years in business he had accumulated sufficient

wealth to enable him to retire and devote the rest of his life to his literary interests. He translated Lessing's *Nathan der Weise* in 1791, Goethe's *Die Geschwister* in 1792, and *Iphigenie auf Tauris* the following year. Regrettably Taylor was an unambitious man and his translations, which were privately printed, circulated only within a close circle of friends. From 1793 until 1824 he contributed a large number of articles on literary subjects to periodical journals such as the *Monthly Review*, the *Critical Review* and the *Monthly Magazine*, and he collected many of these for publication in a three-volume work entitled *Historic Survey of German Poetry* (1828-30). It was given a damning notice in the *Edinburgh Review* by Carlyle who justly calls it 'a mere aggregate of Dissertations, Translations, Notices and Notes'.¹⁵ But the importance of a man like Taylor is not to be judged solely by his efforts as a translator or critic. He is important too because of his contact with other people. After 1811 financial difficulties restricted Taylor to his home of Norwich where he gathered around him a circle of young friends. Among these was Sarah Austin (1793-1867) whose work *Characteristics of Goethe* (1833) was the first book of Goethe criticism to appear in English. It is quite likely, although there is no conclusive evidence, that Mrs Austin's interest in German literature was first inspired by Taylor. If this were the case, it would add significantly to his importance, since Mrs Austin's work, as will become clear in a later chapter, has particular relevance to Arnold's knowledge of Goethe. (see below pp. 102-06).

Like William Taylor, Henry Crabb Robinson was also a Norwich man. Born in 1775, he did not enjoy much formal education and on leaving school was articled to an attorney. In 1796 he moved to London where he worked in an attorney's office, but in 1798 he received a legacy of about a hundred pounds per year which set him free from the drudgery of work which he detested. In the same year Robinson met Taylor who encouraged in him a growing taste for German literature and strengthened his desire to visit Germany. In 1800 Robinson left England for Germany where he remained for five years. He was fortunate enough to make the acquaintance of the Brentano circle at Frankfurt soon after his arrival in Germany, and in 1801 he accompanied Christian Brentano on a walking tour which took them to Jena and Weimar, where he met Goethe briefly for the first time. The following year he and Brentano registered as students at Jena, and it is from this time that Robinson's lasting interest in German literature can be dated. But, as F. Norman has shown in his monograph on Robinson and Goethe, the Englishman's range of ideas about the German poet was extremely limited.¹⁶ Robinson was not endowed with any great ability as a critic or interpreter, but while possessing little individual talent of his own he associated and corresponded with some of the most brilliant men of his age. His tombstone records the names of Coleridge, Wordsworth, Blake, and Flaxman among the men he had known, and it might have included Southey, Landor, and half a dozen eminent Germans. Little of Robinson's enthusiasm for Goethe seems to have communicated itself to Wordsworth, however, whose dislike of the German poet is well known. According to Wordsworth, who knew little of

the language and not a great deal of Goethe's writing, the German poet lacked 'religious sentiment' or 'moral sense' and a second-rate man could not be a first-rate artist.¹⁷ Even Coleridge, whose knowledge of the German language was much superior to Wordsworth's, set Goethe far below Schiller.

As we have seen, after 1800 public interest in works of German literature had greatly diminished, and England's isolated position in the Napoleonic wars was partly to blame. But by 1813 England's position in the wars had improved greatly and the alliance with Prussia fostered a more favourable climate for the reception of German literary productions. Crabb Robinson was not the man to awaken England to the achievements of German culture, however, for not only were his talents no match for such a task, he was also unknown to the general public. In both these respects he was unlike Madame de Staël, whose *De l'Allemagne*, banned in France by Napoleon, was thereby assured of success upon its publication in London in 1813. It is undeniably a brilliant work even to a modern reader disconcerted by Mme de Staël's fondness for sweeping generalizations about national and racial characteristics. The perceptiveness of her judgements make the work a far better guide to German literature than Taylor's *Historic Survey*, and in contrast to Taylor she recognized in Goethe the supreme literary genius of her age. She wrote enthusiastically of his poetry, of *Götz von Berlichingen*, *Egmont*, and *Werther*, and in fact clearly shows her preference for the *Sturm und Drang* productions over the less 'ardent' works of his mature years. Her judgement on the first part of *Faust*, of which several extracts in prose are given, is interesting in its ambivalence:

Whether it be considered as an off-spring of the delirium of the mind, or the satiety of reason, it is to be wished that such productions may not be multiplied; but when such a genius as that of Goethe sets itself free from all restrictions, the crowd of thoughts is so great, that on every side they break through and trample down the barriers of art.¹⁸

De l'Allemagne perhaps tended to perpetuate the kind of prejudice that already existed about Germany as a land where the Gothic imagination could naturally disport itself in old towers and battlements, but whatever its limitations it came appropriately and usefully at a time when English interest in German culture was at its nadir. By pointing to Germany as the intellectual centre of Europe and by her sympathetic treatment of German authors, Mme de Staël allowed a fresh current of thought to pour into England; she made England aware, as Arnold might have said, of a major tributary to the mainstream of European thought, and widened the country's intellectual horizons. Her work was widely read, not only in the year of its publication, but for many decades afterwards. Writing in 1855 G. H. Lewes commented that it still remained 'one of the best books written about Germany'.¹⁹

