

**THE HYGIENE OF THE  
SOUL: MEMOIR  
OF A PHYSICIAN  
AND PHILOSOPHER**

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The Hygiene of the Soul: Memoir of a Physician and Philosopher by Gustav Pollak

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**GUSTAV POLLAK**

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# The Hygiene of the Soul

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BY  
GUSTAV POLLAK



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To  
C. H. P.

*ab imo pectore*

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## I

IN his suggestive essay on "Greatness in Literature," Prof. W. P. Trent, after considering the supreme minds, speaks of "writers whom most of us will want to read in whole or in part because their genius, within well-defined limits, is genuine, and because they stand for something important in culture and in the history of literature and are likely to interest in and for themselves." Among such writers, who, moreover, have stood the test of duration of fame, the Austrian philosopher, Ernst Baron von Feuchtersleben, occupies a distinguished place. No German work dealing with philosophic questions in a popular form has been as successful as his *Zur Diätetik der Seele* (The Hygiene of the Soul). Published originally in 1838, at Vienna, it has maintained its freshness to this day,

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forty-six editions, up to the year 1906, testifying to its popularity in all German-speaking countries. The book has been translated into several languages. Of the English version by Colonel H. A. Ouvry ("Dietetics of the Soul," London, 1852; revised edition, 1873), an anonymous American reprint appeared in 1858. Neither of these two editions, however, contained any information concerning the author himself, and Feuchtersleben's personality may be said to be unknown to English readers. Yet literature chronicles few nobler lives than that of Ernst Baron von Feuchtersleben.

The great dramatist Grillparzer, whose caustic pen spared few contemporary celebrities, wrote, in 1851, of the philosopher as follows:

"I became acquainted with Feuchtersleben at a comparatively late period. Therefore and because our relations were mainly of a literary nature, I know practically nothing

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of his previous life, and must limit myself to remarks concerning his character and his intellect. These are fairly open to the scrutiny of others; his own innate and most genuine modesty would under any circumstances have prevented him from alluding to his personal affairs. . . .

“Married to a woman who was the opposite of himself as to habits, temperament and education, he succeeded by yielding no less than insisting, by his intellectual superiority and his easy good nature, in creating for himself a wedded happiness the perfection of which has perhaps never been equalled. This alone, while testifying to the strength of his character, marks him as what he was in every respect—a truly wise man.

“Honesty, truthfulness, kindness and modesty formed the basis of his character. He had the right to say of himself: ‘I have had to fight for whatever I am,’ for he never surrendered a conviction, or devi-