

before his age the idea of humanity. This has been correctly considered as embodying the ideals which lived in the minds of all the great representatives of the classical period of German literature. It found its most perfect realisation in the person, the life, and the works of Goethe. Though Herder himself did not attain, either in his personal or literary activity, to that elevated expression of his ideal which lived in his contemporaries, Goethe, Kant, and Schiller, and was bequeathed through them to a large circle of poets and thinkers, he has the merit of having formed the conception of a 'History of the Human Race' as a development of the 'Idea of Humanity,' and this in a truly philosophical spirit, with no other practical and ulterior motive than that of the education and elevation of mankind.<sup>1</sup> But other and

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<sup>1</sup> Considering the important part which Herder's 'Ideen' played in German literature, it is remarkable that his name is so little familiar to English writers, among whom Flint was probably the first to do full justice to him. Even Carlyle, to whom two generations of English readers were probably mainly indebted for their knowledge of German literature, has little to say about Herder, referring only to his relations with Goethe and quoting a characteristic passage from Jean Paul on the spirit of Herder's style (Miscellanies, 'Works,' vol. viii. p. 61). The main reason of the neglect which Herder's writings experienced in this, and for a time also in his own, country is probably to be found in the fact that he fell foul of the metaphysical interests and tendencies of his age which sprang up just after his principal work had created, for the time, a great sensation. But there is another reason which is indicated by

Haym ('Herder,' vol. ii. p. 336). It is not in his larger unfinished work that Herder excelled but in the several collections of his smaller pieces, which, as Haym says, give us little gems, not all equally important, but each attractive in itself and together of the most beautiful effect. To express it in terms now familiar to the reader of this History, we may say that Herder's mind took a comprehensive "synoptic" view, that he lacked the power of the great artist to give full expression to the same, but that out of it he was able to elaborate smaller studies of great beauty and value. Thus it is that many of his younger contemporaries were stimulated through him to researches which, though much more limited, led to more definite results, whilst, with a comprehensive and a synoptic view of the world and life, Herder remained himself as Haym says, "always fragmentary." In addition to this, Herder