

WILLIAM KURRELMMEYER:
GERMAN-AMERICAN 1874-1957

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Historians who have written about the Baltimore Germans have told us much about the achievements of politicians, business men, scientists, artists and musicians, but in their accounts one finds little about the contributions of the scholars who taught and wrote about German literature and trained teachers of German. In view of the vastness of the task of reporting on the activities of the German-Americans it is perhaps not surprising that this gap still exists. It is doubtless even less surprising that it should exist in the Middle Atlantic region, which the historian Richard H. Shryock referred to as late as 1943 as a "forgotten region."¹ To report on one of the great early scholars of German literature in Baltimore is the purpose of this paper, which will offer a brief account of William Kurrelmeyer's contributions to the intellectual life of Baltimore through his work as a scholar and a teacher at The Johns Hopkins University, his participation in the activities of the German community of Baltimore, and his years of service to our own Society for the History of the Germans in Maryland, of which he was president from 1937 to 1952, a period which included the extremely trying years of World War II.

William Kurrelmeyer was born in Osnabrück in Westphalia on January 17, 1874, which was also the birthyear of Winston Churchill, Herbert Hoover, German Bestelmeyer, the architect who designed some of the buildings of the University of Munich, Arnold Schönberg, the inventor of the twelve-tone scale, the chemist Karl Bosch, who later won a Nobel Prize, and Guglielmo Marconi, the inventor of wireless telegraphy. Kurrelmeyer's mother brought him to America when he was a child of eight. He thus began his new life in Baltimore in 1882, the year Ralph Waldo Emerson died. After he had completed his elementary education he attended City College, whose faculty was excellent. It included at that time a distinguished member of our Society, Charles F. Raddatz, who was Chairman of the Department of German. In him young Kurrelmeyer came to know a highly cultured man with a good reputation as a philologist who counted among his close friends Basil Gildersleeve and Sidney Lanier.² He may well have been an important early influence on the young scholar.

In the fall of 1893, the black year of the great panic, Kurrelmeyer matriculated at the new Johns Hopkins University, which was then two years younger than he was. Many of the original faculty were still teaching at the University, and for both undergraduates and graduates it was an exciting and stimulating place to work. The small number of undergraduates admitted were chosen on the basis of scholarly promise and the ability to work independently. Requirements were rigorous, and the students were expected to complete them in three years. Kurrelmeyer did. Although he was a serious student and worked hard, he also took time for extra-curricular activities, going out for track and also playing baseball, a sport which he continued to love throughout his life.

In the year in which Kurrelmeyer received his A. B. degree, 1896, he doubtless read the accounts in the *Baltimore Sun* of the events in world history that happened that year: Henri Becquerel's discovery of the radio-activity of Uranium, the death of Alfred Nobel, the first Olympic games in modern times in Athens. At the university he certainly heard of the première of Gerhart Hauptmann's *Die versunkene Glocke* which signalled the breakthrough of symbolism in the German drama.

In the section of the class yearbook where brief profiles of the members of the graduating class are given one finds under Kurrelmeyer's name two citations attributed to Shakespeare:

One may smile and smile and be a villain. (Hamlet)
Oh! he sits high in all the people's hearts. (Julius Caesar)

What prompted the editors to choose these verses we cannot know, but they are apt in at least two ways for the man as well as for the youth. The first may have been suggested by Kurrelmeyer's north German reserve which made him difficult to know. Those who penetrated his reserve and came to know him, however, never fail to speak of his warmth, which may well have inspired the second citation, for he sat high in the hearts of his friends.³

Accounts of the early years of the Johns Hopkins University contain relatively little information about the Department of German which Kurrelmeyer entered as a graduate student in the fall of 1896. One reason is that unlike some other departments it had not been staffed with famous scholars. In those days, we must remember, modern languages were still overshadowed by the classical languages, so ably represented at Hopkins by Basil Gildersleeve, and by the Near Eastern Languages, which were then being taught at Hopkins by the world-renowned Semitic scholar and Assyriologist, Paul Haupt, whom President Gilman had invited to Hopkins from the University of Leipzig in 1883.⁴ Through the publications of Kurrelmeyer's dissertation director, Henry Wood, however, the Department of German was beginning to acquire a reputation for excellence in this country and abroad, and its luster was soon to be further enhanced by the addition of Kurrelmeyer to its staff.