In a sense, however, Madame de Staël's book also marks the end of an era, for

before 1813 the French had had an important role as intermediaries in introducing works of German literature into England. After 1813 this was less and less the case, for the study of the German language became, in Carlyle's words, 'almost expected as a natural item in liberal education'.²⁰ It is true that the first English translation of Goethe's *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, which appeared in 1824, had been made from a badly translated French version by Aubert de Vitry, but what is striking is the way the periodical reviews reacted to this. The early translations of *Werther* had also been taken from French editions, but none of the reviews had then thought the fact worth mentioning. The anonymous translator of *Dichtung und Wahrheit* failed to acknowledge that he had used de Vitry's version, but it did not escape the attention of the critics. He was sharply censured for the deception, and the *Westminster Review* called his work a 'pseudo-version' and 'no translation at all'.²¹ John Gibson Lockhart in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* was even more scathing and described it as 'one of the most audacious and impudent pieces of quackery, by which the public confidence has of late years been insulted'.²²

Of all Goethe's works the one which was to become the best known in England and to exercise the profoundest influence on his reputation was *Faust: erster Teil* (1808). Until *De l'Allemagne* appeared with a few extracts from the play in a prose translation very little was heard of it in England, but Mme de Staël's publisher, John Murray, must have considered that sufficient interest in *Faust* had been aroused to justify bringing out a full translation, for in 1814 he offered Coleridge one hundred pounds to undertake the task. Coleridge was apparently willing but thought the sum inadequate, and although he negotiated with Murray for a time, he never in fact began work on the translation. Before 1820 any Englishman who could not read German was unlikely to know much of *Faust*, but in that year an English edition of Retzsch's famous illustrations, the so-called 'Outlines', was published. Moritz Retzsch (1779-1857), the German artist and engraver, had first published his *Umriße zu Goethes Faust in 26 Blättern* in Germany in 1816 and the 1818 edition was imported into this country.²³ Such was the success of these illustrations that the year 1821 saw the publication of an enlarged rival edition, *Faustus: From the German of Goethe. The greater part of Part One, translated in verse and connected by a prose narrative. With 27 Illustrations in Outline by Moritz Retzsch*. It may have been due to the interest aroused by the 'Outlines' that Murray finally realized his intention of publishing an English version of *Faust*, for in 1823 he brought out a verse translation by Lord Francis Leveson Gower. Unfortunately neither the translation which accompanied the 'Outlines' nor Lord Gower's is particularly distinguished, and both gave further currency to the belief that Goethe was a dangerous and immoral author. It is rather surprising to find that the scene which caused the greatest offence was the *Prolog im Himmel* where Mephistopheles and God are portrayed in conversation together. The *Prolog* had been omitted from the 1821 volume of engravings because it was considered 'repugnant to notions of propriety such as are entertained

in this country'.²⁴ Gower, who also omitted the scene, professed to find in it 'a tone of familiarity on both sides which is revolting in a sacred subject'.²⁵

Gower was severely taken to task for the shortcomings of his work by Abraham Hayward in the preface to his own prose translation of 1833, a version which, to judge by the frequency with which it was reprinted, remained the most widely read for many years. Hayward's was the forerunner of a flood of *Faust* translations, for in the course of the 1830s and 1840s there were close on twenty renderings of the first part. As a writer in the *Westminster Review* commented: 'Faust, by common consent, seems to be the established *pièce de résistance* for all who would display their ability to render German into English'.²⁶ But in spite of Hayward's vigorous repudiation of the charges of indecency and profanity levelled against *Faust*, and his claim that Gower's translation had been responsible for 'fixing a stigma on the moral and religious character of Goethe' and for 'giving an immoral tendency to the poem he professes to purify', the considerations which had moved Gower to make his omissions obviously carried weight with other translators.²⁷ John Stuart Blackie, for example, omitted the *Prolog*, and since he was a figure of some literary eminence, the effect of his 1834 translation can only have served to compound the common prejudices against Goethe. Furthermore, the omission of the *Prolog* naturally helped to create an unbalanced view of *Faust II*. In spite of Carlyle's enthusiastic acclaim of the 'Helena' fragment in the *Foreign Review* in 1828, the second part of *Faust* found little favour in Victorian England. Even the sympathetic G. H. Lewes expressed his dislike, considering it 'far inferior to the *First Part*, and both in conception and execution an elaborate mistake'.²⁸

After the appearance of *De l'Allemagne* British periodicals once again began to devote space to reviews of German literary works, but about Goethe their attitudes were often sharply divided. In 1816 the *Edinburgh Review* published a scurrilous attack on his character under the guise of a review of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*. The critic, Francis Palgrave, commented that 'the principles and morality of the German writers, in general, do not appear well calculated to advance the welfare of society' and followed this with a string of abusive remarks about Goethe personally—egotistical, vain, affected, and, inevitably, licentious.²⁹ This review did not pass without comment, however, and Lockhart, writing in the rival journal, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, censured its 'empty arrogance' and 'offensive irreverence'.³⁰ The publication in 1824 of both the *Memoirs of Goethe* and Carlyle's translation of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* naturally called forth many articles in the periodicals, but one is frequently astonished at the way in which petty national jealousies interfered with a just appreciation of Goethe's merits. The *European Magazine*, for example, found the idea that he might be an author of great stature 'wild and ridiculous', and a critic in *Blackwood's*, while conceding to Goethe a position at the head of German literature, smugly reflected how far that left him behind our own Shakespeare.³¹ But for sheer rancour and malice no article compares with De Quincey's savage attack on Goethe's morals. He considered

all the women characters in *Wilhelm Meister* to be evidence of 'depraved taste and defective sensibility', likened German novels to English brothels, and implied that Goethe was an 'obtuse old libertine'.³² However, the last years of the decade 1820 to 1830 saw the foundation of several journals distinguished by their enlightened attitude towards European authors, the *Foreign Quarterly Review* (1827), the *Foreign Review* (1828) and *Frazer's Magazine* (1830), and it was in these journals that Carlyle's remarkable essays on German literature were first published.

Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) first learned German in 1819 after his interest had been stimulated by *De l'Allemagne*. His translations of the *Lehrjahre* and the *Wanderjahre* were published in 1824 and 1827 respectively, and it was in 1827 that the first of his essays on German literature began to appear. Carlyle was the first reviewer of Goethe's works to show himself to be a 'critic' in the modern sense of the word, but it must be admitted that the picture of Goethe he presents is a distorted one. There are several reasons for this. In the first place Carlyle was really interested only in *Faust* and *Wilhelm Meister*. He paid little attention to the works of Goethe's *Sturm und Drang* period, virtually ignored the classical dramas *Iphigenie auf Tauris* and *Torquato Tasso*, and was silent about Goethe's work as a lyric poet. Secondly, Carlyle's presentation of Goethe was strongly conditioned by the unpleasant reputation Goethe had already acquired as an immoral and irreligious author. Carlyle was at great pains to correct this false impression, but in doing so he was in danger of going to an opposite extreme and making Goethe appear a saint. The course of Goethe's life is surveyed as a passage from the 'scepticism' of *Werther* to the 'faith' of *Wilhelm Meister*, and Carlyle's view of Faust overlooks his greatness, seeing in him only a misguided and miserable creature. Goethe's generous humanism disappears and the effect of Carlyle's essays is to leave the reader with the impression that Goethe's beliefs were far closer to orthodox religion and morality than was in fact the case. The magazine articles on Goethe and German literature were later included in his *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays* (1839) and were highly influential. They are frequently mentioned by other writers on Goethe in the periodicals of the 1840s and were described as 'unquestionably the most important work on German literature in our language'.³³

In disregarding Goethe's work as a lyric poet Carlyle was simply following the tendency of the time. In 1833 E.C. Hawtrey, headmaster of Eton College, published a selection in German of about eighty of the shorter lyrics, together with eight songs from *Faust*, and it is interesting that his endeavour in choosing the poems was 'to make a selection against which no scruple could be raised in a moral point of view'.³⁴ Some of the lyrics in the volume were given in English translation, but it was ten years before anything else was published which might have suggested Goethe's range and stature as a lyric poet. In 1844 *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* began a series of his poems in translation, but even so it was still true in 1853, when E. A. Bowring published *The Poems of Goethe* in the Bohn Library series, that in England the short poems were 'nearly unknown'.³⁵ One of the

surprising facts concerning Goethe's reputation in England, however, is the relative popularity of his epic poem *Hermann und Dorothea*, which was translated into English three times within only a few years of its publication in Germany in 1797. The extent of the early Victorian popularity of the poem can be estimated from the fact that it was translated four times between 1839 and 1949, and while its success never of course approached that of *Faust I*, it is striking that whenever the poem is mentioned in magazine articles about Goethe, the comments are invariably favourable.

After Goethe's death in 1832 his reputation in England grew steadily, and much secondary literature relating to him, such as the volumes of correspondence, reminiscences, and criticism which were published in Germany, were reviewed by the magazines here. The correspondence with Schiller had already appeared in 1828-29 and the correspondence with Zelter, Frau von Stein, and Knebel followed in 1833-34, 1848-51, and 1851 respectively. Dr Riemer, Goethe's personal friend and editor of the Zelter correspondence, published an account of his own conversations with Goethe in *Mittheilungen über Goethe* (1841), and in 1846 he edited a small collection of letters entitled *Briefe von und an Goethe*. The best known collection of conversations, however, was that of J. P. Eckermann whose *Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens* were published in three volumes, the first two in 1837 and the third in 1849. These were well known in England long before they were translated into English in 1849—a writer in the *Foreign Quarterly Review* commented in 1841 that the Eckermann conversations needed no recommendation 'as they are doubtless in the hands of all German scholars'.³⁶ The first of these posthumous tributes to appear in English was Sarah Austin's excellent *Characteristics of Goethe* (1833). It is not an original work of criticism but, as she freely acknowledged, a compilation of various writings on Goethe which she had translated and to which she added an introduction and notes. Her main sources were J. D. Falk's *Goethe aus näherm persönlichen Umgange dargestellt* (1832) and the text of a speech on Goethe given by Kanzler von Müller before the Academy of Useful Sciences at Erfurt in 1822. The work is both intelligent and persuasive in its advocacy of Goethe, and she defends him from several accusations. On the question of his coldness to the issues of German nationalism, she points out that his large and comprehensive understanding made partisan politics repugnant to him. But this neutrality did not signify egotistical self-concern or indifference to the welfare of mankind. He was sceptical about the value of political activity because 'he thought it a pernicious illusion to look for healing to sources whence he was persuaded healing could never come'.³⁷ This same large understanding made it unthinkable that he should indulge in over-simple moral judgements, but he was not therefore immoral, and Mrs Austin defends Goethe from the charge that his works were pernicious in effect.

