facts perfectly familiar to the audience, with which Shakspeare ends the piece.

This *Romeo and Juliet* was not only produced at Weimar, but it kept the stage in Berlin until within the last few years! The Berlin critics on its original production were by no means favourably inclined to it—the dénouement, we learn from Zelter, especially displeased them. Did they resent being robbed of their ennui?

Enough has been said to characterise the attempt of Goethe and Schiller to create a German Drama; which attempt, although its failure was inevitable, cannot be regarded without sympathy, were it only for the noble aim animating it. That aim was misdirected; but it was the error of lofty minds, who saw *above* the exigencies of the age. They could not bring themselves to believe that the Drama, which they held to be so grand a form of Art, had ceased to be the lay-pulpit, and had become a mere amusement.

With Schiller's death Goethe's active interest in the theatre ceased. The Obermarschall Graf von Edeling was adjoined to him, as acting superintendent, but without absolute power, which still remained in Goethe's hands. This was towards the end of 1813. And in 1817 his son, August von Goethe, was added to the direction. Thus was the theatre burdened with a Geheimrath, absolute but inactive, an Obermarschall, and a court page. Nor were matters better behind the scenes. An intrigue had long been forming, under the direction of Caroline Jagemann, to force Goethe's resignation. Between the duke's mistress and the duke's friend there had never been a very pleasant feeling. She was naturally jealous of Goethe's power. As an actress under his direction, she must have had endless little causes of complaint. Had the poet been less firmly fixed in the duke's affections and interests, this rivalry could not have endured so long. At last a crisis came.

There was at that period, 1817, a comedian named Karsten, whose poodle performed the leading part in the well-known melodrame of *The Dog of Montargis* with such perfection that he carried the public everywhere with him, in Paris as in Germany. It may be imagined with what sorrowing scorn Goethe heard of this. The dramatic art to give place to a poodle! He, who detested dogs, to hear of a dog performing on all the stages of Germany with greater success than the best of actors! The occasion was not one to be lost. The

duke, whose fondness for dogs was as marked as Goethe's aversion to them, was craftily assailed, from various sides, to invite Karsten and his poodle to Weimar. When Goethe heard of this, he haughtily answered, "In our Theatre regulations stands: *no dogs admitted on the stage*"—and paid no more attention to it. As the duke had already written to invite Karsten and his dog, Goethe's opposition was set down to systematic arbitrariness, and people artfully "wondered" how a prince's wishes could be opposed for such trifles. The dog came. After the first rehearsal, Goethe declared that he would have nothing more to do with a theatre on which a dog was allowed to perform; and at once started for Jena. Princes ill brook opposition; and the duke, after all, was a duke. In an unworthy moment, he wrote the following, which was posted in the theatre, and forwarded to Goethe:

"From the expressed opinions which have reached me, I have come to the conviction that the Herr Geheimrath von Goethe wishes to be released from his functions as Intendent, which I hereby accord. KARL AUGUST."

A more offensive dismissal could scarcely have been suggested by malice. In the duke it was only a spurt of the imperious temper and coarseness which roughened his fine qualities. On Goethe the blow fell heavily. "Karl August never understood me," he exclaimed, with a deep sigh. Such an insult to the greatest man of his age, coming from his old friend and brother in arms, who had been more friend than monarch to him during two-and-forty years, and who had declared that one grave should hold their bodies—and all about a dog, behind which was a miserable green-room cabal! The thought of leaving Weimar for ever, and of accepting the magnificent offers made him from Vienna, pressed urgently on his mind.

But, to his credit be it said, the duke quickly became sensible of his unworthy outbreak of temper, and wrote to Goethe in a tone of conciliation: "Dear Friend," he wrote, "From several expressions thou hast let fall, I gather that thou wouldst be pleased to be released from the vexations of theatrical management, but that thou wouldst willingly aid it by thy counsel and countenance, when, as will doubtless often be the case, thou art specially appealed to by the manager. I gladly fall in with thy desire, thanking thee for the great good thou hast effected in this

troublesome business, begging thee to retain thy interest in its artistic prosperity, and hoping that the release will better thy health. I enclose an official letter notifying this change, and with best wishes for your health, &c." The cloud passed over; but no entreaty could make Goethe resume the direction of the theatre, and he withdrew his son also from his post in the direction. He could pardon the hasty act and unconsidered word of his friend; but he was prouder than the duke, and held firmly to his resolution of having nothing to do with a theatre which had once prostituted itself to the exhibition of a clever poodle.

What a sarcasm, and in the sarcasm what a moral, lies in this story. Art, which Weimar will not have, gives place to a poodle!

CHAPTER VI

SCHILLER'S LAST YEARS

THE current of narrative in the preceding chapter has flowed onwards into years and events from which we must now return. Instead of the year 1817, we must recall the year 1800. Schiller has just come to settle at Weimar, there to end his days in noble work with his great friend. It may interest the reader to have a glimpse of Goethe's daily routine; the more so, as such a glimpse is not to be had from any published works.

He rose at seven, sometimes earlier, after a sound and prolonged sleep; for, like Thorwaldsen, he had a "talent for sleeping," only surpassed by his talent for continuous work. Till eleven he worked without interruption. A cup of chocolate was then brought, and he resumed work till one. At two he dined. This meal was the important meal of the day. His appetite was immense. Even on the days when he complained of not being hungry, he ate much more than most men. Puddings, sweets, and cakes were always welcome. He sat a long while over his wine, chatting gaily to some friend or other (for he never dined alone), or to one of the actors, whom he often had with him, after dinner, to read over their parts, and to take his instructions. He was fond of wine, and drank daily his two or three bottles.

Lest this statement should convey a false impression, I hasten to recall to the reader's recollection the habits of our

fathers in respect of drinking. It was no unusual thing to be a "three bottle man" in those days in England, when the three bottles were of Port or Burgundy; and Goethe, a Rhinelander, accustomed from boyhood to wine, drank a wine which his English contemporaries would have called water. The amount he drank never did more than exhilarate him; never made him unfit for work or for society.[1]

Over his wine he sat some hours: no such thing as dessert was seen upon his table in those days: not even the customary coffee after dinner. His mode of living was extremely simple; and even when persons of very modest circumstances burned wax, two poor tallow candles were all that could be seen in his rooms. In the evening he went often to the theatre, and there his customary glass of punch was brought at six o'clock. When he was not at the theatre, he received friends at home. Between eight and nine a frugal supper was laid, but he never ate anything except a little salad or preserves. By ten o'clock he was usually in bed.

Many visitors came to him. From the letters of Christiane to Meyer we gather that he must have exercised hospitality on a large scale, since about every month 50 lbs. of butter are ordered from Bremen, and the cases of wine have frequently to be renewed. It was the pleasure and the penalty of his fame, that all persons who came near Weimar made an effort to see him. Sometimes these visitors were persons of great interest; oftener they were fatiguing bores, or men with pretensions more offensive than dulness. To those who pleased him he was inexpressibly charming; to the others he was stately, even to stiffness. While, therefore, we hear some speak of him with an enthusiasm such as genius alone can excite: we hear others giving vent to the feelings of disappointment, and even of offence, created by his manners. The stately minister exasperated those who went to see the impassioned poet. As these visitors were frequently authors, it was natural they should avenge their wounded self-love in

[1] "For the last thousand years, the life of the Rhinelander is as it were steeped in wine; he has become like the good old wine-casks, tinted with the vinous green. Wine is the creed of the Rhinelander in everything. As in England, in the days of Cromwell, the Royalists were known by the meat pasties, the Papists by their raisin soup, the Atheists by their roast beef; so is the man of the Rhinegau known by his wine-flask. A jolly companion drinks his seven bottles every day, and with it grows as old as Methuselah, is seldom drunk, and has at most the Bardolph mark of a red nose." LIEBIG: *Letters on Chemistry*, Appendix.

criticisms and epigrams. To cite but one example among many: Bürger, whom Goethe had assisted in a pecuniary way, came to Weimar, and announced himself in this preposterous style: "You are Goethe—I am Bürger," evidently believing he was thereby maintaining his own greatness, and offering a brotherly alliance. Goethe received him with the most diplomatic politeness, and the most diplomatic formality; instead of plunging into discussions of poetry, he would be brought to talk of nothing but the condition of the Göttingen University, and the number of its students. Bürger went away furious, avenged this reception in an epigram, and related to all comers the experience he had had of the proud, cold, diplomatic Geheimrath. Others had the like experience to recount; and a public, ever greedy of scandal, ever willing to believe a great man is a small man, echoed these voices in swelling chorus. Something of offence lay in the very nature of Goethe's bearing, which was stiff, even to haughtiness. His appearance was so imposing, that Heine humorously relates how, on the occasion of his first interview with him, an elaborately prepared speech was entirely driven from his memory by the Jupiter-like presence, and he could only stammer forth "a remark on the excellence of the plums which grew on the road from Jena to Weimar." An imposing presence is irritating to mean natures; and Goethe might have gained universal applause, if, like Jean Paul, he had worn no cravat, and had let his hair hang loose upon his shoulders.

The mention of Jean Paul leads me to quote *his* impression of Goethe. "I went timidly to meet him. Every one had described him as cold to everything upon earth. Frau von Kalb said he no longer admires anything, not even himself. Every word is ice. Nothing but curiosities warm the fibres of his heart; so I asked Knebel if he could petrify me, or encrust me in some mineral spring that I might present myself as a statue or a fossil." How one hears the accents of village gossip in these sentences! To Weimarian ignorance Goethe's enthusiasm for statues and natural products seemed monstrous. "His house," Jean Paul continues, "or rather his palace, pleased me; it is the only one in Weimar in the Italian style; with such a staircase! A Pantheon full of pictures and statues. Fresh anxiety oppressed me. At last the god entered, cold, monosyllabic. 'The French are drawing towards Paris,' said Knebel. 'Hm!' said the god. His face is massive and animated; his eye a ball of light! At last, as conversation

turned on art, he warmed, and was himself. His conversation was not so rich and flowing as Herder's, but penetrating, acute, and calm. Finally, he read, or rather performed, an unpublished poem, in which the flames of his heart burst through the external crust of ice; so that he greeted my enthusiasm with a pressure of the hand. He did it again as I took leave, and urged me to call. By heaven! we shall love each other! He considers his poetic career closed. There is nothing comparable to his reading. It is like deep-toned thunder, blended with whispering rain-drops."

Now let us hear what Jean Paul says of Schiller. "I went yesterday to see the stony Schiller, from whom all strangers spring back as from a precipice. His form is wasted, yet severely powerful, and very angular. He is full of acumen, but without love. His conversation is as excellent as his writings." He never repeated this visit to Schiller, who doubtless quite subscribed to what Goethe wrote. "I am glad you have seen Richter. His love of truth, and his wish for self-improvement, have prepossessed me in his favour; but the social man is a sort of theoretical man, and I doubt if he will approach us in a practical way."

If to pretenders and to *strangers* Goethe was cold and repellent, he was warm and attractive enough to all with whom he could sympathise. Brotherly to Schiller and Herder, he was fatherly in his loving discernment and protection to such men as Hegel, then an unknown teacher, and Voss, the son of the translator of Homer.[1] He excited passionate attachments in all who lived in his intimacy; and passionate hatred in many whom he would not admit to intimacy.

The opening of this century found Schiller active, and anxious to stimulate the activity of his friend. But theories hampered the genius of Goethe; and various occupations disturbed it. He was not like Schiller a reflective, critical poet, but a spontaneous instinctive poet. The consequence was, that Reflection not only retarded, but misled him into Symbolism—the dark corner of that otherwise sunny palace of Art which he has reared. He took up *Faust*, and wrote the classic intermezzo of *Helena*. He was very busy with the theatre, and with science; and at the close of the year fell into a dangerous illness, which created much anxiety in the duke and the Weimar circle, and of which the Frau von Stein wrote in

[1] Note Voss's enthusiastic gratitude in his *Mittheilungen über Goethe und Schiller*.

that letter quoted p. 334. He recovered in a few weeks, and busied himself with the translation of *Theophrastus on Colours*, with *Faust*, and the *Natürliche Tochter*.

While the two chiefs of Literature were, in noble emulation and brotherly love, working together, each anxious for the success of the other, the nation divided itself into two parties, disputing which was the greater poet of the two; as in Rome the artists dispute about Raphael and Michael Angelo. "It is difficult to appreciate one such genius," says Goethe of the two painters, "still more difficult to appreciate both. Hence people lighten the task by partisanship." The partisanship in the present case was fierce, and has continued. Instead of following Goethe's advice, and rejoicing that it had two such poets to boast of, the public has gone on crying up one at the expense of the other. Schiller himself with charming modesty confessed his inferiority; and in one of his letters to Körner he says: "Compared with Goethe I am but a poetical bungler —*gegen Goethe bin und bleib' ich ein poetischer Lump.*" But the majority have placed him higher than his rival, at least higher in their hearts. Gervinus has remarked a curious contradiction in the fate of their works. Schiller, who wrote for men, is the favourite of women and youths; Goethe, who remained in perpetual youth, is only relished by men. The secret of this is, that Schiller had those passions and enthusiasms which Goethe wanted. Goethe told Eckermann that his works never could be popular; and, except the minor poems and *Faust*, there are none of his productions which equal the popularity of Schiller's.

