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# Green Henry

## *Gottfried Keller*

The path to literature, e.g. to the works of Schiller, is not necessarily the same for everybody. This insight can be found in literature itself, and needs to be realized more strongly through methodological-imaginative action. The following excerpt from Gottfried Keller's *Green Henry* contains the narrator's memories of his father and friends:

## *Green Henry*

"Even if they were unable to follow Schiller to the lofty heights of his philosophical treatises, they profited all the more from his historical works, and from this standpoint they tackled his poetry too, which they entered into and enjoyed in an altogether practical fashion, without being able to go into the artistic values which that great man set up for himself. They took the greatest pleasure in his characters, and liked them better than anything else of the kind. The unvarying ardour and purity of his thought and language was more appropriate to their simple way of life than to that of many a learned admirer of Schiller in the world today. But being simple and absolutely practical, they could not get complete satisfaction out of dramatic readings in negligé; they wanted to see these great creations vividly presented in bodily form and, since there was no talk of a permanent theatre in the Swiss towns of that period, they made another decision . . . and acted plays themselves as well as they were able. To tell the truth, they were quicker and more thorough about setting up the stage and its mechanical devices than about learning their parts, and many a one tried to deceive himself about his real job in the theatre by increased activity in driving nails and sawing boards. Yet it cannot be denied that a great deal of the facility of expression and the pleasing deportment that was the hallmark of almost all these friends could be set down as the result of their dramatic efforts."

From:

Keller, Gottfried (1985): *Green Henry*. Transl. by A. M. Holt. London, John Calder, 13-14

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