LIFE OF JEAN PAUL F. RICHTER, COMPILED FROM VARIOUS SOURCES: TOGETHER WITH HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY. VOL. II

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Life of Jean Paul F. Richter, compiled from various sources: together with his autobiography. Vol. II by Eliza Buckminster Lee

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ELIZA BUCKMINSTER LEE

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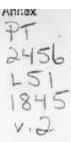


"The history of great minds is a mirror, wherein each reader may behold the treasures and possibilities of his own nature."

VOL. II.

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I have omitted, for the purpose of concluding the A.D. 1796, account of Richter's intimate friendship with Madam von Kalb, two events that took place in the autumn, immediately after his return from Weimar. His wide-spread reputation brought him many proposals to become the instructor of young persons; among others, the Princess of Hohenlohe came to Hof, and entreated him to take charge of her two sons. The eldest of these princes was afterwards the celebrated Jesuit priest, and worker of miracles. The delusion lasted a long time, but ceased before the death of the prince. His fine exterior, gentle manners, and insinuating voice, no doubt made part of the miracle. This was an alluring offer, as it promised Richter independence, and a beautiful residence on the Rhine. He answered, "That he was henceforth determined to educate no children but his own (his books); and that he had so much to say, that if death should sarprise him at his writing-table, in his eightieth year, it would be yet too early."

The other event, that made a deeper impression upon the imaginative mind of Richter, was a visit from the celebrated R

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enthusiast Julia von Krüdener, the wife of the Russian Ambassador in Denmark. This singular woman had been to Leipsic, to visit her son, and came in the full bloom of her remarkable beauty, to his solitary residence, as she said, to seek a comet on its path. Upon Richter, whose soul was always thirsting for the spiritual and ideal in woman, she made an indelible impression, and excited an interest that led to a correspondence of many years' duration. They were only an hour together, but the interest was mutual. There must have been something in Richter's person and manners extremely fascinating to women; for the impression his works had made on the imagination was always deepened by an interview; and there was some reason why Madam von Kalb should tell him "not to smile, and that the tone that his mind gave without words was sweeter than the sounds of the harmonica."

Paul said, in a letter to Otto, "That, unlike as Madam Krüdener was to all other women, so was the impression she had made upon him different from that of all other women."

He wrote to her—"The hour in which I saw you floats like the evening glow still lower beneath the horizon. Your letter must again colour my atmosphere. You came like a dream, and fled like a dream, and I still live in a dream.

"A legend says, that the angels had created men like gods, but that they could not stand upright until God, by a spark, gave them souls, and raised them to the upright posture. Most of us are still such prostrate men; but in your soul glows this sun-spark, and you stand among the cold reclining forms, with your glance still turned to heaven."

Madam von Krüdener answered—" Ineffaceable is the hour when your eye, the sound of your voice, the indescribable whole of your emotion in expression and accent, established the sweetest harmony of knowledge and feeling. I know not whether I make myself intelligible, as you know how imperfectly I possess your language. You will imagine what I think, for I feel with indescribable joy that you wholly understand me, and the little that you said to me was penetrating