How necessary such defence was can be seen from Wolfgang Menzel's history of

German literature *Die deutsche Literatur* (1834). Of the many works on Goethe published in Germany shortly after his death, this was the only one to have any significant influence in England. Menzel was a long-standing opponent of Goethe, and the work contains a vituperative attack on his character. It would be impossible to sum up the whole range of Menzel's criticisms, for virtually every sentence of the section on Goethe is an accusation of one sort or another, but the root cause of his hostility seems to have been his belief that Goethe was not a 'national' poet. He evidently found Goethe's cosmopolitanism and his silent acceptance of the French occupation during the Napoleonic wars particularly infuriating. But probably the most damaging accusation in English eyes was Menzel's claim that Goethe had prostituted his art by beautifying weakness and vice, that his works had a deleterious moral effect and that they were destructive of religion. Such accusations found ready acceptance in mid-nineteenth century England. The *Deutsche Literatur* was eventually published in an English translation in 1840, but the original German work had circulated here from about 1835. It was reviewed twice in the periodicals of the time and both writers showed the work some measure of sympathy, conceding that there had been too much 'overheated enthusiasm' for Goethe, and that in the main Menzel's strictures were 'painfully true'.³⁸ The emancipated G. H. Lewes rightly found Menzel's work despicable, but he had to admit that in England its accusations had won 'a circulation independent of his book'.³⁹ Although the credibility of Menzel's attack had been weakened by its unconcealed malice, echoes of his views are heard for many years. Even an intelligent and informed article on Goethe such as 'Göthe's (sic) Festival' in the *Edinburgh Review*, 92 (1850) could be highly critical of the moral tendency of his works, and for the very reason urged by Menzel, the supposed beautification of vice.

One consequence of Menzel's attack on Goethe's character, together with the fact that most of the articles on Goethe in the periodicals were occasioned by the publication of correspondence, conversations, or reminiscences, was that critical attention was deflected from Goethe's imaginative works to the figure of Goethe himself. Even *Faust I* was rarely the subject of genuine critical discussion. By the 1840s there were already so many translations of the play available in English that new ones were virtually ignored, and one hears little of the work except for perfunctory expressions of reverence for its 'sublimity' and 'grandeur'. In general the Goethe criticism published in the literary journals does not reach a high standard, but at least malicious slanders of the kind that had greeted *Wilhelm Meister* on its appearance in English in 1824 were no longer current. Despite the concern which many people felt at what they considered the moral laxity in Goethe's writings, it was generally admitted that he was the most important literary figure of his age. As an imaginative writer he was known in the first instance as the author of *Faust*, and then as the creator of *Werther*, *Wilhelm Meister*, and *Hermann und Dorothea*, but his name also signified an intellectual

power detached from the preoccupations of the day and devoted to the development of its own powers. In 1848 a reviewer in the *Athenaeum* wrote:

In the present day it can no longer be necessary to discuss the claims of Goethe to a place amongst authors of the highest rank. He has ascended to it with the step of irresistible power,—and is now established there with the sanction of cultivated Europe . . . the largest, clearest, most universal mind of his time.⁴⁰

Many people troubled by an uneasy feeling that Goethe represented a force hostile to traditional religion might well have wished to temper the enthusiasm of this acclaim, but few, if any, would have cared to express absolute disagreement.

Arnold's 'discovery' of Goethe was, therefore, no fortuitous occurrence. For an educated young Englishman interested in *belles lettres* it was virtually impossible to be unaware of Goethe. True, his reputation had not yet steadied to universal esteem, but a large party were claiming him to be the most important cultural phenomenon of his age and the greatest imaginative writer since Shakespeare and Dante. Translations of his works were frequently appearing and his name was regularly mentioned in the pages of the literary journals. Under these circumstances it is hardly conceivable that Arnold could have 'overlooked' or ignored so eminent an author. There is some evidence to suggest that he may have known something of Goethe even before his removal from Rugby to Oxford in 1841.

Dr Arnold's first acquaintance with things German began in the year 1825 when he was at work on his history of Rome. Through his friend Julius Hare he became aware of Niebuhr's monumental scholarship in the same field, and it was to study Niebuhr's work that Dr Arnold first began to learn German.⁴¹ Hare (1795-1855) was himself an enthusiastic student of German literature. He had spent much of his youth on the continent and in 1804-05 had stayed at Weimar where, as he was to recall years later, he had seen Henry Crabb Robinson. Hare had an impressive library of German books, and was particularly fond of Goethe, so it is not improbable that Dr Arnold heard of the poet from Hare.⁴² In any event he would have encountered Goethe's name through Niebuhr himself, as the third volume of the *History of Rome* contains a panegyric on the Weimar poet.⁴³