Like many young scholars of his generation, Kurrelmeyer wrote his dissertation on a philological topic, selecting as his problem the historical development of the types of the first person plural imperative in German.⁵ His monograph reflects the solid philological training and widely ranging philological knowledge that made him one of the leading philologists of his day and also the careful attention to detail which made him a first rate text-scholar. What drew him to the topic, on the other hand, was his curiosity about the historical evolution of linguistic forms which was later expressed in his work as an etymologist and lexicographer.

In 1899, the year he received his Ph.D. degree Kurrelmeyer was appointed Professor of German at Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. A year later, however, he was called back to Hopkins and never left again. His association with the University as student, teacher, and scholar extended over a period of fifty-four years, almost two-thirds of his life.

In 1902 Kurrelmeyer married his childhood sweetheart Carrie Herrmann of Baltimore in a double wedding ceremony in the home of his friend and Hopkins colleague Pastor Julius Hofmann of the Zionskirche. The groom who had been a student of Paul Haupt, was a colleague in the Oriental Seminary, and the bride was the daughter of a former member of the

household staff of Mathilde Wesendonk, with whom Richard Wagner fell in love while living in the little house next to the Wesendonk villa in Zurich which Otto Wesendonk had placed at his disposal, and for whom he wrote the famous song-cycle known as the *Wesendonk-Lieder*.

Pastor Hofmann was Kurrelmeyer's colleague at Hopkins for a brief period only, but remained a colleague in the sense that as Director of the German School of the Zionskirche, which Pastor Scheib had founded in 1836, he maintained a lively interest in the teaching of German. Under his direction the school grew into a full-fledged school which offered classes in German in all subjects five days a week. Thanks largely to the esteem in which Pastor Hofmann was held, the German school of the Zionskirche was the only German school in the City of Baltimore which did not have to close its doors when the war broke out between the United States and Germany in 1917.

Carrie Kurrelmeyer, as many members of the society still recall, was an accomplished pianist. Many may not remember, however, that at the time of her marriage she had been teaching music in the Baltimore schools since she was sixteen. The year before her marriage she was appointed Superintendent of Music Education in the schools of Baltimore City, but in accordance with regulations then in force she had to give up this position when she married.

Kurrelmeyer himself did not play an instrument, but the Kurrelmeys were a musical family, and both Carrie-May and Bernhard learned to play the piano. The family subscribed regularly to concert series in Baltimore and were close friends of Gustav Strube, the Conductor of the Baltimore Symphony, who had daughters the age of Carrie-May and Bernhard. The Kurrelmeys rarely missed the opera seasons in Munich and Salzburg which they visited almost every summer during the time that Kurrelmeyer was actively engaged in scholarly research in libraries and archives in Germany.

Taylor Starck, who was Kurrelmeyer's student during both his undergraduate and his graduate years, remembered Kurrelmeyer as a strict, demanding teacher who was able to get his students to do their best because they knew that he set the same high standards for himself. In his own career at Harvard later, Taylor Starck sought to develop with his graduate students the kind of sympathetic, but unsentimental relationship which made Kurrelmeyer so successful in his rapports with his students.

Kurrelmeyer regularly invited his students to his home in Ellicott City and later on Linden Avenue, and the invitation, as Taylor Starck recalls, always meant to come for lunch and stay for the afternoon. Invariably during the visit Kurrelmeyer would show his visitors some of the new books in his library. "Just see what came today," he would say, taking a volume or a set of books from the shelf; and if, as often happened, the students did not know the work in question, an impromptu lecture would follow from which those fortunate enough to hear it acquired bibliographic as well as scholarly information.

Few Germanists had a knowledge of books comparable to Kurrelmeyer's, and even fewer were as shrewd as he in buying books. When he began teaching at Hopkins the university library was, of course, far from what it is today. It was then the custom for members of the faculty to acquire private libraries for their scholarly work, and most of them allowed their students to use their books for their research work. What we know today as the "Kurrelmeyer Collection" originated as the working library of a scholar. In assembling it, Kurrelmeyer had from the beginning two aims

in mind. The first was to acquire primary and secondary sources essential for his own and his students' research work. The second was to supplement the German holdings of the Hopkins University Library by bequeathing his collection to the University.

