

21-92

The Faust Legend  
as a Poetical Expression of the Age

A thesis submitted to the faculty of the  
Graduate School of the University of Minnesota

by

Edith Kuhlmeier Rowley

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of Master of Arts, June 8th, 1911.

MOM  
989378

Bibliography

- Widman, Faust  
Marlowe, Faustus  
Grabbe, Don Juan and Faust, Werke Vol. 3  
Lenau, Faust, Werke Vol. 4  
Scheible, Kloster  
Goethe, Faust  
Bielschowsky, The Life of Goethe, Vol. 3  
Robinson, History of Western Europe  
National Literature, Vol. 78, 79  
Warkentin, Nachklänge der Sturm und Drang  
Periode in Faustdichtungen.

SEP 15 1911 6.70

The Faust Legend  
as a Poetical Expression of the Age

- I. Brief sketches of the different treatments of the Faust legend.
- II. Survey of the tendencies of the age producing these different treatments.
- III. Similarities and differences in the versions, in the character of Faust, and incidentally of Mephisto.
  - a. Ältestes Faust Buch
  - b. Widman
  - c. Marlowe
  - d. Lessing
  - e. Weidmann
  - f. Müller
  - g. Klinger
  - h. Schink
  - i. Grabbe
  - j. Lenau
  - k. Goethe

The Faust Legend  
as a Poetical Expression of the Age

---

Since each new epoch of time casts new light upon a subject and enables us to see it from a new point of view, the "Faust Problem" has been a perpetual question. It has been treated by many thinkers in various ways, and in different periods of time. This treatise is an attempt to give a brief account of those most characteristic of their age, chronologically, except Goethe. In thought and treatment his Faust is akin to the nineteenth century, and since we are accustomed to consider his drama the last word on Faust I have treated his work last.

In an age fraught with superstition; when inanimate objects were credited with supernatural powers; when the weird, mysterious stories from the orient were brought back by hundreds of returning crusaders; when each new discovery of science was looked upon as a result of magic, Faust, almost hidden by the veil of mystery that surrounds him, was born in Germany. The legend has such prece-

dence that it is difficult to get beneath it and see the real character that gave rise to it. There are however three or four writings of different men\* who agree that a man known as Dr. Faust, traveled about Germany in the first half of the sixteenth century. He called himself a magician and imposed upon the people by making large promises and accomplishing little. About this fragment of truth, hundreds of stories, true or false, have grouped themselves until there seems to be no end to the Faust adventures.

This Faust legend represents in Germany a certain mental development which seems to have spread all over Europe during the sixteenth century. All-comprehending knowledge is sought for but this greatest good becomes evil when an evil agent is employed. This same myth has a different hero in each nation. Spain has its Don Juan, Poland turned its Faust into Twardowsky, Normandy has its Robert le Diable, and England has its Merlin. What wonder then, that the German people accredited Faust with doing the marvelous feats he pretended to do, and

\* Melancton in "Table talks" by Manlius; Philip Bergardi's "Index Sanitatis" reprinted in Scheible's Closter; and Johann Gast "Sermones Convivales 1543."

called him their magician? In 1540\* when he met with a violent death, the imaginative people knew he had been carried off by the devil; and Faust became that wonderful type of magician who sells his soul for a period of transitory happiness. All the feats of magic ever heard of were accredited to him.

The saga received a firm foothold when the first printed collection of the story, "Historia von D. Johann Fausten dem weitbeschreyten Zauberer und Schuartzkünstler," appeared at the "Herbst Messe" of 1587 in Frankfort on the Main. The author writing only what was known to every one, claimed no authorship. It was intended, not so much to amuse, as to warn against the black art, in which every one believed. To be sure each individual may not have been tempted, but each knew of some one who had. And what evil was more threatening than that they too might be tempted and succumb?

The elements of the story are; 1st. Falling from God through presumptuous striving for knowledge and power. 2nd. Forming a bond with the devil who appears as

\* Johann Gast "Sermones Convivalis"

Mephisto. 3rd. The bond for twenty-five years, signed with blood. 4th. Adventures during the specified time in quiet quest for knowledge and later in wild sensuous living. 5th. Final destruction of Faust. The legend in brief is the following;-

Faust the son of a peasant is reared by a rich uncle in Wittenberg. At the university he takes his degree with distinction, but is dissatisfied with theology and studies magic. In a woods at night, he succeeds in calling up Mephistophiles. The spirit agrees to be his servant for twenty-four years, if at the end of that time he will give him his soul. The bond is signed with the victim's own blood.

