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From the West End to Hollywood: The Story of John Oxenford, Critic, Translator, and Playwright

In mid-January 1873, John Oxenford, dramatic critic of the London *Times*, received an invitation from the author Alfred Bates Richards to see a production of Richards' play, *Cromwell*. The invitation had been extended at the request of George Rignold, the drama's principal actor, whose interpretation of Cromwell was masterful and who naturally desired that his performance be evaluated by so experienced and respected a writer as Oxenford. Hearing of Rignold's anxiety and wishing to comply with Richards' proposal, Oxenford, although suffering from acute bronchial catarrh and plagued by a hacking cough, left his sick bed to attend the presentation. Clement Scott relates the story further:

> …John Oxenford repaired to the Queen's Theatre, distressing cough and all, to do a good turn to the author and actor. George Rignold was, of course, in a highly nervous state of mind, for he had been told that Oxenford was in front. Alas! Presently the irritating bark began. It grew louder and louder. Rignold became visibly impatient and disconcerted. He was acting splendidly, but unhappily his scenes were all being ruined by that incessant coughing. At last he could stand it no longer; so he came forward and said:
>
> "Ladies and Gentlemen, I am sorry to interrupt the performance, but I really cannot go on acting unless the old gentleman in the

> private box can suppress his distressing, but evidently depressing cough."
>
> At once poor John Oxenford rose from his seat and left the theatre…. When the curtain fell, someone rushed up to Rignold and exclaimed, "Do you know what you have done, George?" "No! Done! What?"
>
> "You have sent away John Oxenford, of *The Times*, who came out of a sick bed to help you at your own special request! George Rignold collapsed.[1]

The significance which Rignold attached to Oxenford's opinion is indicative of the prestige which the excessively kind reviewer enjoyed among his contemporaries, but Oxenford as a critic so erred on the side of leniency that his reviews, although witty and well-written, were rarely valued for their critical acumen. In his article on Oxenford for the *Dictionary of National Biography*, Robin Humphrey Lagge notes that as a critic Oxenford was "amiable to a weakness"[2] and acquiescent to a fault, an opinion which accurately reflects the general consensus that Oxenford's writings on plays did not, as criticism, strike deep.[3] Edmund Yates (1831–1894), British novelist, dramatist, and journalist and an intimate friend of Oxenford's in the early 1850s, evaluates Oxenford's popular appeal in a like manner in his memoir, [4] although the history of the *Times* seems to indicate that the kindliness of Oxenford's reviews was officially enjoined.[5] Nonetheless, as the doyen of London dramatic critics in the third quarter of the nineteenth century, Oxenford, who by 1873 had reviewed theatrical productions for the prestigious *Times* for over twenty years, was familiar to and respected by actor, playwright, and reader alike. He was, in addition, renowned as a writer of literally hundreds of plays and librettos,[6] which appeared on London stages for more than forty years. But although chiefly, if not exclusively, known to the general public as a dramatist and dramatic critic, John Oxenford was also a very able and accomplished scholar. Friends such as Yates lamented that "no man so thoroughly equipped with vast stores of erudition ever passed through a long life known only as the lightest literary sharpshooter."[7] Oxenford won relatively little acclaim during his lifetime for his translations of Goethe, Molière, and Calderón, and many of his contributions to various literary periodicals went almost unnoticed.[8] His not inconsiderable fame rested almost entirely upon his wide range of dramatic productions, including burlettas, ballets, burlesques, cantatas, comedies, comediettas, dramas, entertainments, extravaganzas, farces, melodramas, operas, operettas, operatic farces, serenatas, and tragedies,[9] and his eminently readable critiques.

Today Oxenford's plays have been largely forgotten and his dramatic

criticisms are gainsaid the name. Ironically, it is as a translator of German literature that Oxenford is remembered in the single post-1900 scholarly article written about him.[10] Still more ironically, in this one article, entitled "John Oxenford as Translator,"[11] Emma Gertrude Jaeck subjects Oxenford—the kindliest of critics[12]—to a harsh critical examination. Her rather disorganized article contains no statement of purpose, yet the intent to portray Oxenford as a plagiarist seems clear. Although she provides a brief biographical sketch of Oxenford and an incomplete list of his translations and adaptations from the French, Spanish, Italian, and German, her primary interest seems to lie in discrediting Oxenford's abilities as a translator. She shies away from accusing Oxenford directly but strongly implies that Oxenford had plagiarized variously from Parke Goodwin, John Henry Hopkins, Jr., Charles A. Dana, John S. Dwight, and Margaret Fuller in rendering Goethe's *Dichtung und Wahrheit* und Eckermann's *Gespräche mit Goethe* into English. Jaeck quotes Parke Godwin's indignant charge of literary theft in appropriating his translation of *Dichtung und Wahrheit* plus three periodical reviews which accuse Oxenford, in incontrovertible language, of blatant appropriation of Godwin's translation. She then states: "It is not my intention to make any accusations against John Oxenford. I shall simply cite corresponding extracts, taken at random, from each of the twenty books, and let the reader draw his own conclusions." The corresponding extracts are almost identical, showing only slight verbal alterations; the conclusions which the reader is meant to draw are obvious.

Jaeck follows a similar procedure in comparing Margaret Fuller's translation of Eckermann's *Conversations with Goethe* with those of Oxenford. However, she does not even consider Oxenford's translations of Soret and the sections of Eckermann not rendered into English by Mrs. Fuller. Nor does she ever state the percentage of original to adopted translations. She implies that she had discovered many more instances of direct borrowing on the part of Oxenford for his translation of *Dichtung und Wahrheit* than the six pages she reproduces in her article but provides no approximation of the actual extent of Oxenford's borrowing. In a book such as *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, which exceeds five hundred pages in Oxenford's 1848 translation, even twenty-five or fifty pages of direct borrowing would not be significant enough to discount the value of Oxenford's original work.

One can of course agree with Jaeck that, when a model such as Godwin's or Fuller's translation existed, Oxenford did, in fact, adopt the sections which he likely considered virtually unimprovable. Yet such a statement says nothing of the skill with which Oxenford rendered his original translations or of the appropriateness of his decision to retain certain passages which had already been more than adequately translated into English. However, Jaeck

misconstrues much of the information she presents, while at the same time failing to include other facts requisite to a fair evaluation. After noting that Oxenford translated only Books I–XIII of *Dichtung und Wahrheit* for the Bohn's Standard Library edition while the remaining books (XIV–XX) were translated by the Rev. A.J.W. Morrision (216), Jaeck proceeds to compare random extracts of Books I–XX to illustrate Oxenford's appropriation of Godwin's translation (221–226). By inference, then, Jaeck accuses Oxenford of plagiarism on the basis of a translation which she herself has falsely ascribed to him.

Jaeck's inclusion of John S. Dwight in the list of translators whose renderings of *Dichtung and Wahrheit* Oxenford purportedly stole is also patently false, since Dwight translated (under Godwin's editorship) Books XVI–XX while Oxenford did not translate beyond Book XIII. Her inclusion of Charles A. Dana, as the American translator of Books X–XV, is also highly dubious, as Oxenford claimed to have only Books I–X of the Godwin edition before him as he worked, and the similarities between the Dana and Oxenford translations of Books X–XIII, even in Jaeck's two extracts, are not striking and are no greater than would be expected in two independent translations of the same passages. Even if Jaeck's arguments were so convincing as to discredit Oxenford's contributions to the translations of Goethe's autobiography and Eckermann's discussions with Goethe, her article could hardly be considered a representative or, still less, a complete study of Oxenford's many activities related to German and German literature.

