

J.N. 44342

Christmasday 1887.



My dearest friend,

Your cheering lines lighted upon me like a genial sunbeam dispensing comfort to my disconsolate mind. Accept of my most heartfelt thanks both for your kindly sentiments, and the generous gift with which you providentially strengthen my health, and corroborate the genuineness of your friendship in thus remembering poor me who never could repay your liberality in kind. If it were possible not to have you invariably before my mind's eye, whenever I yearn for a bright friendly face, or a spirited interlocutor, I should profane your gift by hinting, that every drop of this excellent Bordeaux does remind me of the many happy hours which I have

enjoyed in your company, the bereavement of which I have, ever since my stay here, grievously felt.

Fidler's death has, indeed, been a severe shock to me. I was quite unprepared for this misfortune, for in his last letter, dated Nov. 19, he promised to pass Christmas with us, as usual. How evanescent all our earthly hopes are! What reminder to me, that it will be my turn next! With him a long chain of friendly intercourse is broken, he was, as it were, a member of my family, we emulated each other in our literary studies, shared in each other's vicissitudes, he played a prominent part in the story of my life during 39 years, and now? There is but one hope to comfort me, that you have proved a loving friend to me, and that I may confidently rely upon your remaining so during the span of my life. Pardon my selfishness!

Concerning "Herford's Studies &c.", I shall to the best of my capacity apply to this book, compare his opinions with those of other authors in my possession, and in due time report on it to you. It is wisely done of you, to give me a little task with a useful purpose, for my desultory readings will finally make an unthinking, good-for-nothing fellow of me; very likely others are sure of my being so already.

You have been at Leipzig to bless yourself with the realities of conjugal and paternal delights, instead of making your auditors' flesh creep with your atrocious rascalities on the stage. Well done! After all, the pleasures of a good and loving husband and father outweigh by far the laurels of ever so great an artist. Although I heartily wish you may once be pointed out in the history of

the Stage as a model of artists and public lecturers, I cannot but follow the dictates of my heart in wishing you, on occasion of our entering upon a New Year, all the felicity in the private life of your family, which so sterling a man, as you are, deserves in the highest degree. Please to remember me kindly to your good Lady, as well as to the ladies of your household. My wife begs likewise to join in my ardent wishes for your welfare. And with my everlasting thanks for your sympathetic friendships, the continuance of which will always keep my old much-tryed heart young, I remain, what I have been, since I have known you,



your loving friend,
J. B. Hoegel