When the Kurrelmeyer library was presented to Hopkins by the Kurrelmeyer family in 1957, the German holdings of the University's new Milton Stover Eisenhower Library were strengthened by eleven thousand titles. All major and minor German writers from the late seventeenth to early twentieth century were represented, and the collection also contained complete runs of several important eighteenth and nineteenth century periodicals. Since many of the titles, such as the Wieland and Goethe editions and some of the periodicals represent sets of several volumes, the actual number of volumes was approximately twenty-five thousand. With the collection came as well sixteen hundred and fourteen manuscripts, many from the pens of the authors represented in the library. Twenty-three of these manuscripts are poems; seventeen are longer works, including critical treatises and manuscripts of stories; and one is an opera libretto which is an early work of the mid-nineteenth century writer Otto Ludwig with whose name we associate the German variety of realism usually referred to as "poetischer Realismus." My colleague Lieselotte Kurth and I published a catalogue of the manuscripts in the *Jahrbuch der deutschen Schiller-Gesellschaft* in 1967 (Vol. **XI**, pp. 614-630), and soon after its appearance inquiries began arriving from scholars in this country and abroad who had been unaware of the existence of some of the manuscripts.

Among the letters in the collection are several long series from Karl Gutzkow, Friedrich Gerstäcker, Friedrich von Bodenstedt, Luise Mühlbach, and Paul Heyse to their publisher Hermann Costenoble in Jena. When Lieselotte Kurth and I decided to publish these letters we discovered that the archives of the Costenoble firm had been among the many destroyed during World War II, and also that the letters owned by Hopkins were totally unknown in Germany. To date we have published the correspondence of Gutzkow, Gerstäcker, and Bodenstedt, and we are currently working on the Mühlbach letters.

While the letters of Gutzkow, Gerstäcker, Mühlbach, and Bodenstedt to Costenoble deal mainly with contracts, honoraria, printing, make-up, publication time-tables, and promotion, as one would expect of letters to a publisher, they also touch on personal matters and are at times chatty and even gossipy. Bodenstedt, for example, is a real namedropper. Collectively they are accordingly a source of information about political and social events, such as the War of 1870, and about contemporary literary and cultural life as viewed by leading writers of the time. Since they are primarily business letters, however, we published them in the *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens*, which was founded in 1956 for the purpose of publishing documents, articles, and monographs relating to the history of publication in Germany.⁶

The monetary value of Kurrelmeyer's books and manuscripts was considerable even before World War II, and because of the widespread destruction of archives and libraries in Germany during the war, the value of the collection appreciated greatly. Some items are available nowhere outside of Baltimore and are kept with the Library's rare books. When the *Berliner Akademie der Wissenschaften* was preparing its critical edition of Goethe's works, for example, the editors discovered that the only copy of Volume **IV** of one of the editions they needed was in the Eisenhower Library.

When I spoke to the Baltimore Bibliophiles about the Kurrelmeyer collection, Elizabeth Baer, the Secretary of the Evergreen Foundation, kindly prepared an exhibit of some of the rare items. Among the books displayed was the first printing of Martin Luther's translation of the New Testament from Erasmus's critical edition of the Greek text. This is the so-called "Septemberbibel" which Kurrelmeyer acquired while working on his first major scholarly project, his critical edition of the first printed German Bible, most often referred to as the "Mentelbibel" because it was printed by Johann Mentel in Straßburg in 1466, seventeen years before Luther's birth and fifty-one years before the beginning of the Reformation. Scholars working on the history of the German language had early recognized the philological importance of Luther's Bible translations, but in the course of the nineteenth century historians of the German language came to realize that the pre-Lutheran translations, of which there are thirteen in all, had also had an impact on the formation of literary German and were hence also indispensable sources for German philological studies. Reliable critical editions of the pre-Lutheran translations were, however, unavailable. The invitation to prepare the critical edition of the first German Bible was extended to William Kurrelmeyer around the turn of the century by Eberhard Nestle, who was Professor of Theology at the University of Tübingen, and who had been impressed by Kurrelmeyer's publications. The preparation of the edition, which involved collating all existing printed versions of the pre-Lutheran Bible with the earliest translation and recording the variants, required in all twelve years of painstaking editorial work. Kurrelmeyer actually began work on the project during his wedding trip. In six weeks he copied the entire New Testament from the Wernigerode New Testament, making ten carbon copies, which the young bride separated and collated for him, thus proving from the very beginning of their married life that she could be in every way, a help-mate.

