

**ARTHUR  
SCHOPENHAUER, HIS  
LIFE AND PHILOSOPHY**

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Arthur Schopenhauer, his life and philosophy by Helen Zimmern

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**HELEN ZIMMERN**

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Arthur Schopenhauer.

Von Henry Jones del. 1853.  
Fried. Schinkel sculp. 1853.

# ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER

HIS LIFE AND HIS PHILOSOPHY

BY

HELEN ZIMMERN

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Unders  
... als sonst in Menschenköpfen  
Walt sich in diesem Kopf die Welt  
SCHILLER

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## PREFACE.

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NEARLY a quarter of a century has elapsed since the name of ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER was first pronounced in England.<sup>1</sup> This country may claim to have given the signal for the recognition of a thinker not at the time widely known or eminently honoured in his native land; and although the subsequent expansion of his fame and influence has been principally conspicuous in Germany, indications have not been wanting of a steady growth of curiosity and interest respecting him here. Allusions to him in English periodical literature have of late been frequent, assuming an acquaintance with his philosophy on the reader's part which the latter, it may be feared, does not often possess. The time thus seems to have

<sup>1</sup> See 'Iconoclasm in German Philosophy,' an essay in the 'Westminster Review' for April 1853, understood to be from the pen of Mr. John Oxenford.



arrived for such an account of the man and the author as may effect for the general reader what M. Ribot's able French *précis* has already accomplished for the student of mental science, and may prepare the way for the translation of Schopenhauer's capital treatise, understood to be contemplated by an accomplished German scholar now resident among us.

The little volume which owes its existence to these considerations can advance no lofty pretensions either from the biographical or the critical point of view. No new biographical material of importance can be offered now, and there is every reason to believe that none such exists. We must accordingly depend in the main upon the concise memoir by Gwinner—a model of condensation, good taste, and graphic power—supplemented by the heterogeneous and injudicious, yet in many respects invaluable, mass of detail put forth by the philosopher's immediate disciples, Lindner and Frauenstädt. Relying on these sources of information, we have endeavoured to portray for English readers one of the most original and picturesque intellectual figures of our time; with obvious analogies to Johnson, Rousseau, and Byron, nor yielding in interest to any of them,

yet a man of unique mould; a cosmopolitan, moreover, exempt from local and national trammels, whose mind was formed to be the common possession of his race. The portrait—should the execution have in any degree corresponded with the intention—will, we are convinced, be valued by all who prefer sterling humanity to affectation, who know how to esteem a genuine man. By many it will be deemed unattractive, by some perhaps even forbidding. We shall not be discouraged by cavils grounded upon the fallacy of estimating every man by a uniform conventional standard, without reference to the special mission appointed him in the world. *Il faut que chacun ait les défauts de ses qualités.* Wordsworth's imperturbable egotism, for example, is even more offensive, because less frankly human, than the boisterous arrogance of Schopenhauer. No one, nevertheless, makes this a crime in Wordsworth, it being universally recognised that he needed all his self-complacency to withstand public contumely; that to wish him other than he was would be to wish that England had never possessed a Wordsworth. Schopenhauer needed even more the steeling armour of self-esteem and scorn, inasmuch as the neglect which exasperated him

was more general and more protracted, and arose not, as in Wordsworth's case, from the obtuseness of critics, but from the conspiracy of a coterie. The neglected poet or artist, moreover, has the resource of production; resentment begets new effort, affording an outlet for the pent-up wrath which might otherwise have taken shape as a scandal or a crime, but which now appears transfigured into forms of beauty. The capital labour of Schopenhauer's life, on the other hand, admitted of no repetition; and when it seemed to be dishonoured, the author could but sit brooding over his mortification with a bitterness which, after all, never perverted his intellectual conscience, disgusted him with the seemingly unprofitable pursuit of truth, or impaired his loyalty to the few whom he recognised as worthy of his reverence.

It may still be asked whether Schopenhauer's life-work will really bear comparison with his who brought English poetry back to Nature? If publishing a translation of his writings, we should simply refer the inquirer to the works themselves; but we are painfully aware that no such reference can be confidently made to an abstract whose manifold imperfections are only to be palliated