

**TALES FROM HAUFF: WITH  
INTRODUCTION, NOTES,  
AND VOCABULARY**

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Tales from Hauff: With Introduction, Notes, and Vocabulary by Charles B. Goold

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INTRODUCTION, NOTES, AND VOCABULARY

BY

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## INTRODUCTION.

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THE story of Wilhelm Hauff's life, embracing a period of twenty-five years at the beginning of this century (1802-1827), is neither long nor eventful. He was a native of Stuttgart, in which city his father occupied an important government position. On the latter's death, in 1809, Wilhelm accompanied his mother to Tübingen, where the next eight years of his life were passed. The lad early showed a marked fondness for fairy tales, coupled with no little skill as a *raconteur* on his own part, — a taste and talent which his mother quietly fostered and encouraged. His scholastic career at the Tübingen Gymnasium or Academy, to which Wilhelm and an elder brother Hermann were sent, was anything but brilliant. Owing either to a naturally weak constitution and frequent attacks of illness, or to a distaste for the rather exacting course of study in a German Gymnasium, the younger brother did not distinguish himself as a scholar. Far more inviting than the traditional Latin, Greek, and mathematics of the school curriculum were the attractions of his grandfather's library. Its shelves, to which the brothers had free access, were well stocked with the German classics, works of history, and translations of the standard English novelists. Wilhelm was an omnivorous reader. By his fourteenth year he had read and re-read pretty much everything within his comprehension, that the library afforded. Particularly fascinating, however, to the young schoolboy,



was the story of the Middle Ages, — its romantic tales of marvelous adventure, its descriptions of siege, tourney, and battle. Some of the volumes were illustrated. These were Hauff's especial delight, and over them he spent many a happy hour, storing his imaginative mind with material for future use in his own literary workshop. Here, too, in the old library, the brothers acted out in mimic show the scenes of which they had been reading. "They built for their paper armies, arsenals and forts out of the dust-covered volumes, fought battles, and harangued their troops; while in many an address of young Wilhelm, had it been preserved for us, might perhaps be found the germ of his future literary talent."

After four years more of preparatory study spent in a convent school at the little town of Blaubeuren, Hauff returned to Tübingen to enter the university. He chose a course in theology and philology. The lecture room and the *seminar*, however, seem to have had but little influence in shaping his future career. Far more significant as showing his real bent of mind is the disposition of his leisure hours, many of which, we are told, were spent in entertaining an interested group of listeners, old as well as young, with the recital of fairy tales, and stories of romantic adventure.

On receiving his degree of Ph.D., in 1824, Hauff became private tutor (*Hauslehrer*) to the children of Baron von Hügel, at Stuttgart, in whose household the next two years of his life were spent. This period of Hauff's life marks the beginning of his literary career. In 1825, he began to publish, under the title of *Märchen-Almanach*, a collection of stories with the recital of which he had previously entertained his pupils of the baron's household. The publication of these stories was continued during the two

following years. The general plan of each of the series is the same, — a main narrative interwoven with various tales related by the chief characters. The first of these groups of stories is entitled *Die Karawane*; the second, *Der Sheik von Alessandria*; the third, *Das Wirtshaus im Spessart*. These tales are in many respects the most characteristic of Hauff's writings, and upon them his reputation largely rests. They are the offspring of a poetic and healthy imagination, and are clothed in an attractive literary dress. The plot, while neither original nor deep, reaches a natural and effective climax. The characters are clearly drawn; the sentiment is clean and wholesome. Taken as a whole the stories will compare favorably with those of Andersen and Grimm.

Meanwhile Hauff had also successfully tried his hand at other types of literary composition. His *Mitteilungen aus den Memoiren des Satans*, *Der Mann im Mond*, and *Lichtenstein* were all written while their author was a member of the von Hügel household. Of these productions the most elaborate is *Lichtenstein*, an historical romance, in which may be seen traces of the influence of Scott. Though written in an incredibly short space of time, and therefore not without marks of hasty composition, it won for its author favorable comment, and greatly added to his growing popularity. Its historical setting is the attempt of the emperor Maximilian to overthrow the kingdom of Württemberg and to bring it under the Austrian yoke.

Shortly after the completion of *Lichtenstein*, Hauff resigned his position as tutor, and spent several months in travel, — visiting France and the Netherlands, and lingering some time in Bremen, Dresden, Berlin, and other cities of Germany. The chief literary result of this period of

travel was the *Phantasien im Bremer Rathskeller*, published in 1827, not long before its author's death.

Returning to Stuttgart in January, 1827, Hauff undertook the editorial control of the *Morgenblatt*, a magazine published by the celebrated Cotta. Shortly after embarking on this journalistic enterprise, he married his cousin, to whom he had long been devotedly attached. The following summer was spent in Tirol, gathering material for a romance based on the attempt of the Tirolese, in 1809, to throw off the yoke of Napoleon. But the novel was never written. On his return to Stuttgart in the autumn, Hauff was stricken with a fever and died in November.

As a writer Hauff shows marked traces of the influence of the so-called Romantic School, — a literary movement whose complex origin and development we cannot here detail. As a whole, however, this movement may be characterized as reactionary in its nature, and as embodying a protest against much that had hitherto passed unchallenged in the current philosophical, religious, and political thought of the day. While the impulses that gave rise to the movement are to be found in the social, religious, and literary condition of Germany, from 1770 to 1800, it was not till the close of that period that its purpose and aims were definitely formulated and promulgated. The old university town of Jena, "the Athens of the Saale," as it was sometimes styled, was the geographical center and rallying point of the new school. Among its chief apostles at the outset were the two Schlegels, Tieck, and Novalis. As members of what is known as the late Romantic School, may be mentioned such authors as Fouqué, Arnim, Brentano, Eichendorf, and Hoffmann.