At first Mephistophiles amuses Faust and his famulus Wagner in their home. Later Faust wishes to travel, and visits the upper as well as the lower world. Becoming more degenerate, he plays pranks upon the pope and sultan. He conjures stag's horns upon the head of a knight, swallows a cart load of hay, saws off his leg and pawns it. He spends much time with students and for their amusement

calls up the shades of Alexander, and of Helen of Troy. Helen becomes his concubine and his son Justus predicts the future for him. At the end of the time he regrets his bargain but it is too late. Students find his body which shows signs of a terrible struggle before death. The moral which the author seems to point to is, that every one sells himself to the devil who sacrifices the future to the present; who seeks the immediate gratification of a desire without regard to its consequences.

Even in this first book there is a suggestion of dissatisfied humanity combatting against the natural limitations of human existence. This discontent pervades all human life in every age, but not to the degree that it did at the close of the Middle Ages. This first Faust Book gives an accurate report of the tales that lived upon the lips of the German peasantry during the age of the Reformation. They were the embodiment and imaginative expression of that feeling of freedom and liberty which was almost universal. Their hero was a fearless Titan who defied all power when in quest of liberty and knowl-



edge.

In the Middle Ages unquestioning obedience had been enforced to certain customs and beliefs. But the imagination had had full sway and given rise to mystical idealism, fairy tales, and romance. Following this strict martial age, came the Renaissance with wildest excess. Men thought and acted as they wished. The churches were decorated with pagan ideals of beauty. The most intellectual men turned away from matters of faith, and the clergy became worldly and licentious. When the Reformation movement came to the foreground the individual as well as the nation had internal struggles. The pious were still haunted by worldly joys, and the worldly were seized by pangs of remorse. Such feelings found imaginative expression in the story of Faust. An age less sensuous or less intellectual would never have been tempted by the pleasures which Faust sought, while an age less religious could not have justified the doom which awaited him.

It was preeminently suited to the age which produced it. Here was an ideal ambition, united with supernatural

powers, tearing down the walls of limitation and grasping knowledge and honor far beyond human experience. The legend became very popular and new and revised editions came out very rapidly. Teachers and preachers found it a very convenient tool for driving home their lessons.

In 1599 Georg Widman's book appeared. It is typical of the style of the Faust book of his time and shows how far the moral tendencies had deteriorated since the shaping of the legend. It is now the most easily accessible of all the Fausts of that period. It bears a title which characterizes the nature of the book exactly. "Wahrhaftige Historien von dem grewlichen und abschewlichen Sünden und Lasten, auch von vielen wunderbarlichen und seltzamen Ebentheuren. So Dr. Johannes Faustus, Ein weitberuffener Schwarzkünstler und Erz Zauberer, durch seine Schwartzkunst bisz an seinem erschrecklichen End hat getrieben."

Following the legend closely, he made this series of adventures a vehicle for denouncing the catholic church and laying at its doors the blame for magic and sin. Faust would repent the sin following his allurement by the catholic ceremony but the devil a sly, sneaking individual

catches him at it and he has to renew the compact. With Widman the greater stress is placed on the commentary following each incident. He admonishes his readers to hold to the Luthern faith even to the letter.

It is no advancement over the "Älteste Faust Buch" for the legend had made but little progress in Germany. It had, however, spread in prose and verse. It drifted down the Rhine countries to Holland Denmark and finally England where a master hand first took it up, and Marlowe produced his "Faustus" in 1589.

It was the first dramatized production, and it followed the legend closely giving a simple tragedy of sin and damnation. All the adventures of the legend are present in bold and certain outline, rather than in elaborate detail. His hero is different from the ordinary man and remains remote throughout the play. In a cold, clear way he has drawn his character so far from us that without darkening it he has reconciled us to the justice of his doom. Faust is not a philosophic doubter but simply a common magician who has learned the black art to amuse himself. He has no thoughts beyond his own body and

this life. He has chosen evil because it would satisfy his definite desires. Instead of using his great power for higher aims he knows nothing better than to play foolish pranks upon the pope, the peasant, and the horse-dealer, like any full-blooded Englishman of the Elizabethian age might do.