Oxenford's versatility is indeed impressive and his productivity almost staggering. Born August 12, 1812, in Camberwell, Oxenford lived alone with his father in a house on Bedford Row for the majority of his years. It was here that the largely self-educated[13] writer indulged his passion for books,[14] and one can assume that it was in the tranquility of this domestic environment that he conceived and executed his numerous literary works, but to overemphasize this one aspect of Oxenford's life would give a false impression of the man, who was neither retiring nor otherworldly. During his years with *The Times*, Oxenford, witty and universally admired for his conversational powers, was the companion and good friend of other critics such as Clement Scott, B.L. Blanchard, and Edmund Yates, all members in good standing of "British Bohemia." Yates writes:

> British Bohemia … has been most admirably described by Thackeray in *Philip*: "A pleasant land, not fenced with drab stucco like Belgravia or Tyburnia: not guarded by a large standing army of footmen: not echoing with noble chariots, not replete with chintz drawing-rooms and neat tea-tables; a land over which hangs an endless fog, occasioned

> by too much tobacco: a land of chambers, billiard-rooms, and oyster-suppers: a land of song: a land where soda-water flows freely in the morning; a land of tin dish-covers from taverns and foaming porter: a land of lotos-eating (with lots of cayenne pepper), of pulls on the river, of delicious reading of novels, magazines, and saunterings in many studios: a land where all men call each other by their Christian names; where most are poor, where almost all are young, and where if a few oldsters enter, it is because they have preserved more tenderly and carefully than others their youthful spirits…."[15]

One assumes that Oxenford, described by Yates as being "full of the delightful humour, and [having] the animal spirits of a boy" at the age of forty-three, was one of these oldsters.[16]

Oxenford's completed translations in book form number over fifteen; his dramatic productions in England total slightly more than one hundred;[17] his translations of or adaptations from and critical articles about foreign literature which appear in British periodicals exceed sixty separate items. Such an enumeration does not even account for the copious reviews which have never been collected but which appeared in *The Times* during the period from 1850–1875. By the time of Oxenford's death in 1877, his assiduous labors had given rise to well over two hundred various contributions to the body of scholarly, critical, and imaginative material dealing with English as well as other European literatures. A closer perusal of these contributions reveals that a considerable portion concerns itself with German language and literature. It is on these specifically German-related works that the current discussion will focus. Such an approach necessitates the exclusion of all of Oxenford's theatrical criticisms and many of his dramas which played exclusively on the English stage, but one review warrants a brief mention as it reveals much of Oxenford's style. On 22 October 1866, Oxenford reviewed Bayle Bernard's version of Goethe's *Faust* in *The Times*.[18] The review is instructive in that it is written with Oxenford's characteristic concern for the background of a work and with the intent of broadening his readers' knowledge of German literature. Oxenford quotes from G.H. Lewes' account of the genesis of *Faust* and compares that and other English versions of *Faust* with the German original, pointing out similarities and differences; he also points out in which ways Goethe's treatment of the Faust legend was innovative. There are, of course, other reviews by Oxenford of German dramas which appeared on the London stage, but the primary concern here will be a consideration of Oxenford's translations from the German which were published in book form, the articles related to German literature which were printed under his name in British magazines, and those of his original plays which appeared in

any format in Germany.

Oxenford's translations from the German which were published as separate editions number at least eight.[19] The topical range of these volumes reflect the catholicity of Oxenford's taste. In order of their appearance in print, the six include: *Tales from the German* (1844); a collection of novellas translated together with C.A. Feiling;[20] *The Autobiography of Goethe* (1848); *Conversations of Goethe with Eckermann and Soret* (1850); Friedrich Jacobs' *Hellas: or, The Home, History, Literature, and Art of the Greeks* (1855); Kuno Fischer's *Francis Bacon of Verulam* (1857); and the *Complete Edition of the Songs of Beethoven* (1878).

The first collection of Oxenford's translations in book form, *Tales from the German*, contains ten translations by Oxenford and seven by Feiling.[21] Oxenford's contributions include versions of: Goethe's "The New Paris;" E.T.A. Hoffmann's "The Elementary Spirit," "The Jesuits' Church in G…," and "The Sandmann;" Immermann's "The Wonders in the Spessart;" Heinrich von Kleist's "Michael Kohlhaas" and "St. Cecilia, or the Power of Music;" Musaeus' "Libussa;" Jean Paul's "The Moon;" and Schiller's "The Criminal from Lost Honour." Five of these translations were reprinted the same year in America in a shortened version of the collection.[22] Both the English and American editions received favorable reviews.[23] The *Athenaeum* praised the volume for "introducing [the reader] at once into the spirit of the literary mind of …Germany"[24] and was especially appreciative that the works of celebrated German authors were presented to the English public in such excellent translations.

Perhaps the best of the translations is Oxenford's version of "Der Verbrecher aus verlorener Ehe."[25] This translation is an especially accurate and careful one. Individual words are faithfully rendered,[26] and the word order of the original sentences is closely followed. Moreover, Oxenford gives his audience a truly readable version of Schiller's story, written in clear, fluent English, unmarred by confusing or unnecessarily convoluted sentences. His translation of the novella is markedly better than that of Richard Holcroft, which had been published in 1829 under the title of "The Dishonoured Irreclaimable." Holcroft's version, inaccurate in parts and much freer than Oxenford's,[27] often fails to give the English reader an adequate idea of Schiller's style.

Not as outstanding as the translation from Schiller, but nonetheless successful in their own right, are Oxenford's versions of Musaeus' "Libussa," Hoffmann's "Der Sandmann," and a selection from Immermann's *Münchhausen*. Although blemished by occasional infidelities to the original text,[28] Oxenford's "Libussa" is, in its clarity, infinitely preferable to the obfuscating Thomas Carlyle translation of 1841, which takes noticeable liberties with Musaeus' words.[29] "The Sandman," "an example of the comic

and terrible in union,"[30] is illustrative of Oxenford's ability to convey the tone and mood of the work he is translating. An accurate and well-reading translation, although not of course as smooth and polished as a more recent one,[31] Oxenford's version of "The Sandman" seems to have been the first translation of this tale to have been presented to the English public.[32] In his rendering of this story, as in that of the extract from *Münchhausen* entitled "The Wonders in the Spessart,[33] Oxenford is careful to supply his English readers with additional information which enhances their understanding of the text. A reference to Schiller's Franz Moor in "The Sandman" is, for instance, noted and explained, and the whole of "The Wonders in the Spessart" is prefaced by introductory remarks as to Immermann's probably satiric intent.[34]

Of the five novellas included in the American edition of *Tales from the German*, perhaps the one of greatest interest to the student of German-English literary relations is Oxenford's rendering of Heinrich von Kleist's "Michael Kohlhaas." Its inclusion marks what is probably the first appearance in England or America of any of Kleist's works in English translation.[35] Although its use of "thee" and "thou" seems antiquated to modern readers, Oxenford's version retains the tone and mood of the original. On the whole this careful[36] translation gives an English-speaking audience a good idea of the narrative style which Kleist sought to attain in reporting the story as if it were taken from an old chronicle.

