EARLY FAUST CRITICISM IN AMERICA

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INTRODUCTION.

"Faust", that wonderful creation of a master-mind and the very mirror of its author's soul has probably given rise to more criticism than any other single work in modern literature. Doubtlessly the reason for this is its wide appeal to all peoples of all generations. It portrays the longings, struggles and final triumph of the human soul. Each one who reads it sees painted before him in wonderful pictures the desires and disillusions of his own heart, its joy and sorrow, its hope and despair.

Goethe regarded "Faust" as his life work and in truth it was. Not only did he put his life into it but he spent his life writing it. He began it in 1772 or 1773 and did not finish it till shortly before his death. In the poem we can trace the change in the poet, from the Titanic enthusiasm of the "Sturm und Drang" period, found in Part One, to the calm philosophic ideal, which was the result of his Italien journey, that pervades Part Two.

The first part of "Faust" has appeared in three forms - the Urfaust of 1775 (which was not revealed to us until 1887 by Erich Schmidt), the Fragment of 1790 and the Complete Form of 1808.

In this work Goethe gave expression to the ideas of the generations to come as well as his own - the eternal striving of the soul for something greater than itself, something beyond itself; this ideal to be reached, not through mere knowledge but through creative activity.
CHAPTER ONE
The Position of German Literature in America
In the early 19th Century.

First we shall consider very briefly the position of German in France and England, in reference to their effect upon America.

It was only in the latter half of the 18th century that Germany really began to have a national literature but during those few decades she made vast strides by the aid of such men as Klopstock, Lessing, Herder, Schiller and Goethe. They created for their country a literature different in thought and style from anything that had appeared heretofore. It was because of this very recent development, with its keynote of liberty and individuality, so far removed from their ideals, that France and England did not value the German language. "Werther", that work of Goethe's which is similar in some ways to "Faust", was the first work to arouse interest in both France and England. It appeared in 1774 and was read by Napoleon seven times.

It was not till 1813, the year of the appearance of Madame de Staël's "De l'Allemagne", that German was truly introduced to the rest of the world, first to France, then England and through her to the colonies. Madame de Staël did a great service to both Germany and her native land by bringing before them
a comparison of the two great countries of Europe, their customs and character, their religion and thought. To her also belongs the credit of introducing Faust to her land. She had seen and visited Goethe during her trip to Germany in 1803, but even that great privilege failed to give her a true insight into his most wonderful production. However we owe her much gratitude for her worthy attempt and we may well call her the initiator of Faust criticism outside of Germany. In her "De l'Allemagne" she gave a synopsis of Part One with several translations and criticisms. She thought Mephistopheles the hero of the drama and failed truly to interpret many of the deep-lying ideas but that is little to be wondered at. It has been a matter of a century before the true meaning of Faust's relation to Mephistopheles and "magia naturalis" has been proved to us.

Following "De L'Allemagne" were several translations and criticisms of "Faust" but none of such great importance in introducing it to the English speaking people. After its appearance England, who had heretofore criticized German as being immoral and not fit for reading, began to be interested and to show appreciation for the literature of its neighbor. It was due to Madame de Staël's work that an English essayist exclaims, "We then first imbibed a longing to make the riches of that mighty literature our own."

If this new interest had been fostered by some of the better German writers, it would have grown more rapidly. As late as 1821, the sentimental dramas of Kotzebue were about the only German plays on the English stage and the people accepted his work as an example of all German literature.

Coleridge and Lamb never appreciated Goethe. The latter called "Faust", "the language of cat-monkeys". However, two other great writers of the time loved and revered the author of such a work. Byron called him "the greatest

genius the age has produced" while Carlyle wrote to him the following: "Four years ago I read your 'Faust' among the mountains of Scotland. I could not but fancy I might one day see you and pour out before you as before a Father the woes and wanderings of a heart whose mysteries you seemed so thoroughly to comprehend and could so beautifully represent."

Carlyle had a great influence upon some of the American writers as we shall discover later.

The position of German in America was much the same as in England because of the latter's influence in political and intellectual affairs. After the Revolution the English traditions were preserved for the most part, although the French influence also exerted itself because of their aid in the war and the trips to France made by Jefferson, Monroe and others.

The Germans were only known through the emigrants who came to America, seeking freedom from taxation and the tyranny of the princes. In Philadelphia Franklin exerted his influence to spread some of the German works. He established the Public Academy in 1749 (now the University of Pennsylvania) which was the first school in America to offer German in its curriculum. Elsewhere in the colonies German was practically an unknown factor till 1813, the date of "De l'Allemagne". Conservatism held its ground for a time and condemned German as unclean and immoral, but soon the prejudice began to give way. From 1820 the interest began to grow with astonishing rapidity till by the middle of the century what Theodore Parker called a "German Craze" spread over the colonies.

Goodnight makes the following statement:

"A larger proportion of the attention of literary people and a larger proportional space in periodical literature was then devoted to German literature than at any time since." ¹

¹. Goodnight's German Literature in American Magazines Prior to 1846 p. 17.
He goes on to say that prior to 1795 there occur only seven references to Goethe, and all of those to "Werther", but from 1800-45 scarcely a name found in a modern history of German Literature for that period would be missing.

But despite the number of favorable critics and the silenced criticism of most authors, Goethe still stood like a wall, immovable but stormed with all kinds of assaults. No other German writer was so well known and yet so severely criticised, so much loved but so deeply misunderstood. He and his works were condemned by the Puritan principles as immoral and people drew back from him for fear they would be contaminated. Even "Faust", that gem of all literature, Halleck called "the worst book in the worst sense of the word worst".
CHAPTER TWO

The Early German Scholars at Harvard.

Harvard, the seat of New England learning, entered German upon its curriculum about 1825. Dr. A. P. Peabody writes the following: "German had never been taught in college before, and it was with no little difficulty that a volunteer class of eight was found desirous, or at least willing, to avail themselves of Dr. Follen's services. I was one of that class. We were looked upon with very much the amazement with which a class in some obscure tribal dialect of the remotest Orient would now be regarded. We knew of but two or three persons in New England who could read German, though there were probably many more of whom we did not know. There were no German books in the book stores. .... There was no attainable class book that could be used as a reader."¹

In an address of 1890 Mr. J. R. Lowell said: "By hook or by crook some enthusiasts managed to learn German but there was no official teacher before Dr. Follen, about sixty years ago. Mr. George Bancroft told us that he learned German of Professor Sidney Willard who, himself self-taught, had no notion of its pronunciation."²

2. Publications of the Modern Language Association of America V:5, 1890
George Ticknor (1791 - 1871)

Among the early scholars of German at Harvard was George Ticknor. Through "De l'Allemagne" he first became acquainted with German and determined to study at Göttingen. He accomplished his purpose, arriving in Germany in 1815. In attending this most important university, at that time, of German learning, Ticknor came in contact with many distinguished scholars and teachers. From his observation arose his statement "Every day I feel anew what a mortifying distance there is between a European and an American scholar".¹

During his sojourn at Göttingen, he visited Goethe in Weimar. He describes the interview thus: "We went punctually and he was ready to see us. His whole countenance is old; and though his features are quiet and composed they bear decided traces of the tumult of early feeling and passion. Taken to-gether, his person is not only respectable but imposing. Of Lord Byron he spoke with interest and discrimination - that his poetry showed great knowledge of human nature and great talent in description. All this he said in a quiet, simple manner which would have surprised me much if I had known him only through his books and it made me feel how bitter must have been Jean Paul's disappointment, who came to him expecting to find in his conversation the characteristics of 'Werther' and 'Faust'."²

A few days later in his Journal Ticknor says: "Professor Riemer called on us and amused us above an hour by describing Goethe's mode of living...... He said that Goethe is a much greater man than the world will ever know. He has much on paper which has never been published and among the many unpublished things are parts of a continuation of 'Faust' in which the Devil brings him to court and makes him a great man. His enjoyment of life seems gone and nothing

1. Life, Letters and Journals, I, p. 73.
remains to him but a very few years of cold and unsatisfied retirement.

Upon his return from Europe Ticknor became Professor of Spanish and French at Harvard. It was through his influence that Charles Follen was appointed teacher of German in that college. Credit is also due him for many reforms and changes that finally raised Harvard to the great University that it has become. In his lecture concerning the teaching of living languages he advocated a speaking knowledge, thus preceding by a century the very ideas which are in vogue now.

