

Verbundkatalog Kalliope

Mann, Klaus

Camp Ritchie, 1944-06-12

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U. S. ARMY

Staff & Faculty
Camp Ritchie, Md.
12 June 1944

My dear Mr. Kesten:

I am afraid that you are going to be very disappointed with what I have to write you about the Foreword. In the first place, I am none too well satisfied with my translation. As prose, it does not measure up to my translation of the verse. But that is not the primary thing. After reading and studying what Heine has said in it, I revert again and again to the opinion that it contains little that we can use and much that will harm us by clouding the issue. There are, indeed, only two sentences of one passage and about four of another which bear direct quotation, in my opinion. These, however, are extremely appropriate. The thought occurs to me, if you will pardon such a direct suggestion, that the gist of the remainder of the Foreword can well be given -- and, inevitably, will be given in whatever you write by way of introduction, for I am confident that you are both keenly aware of the historical setting of the poem and thoroughly permeated with the spirit of this introduction, admiring it as you do.

You will pardon me if I do not go into a long explanation of what I find negative and harmful. One example is the definitely no longer applicable reference to England and Russia. Another is the idea voiced by Heine of the "universal domination of Germany" which is almost certain to be grossly misunderstood after the passage of one hundred momentous years. You and I know that Heine meant this in a spiritual sense, different even from the sense of Geibel's famous words about "Deutsches Wesen". But the public will not realize or not remember that Heine desired allegiance to "the best" in the German tradition, the morality of Luther, Goethe and Kant. It would be different, were we getting out a prose anthology wherein Heine's invective style needed representation. But let us not spoil the poem. And will you pardon my putting it just this way?

Here is what I propose: that we print a page giving the underlined passages of my enclosed translation. That this page precede the poetic text. And that it look and read somewhat *as follows:* *

** or exactly, if possible.*