Commendable, too, is Oxenford's decision to translate the first thirteen books of Goethe's *Dichtung und Wahrheit* for Bohn's Standard Library. Prior to the publication of Oxenford's version of Goethe's autobiography in 1848, there had appeared in England only an anonymous 1823 translation and a reprint of Parke Godwin's 1846 American edition. The first was "a poor copy of a wretched French version"[37] and so far removed from the original as to give English readers a false impression of the work and of Goethe, while the second, although more than adequate, was by no means a definitive translation.[38] Oxenford, who based part of his version on the first ten books of the translation edited by Godwin, freely admitted that the American edition contained "many successful renderings" and that those he had "engrafted without hesitation."[39] A selective borrower, however, he took over without alteration only those portions which he felt himself essentially unable to improve. In most cases Oxenford did make certain minor changes, and although the Godwin and Oxenford versions of Books I–X frequently differ only slightly, it is usually the Oxenford translation which is closer to the German original.[40] Moreover, Oxenford's rendering of Books XI–XIII, which he translated without a copy of the American work before him, is clear and faithful and of higher quality than the London reprint of Part 3 of Godwin's edition. The price of the Godwin version was, furthermore, prohibitive for many Englishmen. Oxenford's translation, undertaken to be

published as volume I of Goethe's work for Bohn's Standard Library, had the added advantage of appearing "in so cheap and convenient a form" as to be placed "within the reach of every one."[41]

The Oxenford translation, printed as *The Auto-biography of Goethe. Truth and Poetry: From My Own Life*, was both a critical and a popular success. Typical of the critical comments which the book received are those of the reviewer for the *Spectator*, who, pronouncing the translation to be generally excellent, states that it "is executed with skill and fidelity: Only a few passages occur in which Mr. Oxenford appears to have missed the exact meaning, and the misconception in those are not of a nature to affect the tone or tendency of the work as a whole."[42] Warmly received from the time of its initial appearance, the book was reprinted without alteration in 1871, 1872, 1874, and 1888. In 1891 a revised edition appeared. Parts of the translation were also issued separately in England: Books I–V in 1888 as *Goethe's Boyhood*, and Books I–IX in 1904 as *The Early Life of Goethe*. Oxenford's translation was, moreover, reprinted in America in 1882 and 1902 and was, in fact, in print in the United States as *The Autobiography of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe* as late as 1969[43], published by the Horizon Press (New York, 1969).

Oxenford's translation of Goethe's discussions with Johann Peter Eckermann and Frédéric Jacob Soret was no less of a popular success. *Conversations of Goethe with Eckermann and Soret*, first published in 1850, was reissued for Bohn's Standard Library as volume VI of *Goethe's Works* in new editions in 1874 and 1875 and in revised editions in 1883 and 1892. In 1901 an abridged edition of the work, entitled *Conversations with Eckermann*, appeared simultaneously in Washington and London. Selections from Oxenford's translation of the Eckermann conversations, entitled *Goethe on the Theater*, were published in 1919 by the Dramatic Museum of Columbia University. And in 1935 a slightly altered edition of the Eckermann translation, entitled *Conversations with Goethe* and reprinted from a 1930 abridgment, was published, as was its predecessor, in both London and New York.

Oxenford's *Conversations of Goethe with Eckermann and Soret* was not, however, an unqualified critical success. Judgments of the merits of this translation range from the approving "as exact and faithful as it is elegant" of the *Spectator* reviewer[44] to the "mistranslations are not infrequent—bad translation abounds" of the critic for the *Literary Gazette*.[45] The reviewer for the *Athenaeum*, in a well-balanced critique, commends the book to his readers' perusal with some reservation:

> Mr. Oxenford's version is rather a literal than a substantial copy of the text. It may be called accurate enough, so far as a close rendering of word for word will give unfrequently the virtual force of the

> expressions, for want of proper equivalents; while the language, as English, is rendered somewhat awkward and foreign-looking by too close a repetition of the cast of the original sentences.[46]

The review also points out that although Oxenford had appended a few notes to the text where explanation seemed indispensable and had, in addition, supplied an index, the annotation is not, in fact, sufficient. The allusions to person and things not expressly described in the text are many, and, as these were not suitably explained by Oxenford, the writer feels that the task of introducing the book to a foreign audience had not been completed.[47]
Whatever their individual opinions of the quality of Oxenford's translation, reviewers are unanimous in their praise of his arrangement of the various conversations. The opinion expressed in the *Dublin University Magazine* is typical:

> Eckermann's journal is much more conveniently arranged in this [Oxenford's] English translation than in the original. In the original, two volumes were first published, and the curiosity of the public excited by these led to the publication of a third. The order of time is thus broken in the original. The translator has remedied this—inserting whatever is introduced in the third volume according to its chronological order.[48]

The different reviewers also evince unanimity in the praise they extend to Oxenford for making the complete[49] set of Goethe's conversations accessible at last to the English-reading public. Sarah Margaret Fuller's excellent translation of the Eckermann conversations had, of course, been published in Boston in 1839, but her version is marked by "frequent omissions which render it almost an abridgement."[50] Oxenford was the first to render into English all of the Eckermann conversations and the first to attempt a translation of the Soret conversations.[51]

Oxenford also introduced works of certain German scholars to the English-reading public. In 1855 he published a translation of Friedrich Jacobs' *Hellas: or, The Home, History, Literature, and Art of the Greeks* and in 1857 a version of Kuno Fischer's *Francis Bacon of Verulam: Realistic Philosophy and its Age*. The first is comprised of the manuscripts for a series of lectures delivered by Jacobs in 1808 and 1809 to Prince Ludwig of Bavaria,[52] and the second is a summary of the doctrines contained in Bacon's treatises, *De Augmentis Scientiarum* and *De Novum Organum*. Both Jacobs' and Fischer's books are praised by Oxenford for their clarity, brevity, and comprehensiveness. He clearly feels that each is a significant work which deserves to be brought to the

attention of the average English reader.[53] In aiming his translations toward the general English public, Oxenford judiciously appended notes and references to the translations where the conciseness of the respective German author seems to assume too much knowledge on the part of the reader.[54] He also tried to make his translations readable, but in the case of the work on Francis Bacon he apparently carried his reworking so far as to alter the exact course of the original argument.[55] His version of Friedrich Jacobs' *Hellas* is, however, a translation of unusually high quality—a very accurate, faithful, and polished rendering of the original.[56]

The quality of the translations contained in the *Complete Edition of Beethoven's Songs* is much more difficult to judge. Oxenford states in his preface that he has "endeavoured to make [his] translations as literal as possible, consistently [sic] with their adaptation to music,"[57] and one must realize before attempting to criticize the many instances of loose translation and paraphrasing that these English versions are meant to be sung rather than read.[58] The volume contains English translations of seventy-six songs[59] as well as the original German texts and the music which Beethoven wrote for them. The range of poets represented is commented on by Oxenford: "Beethoven's high admiration of Göthe is fully shown by the number of pieces taken from the works of the great poet. Bürger was evidently a favourite; so also was Matthison, whose celebrity was considerable in his day. It is noteworthy that nothing is taken from Schiller or from any of the poets of the Romantic School"[60] The lyrics of these and other German poets such as Claudius, Tiedge, Gellert, and Weisse[61] probably reached a large audience of English music-lovers in Oxenford's translations. In many instances such a volume might well have provided its purchaser with a gratuitous introduction to the poetry of German, for there were no doubt many who would not otherwise have shown interest in a German lyric.

Books were not, of course, the only medium employed by Oxenford in his efforts to familiarize English readers with the works of Germany's major and minor writers. Between the years 1842 and 1855, he contributed to British periodicals at least sixty articles pertaining to Germany or German literature. Thirty-one of these articles appeared in *Ainworth's Magazine*, a popular miscellany of fiction,[62] and twenty-one in Colburn's highly respected literary periodical, the *New Monthly Magazine*.[63] Almost all of the sixty articles fall into one of three general categories: translations of German poetry; translations of German prose selections; or adaptations from German sources.