To make an instrument of vengeance out of this partisanship, seemed an excellent idea to Kotzebue, who, after being crowned at Berlin, and saluted all over Germany with tributes of tears, now came to his native city of Weimar. He was invited to court, but he was not admitted into the select Goethe-Schiller circle; which irritated his vanity the more, because a joke of Goethe's had been repeated to him. In Japan, besides the temporal court of the emperor, there is the spiritual court of the Dalai-Lama, which exercises a superior though secret influence. Goethe, alluding to this, said: "It is of no use to Kotzebue that he has been received at the temporal court of Japan, if he cannot get admitted to the spiritual court." Kotzebue thought he could destroy that court, and set up one of his own, of which Schiller should be the Dalai-Lama.

There was at this time a select little circle, composed of Goethe, Schiller, Meyer, and several distinguished women, the Countess von Einsiedel, Fraülein von Imhoff, Frau von Wolzogen, and others. The great preponderance of women in this circle gave a romantic tinge to the laws they imposed on themselves. On Kotzebue's arrival, one of Amalia's maids of honour used her utmost to obtain his admission; but Schiller and Goethe, resolved on his exclusion, got a bye-law enacted, that "no member should have the power of introducing another person, native or stranger, without the previously expressed unanimous consent of the other members. A certain coolness had sprung up between some of the members of the circle, and Goethe, pestered by the iteration of the request that Kotzebue should be admitted, at last said, "Laws once recognised should be upheld; if not, it would be better to break up the society altogether; which, perhaps, would be the more advisable, as constancy is always difficult, if not tedious, to ladies." The ladies were naturally enough irritated. Kotzebue was ready to inflame them. Schiller had just gone to Leipsic; and Kotzebue, taking advantage of this absence, organised a fête to celebrate the coronation of Frederick Schiller in the Stadthouse of Weimar. Scenes from *Don Carlos*, the *Maid of Orleans*, and *Maria Stuart*, were to come first. Goethe's favourite, the Countess von Einsiedel (now his foe), was to represent the Joan of Arc; the Fräulein von Imhoff the Queen of Scots; Sophie Moreau was to recite the Song of the Bell. Kotzebue was to appear as Father Thibaut in the *Maid of Orleans* and as the Bell Founder, in which latter character he was to strike the mould of the bell (made of pasteboard), and breaking it in pieces, disclose the bust of Schiller, which was to be crowned by the ladies. The preparations for this fête were eagerly carried forward. Weimar was in a state of excitement. The cabal looked prosperous. The Princess Caroline had consented to be present. Schiller was most pressingly invited, but said, in Goethe's house, a few days before, "I shall send word I am ill." To this Goethe made no reply. He heard of all the arrangements in perfect silence.

"It was thought," says Falk, to whom we owe this story, "that a coolness between the two great men would spring out of this cabal; especially if the simple, unsuspecting Schiller should fall into the toils laid for him. But they who suspected this, knew not the men. Fortunately, however, the whole

scheme fell to pieces. The directors of the Library refused to lend Schiller's bust; the Burgomaster refused to lend the Stadthouse. Rarely has so melancholy, so disastrous a day risen on the gay world of Weimar. To see the fairest, most brilliant hopes thus crushed at a blow when so near their fulfilment, what was it but to be wrecked in sight of port? Let the reader but imagine the now utterly useless expenditure of crape, gauze, ribbons, lace, beads, flowers which the fair creatures had made; not to mention the pasteboard for the bell, the canvas colours, brushes for the scenes, the wax candles for lighting, &c. Let him think of the still greater outlay of time and trouble requisite for the learning so many and such various parts; let him figure to himself a majestic Maid of Orleans, a captivating Queen of Scots, a lovely Agnes, so suddenly compelled to descend from the pinnacle of glory, and in evil moment to lay aside the crown and sceptre, helm, dress and ornament, and he will admit there never was fate more cruel."

Shortly after this—on the 13th June 1802—Goethe's son was confirmed. Herder officiated on the occasion; and this brought him once more into that friendly relation with Goethe, which of late had been cooled by his jealousy of Schiller. Herder had been jealous of the growing friendship of Goethe and Merck; he was still more embittered by the growing friendship of Goethe and Schiller. He was bitter against Schiller's idol, Kant, and all Kant's admirers, declaring the new philosophy destructive of Christian morals. He was growing old, and the bitterness of his youth was intensified by age and sickness. Schiller was in every way antagonistic to him; and the representation of *Wallenstein* "made him ill." Goethe, whose marvellous tolerance he had so sorely tried, and who never ceased to admire his fine qualities, said, "one could not go to him without rejoicing in his mildness, one could not quit him without having been hurt by his bitterness." For some time Goethe was never mentioned in the Herder family, except in an almost inimical tone; and yet Herder's wife wrote to Knebel: "Let us thank God that Goethe still lives. Weimar would be intolerable without him." They lived together in Jena for a few days, and parted never to see each other again. In December 1803, Herder was no more.

While discussing Physical Science with Ritter, Comparative Anatomy with Loder, Optics with Himly, and making observations on the Moon, the plan of a great poem, *De Natura*

Rerum, rose in Goethe's mind, and like so many other plans, remained a plan. Intercourse with the great philologist Wolff led him a willing student into Antiquity; and from Voss he tried to master the whole principles of Metre with the zeal of a philologist. There is something very piquant in the idea of the greatest poet of his nation, the most musical master of verse in all possible forms, trying to acquire a theoretic knowledge of that which on instinct he did to perfection. It is characteristic of his new tendency to theorise on poetry.

Whoever reads the *Natürliche Tochter*, which was completed at this period, will probably attribute to this theorising tendency the absence of all life and vigour which makes it "marble smooth and marble cold." But although it appears marble cold to us, it was the marble urn in which the poet had buried real feelings; and Abeken relates that the actress who originally performed the Heroine, told him how, on one occasion, when she was rehearsing the part in Goethe's room, he was so overcome with emotion, that with tears in his eyes he bade her pause.[1] This may seem more strange than the fact that Schiller admired the work, and wrote to Humboldt: "The high symbolism with which it is handled, so that all the crude material is neutralised, and everything becomes portion of an ideal Whole, is truly wonderful. It is entirely Art, and thereby reaches the innermost Nature, through the power of truth." And Fichte—who, Varnhagen tells me, was with him in the box at the Theatre when the play was performed at Berlin, and was greatly moved by it—declared it to be Goethe's masterpiece. Rosenkrantz is amazed at the almost universal condemnation of the work. "What pathos, what warmth, what tragic pain!" he exclaims. Others would echo the exclamation—in irony. It seems to me that the very praise of Schiller and Fichte is a justification of the general verdict. A drama which is *so* praised, *i.e.* for its high symbolism, is a drama philosophers and critics may glorify, but which Art abjures. A drama, or any other poem, may carry with it material which admits of symbolical interpretation; but the poet who makes symbolism the substance and the purpose of his work, has mistaken his vocation. The whole Greek Drama has been *interpreted* into symbols by some modern scholars; but if the Greek Dramatists had written with any such purpose as that detected by these interpreters, they would

[1] ABEKEN: *Goethe in den Jahren* 1771–75, p. 21.

never have survived to give interpreters the trouble. The *Iliad* has quite recently been once more interpreted into an allegory; Dante's *Divine Comedy* has been interpreted into an allegory; Shakspeare's plays have, by Ulrici, been interpreted into moral platitudes; the *Wahlverwandtschaften* has been interpreted into a "world history." Indeed symbolism being in its very nature *arbitrary*—the indication of a meaning not directly expressed, but arbitrarily thrust *under* the expression—there is no limit to the power of *interpretation*. It is, however, quite certain that the poets had not the meanings which their commentators find; and equally certain that if poets wrote for commentators they would never produce masterpieces.

In December 1803 Weimar had a visitor whose rank is high among its illustrious guests: Madame de Stael. Napoleon would not suffer her to remain in France; she was brought by Benjamin Constant to the German Athens, that she might see and know something of the men her work *De l'Allemagne* was to reveal to her countrymen. It is easy to ridicule Madame de Stael; to call her, as Heine does, "a whirlwind in petticoats," and a "Sultana of mind." But Germans should be grateful to her for that book, which still remains one of the best books written about Germany; and the lover of letters will not forget that her genius has, in various departments of literature, rendered for ever illustrious the power of the womanly intellect. Goethe and Schiller, whom she stormed with cannonades of talk, spoke of her intellect with great admiration. Of all living creatures he had seen, Schiller said, she was "the most talkative, the most combative, the most gesticulative;" but she was "also the most cultivated, and the most gifted." The contrast between her French culture and his German culture, and the difficulty he had in expressing himself in French, did not prevent his being much interested. In the sketch of her he sent to Goethe it is well said: "She insists on explaining everything; understanding everything; measuring everything. She admits of no Darkness; nothing Incommensurable; and where her torch throws no light, there nothing can exist. Hence her horror for the Ideal Philosophy, which she thinks leads to mysticism and superstition. For what we call poetry she has no sense; she can only appreciate what is passionate, rhetorical, universal. She does not prize what is false, but does not always perceive what is true."

The Duchess Amalia was enchanted with her, and the duke wrote to Goethe, who was at Jena, begging him to come over,

and be seen by her; which Goethe very positively declined. He said, if she wished very much to see him, and would come to Jena, she should be very heartily welcomed; a comfortable lodging and a bourgeoise table would be offered her, and every day they could have some hours together when his business was over; but he could not undertake to go to court, and into society; he did not feel himself strong enough. In the beginning of 1804, however, he came to Weimar, and there he made her acquaintance; that is to say, he received her in his own house, at first *tête-à-tête*, and afterwards in small circles of friends.

Except when she managed to animate him by her paradoxes or wit, he was cold and formal to her, even more so than to other remarkable people; and he has told us the reason. Rousseau had been drawn into a correspondence with two women, who addressed themselves to him as admirers; he had shown himself in this correspondence by no means to his advantage, now (1803) that the letters appeared in print.[1] Goethe had heard or read of this correspondence; and Madame de Stael had frankly told him she intended to print his conversation. This was enough to make him ill at ease in her society; and although she said he was "un homme d'un esprit prodigieux en conversation . . . quand on le sait faire parler il est admirable," she never saw the real, but a factitious Goethe. By dint of provocation—and champagne—she managed to make him talk brilliantly; she never got him to talk to her seriously. On the 29th of February she left Weimar, to the great relief both of Goethe and Schiller.[2]

Nothing calls for notice during the rest of this year, except the translation of an unpublished work by Diderot, *Rameau's Nephew*, and the commencement of the admirable work on *Winckelmann and his Age*. The beginning of 1805 found him troubled with a presentiment that either he or Schiller would die in this year. Both were dangerously ill. Christiane, writing to her friend Nicolaus Meyer, says, that for the last three months the Geheimrath has scarcely had a day's health, and at times it seemed as if he must die. It was a touching

[1] The correspondence alluded to can be no other than that of Rousseau with Madame de la Tour-Franqueville and her friend, whose name is still unknown; it is one of the most interesting among the many interesting correspondences of women with celebrated men. A charming notice of it may be found in STE.-BEUVE'S *Causeries du Lundi*, vol. ii.

[2] In the *Tag und Jahres Hefte*, 1804 (*Werke*, xxvii. p. 143), the reader will find Goethe's account of Madame de Stael and her relation to him.

scene when Schiller, a little recovered from his last attack, entered the sick room of his friend. They walked up to each other, and, without speaking a word, expressed their joy at meeting in a long and manly kiss. Both hoped with the return of spring for return of health and power. Schiller meanwhile was translating the *Phèdre* of Racine; Goethe was translating the *Rameau's Nephew*, and writing the history of the *Farbenlehre*.

The spring was coming, but on its blossoms Schiller's eyes were not to rest. On the 30th of April the friends parted for the last time. Schiller was going to the theatre. Goethe, too unwell to accompany him, said good-bye at the door of Schiller's house. During Schiller's illness Goethe was much depressed. Voss found him once pacing up and down his garden, crying by himself. He mastered his emotion as Voss told him of Schiller's state, and only said, "Fate is pitiless, and man but little."

It really seemed as if the two friends were to be united in the grave as they had been in life. Goethe grew worse. From Schiller, life was fast ebbing. On the 8th of May he was given over. "His sleep that night was disturbed; his mind again wandered; with the morning he had lost all consciousness. He spoke incoherently and chiefly in Latin. His last drink was champagne. Towards three in the afternoon came on the last exhaustion; the breath began to fail. Towards four he would have called for naphtha, but the last syllable died upon his lips; finding himself speechless, he motioned that he wished to write something; but his hand could only trace three letters, in which was yet recognisable the distinct character of his writing. His wife knelt by his side; he pressed her hand. His sister-in-law stood with the physician at the foot of the bed, applying warm cushions to the cold feet. Suddenly a sort of electric shock came over his countenance; the head fell back; the deepest calm settled on his face. His features were as those of one in a soft sleep.

"The news of Schiller's death soon spread through Weimar. The theatre was closed; men gathered into groups. Each felt as if he had lost his dearest friend. To Goethe, enfeebled himself by long illness, and again stricken by some relapse, no one had the courage to mention the death of his beloved rival. When the tidings came to Henry Meyer, who was with him, Meyer left the house abruptly lest his grief might escape him. No one else had courage to break the intelligence.

