

**PHILOSOPHICAL
CLASSICS FOR ENGLISH
READERS: LEIBNIZ**

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Philosophical Classics for English Readers: Leibniz by William Knight & John Theodore Merz

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WILLIAM KNIGHT & JOHN THEODORE MERZ

**PHILOSOPHICAL
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Philosophical Classics for English Readers

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LEIBNIZ

This One



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BY

JOHN THEODORE MERZ

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PREFACE

IN the following discussion of the character of Leibniz and the spirit of his philosophy, I have endeavoured to confine myself as much as possible to those points in the life and the doctrine which cannot be easily gathered by a perusal of Guhrauer's biography (Berlin, 1846), of the principal works of the philosopher himself, or of the well-known historical treatises of Ueberweg, Kuno Fischer, Erdmann, and Zeller. These I have supposed to be of easy access, and I express the hope that those of my readers who have not read them may be better prepared by this volume to do so, and that those who have read them may find something in it, which the larger works did not readily supply.

None of the many editions of the works of Leibniz is complete; and none can as yet be dispensed with. The following are the principal editions:—

I. 'Gothofredi Guillelmi Leibnitii opera omnia, nunc primum collecta studio Ludovici Dutens:' Geneva, 1768. This edition contains a great deal of matter, referring especially to law, natural science, ethnography, &c., and many letters which have not yet passed into the more recent but unfinished editions.

II. 'God. Guil. Leibnitii opera philosophica quæ

extant latina, gallica, germanica omnia,' ed. Joh. Ed. Erdmann: Berlin, 1840. This is the most handy edition; but as the correspondence is not complete, it is by no means sufficient for the historian, though it suffices for the purely philosophical student.

III. In the year 1843, G. H. Pertz began an edition of the works of Leibniz, under the title, 'Leibnizen's gesammelte Werke, aus den handschriften der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Hannover herausgegeben,' and edited himself the (then unpublished) 'Annales imperii occidentis Brunsvicensis,' in three volumes; and in a fourth volume, 'Geschichtliche Aufsätze und Gedichte' (1847). Unfortunately this edition did not aim at completeness; and in the preface to the fourth volume several historical writings of Leibniz are mentioned, notably his essays in the 'Scriptores rerum Brunsvicensium,' as not having been included. The second series of this edition, which should have contained the philosophical works, does not extend beyond one volume, which gives the correspondence of Leibniz with Antoine Arnaud. It was edited by Grotefend (Hanover, 1846). This volume can be dispensed with, as it is incorporated in the edition of Gerhardt mentioned below.

IV. The only complete edition—so far as I know—is that of Leibniz's mathematical works by Gerhardt, an indefatigable student and editor:—

'Leibnizens mathematische Schriften, herausgegeben von C. J. Gerhardt,' 7 vols.: London and Berlin, 1850; Halle, 1855-63. It appeared as the third series in the edition of Pertz.

V. 'Leibniz's Deutsche Schriften, herausgegeben von Dr G. E. Gubrauer,' 2 vols.: Berlin, 1838 and 1840.

VI. 'Œuvres de Leibniz, publiées pour la première fois d'après les manuscrits originaux avec notes et introductions,' par A. Foucher de Careil, 7 vols. : Paris, 1859-75. The first two volumes, which appeared in a second edition, contain the theological works; vols. iii. to vi. the political works; vol. vii., entitled 'L. et les Académies,' contains the whole of the writings bearing upon the foundation of Academies. I have found the two first and the last volume of much use in writing the fourth and sixth chapters of the first part of this essay.

VII. 'Die Werke von Leibniz,' von Onno Klopp. Of this magnificent edition only 10 vols. appeared (Hanover, 1864-77), belonging to the first series, and containing the historical and political works.

VIII. The most important edition is that of C. J. Gerhardt, 'Die philosophischen-Schriften von G. W. Leibniz,' vols. i. and ii., and iv. and v. : Berlin, 1875-82. It contains valuable introductions, and gives the correspondence with eminent contemporaries. It is unfinished, and hence incomplete, like all the other editions of the philosophical works, but every student of Leibniz must eagerly look forward to its completion. The portrait reproduced here is taken from this edition, with the kind permission of the publishers, the Weidmannsche Buchhandlung in Berlin.

IX. The German translations of Leibniz's principal philosophical writings, by Schaarschmidt and von Kirchmann, in the 'Philosophische Bibliothek,' edited by the latter, can be recommended on account of the valuable notes and explanations attached to them.