

***F. MAX  
MÜLLER***



***MEMORIES***

**F. Max Müller**

# **Memories**

**A Story of German Love**

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**TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.**

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The translation of any work is at best a difficult task, and must inevitably be prejudicial to whatever of beauty the original possesses. When the principal charm of the original lies in its elegant simplicity, as in the case of the "Deutsche Liebe," the difficulty is still further enhanced. The translator has sought to reproduce the simple German in equally simple English, even at the risk of transferring German idioms into the English text.

The story speaks for itself. Without plot, incidents or situations, it is nevertheless dramatically constructed, unflagging in interest, abounding in beauty, grace and pathos, and filled with the tenderest feeling of sympathy, which will go straight to the heart of every lover of the ideal in the world of humanity, and every worshipper in the world of nature. Its brief essays upon theology, literature and social habits, contained in the dialogues between the hero and the heroine, will commend themselves to the thoughtful

reader by their clearness and beauty of statement, as well as by their freedom from prejudice. "Deutsche Liebe" is a poem in prose, whose setting is all the more beautiful and tender, in that it is freed from the bondage of metre, and has been the unacknowledged source of many a poet's most striking utterances.

As such, the translator gives it to the public, confident that it will find ready acceptance among those who cherish the ideal, and a tender welcome by every lover of humanity.

The translator desires to make acknowledgments to J. J. Lalor, Esq., late of the Chicago *Tribune* for his hearty co-operation in the progress of the work, and many valuable suggestions; to Prof. Feuling, the eminent philologist, of the University of Wisconsin, for his literal version of the extracts from the "Deutsche Theologie," which preserve the quaintness of the original, and to Mrs. F. M. Brown, for her metrical version of Goethe's almost untranslatable lines, "Ueber allen Gipfeln, ist Ruh," which form the keynote of the beautiful harmony in the character of the heroine.

G.P.U.

Chicago, November, 1874.

## **AUTHOR'S PREFACE.**

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Who has not, at some period of his life, seated himself at a writing-table, where, only a short time before, another sat, who now rests in the grave? Who has not opened the

drawers, which for long years have hidden the secrets of a heart now buried in the holy peace of the church-yard? Here lie the letters which were so precious to him, the beloved one; here the pictures, ribbons, and books with marks on every leaf. Who can now read and interpret them? Who can gather again the withered and scattered leaves of this rose, and vivify them with fresh perfume? The flames, in which the Greeks enveloped the bodies of the departed for the purpose of destruction; the flames, into which the ancients cast everything once dearest to the living, are now the securest repository for these relics. With trembling fear the surviving friend reads the leaves no eye has ever seen, save those now so firmly closed, and if, after a glance, too hasty even to read them, he is convinced these letters and leaves contain nothing which men deem important, he throws them quickly upon the glowing coals—a flash and they are gone.

From such flames the following leaves have been saved. They were at first intended only for the friends of the deceased, yet they have found friends even among strangers, and, since it is so to be, may wander anew in distant lands. Gladly would the compiler have furnished more, but the leaves are too much scattered and mutilated to be rearranged and given complete.

## **FIRST MEMORY.**

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Childhood has its secrets and its mysteries; but who can tell or who can explain them! We have all roamed through this silent wonder-wood—we have all once opened our eyes in blissful astonishment, as the beautiful reality of life overflowed our souls. We knew not where, or who, we were—the whole world was ours and we were the whole world's. That was an infinite life—without beginning and without end, without rest and without pain. In the heart, it was as clear as the spring heavens, fresh as the violet's perfume—hushed and holy as a Sabbath morning.

What disturbs this God's-peace of the child? How can this unconscious and innocent existence ever cease? What dissipates the rapture of this individuality and universality, and suddenly leaves us solitary and alone in a clouded life?

Say not, with serious face. It is sin! Can even a child sin? Say rather, we know not, and must only resign ourselves to it.

Is it sin, which makes the bud a blossom, and the blossom fruit, and the fruit dust?

Is it sin, which makes the worm a chrysalis, and the chrysalis a butterfly, and the butterfly dust?

And is it sin, which makes the child a man, and the man a gray-haired man, and the gray-haired man dust? And what is dust?

Say rather, we know not, and must only resign ourselves to it.

Yet it is so beautiful, recalling the spring-time of life, to look back and remember one's self. Yes, even in the sultry summer, in the melancholy autumn and in the cold winter of life, there is here and there a spring day, and the heart says:

"I feel like spring." Such a day is this—and so I lay me down upon the soft moss of the fragrant woods, and stretch out my weary limbs, and look up, through the green foliage, into the boundless blue, and think how it used to be in that childhood.

Then, all seems forgotten. The first pages of memory are like the old family Bible. The first leaves are wholly faded and somewhat soiled with handling. But, when we turn further, and come to the chapters where Adam and Eve were banished from Paradise, then, all begins to grow clear and legible. Now if we could only find the title-page with the imprint and date—but that is irrevocably lost, and, in their place, we find only the clear transcript—our baptismal certificate—bearing witness when we were born, the names of our parents and godparents, and that we were not issued *sine loco et anno*.

But, oh this beginning! Would there were none, since, with the beginning, all thought and memories alike cease. When we thus dream back into childhood, and from childhood into infinity, this bad beginning continually flies further away. The thoughts pursue it and never overtake it; just as a child seeks the spot where the blue sky touches the earth, and runs and runs, while the sky always runs before it, yet still touches the earth—but the child grows weary and never reaches the spot.

But even since we were once there—wherever it may be, where we had a beginning, what do we know now? For memory shakes itself like the spaniel, just come out of the waves, while the water runs in, his eyes and he looks very strangely.