

**SAPPHO: A  
TRAGEDY IN  
FIVE ACTS**

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Sappho: a tragedy in five acts by Franz Grillparzer & Ellen Frothingham

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**FRANZ GRILLPARZER & ELLEN FROTHINGHAM**

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# SAPPHO.

A Tragedy in five Acts.

BY

FRANZ GRILLPARZER.

TRANSLATED BY ELLEN FROTHINGHAM.

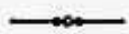


BOSTON:  
ROBERTS BROTHERS.

1876.

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# MEMOIR.



FRANZ GRILLPARZER was born in Vienna, January 15, 1791. His father was a lawyer, and in comfortable circumstances until the disasters attendant on the invasion of Austria by Napoleon destroyed his property. At his death, in 1809, Franz found himself at the age of eighteen obliged not only to provide for his own support, but to contribute something towards the maintenance of his mother and three younger brothers. He obtained, first, a position as tutor in a nobleman's family, and, in 1813, a small post under government. For this the legal studies which he had pursued with zeal after the death of his father abundantly qualified him. His promotion was exceedingly slow and rather hindered than furthered by his literary works, notwithstanding the ardent patriotism and the loyalty to the House of Hapsburg which many of his dramas express.

The censorship was very severe in Austria at that time, and Grillparzer was condemned to feel the full rigor of it. Obstacles were put in the way not only of the success, but of the presentation, of his plays. Not until he had grown an old man, were party prejudices so allayed that his countrymen could do justice either



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to his integrity as a citizen, or his worth as a dramatic poet. The first public expression of love and respect to him was on the occasion of his attaining his eightieth birthday, in 1871. Then the largest hall in the city was filled with deputations, bringing laurel crowns and costlier presents, and there speeches were made and verses read in honor of the venerable poet and patriot. A year later, the capital celebrated his funeral as if he had been a ruler in the land. He died, January 21, 1872, at the age of eighty-one.

His long life was that of a solitary student. He labored faithfully and successfully to make up for the defects of his early education, which had been intrusted to incompetent tutors over whom his father exercised no supervision, though living under his own roof. In his years of lonely reading, he not only made himself familiar with the modern European languages, but became so conversant with Greek and Latin that the classic authors were among the favorite companions of his old age. His one recreation was travelling. He visited Greece and Italy, stayed long in London and Paris, and acquainted himself with the chief cities and famous men of Germany.

Grillparzer cherished a life-long attachment to Katharina Fröhlich; but want of means, and perhaps peculiarities of disposition on both sides, prevented their

marrying. The last few years of his life, he lived near her in modest rooms, which the three sisters Fröhlich fitted up for him, adjoining their own, in the fourth story of a house in the Spiegelgasse. Here he enjoyed, for the first time, something like the companionship of home. The sisters cared for him when the infirmities of age came on, and Katharina was with him at his death.

The first of Grillparzer's dramas that appeared upon the stage was "Die Ahnfrau," produced in 1817.

"Sappho" was first acted in 1818, and was followed at intervals of three years by six other plays, the last of which was given in 1838. After that time, Grillparzer allowed no drama to be offered for representation, although he left three completed in manuscript. He was reserved and sensitive, and shrank ever more and more from all contact with the public. The success of a piece, he said, could no longer give him pleasure, while its failure might still cause him pain. Several of the dramas, including the "Sappho," continue to form part of the repertory of the principal German theatres.

The complete edition of Grillparzer's works, published in 1872, comprises — beside the dramas — poems, tales, aphorisms, an account of the Spanish theatre, and the fragment of an autobiography.

ELLEN FROTHINGHAM.

BOSTON, October, 1876.

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