George Ticknor was a great scholar, in that he foresaw the needs of the coming generations. He was one of the first men who had the courage to advocate new ideas and methods in American education.

Edward Everett (1794 - 1865)

Edward Everett, like his friend Ticknor, observed while attending Göttingen that America had much to learn from the German Universities. He carried back to America with him many German books, a beginning of the great German library at Harvard. As Professor of Greek in that institution, he used his influence to introduce the new ideas he had gained abroad, and as President of Harvard from 1846-9 he established many educational reforms there.

From 1820-4 Edward Everett was Editor of the North American Review, a magazine very influential in increasing the popularity of German in America. In 1817 appeared one of the earliest articles on Goethe and written by the pen of Everett. In it we can see the prejudice that existed against that great world's genius, although there is also much praise.

"Goethe is as yet but inadequately known to us by the translation of 'Werther' and the work of Madame de Staël but it is an injustice to ourselves to indulge such ignorance of the literature and men which are working upon

the condition of the human mind with such powerful engines.\(^1\)

"Were we called upon to say which is the masterpiece of Goethe, we should with some hesitation pronounce it to be 'Faust', that alien from the empire of criticism. This work is already known to our readers from the account of Madame de Staël, inadequate as a judgment formed upon French models is, to decide upon a production like the one in question. As for the specimens of the work itself, as they appear in the English translation of Madame de Staël's 'Germany', our readers would suspect us of exaggerating, were we to say how far they are below being even a shadow of a shade..... In the first place the French language is inadequate to render the German of 'Faust'.\(^2\)

"As for the piece considered as a poetical work we do not know that it is of unexampled excellence and it is far from being free from much which must needs be called stuff..... but there are flights and touches, we think, of which it would not be easy to find a parallel since Shakespeare."

"The introduction of the Easter hymn as a chorus in the moment when Faust would swallow the laudanum seems to us not only a most admirable dramatic invention but a flight of poetry of the truest sublimity and an application of religion to life of the most touching kind. One has only to imagine the situation of a desperate man, wearied of life and lifting the fatal cup to his lips; in the darkness of midnight before the morn of Easter; in the moment of his destruction the chime of the bells and chanting choir of the neighboring church are heard and the poison drops from his hand beneath the heavenly accents that reach him from the chorus of angels, 'Christ is Arisen'.\(^3\)

Thus did Edward Everett, the minister, lecturer, statesman, teacher and orator begin that Faust criticism that has extended through the years as it

2. Ibid, p. 262.
reveals to us new wonders with each reading.

Alexander Everett (1790 - 1847)

Alexander Everett was equally as important as his brother in the field of German literature. When Secretary of the American Embassy in St. Petersburg (1809-12) he had many opportunities of studying European life and also when he was United States Minister at the Hague. In his work entitled "Europe" he devoted a chapter to Germany which contains a good comparison of the latter with the United States. During his brother's editorship of the North American Review and during his own (1829-35) Everett contributed many articles concerning German literature but none of them on Goethe. However in the Boston Miscellany he wrote a short sketch of "Faust" with several translations. In it he says:

"In the introductory stanzas which were then (1808) prefixed for the first time under the title of 'Spirit Land', the poet expresses his feelings on resuming the favorite work of his earlier years when most of the companions and friends of his youth had been separated from him. The stanzas are distinguished by a tenderness and delicacy of sentiment which are not very frequently the prevailing characteristic in Goethe's works and which render this one of the most pleasing of his minor poems."¹

Then the critic translates this poem, the scene in the library and the one in Martha's house. The following lines from the Easter episode will show how far short this early critic came from the later translations of Brooks and Taylor but even these can never entirely portray Goethe's "Faust".

"Celestial sounds - why come ye here to greet
A grovelling earth worm with your cheerful breath,
Go tell your tell where hearts congenial beat,
I hear the message well, but want the saving faith.

Faith dearly loves the miracles she hears

¹ Boston Miscellany, 1842, II, p. 55.
And most delights where wonders most abound.

But I no more may reach the lofty spheres,

From which the voice of Revelation sounds.

Yet ah! in youth how sweetly o'er me fell
Heaven's kiss of love upon the Sabbath day!

How full of meaning was the deep-toned bell!

And what an ecstasy it was to pray.

Strange feelings led me from my parents' hearth

O'er hill and dale to wander far and near

And there with many a hotly gushing tear,

I felt an unknown world within me have its birth.

And now - e'en now - with that accustomed song,

So often heard in youth's enchanting hours

What hosts of cheerful recollections throng

Upon my mind and nerve my fainting powers.

Oh! sound again! sweet voices as before.

I weep. I feel myself a man once more."

Speaking of Faust, Everett says: "He is intended as a type of frail humanity and as soon as the impulse to good ceases, he relapses into his habitual tendency to evil", again showing that the author has not understood Goethe's great truth that the human soul ever strives for the good and that evil is only an obstruction.


George Bancroft (1800 - 1801)

Bancroft was first interested in German by Edward Everett, when both were in Harvard, the former as a pupil the latter as a teacher. Bancroft won a scholarship to Göttingen and there he studied theology and history at the same time acquiring a thorough knowledge of the German language. He studied Schiller and Goethe diligently, greatly admiring the former but at first his narrow Puritanical principles clashed with the latter's broad tolerant views.

Bancroft travelled through France, Switzerland, Italy and England while abroad, thus laying a good foundation for the history which became his life work, "History of United States" in ten volumes.

After his return to America he and Joseph Cogswell put into execution a plan they had cherished for several years, namely to establish a boys' school where they could carry out many of their educational ideas they had gained in Germany. They began the modern language instruction among boys of nine, thinking it best to have an early beginning, and both educators felt that these languages were "most valuable" to the student.

During these years, at Round Hill, where the school was established, Bancroft found time to write several articles for the magazines. Among them was the one entitled "Life and Genius of Goethe", from which we shall quote quite extensively. Bancroft here shows that he has overcome many of his former prejudices but that he still has not probed much beneath the surfact of Goethe's masterpieces.

"The most eminent German writers have often been misunderstood and their claims to admiration unjustly represented. The literature of a people if it be good will be peculiar; it will contain a description of emotions belonging to itself of sensations which have not been aroused or indulged by others, of thoughts and sentiments new in themselves or at least in the forms under which they are represented: a foreign literature will seldom be in strict harmony
with the taste and associations acquired at home but this far from being any objection to its excellence confers on it an additional claim to attention. Let these remarks be applied to the literature of Germany. If on first acquaintance it offend or seem strange and unnatural this is nothing more than might have been expected. Goethe is the most national poet of the Germans, the most fit representative of their literature and more nearly than any other the universal favorite of his countrymen. Of the value of Goethe's poetry different opinions may exist: but it is too late to dispute his genius. 1

"His 'Faust', the most wonderful and original production of the German muse had been an invention of his youth but was now matured and finished with the strictest care. This work though it exhibits vice in all its deformity, as essentially mean and hideous is still not of a purely moral tendency; and though abounding in sallies of genius, accurate delineations of man and exhibitions of the heart with all the strength and weakness of the passions it is still liable to censure for its occasional levity and its too daring extravagance." 2

"A reason why many of his works cannot be popular in America is found in the nature of his subjects. Instead of describing sentiments of tenderness and true humanity and depicting the feelings that warm and cheer and bless mankind in the seasons of bereavement or success he has more frequently sketched the sorrows which spring from the imagination and the evils to which men have become exposed by the vices of refinement." 3

"He depicts men driven to despair and suicide by hopeless desire, women languishing from a passion that their own innocence condemns, persons of


delicate sensibility brooding over unreal pains till they turn every object in nature into nutriment for their weakness and 'drink misanthropy even from the sources of love'. Yet his descriptions are made in the spirit of kindness not of scorn."