Preparing the edition was a gargantuan task which Kurrelmeyer was able to accomplish because he was dedicated to scholarship and believed in its significance, because he had the capacity to work in a sustained manner, and also because he was a highly disciplined worker who knew how to use time efficiently. As his daughter puts it, he got up and went to bed with the chickens. By rising at five-thirty he could devote several hours to scholarly work before his classes began later in the day. Gradually the edition grew page by page over a countless numbers of days whose freshest hours were set apart for scholarship.

While working on this project Kurrelmeyer collected several Bibles and was for a time even possessor of a genuine *Mentelbibel*, which he acquired under unusual circumstances. Since the New York Public Library had a copy of the *Mentelbibel*, Kurrelmeyer had a habit of spending Saturdays in New York City. One Saturday when he arrived at the library, early in the morning as usual, one of the librarians, also a bibliophile, asked him what in the world he was doing in New York when a *Mentelbibel* was being sold at auction that day in Philadelphia. Upon hearing this news Kurrelmeyer immediately left the library and boarded the next train for Philadelphia, arriving at the auction just as the *Mentelbibel* was being offered for bidding. Looking at it, he noticed that the first three pages were missing and asked the auctioneer to show him the title page. He was aware, but the auctioneer was not, that early printings often had instead of a title page a colophon at the end with information relevant to the production of the book. Thanks to his expertise Kurrelmeyer got the *Mentelbibel* for the incredible sum of sixty dollars and later simply

had the three missing pages photographed. For years, I am told, the instructions in the Kurrelmeyer household were that in case of fire the first thing to be saved was the *Mentelbibel*. Several years after he had acquired it, Kurrelmeyer sold his *Mentelbibel* to a scholar in Germany who needed it, and even then it brought nine hundred dollars.

The Kurrelmeyer Bibles were an impressive addition to the Hopkins collection in Evergreen House, which is now one of the finest in the United States. Even before his own Bibles were added, however, he was instrumental in enhancing the collection's importance. For it was he who as Pastor Julius Hofmann's literary executor persuaded Henry G. Hilken, then German Consul in Baltimore, to give Hopkins the money to purchase the Hofmann Bible collection when Pastor Hofmann died in 1928. To appreciate the significance of the Hofmann collection one need only look in the catalogue of the Eisenhower Library under "German Bibles."

Kurrelmeyer's edition of the first printed German Bible, ten volumes in all, appeared at regular intervals between 1904 and 1915 in the prestigious series of the *Stuttgarter literarischer Verein* in Stuttgart. Volume ten almost became a war casualty when the ship carrying it to the United States in 1915 was torpedoed by a German submarine. Fortunately the ship was able to make port even though it was damaged. Evidence of the world-wide recognition accorded the edition is that the first order was placed by the Vatican.

Long before the manuscript of the last volume of the Bible-edition had gone off to Stuttgart, Kurrelmeyer had embarked upon another project which was to add considerably to his growing reputation as a scholar, his study of "Doppeldrucke." Technically "Doppeldruck" means a page printed on both sides, but Kurrelmeyer used the term in a special way to designate a particular kind of unauthorized printings which were widespread in the eighteenth century. The difference between the "Doppeldrucke" studied by Kurrelmeyer and "Nachdrucke,"—the term used in German for pirated editions,—is that the former were unauthorized editions by authorized publishers, whereas "Nachdrucke" were unauthorized editions by unauthorized publishers.⁷ "Doppeldrucke" doubtless occurred as frequently as they did in the eighteenth century because of the manner in which contracts were made. Authors and publishers usually agreed on a fixed number of copies to be printed, and for these the publisher paid a lump sum. When an edition was exhausted a new contract was drawn up. Because of this arrangement publishers could and did reprint secretly in order to make additional profit. The "Doppeldrucke" that thus came into circulation are an important concern of the text scholar because they contain printing errors that were never corrected because no proofs were submitted to the author.