But Dr Arnold had other connexions with Germany too. European tours during the free summer months were becoming a regular feature of his life, and although Germany was not on the itinerary of his tour to Northern Italy in 1825, his interest in the country was aroused. In a letter of 1828 to Augustus Hare (the brother of Julius) he expressed a desire to visit 'Leipsic, Dresden, and Prague, to worship the Elbe and the country of John Huss and Ziska.' In 1830 he did, in fact, visit Germany and actually met Niebuhr briefly at Bonn. He had not originally planned this visit, but on returning from Italy the travellers heard that revolution had broken out in France. To avoid any possible danger, therefore, they decided to return via the Tyrol, Württemberg, Baden, and the Rhine Valley. The Arnold

family's links with Germany had, however, already been consolidated, for in the summer of 1827 during his stay at Rome Dr Arnold met the Chevalier Bunsen who was Niebuhr's successor as Minister to the Papal Court. The encounter led to a lasting friendship, and, although the two men did not meet again until 1838, there was an unbroken exchange of letters between them. In 1835 Bunsen sent Dr Arnold a copy of his own collection of German hymns, some of which Dr Arnold attempted, without success, to translate. In June of the following year Bunsen's son, Henry, came to England and lived with the Arnolds for two years before going to Oxford to study and eventually take orders in the Church of England. In October 1838 the Chevalier, his wife and son stayed for a short time at Rugby. An important consequence of this friendship seems to have been an expansion of Dr Arnold's awareness of German literature and scholarship. His reading of German certainly did not stop at Niebuhr's *History of Rome*, but there is good reason for believing that he was mostly concerned with theological rather than literary works.⁴⁴

Matthew was certainly fortunate in having a father who recognized the importance of modern languages. Dr Arnold had introduced German into the curriculum of Rugby School in 1835, but it was studied only in the Upper School and then for a mere hour a week. Its purpose was explained by Dr Arnold thus:

With regard to German I can speak more confidently; and I am sure that there we do facilitate a boy's after study of the language considerably, and enable him, with much less trouble, to read those German books, which are essential to his classical studies at the University.⁴⁵

Matthew entered the fifth form of Rugby school in 1837, but had had private tuition in German before this date. Dr Arnold had engaged Mr Herbert Hill, a nephew of Robert Southey's, to prepare Matthew and Thomas for Winchester, and an entry in Mrs Arnold's domestic journal under 18 October 1835 records an incident in 1832 as follows:

The infant of 1822 [i.e. Matthew] has just come to tell me how pleasantly and easily he has been reading German with Mr Hill.⁴⁶

It would be unwise, however, to take this as proof that Matthew had a fluent reading knowledge of German. In 1832 he was a nine-year-old boy, doubtless eager to please and impress his mother. In fact, it is probable that he never mastered German as he learned to master French. In 1848, when trying to improve his German in preparation for a visit to Switzerland, he wrote to his mother, complaining that German 'almost breaks my heart, because I cannot get to read it like French, though I work at it with fury'.⁴⁷ The truth of Matthew's statement is borne out by certain errors, some of them elementary, in his translations from German authors in the so-called 'German Note-Book' of 1847. It seems safe to assume that with constant practice his reading knowledge of German gained in fluency over the years, but his

ability to speak the language, probably never very adequate, certainly became weaker towards the end of his life.⁴⁸

It is unlikely that Matthew had read anything of Goethe in the classrooms of Rugby, for the teaching there was aimed simply at giving the boys sufficient grounding in the grammar for them to be able to continue learning the language on their own. An author of Goethe's complexity would hardly provide suitable reading material, apart from other considerations. Nevertheless, Dr Arnold himself seems to have had some knowledge of Goethe, for in a letter of 1836 to Justice Coleridge he discussed the school curriculum in the following terms:

Shakespeare, with English boys, would be but a poor substitute for Homer; but I confess that I should be glad to get Dante and Goethe now and then in the room of some of the Greek tragedians and of Horace; or rather not in their room, but mixed up with them.⁴⁹

As I have already indicated, Dr Arnold's interest in Goethe may have been first awakened by Julius Hare, Niebuhr, or the Chevalier Bunsen. But possibly more important than any of these in stimulating his interest in German literature was the ubiquitous Henry Crabb Robinson.

In 1834 Fox How near Ambleside became the permanent holiday home of the Arnold family. Since Rydal Mount was 'next door' the aged poet Wordsworth became their neighbour and friend. Crabb Robinson had known Wordsworth for over twenty years and customarily spent the Christmas and New Year with him at Rydal. Robinson was as enthusiastic an admirer of Goethe as he had ever been, and twenty years of friendship with an equally resolute opponent of the German sage had done little to diminish the admiration of the one or the hostility of the other. Ever since his residence in Weimar in the early years of the nineteenth century Robinson had conducted a verbal campaign on behalf of Goethe and had not missed a single opportunity of recommending him to all who might conceivably be interested. His loyalty did not go unrewarded. Goethe sent him a token of his esteem and was in due course thanked for his regard when Robinson visited him personally in 1829. They spoke of the reputation enjoyed by German poets in England, Robinson read some Byron and discreetly attempted to promote the cause of Wordsworth. Although Robinson had written very little on Goethe, he was nevertheless widely known in England as a 'Goethe expert' and his opinions were frequently solicited by others (Sarah Austin, William Whewell, and John Mills, to name but three) who were more actively engaged in translation or criticism.

It was through Wordsworth that Robinson and Dr Arnold first became acquainted with each other at Christmas 1835. Early in the New Year Wordsworth and Robinson dined at Fox How and one of the topics of conversation, as one can well imagine, was Goethe. Robinson made the following record of the event in his diary.