Goethe perceived that the members of his household seemed embarrassed and anxious to avoid him. He divined something of the fact, and said at last, 'I see—Schiller must be very ill.' That night they overheard him—the serene man who seemed almost above human affection, who disdained to reveal to others whatever grief he felt when his son died—they overheard Goethe weep! In the morning he said to a friend, 'Is it not true that Schiller was very ill yesterday?' The friend (it was a woman) sobbed. 'He is dead,' said Goethe faintly. 'You have said it,' was the answer. 'He is dead,' repeated Goethe, and covered his face with hands."[1]

"The half of my existence is gone from me," he wrote to Zelter. His first thoughts were to continue the *Demetrius* in the spirit in which Schiller had planned it, so that Schiller's mind might still be with him, still working at his side. But the effort was vain. He could do nothing. "My diary," he says, "is a blank at this period; the white pages intimate the blank in my existence. In those days I took no interest in anything."

CHAPTER VII

FAUST

ALTHOUGH the first part of *Faust* was not published until 1806, it was already completed before Schiller's death, and may therefore be fitly noticed in this place. For more than thirty years had the work been growing in its author's mind, and although its precise chronology is not ascertainable, yet an approximation is possible which will not be without service to the student.

The Faust-fable was familiar to Goethe as a child. In Strasburg, during 1770–71, he conceived the idea of fusing his personal experience into the mould of the old legend; but he wrote nothing of the work until 1774–5, when the ballad of the King of Thule, the first monologue, and the first scene with Wagner, were written; and during his love affair with Lili, he sketched Gretchen's catastrophe, the scene in the street, the scene in Gretchen's bedroom, the scenes between Faust and Mephisto during the walk, and in the street, and

[1] BULWER'S *Life of Schiller*.

the garden scene. In his Swiss journey, he sketched the first interview with Mephisto, and the compact; also the scene before the city gates, the plan of Helena (subsequently much modified), the scene between the student and Mephisto, and Auerbach's cellar. When in Italy, he read over the old manuscript, and wrote the scenes of the witches' kitchen and the cathedral; also the monologue in the forest. In 1797, *the whole was remodelled.* Then were added the two Prologues, the Walpurgis night, and the dedication. In 1801, he completed it, as it now stands, retouching it perhaps in 1806, when it was published. Let us now with some carefulness examine this child of so much care.

The cock in Esop scratched a pearl into the light of day, and declared that to him it was less valuable than a grain of millet seed. The pearl is only a pearl to him who knows its value. And so it is with fine subjects: they are only fine in the hands of great artists. Where the requisite power exists, a happy subject is a fortune; without that power, it only serves to place the artist's incompetence in broader light. Mediocre poets have tried their prentice hands at Faust; poets of undeniable genius have tried to master it; Goethe alone has seen in it the subject to which his genius was fully adequate; and has produced from it the greatest poem of modern times:

> "An Orphic tale indeed,—
> A tale divine, of high and passionate thoughts,
> To their own music chaunted."

Although genius can find material in the trifles which ordinary minds pass heedlessly by, it is only a very few subjects which permit the full display of genius. The peculiarities of a man's organisation and education invest certain subjects with a charm and a significance. Such was *Der Freischütz* for Weber; the maternity of the Madonna for Raphael; *Faust* for Goethe. Thus it is that a fine subject becomes the marble out of which a lasting monument is carved.

Quite beyond my purpose, and my limits, would be any account of the various materials, historical and æsthetical, which German literature has gathered into one vast section on Faust, and the Faust legend. There is not a single detail which has not exercised the industry and ingenuity of commentators; so that the curious need complain of no lack of informants. English readers will find in the translations by Hayward and Blackie a reasonable amount of such informa-

tion pleasantly given; German readers will only have the embarrassment of a choice. Far more important than all learned apparatus, is the attempt to place ourselves at the right point of view for studying and enjoying this wondrous poem, the popularity of which is almost unexampled. It appeals to all minds with the irresistible fascination of an eternal problem, and with the charm of endless variety. It has every element: wit, pathos, wisdom, farce, mystery, melody, reverence, doubt, magic, and irony; not a chord of the lyre is unstrung, not a fibre of the heart untouched. Students earnestly wrestling with doubt, striving to solve the solemn riddles of life, feel their pulses strangely agitated by this poem; and not students alone, but as Heine, with allowable exaggeration, says, every billiard-marker in Germany puzzles himself over it. In *Faust* we see, as in a mirror, the eternal problem of our intellectual existence; and, beside it, varied lineaments of our social existence. It is at once a problem and a picture. Therein lies its fascination. The problem embraces questions of vital importance; the picture represents opinions, sentiments, classes, moving on the stage of life. The great problem is stated in all its nudity; the picture is painted in all its variety.

This twofold nature of the work explains its popularity; and, what is more to our purpose, gives the clue to its secret of composition; a clue which all the critics I am acquainted with have overlooked; and although I cannot but feel that considerable suspicion must attach itself to any opinion claiming novelty on so old a subject, I hope the contents of this chapter will furnish sufficient evidence to justify its acceptance. The conviction first arose in my mind as the result of an inquiry into the causes of the popularity of *Hamlet*. The two works are so allied, and so associated together in every mind, that the criticism of the one will be certain to throw light on the other.

Hamlet, in spite of a prejudice current in certain circles that if now produced for the first time it would fail, is the most popular play in our language. It *amuses* thousands annually, and it stimulates the minds of millions. Performed in barns and minor theatres oftener than in Theatres Royal, it is always and everywhere attractive. The lowest and most ignorant audiences delight in it. The source of the delight is twofold: First, its reach of thought on topics the most profound; for the dullest soul can *feel* a grandeur which it cannot *understand*,

and will listen with hushed awe to the outpourings of a great meditative mind obstinately questioning fate; Secondly, its wondrous dramatic variety. Only consider for a moment the striking effects it has in the Ghost; the tyrant murderer; the terrible adulterous queen; the melancholy hero, doomed to so awful a fate; the poor Ophelia, broken-hearted and dying in madness; the play within a play, entrapping the conscience of the King; the ghastly mirth of gravediggers; the funeral of Ophelia interrupted by a quarrel over her grave betwixt her brother and her lover; and finally, the hurried bloody dénouement. Such are the figures woven in the tapestry by passion and poetry. Add thereto the absorbing fascination of profound thoughts. It may indeed be called the tragedy of thought, for there is as much reflection as action in it; but the reflection itself is made dramatic, and hurries the breathless audience along, with an interest which knows no pause. Strange it is to notice in this work the indissoluble union of refinement with horrors, of reflection with tumult, of high and delicate poetry with broad, palpable, theatrical effects. The machinery is a machinery of horrors, physical and mental: ghostly apparitions—hideous revelations of incestuous adultery and murder—madness—Polonius killed like a rat while listening behind the arras—gravediggers casting skulls upon the stage and desecrating the churchyard with their mirth—these and other horrors form the machinery by which moves the highest, the grandest, and the most philosophic of tragedies.

It is not difficult to see how a work so various should become so popular. *Faust*, which rivals it in popularity, rivals it also in prodigality. Almost every typical aspect of life is touched upon; almost every subject of interest finds an expression in almost every variety of rhythm. It gains a large audience because it appeals to a large audience:

> Die Mass könnt ihr nur durch Masse zwingen,
> Ein jeder sucht sich endlich selbst was aus.
> Wer Vieles bringt wird manchem Etwas bringen,
> Und jeder geht zufrieden aus dem Haus.[1]

Critics usually devote their whole attention to an exposition of the Idea of Faust; and it seems to me that in this laborious

[1] The mass can be compelled by mass alone,
Each one at length seeks out what is his own.
Bring much, and every one is sure to find
From out your nosegay something to his mind.
BLACKIE.

search after a remote explanation they have overlooked the more obvious and natural explanation furnished by the work itself. The reader who has followed me thus far will be aware that I have little sympathy with that Philosophy of Art which consists in translating Art into Philosophy, and that I trouble myself, and him, very little with "considerations on the Idea." Experience tells me that the Artists themselves had quite other objects in view than that of developing an Idea; and experience further says that the Artist's public is by no means primarily anxious about the Idea, but leaves that entirely to the critics,—who cannot agree among themselves. In studying a work of Art, we should proceed as in studying a work of nature: after delighting in the effect, we should try to ascertain what are the *means* by which the effect is produced, and not at all what is the Idea lying behind the means. If in dissecting an animal we get clear conceptions of the mechanism by which certain functions are performed, we do not derive any increase of real knowledge from being told that the functions are the final causes of the mechanism; while, on the other hand, if an *a priori* conception of purpose is made to do the work of actual inspection of the mechanism, we find ourselves in a swamp of conjectural metaphysics where no dry land is to be found.

The Theatre Prologue. This opening of the work shows a strolling company of Players about to exhibit themselves in the market-place, to please the motley crowd with some rude image of the Comedy and Tragedy of Life. The personages are three: The Manager, the Poet, and the Merry Andrew: three types representing the question of Dramatic Art in reference to poets and the public. The Manager opposes his hard practical sense to the vague yearnings and unworldly aspirings of the Poet; he thinks of receipts, the poet thinks of fame. But here, as ever, hard practical sense is not the best judge; the arbitration of a third is needed, and we have it in the Merry Andrew, who corrects both disputants by looking to the real issue, namely, the *amusement of the public.* When the poet flies off in declamations about Posterity, this wise and merry arbiter slily asks: Who then is to amuse the present? A question we feel repeatedly tempted to ask those lofty writers who, despising a success they have striven in vain to achieve, throw themselves with greater confidence on the Future; as if the Future in *its* turn would not also be a Present, having its despisers and its Jeremiahs.

The Theatre Prologue, brief though it is, indicates the whole question of poets, managers, and public. It is the wisest word yet uttered on the topic, and seems as fresh and applicable as if written yesterday. No consideration of importance is omitted, and there are no superfluities. Every line is thrown off with the utmost ease, and with the perfect clearness of perfect strength. One might say without exaggeration that the mastery of genius is as distinctly traceable in these easy felicitous touches, as in any other part of the work; for it is perhaps in the treatment of such trifles that power is most decisively seen: inferior writers always overdo or underdo such things; they are inflated or flat. All bodies at a certain degree of heat become luminous, and in the exaltation of passion even an inferior mind will have inspirations of felicitous thought; but, reduced to normal temperatures, that which before was luminous becomes opaque, and the inferior mind, being neither exalted by passion nor moved towards new issues by the pressure of crowding thoughts, exhibits its normal strength. And that is why the paradox is true, of real mastery being most clearly discernible in trifles. When the wind is furiously sweeping the surface, we cannot distinguish the shallowest from the deepest stream; it is only when the winds are at rest that we can see to the bottom of the shallow stream, and perceive the deep stream to be beyond our fathom.

We may still call upon the wisdom of this Prologue. The Manager wants to know how best to attract the public:

> Sie sitzen schon, mit hohen Augenbraunen
> Gelassen da, und möchten gern erstaunen.
> Ich weiss wie man den Geist des Volks versöhnt;
> Doch so verlegen bin ich nie gewesen;
> Zwar sind sie an das Beste nichte gewöhnt
> *Allein sie haben schrecklich viel gelesen.*[1]

The Poet, who never drifts towards Utilitarianism, replies in rhapsodies about his Art; whereupon the Merry Andrew bids

> [1] With eyebrows arch'd already they sit there,
> And gape for something new to make them stare.
> I know how to conciliate the mob,
> But ne'er yet felt it such a ticklish job:
> 'Tis true what they have read is not the best,
> But that they much have read must be confessed.
>
> BLACKIE'S *Translation.*

I shall generally follow this translation; but the passage just cited is not of the usual excellence. The last couplet of the original is one of those couplets which, in their ease, familiarity, and felicity, are the despair of translators.

him prove himself a master of his Art, by *amusing* the public.

> Let Fancy with her many-sounding chorus,
> Reason, Sense, Feeling, Passion, move before us;
> But mark you well! a spice of Folly too.

The Manager insists upon "incidents" above all things:

> They come to see, you must engage their eyes.

And he adds, with true managerial instinct,

> You give a piece—give it at once in pieces!
> In vain into an artful whole you glue it,—
> The public, in the long run, will undo it.

So the dispute runs on, till the Manager settles it by resolving to give a grand and motley spectacle, "From heaven to earth, and thence thro' earth to hell." This sentence gives us the clue to the composition of the work; a clue which has usually been taken only as a guide through the mental labyrinth, through the phases of the psychological problem, instead of through that, and *also* through the scenes of life represented.

The *Prologue in Heaven* succeeds. In many quarters this Prologue has been strangely misunderstood. It has been called a parody of the Book of Job, and censured as a parody. It has been stigmatised as irrelevant and irreverent, out of keeping with the rest, and gratuitously blasphemous. Some translators have omitted it "as unfit for publication." Coleridge debated with himself, "whether it became his moral character to render into English, and so far certainly to lend his countenance to, language much of which he thought vulgar, licentious, and blasphemous."[1] And I will confess that my first impression was strongly against it; an impression which was only removed by considering the legendary nature of the poem, and the legendary style adopted. It is only organic analysis which can truly seize the meaning of organic elements; so long as we judge an organism *ab extra*, according to the Idea, or according to *our* Ideas, and not according to *its* nature, we shall never rightly understand structure and function; and this is as true of poems as of animals. Madame de Stael admirably says of the whole work, "il serait véritablement trop naïf de supposer qu'un tel homme ne sache pas toutes les fautes de goût qu'on peut reprocher à sa pièce;

[1] *Table Talk*, vol. ii. p. 118.

mais il est curieux de connaître les motifs qui l'ont déterminé à les y laisser, ou plutôt à les y mettre." And in trying to understand what were the motives which induced Goethe to introduce this prologue, and to treat it in this style, we must dismiss at once the supposition that he meant to be blasphemous, and the supposition that he could not have been as grave and decorous as Klopstock, had he deemed it fitting. Let us look a little closer.