"But not only has Goethe described the vicious sentiments and painful excitement which grow out of refinement; he has also sketched with light pencil the delicate and amiable sympathies of life and the noble emotions which can arise only in cultivated minds. By the description of mental sorrow he controls the feelings of compassion and by incorporating into his verse and his romances the experience of his life he becomes a practical guide though he may more frequently warn against danger than direct towards purity and virtue."\(^1\)

"The works of Goethe are not without lessons of practical morality. Though he makes no boasts of being himself a religious man he acknowledges religion to be essentially the best foundation of a good character..... He has drawn many exquisite and elevating pictures of female excellence, has illustrated the superiority of domestic life and has given the noblest encomiums to that sex, which knows how to establish order and economy, to feel and to endure. 'Ye call woman fickle, ye err, she but roams in search of a steadfast man.'\(^2\)

Joseph Cogswell (1786 - 1871)

Cogswell was also a student at Göttingen with Ticknor and Everett. His interest was in botany and mineralogy. The latter became a common ground of interest to both Goethe and Cogswell, for the two men had several interviews during the latter's stay in Germany. It was through this American's help that Goethe presented thirty volumes of his works to Harvard, where Cogswell became Professor of mineralogy and geology after his return to America. In

2. Ibid, p. 324.
the New York Review we find an article of his which comments upon several of Goethe's works, among them Faust. It is a much more favorable criticism than those that have preceded it.

"We must pass to the consideration of our author's greatest poem and the greatest poem of the age, 'Faust'."¹

"Every page of the whole poem seems to us like a revelation; every line is perfect as a piece of versification. No translation can give more than a faint idea of the original for besides the strong nationality which hinders its naturalization in a foreign language, one of its minor excellencies (and splendid must the poem be, in which this excellence is but a minor one) is that from first to last it is perhaps the most perfect model of versification and of every kind of versification which exists in any language. This excellence, however it is evident, must vanish like a subtle vapor in the crucible of translation."

"The great subject of wonder in 'Faust' - that which makes the poem seem like a leaf torn from an apocalypse than the production of a human being - is the portraiture of the two main personnages, Faust and Mephistopheles. They are the separate embodiments of the two principles which exist - mixed in every human nature, the bestial and the angelic. The human existence has been analyzed into its two great components and under the wizard hands of the poet these two great elements assume the semblance and the voice of human beings. The one is a man in reality: a wise, proud, ambitious, discontented man and is called Faust. The other is a fiend in human shape, a sneering, despising and perfectly placid fiend and is called Mephistopheles."²

"How many and what attempts have been made to delineate a devil, we know not. We know only that Goethe's is an unexampled and unrivalled creation. Mephistopheles, in one word, we consider the greatest conception in poetry.

since Shakespeare. He is as far as we know the only portrait of the devil which mortal ever drew. Milton's Satan has nothing to do with the question. A glorious, a sublime creation certainly but not the devil. Satan is the incarnation of pride, ambition, but he is still 'naught less than archangel ruined'. Milton's Satan has nothing to do with the question. A glorious, a sublime creation certainly but not the devil. Satan is the incarnation of pride, ambition, but he is still 'naught less than archangel ruined'.

Mephistopheles on the contrary is the real original devil - the quintessence of the bestial, the vile, the little, the loathsome in human nature, extracted, condensed, embodied contempt which are such strong ingredients of his nature that who will not acknowledge that Mephistopheles - the spirit who ever denies and despises, the embodiment of the human bestial - is not a bolder, truer and sublimer impersonation of the arch-enemy than the fallen archangel of 'Paradise Lost'.

"There is not in fact in the whole range of literature a work which contains a sounder, deeper or more healthy moral than this drama. It is a poem which embodies the result of all Goethe's studies, actions and life and it is for this reason that a study of this single work would give the reader a very comprehensive notion of Goethe's genius.""1

"To make the most of present life, of present knowledge; to develop to the utmost the human intellect as it exists; and to look forward to their complete expansion, to their perfect development in some future existence with faith, with placid and unrepining hope; to be universal within the present limitations of humanity and to trust for an universal and unbounded existence in a future sphere: this as we have repeated again and again was - Goethe. The reverse of this - the embodiment of man, over-ambitious, disgusted with humanity, and 'cursing patience'; invoking and devoting himself to the friend which slumbered as yet unformed and chaotic within his own nature - this is Faust."3

3. Ibid, p. 47.
George H. Calvert (1803-1888)

George Calvert was the first Southerner to become interested in German. Like the other early German scholars he attended Harvard and there he was aroused by an ambition to study at Göttingen. There he became acquainted with many of the greatest works in German literature, among them Faust, and he visited Goethe at Weimar. Of him he says: "Few know that behind the poet, beneath the writer and thinker, lying as solid foundation to the splendid superstructure of sixty printed volumes, is a practical man of business, a vigorous, rigorous, methodical administrator, who as such, did better work and more of it than was ever done, except by a few of the predominant law givers and wisest, long-lived rulers of populous nations."1

This shows that Calvert knew the author of "Faust" and understood him much better than many critics that have followed him, who have severely criticised Goethe because he held himself aloof from all affairs of the state and showed himself to be a poor citizen of Germany.

Upon his return to his native land, Calvert became editor of the Baltimore American and through it he spread many of his new ideas. In 1843 he went to Newport, Rhode Island, and here became connected with the Transcendentalists. He aided George Ripley in the preparation of his "Specimens of Foreign Standard Literature" by adding a translation of the "Goethe-Schiller Correspondence".

In his book entitled "Goethe" he has given a very sympathetic appreciation of "Faust" and its author, from which are the following quotations: "'Faust' is the poetical reverberation of Goethe's individual life, an artistic transfigurement through a many-toned song - by one who had a genius for such singing - of the passions, thoughts, strivings, doubts, conflicts, acquisitions, upreaching of a great poet and a great man, a deep-thoughted, warm-souled, well-poised man, whose profuse gifts were crowned with a rare literary gift of

1. Goethe, by Calvert, 1872, pp.5-6.
fullest, finest, most perspicuous expression. In earliest manhood Goethe conceived his 'Faust', and finished it in his eight-second year, thus carrying it in him and with him for sixty years of the most variably productive, and the most continuously and methodically active life, and may it not be added, the most successful in the achievement of its many high aims, that was ever lived on earth."

"The prelude and dedication are by their beauty and significance, a becoming prologue to the great tragedy which, as Goethe said to Eckerman 'ranges from Heaven through Earth to Hell' and, it may be added reascends at the close of the Second Part to whence it started."

"Mephisto represents the animal nature of man his vis a tergo, the driving power of desire, which, pushed to extreme, brings him to ruin, but, here on earth, shares his being in an indissoluble partnership with his upper powers of reason and emotion..... Possibly in man's struggles for and in the flesh, the soul is braced and tutored for the higher phase, when free of the body, it shall glow with more steadiness and brilliancy through an early earth-drawn vigor."

"And now we come to the chief, the great personage of the drama, the marvelous Margaret. Here we have the resources and attractions and the transmuted harvests of feeling, exhibited with the trueness of a deep, sure sensibility and the clearness of the brightest Art."