Using the plain ungarnished legend Marlowe has made the play represent "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" It is a text peculiarly fitting the English at this time. Foreign and domestic success, intellectual advancement and liberality all faded before the growing licentiousness of the age. In this drama Marlowe only depicted the popular fancy of his day. Making a compact with the devil was nothing extraordinary. In fact such bargains seemed quite common. The conception of the devil was still that of the Middle Ages. He was a definite personage always ready to bargain in souls. This was his real business. His work in the world is pure, unmixed evil, arising from his position, as enemy to God. Still he cannot forget

the God he offended and when Faust denies the existence of heaven and hell he says to him,

"Thinks't thou that I who saw the face of God  
And tasted the eternal joys of heaven  
Am not tormented by ten thousand hells  
In being thus deprived of everlasting bliss?"

The life of the church going people was hemmed in by the doctrine of the church. Free inquiry and investigation was not permitted. Faust's discontent and superhuman desires, though they arose from a noble purpose, are the beginning of a rebellion against God who set the limits to human nature and wisdom. In England at this time this idea was very appropriate, for an attempt had been made to unite ethical sentiment with tolerance and comprehension of others. Marlowe's scepticism enabled him to take up the subject without prejudice and use the legend in a purely dramatic setting.

This kind of play was by no means an innovation to the English stage. It had long been accustomed to sacred subjects in the early mystery and miracle plays. Good and

bad angels, even the devil and God had taken part freely.

Faust is an agnostic who chafes under restraints of ignorance and poverty. He wishes to gain the whole world, and he does so through Mediaeval magic i.e. by giving his soul in exchange. The soul had concrete existence and could be bought or sold independently. But by selling his soul he has lost it. Marlowe has rationalized this fact by showing that Faust is gradually losing his soul, and not by sudden violence at the end. All through his intercourse with Mephisto he is continually degrading himself. His will is paralyzed by repeated yieldings to evil, and his physical sensibility increases as his will power decreases.

The English people who believed in magic and witchcraft, who burned witches and hanged alchemists could never have grasped the idea of a man resorting to superhuman powers for higher motives than sensual pleasure. That such a man should finally find redemption through God's mercy, or work out his own atonement was utterly impossible. Faust had to wait several centuries before he could

find a patron who was willing to save him.

The tragedy of Marlowe's Faust returned to Germany through the English comedians who, even before the seventeenth century traveled about in their thespian carts bringing their English pieces to Germany and Holland. The German theatre which was just in its beginning did not make a place for this Faust. It had to content itself with the "Puppenspiel" at markets, fairs, and church celebrations. These performances continually became more degraded and threatened the annihilation of Faust.

From this humiliating state, Lessing tried to rescue him. He wanted to renew the theme and show what splendid possibilities it contained. He had several Faust plans. One was to let Faust see his whole life in a dream, and so save himself from hell. His Faust was to be an intellectual man incapable of succumbing to the lower sensual pleasures. Then one of Lessing's plans became finished products and his influence is merely that of pointing out the way to his followers.

While the revolution was raging in France, a literary

movement much like a revolution was taking place in Germany. The writers of the "Sturm und Drang" period advocated extreme individualism, destruction to every barrier of individual growth, and war against authority. They glorified instinct, passion, nature and genius. It is quite natural that in such a period of thought the old saga of Dr. Faust should be revived. He was a man who, by his own strength, tried to lift himself above all nature and natural bonds. It is in this light that the Sturm und Drang writers considered him and characterized him as "Das schrankenlose strebende Genie."\*

The play which probably began, and was of the most influence to the rest of the Sturmer and Dranger was Weidmanns "Allegorisches Drama von Johann Faust." It was played in Prag, Munchen, Ulm, and Nordlingen in 1775. Following the teachings of Gottsched, the composition turned out to be little more than a stiff adherence to the three unities. In itself it is of little value, but it contains for the first time, the good angel, the parents of Faust, and a sweetheart who try to save their

\* Maler Muller.



hero. These new elements opposing the influence of Mephisto, and the appropriateness of the character itself, made Faust as much of a favorite with literary men of the eighteenth century as he had been with the common people, in the sixteenth century. Maler Muller, Klinger, Lenz, Soden, Chamisso, Schone, Klingeman, Voss, Braunthal, Benkowitz, and Schink all attempted a Faust drama more or less dependent upon one another. Faust was always a character of their own storm and stress feelings. He was not radically bad to begin with, but he rushed on through life plunging from one sin to the next lower one, and exhausting his life long before he was a mature man. He has attempted to take the judgment of his fellow men into his own hands, and establish justice. He has advocated liberty and thwarted the decrees of princes, only to find that he is wrong in his decision and more than ever in the snares of the evil one.

