

mortal foes, they would still be great, but of a greatness merely human. But by measuring strength with the gods themselves, their own powers are measured by the opposing forces which they overcome. Thus Faust's daring challenge to the invisible world exalts him, in our imagination, to almost super-human proportions, and makes him one of the grandest impersonations of human character created by the genius of man.

Goethe has been deservedly censured for "the absence of all moral perspective" in some of his works, especially in his prose fiction. In modern art, he is the most distinguished representative of that school of "total impartiality" which paints vice and virtue with an even hand. The moral standard of his life, as well as of his art, is not the true Christian one. As his theoretical creed is largely mixed with a certain vague pantheism of his own, so his ethical persuasion reflects that naturalism which the writings of Rousseau had rendered popular in his youth. Thus, judged from his own point of view, neither Goethe's life nor his works present such grave anomalies as our Christian ethics will find there. That explains why Goethe has gained such a strange fascination, such an unexampled intellectual ascendancy over a large portion of the cultured classes of all nations. For all those who have thrown off Christian belief and Christian restraint, Goethe is the new prophet, and his doctrine of humanity and self-culture is the gospel of the new dispensation. And his influence seems destined to grow wider and firmer with the advancing age, because his teachings present a platform upon which all those who stand outside the Church are able to stand together.

The question then presents itself, whether Goethe's writings are for good or for evil to him who reads them, if he be a Christian, a Catholic? The answer must necessarily be a qualified one. It cannot be contested that Goethe's works contain many gems of purest beauty and human sweetness, in vain to be looked for elsewhere within the realms of art. Is it possible, then, with his perverted view of life, to separate the dross from the pure metal which it conceals? To the mature eye which possesses the full experience of life, the answer should be yes; but with regard to the immature who lack that experience, a conscientious answer

cannot be in the affirmative. Of course this has no application to most of his lyrical productions, some of which belong to the most comforting and sustaining expressions of thought and sentiment to be found in any literature. It refers rather to his more extended productions of life and character. To Faust, however, it applies in a far less degree than to many others of his works which have a much better reputation among the average reading public.

That the Faust drama presents a deep and obvious moral purpose, no one can deny that is capable of reading the deeper meaning of things on their outward surface. The nemesis that follows the commission of crime is here distinctly discernible. It appears before us in its most awful reality in the person of Satan himself, harrowing with taunts and threats the soul of the unfortunate Margaret, even in the Temple of God, whither she has dragged herself to seek comfort for her conscience-stricken heart. And, whether the lesson was intended or not, it certainly stands out in bold relief from the pages of this wonderful picture of human life, that a gross violation of the moral law, such as that committed by Faust, will, with a fatal necessity, bring sorrow and desolation to the heart of the doer, and strike it sorest in the ruin of those that are dearest to it. Nay the whole plot of Faust points out, with unexampled force, that impressive moral, that he who seeks enjoyment and happiness away from the path of reason—and of religion, which is the complement of reason—will find nothing but dejection and remorse. The fruit which he will put to his lips will wither in his grasp, and like Faust, instead of reaching the spirits above, he will fall a prey to the demons below.

In summing up this brief and fragmentary appreciation of Germany's greatest poetical work, it would seem to us, that, in the domain of art, it occupies a position quite distinct from every other production of its kind, in being a complete picture of the whole life of man, woven out of its most essential elements, representing what is noblest in the human mind and sweetest in the heart, yet in colors and features that possess a strange and life-like fascination. But, as in actual life, its brighter colors are intermingled