"Gretchen, as poetic creation, that is, an invented personage combining fidelity to every-day truth with features heightened through genial transfiguration combining vital individuality with generic breadth, is not below any woman in

Shakespeare. By her intense feminine loveliness she holds all hearts, and so deeply does she throb with humanity that we love her not for her beauty and tenderness only, or her sufferings, but, through our fellow-feeling for her very crime. This is the test of Goethe's Art — that by the fearful deed of infanticide the whole previous structure is not shattered."1

"'Faust' is a lyrical drama, Goethe giving here freest play to all his powers lyric, epic, dramatic, produced one of the masterpieces of literature, hardly second to any other masterpiece. I put in 'hardly' because every time I look anew into 'Faust', its deeps seem deeper, its beauties fresher, its variety still infinite."2

"Of all poets Goethe is the most direct in his diction, the simplest in his words. He seldom transposes words, he never overloads them or with them. His style is so admirable because, besides issuing out of a richly-endowed poetic mind, it is the easy result of most intinite union between what he has to say and the how to say it."3

"The Second Part of 'Faust' is at bottom a commentary on life, civilized life, in its divers phases, its multiformias aspects, shapes, expressions, conformations, and a commentary by one who had lived in and through more of these phases and forms, and more thoroughly than any man of his time or of any time; and he at once a practical worker and a ceaseless thinker and to crown all, a sovereign poet."4

"The Second Part is to the first part what a reflex of a rainbow is to the primitive, grand beautiful phenomenon. It has the same colors, and the same arch hung between earth and heaven, but it is comparatively pale and indistinct,

having only a reflected, not a primary life. In the Second Part symbolic
personages represent ideas and purposes, political, artistic, scientific, and
through them the attempt is made to give the life and discipline of Faust. ¹

"In the First Part the principal personages and scenes are passionately real
and present; in the Second they are intellectually real, and therefore not so
present. In the First the personages represent themselves; in the Second they
represent something else. They are not beings pulsating with their own hearts'
beats, but abstraction's symbols; and thence, not having primitive passions and
affections we cannot lay hold of them with our passions and affections."²

"In the Second Part of 'Faust' one is irritated with an unending intellectual
hunt the slipper. The shell is often glancing with light, but the kernel
when found, hardly pays the search. The personages are reflex, remote, mostly
thin, and even cold."³

From these words of Calvert we may see slowly disappearing the deeply-
rooted prejudices of those early days of American culture that was ever present
against Goethe and his works.

2. Ibid, p. 239.
CHAPTER THREE

The Transcendentalists.

This word "Transcendental" was first adopted by Immanuel Kent, who applied it to a certain group of ideas that did not come from experience cut through which experience was acquired, as he thought. This term was carried to America and applied to a group of writers, who sought to reveal to man his own divine nature, his creative faculties, through which he could reach the ideal. At first "Transcendental" was used only of philosophy but soon it spread to religion and literature. W. E. Channing gives us about as complete an idea of this vague appellation as is found anywhere: "Transcendentalism was an assertion of the inalienable integrity of man, of the immanence of Divinity in instinct. In part it was a reaction against Puritan Orthodoxy; in part, an effect of renewed study of the Ancients, of Oriental Pantheists, of Plato and the Alexandrians, of Plutarch's morals, Seneca and Epicetus; in part the natural product of the culture of the place and time. On the somewhat stunted stock of Unitarianism whose characteristic dogma was trust in individual reason as correlative to Supreme Wisdom, had been grafted German Idealism, as taught by the masters of most various schools, by Kant and Jacobi, Fichte and Noralis, Schelling and Hegel, Schleiermacher and De Wette, by Madame de Staël, Cousin, Coleridge, Carlyle; and the result was a vague yet exalting conception of the godlike nature
of the human spirit.... Transcendentalism, as viewed by its disciples, was a pilgrimage from the idolatrous world of creeds and rituals to the temple of the Living God in the soul. It was a putting to silence of tradition and formulas that the Sacred Oracle might be heard through intuitions of the single-eyed and pure-hearted. Amidst materialists, Zealots and skeptics, the Transcendentalist believed in perpetual inspiration, the miraculous power of will, and a birth-right to universal good."¹

The Transcendental movement in New England was akin in several ways to the "Sturm and Drang" period in Germany. Both had as their watchwords, Idealism, Liberalism and Independence. Both sought to free literature from physical, mental and spiritual slavery. In New England Goethe and German Philosophy was discussed because in them was found the embodiment of the Transcendental idea. However, this group in New England never penetrated the depths of Goethe's message because in them still existed some of the old Puritan asceticism which disregarded man's sensual nature. For this reason they could not understand that harmony of sensual and spiritual which is ever found with Goethe and especially in "Faust". In this fact we can trace much of the prejudice against the latter, in such men of letters as Emerson, who always had only a "qualified admiration" of Germany's greatest poet.

Through the Dial, a small magazine of only four volumes of which Margaret Fuller was the editor, the message of the Transcendentalists was given to the world. It is through its pages that we have preserved for us many of the words of the writers we are to consider.

¹ Memoirs, II, p. 12.
George Ripley (1802 - 1880)

It was at George Ripley's home that the first meeting of the Transcendentalists was held in 1836 and he was one of their most loyal members. As a Unitarian minister Ripley had many theological views that clashed with the liberal belief of the Transcendental Club. It was through the latter that he acquired his broad minded toleration, which saw beneath the surface of German literature and penetrated to the true thought.

Ripley compiled a series of German and French translations, with the help of several of his friends, which he designated "Specimens of Foreign Literature", a work of fourteen volumes. These proved to have a great influence upon the study of German in New England.

In July of 1840, together with Margaret Fuller and Emerson, George Ripley began the Dial to which he contributed several articles concerning the new thought and literature. He also contributed to other magazines and in one of them he writes as follows: "It is difficult to form an estimate of the character of Goethe. He is so many sided that you never know where to find him. At one time you find him recommending action and practical life. He counsels men to take part in the doing and the driving of the world. But when French cannon thunder at the gates of Weimar that first poet of Germany, fearful lest his mind should be disturbed, sits down to study Chinese. Now he seems cool, indifferent to the great interests of humanity and again he is filled with the love of man. The words of an old writer would have served him for a motto - 'Come let us enjoy the good things that are present - our life is short and tedious and in the death of man there is no remedy'."

"Whatever was his character as a man his power as a writer is unrivalled among the moderns and his claims to immortal renown uncontested. He goes silently up to take his place among the fixed stars of creation. His works pass into the ages to shine with perennial brilliancy."¹

¹. Boston Quarterly Review, 1839, p. 188.
The Brook farm project had Ripley as a leader. It was a school established for boys of 12-14 years and in it they tried to combine intellect and manual labor, to introduce the new freedom of thought. We cannot go into detail concerning this attempt but it is enough to realize it was another product of the new influence from Germany.

Frederick H. Hedge (1805 - 1890)

It has been said that the German thought of the Transcendental period reached its high tide in Frederick Hedge. Like many of our other writers, he studied in Germany and there gained a thorough knowledge of its language. In 1829 he was ordained at Cambridge and from then on was influential in the spread of German in America.

In 1857 he wrote an article in the Examiner where called "Faust", the consummate flower of a Gothic mind - a work which the final judgment of mankind will rank with the supreme products of genius.\(^1\)

In 1848 Hedge published "Prose Writers of Germany". In 1878 he resigned a six years Professorship in German at Harvard, in order to devote himself to his work on "Hours with German Classics" which appeared in 1886. This book contains about ninety pages devoted to Goethe. He has collected all of his Faust criticisms there and presented them to the world in a very interesting sketch from which we shall quote at length: "The history of its composition reveals itself here and there in the finished work, especially in the second part. The first half of the fifth act gives one the impression of an outline not filled up, indications instead of representations, a design imperfectly executed. Single passages striking in themselves are loosely connected; and this first half bears no proportion to the last. The fourth act is rich in suggestion but labors in the structure. The third act, an exquisite poem in itself, is an interlude and does not further the development of the plot. In short, although one grand design

may be supposed in the poet's mind to have comprehended and clinched the whole, the want of unity in the execution of the Second Part is painfully apparent to all in whose estimation the interest of single portions does not compensate for the halting of the plot. Even the First Part with all its grandeur and its fire, its pathos and its sweetness, bears marks of interruption in its composition..... Gaps and seams and joints and splicings are here and there apparent. The work is too great to be injured by them but they bear witness of arrested and fitful composition. The Walpurgisnachttraum or 'Aberon and Titania's Golden Wedding' is lugged in with no motive in the drama, whose action it only serves to interrupt."