Kurrelmeyer became seriously concerned with "Doppeldrucke" when he discovered that Michael Bernays, who had first called attention to their existence in connection with Goethe's works several years earlier, had treated them only superficially.⁸ For his own work Kurrelmeyer began collecting editions of Wieland, Klopstock, Goethe, Schiller, and other eighteenth century writers and also examined editions of their works in libraries in this country and abroad. He began with Goethe's works, and as he carefully compared editions, paying attention not only to words, but to individual letters and even type-fonts, he was able to piece together an astonishing story of devious dealing by one of the most respectable German publishers, Johann Friedrich Cotta. Cotta contracted to publish Goethe's collected works just after the turn of the century, and he and Goethe

agreed that the edition should come out in installments, each to be covered by a separate contract, and each to be paid for separately. Volumes one to eight appeared first, volume eight coming out in 1808. At this point Cotta discovered that he had underestimated the demand for the edition and reset several volumes without informing Goethe. Kurrelmeyer discovered three printings of volumes one, two, three, and four; two of volumes five, six, and seven, but none of volume eight. A passage from the *Sturm und Drang* drama, *Clavigo* (1774), the first work Goethe published under his own name, will illustrate one kind of error that occurred in the "Doppeldrucke." Toward the beginning of Act IV, which takes place in Clavigo's apartment, Clavigo's friend Carlos remarks that the townspeople have noticed that he formerly never appeared in public ". . . ohne eine stattliche, herrliche, hochäugige Spanierin im Triumph aufzuführen, deren volle Brust, ihre glühenden Wangen, ihre heißen Augen die Welt rings umher zu fragen schienen: Bin ich nicht meines Begleiters werth?"⁹ (. . . without triumphantly escorting a majestic, splendid, noble-eyed Spanish woman, whose ample bosom, flushed cheeks, and burning eyes seemed to ask: Am I not worthy of my companion?). In the "Doppeldruck" "stattlich" became "sittlich" (well behaved). Goethe doubtless came across the error while editing his writings for Cotta's *Ausgabe letzter Hand* (1827-1830), for he worked from printed copies rather than the manuscripts. Noticing that "sittlich" made no sense, he apparently simply deleted it without further reflection, thus altering the text of the drama a second time. Because the *Ausgabe letzter Hand* was the definitive edition of Goethe's works, it became the basis for later editions; and the errors that Goethe failed to notice and correct were thus repeated in edition after edition until Kurrelmeyer brought them to light.

When Kurrelmeyer examined the writings of Christoph Martin Wieland he also found numerous errors resulting from "Doppeldrucke." He reported these errata in a long article entitled "Die Doppeldrucke von Wielands Werken" which was printed in the proceedings of the Prussian Academy of Arts and Sciences in Berlin in 1913. At that time Bernhard Seuffert, Erich Schmidt and others had already published seven volumes of the Academy's new critical edition of Wieland. When they learned of Kurrelmeyer's findings, however, they at once stopped the presses and prepared a large volume of corrections which came out before any other volumes were published.¹⁰ Seuffert and Schmidt then invited Kurrelmeyer to collaborate with them by editing Wieland's prose works. Several of the volumes edited by Kurrelmeyer appeared before his death. The remaining volumes of the still incomplete edition are being done on the basis of his notes.

The third area in which Kurrelmeyer distinguished himself as a scholar was lexicography. A major contribution in this field is his long study, "German Lexicography," which appeared in installments in *MLN* from 1919 on. In the eleventh installment he reveals the idea underlying his study when he observes that the makers of dictionaries "as a rule place their main stress upon literary and historical monuments, neglecting works of a technical and popular scientific nature in which quite a different vocabulary is used. . . ."¹¹ For his own lexicographical studies Kurrelmeyer consulted diverse non-literary texts, including several in his own library. Among these latter were chronicles, such as the *Chronik der Stadt Trautenau* (Trutnov), and works of a technical nature, such as J. B. Schreitner's study of military fortifications, *Examen Fortificationum* (Straß-

burg 1676). By going through these and similar works he found numerous words not listed in standard dictionaries.