The wager between Mephistopheles and the Deity was part and parcel of the Legend. In adopting the Legend, Goethe could not well omit this part, and his treatment of it is in the true mediæval style, as all who are familiar with mediæval legends, and especially those who are familiar with the Miracle-plays of Europe, will recognise at once. In these Miracle-plays we are startled by the coarsest buffoonery, and what to modern ears sounds like blasphemy, side by side with the most serious lessons; things the most sacred are dragged through the dirt of popular wit; persons the most sacred are made the subject of jests and stories which would send a shudder through the pious reader of our times. As a specimen of the lengths to which this jesting spirit went, in the works of priests, performed by priests, and used for religious instruction, the following bit of buffoonery may be cited. In one of the plays God the Father is seen sleeping on his throne during the Crucifixion. An Angel appears to him; and this dialogue takes place:

"*Angel.* Eternal Father, you are doing what is not right, and will cover yourself with shame. Your much beloved son is just dead, and you sleep like a drunkard.

"*God the Father.* Is he then dead?

"*Angel.* Ay, that he is.

"*God the Father.* Devil take me if I knew anything about it."[1]

Nothing is more certain than that such things were not intended as blasphemous; they were the naïve representations which uncultured minds naïvely accepted. In treating a mediæval legend, Goethe therefore gave it something of the

[1] Quoted in SCHERR: *Geschichte der Deutschen Cultur*, p. 171. In the early forms of the drama, I remember nothing so irreverent as this passage, but many of extreme coarseness and ignoble buffoonery. Nor is this strange perversion of the religious ceremony unexampled. In Greece, where the Drama was a religious festival, the same comic license flourished unrestricted; the very stage trodden by the Eumenides and solemnised by the presence of the gods, was, in the after-piece, the scene of gross buffoonery, in which the gods were buffoons.

mediæval colouring—a faint tint, just enough to effect his purpose, when the real colour would have been an offence. In adopting the idea of the Prologue he followed the old puppet-play of *Faust*, of which there are many versions.[1] An inferior artist would assuredly have made this Prologue as grand and metaphysical as possible. Goethe intentionally made it naïve. We cannot suppose him unable to treat it otherwise had he so willed; but he did not will it so. He was led to write this scene by his study of the older literature, and the source of its inspiration is traceable in this naïveté.[2] Consider the whole tenor of the work, and see how great a want of keeping there would have been in a prologue which represented Mephistopheles and the Deity according to modern conceptions of severe propriety, when the rest of the work was treated according to legendary belief; scenes like that with the poodle, the Walpurgis Night, and the Witches' Kitchen, would have been in open contradiction with a Prologue in the modern spirit. It seems to me that the Prologue is just what it should be: poetical, with a touch of mediæval colouring. It strikes the key note; it opens the world of wonder and legendary belief, wherein you are to see transacted the great and mystic drama of life; it is the threshold at which you are bidden to lay aside your garments soiled with the dust of the work-day world; fairy garments are given in exchange, and you enter a new region, where a drama is acted, dream-like in form, in spirit terribly real.

Then, again, the language put into the month of Mephistopheles,—which is so irreverent as to make the unreflecting reader regard the whole Prologue as blasphemous,—is it not strictly in keeping? Here we see the "spirit that denies" so utterly and essentially irreverent, that even in the presence of the Creator, he feels no awe; the grander emotions are not excitable within his soul; and, like all his species, he will not believe that others feel such emotions: "Pardon me," he says, "I cannot utter fine phrases." To such spirits, all grandeur of phrase is grandiloquence. Mephisto is not a hypocrite: he cannot pay even *that* homage to virtue. He is a sceptic, pure and simple. In the presence of the Lord he demeans himself much as we may imagine a "fast" young man behaving when introduced into the presence of a Goethe, without brains

[1] See MAGNIN: *Histoire des Marionnettes*, p. 325.

[2] It was probably this feeling of its naïveté which made him say that it ought to be translated into the French of Marot.

enough to be aware of his own insignificance. He offers to lay a wager just as the fast youth would offer to "back" any opinion of his own; and the brief soliloquy in which he expresses his feelings on the result of the interview has a levity and a tinge of sarcasm intensely devilish.

There are, it will be observed, two Prologues: one on the Stage, the other in Heaven. The reason of this I take to lie in the twofold nature of the poem, in the two leading subjects to be worked out. The world and the world's ways are to be depicted; the individual soul and its struggles are to be portrayed. For the former we have the theatre-prologue, because "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players." For the latter we have the prologue in heaven, because heaven is the centre and the goal of all struggles, doubts, and reverence; and because Faust is struggling heavenward:

Nicht irdisch ist des Thoren Trank noch Speise,
Ihn treibt die Gährung in die Ferne.

"This fool's meat and drink are not earthly," says Mephisto. "The ferment of his spirit impels him towards the for ever distant."

There is also another organic necessity for these two prologues: in the first we see the Manager and his Poet moving the puppets of the scene; in the second, we see the Lord and Mephistopheles moving the puppets of the drama within a drama. It is from strolling players that the cause of the whole representation proceeds; it is from heaven that the drama of the temptation issues. These two prologues were both written in the same year, and long after the conception of the Faust-legend had taken shape in Goethe's mind. They were after-thoughts, and it becomes us to inquire what purpose they were intended to subserve. I believe that in his first conception he only intended the *individual* element of the work to be developed; and that the world-picture was an after-thought, the product of reflection. In this subsequent conception the *Second Part* was more or less forecast; and the two prologues are introductory to the whole poem in this new conception.

But to proceed with our analysis. The first scene is that of *Faust in his study*. The drama here begins. Faust sits amid his books and instruments, vain appliances of vain inquiry. Pale, and worn with midnight toil, he feels his efforts have been vain, feels that science is impotent, feels that no answer

to his questions can be extorted by mortal wisdom, and gives himself to magic.

That I, with bitter-sweating brow,
No more may teach what I do not know;
That I with piercing ken may see
The world's in-dwelling energy,
The hidden seeds of life explore,
And deal in words and forms no more.

The moon, which shines in upon him, recalls him to a sense of the Life without, which he has neglected in his study of parchments and old bones: *Und fragst du noch warum dein Herz*, he exclaims in the well-known lines, and opens the magic book to summon a spirit to his aid:

(*He seizes the book, and pronounces with a mysterious air the sign of the Spirit. A red flame darts forth, and the Spirit appears in the flame.*)

Spirit. Who calls me?
Faust (*turning away*). Vision of affright!
Spirit. Thou hast with mighty spells invoked me,
And to obey thy call provoked me,
And now—
Faust. Hence from my sight!
Spirit. Thy panting prayer besought my form to view,
To hear my voice, and know my semblance too;
Now bending from my lofty sphere to please thee,
Here am I!—ha! what shuddering terrors seize thee,
And overpower thee quite! where now is gone
The soul's proud call? the breast that scorn'd to own
Earth's thrall, a world in itself created,
And bore and cherish'd? with its fellow sated
That swell'd with throbbing joy to leave its sphere
And vie with spirits, their exalted peer.
Where art thou, Faust? whose invocation rung
Upon mine ear, whose powers all round me clung?
Art *thou* that Faust? whom melts my breath away,
Trembling ev'n to the life-depths of thy frame,
Now shrunk into a piteous worm of clay!
Faust. Shall I then yield to thee, thou thing of flame?
I am thy peer, am Faust, am still the same!
Spirit. Where life's floods flow,
And its tempests rave,
Up and down I wave,
Flit I to and fro:
Birth and the grave,
Life's secret glow,
A changing motion,
A boundless ocean,
Whose waters heave
Eternally;
Thus on the noisy loom of Time I weave
The living mantle of the Deity.
Faust. Thou who round the wide world wendest,
Thou busy sprite, how near I feel to thee!

Spirit. Thou'rt like the spirit whom thou comprehendest,
Not me! (*vanishes.*)
Faust (*astounded*). Not thee!
Whom, then?
I, image of the Godhead,
Not like thee! (*knocking is heard.*)
Oh, death!—'tis Wagner's knock—he comes to break
The charm that bound me while the Spirit spake!
Thus my supremest bliss ends in delusion
Marr'd by a sneaking pedant-slave's intrusion!

How fine is this transition, the breaking in of prose reality upon the visions of the poet,—the entrance of Wagner, who, hearing voices, fancied Faust was declaiming from a Greek drama, and comes to profit by the declamation. Wagner is a type of the Philister, and pedant; he sacrifices himself to Books as Faust does to Knowledge. He adores the letter. The dust of folios is his element; parchment is the source of his inspiration.

Left once more to himself, Faust continues his sad soliloquy of despair. The thoughts, and the music in which they are uttered, must be sought in the original, no translation can be adequate. He resolves to die; and seizing the phial which contains the poison, says:—

I look on thee, and soothed is my heart's pain;
I grasp thee, straight is lulled my racking brain,
And wave by wave my soul's flood ebbs away.
I see the ocean wide before me rise,
And at my feet her sparkling mirror lies;
To brighter shores invites a brighter day.

He raises the cup to his lips, when suddenly a sound of bells is heard, accompanied by the distant singing of the choir. It is Easter. And with these solemn sounds are borne the memories of his early youth, awaking the feelings of early devotion. Life retains him upon earth; Memory vanquishes despair.

This opening scene was *suggested* by the old puppet-play in which Faust appears, surrounded with compasses, spheres, and cabalistic instruments, wavering between theology, the divine science, philosophy, the human science, and magic, the infernal science. But Goethe has enriched the suggestion from his own wealth of thought and experience.

The scene before the gate. We quit the gloomy study, and the solitary struggles of the individual, to breathe the fresh air, and contemplate everyday life, and everyday joyousness.

It is Sunday; students and maid-servants, soldiers and shop-keepers, are thronging out of the city gates on their way to various suburban beerhouses which line the high road. Clouds of dust and smoke accompany the throng; joyous laughter, incipient flirtations, merry song, and eager debates, give us glimpses of the common world. This truly German picture is wonderfully painted, and its place in the poem is significant, showing how life is accepted by the common mind, in contrast with the previous scene which showed life pressing on the student, demanding from him an interpretation of its solemn significance. Faust has wasted his days in questioning; the people spend theirs in frivolous pursuits, or sensual enjoyment; the great riddle of the world never troubles them, for to them the world is a familiarity and no mystery. They are more anxious about good tobacco and frothy beer, about whether this one will dance with that one, and about the new official dignitaries, than about all that the heavens above or earth beneath can have of mystery. Upon this scene Faust, the struggler, and Wagner, the pedant, come to gaze. It affects Faust deeply, and makes him feel how much wiser these simple people are than he is—for they enjoy.

Hier ist des Volkes wahrer Himmel
Zufrieden jauchzet gross und Klein:
Hier bin ich Mensch, hier darf ich's seyn.

Yes, here he feels himself a man, one of the common brotherhood, for here he yearns after the enjoyments which he sees them pursuing. But Wagner, true pedant, feels nothing of the kind; he is only there because he wishes to be with Faust. He is one of those who, in the presence of Niagara, would vex you with questions about arrow-headed inscriptions, and in the tumult of a village festival would discuss the origin of the Pelasgi.

The people crowd round Faust, paying him the reverence always paid by the illiterate to the "scholar." Wagner sees it with envy; Faust feels it to be a mockery. Reverence to him, who feels profoundly his own insignificance! He seats himself upon a stone, and, gazing on the setting sun, pours forth melancholy reflections on the worthlessness of life, and the inanity of his struggles. The old peasant has recalled to him the scenes of his youth, when while the fever raged he was always tending the sick, and saved so many lives, "helping,

helped by the Father of Good." Seated on that stone, the visions of his youth come back upon his mind:

> Here sat I oft, plunged in deep thought, alone,
> And wore me out with fasting and with prayer.
> Rich then in hope, in faith then strong,
> With tears and sobs my hands I wrung,
> And weened the end of that dire pest,
> From the will of Heaven to rest.

His means were unholy.

> Here was the medicine, and the patient died,
> But no one questioned—who survived?
> And thus have we, with drugs more curst than hell,
> Within these vales, these mountains here,
> Raged than the very pest more fell!
> I have myself to thousands poisons given;
> They pin'd away, and I must live to hear
> Men for the reckless murd'rers thanking heaven!

Wagner does not understand such scruples. He is not troubled, like Faust, with a consciousness of a double nature. The Poodle appears, to interrupt their dialogue, and Wagner, with characteristic stupidity, sees nothing but a *Poodle* in the apparition:

> Ich sah ihn lange schon, nicht wichtig schien er mir.

The spiritual insight of Faust is more discerning. They quit the scene, the Poodle following.