"But the effect of the long arrest which after Goethe's removal to Weimar delayed the completion of 'Faust' is most apparent in the wide gulf which separates, as to character and style, the Second Part from the First. So great indeed is the distance between the two that without external historical proofs of identity it would seem from internal evidence altogether improbable in spite of the slender thread of the fable which connects them that both poems were the work of one and the same authors."

"As to the question which of the two is the greater production it is like asking which is the greater Dante's 'Commedia' or Shakespeare's 'Macbeth'. They are incommensurable. As to which is the more generally interesting, no question can arise. There are thousands who enjoy and admire the First Part, to one who even reads the Second. The interest of the former is poetic and thoroughly human; the interest of the other is partly poetic but mostly philosophic and scientific..... In one respect at least the Second Part is nowise inferior to the First - namely in rhythmical beauty. It abounds in metrical prodigies, - proof at once of the marvellous plasticity of the language and the technical skill of the poet."¹

¹. Hours with German Classics by F. Hedge, p. 298f.
The Prologue in Heaven was not written until the larger portion of the First Fart had been published. It seems not unlikely that Faust's salvation was an afterthought and that Goethe's original design was to follow the legend and consign his hero to the Devil at the end of his career. We may suppose riper thought rejected such an ending and occasioned the temporary arrest of the whole undertaking until the idea of the Prologue in Heaven occurred to him as offering a way for escape from the sorry finale of the legendary 'Faust' and a better treatment of the theme. But the Prelude on the Stage proposes to traverse the entire circle of creation and to pass 'with considerate rapidity from heaven through the world to hell'. This seems to imply the intention after all to make hell the terminus of Faust's career.... Here then is a contradiction, - the Prelude pointing downward to the Pit; the Prologue in Heaven directing to the skies. The contradiction can be solved only by supposing that the author forgot himself for the moment and wrote in the sense of his original design."

"It is a proof of his genius that with all these irregularities the play has won for itself the suffrage of two generations and maintains its place as the literary masterpiece of modern time."¹

Hedge follows this discussion with an outline of the poem and several translations. We can see by the above quotations that many unsolved problems are brought to view which shows at least a more careful reading of "Faust" than we have seen hitherto and one step upward to the light of a deeper, truer understanding of Goethe's aims and purposes.

James F. Clarke (1810-1888)

J. F. Clarke was one of the German enthusiasts at Harvard, a firm follower of Transcendentalism, a close friend of Emerson and Margaret Fuller; therefore he must not be omitted from our list although he has left no Faust criticism that I have been able to find. However he says of Goethe, whose works he much

¹. Hours with German Classics by Hedge, p. 302f.
admired. "There is no great man of modern times concerning the character and
measure of whose greatness, opinion - out of Germany at least - is so much divided.
From Thomas Carlyle, who regards him as a demi-god to Andrews Norton, who looks
upon him as little better than a demi-devil, there is space for a variety of
opinions. For myself, having studied his writings more or less for twenty years,
it seems to me that a more profound and creative intellect has not visited the
earth in these later days..... His method is to take his departure always from
experience.

The chief advantage of studying his writings is to see in them what a wealth
of thought he could find under the surface of our every day existence and how to
an earnest mind common life teems with wonders."1

Clarke was one of Margaret Fuller's biographers and has given to us one of
the best sources we have of her life and thought. He was one of the leading
minds in religion, literature and philosophy of that day.

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803 - 1882)

Ralph W. Emerson, one of our best known American writers attributes his
interest in German to Madame de Staël; in Goethe, to his great friend across the
seas Carlyle, whom he visited in 1833. Emerson says that his main reason for
studying German was to become acquainted with Goethe but at first he could only
give him a "qualified admiration", for as he said in a letter to Carlyle, "The
Puritan in me accepts no apology for badmorals in such as he."2

In the Dial appeared Emerson's lecture delivered in 1839 entitled "Thoughts
on Modern Literature". In speaking of Goethe, he says, "But of all men he who
has united in himself and that in the most extraordinary degree the tendencies
of the era is the German poet and philosopher Goethe..... He learned as readily
as other men breathe. Of all the men of his time not one has seemed so much

2. Ibid, I, p. 29.
at home in it as he."¹

"If we try Goethe by the ordinary canons of criticism we should say that his thinking is of great altitude and all level. Dramatic power he has very little... ;. It is all design with him just thought and instructed expression, analogies, allusion, illustration which knowledge and correct thinking supply."²

"But now that we may not seem to dodge the question which all men ask,..... what shall we think of that absence of moral sentiment and that singular equivalence to him of good and evil in action which discredits his composition to be pure?"³

"We can fancy him saying to himself, 'There are poets enough of the Ideal, let me paint the Actual. The age that can damn it as false and falsifying will see that it is deeply one with genius and history of all the centuries. I have given my characters a bias to error. Men have the same - I have let mischances befall instead of good fortune. They do so daily and out of many vices and misfortunes I have let a great success grow as I had known in my own and many other examples.' Goethe then must be set down as the poet of the Actual not the Ideal; the poet of limitation not of possibility; of this world and not of religion and hope."

"That Goethe had not a moral perception proportionate to his other powers is not then merely a circumstance as we might relate of a man that he had or had not the sense of tune or an eye for colors - but it is the cardinal fact of health or disease; since lacking this he failed in the high sense to be a creator and with divine endowments drops by irrevocable degree into the common history of genius..... We feel that a man gifted like him should not leave the world as he found it."⁴

Can anyone ever say that Goethe left no imprint on the world? To many, he has created a new world, a world upon a higher plane than man dwelt before he came. But he failed to lift Emerson to that higher plane because of the latter's miscomprehension.

In 1847-8 Emerson travelled on the continent a second time and again saw Carlyle. While abroad he delivered his lectures on "Representative Men", among whom was "Goethe, The Writer". He called Goethe "the high priest of the age" but "Faust" he never appreciated. The first part he said was "a little too modern and intelligible"; "full of disagreeable superficial scenes and restless, gossipping aimless activity." Helena or Part Two he had more praise for: "The Helena is the work of one who found himself the master of histories, mythologies, philosophies, sciences and national literature in the encyclopaedical manner in which modern erudition with its international intercourse of the whole earth's population researches into Indian, Etruscan and all Cyclopean arts..... These are not wild miraculous songs but elaborate forms to which the poet has confided the results of eighty years of observation."

"The wonder of the book is its superior intelligence. In the menstrum's of this man's wit the past and present ages and their religious, politics and modes of thinking are dissolved into archetypes and ideas..... He writes in the plainest and lowest tones, omitting a great deal more than he writes and putting ever a thing for a word. He has said the best things about nature that ever were said."¹

"Take the most remarkable example that could occur of this tendency to verify every term in popular use. The Devil had played an important part in mythology in all times. Goethe would have no word that does not cover a thing. So he flies at the throat of this imposter. He shall be real; he shall be modern;

¹ Works, IV, p. 259f.
he shall be European; he shall dress like a gentleman. Accordingly he stripped him of mythological gear, of horns, cloven foot, harpoon, tail, brimstone and blue fire and instead of looking in books and pictures, looked for him in his own mind, in every shade of coldness, selfishness and unbelief that in crowds or in solitude darkens over the human thought, ... he flung into literature his Mephistopheles the first organic figure that has been added for some ages and which will remain as long as the Prometheus.¹

"I dare not say Goethe ascended to the highest grounds from which genius has spoken. There are nobler strains in poetry than any he has sounded."²

Emerson never sounded the depths of Goethe's genius. This is strange since in his own writings he embodied many of the great poet's ideas. Emerson, too, was an optimist, full of faith in the ultimate goodness of humanity. Truth and reality were his ideals as they were Goethe's. Both believed in freedom from the old traditions, a mental and moral freedom. Emerson's "Earth Song" reminds us of Goethe's Erdgeist's song in "Faust".

Mrs. Sarah Helen Whitman (1803 - 1878)

The last of the Transcendental writers we shall discuss and the one who seems to most closely approach Margaret Fuller in her appreciation of Goethe is Sarah Whitman, whom most of us know best as Edgar Allen Poe's "Helen".