In addition to discovering new German words, Kurrelmeyer also corrected faulty definitions of known expressions. He pointed out, for example, that the German word "Pistole" in the meaning of "pistol" is derived not from the Italian city of Pistoia, as had been previously believed, but from Czech "pistol," which is doubtless related to French "pistolet," and which came into German during the Hussite Wars between 1421 and 1429. When one looks up "Pistole" in Kluge's *Etymologisches Wörterbuch* one finds the reference: "Kurrelmeyer, 1921 Mod. Lang. Notes 36, 488," which indicates that in the revision of this basic etymological dictionary Kurrelmeyer's philological studies were taken into account.

Almost from the beginning of his career at Hopkins Kurrelmeyer was an editor of *Modern Language Notes*, which had been founded at Hopkins in 1886 by A. Marshall Elliott who had also organized the Modern Language Association three years earlier in December of 1883. Kurrelmeyer also became one of the early members of the new professional society and from the beginning attended meetings, presented papers, and shared in the administrative work. In those days, older colleagues tell us, the Kurrelmeyer home was a kind of family hotel for members of the MLA at meeting time. Often all the bedrooms were full, and sometimes there were as many as twenty at meals.

Both Kurrelmeyer and his wife took part in the work of the German Society of Maryland, Mrs. Kurrelmeyer serving for years as President of the Ladies' Auxiliary; and Kurrelmeyer was also a member of the Society for the History of the Germans in Maryland, which in those days, as we recall had only male members. In 1926 he became a member of the Executive Board and remained on the board until 1937, the year in which he was elected President. As President he worked tirelessly to increase the membership, particularly during the war years. In recognition of his long years of service the Society elected him Honorary President when he stepped down from the presidency in 1951.

On November 13, 1931, in anticipation of the centennial of Goethe's death, Kurrelmeyer and his new colleague Ernst Feise, who had joined the staff of the Department of German in 1928, organized the Maryland Chapter of the American Goethe Society, the aims of which were to be, as set forth in the constitution, to promote the study and appreciation of Goethe and of German literature, art, and philosophy. Kurrelmeyer became the Society's first president. His great coup in his first year in office was persuading Gerhart Hauptmann to come to Baltimore to deliver the festival address at the city's celebration of the Goethe centennial. The list of lecturers who spoke before the Society during the subsequent years of Kurrelmeyer's long presidency read like a *Who's Who* of Baltimore's German-American academicians and public figures.¹²

On Kurrelmeyer's sixty-fifth birthday in 1939 several colleagues and students honored him at a testimonial dinner, and among the many tributes was a delightfully humorous poem by his colleague Ernst Feise which turns cleverly on the theme of "Doppeldrucke" as it might be applied to events in Kurrelmeyer's life:

Als William Kurrelmeyer
Nicht älter als zehn Jahr,
Sah er mit Wohlgefallen
Ne Maid mit Lockenhaar.

When William Kurrelmeyer
Was hardly ten years old
He beheld with greatest pleasure
A maid with curly locks.

Er bat sie um ihr Jawort,
 Als er Professor war
 Und trat mit seinem Freunde
 Karl Grimm vor den Altar.
 Die beiden Freunde wurden
 Getraut auf einen Ruck;
 Das war in seinem Leben
 Der erste Doppeldruck.

When he became Professor
 He asked her for her "Yes"
 And led her to the altar
 With his good friend Karl Grimm.
 The two good friends were then
 Both married at one go;
 That was in Kurrelmeyer's life
 The initial "Doppeldruck."

In the third stanza Feise skilfully develops his "Leitmotiv" as he recalls the subsequent growth of the Kurrelmeyer family:

Den Kurrelmeyers wuchsen
 Zwei Kinder froh heran,
 Sie fanden auch beizeiten
 Sich beide Frau und Mann;
 Und wieder kam ein Mädchen
 Und wieder kam ein Knab',
 Daß es in der Familie
 Zwei Doppeldrucke gab.
 Zwei Kinder und zwei Enkel,
 Sie sind ein rechter Schmuck,
 In Treuen und in Ehren,
 Ein Doppeldoppeldruck.