An agreeable afternoon, though the main subject of conversation was one on which I have no pleasure in hearing Wordsworth talk, Goethe, whom he depreciates in utter ignorance. Dr Arnold seems to be aware of the real objections to Goethe's moral character and is likely to overrate their importance.⁵⁰

Robinson's intuition appears to have been accurate for Dr Arnold had serious reservations about *Faust I*. Although he thought that the play as a whole was saved from being 'a piece of Devilry' by Margaret's redemption, he felt that the Prologue was blasphemous; and in this, as we have seen, he agreed with most Englishmen of that time.⁵¹ The two men met frequently during the January of 1836, but there is no record of their having spoken of Goethe again. Dr Arnold did not meet Robinson again for almost another three years, since the latter did not spend a winter holiday at Rydal again until the Christmas and New Year of 1838-39. The friendship was renewed and visits were once again exchanged. F. Norman points out that Robinson's diaries record three separate occasions when Robinson read poems of Goethe with 'Miss Arnold'—presumably Jane, the eldest of the Arnold children—and on one of these occasions the Doctor himself was present and 'took an interest'.⁵²

This leads us to some interesting speculations. Since Crabb Robinson was reading Goethe's poems with Jane, it must be reckoned as a distinct possibility that, even before his departure to Oxford, Matthew had encountered at least some of Goethe's poetry. This is of particular interest since it would mean that Arnold became familiar with Goethe's shorter poems at a time when, as I have shown, Goethe's activity as a lyric poet was almost completely disregarded in England. One is led to speculate whether the editions which were used at these poetry readings belonged to the Arnold family or to Crabb Robinson. The latter alternative would seem the more probable, but one ought not to forget that the headmaster of a 'rival' public school, Edward Craven Hawtrey of Eton, had published a selection of Goethe's shorter poems in 1833 (see above p. 9), and that this selection had been made with a view to excluding those poems against which any moral objections could be raised. Almost certainly, therefore, Dr Arnold would have known of Hawtrey's little volume, and it would have been ideally suited to his purposes. He had expressed the wish to introduce a little 'Goethe and Dante' into the teaching of literature at Rugby, but he was a man who would have been reluctant to introduce anything of which the moral tendency could be said to be uncertain or dubious. This is not to suggest that Hawtrey's selection may have been used for teaching purposes at Rugby—where the emphasis was naturally placed on acquiring facility in the language—but simply that Dr Arnold could well have acquired the book for his own use and that of his older children.

Although Crabb Robinson saw little more of the Arnolds before the Doctor's death in 1842, he remained a friend of the Arnold family and often visited Mrs Arnold whenever he was staying with the Wordsworths at Rydal. To the end of his life Robinson remained the enthusiastic advocate of Goethe's cause. Walter

Bagehot's essay on him contains a delightful account of the literary breakfasts he used to give at his house in Russell Square for the young men of University College, London (of which he was one of the original founders). As Bagehot puts it: 'There was little to gratify the unintellectual part of man at these breakfasts and what there was was not easy to be got at', but anecdotes were never in short supply and these often had to do with Goethe and Schiller. A. H. Clough, who became Principal of University Hall in 1849 and used to be one of the invited guests on those occasions, was sometimes accompanied by the dauntingly elegant young secretary of Lord Lansdowne—Matthew Arnold. 'Old Crabb' as he was known to the young men, had the unfortunate habit of forgetting people's names and hence, to refer to them, he resorted to epithets of almost Homeric distinction and length. Clough was known as 'That admirable and accomplished man. You know whom I mean. The one who never says anything'. Matthew warranted an even fuller title:

Probably the most able, and certainly the most consequential, of all the young persons I know. You know which it is. The one with whom I could never *presume* to be intimate. The one whose father I knew so many years.⁵³

Fittingly enough the very last entry in 'Old Crabb's' diary relates to Matthew:

31 January 1867—During the last two days I have read the first essay on the qualifications of the present age for criticism. The writer resists the exaggerated scorn of criticism, and maintains his point ably. A sense of creative power he declares happiness to be, and Arnold maintains that genuine criticism is. He thinks of Germany as he ought, and of Goethe with high admiration. On this point I can possibly give him assistance, which he will gladly—

But I feel incapable to go on.⁵⁴

Robinson died on 5 February. Arnold, who had seen him and heard him speak of Goethe only a short time before the last entry was written, wrote to his mother to inform her of the loss of an old family friend.⁵⁵ But if Crabb Robinson did play any significant role in introducing Goethe to Arnold, it happened at a very early stage in the poet's career. In 1867 he needed little 'assistance' on this point. For more than twenty years he had been as eager an admirer of Goethe as Robinson himself.

Perhaps, therefore, when Matthew Arnold went up to Balliol in October 1841, Goethe was already rather more to him than the obscure author to whom Byron had dedicated *Werner* and *Sardanapalus*, and fragments of whose own play, *Faust*, about which one heard so much, had been translated by Shelley. Arnold's years at Oxford must have been a time of rapid intellectual development, but they are nevertheless a time about which even now comparatively little is known. Matthew's brother, Thomas, has left an interesting record of the poet's student years in his own autobiography:

He was cultivating his poetic gift carefully, but his exuberant versatile nature

claimed other satisfactions; his keen bantering talk made him something of a social lion among Oxford men; he even began to dress fashionably. Goethe displaced Byron in his poetical allegiance; the transcendental spells of Emerson wove themselves around him; the charm of an exquisite style made him, and long kept him, a votary of George Sand. The perfect handling of words, joined to the delicate presentation of ideas, attracted him powerfully to John Henry Newman . . . But, so far as I know, Newman's *teaching* never made an impression upon him.⁵⁶