After her marriage with a man of Boston, Mrs. Whitman learned to know intimately the Transcendentalists and their circle; especially was Emerson her devoted friend.

Her best criticism of Goethe and "Faust" is found in an article³ concerning Margaret Fuller's translation of Eckermann which Mrs. Whitman thought was a great aid in understanding Goethe, and especially "Faust". Mrs. Whitman writes as

1. Works IV, p. 263.
2. Ibid, p. 270.
follows: "Goethe seized upon what was still vital and genuine in this old legend of Faust and concentrating upon it the light of his genius, the simple germ expanded and unfolded into a plant of rare and surpassing beauty, putting forth leaf after leaf and producing gradually the fairest flowers and richest fruits. Its seeds have been wafted abroad over far lands and have sprung up again in power and beauty from many a foreign soil."

"Fifty years had elapsed after the publication of this first part of 'Faust' before the second was fully completed and given to the world. In this long interval great and important changes had taken place in the mind of the author. He was no longer a lonely exile on earth, - he had reconciled himself to existence and brought his finely tempered spirit into perfect harmony with itself and the external world. In Experience he had found a rude, yet not unfriendly teacher, in Nature the gentlest mother and the kindest nurse and within his own heart a tranquil happy home."

"We believe that the continuation of this poem is as yet but little known out of Germany. It does not reflect life in its simplicity, - it is not calculated, like the works of Shakespeare to please the learned and the unlearned - the wise and the simple, - it is full of refinements and abstractions - it deals in symbols and hieroglyphics.... Goethe confessed that the first part was almost entirely subjective proceeding from an oppressed, impassioned state of the individual character, while in the second he says, 'there was exhibited a higher, broader, clearer and more passionless region of which those, who have not lived and looked about them sometime, will hardly know what to think....'"

"Many commentaries have been written upon this portion of 'Faust' - for ourselves we read the work without an interpreter - no critic intermeddled with our joys - we groped our way in the darkness and often came unawares upon rich treasures - lumps of pure golden ore and gems of rare luster. It is true that after its first perusal we retained for it far a time only a confused and
dream-like recollection produced by the constant change of scene and strange blending of objects."

"What seemed at first but a confused and fragmentary delineation of objects now unfolds a design of rich and rare significance...."

"The forms, it is true, are marble still,- still wanting in all the life-warm coloring and glowing freshness of nature and still as with all figures wrought in relief one side of the object only being delineated by the artist, it is left for the imagination of the beholder to supply the rest and to give the figure its full completeness and finish."

"We know of nothing that approaches this work in exuberance and prodigality of genius, in the lavish expenditure that is exhibited of all the richest materials of poetry; neither are the closing scenes without a pure spiritual beauty, a divine glory which reflects back its mellow radiance along the whole rich vista of the narrative lined as it is with images of beauty and terror, magnificence and simplicity, grotesqueness and gloom."

"Ever in reading this poem are we discovering some new beauty, some fine and delicate meaning which had hitherto escaped the notice."

Mrs. Whitman finishes the article by considering the way German was regarded by many Americans.

"The opposers of German Literature are fond of advocating the claims of common sense over those of Philosophy, of elevating the actual over the ideal. They are afraid of all vagueness and mysticism and tremble like children at the shadowy appearances seen in the twilight. Yet at night in the darkness we may see much that cannot be seen by day. The near glare of the sun conceals from us those lights of heaven that are forever burning in the vaults of space, even as the acute shrill sounds of day prevent us from hearing the deep voices of nature."

"For ourselves we rejoice in the increasing number of those who are willing to follow truth wherever she may lead them, in the spirit of that childlike
confidence and perfect love which casteth out fear. We look for the time when philosophy shall aid in reconciling reason and faith, when we shall be able to interpret in all its beautiful simplicity the word of him who taught to read the gospel of Nature - to observe the lilies of the field - and to seek for the kingdom of heaven within our own hearts."
CHAPTER FOUR
Margaret Fuller and Goethe.

"If Margaret Fuller were considered only from the standpoint of the great influence she exerted upon the lives of our greatest American authors and thinkers, that alone ought to insure her a high place in the history of American thought and letters," says F. A. Braun. Yet few Histories of American Literature mention her work, and fewer still are the people of to-day who know the name of Margaret Fuller, one of Goethe's most sympathetic critics.

Born in 1810 to a Puritan family of Cambridgeport, Massachusetts, Margaret's life began almost in the shelter of those walls from which German learning first emanated. Her father was a strict Puritan of the old type, deeply religious and fond of learning merely for its own sake. Margaret describes her mother thus, "She was one of those fair and flowerlike natures, which sometimes spring up even beside the most dusty highways of life - a creature not to be shaped into a merely useful instrument, but bound by one law with the blue sky, the dew and the frolic birds."

Here we may trace a similarity to the words of Margaret's beloved master Goethe, who tells us that from his young and happy mother he inherited his

1. Margaret Fuller and Goethe by F. A. Braun, p. 6.
Margaret began Latin at the early age of six, with her father as instructor. He was fond of his daughter but never seemed to realize she was but a child. Because of her irregular hours of study and the many tasks her father imposed the child's intellect was unduly emphasized, while her health and activities were neglected. In the later years she realized this and exclaimed "It was not mother's fault that she was ignorant of every physical law, young, untaught country girl as she was; but I can't help mourning sometimes that my bodily health should have been so destroyed by the ignorance of both my parents."

At the age of twenty-two Margaret had studied English, French, Spanish and Italian literature quite thoroughly. As a young woman she was not of pleasing appearance; was abrupt and very plain-spoken but her magnetic personality won for her many friends. "She wore this circle of friends when I first knew her, as a necklace of diamonds about her neck" says Emerson. Her whole life seemed to be a struggle either physically or mentally. Her father's death in 1835 threw upon her the responsibility of helping support the family. This she did despite her ill-health and gave up her long cherished European trip. However when the latter was accomplished during the last four years of her short life there seemed to come the fulfillment of her fondest hopes. She lived a life of active service for others. While in Italy, she found the "one man" there; she was blessed with a child. Then as a tragic, and yet fitting climax to her unselfish and devoted life her prayer was answered. "That it may not be my lot to lose my babe at sea... but if I should, it may be brief anguish, and Ossoli, he and I go to-gether."

The orthodox religion of her fathers failed to satisfy Margaret Fuller's needs. Her soul craved for something deeper and here is found that same longing.

1. Margaret Ossoli by Higgenson, p. 22.
3. Margaret Ossoli by Higgenson, p. 275.
of the soul for Truth, that Goethe had and which he portrayed so beautifully in
"Faust". "Very early in life I knew that the only object in life was to grow",
exclaims Margaret.¹ She desired the same development of character that she
found later in Wilhelm Meister and "Faust". Again she says "I prayed in very
early years 'Give me the truth, cheat me by no illusion'."²

Margaret read Madame de Stael as early as 1826 but did not begin to study
German until 1832. It was that work however that first made her acquainted with
Goethe and brought to her attention "Faust". Carlyle's articles in the English
magazines increased her interest and soon she was reading all of Germany's
masterpieces. She was also influenced by several of the Harvard writers discussed
in the preceding chapters. Hedge provided her with many books from his library,
Clarke helped her with the German pronunciation, Emerson interested her in many
of Carlyle's articles and all three men proved to be her closest friends. In his
splendid insight into the character and mind of Margaret Fuller that Emerson gives
in the Memoirs, we find him saying: "But what was of still more import to her
education she had read German books and for three years before I knew her almost
exclusively - Lessing, Schiller, Richter, Tieck, Novalis and above all Goethe.
It was very obvious at the first intercourse with her, though her rich and busy
mind never reproduced undigested reading, that last writer - food or poison - the
most powerful of all mental reagents - the pivotal mind in modern literature -
for all those before him are ancients and all who have read him are moderns -
that this mind had been her teacher and of course the place was filled nor was
there room for any other..... Nowhere did Goethe have a braver more intelligent
or more sympathetic reader."³

