

have lived to close upon half a century, and yet my faith abides, now calm, now troubled, but always there, the luminous foam-flower of plumbless seas. I never particularly cared about regarding myself as the offspring of chance, and amid the many desires and impulses, wishes, longings, wrestlings of heart, ambitions, which have disturbed, darkened, brightened

Mein gar zu dunkles Leben

I have never been ambitious of rotting forever. But though thus carefully grounded in Christianity, yet having in my youth looked into some heathen writers, and pondered on philosophies that are now but fossils of thought—things that we look at with sad wonder—amid graves of glory and tombs of song—I find myself, just as in the case of phrenology, dominated by those early studies in a manner, let it be at once confessed, not a little humiliating.

Senators and Members of Parliament well know an ancient prophet-like figure which haunts the buildings at Ottawa. His blue eye has in it the light which never was on sea or shore. His grey hair, untrimmed, streams down over his shoulders, giving some slight evidence of the number of winters which have swept over them. He generally has some tracts of his own composition in his pocket, which explain all things, lay bare the future, and are portentous of coming doom. Like the "Ancient Mariner" he arrests you—keeps you—holds you—fascinates you—enslaves you with his glittering eye, and handing you a tract proceeds to lay bare his philosophy—a philosophy in which the mystic beast in the Revelation sometimes plays a prominent part, just as "Jumbo" used to do in the exhibitions of Barnum.

The first time he spoke to me, I regret to say I said to him—with a want of gentlemanly courtesy, which is not customary with me, a levity which in the presence of superior years was unbecoming, nay almost criminal, when to age was superadded many of those characteristics which have marked the prophet and philosopher in all times—that I knew nothing about these things, but that in Senator Alexander he would find a sympathetic listener, and one ready to bring his ideas before the country. If I had entered Periclean Athens, should I not have encountered an uncouth figure, that of a man who cared for none of the things the world loves, who, too, was busy with great ideas and great dreams? I have sometimes thought we are too hard on the Athenians for the way they treated Socrates. Let Socrates visit Toronto, or Ottawa or Montreal to-morrow, how would he be treated? Nay, what reception would be accorded to a greater than he? How do I know that I am not as blind to the wisdom in this Ottawa mystic as the Athenians were to the divine science hidden away in the uncouth Socratic corpus?

Reflections like these had weighed upon my conscience, and within the past few days I have, so to speak, for brief moments sat at his feet as we walked (pardon the bull) up towards the main tower of the Parliament buildings.

As I listened, my Pythagorean studies of other days began to lay fast hold of me. As he talked and talked well—with a certain system—a regularity of progression—half philosophical, half prophetic—I asked myself whether some old Greek theologian did not stand before me. The roar of the Chaudière was lost; the green velvet lawns, the magnificent buildings faded away and instead of all I saw

The gulf, the rock of Salamis;

the columned temple built by him who raised the Parthenon into the pellucid air of Attica. I heard the cry of "To the sea!" and watched the neophytes purify themselves; assisted at the sacrifice of the mullet and the barley cake; joined in the procession of the sacred basket, while "Hail Ceres!" drowned the voice of the waves; attended the pomp that bore Jaccus along the sacred way; spent the night in the great pit of Ictinus, and went through the secret rites, not unlike those with which my masonic brethren are familiar, and the following day even dared to bandy jokes, leaning on the bridge that spans the Cephisus; I saw on vanished altars in forgotten shrines selected incense rising to varied gods, in a system which had yet a strong grasp of the truth that the first cause is "the One," and is not only infinitely powerful but infinitely good, and which embodied many doctrines we are apt to think peculiar to Christianity, or at least to Bible teaching, such as providence; the belief in a Trinity; that sin can be escaped from only by divine aid; that the universe is upheld by the creative energy which made it—the ultimate explanation of existence being, of course, as far away from them as from us.

Those old feelers after God—to use language suggested by Paul—haply some times found him, and, preparing the world for Christianity, did they, too, not do a divine work? Did they, too, not get glimpses of the Unknowable "whose ways are past finding out?" Did they not have some momentary glance such as He vouchsafed to Moses? Pythagoreanism is a dream—but if we admit a perhaps, what is to prevent this venerable figure from encasing some earnest soul that struggled in the darkness towards the light, and maybe sat at the feet of Socrates himself? He is earnest, and earnestness is always respectable. He has walked, as far as the journey could thus be accomplished, to Palestine, and paced every foot of ground trod by "blessed feet."

