

24.
The "Char-
acteristic."

significance and the beauty of a work of art, between the idea and the form, became more and more clarified. The discussion was further enriched by the introduction of a new term, the "Characteristic." It was maintained that Art has to represent the characteristic, not the Ideal.

I have frequently had occasion to point out how various lines of thought which strove indefinitely to give expression to a hidden conception were brought together through the introduction of some novel word or

celebrated. Schiller allowed that "Kant's ethics were necessary, considering the lax morality of the age: he became the Drako of his age because he did not consider it worthy and ready to receive a Solon," but added further on, "How have the children of the household deserved it that he [Kant] should only look after the servants." The philosophical question was, How was freedom, the autonomous nature of the moral law, compatible with the radical propensity to evil? moral beauty and grace would become impossible. To this Kant replied by a celebrated simile, "Only after vanquishing the monsters was Hercules introduced to the Muses, who, on their part, shrunk from that severe task." This symbol of Kant's has, so Kuno Fischer says, suggested to Schiller one of the finest verses in his latest philosophical poem, "Das Ideal und das Leben." Goethe, on the other hand, missed in Schiller's treatment a real appreciation of natural beauty, and felt even personally offended by some passages which he supposed were directed against his own position; but an approximation of the poets was soon to follow, and after it we have in 'The Hours' that last and most

important of Schiller's æsthetical essays named in the text; it had the full appreciation of Goethe himself. In contrasting Realism and Idealism in poetry, in art, and in the whole of human endeavour, Schiller has opened out illuminating aspects of great importance: "His ideas and reflections have borne fruit everywhere, and have exerted a distinct influence on many regions of thought. They have flowed, as Gervinus remarks, into the minutest arteries of our [German] national culture. We carry them about in our minds not knowing whence they come. Especially in criticism and literary history, the philosophy of art and culture are immensely indebted to Schiller. Those distinctions have, under different names, made the run of the whole world, and they laid (according to an expression of Goethe) the first foundation of all modern æsthetic; for all synonymous conceptions which have been put forward, antique and modern, Hellenic and Romantic, popular and artistic, are only sports and variations of those fundamental distinctions brought out by Schiller" (Berger's 'Schiller,' vol. ii. p. 234; see also Goethe, Werke, section ii., vol. ii. p. 53).