Muller, Klinger and Schink furnished the three types of productions which were most influential and the other dramatists followed one or the other of these models. Muller's "Situation aus Faust's Leben," was written in

1778. He intended to make it a satirical mirror of the times and chose his scenes from the most effective side for the drama. He was unable to carry it out, and the work remains only a fragment of what might have been a great work. His hero was to be a "Kraftgenie" who would be driven by external circumstances to form a bond with the devil. As a natural outcome he would give himself up to a wild, sinful life, and incapable of all feelings of remorse sink deeper and deeper until he would despair of God's mercy.

More in Muller's own idea of Faust than in his drama, is he a typical hero of the Storm and Stress movement.

\* "Faust war ein grosser Kerl, der alle seine Kraft gefühlt, gefühlt den Zugel, den gluck und Schicksal ihm anhielt, den er gern zerbrechen wollt und Mittel und Wege sucht,— Muth genug hat, alles nieder zu werfen, was im Weg trat und ihm verhindern will; Wärme genug in seinem Busen tragt sich in Liebe an einen Teufel zu Hangen, der ihm offen und vertraulich ent gegentritt.....Das Emporschwingen so hoch als möglich liegt doch so ganz in der Natur .....Es giebt momente im Leben wer erfährt das

\* Cf. Beruh Seuffert D.L.D. d 18Jh's.

nicht, hat's nicht schon tausendmal erfahren—wo das Herz sich selbst überspringt, wo der herrlichste, beste Kerl, trotz gerechtigkeit und Gesetz absolut über sich selbst hinausbegehrt. Von dieser Seite griff ich meinen Faust."

The fragment does not show us this idealist who overleaps the bonds of humanity and knocks at heaven and hell, but rather a sensualist who sinks step by step. Faust striving for power and pleasure foresees his downfall. He makes a compact with the devil for twelve years at the end of which time he can withdraw if he likes. Faust has spent his time in pleasure and at the end of twelve years is in love with the Spanish King's bride. He is just beginning to win her favor when Mephistophiles announces the twelve years are up, and he must make his decision. He has free choice. He may become the degraded beggar that he was, before the eyes of the court, or after twelve years of pleasure lose his eternity. Faust yields.

Klinger varied his legend by identifying Faust with the inventor of printing. He has been very unfortunate. His great invention has been scoffed at or ignored. To

spite his townsmen and prove that he is a man of importance, Faust leagues himself with the devil. He has lost faith in God but not in humanity. Similar to Soden, his Faust has two aims. "Die grosse Wunde der Menschheit bis in ihren Grund zu sondiren, und, wars moglich, sie zu heilen," and the second "Der Zukunft Schleyer zu heben, und ihre Tiefe mit Götterblick durchzuschauen." \*

Though Faust knows that he himself is lost, he still believes in the universal good of humanity. The evil which is done is caused by surrounding conditions not by the individual wish to do wrong. His own sin was brought about by unfavorable conditions, and he hopes to spare others by improving the general state of affairs. With his supernatural power he attempts to work justice. He punishes one act after another and gives authority to the oppressed. In his zeal for justice he has spared no means of punishment; but he has been very partial to himself. He has traveled through all phases of evil and caused untold misery to others, but still he believes in the justice of his acts. Though Leviathan shows him how

\* "Nachklänge zur Sturm und Drang Periode" Warkentin.

each act has caused great evil and injustice, he still maintains his principle. Even when carried off by Leviathan, he defies him and the principles of evil like a man crazed by his own thoughts.

Johann F. Schink first attempted a comic play "Dr. Faust eine Plasanterie." A widow playing the part of a fahrender Schuler, of Mephisto, and later of Helen finally succeeds in gaining Faust for her betrothed. Later he wrote another piece "J Faust Dramatische Phantasie," in which he claims Lessing for his model. Through the counsel of devils we learn of their attempt to win Faust. He is to squander his fortune and then resort to magic.