Anyway he is superior to the world around him. Like Don Quixote his aim is a great one; his projects embrace mankind, and the sneers of senators and M.P.'s—what are they but the missiles which "practical" men in all ages, and who look at everything from the vanishing point of

the hour—from the rim of the wheel amid the dust of the present, fling at those whose thought is throned in the centre, and works in the light of the absolute? While these ideas passed rapidly through my mind, the very language of the antique mystics sounded in my ears—"the first principle of things." Might not the soul of some Simplicius have entered the frame of my venerable friend and his language be the far-resounding echoes of Eleusinian mysteries and Orphic hymns, chanted by men in all but forgotten years? Nay, what was to prevent the man before me being any one of those great teachers from Plato to Proclus? And still the mystic and prophetic sentences rolled round me until the strident bell, which announced that the Speaker was in the chair, destroyed the chain of association, and I hastily bade him farewell and hurried to my place.

NICHOLAS FLOOD DAVIN.

GOETHE'S "FAUST."—I.

THE "Faust" legend may be regarded as a symbol of the time during which it arose, the time of the awakening which preceded the Reformation. The desire for light and knowledge was aroused, but there was no science to satisfy it. Men would know Nature at first hand, and command her powers, but there was none to show them the way. So they listened to the suggestions of superstition, and men like Nostradamus and Faust looked to the Powers of Darkness to satisfy their desire for light. Strange paradox!

Faust himself was personally known to Melancthon, who tells us that he ascribed to his magic the victories of Charles V. in northern Italy. He studied at Cracow, and went about disputing and practising magic. About the year 1535 he disappeared, torn in pieces by the demons, it was said afterwards. Upon him that credulous age heaped a mass of stories grotesquely marvellous, such as make up the first Faust Book printed in 1587, and the "Faust" of Marlowe. While the Reformation remained a living force, while the conflict continued between men's longing for freedom and their fear of its responsibilities, the Faust subject maintained its interest. But the Catholic reaction under Ferdinand II. brought about the Thirty Years' War. This frightful struggle left Germany bereft of two-thirds of her people, and the remainder under the heel of priestly orthodoxy and princely absolutism. Her heart and mind were crushed, and the work of the Reformation entered upon a period of suspended animation.

Toward the middle of the last century, about the birth-time of Goethe, Lessing awoke the sleeping forces of the Reformation, and turned them against both cast iron orthodoxy and princely absolutism. Again men remembered the Faust legend, and in the brain of young Goethe that legend took up its abode, and for sixty years was associated with impulses toward the ideal, his longings for the infinite amid the limits of the finite, his sense of the contradictions of life, his efforts in the direction of conscious light. All these we have with us forever in Goethe's "Faust," the greatest of modern poems,

An Orphic tale indeed,
A tale divine of high and passionate thoughts,
To their own music chanted.

Like the Divine Comedy, Goethe's "Faust" is at once a poetic autobiography and a work of universal application. It is a record of Goethe's own development, and also a picture of humanity in its struggle with evil, cleansing itself in its strivings after truth, eliminating its impurities, and finally becoming one with the moral order of the universe. His views as to the nature and the uses of evil, Goethe has given us in this memorable sentence: "It is impossible that God should Himself look upon evil as He would have us look upon it." The Lord Himself hardened Pharaoh's heart and sent an evil spirit to vex Saul; and Satan, the accusing angel, the angel of trial and temptation, twice presented himself before the Lord among the sons of God, and twice received the Almighty's immediate commission to afflict Job. Throughout Goethe's works, we gather that he regarded evil as necessary to the development of man's character by trial and combat. There would be no merit in being moral unless we could be immoral if we chose. Goethe's "Mephisto," the representative of the principle of evil as thus conceived, is a very different being from the Satan of orthodoxy (so grandly presented by Milton) whose stately beauty, haughty pride and indomitable courage command our interest and sympathy, and who is tortured by a generous remorse for the fate of his fellow rebels. "Mephisto" never fell from heaven. He has no torturing memories of lost happiness and glory such as his poor, negative nature is quite incapable of conceiving. Like the Satan of Job, he presents himself before the Lord. He hears the archangel's songs of praise. "Pardon me," he says, "I cannot make fine speeches, even should the whole circle despise me. I can say nothing about suns and worlds. I only see how men torment themselves. The little god of the world remains still of the same stamp, just as wonderful as on the first day. He would live a little better hadst Thou not given him that beam of Heaven's light which he calls 'reason,' and which he only uses to become more beastly than the beasts." The devil's functions in the world are intimated by the Almighty: "Man's activity slackens all too easily. He soon loves unconditional repose. Therefore I give him the companion who incites and stirs, and must, as devil, be busy. The fiend's commission with regard to Faust is given in these words: "Divert this spirit from its source,

and lead it, if thou cannot grasp it, down with thee upon thine own road; and stand ashamed when thou must confess that a good man, amid his dark impulses, well knows the right way." "Good," replies the fiend, "it will not last long. When I have won, Thou wilt freely allow my triumph. Dust shall he eat, and with pleasure, like my aunt, the famous serpent."

