

**HENRY OF OFTERDINGEN:
A ROMANCE FROM THE
GERMAN OF NOVALIS**

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Henry of Ofterdingen: A Romance from the German of Novalis by Friedrich von Schlegel

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FRIEDRICH VON SCHLEGEL

**HENRY OF OFTERDINGEN:
A ROMANCE FROM THE
GERMAN OF NOVALIS**

HENRY OF OFTERDINGEN :

A ROMANCE.

FROM THE GERMAN OF

NOVALIS,

(FRIEDRICH VON HARDENBERG.)

CAMBRIDGE:

PUBLISHED BY JOHN OWEN.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE present translation is made from the edition of Tieck and Schlegel. The life of the author is chiefly drawn from the one written by the former. The completion of the second part is also by the same writer.

Richter said, in a prophetic feeling of the fate of his own works, that translators were like wagoners who carry good wine to fairs—but most unaccountably water it before the end of the journey. Which allusion and semi-confession is meant to take the place of the usual apology; and the reader can proceed without farther preface.

Cambridge, June, 1842.

ERRATA.

Page xvi, line tenth from bottom, *for* tice. He read tice, he

Page 23, line ninth from top, *for* work read woke

Page 66, first word of the poetry, *for* T'leugh read Through

LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

PROBABLY some of the readers of this volume will feel an interest in the author's life. Although there are but few works, in which the mind of the author is more clearly and purely reflected than in this; yet it is natural that the reader should feel some interest in the outward circumstances of one, who has become dear to him; and those friends of Novalis, who have never known him personally, will be glad to hear all that we can bring to light concerning him.

The Baron of Hardenberg, the father of the author, was director of the Saxonian salt works. He had been a soldier in his younger days, and retained even in his old age a predilection for a military life. He was a robust, ever active man, frank and energetic;— a pure German. The pious character of his mind led him to join the Moravian community; yet he remained frank, decided, and upright. His mother, a type of elevated piety and Christian meekness, belonged to the same religious community. She bore with lofty resignation the loss, within a few successive years, of a blooming circle of hopeful and well educated children.

Friedrich von Hardenberg (Novalis) was born on the second of May, in the year 1772, on a family estate in the county of Mansfield. He was the oldest

of eleven children, with the exception of a sister who was born a year earlier. The family consisted of seven sons and four daughters, all distinguished for their wit and the lofty tone of their minds. Each possessed a peculiar disposition, while all were united by a beautiful and generous affection to each other and to their parents. Friedrich von Hardenberg was weak in constitution from his earliest childhood, without, however, suffering from any settled or dangerous disease. He was somewhat of a day-dreamer, silent and of an inactive disposition. He separated himself from the society of his playmates; but his character was distinguished from that of other children, only by the ardor of his love for his master. He found his companions in his own family. His spirit seemed to be awakened from its slumber, by a severe disease in his ninth year, and by the stimulants applied for his recovery; and he suddenly appeared brighter, merrier, and more active. His father, who was obliged by his business to be much of his time away from home, entrusted his education for the most part to his mother, and to family tutors. The gentleness, meekness, and the pure piety of his mother's character, as well as the religious habits of both parents, which naturally extended to the whole household, made the deepest impression upon his mind; an impression which exerted the happiest influence upon him throughout his whole life. He now applied himself diligently to his studies, so that in his twelfth year he had acquired a pretty thorough knowledge of the Latin language, and some smattering of Greek. The reading of Poetry was the fa-

vorite occupation of his leisure hours. He was particularly pleased with the higher kind of fables, and amused himself by composing them and relating them to his brothers. He was accustomed for several years to act, in concert with his brothers Erasmus and Charles, a little poetical play, in which they took the characters of spirits, one of the air, another of the water, and the other of the earth. On Sunday evenings, Novalis would explain to them the most wonderful and various appearances and phenomena of these different realms. There are still in existence some of his poems written about this period.

He now applied himself too severely to study, especially to history, in which he took a deep interest. In the year 1789, he entered a Gymnasium, and in the autumn went to Jena to pursue his studies there. Here he remained until 1792, and then with his brother Erasmus entered the University at Leipzig; he left the following year for Wittenberg, and there finished his studies.

At this time the French war broke out, which not only interrupted his studies greatly, but which also inspired him suddenly with so great a desire to enter upon a military life, that the united prayers of his parents and relations were scarcely able to restrain his wishes.

About this time he became acquainted with Frederick Schlegel, and soon became his warmest friend; he also gained the friendship of Fichte; and these two great spirits exerted a powerful and lasting influence upon his whole life. After applying himself with unwearied ardor to the sciences, he left Witten-