

the eighteenth century. After the devastations of former centuries, after the ruin of national prosperity through the Wars of the Reformation, the Thirty Years' War, and the Wars of the Succession, light had begun to dawn in the middle of the eighteenth century and an era of progress and comparative prosperity, and certainly of national hope and confidence, seemed to have set in, especially during the thirty years of peace which succeeded the Seven Years' War: the inspiring figure and hero of the age being Frederick the Great.¹

This increasing tide of prosperity and hopefulness, under the influence of which were indited the well-known opening lines of Schiller's *Künstler* (1789),² received a serious check during the greater part of twenty years through the Wars of the Revolution. It was the latter with its seemingly hopeful beginnings, not the social misery of the masses,³ which gave the

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the Huguenots at the end of the seventeenth century. Late in the eighteenth century, as Biedermann shows, the influence of the more advanced state of England and Holland made itself felt in many directions, notably in Agriculture and some of the trades.

¹ Inspiration came not only from his military renown, but quite as much, as Biedermann shows, from the reforms in many directions of legislature, administration, trade and industry in which, during the afternoon and evening of his life, he, first among German princes, led the way in the direction of popular progress. His literary tastes, on the other side, as is well known, were distinctly French. See also Carlyle's 'Friedrich II.,' Book XXI., Introduction.

² On these verses Kuno Fischer

remarks: "The mastery of man over nature, the reign of culture which Bacon had proclaimed as the theme and aim of the modern age, is in full development. . . . The moment in which Schiller composes his 'Künstler' is one of 'eventful silence,' the last before a storm. The poem appeared in March 1789. Two months later and the Assembly of the French States General begins its session" ('Schiller als Philosoph,' vol. i., 2nd ed., p. 152).

³ That such misery existed in many parts of Germany at the time of the outbreak of the French Revolution there is no doubt, and more recent historians are inclined to insist on the fact that the revolt took place in France rather than in other European countries not because of the greater misery