To Kurrelmeyers were then born
 Two children who both flourished,
 And each when the time came found
 A wife and husband for themselves;
 And once again there came a girl,
 And once again a boy,
 So that in the family
 There were two "Doppeldrucke"
 Two children, two grandchildren,
 They are a true adornment,
 Yes, honestly and truthfully,
 A "Doppeldoppeldruck."

Later in the evening Henry Carrington Lancaster of the Department of Romance Languages and Co-Editor of *MLN* proposed a toast to the jubilarian in which he parodied in English the convoluted style favored by some German scholars. As he raised his glass he saluted Kurrelmeyer as his "... distinguished, erudite, etymology-hunting, Wieland-editing, Doppeldrucke-investigating, printer-terrifying-contributor, overawing-bibliography-collecting, -Middle High German-, eighteenth century and early nineteenth century authoritating colleague, Herr Professor Doktor William Kurrelmeyer . . .". Although his intent was to evoke mirth, Lancaster also provided in his toast a remarkably succinct summary of Kurrelmeyer's accomplishments as a scholar, for he managed to get all the important things in.

On the fly-leaf of Volume I of his own copy of his first printed German Bible Kurrelmeyer pencilled the following inscription from Virgil: "Labor omnia vicit improbus," which one might translate roughly as "Persistent work conquered all." The inscription aptly characterizes his attitude toward his scholarly work, for he always saw through to the end everything he undertook as a scholar, in spite of difficulties and frustrations along the way. Those who knew him found him equally committed to his human relationships. He was always thoughtful of his family and also of his students. He never considered his duty done when his students got their doctorates, Taylor Starck recalls, but kept in constant touch, trying to find positions for them, if they had none, and helping them to find other positions when he thought they might be better placed.¹³

Some of the warmth of Kurrelmeyer the man is reflected in the *In Memoriam* he composed while President of the Society for the History of the Germans in Maryland for his friend Dr. Christian Deetjen who was also an active member of the society.¹⁴ An amusing impression of the austerity of Deetjen's early years in Baltimore is conjured up when Kurrelmeyer recalls how a German butcher at the Lexington Market used to

sell the young doctor, doubtless at a low price, generous portions of pork-chops which he would then cook for his dinner over the gas jet in his office, and how at times the young doctor would spend his last nickel for a glass of beer which would entitle him to eat his fill at the free lunch counter in the bar. One of the special bonds between Kurrelmeyer and Deetjen was their mutual love of books, rare and otherwise, and in his tribute he charmingly illustrates this love in his friend by making special mention of his delight in reminiscing about his memorable visit to the old Abbey of Tepl with its fine library during the trip he made to Germany in hope of finding there a specialist who might provide relief from the constant pain he suffered as a consequence of burns he had sustained as an experimenter with x-rays at a time when the destructive effects of the rays had not yet been recognized. What Deetjen particularly remembered it seems, was a room in the library in which all the cases were filled with incunabula, and what he never could get over was the Abbot's casual remark in reference to these early printings, which Deetjen knew were priceless "There are our duplicates."

What Kurrelmeyer writes of Deetjen's special brand of humor might also be said to characterize his own humor, for he, too, loved to mystify unsuspecting individuals by making outlandish statements. An amusing example of his roguishness is the episode in the *Lumpensammler*, the late Munich local, which Kurrelmeyer was taking back to the city with an American colleague. The two were speaking English, and a young fellow in the compartment, who may well have had a few beers too many, watched and listened with obvious curiosity until at last, no longer able to contain himself, he blurted out the question, "Verzeihen Sie, meine Herren, was sprechen Sie denn eigentlich?" With a perfectly straight face Kurrelmeyer replied, "Chinesisch," an answer which seems to have satisfied the young man, who simply said "Danke schön!" Kurrelmeyer was famous for this kind of performance.

