



## The life and genius of Goethe; lectures at te Concord school of philosophy

Horatio Stevens White

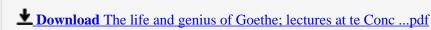
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# The life and genius of Goethe; lectures at te Concord school of philosophy

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The life and genius of Goethe; lectures at te Concord school of philosophy Horatio Stevens White This historic book may have numerous typos and missing text. Purchasers can download a free scanned copy of the original book (without typos) from the publisher. Not indexed. Not illustrated. 1886 Excerpt: ... failure, and was so considered even by Goethe's contemporaries; and at the present day the play has almost disappeared from the stage. This ends our consideration of the acknowledged typical dramas of Goethe. If time permitted, other minor dramas might have been considered with interest, but the general result would not thereby be materially affected. "What, then, we may ask, is that result? Is it such as to justify us in affirming that Goethe was a great playwright? Without detracting from Goethe's greatness in other directions, and indeed heartily acknowledging it, we must, in accordance with the verdict of rational criticism, answer the question in the negative. And in order to justify this answer, we have only to generalize what we have already stated in particular. Goethe's short comings as a playwright may be said to be four in number:--1. A fundamental lack of the dramatic sense,--which in great measure prevented him from recognizing what subjects were capable of being transformed into dramatic ideas, and so becoming dramatically effective. 2. A fundamental lack of constructive power,--which prevented him from producing works distinguished by organic unity; thus leaving his dramas, either a series of almost disconnected scenes, like "Gotz" and "Egmont," with an operatic termination like the latter, or united only by an abstract notion, not arising out of the dramatic idea, but essential to it, as in "Tasso" and in "Faust." 3. The lack of passionate expression and vigorous action, leading him to dwell upon descriptions of characters and scenes, rather than upon living actions and stirring events. 4. His inability to deal with the legitimate rules of dramatic art,--at one time leading him to set them aside...



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