Faust's Study. The student and the poodle enter. The thoughts of Faust are solemn; this makes the poodle restless; this restlessness becomes greater and greater as Faust begins to translate the Bible—an act which is enough to agitate the best-disposed devil. A bit of incantation follows, and Mephistopheles appears. I must not linger over the details of the scene, tempting as they are, but come to the compact between Faust and Mephistopheles. The state of mind which induces this compact has been artfully prepared. Faust has been led to despair of attaining the high ambition of his life; he has seen the folly of his struggles; seen that Knowledge is a will-o'-the-wisp to which he has sacrificed Happiness. He now pines for Happiness, though he disbelieves in it as he disbelieves in Knowledge. In utter scepticism he consents to sell his soul *if* ever he shall realise Happiness. What profound sadness is implied in the compact, that if ever he shall

say to the passing moment, "Stay, thou art fair," he is willing to perish eternally!

This scene of the compact has also its origin in the old puppet play, and very curious is it to trace how the old hints are developed by Goethe. In the Augsburg version there is one condition among those stipulated by Mephistopheles to the effect that Faust shall never again ascend the theological chair. "But what will the public say?" asks Faust. "Leave that to me," Mephisto replies; "I will take your place; and believe me I shall add to the reputation you have gained in biblical learning."[1] Had Goethe known this version, he would probably not have omitted such a sarcastic touch.

I must pass over the inimitable scene which follows between Mephisto and the young Student newly arrived at the University, with boundless desire for knowledge. Every line is a sarcasm, or a touch of wisdom. The *position* of this scene in its relation to the whole, deserves, however, a remark. What is the scene, but a withering satire on every branch of Knowledge? and where does it occur, but precisely at that juncture when Knowledge has by the hero been renounced, when Books are closed for ever, and Life is to be enjoyed? Thus the words of Mephisto, that Theory is a greybeard, and Life a fresh tree, green and golden—

Grau, theurer Freund, ist alle Theorie,
Und grün des Lebens goldner Baum—

prepare us for the utter abjuration of Theory, and the eager pursuit of Enjoyment. This leads to

Auerbach's Cellar, and its scene of Aristophanic buffoonery. The cellar reeks with the fumes of bad wine and stale tobacco; its blackened arches ring with the sound of boisterous mirth and noisy songs. The sots display themselves in all their sottishness. And *this* is one form of human enjoyment! A thing still unhappily to be seen in every city of Europe. Faust looks on with a sort of bewildered disgust, which soon wearies him; and then away! away! to the other scene as foul, as hideous—to—

The Witches' Kitchen. Here Faust passes from bestiality to bestiality, from material grossness to spiritual grossness, from the impurity of sots to the impurity of witches. In this den of sorcery he drinks of the witch's potion, which will make him,

[1] *Das Closter*, vol. v. p. 326.

as Mephisto says, see a Helen in the first woman he meets. Rejuvenescence is accompanied by desires hitherto unknown to him; he is young, and young passions hurry him into the "roaring flood of time."

Meeting with Margaret. The simple girl, returning from church, is accosted by Faust, and answers him somewhat curtly; here commences the love-episode which gives to the poem a magic none can resist. Shakspeare himself has drawn no such portrait as that of Margaret: no such peculiar union of passion, simplicity, homeliness, and witchery. The poverty and inferior social position of Margaret are never lost sight of; she never becomes an abstraction; it is Love alone which exalts her above her lowly station, and it is only *in* passion that she is so exalted. Very artful and very amusing is the contrast between this simple girl and her friend Martha, who makes love to Mephisto with direct worldly shrewdness. The effect of this contrast in the celebrated garden scene is very fine; and what a scene that is! I have no language in which to express its intense and overpowering effect: the picture is one which remains indelible in the memory; certain lines linger in the mind, and stir it like the memory of deep pathetic music. For instance, Margaret's asking him to think of her, even if it be for a moment,—she will have time enough to think of *him:*

Denkt ihr an mich ein Augenblickchen nur,
Ich werde Zeit genug an euch zu denken haben:

What a picture of woman's lonely life, in which the thoughts, not called out by the busy needs of the hour, centre in one object! And then that exquisite episode of her plucking the flower, "He loves me—loves me not;" followed by this charming reflection when Faust has departed:

Du lieber Gott! was so ein Mann
Nicht alles alles denken kann!
Beschämt nur steh' ich vor ihm da,
Und sag' zu allen Sachen ja.
Bin doch ein arm unwissend Kind
Begreife nicht was er an mir find't.[1]

[1] The naïveté of expression is not to be translated. Blackie has given the sense:

Dear God! what such a man as this
Can think on any thing you may!
I stand ashamed, and answer yes
To every word that he may say.
I wonder what a man so learned as he
Can find in a poor simple girl like me.

Wood and Cavern. I do not understand the relation of this scene to the whole. Faust is alone among the solitudes of Nature, pouring out his rapture and his despair :

Faust. Alas ! that man enjoys no perfect bliss,
I feel it now. Thou gavest me with this joy,
Which brings me near and nearer to the gods,
A fellow, whom I cannot do without ;
Though, cold and heartless, he debases me
Before myself, and, with a single breath
Blows all the bounties of thy love to nought.
He fans within my breast a raging fire
For that fair image, busy to do ill.
Thus reel I from desire on to enjoyment,
And in enjoyment languish for desire.

Mephisto enters, and the two wrangle. The scene is full of fine things, but its position in the work is not clear to me. It is followed by that scene in Margaret's room which exhibits her at the spinning-wheel, singing *Mein Ruh' ist hin*—"My peace is gone, my heart is sad;" and is succeeded by the second Garden scene, in which she questions Faust about his religion. I must give the famous confession of Faith, though more literally than Blackie renders it :

Misunderstand me not, thou lovely one.
Who dare name Him ?
And who confess :
"I believe in Him" ?
Who can feel
And force himself
To say : "I believe not in Him" ?
The All-encompasser,
The All-sustainer
Encompasses, sustains he not
Thee, Me, Himself ?
Does not the Heaven arch itself above ?
Lies not the earth firm here below ?
And rise not the eternal stars
Looking downwards friendly ?
Gaze not our eyes into each other,
And is not all thronging
To thy head and heart,
Weaving in eternal mystery
Invisibly visibly about thee ?
Fill up thy heart therewith, in all its greatness,
And when thou'rt wholly blest in this emotion,
Then call it what thou wilt,
Call it Joy ! Heart ! Love ! God !
I have no name for it,
Feeling is all-in-all.
Name is sound and smoke,
Clouding the glow of Heaven.

Margaret feels this confession to be the same in substance as that the Priest tells her, only in somewhat different language:

Nur mit ein bischen andern Worten.

There is something inexpressibly touching in her solicitude about her lover's faith; it serves to bring out one element of her character; as her instinctive aversion to Mephisto brings out another element: she sees on his forehead that he feels no sympathy, that "He never yet hath loved a human soul." In his presence she almost feels that her own love vanishes; certain it is that in his presence she cannot pray.

The guileless innocence which prattles thus, prepares us for the naïve readiness with which she expresses her willingness to admit her lover to her apartment, and consents to give her mother the sleeping draught. This scene is, with terrible significance, followed by that brief scene at the Well, where Margaret hears her friend Bessy triumph, feminine-wise, over the fall of one of their companions. Women, in all other things so compassionate, are merciless to each other precisely in those situations where feminine sympathy would be most grateful, where feminine tenderness should be most suggestive. Bessy says not a word against the seducer; her wrath falls entirely on the victim, who has been "rightly served." Margaret—taught compassion by experience—cannot *now* triumph as formerly she would have triumphed. But now she too is become what she chid, she too is a sinner, and cannot chide! The closing words of this soliloquy have never been translated; there is a something in the simplicity and intensity of the expression which defies translation.

Doch—alles was dazu mich trieb,
Gott! war so gut! ach war so lieb![1]

The next scene shows her praying to the Virgin, the Mother of Sorrows; and this is succeeded by the return of her brother Valentine, suffering greatly from his sister's shame; he interrupts the serenade of Faust, attacks him, and is stabbed by Mephisto, falls, and expires uttering vehement reproaches against Margaret. From this bloodshed and horror we are led to the Cathedral. Margaret prays amid the crowd—the evil spirit at her side. A solemn, almost stifling sense of awe

[1] The meaning is, "Yet if I sinned, the sin came to me in shape so good, so lovely, that I loved it."

rises through the mind at this picture of the harassed sinner seeking refuge, and finding fresh despair. Around her kneel in silence those who hear with comfort the words to her so terrible:

Dies iræ, dies illa,
Solvet sæclum in favilla!

and when the choir bursts forth—

Judex ergo cum sedebit
Quidquid latet apparebit,
Nil inultum remanebit—

she is overpowered by remorse, for the Evil Spirit interprets these words in their most appalling sense.

The Walpurgis Nacht. The introduction of this scene in this place would be a great error if *Faust* were simply a drama. The mind resents being snatched away from the contemplation of human passion, and plunged into the vagaries of dreamland. After shuddering with Margaret, we are in no mood for the Blocksberg. But *Faust* is not a drama; its purpose is not mainly that of unfolding before our eyes the various evolutions of an episode of life; its object is not to rivet attention through a story. It is a grand legendary spectacle, in which all phases of life are represented. The scene on the Blocksberg is part of the old Legend, and is to be found in many versions of the puppet-play.[1] Note how Goethe introduces the scene immediately after that in the Cathedral—thus re-presenting the wizard-element in contrast with the religious element; just as previously he contrasted the Witches' Kitchen and its orgies with the orgies of Auerbach's cellar.

We must not linger on the Blocksberg, but return to earth, and the tragic drama there hastening to its dénouement. Seduction has led to infanticide; infanticide has led to the condemnation of Margaret. Faust learns it all; learns that a triple murder lies to his account—Valentine, Margaret, and her child. In his despair he reproaches Mephisto for having concealed this from him, and wasted his time in insipid fooleries. Mephisto coldly says that Margaret is not the first who has so died. Upon which Faust breaks forth: "Not the first! Misery! Misery! by no human soul to be conceived! that more than one creature of God should ever have been

[1] In the Strasburg version, Mephisto promises Hanswurst a steed on which he may gallop through the air; but, instead of a winged horse, there comes an old goat with a light under his tail.

plunged into the depth of this woe! that the first, in the writhing agony of her death, should not have atoned for the guilt of all the rest before the eyes of the eternally Merciful!"

One peculiarity is noticeable in this scene: it is the only bit of prose in the whole work;—what could have determined him to write it in prose? At first I thought it might be the nature of the scene; but the intensity of language seems to demand verse, and surely the scene in Auerbach's cellar is more prosaic in its nature than this? The question then remains, and on it the critic may exert his ingenuity.

What painting in the six brief lines which make up the succeeding scene! Faust and Mephisto are riding over a wild and dreary plain; the sound of carpenters at work on the gibbet informs them of the preparations for the execution of Margaret.

And now the final scene opens. Faust enters the dungeon where Margaret lies huddled on a bed of straw, singing wild snatches of ancient ballads, her reason gone, her end approaching. The terrible pathos of this interview draws tears into our eyes after twenty readings. As the passion rises to a climax, the grim, passionless face of Mephistopheles appears—thus completing the circle of irony which runs throughout the poem. Every one feels this scene to be untranslatable. The witchery of such lines as

Sag' niemand dass du schon bei Gretchen warst,

Mr. Hayward has already pointed out as beyond translation; "indeed it is only by a lucky chance that a succession of simple, heartfelt expressions or idiomatic felicities are ever capable of exact representation in another language."[1]

The survey just taken, disclosing a succession of varied scenes representative of Life, will not only help to explain the popularity of Faust, but may help also to explain the secret of its composition. The rapidity and variety of the scenes give the work an air of formlessness, until we have seized the principle of organic unity binding these scenes into a whole. The reader who first approaches it is generally disappointed: the want of visible connection makes it appear more like a Nightmare than a work of Art. Even accomplished critics have been thus misled. Thus Coleridge, who battled so ingeniously for Shakspeare's Art, was utterly at a

[1] *Translation of Faust:* Preface, p. xxxi, 3rd Edition.

loss to recognise any unity in Faust. "There is no whole in the poem," he said, "the scenes are mere magic-lantern pictures, and a large part of the work is to me very flat."[1] Coleridge, combating French critics, proclaimed (in language slightly altered from Schlegel) that the unity of a work of Art is "organic, not mechanic;" and he was held to have done signal service by pointing out the unity of Shakspeare's conception underlying variety of detail; but when he came to Goethe, whom he disliked, and of whom he always spoke unworthily, he could see nothing but magic-lantern scenes in variety of detail. If *Hamlet* is not a magic-lantern, *Faust* is not. The successive scenes of a magic-lantern have no connection with a general plan; have no dependence one upon the other. In the analysis just submitted to the reader, both the general plan and the interdependence of the scenes have, it is hoped, been made manifest. A closer familiarity with the work removes the first feeling of disappointment. We learn to understand it, and our admiration grows with our enlightenment. The picture is painted with so cunning a hand, and yet with so careless an air, that Strength is veiled by Grace, and nowhere seems straining itself in Effort.