Translations of German poetry constitute the majority of Oxenford's contributions to periodical literature. Over a period of not quite fifteen years he prepared for publication thirty-six articles, containing a total of seventy German poets in English translation. Heine, Freiligrath, Grün, Lenau,

Rückert, Adelbert von Chamisso, and Friedrich von Sallet are the German poets most frequently represented in those articles.[64] Their poems are presented to English readers in generally good translations which retain the mood, rhyme scheme, and sense of the original. It appears, in fact, that Oxenford's translations introduced the work of Lenau, Sallet, and Moritz Hartmann to English readers for the first time.[65] In addition, Oxenford's 1842 translations of Grün and Freiligrath, although not the first, were certainly among the very earliest translations of these poets to have been published in England.

But Oxenford did not merely translate. His English versions of German poetry are usually introduced by short paragraphs containing background information about the poet being translated and critical comments about the work to follow.[66] As valuable as these brief commentaries are the many interesting and informative footnotes which often accompany a text. The notes elucidate certain lines or words (often by placing them in historical or cultural perspective), comment perceptively upon the poet's style, and, not infrequently, reproduce samples of the original German. Of great importance, too, are Oxenford's numerous comparisons and references to German poets and writers other than the author under discussion. His genuinely enthusiastic remarks no doubt served to stimulate interest in the field of German literature among his readers.

The critical commentaries preceding Oxenford's prose translations from the German probably had much the same effect. They concern themselves primarily with Jean Paul Friedrich Richter, as at least[67] four of Oxenford's eleven prose translations are comprised of selections from *Die unsichtbare Loge*.[68] The commentaries, which introduce translations both accurate and fluent, characteristically name the source from which the selection or selections are being taken and remark upon Jean Paul's consummate skill as a satirist. One such commentary, written by Oxenford in 1845, notes the "new interest awakening for the words of Richter"[69] and appraises the value of the various types of Jean Paul selections available to English readers:

> There is nothing novel in the notion of making selections from this author; but they have generally been more on the principle of giving aphorisms and isolated thoughts and similes, than on that of taking tolerably long episodes, descriptions, and reflections, which will here be adopted. Thus, a middle course will be pursued, between the translation of entire works—many of which, as wholes, would prove tiresome and unsatisfactory to the English reader—and the mere collections of short brilliant passages, which, while they show the wit and profundity of the man, tell nothing of his capabilities as a humorist, on which, however, much of his reputation depends.[70]

Oxenford obviously feels that his translations, although certainly not remarkable for their novelty, are nonetheless valuable additions to the body of works by Richter accessible to readers of English.

The term "novelty" is indeed applicable, however, to the adaptations from the German which Oxenford contributed to British magazines. These adaptations, eleven in number, are retellings, from Oxenford's own perspective and in his own words, of legends and stories which he had read in the original German. The degree of creativity and invention evinced by Oxenford in adapting the legends varies from article to article.[71] One article, the "Legends of Breslau,"[72] is straight-forward, dry, and unimaginative. The indigenous legends are presented to the reader very matter-of-factly, with little or no humorous commentary given by the narrator. The majority of the articles, however, including the "Legends of Salzburg"[73] and the "Legends of Gastein,"[74] are witty, tongue-in-cheek renditions of the traditional stories, aimed, at least in part, at twitting contemporary Londoners. Oxenford makes, for instance, a pointed reference in the "Legends of Salzburg" to a monk residing in that area in the sixteenth century, who "…seems to have been one of those monopolisers of conversation, whom we often find at dinner-tables, and who are jealous when a speech is directed otherwise than to themselves alone,"[75] and in the "Legends of Gastein," he notes the ironic similarities between a fifteenth-century Austrian named Weitmoser and nineteenth-century Englishmen:

> We are proud to reflect the instances of piety like that recorded of Weitmoser are not uncommon in our own country. The numerous operatives, who, provided they may have a jollification at Greenwich on Easter Monday, do not mind pawning their clothes for a whole week, seem to imitate as nearly as possible the act which gained the approbation of the good Bishop of Salzburg.[76]

Oxenford's ingenious updating of most of the legends, coupled with his clever phrasing and sly wit, greatly enhances the appeal of these adaptations. The majority of the English-reading public no doubt found them highly entertaining and palatable samplings of German culture.

A less esoteric and more profound aspect of German culture is treated in "Iconoclasm in German Philosophy,"[77] an article which Oxenford contributed to the *Westminster Review* for April, 1853. This article is unique among Oxenford's German-related periodical publications in that it is a lengthy essay, both descriptive and critical, about the body of works of a German writer rather than a translation selected from one of those works. Written at a time when Schopenhauer was little known and even less understood in

England, the essay generated a considerable amount of interest for the man and his philosophy.[78]

Even more significant than the article's effect in England, however, is the impact it had in Germany. In an article for the *Fortnightly Review*, Francis Hueffer speaks of the extent to which Schopenhauer had been neglected in his native Germany until the publication of *Pareraga and Paralipomana* in 1851 brought a certain amount of recognition. Yet he adds:

> …the attention thus created would most likely soon have subsided again had it not been for a foreign voice suddenly and loudly raised in testimony of the neglected philosopher's merits. Such voices are listened to with particular eagerness in Germany. I am alluding to a paper … published in the *Westminster Review* of April, 1853. … It may be called without exaggeration the foundation of Schopenhauer's fame, both in his own and other countries. For now suddenly the prophet was acknowledged by his people. The journals began to teem with his praise, enemies entered the arena, and were met by champions no less enthusiastic; and before long the Sage of Frankfort [*sic*] became one of the sights of that ancient and renowned city.[79]

Perhaps no one was more appreciative of this belated acclaim than Schopenhauer himself. Certainly no one had more assiduously, yet covertly,[80] sought such recognition. Schopenhauer appears to have been not only very pleased with Oxenford's article[81] but also extremely impressed with the Englishman's abilities as a translator. Four years later, Schopenhauer wrote the following in a letter to a Dr. Asher, who was preparing to translate some of the philosopher's work into English: "Als Muster und Vorbild dazu würde ich Ihnen die wenigen Seiten empfehlen, welche Oxenford, in *Westminster Review*, April 1853, so übersetzt hat, daß ich quite amazed war: nicht bloß den Sinn, sondern den Stil, meine Manieren und Gesten, zum Erstaunen: wie im Spiegel!"[82] It was he who, having been told of Oxenford's essay, wrote triumphantly to a friend: "Meine Philosophie hat soeben den Fuß in England gesetzt…"[83] and who, having subsequently read the article in English, wrote to this same friend, Ernst Otto Lindner, assistant editor of the *Vossische Zeitung*: "Die ersten 6 Seiten verdienten ganz übersetzt zu werden, ja selbst das Ganze."[84] Lindner, a warm admirer and eager advocate of the aged luminary, took the hint at once. Within three weeks Oxenford's article, translated into German by Lindner's English-born wife, appeared in the *Vossische Zeitung* under the title "Deutsche Philosophie im Auslande."[85] It was in this German version that Oxenford's writing had such an overwhelming effect upon Schopenhauer's countrymen.[86]

"Iconoclasm in German Philosophy" was not, however, the only one of Oxenford's literary efforts to find acceptance in Germany. Three of his dramas, *A Day well Spent*, *My Fellow Clerk*, and *A Quiet Day* were published there in 1838 as numbers in a series entitled *The Modern English Comic Theater*, which was intended to aid in "the study of English conversation in its present state."[87] Each went through at least three editions, and two were still in print as late as Oxenford's death in 1877. One of the three, *A Day well Spent*, was also translated into German,[88] as were the dramas *Twice Killed*[89] and *Two Orphans*.[90] The first-mentioned, *A Day well Spent*, is remarkable for more than simply having appeared in Germany in both German and English editions. This one-act farce inspired the Austrian dramatist Johann Nestroy to write his famous *Einen Jux will er sich machen* in 1842.[91] Donald Habermann succinctly notes the points at which Nestroy's play and that of his predecessor differ:

> *A Day well Spent* is a one-act play in nine scenes that has no merit whatever. The dialogue is pompous, the characters are lifeless, and the humor is without imagination. Its single virtue is that its plot with no essential changes was used by Nestroy for his play. *Einen Jux*, on the other hand, is a full four-act play that abounds with comic vitality. Nestroy has followed Oxenford's plotting, but has embellished it with social comment, songs, expanded dialogue, and one additional character.[92]

Nestroy's play, in turn, was transformed by the American playwright Thornton Wilder into a four-act farce entitled *The Merchant of Yonkers*.[93] This play, which opened in New York on December 28, 1938, was not successful, primarily because its German director, Max Reinhardt, failed to understand its special American qualities and also because the central role of Dolly Levi, which does not appear in either Oxenford's or Nestroy's play, was pathetically miscast.[94] *The Merchant of Yonkers* did find success, however, sixteen years later in a rewritten version entitled *The Matchmaker*,[95] which was itself transformed in 1964 into the musical comedy *Hello, Dolly*. Finally, in 1981 Tom Stoppard's 1981 play "On the Razzle" took its inspiration from Nestroy as well. All three works have played to highly receptive audiences over many years, on the stage and on the screen, but it's likely that few members of those audiences ever suspected Wilder's or Stoppard's indebtedness to a German source, and no doubt fewer still were cognizant of the fact that Nestroy's play can be traced to John Oxenford.[96]

Such has always been the fate of John Oxenford. His accomplishments in the field of Anglo-German literary relations have been for the most part

unrecognized, overlooked, or ignored. The present discussion has sought to remedy this neglect and has, accordingly, presented an evaluation, both quantitative and qualitative, of Oxenford's activities relating to Germany and German literature. The scope and depth of these activities mark Oxenford as a man of considerable talent and of some perception. Sparked by a keen interest in Germany and its literature, Oxenford made significant and often innovative contributions to the English public's increasing awareness of German literature and culture. His many translations rendered the original German accurately and presented the texts in a comprehensible, well-formulated English style. Moreover, some of his own original works, themselves translated into German, gained acceptance in and exerted influence on the land of his literary inspiration. John Oxenford's achievements are truly noteworthy, and the consequences of his endeavors are undeniable; his near anonymity in scholarly circles is regrettable.

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Notes

[1] Clement Scott, *The Drama of Yesterday and To-Day*, vol. II (London and New York, 1899), 474–475.

[2] "Oxenford, John," *Dictionary of National Biography* [hereafter *DNB*], eds. Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee, vol. XV (London, [1921]), 13.

[3] See also, for example, Frederich Wedmore, "Obituary: Mr. John Oxenford"); *The Academy*, XI (January–June, 1877), 194–195, and *The History of "The Times,"* vol. II ("The Tradition Established, 1841–1884"), London, 1939), 441–443.

[4] Edmund Yates (1831–1894), British novelist, dramatist, and journalist, became an intimate friend of Oxenford's in the early 1850s. His characterization of Oxenford, given on pages 307–311 on volume I of *Recollections and Experiences*, is recommended as faithful and accurate by the writers of *The History of "The Times,"* vol. I, 441; they take exception, however, to his assumption (*Recollections*, vol. I, 308–310) that the kindliness of Oxenford's reviews was officially enjoined (*History*, vol. I, 441–443).

[5] See *Times* (London), February 23, 1877, 5, col. F. Edmund Yates evaluates Oxenford's popular appeal in a like manner in *Edmund Yates: His Recollections and Experiences*, vol. I (London, 1884), 308.

[6] Klaus Stierstorfer, who provides likely the most complete and accurate published list of Oxenford's plays in *John Oxenford (1812–1877) As Farceur and Critic of Comedy* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1996), 263–270, counts 105 works with two additional possibilities. Stierstorfer does not list libretti, which are often more difficult to attribute in large part because Oxenford wrote primarily for musical adaptations of popular works translated from other languages, in which case the original author might be credited rather than Oxenford. In addition, our research has identified two dramatic works by Oxenford not included in Stierstorfer's list: *Midshipman Easy*, performed at the Surrey Theater, 26 September 1836, and *Elopement Extraordinary*, performed at Woodin's Polygraphic Hall, 21 March 1864.

[7] Yates, *Recollections and Experiences*, vol. I, 308.

[8] With the exception of Bayard Quincy Morgan and A.R. Hohlfeld, ed., *German Literature in British Magazines 1750–1860* (Madison, WI, 1949) no secondary sources, including the *DNB* and obituaries in newspapers and periodicals, mention the translations (from the German), with frequent commentary, which Oxenford contributed to *Ainsworth's Magazine* and the *New Monthly Magazine* from 1842–1855. Even Morgan/Hohlfeld indicates only the existence of the lengthier commentaries and fails to call attention to Oxenford's shorter, but equally valuable, critical notes.

[9] The categories are those of Allardyce Nicoll, *A History of English Drama 1660–1900*, 6 vols. (Cambridge, 1959).

[10] With the exception of Klaus Stierstorfer's work in the 1990s, Jaeck's article appears to be the only scholarly treatment of Oxenford.

[11] Emma Gertrude Jaeck, "John Oxenford as Translator," *JEGP*, XIII (1914), 214–237.

[12] It was Oxenford's own boast that "'none of those whom he had censured ever went home disconsolate and despairing on account of anything he had written'" (*DNB*, vol. XV, 13).

[13] Robin Humphrey Legge (*DNB*, vol. XV, 12–13) writes that Oxenford "was almost entirely self-educated, though for upwards of two years he was a pupil of S.T. Friend." It is especially interesting that Oxenford acquired Greek, Latin, and the principal modern languages (that is, German, French, Italian, and Spanish) entirely without aid (see *Times (London)*, February 23, 1877, p. 5, col. f).

[14] Oxenford is called a "devourer of books" in the obituary which appeared in the *Times (London)* on Feb. 23, 1877 (p. 5, col. f). The writer of the *Athenaeum* obituary also notes that Oxenford was deeply read in the books which a busy age is apt to neglect…." [*Atheneum* (January–June, 1877), p. 250.]

[15] *Recollections and Experiences*, vol. I, pp. 300–301.

[16] *Recollections and Experiences*, vol. I, p. 307.

[17] See note 6 above.

[18] *Times (London)*, 22 October 1866, p. 7, col. g.

[19] A translation of Goethe's *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* is attributed to Oxenford by Legge in the *DNB*, vol. XV, p. 13, and by the writer of Oxenford's obituary in the *Times (London)*, 23 February 1877, p. 5, col. f. However, there is no English version of the novel published with Oxenford named as the translator. The only possibility is an anonymous translation listed on page fifty-nine of the second edition of Eugene Oswald's "Goethe in England and America. Bibliography," in *Publications of the English Goethe Society*, vol. XI (London, 1909). Oswald's listing reads: "*ANON*. Translation executed by a 'gentleman well known in the literary world, who does not wish his name to appear.' Occupying pp. 1 to 245 in *Novels and Tales by Goethe*. L., Bohn, 1854. VI and 504 pp." Jaeck also wonders if Oxenford is the "ANON." (See Jaeck, 235).

[20] C.A. Feiling also collaborated with Oxenford (and Prof. A. Heimann) on an adaptation of J.G. Flügel's *Complete Dictionary of the German and English Languages* (London, 1857). The three worked together on another edition, "carefully corrected and revised," which was published in 1861.

[21] Feiling contributed translations of: Hauff's "The Cold Heart," "Nose, the Dwarf," and "The Severed Hand;" Adam Oehlenschlager's "Ali and Gulhyndi;" Tieck's "The Klausenburg;" van der Velde's "Axel: A Tale of the Thirty Years'War;"and Zschokke's "Alamontage."