Ithuriel, the good angel announces that he will be saved by the love of a pure woman. Faust is half resolved to resort to magic and Mephisto, disguised as Theophrastus Paracelsus urges it upon him. Mathilda the pious girl who loves him and Eckhard the famulus resolve to save him. Through the combined efforts of these two, Faust is kept from sinning first against the maiden Isobel, next from gross vanity in Leipzig and third from the magic influ-

ence of the statue in Rome. The hero having no other choice turns to Mathilda while heavenly music vanquishes Mephisto, Faust has lost all of his individuality. He is neither the titan of the legend nor the libertine of the Sturm and Drang. He is simply a weakling who is moved by the strongest outside force.

Others who wrote on the Faust theme in the early nineteenth century are: Aloys W. Schreiber, "Scenen aus Faust's Leben;" Joh. Nepomuk Komareck "Faust von Mainz, Ein Gemähle aus der Mitte des 15Jhdt;" Karl F. Benkowitz "Die Jubel feier der Hölle oder Faust der jüngere;" Niklas Vogt, "Der Farberhof oder die Buchdruckerei in Mainz." Karl Rosenkranz "Nachspiel zur Tragödie Faust." Their works were not available and will not be touched upon here.

Later C. D. Grabbe in "Don Juan and Faust eine Tragödie 1829, wanted to portray the two contrasting instincts which Goethe unites in his Faust in these two separate characters. Don Juan has "Lust am Leben" while Faust is trying to unravel the mysteries of the world. Grabbe is not so much concerned with either hero as he is

in the juxtaposition of the two. Faust has the unquenchable thirst for knowledge and Don Juan the insatiable greed for pleasure. Through their various means each seeks happiness. The devil as Ritter works out the destruction of both, though their own insatiability would have accomplished it without him. He is not so much a devil, as he is the personification of the destructiveness of unbounded desire. Both lose their lives, Faust knowing he will when he follows the compact, and Don Juan as the natural outcome of his defiance of moral law.

Both fall in love with Donna Anna daughter of the governor. Don Juan because he sees a beautiful face, and Faust because he recognizes in her the ideal type of woman. Anna really loves the warm, passionate Spainard, while the cold, german philosopher only incited her fear. She is engaged to Octavio, and true to her word of honor repulses both suitors. While Don Juan kills the lover and father in a duel, Faust escapes to Mt. Blanc with the bride. The devil, as Ritter, aids Faust but betrays him at every opportunity. He has made his whereabouts known

to Don Juan. That hero attempts to scale the mountain,, but Faust conjures him back to the graveyard and the governor's monument. In fearless sport he invites the marble figure to a banquet.

Faust has been unable to win Donna Anna's love, and in a fit of anger kills her. Then he sinks into deepest despair. He has sacrificed everything for her, and now he has sacrificed her to his anger. Nothing in life has satisfied him and he is most displeased with himself. He goes to Don Juan in order that they may lament over Anna together. But Don Juan is his exact opposite. The death of Anna does not trouble him. He has prepared a banquet to which the marble statue is coming and he will let nothing mar his feast. Faust in utter despair is willing to die at the hands of the Ritter.

Don Juan begins his feast but the statue appears and warns him to repent of what he has done. The self-satisfied man replies "Alles was ich that gefällt mir!" This gives the Ritter power over him but even in death Don Juan shouts in defiance "Köing und Ruhm und Vaterland und



Liebe," and dies perfectly satisfied. Faust has suffered in this treatment by the presence of Don Juan who has robbed him of many of his former characteristics and made him less admirable.

Lenau wrote his Faust some years after Goethe's work was published and took still a different point of view. He had not the depth of thought nor yet the culture of his great predecessor Goethe, and could not produce a work of art which would be greater than he himself was. He called his Faust a Swabian and his signature to the devil a "Schwabenstreich." Although he tried to make his work pantheistic he did not keep it up on that level. It has christian philosophy, and also an ending which suggests the teaching of the church. Lenau himself was a catholic and called his pantheism in this play not a "Selbständige positive Welt anschauung, sondern eine Negatives Kehr Bild der Christlichen. If his "erkenntnissdrang" is a sin then he is guilty even before he has given himself to the devil and all there is left to do is to make him denounce nature too.