This statement is supplemented by the obituary which Thomas wrote for the *Manchester Guardian* (18 May 1888) in which he relates how after their father's death in 1842 Matthew 'plunged . . . in the vast sea of Goethe's art and Spinoza's mysticism' and by 1845 had 'drifted far away from orthodox Christianity'. It would seem from these accounts, therefore, that whether or not Matthew knew anything of Goethe's works before going up to the University, he only became a 'votary', and enthusiastic admirer, from about 1842. If this is in fact so, one is entitled to ask what prompted the sudden surge of enthusiasm. A variety of answers suggest themselves. Goethe was certainly 'in the air' at this time, and hence Arnold could have 'caught' his enthusiasm from any number of his Oxford contemporaries, but if, as Edward Walford's letter to *The Times* (20 April 1888) suggests, Matthew Arnold's drifting away from Christianity began even earlier than Thomas Arnold indicates, then the rather unintelligent controversy in the literary periodicals concerning the orthodoxy of Goethe's religious and moral opinions must have seemed to Matthew almost comically irrelevant.⁵⁷ Arnold's friendship with Clough began to develop after Arnold had arrived at Oxford as a student, and it is worth remembering that Clough had known some of Goethe's works—*Hermann und Dorothea* and *Werther* at least—since 1839.⁵⁸ The two young men were both members of the 'Decade', a discussion group along the lines of the Cambridge 'Apostles', and it is quite possible that Goethe's name occasionally figured in their literary debates.

But the vital clue is perhaps given by Arnold himself in the 'Emerson' essay from *Discourses in America* (1885). There he looked back across an interval of forty years and recalled the 'voices' that had spoken to his generation.

A greater voice still,—the greatest voice of the century—came to us in those youthful years through Carlyle: the voice of Goethe. To this day,—such is the force of youthful associations,—I read the *Wilhelm Meister* with more pleasure in Carlyle's translation than in the original. The large liberal view of human life in *Wilhelm Meister*, how novel it was to the Englishman in those days! and it was salutary too, and educative for him, doubtless, as well as novel. But what moved us most in *Wilhelm Meister* was that which, after all, will always move the young most,—the poetry, the eloquence.⁵⁹

Arnold's reading of Carlyle's translation of *Wilhelm Meister* was almost certainly the decisive stimulus in the growth of his interest in Goethe. The influence which Carlyle exerted on Arnold during the early 1840s was, in fact, very great and not confined to his role as a translator and interpreter of Goethe. Both Arnold and

Clough were impressed by Carlyle's ringing prophetic tone and for a time they looked to him for spiritual guidance. In the long run, however, they came to feel that he had led them out into the wilderness, only to leave them there. The spell was eventually broken, or, to be more precise, it dissolved. In a letter of 1849 Arnold spoke of Carlyle as a 'moral desperado', and, although he still respected Carlyle at this time, his comment perhaps indicates growing dissatisfaction. Ten years later he could speak of 'the Carlylean strain . . . which the clear-headed among us have so utter a contempt for'.⁶⁰

Many years later, when preparing the 'Emerson' lecture for his tour of the United States, Arnold again turned his attention to Carlyle and read his letters. Some of the old admiration was then restored but in 1860 his rejection of Carlyle seemed complete. In the early 1840s, however, Carlyle's peremptory command, uttered in *Sartor Resartus* (1838), was not to be ignored—'Close thy *Byron*: open thy *Goethe*'.⁶¹

In the 'Emerson' essay Arnold speaks of Carlyle as a translator of Goethe, but he also knew Carlyle's critical essays on the German poet. *The Critical and Miscellaneous Essays* were on Arnold's reading lists for 1847, but this was probably not his first acquaintance with a work which for eight years had represented the best and most widely-known critical interpretation of Goethe's writing available in English.⁶² Indeed, if one reads between the lines of Arnold's letter to his youngest sister, Frances, in 1877 when he was working on his essay 'A French Critic on Goethe', one can see that for a time Arnold must have owed his view of Goethe directly to Carlyle. He wrote:

On looking back at Carlyle, one sees how much *engouement* there was in his criticism of Goethe, and how little of it will stand.⁶³

These are the words of a man acknowledging a past infatuation. The essay itself, 'A French Critic on Goethe', confirms this speculation. With his unflinching courtesy Arnold spoke kindly of Carlyle and told his readers how he, Carlyle,

. . . did so much to make Goethe's name a name of might for other Englishmen also, a strong tower into which the doubter and the despairer might run and be safe . . .⁶⁴

Nor need it surprise us that Carlyle's 'Goethe moralisé' should have been so attractive to Arnold. The Goethe whom Carlyle purveyed was in some respects ideally suited to a man who had just lost the religious faith of his upbringing. Carlyle had represented Goethe as a poet-prophet-saint who, while rejecting the creeds and dogmas of established religions, had nevertheless risen above the 'spiritual perplexities' of his time, had avoided the 'pestilential fever of scepticism', had retained his moral earnestness and found new certainties. Such a representation of Goethe must have appealed strongly to the youthful Arnold in search of a new creed to live by. When one adds to this the picture of Goethe as the disinterested

lover of art, the whole and harmoniously developed man free of caste and sectarian allegiance, then one can see that the appeal must have been almost irresistible.⁶⁵

