

**FERDINAND
LASSALLE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649582297

Ferdinand Lassalle by George Brandes

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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BY

GEORGE BRANDES

AUTHOR OF

"WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE," ETC.

"Flectere si nequeo Superos, Acheronta movebo"

(If I cannot bend the will of Heaven, I will cause turmoil in hell)

VIRGIL

EDITED BY
JAMES H. HARRIS

NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

LONDON: WILLIAM HEINEMANN

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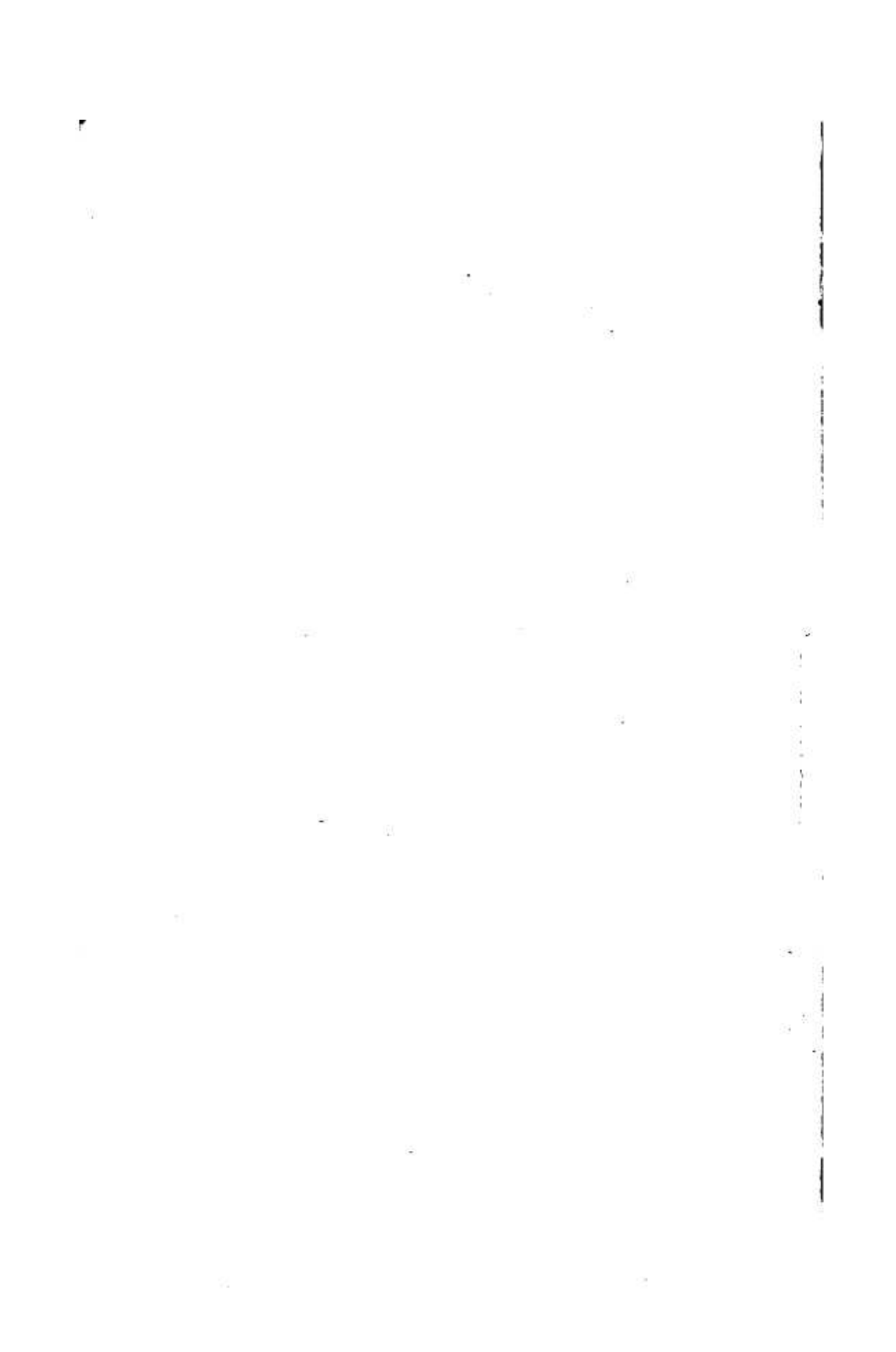
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NOTE

THE master hand of George Meredith has made Lassalle a permanent figure in English literature. Those who know Lassalle only as Alvan, the passionate lover of the "Tragic Comedians," will wish to know him also as the democratic leader, the man of letters and of law, and to observe from a wider outlook the progress of the restless career which ended in profound catastrophe.

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PART I

LASSALLE BEFORE THE AGITATION

ONE event during the nineteenth century has provoked the greatest surprise and astonishment in Europe. Unsuccessful attempts at its explanation have been, and are still offered by the different European nationalities. This event is the process by which the Germany of Hegel was transformed to the Germany of Bismarck. Some theorists speak as if the old German stock had suddenly died out, and a new race had sprung up without roots; others, as if the old stock had been destroyed or ennobled by an infusion of Wendish-Slavonic blood. To some, modern Germany is enigmatic as the Iron Mask. The face of the philosopher and the poet was the real countenance, and this has now been hidden by Prussian domination, as the mask concealed the identity of the unhappy prisoner. Others, again, regard the old and pleasant countenance of romance as the mask, hypocritically hiding the real features, which have now become visible. These views are alike injudicious, and are based in either case upon ignorance of the course of development which modern Germany has pursued. If this development is studied in literature, it will be seen how, step by step, the ideas, the methods of action, and the views of life pursued and entertained by the newer generation have developed organically from those of the past age. The gulf which divides the Germany of Hegel from the Germany of Bismarck will gradually be filled before our eyes. The faces upon either side of this gulf will appear as related by similarity of feature ;