I believe few persons have read *Faust* without disappointment. There are works which, on a first acquaintance, ravish us with delight: the ideas are new; the form is new; the execution striking. In the glow of enthusiasm we pronounce the new work a masterpiece. We study it, learn it by heart, and somewhat weary our acquaintances by the emphasis of enthusiasm. In a few years, or it may be months, the work has become unreadable, and we marvel at our old admiration. The ideas are no longer novel; they appear truisms or perhaps falsisms. The execution is no longer admirable, for we have discovered its trick. In familiarising our minds with the work, our admiration has been slowly strangled by the contempt which familiarity is said to breed, but which familiarity only breeds in contemptible minds, or for things contemptible. The work then was no masterpiece? Not in the least.[2] A masterpiece excites no sudden enthusiasm; it must be studied much and long, before it is fully comprehended; we must

[1] *Table Talk*, vol. ii. p. 114.

[2] "A deduction must be made from the opinion which even the wise express of a new book or occurrence. Their opinion gives me tidings of their mood, and some vague guess at the new fact, but is nowise to be trusted as the lasting relation between that intellect and that thing."—*Emerson*.

grow up to it, for it will not descend to us. Its influence is less sudden, more lasting. Its emphasis grows with familiarity. We never become disenchanted; we grow more and more awestruck at its infinite wealth. We discover no trick, for there is none to discover. Homer, Shakspeare, Raphael, Beethoven, Mozart, never storm the judgment; but, once fairly in possession, they retain it with increasing influence. I remember looking at the Elgin Marbles with an indifference which I was ashamed to avow; and since then I have stood before them with a rapture almost rising into tears. On the other hand, works which now cannot detain me a minute before them, excited sudden enthusiasm such as in retrospection seems like the boyish taste for unripe apples. With *Faust* my first feeling was disappointment. Not understanding the real nature of the work, I thought Goethe had missed his aim, because he did not fulfil my conceptions. It is the arrogance of criticism to demand that the artist, who never thought of us, should work in the direction of our thoughts. As I grew older, and began to read *Faust* in the original (helped by the dictionary), its glory gradually dawned upon my mind. It is now one of those works which exercise a fascination to be compared only to the minute and inexhaustible love we feel for those long dear to us, every expression having a peculiar and, by association, quite mystic influence.

A masterpiece like *Faust*, because it is a masterpiece, will be almost certain to create disappointment, in proportion to the expectations formed of it. Sir Joshua Reynolds, on his first visit to the Vatican, could not conceal his mortification at not relishing the works of Raphael, and was only relieved from it on discovering that others had experienced the same feeling. "The truth is," he adds, "that if these works had been really what I expected, they would have contained beauties superficial and alluring, but by no means such as would have entitled them to their great reputation." We need not be surprised therefore to hear even distinguished men express unfavourable opinions of *Faust*. Charles Lamb, for instance, thought it a vulgar melodrame in comparison with Marlowe's *Faustus;* an opinion he never could have formed had he read *Faust* in the original. He read it in a translation, and no work suffers more from translation. However unwilling a reader may be that his competence to pronounce a judgment should be called in question, it must be said in all seriousness and with the most complete absence of exaggera-

tion and prejudice, that in translation he really has not the work before him.

Several times in these pages I have felt called upon to protest against the adequacy of all translation of poetry. In its happiest efforts, translation is but approximation; and its efforts are not often happy. A translation may be good *as* translation, but it cannot be an adequate reproduction of the original. It may be a good poem; it may be a good imitation of another poem; it may be better than the original; but it cannot be an adequate reproduction; it cannot be the same thing in another language, producing the same effect on the mind. And the cause lies deep in the nature of poetry. "Melody," as Beethoven said to Bettina, "gives a *sensuous existence to poetry;* for does not the meaning of a poem become embodied in melody?" The meanings of a poem and the meanings of the individual words may be produced; but in a poem meaning and form are as indissoluble as soul and body; and the form cannot be reproduced. The effect of poetry is a compound of music and suggestion; this music and this suggestion are intermingled in words, to alter which is to alter the effect. For words in poetry are not, as in prose, simple representatives of objects and ideas: they are parts of an organic whole—they are tones in the harmony; substitute *other* parts, and the result is a monstrosity, as if an arm were substituted for a wing; substitute *other* tones or semitones, and you produce a discord. Words have their music and their shades of meaning too delicate for accurate reproduction in any other form; the suggestiveness of one word cannot be conveyed by another. Now all translation is of necessity a substitution of one word for another: the substitute may express the meaning, but it cannot accurately reproduce the music, nor those precise shades of suggestiveness on which the delicacy and beauty of the original depend. Words are not only symbols of objects, but centres of associations; and their suggestiveness depends partly on their sound. Thus there is not the slightest difference in the meaning expressed when I say

The dews of night began to fall,

or

The nightly dews commenced to fall.

Meaning and metre are the same; but one is poetry, the other prose. Wordsworth paints a landscape in this line:

The river wanders at its own sweet will.

Let us translate it into other words:

The river runneth free from all restraint.

We preserve the meaning, but where is the landscape? Or we may turn it thus:

The river flows, now here, now there, at will,

which is a very close translation, much closer than any usually found in a foreign language, where indeed it would in all probability assume some such form as this:

The river self-impelled pursues its course.

In these examples we have what is seldom found in translations, accuracy of meaning expressed in similar metre; yet the music and the poetry are gone; because the music and the poetry are organically dependent on certain peculiar arrangements of sound and suggestion. Walter Scott speaks of the verse of a ballad by Mickle which haunted his boyhood; it is this:

The dews of summer night did fall;
The moon, sweet regent of the sky,
Silvered the walls of Cumnor Hall,
And many an oak that grew thereby.

This verse we will re-arrange as a translator would arrange it:

The nightly dews commenced to fall;
The moon, whose empire is the sky,
Shone on the sides of Cumnor Hall,
And all the oaks that stood thereby.

Here is a verse which certainly would never have haunted any one; and yet upon what apparently slight variations the difference of effect depends! The meaning, metre, rhymes, and most of the words, are the same; yet the difference in the result is infinite. Let us translate it a little more freely:

Sweetly did fall the dews of night;
The moon, of heaven the lovely queen,
On Cumnor Hall shone silver bright,
And glanced the oaks' broad boughs between.

I appeal to the reader's experience whether this is not a translation which in another language would pass for excellent; and nevertheless it is not more like the original than a wax rose is like a garden rose. To conclude these illustrations, I will give one which may serve to bring into relief the havoc made by

translators who adopt a *different* metre from that of the original.[1] Wordsworth begin his famous Ode:

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore;
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

The translator, fully possessed with the sense of the passage, makes no mistake, but adopting another metre, we will suppose, paraphrases it thus:

A time there was when wood, and stream, and field,
The earth, and every common sight, did yield
To me a pure and heavenly delight,
Such as is seen in dream and vision bright.
That time is past; no longer can I see
The things which charmed my youthful reverie.

These are specimens of translating from English into English,[2] and show what effects are produced by a change of music and a change of suggestion. It is clear that in a foreign language the music must incessantly be changed, and as no complex words are precisely equivalent in two languages, the suggestions must also be different. Idioms are of course untranslatable. Felicities of expression are the idioms of the poet; but as on the one hand these felicities are essential to the poem, and on the other hand untranslatable, the vanity of translation becomes apparent. I do not say that a translator cannot produce a fine poem in imitation of an original poem; but I utterly disbelieve in the possibility of his giving us a work which can be to us what the original is to those who read it. If, therefore, we reflect what a poem *Faust* is, and that it contains almost every variety of style and metre, it will be tolerably evident that no one unacquainted with the original can form an *adequate* idea of it from translation; and if this is true, it will explain why Charles Lamb should prefer Marlowe's *Faustus*, and why many other readers should speak slightingly of the *Faust*.

[1] "Goethe's poems," said Beethoven, "exercise a great sway over me, not only by their meaning, but by their rhythm also. It is a language which urges me on to composition."

[2] Aristotle has a very similar argument and mode of illustration in the *De Poetica*.

As useful memoranda for comparison, I will here analyse Marlowe's *Faustus* and Calderon's *El Magico Prodigioso*.

Doctor Faustus has many magnificent passages, such as Marlowe of the "mighty line" could not fail to write; but on the whole it is wearisome, vulgar, and ill-conceived. The lowest buffoonery, destitute of wit, fills a large portion of the scenes; and the serious parts want dramatic evolution. There is no character well drawn. The melancholy figure of Mephistopholis has a certain grandeur, but he is not the Tempter, according to the common conception, creeping to his purpose with the cunning of the serpent; nor is he the cold, ironical "spirit that denies;" he is more like the Satan of Byron, with a touch of piety and much repentance. The language he addresses to Faustus is such as would rather frighten than seduce him.

The reader who opens *Faustus* under the impression that he is about to see a philosophical subject treated philosophically, will have mistaken both the character of Marlowe's genius and of Marlowe's epoch. *Faustus* is no more philosophical in intention than the *Jew of Malta*, or *Tamburlaine the Great*. It is simply the theatrical treatment of a popular legend,—a legend admirably characteristic of the spirit of those ages in which men, believing in the agency of the devil, would willingly have bartered their future existence for the satisfaction of present desires. Here undoubtedly is a philosophical problem, which even in the present day is constantly presenting itself to the speculative mind. Yes, even in the present day, since human nature does not change: forms only change, the spirit remains; nothing perishes,—it only manifests itself differently. Men, it is true, no longer believe in the devil's agency; at least, they no longer believe in the power of calling up the devil and transacting business with him; otherwise there would be hundreds of such stories as that of Faust. But the spirit which created that story and rendered it credible to all Europe remains unchanged. The sacrifice of the future to the present is the spirit of that legend. The blindness to consequences caused by the imperiousness of desire; the recklessness with which inevitable and terrible results are braved in perfect consciousness of their being inevitable, provided that a temporary pleasure can be obtained, is the spirit which dictated Faust's barter of his soul, which daily dictates the barter of men's souls. We do not make compacts, but we throw away our lives; we have no Tempter face to face with us, offering

illimitable power in exchange for our futurity: but we have our own Desires, imperious, insidious, and for them we barter our existence,—for one moment's pleasure risking years of anguish.

The story of Faustus suggests many modes of philosophical treatment, but Marlowe has not availed himself of any: he has taken the popular view of the legend, and given his hero the vulgarest motives. This is not meant as a criticism, but as a statement. I am not sure that Marlowe was wrong in so treating his subject; I am only sure that he treated it so. Faustus is disappointed with logic, because it teaches him nothing but debate,—with physic, because he cannot with it bring dead men back to life,—with law, because it concerns only the "external trash,"—and with divinity, because it teaches that the reward of sin is death, and that we are all sinners. Seeing advantage in none of these studies he takes to necromancy, and there finds content; and how?

Faust. How am I glutted with conceit of this!
Shall I make spirits fetch me what I please?
Resolve me of all ambiguities?
Perform what desperate enterprise I will?
I'll have them fly to India for gold,
Ransack the ocean for orient pearl,
And search all corners of the new-found world
For pleasant fruits and princely delicates.
I'll have them read me strange philosophy;
And tell the secrets of all foreign kings:
I'll have them wall all Germany with brass,
And make swift Rhine circle fair Wittenburg:
I'll have them fill the public schools with skill,
Wherewith the students shall be bravely clad:
I'll levy soldiers with the coin they bring,
And chase the prince of Parma from our land,
And reign sole king of all the provinces:
Yea, stranger engines for the brunt of war,
Than was the fiery keel at Antwerp bridge,
I'll make my servile spirits to invent.

There may in this seem something trivial to modern apprehensions, yet Marlowe's audience sympathised with it, having the feelings of an age when witches were burned, when men were commonly supposed to hold communication with infernal spirits, when the price of damnation was present enjoyment.

The compact signed, Faustus makes use of his power by scampering over the world, performing practical jokes and vulgar incantations,—knocking down the Pope, making horns sprout on the heads of noblemen, cheating a jockey by selling him a horse of straw, and other equally vulgar tricks, which

were just the things the audience would have done had they possessed the power. Tired of his buffooneries he calls up the vision of Helen; his rapture at the sight is a fine specimen of how Marlowe can write on a fitting occasion.

His last hour now arrives: he is smitten with remorse, like many of his modern imitators, when it is too late; sated with his power, he now shudders at the price. After some tragical raving, and powerfully depicted despair, he is carried off by devils. The close is in keeping with the commencement: Faustus is damned because he made the compact. Each part of the bargain is fulfilled; it is a tale of sorcery, and Faustus meets the fate of a sorcerer.

The vulgar conception of this play is partly the fault of Marlowe, and partly of his age. It might have been treated quite in conformity with the general belief; it might have been a tale of sorcery, and yet magnificently impressive. What would not Shakspeare have made of it? Nevertheless, we must in justice to Marlowe look also to the state of opinion in his time; and we shall then admit that another and higher mode of treatment would perhaps have been less acceptable to the audience. Had it been metaphysical, they would not have understood it; had the motives of Faustus been more elevated, the audience would not have believed in them. To have saved him at last, would have been to violate the legend, and to outrage their moral sense. For, why should the black arts be unpunished? why should not the sorcerer be damned? The legend was understood in its literal sense, in perfect accordance with the credulity of the audience. The symbolical significance of the legend is entirely a modern creation.