[22] The English edition (containing seventeen items) was published in 1844 in London by Chapman & Hall. The American edition (containing eight items, including Oxenford's versions of "Libussa," "The Criminal from Lost Honour," "The Wonders in the Spessart," "The Sandman," and "Michael Kohlhaas") was published a few months later in New York by Harper & Brothers.

[23] See the *Athenaeum* (1844), 1088–1090, and *Littel's Living Age*, III (1844), 475–478.

[24] *Athenaeum* (1844), 1088.

[25] Morgan, too, while evaluating the entire collection as excellent (615), singles out Oxenford's translation of "The Criminal from Lost Honour" for individual praise (419). Morgan also separately commends Oxenford's version of Jean Paul's "The Moon" for its excellence (392).

[26] Oxenford takes care to inform the reader when the polite or formal "you" is being used and when the informal mode of address is meant.

[27] Compare, for example, Oxenford's and Holcroft's renderings of the very first sentence of the story with the original, which reads: "In der ganzen Geschichte des Menschen ist kein Kapitel unterrichtender für Herz und Geist als die Annalen seiner Verirrungen" [Schiller, *Werke*, Bd. II (Berlin und Darmstadt: Tempel-Verlag, [1962]), 289].

Oxenford, 18 (American edition): "In the whole history of man there is no chapter more instructive for the heart and mind than the annals of his errors."

Holcroft, *Tales of Humour and Romance* (London, 1829), 139: "There is not a chapter in the history of human nature, more instructive both to the heart and understanding, than that which records our errors."

[28] Oxenford is in a few instances careless in the rendering of tenses. He translates, for example, the "du spurest" on page 65 of the original text [Musaeus, *Volksmärchen der Deutschen*, 3. Bd., neue Auflage (Gotha, 1826)] as "Thou hast traced" (66). There are a few mistranslations, too: "einen Schlechten Rechner"(65) is rendered as "a bad calculation"(17).

[29] Compare, for example, Oxenford's and Carlyle's translations with page 5 of the original, which reads: "Tief um Böhmer Walde, wovon jetzt nur ein Schatten übrig ist, wohnte, vor Zeiten, da er sich noch weit und breit ins Land erstreckte, ein geistiges Völklein, lichtscheu und luftig, auch unkörperlich…."

Oxenford, 3 (American Edition): "Deep in the Bohemian forest, of which now only a shadow remains, dwelt years ago, when it spread itself far and wide into the country, a little spiritual people, aerial, uncorporeal, and shunning the light…."

Carlyle, *German Romance*, vol. I (Boston, 1841), 87: "Deep in the Bohemian forest, which has now dwindled to a few scattered woodlands, there abode, in the primeval times, while it stretched its umbrage far and wide, a spiritual race of beings, airy and avoiding light, incorporeal also…."

[30] *Athenaeum* (1844), 1088.

[31] In comparison to a more modern translation, Oxenford's version seems to be stiff and too close to the original. Compare Oxenford's translation of the phrase "…mein holdes Engelsbild, so tief in Herz and Sinn geprägt" [E.T.A. Hoffmann, *Ausgewählte Schriften*, 5. Bd., „Nachtstücke") Berlin, 1827), 1] with a modern rendering:

Oxenford, 67 (American edition): "… the fair angel-image that is so deeply imprinted in my heart and mind."J.T. Bealby, "The Sand-Man" in *The Best Tales of Hoffmann*, ed. E.F. Bleiler (New York, 1967), 183: …my sweet angel, whose image is so deeply engraved upon my heart and mind."

[32] Similarly, Oxenford's translations of Hoffmann's "The Elementary Spirit" and "The Jesuits' Church in G—" seem to have been the first English translations of these particular tales.

[33] This seems to have been among the first appearances of this tale in English translation.

[34] Oxenford's introductory note reads: "The story is probably meant to satirize the speculative tendency of the Germans, and old Albertus Magnus seems a sort of representative of Hegel, whom Immermann openly attacks in the course of the 'Münchhausen.' To me the expression 'dialectic thought,' which occurs in the Hegelian sense at page 41, is conclusive in this respect."

[35] Oxenford's translation of "Michael Kohlhaas" (and of "St. Cecilia; or, the Power of Music" which is included in the English edition) is the very first Kleist translation listed in

Morgan, Morgan/Hohlfeld, and Scott Holland Goodnight, *German Literature in American Magazines Prior to 1846* (Madison, Wisconsin, 1907). The *Athenaeum* reviewer's statement that "… this powerful tale ["Michael Kohlhaas"] is almost unknown in England…" (1844, 1088) seems to corroborate the assumption.

[36] Oxenford prefaces his translation thus: "on one point the translator of this tale solicits the indulgence of his critical readers. A great number of official names and legal terms occur, the technical meaning of which could not properly be defined by any one but a German jurist. As these names have no exact equivalents in English, the names into which they are here translated may appear arbitrary. The translator can only say that, where exactitude was impossible, he has done his best" (79). He proceeds thereafter to footnote and explain his translations of the various names and terms.

[37] Parke Godwin, ed., *The Auto-Biography of Goethe. Truth and Poetry: From My Life*, Part I (London, 1847), ix.

[38] In the "Advertisement" to *The Auto-Biography of Goethe. Truth and Poetry: From My Own Life* (London, 1848), iii, Oxenford makes the following comments about Parke Godwin's translation: "Before the following translation was commenced, the first Ten Books had already appeared in America. It was the intention of the Publisher to reprint these without alteration, but, on comparing them with the original, it was perceived that the American version was not sufficiently faithful, and therefore the present was undertaken.

[39] Oxenford, "Advertisement," iii.

[40] Compare, for example, the Oxenford and Godwin/John Henry Hopkins, Jr. translation of these two sentences from Book VI: "… er hatte eine Hofmeisterstelle in einem befreundeten Hause bekleidet, sein bisheriger Zögling war allein auf die Akademie gegangen. Er besuchte mich öfters in meiner traurigen Lage, und man fand zuletzt nichts natürlicher, als ihm ein Zimmer neben dem meinigen einzuräumen: da er mich denn beschäftigen, beruhigen und, wie ich wohl merken konnte, im Auge behalten sollte." [*Goethes Werke*, 27. Bd. (Weimar, 1889), 5–6.]

Godwin/Hopkins, 1847 London reprint, 2: "He had been a tutor in the family of one of our friends, though his former pupil had gone to the University without him. He often visited me in my sad condition, and they found nothing more natural at last than to give him a chamber next to mine, where he could keep me busy, quiet, and as I plainly marked, have his eye upon."

Oxenford, 181: "He had held the place of tutor in the family of one of our friends; and his former pupil had gone alone to the university. He often visited me in my sad condition, and they at least found nothing more natural than to give him a chamber next to mine, as he was then to employ me, pacify me, and, as I marked, keep his eye on me."

Although a single example may offer no more conclusive proof of the quality of Oxenford's translations than Jaeck's few random examples do of her contention that the translations are faulty, it is significant that random examples of instances in which Oxenford's translation is superior to Godwin's are numerous and easy to identify.

[41] *Westminster Review*, LII (Oct. 1849–Jan. 1850), 606 (A review of Bohn's Standard Library).

[42] *Spectator*, XXI (1848), 1192. Contemporary critical evaluation of the translation is much the same in tenor. Morgan, 155, gives Oxenford a "**" rating, which signifies that it is a translation of unusually high quality.

[43] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *The Autobiography of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*. Translated by John Oxenford. New York: Horizon Press [1969].