He introduces his hero climbing the mountain seeking to crush his feelings through strenuous activity. "Ich fühls, des Glauben's letzter Faden reisst," he exclaims. At the same moment a stone slips and dashes him over the abyss. Midway he is caught by a dark hunter, Mephisto who immediately escapes behind the rocks. He visits Faust that evening while he and Wagner are dissecting a corpse and diagnoses his case as

"Euch grämt dasz Kräfte rustig in euch schaffen,  
Und euch nicht lassen in die Werkstatt gaffen."

He advises him to overstep the bonds set by the creator for then and then only can he obtain comfort. Very troubled Faust revolves the question in his mind and decides,

"Vom Himmel fallen nicht erhörungslose  
So schreit ich, sie zu suchen höllenwärts."

Wagner notices such a change in his master that he calls in a friend to cheer him. The friend advises Faust to marry but he declares —

"Ein Weib das mir nicht ekel brächte

Das muszte fromm sein und im Bund der Möchte  
Mit denen ich in Bruch und Fluch."

Up to this time Faust has been good and noble. His pantheism has made him broad and liberal. He has given up God but his love of nature has kept him pure. Under the companionship and influence of Mephisto the hold nature has upon him weakens and he is pulled down into sin and degradation. Regardless of everything but his own senuous pleasure, he rushes on from one shameful act to another. Mephisto is always the exciting force and Faust is continually weakening through his non-resistance.

At a peasant's wedding he kidnaps the bride and then forsakes her. He goes to court and at the marriage feast insults the bridal pair. At a blacksmith's shop he is about to betray the young wife. The appearance of his first love with her child begging at the door cause him to flee when she will not be bought by his gold. His solitary moments are tinged with remorse that suggests insanity, but Mephisto always cheers him with some wild adventure.

As an artist he paints princess Marie's picture and his love for her, akin to worship might save him. Mephisto thwarts this by causing him to kill her lover in a duel. Stranded on a rock he soliloquizes just before he dies;

"So lang ein Kusz auf Erden glüht  
 Der nicht durch meine Seele sprüht  
 So lang ein Schmerz auf Erden klagt  
 Der nicht an meinen Herzen nagt  
 So lang ich nicht allwaltend bin.  
 War ich viel lieber ganz dahin!"

when Mephisto with the bond comes to claim him he denies its power by saying

"Ich bin ein Traum mit Lust und Schuld und Schmerz  
 Und träume mir das Mezzel in das Herz."

and sinks back into Mephisto's arms.

Neither Lenau nor his surroundings had a saving ideal to strive for. There was no central, uplifting power in church or state to inspire him. He allowed his Faust to drift like himself from one attraction to another, receiving spiritual benefit from none.

The Faust legend finally reached its highest development when it was incorporated in the noblest literary product of the nineteenth century, namely Goethe's "Faust." Since the age in which he lived was very liberal, and Goethe was, himself, a man of almost universal culture, the outline of the old legend was enlarged and rebuilt until it became a "Welt Bibel" with its universal problems of intellect and pleasures of this life. While Goethe has portrayed his own spiritual life and used even his own experiences, he has so generalized his theme that it is universal in its appeal.

Though the other writers were not able to free themselves from their own environment and so gave pictures of their own times, Goethe rose above time and space. His Faust was not the product of a definite period. More than half a century witnessed its growth as decade after decade left their influences upon it. It depicts the struggles, in a human soul, between faith and knowledge; between spiritual and worldly desires. His Faust is not only the personification of himself, the greatest and most univer-

sal thinker, but also a personification of the German people, with their changeful search for knowledge, pleasure and power.

In the former treatments, Faust has made his compact with hell as a result of highest hope and expectation, with Goethe he does it out of deepest despondency. The unnaturalness of his life as a scholar has made his existence a burden to him. In seeking for knowledge he had omitted two other factors of life, enjoyment and action, and now he comes to a full realization of his loss. It is not so much knowledge as complete manhood, that he seeks.

The Lord sees in Faust's vague yet lofty yearnings, and in his discontent, a good that is attainable, for they are but the first green buddings of the tree which is the promise of future flowers and fruit. Amid all his perplexities he has a consciousness of the right way and can not be lost while he is striving after the good. Faust does not curse the world because he is a pessimist, but rather because he is an idealist who wants to know and experience everything or have absolutely nothing. He knows

that the pleasures the devil can give will not satisfy the idealist and his reason for seeking the compact is very different from that of the earlier Fausts.