The drama opens. Faust, a man of middle age, is alone in his study, and, in a long soliloquy, he expresses his weariness of the "huckstering in words" which constitutes the science of his time. In lines of touching and marvellous beauty he describes his grief that man's noblest aspirations should be borne down by the sordid realities of life. "Upon the noblest gifts the mind has received, matter strange and ever stranger forces itself. If we attain to this world's wealth, then all that is better seems illusion. Those glorious sentiments that are our real life are stifled in the tumult of earth." He opens the great magic book of Nostradamus at the sign of the *Makrokosm*, and the universe lies open before him. But the glorious spectacle is a spectacle and nothing more. The sources of life, the secret springs, the nourishing breasts are hidden still. Impatiently he turns the magic pages. His eye rests with hope on the sign of the Earth-spirit, the *Archaos* of the Orphic poets, the originator, dwelling in the middle of the earth, ruling the materials of life and growth, the spirit who "toils at the sounding loom of Time and works the living garment of God." He calls the spirit. In vain. He is sternly warned back to the limited conditions of humanity. "Thou art like the spirit that thou comprehendest, not me." Then he would escape the trammels of humanity by suicide; but, as he lifts the poisoned chalice, the Easter bells and the angel choir tell of the great triumph over the grave, and the rescued man forgets his fatal purpose amid a flood of sweet beliefs and memories. Who can read without tears the lines beginning—

Was sucht ihr, mächtig und gelind,
Ihr Himmelstone, mich am Staube?

We next find him among the motley crowd of Easter holiday-makers, won back to the world by the spring time and the fresh human happiness around him. His conversation with Wagner during this walk is rich in deepest wisdom. At length the sun sinks, and, lifted up by the feelings of Easter tide, he follows him in spirit, and would fain follow him in the body. But—

Alas, that when on spirit wing we rise,
No wing material lifts our husk of clay.

A black dog follows him home, and enters his study with him. With the Easter feelings still upon him, he takes down his Greek testament and proceeds to translate the Gospel of John, sorely puzzled for a German equivalent to the wonderful "logos" of the Hellenized Jews of the time of Christ. The dog shows ever-increasing distress as this work proceeds, first swelling to an enormous size, and finally dissolving in vapour and showing Mephisto. Faust asks him what he is. Mark his reply well—"A part of that power which evermore desires evil and evermore does good."

Faust's bargain with Mephisto differs radically from the old-fashioned sale of one's soul to the devil. From the first Faust feels himself sublimely above the limited nature of the demon. "What wilt thou give, poor devil? Was a human spirit, in its lofty endeavours, ever comprehended by such as thou?" The fiend states his terms: "I will bind myself here to thy service. At thy sign I will not rest. If we meet on the other side, then shalt thou do the like for me." "The other side troubles me little," Faust replies. "From this earth flow my joys, this sun shines upon my griefs. Canst thou ever deceive me with thy flatteries, canst thou ever so cheat me with enjoyments that I shall be pleasing to myself; let that be my last day. If I shall say to the passing moment—'Tarry, I pray, thou art so fair,' then mayst thou bind me in fetters, then will I gladly perish. The death-knell may sound, thou art free from thy service. The clock may stand, the pointer fall. Let time be past for me." There is no compact here under which Faust makes over his soul to the devil in exchange for worldly advantages. Mephisto trusts to win by degrading Faust's human nature here, and their meeting "on the other side" depends upon his success.

Here follows, as a kind of interlude, the scene between Mephisto and the student, so rich in satire and abounding in touches of wisdom, in which every branch of human science comes under the lash in turn. Theology, especially, is hit off to the life. "The best way is to listen to only one master, and to swear by him. Above all things, stick to words. When sense is not forthcoming, a word steps in. You can dispute beautifully with words. You can construct a system with words. You can believe faithfully in words, and from a word no jot can be taken away." The poor youth finally departs with, as he says, "a mill wheel buzzing in his head," but first begs a line in his album from the supposed doctor. This is written, and what does he read but "*Eritis sicut Deus, scientes bonum et malum*!" The demon fires this parting shot after him. "Only follow the old saying of my aunt, the serpent. You'll soon have enough of your God-likeness."

The scenes in Auerbach's cellar and the witches' kitchen are admirable on the stage, but belong rather to the mediæval devilment of the earlier Faust books than to the profound work of Goethe. So we will pass on to the meeting with Margaret. Margaret is Goethe's own creation, and by far the most touching presentment in the whole range of the modern drama. "Shakespeare himself," says Lewes, "has drawn no such portrait as