[44] *Spectator*, XXIII (1850), 1192. For other favorable reviews plus extracts, see the *New Monthly Magazine*, XCI (1851), 256–259, and the *Dublin University Magazine*, XXXVII (1851), 732–749.Another highly favorable evaluation of Oxenford's skill in translating the conversations, although not contained in the review appearing shortly after the publication of

the work, is that given by the over-enthusiastic writer of Oxenford's obituary in the *Athenaeum* (1877), 258, who calls the translation "a work with qualities of style superior to the original."

A modern, critical evaluation, that given by Morgan, 175 ("Excellent translation on the whole"), is also favorable.

[45] *Literary Gazette*, XXXIII (1851), 62.

[46] *Athenaeum* (1850), 1338–1339.

[47] *Athenaeum* (1850), 1338.

[48] *Dublin University Magazine*, XXXVII (1851), 746–747. Oxenford gives an explanation of his arrangement of the conversations in the "Translator's Preface" to *Conversations of Goethe with Eckermann and Soret* (London, 1850), V:

In 1836, John Peter Eckermann, who gives a full account of himself in the 'Introduction,' published, in two volumes, his "Conversations with Goethe." In 1848, he published a third volume, containing additional Conversations, which he compiled from his own notes, and from that of another friend of Goethe's, M. Soret, of whom there is a short account in the 'Preface to the Third or Supplemental Volume.' Both these works are dedicated to Her Imperial Highness Maria Paulouna, Grand Duchess of Saxe-Weimar and Eisenach.

Had I followed the order of German publication, I should have placed the whole of the Supplementary Volume after the contents of the first two; however, as the Conversations in that volume are not of a later date than the others (which, indeed, terminate with the death of Goethe), but merely supply gaps, I deemed it more conducive to the reader's convenience to rearrange in chronological order the whole of the Conversations, as if the Supplement had not been published separately.

Still, to preserve a distinction between the Conversations of the First Book and those of the Supplement, I have marked the latter with the abbreviation 'Sup.,' adding an asterisk (thus Sup.*) when a Conversation has been furnished, not by Eckermann, but by Soret."

[49] "Complete" is the adjective most frequently used by the reviewers themselves. Oxenford's translation is not, however, entirely complete. Catering to the contemporaries of Queen Victoria, Oxenford omitted two passages (supposedly too risqué to be printed) from the Eckermann part—those dated July 9, 1827, and February 20, 1829—and others from the Soret selections. See the "Editor's Preface" to Eckermann, *Conversations with Goethe*, ed J.K. Moorhead (London and New York, [1935]).

[50] Oxenford, "Translator's Preface," vi. Oxenford writes: "I feel bound to state that, while translating the First Book I have had before me the translation by Mrs. Fuller, published in America. The great merit of this version I willingly acknowledge, though the frequent omissions render it almost an abridgement."

Again, Oxenford seems to have borrowed very selectively from the work of his predecessor. Oxenford's version is usually slightly closer to the meaning of the original German, although it is at the same time stiffer and less facile than Mrs. Fuller's translation.

Compare, for example, the Fuller and Oxenford translations of the following passage (dated Weimar, Dienstag, den 10. Juni 1823): "Vor wenigen Tagen bin ich angekommen; heute war ich zuerst bei Goethe. Der Empfang seinerseits war überaus herzlich, und der Eindruck seiner Person auf mich der Art, daß ich diesen Tag zu den glücklichsten meines Lebens rechne.

Er hatte mir gestern, als ich anfragen ließ, diesen Mittag zu zwölf Uhr als die Zeit bestimmt, wo ich ihm willkommen sein würde. Ich ging also zur gedachten Stunde hin, und fand den Bedienten auch bereits meiner wartend und sich anschickend mich hinaufzuführen." [Johann Peter Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe*, 1. Theil (Leipzig, 1899), 27.]

S.M. Fuller, *Conversations of Goethe* (Boston, 1839), 30: "I arrived here some days since, but did not see Goethe till to-day. He received me with great cordiality; and the impression he made on me during our interview was such, that I consider this day as the happiest of my life.

Yesterday, when I called to inquire, he said he should be glad to see me to-day, at twelve o'clock. I went at the appointed time, and found a servant waiting to conduct me to him."

Oxenford, 1850 ed., 9.: "I arrived here a few days ago, but did not see Goethe till to-day. He received me with great cordiality; and the impression he made on me was such, that I consider this day as one of the happiest in my life.

Yesterday, when I called to inquire, he fixed to-day at twelve o'clock as the time when he would be glad to see me. I went at the appointed time, and found a servant waiting for me, preparing to conduct me to him."

[51] Oxenford himself states in the "Translator's Preface" on page vi of the 1850 edition: "The contents of the Supplementary Volume are now, I believe, published for the first time in the English language."

[52] Oxenford gives a capsule summary of the book and its genesis in the "Translator's Preface" to Jacobs' *Hellas* (London, 1855), v.: "In 1808, Friedrich Jacobs, the celebrated philologist of Gotha, was requested by Prince (afterwards King) Louis of Bavaria, to deliver in his presence a series of lectures on Greek history and literature. The lectures were commenced and continued till April, 1809, whence the Prince was called to the army, and the course of oral instruction was broken off, never to be resumed. The manuscript lectures, however, containing a brief though comprehensive survey of the geography, history, literature and art of the ancient Greeks, were found among Jacobs' posthumous works. These were revised and edited, in 1853, by Professor E.F. Wüstemann, the editor of Theocritus, with the title of *Hellas*. Of the work so composed the present volume is a translation."

[53] Oxenford states in the "Translator's Preface" to Jacobs' *Hellas*, vii, that his book is "is intended for general readers," and on pages vi–vii of the "Translator's Preface" to Fischer's *Francis Bacon*, he notes that this English version is meant for "the generality of readers."

[54] See "Translator's Preface" to Jacobs' *Hellas*, vii, and "Translator's Preface" to Fischer's *Francis Bacon*, pages vi and vii.

[55] Oxenford states on page vi of the "Translator's Preface" to Fischer's *Francis Bacon*: "In performing the work of translation, I have endeavoured, as much as possible, to make my version *readable*," and on pages vi–vii: "I have, therefore, endeavoured to render sentence for sentence rather than word for word, certain that I should thus render a greater service to the generality of readers than by encumbering the text with a number of strange compounds, utterly at variance with the genius of the English language."

Morgen, 115, gives the translation a grade of somewhere between B and C and comments that the exact course of the argument in the original is not faithfully reproduced.

[56] Morgan, 253, calls the translation excellent and singles it out for being of unusually high quality. Oxenford seems to have successfully carried out his avowed purpose of making his translation of Hellas "as faithful to the original as possible" ("Translator's Preface," vi).

[57] "Preface" to the *Complete Edition of Beethoven's Songs* (London and New York, [1878], [iii]).

[58] A good example of the liberties which Oxenford took with the original poem is his rendering of Klärchen's song from *Egmont*:

Beethoven: "Freudvoll und leidvoll, gedankenvoll sein; Langen und bangen in schwebender Pein; Himmelhoch jauchzend, zum Tode betrübt; Glücklich allein ist die Seele, die liebt."

Oxenford: "Cheerful and tearful, and pensive to be; Never from care and anxiety free; Madly rejoicing, compell'd now to moan, Lovers live thus and are happy alone…" (241–243).

[59] Seven of these songs are translated by George Linley rather than Oxenford.

[60] "Preface," [iii].

[61] The volume includes Oxenford's translations of the poems of: S. v. Breuning, Bürger (4), Claudius, Friedelberg (2), Gellert (6), J. Göbel, Göthe (15), Count v. Haugwitz, Herder (Posthumous), F.F. Hermann, Herrosee, F.A. Kleinschmid, Carl Lappe, Lessing, Matthisson (3), Sophie Mereau, C.L Reissig (6), J.B. Rupprecht, J.L. Stoll (2), Tiedge (2), F. Treitschke, H.W.F. Ültzen, C.F. Weisse (2), and Wessenberg.