Mephisto, too, is no longer the definite, medieval devil but rather the intellectual doubt in mankind. He is not a bad spirit so much as he is a simple wag. He is a civilized devil representing the negative side of Faust, and not the low, deformity of earlier times.

"Ein Theil von jener Kraft

Die stets das Böse will und stets das Gute schafft." is the way he characterizes himself.

The compact has also been modernized. Mephisto no longer serves for twenty-four years but acts as a companion bound by a wager to please Faust and make him content. With these principle modifications the old plot has grown into the following drama.

The play begins with a prologue in heaven. Mephisto is present with the good angels but he does not praise the works of the Lord. He is a pessimist who fails to see growth and development in mankind. When the Lord singles

out Faust as his servant the devil scoffingly, draws up the wager to win Faust's soul, provided he can lead him while on earth. The Lord prophesies his failure, for through all his sins and errors Faust will be working out his deliverance. For as long as a man can still aspire, and spurn earthly pleasures, longing for something better and higher, he is still the Lords. Faust pines for no earthly pleasure, but rather longs to calmly and reverently contemplate the great work of creation.

He has received no enjoyment or spiritual benefit from any of his studies. Even magic has disappointed him. When he summoned the "Erdgeist," who typifies the personification of God as expressed through physical nature, he was strongly repulsed. He had striven to grasp the whole of human life and nature, but the sight of it had overwhelmed him. As a finite being he could not grasp the infinite. There is still one way left in which he can begin life anew or at least end his hateful existence and that is by suicide. But he is restrained by hearing the easter music, from taking this last step in his despondency.



While walking with his famulus Wagner, the next afternoon, he is gladdened by the life and joy about him. He is seized anew by the longing for spiritual assistance to lift him out of his narrow existence. No sooner does he express the wish for earthly pleasures, than the devil approaches him. In the form of a poodle Mephisto crosses the threshold with Faust. In the evening while Faust is trying to recover his faith, he discovers that it is Mephisto who has taken the form of the poodle. In this case Faust did not summon the devil he came voluntarily!

He is utterly disgusted with his present life and curses everything that can make life satisfactory, even hope, faith and patience. He wants everything or nothing and so is willing to accept even the devil's means of escape from his present position. But he knows that the devil will not satisfy him for he says—

"Ward eines Menschen Geist, in seinem hohen Streben

Von Deinesgleichen je gefaszt?"

Nevertheless he is willing to make a compact and he wants the terms to be definite:

"Werd' ich zum Augenblicke sagen;  
 Verweile doch! du bist so schön!  
 Dann magst du mich in Fesselnschlagen."

This is not the earlier sale of a soul, but rather a wager in which Mephisto agrees to satisfy Faust as they travel through "Die kleine und die grosse Welt."

Mephisto first takes Faust to Auerbach's Keller where he is to be tempted by the pleasures of eating and drinking, but Faust turns from them in disgust. Next through a love philter in the Witches Kitchen, Mephisto brings about the love between Faust and Margarete. Faust's agreement in the legend to refrain from marriage, had given rise to a simple, girlish character in earlier productions but "Gretchen ist eine Unerreichbare, namentlich auch eine unübersetsbare, urdeutsche Gestalt. Das verkörperte Ideal germanischer Poesie."\*

The love scenes of Faust and Margarete are perfect in themselves. She is a simple, innocent child of the common people. She is worried about the religion of her beloved. His confession of pantheism sounds good enough to

\*Dingelstet.

her except that he seems to have no Christianity, but his words seem to reassure her. She has full confidence in him and in her innocent love gives herself up entirely to this seemingly good man.

"Die sich einmal nur vergessen

Die nicht ahnte dasz sie fehle"

has blindly committed a sin which does not only affect her but the other members of her family as well. Her mother has been killed by the sleeping potion and her brother fighting with Faust for his sister's honor is killed in a duel.

Though Faust leaves Margarete it is because he is under a ban for the murder of her brother, and moreover he does not know of her fate. Mephisto thinks he can make Faust forget her and so leads him to the low, sensuous entertainment on the Brocken. But amid these wild pleasures of the Walpurgis Nacht he thinks of her and immediately returns. He finds her in prison, not exactly insane, but dazed by the terror of her guilt. Though she longs to live and fears the death which awaits her, she will not

accept his means of escape but insists on remaining and atoning for her sin. Through this very sin which Mephisto has incited Faust has been purged and uplifted and is never again tempted by senuous pleasure. The tragedy has made him conscious of the fact that everything has limits and that he must cultivate moderation and self-limitation. Mephisto's words, "Her zu mir!" show that the story is not yet finished but has its sequel in a second part. Up to this point Faust has possessed knowledge, and enjoyed pleasure but never experienced an active life. This experience he is to find in the second part when Mephisto leads him into "die Grosse Welt."