Margaret Fuller's religion and philosophy were deeply influenced by Goethe's

2. Ibid, p. 303.
teaching. She says as early as 1832: "It seems to me as if the mind of Goethe had embraced the universe. He comprehends every feeling I have ever had so perfectly, expresses it so beautifully,"¹ and again "How often I have thought that if I could see Goethe and tell him my state of mind he would support and guide me. He would be able to understand."²

Like Goethe, she believed "There is only one guide, the voice in the heart. .... Thou canst not stray from nature nor be so perverted but she will make thee true again."³ Like "Faust" and its author she exclaims "I wish to know and feel my pain, to investigate its nature and its source."⁴ Also she gives expression to Goethe's Titanic idea, that underlies so many of his works, in these words, "by becoming more ourselves, by destroying sin in its principle, we attain to absolute freedom,..... In short we become gods and able to give life which we now feel ourselves able only to receive."⁵ And listen to the echo of Goethe's thought in Margaret's words "Whatever has been permitted by the law of being must be for good and only in time not good. The moment we have broken through an obstruction, not accidentally but by the aid of faith we begin to interpret the Universe and to apprehend why evil is permitted. Evil is obstruction. Good is accomplishment."⁶

Many wish to place Margaret Fuller among the Transcendentalists but she herself proved this to be unfounded. Although esteeming them and their work she often criticized their ideas and always spoke of "them" and "me" not of "us".

The writers of the preceding chapter wished to cut loose from the past and all its

2. Ibid, p. 122.
3. Ibid, p. 211.
traditions. Margaret thought the best of them should be preserved for the new literature. They dwelt much in speculative philosophy; she cared not for it. They loved the ideal; she, the real. They wished to withdraw from the world; she desired to remain in it and make it better. They could not conceive of joining the sensual side of man's nature with the aesthetic; only in a perfect harmony of these two did she find the true ideal. Realizing Margaret Fuller's close connection with Goethe and his teachings we cannot think of confining her ideas to such a narrow space as the word "Transcendentalism" implies.

It was as editor of the Dial (1840 - 2), that Margaret Fuller strove to give rise to a new literature that would embody the new thought. In this magazine appeared two splendid criticisms of Goethe. The first is in reply to Menzel's essay on Germany's master-poet and in it she defends "her parent" with a truly affectionate regard from the assault of his countryman. In the second she wrote an essay entitled "Goethe" from which we shall let the author speak for herself, "Fardon him, World, that he was too worldly. Do not wonder, heart, that he was so heartless. Believe, Soul, that one so true as far as he went must yet be initiated into the deeper mysteries of the soul."1

"But you say there is no likeness between Goethe and Tasso. Never believe it, such pictures are not painted from observation merely. That deep coloring which fills them with light and life is given by dipping the brush in one's own life-blood."2

After tracing the change in Goethe's works to his change of character, from the Storm and Stress Period to his return from Italy, she says, "If his genius lost sight of the highest aim he is the best instructor in the use of means, ceasing to be a prophet poet, he was still a poetic artist. From this time

2. Ibid, p. 6.
forward he seems a listener to nature but not himself the highest product of nature, a priest to the soul of nature.\(^1\)

"'Faust' contains the great idea of his life as indeed there is but one great poetic idea possible to man, the progress of a soul through the various forms of existence. All his other works whatever their miraculous beauty of execution are mere chapters to this poem illustrative of particular points. 'Faust', had it been completed in the spirit in which it was begun would have been the Divina Comedia of its Age.\(^2\)

"Faust bent upon reaching the centre of the universe through the intellect alone naturally after a length of trial which has prevented the harmonious unfolding of nature falls into despair. He has striven for one object and that object eludes him. Returning upon himself he finds large tracts of his nature lying waste and cheerless. He is too noble for apathy, too wise for the vulgar content with the animal enjoyments of life. Yet the thirst he has been so many years increasing is not to be borne. Give me, he cries, but a drop of water to cool my burning tongue. Yet in casting himself with a wild recklessness upon the impulses of his nature, yet untried, there is a disbelief that anything short of the All can satisfy the immortal spirit...... With the progress of an individual soul is shadowed forth that of the soul of the age; beginning in intellectual scepticism; sinking into license; cheating itself with dreams of perfect bliss to be at once attained by means no surer than a spurious paper currency; longing itself back from conflict between the spirit and flesh, induced by Christianity to the Greek era with its harmonious development of body and mind; striving to reembody the loved phantom of classical beauty in the heroism of the middle age; redeemed at last through mercy alone."\(^3\)

3. Ibid, p. 22.
In a later volume of the Dial Margaret Fuller characterizes the demon within us as he has appeared in literature, "The demon of the man of Uz, the facetious familiar of Luther, cracking nuts on the bed-posts, put to flight by hurling an ink-horn; the haughty Satan of Milton whose force of will is a match for all but Omnipotence; the sorrowful satire of Byron's temper; the cold polished irony of Goethe's Mephistopheles; all mark with admirable precision the state of the age and the mental position of the writer. Man tells his aspirations in his God; but in his demon he shows his depth of experience, and casts light into the cavern through which he worked his course up to the cheerful day..... If we compare the Mephistopheles and Lucifer with the buskined devil of the mob, the goblin with the cloven foot and tail, we realize the vast development of inward life. What a step from slavish fears of injury or outward retribution to representations, like these, of inward dangers, the pitfalls and fearful dens within our nature, and he who thoughtfully sees the danger begins already to subside."¹

"The second part of 'Faust' is full of meaning, resplendent with beauty but it is rather an appendix to the first part than a fulfilment of its promise. The world remembering the powerful stamp of individual feeling, universal indeed in its application but individual in its life, which had conquered all its scruples in the first part, was vexed to find instead of the man Faust, the spirit of the age - disincontented with the shadowy manifestations of truths it longed to embrace and above all disappointed that the author no longer meets us fact to face, or riveted the ear by his deep tones of grief and resolve."

"When the world shall of got rid of the still overpowering influence of the first part, it will be seen that the fundamental idea is never lost sight of in the second. The change is that of Goethe, thought the same thinker is no longer the same person."²

2. Ibid, p. 23.
"Goethe always represents the highest principle in the feminine form. As in 'Faust' the purity of Gretchen resisting the demon always, even after all her faults, is announced to have saved her soul in heaven."¹

"One is ashamed when finding any fault with one like Goethe who is so great. It seems the only criticism should be to do all he omitted to do and that none who cannot is entitled to say a word. Let one speak who was all Goethe was not."²

CHAPTER FIVE.

Miscellaneous Faust Criticism in
American Periodicals.

In this group of Faust criticisms we can trace as plainly as in the preceding groups the "ever ascending regard" for Goethe and his Faust. Sometimes a critic breaks forth into a violent attack but as the years go by we realize these unfavorable criticisms become less and that gradually Goethe is coming into his own.

It is interesting to note that in an early "Portfolio" volume there is a reference to some engravings of "Faust" made by Henry Stone of Washington, D. C.

"The engravings executed by Mr. Stone will probably not be duly appreciated by the majority of those who view them, the Romance of 'Faust' being not much known in this country and the translations that have appeared in England with the exception of Lord Gower's recently published, being little calculated to convey a just idea of this astonishing production."

"The introduction to these engravings intimates the serious character of the book. In truth Faust is led on to crime by so gentle a descent; his offences spring so entirely from the fatality that weighs him down; the miseries which he accumulates on the head of the unfortunate Margaret are, as it were, so little his fault; his love for her is so true, his interviews with her both
before and after their mutual fault so little resemble those of an abandoned reducer; his remorse flows so from the bottom of his soul that it becomes necessary to recollect that the first error always leads to others, to be disposed to criminate Faust, who neither resembles Don Juan, nor Manfred nor Lewis' Monk but as a poetical composition is sui generis."

"In the first plate God, surrounded by his angels orders the genius of evil (Mephistopheles) to visit the earth."