[62] See Walter Graham, *English Literary Periodicals* (New York, 1966), 299. Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader* (Chicago [1957]), 394, lists the circulation of the magazine during its first year of publication (1842) at 7000.

[63] See Graham, 285–286. Altick, 393, lists 5,000 as the circulation for the *New Monthly Magazine* in 1830. No figures are given for the years when Oxenford's articles appeared (1845–1853).

[64] Other German poets translated by Oxenford include: Oscar von Sydow, Gustav Schwab, J.G. Seidl, Karl Simrock, Ludwig Bechstein, Edward Mautner, Alfred Meissner, Ferdinand Massmann, Klopstock, Halm, Gleim, Herder, A. v. Arnim, Tieck, Zacharias Lund, Moritz Hartmann, and Heinrich Smidt.

[65] Oxenford also appears to have been the first to translate the poems of such lesser-known poets as Oscar von Sydow, J.G. Seidl, Edward Mautner, Alfred Meissner, and Heinrich Smidt into English.

[66] When such introductory paragraphs are lacking, the information usually contained in them is often found instead in the many footnotes appended to the text.

[67] Four out of the total of nine articles which contain prose translations of Jean Paul were unavailable. Of the five consulted, four presented selections from *Die unsichtbare Loge*.

[68] Oxenford's articles devoted to prose translations include—in addition to nine Jean Paul articles—a direct translation of a German legend and the first English translations from Bechstein's collection of legends and traditions to appear in British periodicals.

[69] John Oxenford, "Selections from Jean Paul Friedrich Richter, "*Ainsworth's Magazine*, VII (1845), 536.

[70] *Ainsworth's Magazine*, VII (1845), 536.

[71] Oxenford stresses (in the "Legends of Leubus") that he does not alter the facts of the legends, that the novelty of his versions lies only in the style in which the facts are retold: "But we *find* our legends, good reader, we do not *make* them; and though we please ourselves as far as concerns the way in which we tell them, we do not venture to alter the facts …. "[*New Monthly Magazine*, LXXXVI (1849), 464.]

[72] John Oxenford, "Legends of Breslau," *New Monthly Magazine*, LXXXV (1849), 21–27.

[73] John Oxenford, "Legends of Salzburg," *New Monthly Magazine*, "Legends of Breslau," *New Monthly Magazine*, LXXXV (1848), 59–63.

[74] John Oxenford, "Legends of Gastein," *New Monthly Magazine*, LXXXII (1848), 316–319.

[75] *New Monthly Magazine*, LXXXII (1848), 60.

[76] *New Monthly Magazine*, LXXXII (1848), 317.

[77] "Iconoclasm in German Philosophy," *Westminster Review*, LIX (January–April 1853), 388–407. The article was unsigned. It was not until almost three years after it had first appeared that Schopenhauer learned that the author was John Oxenford. See Arthur Schopenhauer, *Der Briefwechsel Arthur Schopenhauers*, ed. Arthur Hübscher, 2. Bd. (1849–1860) (München, 1933), p. 478. [Letter from Schopenhauer to Frauenstadt, dated March 21, 1856.]

[78] *DNB*, vol. XV, 13.

[79] F. Hueffer, "Arthur Schopenhauer," *Fortnightly Review* (December 1, 1876), 785.

[80] Schopenhauer to Lindner, June 9, 1853, in Arthur Schopenhauer, der *Briefwechsel Arthur Schopenhauers (München, 1933)*, 2. Bd., 214.

[81] Schopenhauer to Lindner, May 9, 1853, *Briefwechsel*, 2. Bd., 208: "Der Artikel hat mir großes Vergnügen gemacht und habe ich ihn 3 Mal gelesen. ….Die Wärme des Mannes ist auffallend…."

[82] Schopenhauer to David Asher, October 22, 1857, *Briefwechsel*, 2. Bd., 590.

[83] Schopenhauer to Lindner, April 27, 1853, *Briefwechsel*, 2. Bd., 209.

[84] Schopenhauer to Lindner, May 9, 1853, *Briefwechsel*, 2. Bd., 209.

[85] Wilhelm von Gwinner, *Schopenhauers Leben*, 3rd ed. (Leipzig, 1910), 348.

[86] Gwinner, 350.

[87] See Wilhelm Heinsius, *Allgemeines Bücher-Lexikon*, 10. Bd. (Leipzig, 1848; reprinted Graz, 1963), 333.

[88] See the *DNB*, vol. XV, 13. Neither Christian Gottlob Kayser, *Vollständiges Bücher-Lexicon*, Bd. 7–Bd. 30 (Leipzig, 1841–1900) nor Heinsius, Bd. 10–Bd. 16 (Leipzig 1848–1887), mention the publication of a German translation of the play but the fact that Nestroy was familiar with the work seems to indicate that a German translation of the work was available.

[89] Neither Kayser nor Heinsius mention a published German translation of the drama. However, the *DNB*, vol. XV, 13; *The Annual Register for 1877*, 138; and *The Times* obituary, February 23, 1877, p. 5, col. f., all state that the drama was translated for the German stage and played in Germany or Austria.

[90] See John Oxenford, *Die beiden Waisen*, Drama in 8 Bildern und 6 Akten aus dem Englischen (Budapest, 1877).

[91] Robert F. Arnold writes: "Zu den ganz wenigen Possen des berühmten Wieners, für deren Handlung ein erzählendes oder schon gleich dramatisches Vorbild sich bisher nicht hat nachweisen lassen, gehört das unverwüstliche ‚Einen Jux will er sich machen'; eine zeitgenössische Kritik hob es ausdrücklich als Original hervor und noch Rommels ausgezeichnete Nestroy-Ausgabe (Bong, S. LI) läßt die Frage, ob die nur von Max Ring ('Erinnerung' 1898) II, S. 188) behauptete Abhängigkeit von einem englischen Schwank bestehe, offen."

[92] Donald Habermann, *The Plays of Thornton Wilder, A Critical Study* (Middletown, CN, [1967], 22.

[93] The copyright page of *The Merchant of Yonkers* (New York and London, [1939]) carries the following note: "This play is based upon a comedy by Johann Nestroy, Einen Jux will er sich Machen [sic] (Vienna, 1842) which was in turn based upon an English original, A Well Spent Day [sic], by John Oxenford."

[94] See Habermann, 22–23.

[95] Wilder comments upon the relation of this play to its German predecessor in the preface to Thornton Wilder, *Three Plays* (New York: Bantam, 1966), xi–xii: "I have already read small theses in German comparing it [*The Matchmaker*] with the great Austrian original on which it is based. The scholars are very bewildered. There is most of the plot (except that our friend Dolly Levi is not in Nestroy's play); there are some of the tags; but it's all 'about' quite different matters. My play is about the aspirations of the young (and not only of the young) for a fuller, freer participation in life. Imagine an Austrian pharmacist going to the shelf to draw from a bottle which he knows to contain a stinging corrosive liquid, guaranteed to remove warts and wens; and imagine his surprise when he discovers that it has been filled overnight with very American birch-bark beer."

[96] For a more detailed discussion see Klaus Stiersdorfer, Oxenfords *A Day Well spent* als Quelle von Nestroys Jux: eine Neubewertung. *Nestroyana* 16 (1996), S. 100–111, and Michael Mitchell and Brian Murdoch, "Wer kennt heute noch John Oxenford? The Fortunes of a Farce from Nestroy to Stoppard," in *Studies in Nineteenth Century Austrian Literature*. Glasgow 1983. S. 59–76.