Let us now turn to Calderon's *El Magico Prodigioso*, often said to have furnished Goethe with the leading idea of his *Faust*, which, however, does *not* resemble *El Magico* in plot, incidents, situations, characters, or ideas. The *Faustus* of Marlowe has a certain superficial resemblance to the *Faust*, because the same legend is adopted in both; but in *El Magico* the legend is altogether different; the treatment different. Calderon's latest editor, Don Eugenio de Ochoa, is quite puzzled to conceive how the notion of resemblance got into circulation, and gravely declares that it is *enteramente infundada*.

The scene lies in the neighbourhood of Antioch, where, with "glorious festival and song," a temple is being consecrated to Jupiter. Cyprian, a young student, perplexing him-

self with the dogmas of his religion (polytheism), has retired from the turmoil of the town to enjoy himself in quiet study. Pliny's definition of God is unsatisfactory, and Cyprian is determined on finding a better. A rustling among the leaves disturbs him, caused by the demon, who appears in the dress of a cavalier. They commence an argument, Cyprian pointing out the error of polytheism, the demon maintaining its truth. We see that Cyprian has been converted to monotheism—a step towards his conversion to Christianity; and this conversion operated by the mere force of truth, this change of opinion resulting from an examination of polytheism, was doubtless flattering to Calderon's audience,—a flattery carried to its acme in the feeble defence of the demon, who on his entrance declares, aside, that Cyprian shall never find the truth. Calderon would not let the devil have the best of the argument even for a moment. Instead of the "spirit that denies," he presents us with a malignant fiend, as impotent as he is malignant,—a fiend who acknowledges himself worsted in the argument, and who resolves to conquer by lust the student whom he cannot delude by sophisms. He has power given him to wage enmity against Justina's soul; he will make Justina captivate Cyprian, and with one blow effect two vengeances. We need not point out the dissimilarity between such a fiend and the fiend Mephistopheles.

Cyprian is left alone to study, but is again interrupted by the quarrel of Lelio and Floro, two of his friends, who, both enamoured of Justina, have resolved to decide their rivalry by the sword. Cyprian parts them, and consents to become arbiter. He then undertakes to visit Justina, in order to ascertain to whom she gives the preference. In this visit he falls in love with her himself. There is an under-plot, in which Moscon, Clarin, and Libia, according to the usual style of Spanish comedies, parody the actions and sentiments of their masters; I omit it, as well as the other scenes which do not bear on the subject matter of the drama.

Justina, a recent convert to Christianity, is the type of Christian innocence. She rejects Cyprian's love, as she had rejected that of her former admirers. The coldness exasperates him:

> So beautiful she was—and I,
> Between my love and jealousy,
> And so convulsed with hope and fear,
> Unworthy as it may appear,—

So bitter is the life I live
That, hear me, Hell! I now would give
To thy most detested spirit
My soul, for ever, to inherit,
To suffer punishment and pine,
So this woman may be mine.
Hear'st thou, Hell? Dost thou reject it?
My soul is offered.
Demon (*unseen*). I accept it.
(*Tempest, with thunder and lightning.*)

In another writer we might pause to remark on the "want of keeping" in making a polytheist address such a prayer to hell; but Calderon is too full of such things to cause surprise at any individual instance. The storm rages,—a ship goes down at sea; the demon enters as a shipwrecked passenger, and says aside:

It was essential to my purposes
To wake a tumult on the sapphire ocean,
That in this unknown form I might at length
Wipe out the blot of the discomfiture
Sustained upon the mountain, and assail
With a new war the soul of Cyprian,
Forging the instruments of his destruction
Even from his love and from his wisdom.

Cyprian addresses words of comfort to him on his misfortune; the demon says it is in vain to hope for comfort, since all is lost that gave life value. He then tells his story; describing, by means of a very transparent equivocation, the history of his rebellion in heaven and his chastisement. In the course of his narrative he insinuates his power of magic, hoping to awaken in Cyprian's breast a love of the art. Cyprian offers him the hospitality due to a stranger, and they quit the scene.

In their next scene the demon asks Cyprian the reason of his constant melancholy. This is an opportunity for the display of fustian, never let slip by a Spanish dramatist. Cyprian describes his mistress and his passion for her with the volubility of a lover, and the taste of an Ossian. He very circumstantially informs the demon that the "partes que componen a esta divina muger"—the charms which adorn this paragon—are the charms of Aurora, of fleecy clouds and pearly dews, of balmy gales and early roses, of meandering rivulets and glittering stars, of warbling birds and crystal rocks, of laurels and of sunbeams; and so forth through the space of more than fifty lines, in a style to captivate magazine poets, and to make other

readers yawn. Having described her, he declares that he is so entranced with this creature as to have entirely forsaken philosophy; he is willing to give away his soul for her. The demon accepts the offer, splits open a rock and shows Justina reclining asleep. Cyprian rushes towards her, but the rock closes again, and the demon demands that the compact shall be signed before the maiden is delivered. Cyprian draws blood from his arm, and with his dagger writes the agreement on some linen. The demon then consents to instruct him in magic, by which, at the expiration of one year, he will be able to possess Justina.

This temptation-scene is very trivial,—feeble in conception and bungling in execution. Remark the gross want of artistic keeping in it: Cyprian had before addressed a vow to hell that he would give his soul for Justina; the demon answered, "I accept it!" Thunder and lightning followed,—effective enough as a melo-dramatic *coup de théâtre*, utterly useless to the play; for although the demon appears, it is not to make a compact with Cyprian, it is not even to tempt him; it is simply to become acquainted with him, gain his confidence, and *afterwards* tempt him. The time elapses, and the demon then tempts Cyprian as we have seen. How poor, feeble, and staggering these outlines! What makes the feebleness of this scene stand out still more clearly, is the gross and senseless parody of Clarin, the *gracioso*. Like his master, he too is in love; like his master he offers to sell his soul to the demon, and strikes his nose, that with the blood he may write the compact on his handkerchief.

It is in this temptation-scene, however, that the single point of resemblance occurs between the plays of Calderon and Goethe. It is extremely slight, as every one will observe; but slight as it is, some critics have made it the basis of their notion of plagiarism. The compact is the point which the legend of St. Cyprian and the legend of Faust have in common. In all other respects the legends differ and the poems differ. It is curious however to compare the motives of the three heroes, Faustus, Cyprian, and Faust; to compare what each demands in return for his soul; and in this comparison Calderon "shows least bravely;" his hero is the most pitiful of the three.

To return to our analysis: The year's probation has expired, and Cyprian is impatient for his reward. He has learned the arts of necromancy, in which he is almost as proficient as his

master; boasts of being able to call the dead from out their graves, and of possessing many other equally wonderful powers. Yet with this science he does nothing, attempts nothing. Of what use then was the year's probation? of what use this necromantic proficiency? Had the question been put to Calderon he would probably have smiled, and answered, "to prolong the play and give it variety,"—a sensible answer from a rapid playwright, but one which ill accords with the modern notion of his being a profound artist. Perhaps it is too much to expect that a man who wrote between one and two hundred plays should have produced one that could be regarded as a work of art; nor should we have judged him by any higher standard than that of a rapid and effective playwright, had not the Germans been so hyperbolical in criticism, which the English, who seldom read the poet, take for granted must be just.

The demon calls upon the spirits of hell to instil into Justina's mind impure thoughts, so that she may incline to Cyprian. But this could have been done at first, and so have spared Cyprian his year's probation and his necromantic studies, — studies which are never brought to bear upon Justina herself, though undertaken expressly for her conquest. Justina enters in a state of violent agitation: a portion of the scene will serve as a specimen. I borrow from the translation of this scene which appeared in the *Monthly Chronicle*, vi. p. 346.

The demon enters and Justina asks him:

Say if thou a phantom art,
Formed by terror and dismay?
Dæm. No; but one call'd by the thought
That now rules, with tyrant sway,
O'er thy faltering heart,—a man
Whom compassion hither brought,
That he might point out the way
Whither fled thy Cyprian.
Just. And so shalt thou fail. This storm
Which afflicts my frenzied soul
May imagination form
To its wish, but ne'er shall warm
Reason to its mad control.
Dæm. If thou hast the thought permitted,
Half the sin is almost done!
Wilt thou, since 't is all committed,
Linger ere the joy be won?
Just. In our power abides not thought,
(Thought, alas! how vain to fly);
But the deed is, and 't is one
That we sin in mind have sought

And another to have done:
I'll not move my foot to try.
Dæm. If a mortal power assail
Justina with all its might,
Say will not the victory fail
When thy wish will not avail,
But inclines thee in despite?
Just. By opposing to thee now
My free will and liberty.
Dæm. To my power they soon shall bow.
Just. If it could such power avow,
Would our free will then be free?
Dæm. Come, 'tis bliss that thou wilt prove.
Just. Dearly would I gain it so.
Dæm. It is peace, and calm, and love. (*Draws, but cannot*
Just. It is misery, death, despair! *move her.*)
Dæm. Heavenly joy!
Just. 'Tis bitter woe!
Dæm. Lost and shamed, forsaken one!
Who in thy defence shall dare?
Just. My defence is God alone.
Dæm. Virgin, virgin, thou hast won! (*Loosens his hold.*)

How delighted must the audience have been at this victory over the demon, by the mere announcement of a faith in God! Unable to give Cyprian the real Justina, the demon determines on deceiving him with a phantom. A figure enveloped in a cloak appears, and bids Cyprian follow. In the next scene Cyprian enters with the fancied Justina in his arms. In his transport he takes off the cloak, and instead of Justina discovers a Skeleton, who replies to his exclamation of horror:

Así, Cipriano, son
Todas las glorias del mundo!

"Such are the glories of this world." In this terrific situation we recognise the inquisitor and the playwright, but the artist we do not recognise. As a piece of stage effect this skeleton is powerfully conceived; as a religious warning it is equally powerful; as art it is detestable. It is a fine situation, though he has used it twice elsewhere; but the consistency of the play is violated by it. If the demon wished to seduce Cyprian, would he have attempted to do so by *such* means? No. But Calderon here, as elsewhere, sacrifices everything to a *coup de théâtre*.

Cyprian, exasperated at the deception, demands an explanation. The demon confesses that he is unable to force Justina, as she is under the protection of a superior power. Cyprian asks who that power is. The demon hesitates, but is at length obliged to own that it is the God of the Christians.

Cyprian seeing that God protects those who believe in him, refuses to own allegiance to any other. The demon is furious, and demands Cyprian's soul, who contends that the demon has not fulfilled his share of the compact. Words run high: Cyprian draws his sword and stabs the demon, of course without avail,—another stage effect. The demon drags him away, but, like Justina, he calls God to his aid, and the demon rushes off discomfited.

Cyprian becomes a Christian, and Justina assures him of his salvation in spite of his sins, for—

> . . . . no tiene
> Tantas estrellas el cielo,
> Tantas arenes el mar,
> Tantas centelles el fuego,
> Tantos átomes el dia,
> Como él perdona pecados.

Justina and Cyprian are condemned as heretics, and burned at Antioch, martyrs of the Christian faith. The demon appears riding on a serpent in the air, and addresses the audience, telling them that God has forced him to declare the innocence of Justina, and the freedom of Cyprian from his rash engagement. Both now repose in the realms of the blessed.

These analyses will enable the reader to perceive how Marlowe and Calderon have treated the old story, each in a spirit conformable with his genius and his age; the one presenting a legend in its naïveté, the other a legend as the vehicle for religious instruction. Goethe taking up the legend in an age when the naïve belief could no longer be accepted, treated it likewise in a way conformable with his genius and his age. The age demanded that it should be no simple legend, but a symbolical legend; not a story to be credited as *fact*, but a story to be credited as *representative* of fact; for although the rudest intellect would reject the notion of any such actual compact with Satan, the rudest and the loftiest would see in that compact a symbol of their own desires and struggles.

To adapt the legend to his age, Goethe was forced to treat it symbolically, and his own genius gave the peculiar direction to that treatment. We shall see in the Second Part, how his waning vigour sought inspiration more in symbolism than in poetry, more in reflection than in emotion; but for the present, confining ourselves to the First Part, we note in his treatment a marvellous mingling of the legendary and the symbolical, of

the mediæval and the modern. The depth of wisdom, the exquisite poetry, the clear bright painting, the wit, humour, and pathos, every reader will distinguish; and if this chapter were not already too long, I should be glad to linger over many details, but must now content myself with the briefest indication of the general aspects of the poem.

