

christian dispensation in the fourth century when Cyprian of Antioch is said to have sold himself to the embodiment of evil, for the furtherance of his selfish ends. In the sixth century Theophilus, as a disciple tells us, sold himself to the Devil, but was finally saved by Christ on the intercession of the Virgin. This tale was dramatized in French in the thirteenth century, and translated into low German in the fourteenth. The idea of such a pact, caused no doubt by this work, took hold of and floated among the German people till it was finally transferred to the person of Dr. Faust, one of the most famous of the numerous travelling jugglers or magicians of the time. His tricks of legerdemain, and perhaps chemical experiments, would, among a superstitious and ignorant people, easily give him, as well as others like him, the reputation of being in league with the evil one. His sudden and violent death, as the result of one of his experiments, perhaps, would suggest the payment of his bond. Accordingly, soon after the death of this personage, we have the Faust legend fully formed, and assuming in different localities slightly different forms. These were collected and written down by an unknown hand, and afterwards printed at Frankfurt on the Main by one John Spiess, in 1587. It forms the groundwork, directly or indirectly, of all succeeding Faust literature.

According to the story of this book, Faust, dissatisfied with his knowledge, wanted to explore Heaven and Earth, and to find wherewith to satisfy all his other desires. For this purpose he conjures up, by means of his magical books, a spirit of the name of Mephistopheles, to whom he signs over his soul after the lapse of twenty-four years. In return Mephistopheles is during this time to answer all his questions and procure him all sorts of pleasures. Accompanied also by his servant Wagner, Faust then sets out on a tour, disputing learnedly and instructing as he goes. Taking greater flights he visits Hell, and returning soars through the clouds and beyond to the starry firmament. Coming back to earth again, he travels from one end of Europe to the other, and enjoys all the pleasures of the world. When his time is up he makes Wagner his heir, and promises him further a spirit in monkey form for a servant. While awaiting his end, during the last night of his allotted time, he is caught up and destroyed by a whirlwind, and next morning his mangled body is found lying in the courtyard.

Shortly after its publication, the Faust book was translated into Danish, French, Dutch, and English. Founded on this English translation rather than on the original German, Marlowe's "Dr. Faustus" then appeared in 1604, the first dramatized version of the legend. The English author has improved but little on the original story. In it, as in Faust plays generally, traces of the author are plainly discernible.

A company of English actors brought Marlowe's play with them in their repertory to the continent, and acted it in several German cities. This, doubtless, originated the idea of a German dramatization of the legend, which first took place early in the second half of the seventeenth century. About a hundred years later this Faust play disappeared from the German stage, probably because of the efforts of some dramatic reformers, who, along with

other improvements, succeeded in excluding from the stage a certain character that figured also prominently here. It was replaced by a Faust puppet play which, in its main features, differs but little from it, and which is still played before the awe inspired juveniles of Germany.

According to this play, Faust summons up a number of spirits, of whom he chooses one, who is as fleet as thought, with whom he sets out on his travels. Wagner, his servant, profiting from his master's experience, likewise conjures the spirits and forces them to serve him, without, however, sacrificing his soul. As in the legend the agreement is to be for twenty-four years, but after twelve, Faust is brought back and informed to his terror that, being served by night as well as by day, his time is now up. Despair, attempted repentance, and recourse to the aid of Wagner, are alike useless. He is carried off by the Devil.

Early in the literary revival of the eighteenth century the Faust legend was made the subject of scientific inquiry. The literary reformer and critic, Lessing, was the first in Germany to conceive the idea of treating it according to the strict rules of dramatic art. What this great dramatist and preacher of toleration might have made of such a theme may be imagined. He worked long at it, and is said to have completed one dramatized version, which, however, with the exception of a few fragmentary scenes, was unfortunately lost. From these the author's idea seems to have been that too great a desire for knowledge is dangerous, if not the source of all evil, for he makes it the cause of Faust's destruction. Lessing is also known to have meditated another treatment of the legend, in which, contrary to his first design, the desire for knowledge was to be celebrated as the noblest of all desires. The Devil was to be deceived by a phantom of Faust, who, sunk in sleep by his guardian angel at the beginning of the action, sees all in a dream, and awakens to see the demon, undeceived by the angel, withdrawing in confusion. This new idea of the rescue, Lessing doubtless owed to a poem of the Spaniard, Calderon, "Life a Dream."

The subject had also been taken up by other hands, and several Faust dramas were written even during the life-time of Lessing. A new literary movement took place early in the latter half of the eighteenth century, the apostles of which were young men whose gospel was freedom from conventionality and restrained in both literature and life. It was the so-called Storm and Stress period. As might be expected, the Faust subject was congenial to the poets of this school. The best second rate works on the subject were written by them. Goethe himself was under the influence of the movement when he began his immortal work. Of the fifteen or more Faust dramas now existing, those that appeared after the partial or complete publication of Goethe's work, bear marked traces of its influence, while for the others, as well as for Goethe himself, the puppet play was, doubtless, the immediate source of inspiration, though the Faust book, and, perhaps, Marlowe, may have been at times brought into requisition.

Apart from their ethical tendency, for all Faust dramas are more or less didactic, these productions are on the