At Oxford Arnold seemed unwilling to play the part expected of Dr Arnold's eldest son, one sent from the very seat of high seriousness, Rugby school itself. His dress was fashionable, his air flippant, his tone playful and bantering. Known to his friends as 'The Poet', he declined to take his work at the university too seriously, and to the disappointment, but not to the surprise of his friends he eventually took a Second Class. Trilling's explanation of this behaviour is convincing. He argues that the only way in which the young writer could protect his talent from the hostile environment of an Oxford indifferent to everything but the religious controversies of the Tractarian movement, was for him to affect an attitude of unconcern towards such matters.⁶⁶ Arnold could not afford to allow the fragile instinct for sensuous beauty to be consumed by the all-prevailing seriousness of the *Zeitgeist*. Arnold was not lacking in 'seriousness' as the melancholy note of his first poetic volume *The Strayed Reveller, and Other Poems* eventually proved to his friends when it was published in 1849. The letters to Clough in particular reveal how troubled he was lest a poetic talent, never very robust, be stifled, as he saw happening in Clough, by an over-sensitive, tormented conscience and by intellectual probings too profound to be healthy.⁶⁷

This is not to say that the joyful sense of emancipation from the constricted world view of orthodox Christianity which he felt at Oxford was not genuine. He revelled in the sense of new horizons which contact with European authors like George Sand and Goethe gave him. One gets a glimpse of his feelings at this time from a letter he wrote to Lord Bulwer Lytton in 1868, thanking him for the gift of the three-volume edition of his *Miscellaneous Prose Works* which had just been published:

A thousand thanks for your magnificent present, which I shall value extremely. I am delighted to think that a good deal in it will be quite new to me; articles in the *Quarterly* which appeared without your name and which I have missed reading. Other parts of it, well-known and familiar to me, carry me back to the happiest time of my life—*The Student*, the *Life of Schiller*, came into my hands just at the moment I wanted something of the kind. I never shall forget what they gave me—the sense of a wider horizon, the anticipation of Germany, the opening into the great world . . .⁶⁸

One also gets something of the flavour of Arnold's behaviour at this time from Shairp's recollection of him in his poem 'Balliol Scholars 1840-1843', where Arnold is depicted as 'half-a-dream chaunting with jaunty air/Great words of Goethe, catch of Béranger'.⁶⁹

In his Introduction to the *Letters of Matthew Arnold to A. H. Clough* (1932), H. F. Lowry points out that by reading George Sand's novel Arnold could perhaps allow himself the luxury of appearing just a trifle wicked to his less emancipated friends.⁷⁰ But the same could be said of his enthusiasm for Goethe. After all,

Goethe was widely thought of as a blasphemous infidel, and *Wilhelm Meister* contained things to which no gentleman would refer in the presence of a lady. Shairp's words usefully remind us that in those early days the charm of Goethe's *Voice* lay for Arnold no less in its poetry, eloquence and large liberality than in the refuge it offered to the spiritually perplexed. Hence, in a fascinating way, Arnold's youthful preoccupation with Goethe illuminates the intriguing division in Arnold, noted by Trilling, between an intense earnestness and an apparently flippant gaiety.

Exact details of Arnold's reading of Goethe at this time are difficult to obtain. *Wilhelm Meister* was, of course, definitely read, and one can be fairly sure that *Werther* and *Faust*, being the most celebrated of his other works, were not overlooked. The shorter lyric poems and the long epic *Hermann und Dorothea* were likewise probably among the first of Goethe's writings with which Arnold became familiar. He may well have relied to some extent on translations during his time at Oxford, not only because his German was not absolutely fluent but also because it was doubtless easier to acquire English translations than the German originals. He must certainly have known Hayward's translation of *Faust I* for he speaks of it with praise in *On Translating Homer* (1861).⁷¹ In the same work he also refers to an anonymous anthology of hexameter translations published in 1847, which contained William Whewell's translation of *Hermann und Dorothea*.⁷²

In 1847 Arnold resigned his Oriel fellowship and became private secretary to the Liberal Peer, Lord Lansdowne. From then on most of his time was spent in London, and it was probably there in 1847 that he acquired the sixty-volume Cotta edition of Goethe's works, the *Ausgabe letzter Hand* (1828-40). An element of doubt concerning the date still remains, however, for although an entry in a list of expenses at the front of his 1847 diary, which reads "Goethe £8-10" seems conclusive evidence in favour of 1847, a letter to Clough of 24 May 1848 could indicate a later date. There, Arnold told Clough—"I have got a good Goethe—the og. German—quite by accident".⁷³ As the two men had exchanged frequent letters, Arnold could hardly be referring to something he had bought in 1847—unless, of course, he had forgotten to mention the fact before. But the hasty and excited manner of expression in the letter surely points to a recent event. The reference in the letter to Clough, however, could possibly apply to any of the 'secondary' works by Goethe which Arnold is known to have possessed—the six-volume *Briefwechsel zwischen Schiller und Goethe* (1828-29), for example, or Eckermann's *Gespräche mit Goethe*, the third and final volume of which appeared in 1848. This is perhaps the most plausible answer to the problem, as £8-10 is too large a sum to be accounted for by anything but a very considerable purchase of books.

Such then is the background to this study. From 1847 on Arnold was deeply

immersed in the life, thought and works of the German poet. At that crucial time, therefore, when his intellectual opinions and habits of mind were still in the process of formation, when his poetic talent was still active, Arnold was exposed to Goethe's powerful influence. It remains now to assess the nature of this influence, the extent and importance of its operation, and to trace its effects on Arnold's own literary productions, both as a poet and as a critic.