And first of the main theme: "The intended theme of Faust," says Coleridge, "is the consequences of a misology or hatred and depreciation of knowledge caused by an originally intense thirst for knowledge baffled. But a love of knowledge for itself and for pure ends would never produce such a misology, but only a love of it for base and unworthy purposes." Having stated this to be the theme, Coleridge thus criticises the execution: "There is neither causation nor proportion in Faust; he is a ready-made conjuror from the beginning; the *incredulus odi* is felt from the first line. The sensuality and thirst after knowledge are unconnected with each other."[1] Here we have an example of that criticism before alluded to, which imposes the conceptions of the critic as the true end and aim of the artist. Coleridge had formed the plan of a Faust of his own, and blames Goethe for not treating the topic in the way Coleridge conceived it should be treated. A closer scrutiny would have convinced him that misology is not the intended theme. After the first two scenes knowledge is never mentioned; misology is exhausted as a topic in the initial stages of the work. And what says Goethe himself? "The marionnette fable of Faust murmured with *many voices* in my soul. I too had wandered into every department of knowledge, and had returned early enough satisfied with the vanity of science. And life, too, I had tried under various aspects, and always came back sorrowing and unsatisfied." Here, if anywhere, we have the key to *Faust*. It is a reflex of the struggles of his soul. Experience had taught him the vanity of philosophy; experience had early taught him to detect the corruption underlying civilisation, the dark under-currents of crime concealed beneath smooth outward conformity. If then we distinguish for a moment one of the two aspects of the poem—if we set aside the picture, to consider only the problem—we come to the conclusion that the theme of *Faust* is the cry of despair over the nothingness of life. Misology forms a portion, but only a

[1] *Table Talk*, vol. ii. p. 111.

portion of the theme. Baffled in his attempts to penetrate the *mystery* of Life, Faust yields himself to the Tempter, who promises that he shall penetrate the *enjoyment* of Life. He runs the round of pleasure, as he had run the round of science, and fails. The orgies of Auerbach's cellar, the fancies of the Blocksberg, are unable to satisfy his cravings. The passion he feels for Gretchen is vehement, but feverish, transitory; she has no power to make him say to the passing moment, "Stay, thou art fair." He is restless because he seeks,—seeks the Absolute, which can never be found. This is the doom of humanity:

Es irrt der Mensch so lang' er strebt.

It has been said reproachfully that in *Faust* the problem is stated but not solved. I do not think this reproach valid, because I do not think a poem was the fit vehicle for a solution. When the Singer becomes a Demonstrator, he abdicates his proper office, to bungle in the performance of another. But very noticeable it is that Goethe, who has so clearly stated the problem, has also, both practically, in his life, and theoretically, in his writings, given us the nearest approach to a solution by showing how the "heavy and the weary weight" of this great burden may be wisely borne. His doctrine of Renunciation—*das wir entsagen müssen*—applied by him with fertile results in so many directions, both in life and theory, will be found to approach a solution, or at any rate to leave the insoluble mystery without its perplexing and tormenting influence. Activity and sincerity carry us far, if we begin by Renunciation, if we at the outset content ourselves with the Knowable and Attainable, and give up the wild impatience of desire for the Unknowable and Unattainable. The mystery of existence is an awful problem, but it *is* a mystery and placed beyond the boundaries of human faculty. Recognise it as such, and renounce! Knowledge can only be relative, never absolute. But this relative knowledge is infinite, and to us infinitely important: in that wide sphere let each work according to ability. Happiness, ideal and absolute, is equally unattainable: renounce it! The sphere of active Duty is wide, sufficing, ennobling to all who strenuously work in it. In the very sweat of labour there is stimulus which gives energy to life; and a consciousness that our labour tends in some way to the lasting benefit of others, makes the rolling years endurable.

CHAPTER VIII

THE LYRICAL POEMS

THE *Faust* and the Lyrics suffice to give Goethe pre-eminence among the poets of modern times, Shakspeare excepted; and had they stood alone as representatives of his genius, no one would ever have disputed his rank. But he has given the world many other works: in other words, he has thrown open many avenues through which the citadel of his fame may be attacked. His fame is lessened by his wealth; the fact of his doing so much, has lessened the belief in his power; for as the strength of a beam is measured by its weakest part, so, but unjustly, are poets tested by their weakest works, whenever enthusiasm does not drown criticism. Thus does mere wealth endanger reputation; for when many targets are ranged side by side, the clumsiest archer will succeed in striking one; and that writer has the best chance with the critics who presents the smallest surface. Greek Literature is so grand to us mainly because it is the fragment of fragments; the masterpieces have survived, and no failures are left to bear counter-witness. Our own contemporary Literature seems so poor to us, not because there are no good books, but because there are so many bad, that even the good are hidden behind the mass of mediocrity which obtrudes itself upon the eye. Goethe has written forty volumes on widely different subjects. He has written with a perfection no German ever achieved before, and he has also written with a feebleness which it would be gratifying to think no German would ever emulate again. But the weak pages are prose. In verse he is always a *singer;* even the poorest poems have something of that grace which captivates us in his finest. The gift of Song, which is the especial gift of the poet, and which no other talents can replace, makes his trifles pleasant, and his best lyrics matchless.

The lyrics are the best known of his works, and have by their witchery gained the admiration even of antagonists. One hears very strange opinions about him and his works; but one never hears anything except praise of the minor poems. They are instinct with life and beauty, against which no prejudice can stand. They give musical form to feelings the most

various, and to feelings that are *true*. They are gay, coquettish, playful, tender, passionate, mournful, reflective, and picturesque; now simple as the tune which beats time to nothing in your head, now laden with weighty thought; at one moment reflecting with ethereal grace the whim and fancy of caprice, at another sobbing forth the sorrows which press a cry from the heart. "These songs," says Heine, himself a master of song, "have a playful witchery which is inexpressible. The harmonious verses wind round your heart like a tender mistress. The Word embraces you while the Thought imprints a kiss."[1]

Part of this witchery is the sincerity of the style. It does not seek surprises in diction, nor play amid metaphors, which, in most poets, are imperfect expressions of the meaning they are thought to adorn. It opens itself like a flower with unpretending grace, and with such variety as lies in the nature of the subject. There is no ornament in it. The beauties which it reveals are organic, they form part and parcel of the very tissue of the poem, and are not added as ornaments. Read, for example, the ballad of the *Fisherman* (translated p. 236). How simple and direct the images; and yet how marvellously pictorial. Turning to a totally different poem, the *Bride of Corinth*,—what can surpass the directness with which every word indicates the mysterious and terrible situation? every line is as a fresh page in the narrative, rapidly and yet gradually unfolded. A young man arrives at Corinth from Athens, to seek the bride whom his and her parents have destined for him. Since that agreement of the parents her family has turned Christian; and "when a new faith is adopted, love and truth are often uprooted like weeds." Ignorant of the change, he arrives. It is late in the night. The household are asleep; but a supper is brought to him in his chamber, and he is left alone. The weary youth has no appetite; he throws himself on his bed without undressing. As he falls into a doze the door opens, and by the light of his lamp he sees a strange guest enter—a maiden veiled, clothed in white, about her brow a black and gold band. On seeing him, she raises a white hand in terror. She is about to fly, but he entreats her to stay—points to the banquet, and bids her sit beside him and taste the joys of the gods, Bacchus, Ceres, and Amor. But she tells him she belongs no more to

[1] "Die harmonischen Verse umschlingen dein Herz wie eine zärtliche Geliebte; das Wort umarmt dich, während der Gedanke dich küsst."

joy; the gods have departed from that silent house where One alone in Heaven, and One upon the Cross, are adored; no sacrifices of Lamb or Ox are made, the sacrifice is that of a human life. This is a language the young pagan understands not. He claims her as his bride. She tells him she has been sent into a cloister. He will hear nothing. Midnight—the spectral hour—sounds; and she seems at her ease. She drinks the purple wine with her white lips, but refuses the bread he offers. She gives him a golden chain, and takes in return a lock of his hair. She tells him she is cold as ice, but he believes that Love will warm her, even if she be sent from the grave:

Wechselhauch und Kuss!
Liebesüberfluss!
Brennst du nicht und fühlest mich entbrannt?

Love draws them together; eagerly she catches the fire from his lips, and each is conscious of existence only in the other; but although the vampire bride is warmed by his love, no heart beats in her breast. It is impossible to describe the weird voluptuousness of this strange scene; this union of Life and Death; this altar of Hymen erected on the tomb. It is interrupted by the presence of the mother, who, hearing voices in the bridegroom's room, and the kiss of the lovers mingling with the cockcrow, angrily enters to upbraid her slave, whom she supposes to be with the bridegroom. She enters angry "and sees—God! she sees her own child!" The vampire rises like a Shadow, and reproaches her mother for having disturbed her. "Was it not enough that you sent me to an early grave?" she asks. But the grave could not contain her: the psalms of priests—the blessings of priests had no power over her; earth itself is unable to stifle Love. She has come; she has sucked the blood from her bridegroom's heart; she has given him her chain and received the lock of his hair. To-morrow he will be grey; his youth he must seek once more in the tomb. She bids her mother prepare the funeral pyre, open her coffin, and burn the bodies of her bridegroom and herself, that they together may hasten to the gods.

In the whole of this wondrous ballad there is not a single image. Everything is told in the most direct and simple style. Everything stands before the eye like reality. The same may be said of the well-known *Gott und die Bajadere*, which is,

as it were, the inverse of the *Bride of Corinth*. The Indian god passing along the banks of the Ganges is invited by the Bajadere to enter her hut, and repose himself. She coquettes with him, and lures him with the wiles of her caste. The god smiles and sees with joy, in the depths of her degradation, a pure human heart. He gains her love; but, to put her to the severest proof, he makes her pass through

Lust und Entsetzen und grimmige Pein.

She awakes in the morning to find him dead by her side. In an agony of tears she tries in vain to awaken him. The solemn, awful sounds of the priests chanting the requiem break on her ear. She follows his corpse to the pyre, but the priests drive her away; she was not his wife; she has no claim to die with him. But Passion is triumphant; she springs into the flames, and the god rises from them with the rescued one in his arms.

The effect of the changing rhythm of the poem, changing from tender lightness to solemn seriousness, and the art with which the whole series of events is unfolded in successive pictures, are what no other German poet has ever attained. The same art is noticeable in the *Erl King*, known to every reader through Schubert's music, if through no other source. The father riding through the night, holding his son warm to his breast; the child's terror at the Erl King, whom the father does not see; and the bits of landscape which are introduced in so masterly a way, as explanations on the father's part of the appearances which frighten the child; thus mingling the natural and supernatural, as well as imagery with narrative: all these are cut with the distinctness of plastic art. The *Erl King* is usually supposed to have been original; but Viehoff, in his *Commentary on Goethe's Poems*, thinks that the poem Herder translated from the Danish, *Erlkönigs Tochter*, suggested the idea. The verse is the same. The opening line and the concluding line are nearly the same; but the story is different, and none of Goethe's art is to be found in the Danish ballad, which tells simply how Herr Oluf rides to his marriage, and is met on the way by the Erl King's daughter, who invites him to dance with her; he replies that he is unable to stop and dance, for to-morrow is his wedding-day. She offers him golden spurs and a silk shirt, but he still replies, "To-morrow is my wedding-day." She then offers him heaps of gold. "Heaps of gold will I gladly take; but dance I dare not—will not." In anger she strikes him on the heart, and

bids him ride to his bride. On reaching home, his mother is aghast at seeing him so pallid. He tells her he has been in the Erl King's country. "And what shall I say to your bride?" "Tell her I am in the wood with my horse and hound." The morning brings the guests, who ask after Herr Oluf. The bride lifts up the scarlet cloak; "there lay Herr Oluf, and he was dead." I have given this outline of the Danish ballad for the reader to compare with the *Erlkönig:* a comparison which will well illustrate the difference between a legend and a perfect poem.

It is not in the ballads alone, of which three have just been mentioned, that Goethe's superiority is seen. I might go through the two volumes of Lyrics, and write a commentary as long as this Biography, without exhausting so fertile a topic. Indeed his Biography is itself but a commentary on these poems, which are real expressions of what he has thought and felt:

Spät erklingt was früh erklang,
Glück und Unglück wird Gesang.

Even when, as in the ballads, or in poems such as the exquisite Idyl of *Alexis and Dora*, he is not giving utterance to any personal episode, he is scarcely ever *feigning*. Many of the smaller poems are treasures of wisdom; many are little else than the carollings of a bird "singing of summer in full-throated ease." But one and all are inaccessible through translation; therefore I cannot attempt to give the English reader an idea of them; the German reader has already anticipated me, by studying them in the original.

BOOK THE SEVENTH

1805 TO 1832

Ὡς εὐ ἰσθι ὁτι εμοιγε ὁσον αἱ ἀλλαι αἱ κατα το σωμα ἡδοναι ἀπομαραινονται, τοσουτον ἀυξονται αἱ περι τους λογους ἐπιθυμιαι τε και ἡδοναι.—PLATO, *Rep.* i. 6.

"Le Temps l'a rendu spectateur."
MADAME DE STAEL.

CHAPTER I

THE BATTLE OF JENA

THE death of Schiller left Goethe very lonely. It was more than the loss of a friend; it was the loss also of an energetic stimulus which had urged him to production; and in the activity of production he lived an intenser life. During the long laborious years which followed—years of accumulation, of study, of fresh experience, and of varied plans—we shall see him produce works of which many might be proud; but the noonday splendour of his life has passed, and the light which we admire is the calm effulgence of the setting sun.

As if to make him fully aware of his loss, Jacobi came to Weimar; and although the first meeting of the old friends was very pleasant, they soon found the chasm which separated them intellectually had become wider and wider, as each developed in his own direction. Goethe found that he understood neither Jacobi's ideas nor his language. Jacobi found himself a stranger in the world of his old friend. This is one of the penalties we pay for progress; we find ourselves severed from the ancient moorings; we find our language is like that of foreigners to those who once were dear to us, and understood us.

Jacobi departed, leaving him more painfully conscious of the loss he had sustained in losing Schiller's ardent sympathy. During the following month, Gall visited Jena, in the first successful eagerness of propagating his system of Phrenology, which was then a startling novelty. All who acknowledge the very large debt which Physiology and Psychology owe to Gall's labours (which acknowledgment by no means implies an