



Friedrich Schiller - Band of Brothers

Friedrich Schiller, born in Germany in 1759, came to adulthood during a time of great ferment in German arts, letters and philosophy. He was a contemporary and associate of such resounding names as Fichte, Goethe and Kant. It is not surprising then that he dabbled in philosophy, history and drama.

He began life as the son of a captain in the employ of the Duke of Werttemberg. Friedrich, then, was obligated to also join the service. He did so as an army surgeon, where undoubtedly he formed some ideas bout military life. Yet he had ambitions beyond military service. He published his first play at the age of 23, Die Rauber. The Encyclopedia of Philosophy reports that his early production was of uneven quality, yet many of the plays are still produced, especially his Wilhelm Tell which is less a drama about a famous legendary-historical figure than it is about a struggle for freedom of a great nation.

In this work we find his reference to a "band of brothers":

*By this fair light which greeteth us, before
Those other nations, that, beneath us far,
In noisome cities pent, draw painful breath,
Swear we the oath of our confederacy!
A band of brothers true we swear to be,
Never to part in danger or in death! [They repeat his
words with three fingers raised.]
We swear we will be free as were our sires,
And sooner die than live in slavery! [All repeat as
before.]
We swear, to put our trust in God Most High,
And not to quail before the might of man!*

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