Lulled to sleep by Ariel, on the bosom of nature, Faust is freed from remorse. On the basis of his past experience he is to begin life anew. In the capacity of financier he goes to the imperial court. The emperor wishes to see Helen of Troy and it is Faust's duty to produce her. Mephisto, the spirit of annihilation can not reanimate beings, so he directs Faust to the "Realm of the Mothers" where the eternal, original form of all

things exist. Faust fulfills his task and Helen appears in lifelike attitude before the court.

Her classic beauty makes an appeal to Faust alone. His feeling is akin to worship, and in the presence of beauty he is still the unrestrained idealist. He tries to hold Helena, but is overcome and sinks back in a swoon. He must use other means to gain a classical ideal. Mephisto is a spirit of the Middle Ages and has no power over the classical shades. To aid him, he seeks out Wagner's study where that pedantic scientist has just formed a manikin by synthesis. The clairvoyant Homunculus is ready to act as guide and leads Mephisto and the unconscious Faust to Greece. On Classical Walpurgis night Faust succeeds in recalling the shade of Helena. He wins her love by natural means and through their union Faust is purified and elevated. Ideal beauty frees him from sensuousness, and through the medium of an esthetic education he acquires moral culture and self-restraint.

His happy Arcadian life is brought to an end by the death of his son Euphorion. The boy has known neither

danger nor moderation and in attempting to fly has fallen and died. The death of the son has also called the mother, and Helena returns to hades leaving her garment and veil with Faust. These envelope him and bear him swiftly through the air above everything that is common. The union of Faust and Helena has a special significance; it is the fusion of classical and romantic poetry, and Euphorion represents modern poetry. Classic verse has beauty and dignity and to this is added the principle that what comes from the heart can only express true feeling.

Faust has been carried by the cloud-like garments of Helena far above the common earth. He has received a noble inspiration for the highest, and now resolves to seek it in useful activity for others. He wishes to curb the useless activity of the sea and make the shore a fruitful land. By assisting his former friend, the emperor, in battle he is given the tidal shore as a fief. He drains it, builds dykes, and fits it up for a splendid agricultural land in which free activity will give the inhabitants a busy, prosperous life for he feels that,

"Nur der verdient sich Freiheit wie das Leben,  
Der täglich sie erobern muss."

Though Faust is prince of the strand he is not satisfied. The hut of Philemon and Boucis is in the midst of his possessions and hinders him from having his property include the whole area. In his impatience he orders them removed and his command has provoked a deed of violence. Out of the smoke and vapor of the burned hut four spirits of torture approach him. Care tries to master him but she has power only to blind him. Though bent with age and blinded Faust is still enthusiastic over his work. He has found that the purpose of life is activity for others and in anticipation of living on a free soil with a free people exclaims,

"Im Vorgefühl von solchen hohen Glück

Geniess ich jetzt den höchsten Augenblick."

He has found peace in the exercise of his highest nature, he has accepted his place as a servant of the Divine Creative power, and henceforth the destroying spirit has might only over the dead and worn out body.

Angels bringing divine love carry Faust's spirit above the sordid earth. Margarete intercedes for him and he is drawn by the "eternal womanly," that is, divine love, to higher spheres.

Mephisto has been outwitted for he has had to do with a power beyond his comprehension. Though he knows men of the world and has been able to calculate on their actions, he is unable to understand any action motivated by love and regard for others. With Faust he had to do with a soul whose nature was rooted in the ideal, spiritual element, with a man who is possessed of all gifts of genius. And so all of Mephisto's plans are crossed. The temptations he puts before Faust are either wearisome, or contain some spiritual nourishment of which Mephisto had not dreamed. What he has intended to be wholly vile, Faust has made noble and gracious in action. Such a soul can not be lost for it has worked out the very purpose of God. And so Faust who for centuries had been damned because he represented the evils succumbed to through temptation, has finally saved himself because these very temptations



have been a means of leading him to a better realization of himself.