Reflecting as it usually does a sense of perspective, a sense of humor is one of the more reliable indices of a well-balanced personality. In Kurrelmeyer's case this was certainly true. He loved his work, but he also loved his family and his friends; and although he worked hard, he also knew how to relax and to enjoy his leisure time. People who, like him, derive joy from their work and from their human relationships often turn out to be successful people. This does not mean that they are immune to pain. It means rather that they are able to deal with pain in such a way that it doesn't poison their lives. Kurrelmeyer was one of those fortunate enough to know how to make pain productive. Mrs. Kurrelmeyer may have had this quality in mind when she wrote me after his death that she hoped some of his spirit would pass over into her and give her the strength she needed to face life alone after so many happy years at his side.

Great achievements demand an immense investment of self. Noah Webster worked thirty-six years on his dictionary. Edward Gibbon labored twenty years of his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. William Kurrelmeyer spent a decade on his monumental edition of the first printed German Bible. To the generation of philologically trained scholars who, like Kurrelmeyer, were willing to devote endless time and energy to preparing the accurate texts which are the basic tools of the literary historian or the literary critic we owe a great debt; and to Kurrelmeyer we owe a special debt because he was one of the great text-scholars. He left editions that are reliable as a basis for scholarly work, developed methods that can be applied to further text-critical work, and, last but not least, he gave his

university a library which contains many editions necessary for the preparation of future critical editions. For the many different editions in his collection are not duplicates, but copies of the printings that must be compared by scholars wishing to establish definitive texts of the works in question, one of which is Klopstock's great epic poem *Der Messias*. Since Hopkins owns these editions some of the text-critical work of the future will have to be done here in Baltimore with Kurrelmeyer's books.

At his desk Kurrelmeyer worked by the light of a small green table lamp which now stands in the entrance hall of the apartment of his daughter, who lights it every evening. Although it is an ordinary lamp, to those of us who know that it was his it is somehow symbolic of his continuing presence. At Hopkins he lives on in the way every scholar hopes to live on, through the work of those who come after him. My colleague, Lieselotte Kurth, has written extensively on Wieland and may even prepare a critical edition of Wieland's *Komische Erzählungen* for which the Kurrelmeyer collection contains the necessary editions. Together she and I plan to publish additional letters from his manuscript collection which he intended to publish himself, and in doing this we shall also be carrying on his work. Through us, we hope, still another generation of scholars will carry it on.

¹In: *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, LXVII (1943), p. 115 ff.

²Dieter Cunz, *The Maryland Germans* (Princeton: University Press, 1948), p. 338.

³Kurrelmeyer's former students, Edward H. Sehr and Taylor Starck, make special mention of his warmth in their tributes, the former in "In Memoriam: William Kurrelmeyer," *The Report, SHGM*, XXX (1959), 115-116, and the latter in "William Kurrelmeyer 1874-1957" *The Report, SHGM*, XXXII (1966), 9-13. Augustus J. Prah also mentions Kurrelmeyer in his article "German Scholars at the Johns Hopkins University," *The Report, SHGM* (1959), 67-72.

⁴Prah includes a profile of Haupt in "German Scholars at Hopkins," *The Report, SHGM*, XXX (1959), 67-68.

⁵Published under the title *The Historical Development of the Types of the First Person Plural Imperative in German* (Strasburg: Trubner, 1900).

⁶The Gutzkow letters appeared in Volume XIII (1972), Spalten 1-236; the Gerstäcker letters in Volume XIV (1974), Spalten 1053-1210; and the Bodenstedt, letters in Volume XVIII (1977), Spalten 799-962.

⁷Taylor Starck, "Goethean Doppeldrucke," *MLN*, LXVIII (1953), p. 309.

⁸Michael Bernays, *Über Kritik und Geschichte des Goetheschen Textes* (Berlin: Dümmler, 1866).

⁹*Werke*, Herausgegeben im Auftrage der Groscherzogin Sophie von Sachsen (Weimar 1887-1916), Vol. 11, pp. 98-99.

¹⁰Taylor Starck, *The Report, SHGM*, XXXII (1966), 11.

¹¹*MLN*, LXI (1946), p. 315.

¹²Dieter Cunz lists the lecturers from the founding year to 1946 in "Die Marylander Goethe-Gesellschaft," *Monatshefte*, XXXVIII (1946), 367-370.

¹³*The Report, SHGM*, XXXII (1966), 12.

¹⁴*The Report, SHGM*, XXV (1942), 36-39.