"The second plate represents Faust and his fellow collegian Wagner. Faust calls the attention of his companion to a dog which is crossing the field whose sparkling eyes are fixed on him."¹

There follows an enumeration of the different engravings; Mephistopheles in Faust's study; the path between the two; Faust asking Margaret's permission to go home with her; the two in the garden; their first embrace; Margaret in church; the prison scene, all of which would be very interesting to see in the light of our modern knowledge of "Faust" and art.

The American Quarterly Review of 1829 says: "'Faust' is acknowledged to be his (Goethe's) chief production. It is marked by a potent intellect and an intimate acquaintance with human nature. In all its scenes there seems to be a reality; in its character individuality. Vice is described in the fathomless depths of its misery. The details of the work are often gross and offensive; the general effect is beyond that of any other production of poetry to fill the soul with horror at vice, to make us shudder and shrink from a career that leads to unsated possession and interminable woe."²

In the Knickerbocker of 1833 we find the following: "'Faust' is emphatically a work of art - a work matured in the mysterious depths of a vast and wonderful mind and bodied forth with that truth and curious felicity of composition in

which this man is generally admitted to have no living rival."\(^1\)

"The most remarkable poem of the present age beyond all doubt or competition is Goethe's "Faust". There is but one voice on this matter among those who know it. The nature and character, truth and application of the sentiments and incidents strike us more forcibly when the parties concerned are our old familiar friends than they can among new faces and we require too that there should be a keeping and harmony in what we are told with what we know already and that our new ideas, should we be so fortunate as to get any, shall mix readily and kindly with the old. 'Faust' is a pleasant book in this respect - the episode of Margaret it is true is Goethe's own but the principal characters of the Doctor and his tempter are faithful to the ancient letter."

Discussing Faust's speech after he hears the Easter music the article continues: "These are the outpourings of a humor that only comes over one occasionally and which must be felt to be expressed for, for such passages, every moment of inspiration is not the happy one. Genius is a will o' the wisp which nothing but another will o' the wisp can follow."\(^2\)

Andrew Norton, in the Select Journal of Foreign Literature attacks Goethe most severely: "As to 'Faust', the most zealous of its readers must allow that the renovation which it is adapted to produce is of the most questionable kind. One may at first thought be astonished at the enthusiasm of the Germans for a work in which subjects so much respected are treated with pleasantry and which from beginning to end breathe such an infernal air. How can men so strict in their morality take pleasure in a spectacle of triumphant vice."

"Madame de Staël who follows Goethe's German admirers, but is compelled by her good taste and right feelings to toil after them in vain, says of 'Faust' that 'whether it be considered as a production of the delirium of genius

2. Ibid, p. 33
or the satiety of reason, it is to be wished that such works should not be multiplied.\textsuperscript{1}

"We ought to remark that it is rather the outrageous admiration of Goethe than anything in his own character or writings which we regard as likely to be very pernicious, at least to English readers. Even his drama 'Faust' may in truth be read by any person of tolerably strong head without a feeling of dizziness or danger to his faith, though not perhaps without strong disgust."\textsuperscript{2}

Another unfavorable critic, influenced without doubt by W. Menzel's denunciation of Goethe, is Reverend Ware in the Christian Examiner who says of the poet: "He writes of love; and it is to recount its sufferings and leave the sincere lover to shoot himself. He writes of a hero, the liberator of his country, the martyr for its independence and confounding patriotism with libertinism, he casts aside the father of a family whom history has extolled, to represent a reckless seducer. He writes of a scholar, outwatching the bear, becoming wise with the stores of all knowledge and makes his philosopher so dissatisfied by his acquisition as to sell his soul to the devil for the opportunity of sensual enjoyment. Everywhere the pages of Goethe are stamped with evidence that he has no faith in reason or affections, in God, man or woman..... It is this ignorance of morals which gives to Goethe's works one of their peculiarities, insincerity. He is an artist and not a man."\textsuperscript{3}

Marlowe's "Faust" and Goethe's are compared in the Democratic Review of 1843. Of the latter, the writer says, "The hero of Goethe's is we think something less than a man. Profoundly learned he is yet the slave of profound ignorance. He sins by shutting his own eyes."\textsuperscript{4}

2. Ibid, p. 262.
"We pass over the prologue. It was probably borrowed from the book of Job. It is difficult to avoid the idea of blasphemy in perusing it and yet perhaps it would be difficult to produce a sentence or even a line which would warrent the accusation. The admirers of Goethe defend him by the example of the earlier dramatists who abound in similar scenes. This defence would be conclusive were the poem contemporary with those whose example is quoted to defend it."¹

"As soon as Margaret appears upon the scene we find ourselves fascinated. She is touchingly drawn throughout."²

"If the poet had designed to represent intense selfishness he could not have selected a better instance than Faust. Even the burst of human passion which comes to wound him in his eager pursuit after Margaret only renders this grovelling instinct more palpable. He feels he is a selfish wretch and with most devilish arguments lulls himself into a sort of compromise with better feelings. We feel bound to enter our dissent against those very enlightened commentators who see in Faust the portraiture of a man led by a blind destiny. It is we think unjust to the author and a bad moral is unnecessarily extracted from a book which might be made to teach a good one. That he abandons himself to his own wayn and fancy is indisputable but we are unable to discover anything that teaches or encourages the idea of fatalism."³

In the Living Age many articles concerning German Literature have been printed among those of the early years two which show that the real Goethe is still an unknown being to the writers of those days. Referring to Mr. Lewes' biography of Goethe we read: "There is one charge made against Goethe which arouses Mr. Lewes' indignation: he is accused of being irreligious. Here we doubt whether the usual defense will produce general conviction. For if irreverent phrases are used by the poet, it is no sufficient reply to say that they are put

in the mouths of irreverent characters. The very presentation of such thoughts to the mind is a moral injury. Mr. Lewes is indignant with those who have spoken of Goethe as an immoral writer. We disagree. Introducing such characters as Gretchen and Klärchen is certainly immoral. ¹

Who can understand anyone's applying the term "immoral" to such charming creations of an artist's mind as Klärchen and Gretchen?

Again in another article we are told that Goethe "writes like a man who had not only experienced but explored every reality of human life except that of anguish and remorse. This experience even his Faust wants. Remorse, grief and agony Goethe gently waived. Hence his passion never reaches the deepest deep of human life. It can glow and melt but is never a consuming fire."²

Can anyone read the Frederika chapter and its tragic result in "Dichtung und Wahrheit", or see its counterpart in Faust's deepest anguish and then believe the statement just quoted?

"He (Goethe) took the suffering human race; he read each wound, each weakness clear. He struck his finger on the place and said 'Thou ailest here and here'. He knew all symptoms of disease, a few alleviations, no remedies. The earth was eloquent to him, but the skies silent. 'Adequate to himself' was written on that broad, calm forehead and therefore men thronged eagerly about him to learn the incommunicable secret. It was not told and will not be told. For man it is weary way to God, but a wearier far to any demi-god."³

"The heroes in Werther, Wilhelm, Tasso and Faust are such cloudy, shadowy pictures because they are essentially sketches of moral weakness without any relief in characters of corresponding power. Faust does not grow. The only portions of a coherent drama that Goethe ever wrote are the Gretchen element in

1. Living Age, 1856, vol. XLVIII, p. 149.
3. Ibid, p. 31
"His own mind is the sheet of water which reflects the image and you see only
that it stretches vaguely away, far beyond and beneath the image it is reflecting.
.... If you have a Gretchen living before your eyes you must have with her as
the condition of her existence the shadowy Faust whom she impresses. The point of
sight of the picture requires the presence of Faust; not because she is delineated
through the effect produced on Faust's nature but because you really see only that
portion of her nature which was turned to Faust and no other side. It may be
noticed that perfect as Goethe's women are, they are never very finely drawn in
their mutual influence on each other; it is only in the presence of the lover who
is for the time Goethe's representative that they are so strikingly done." 2

In the last three of these miscellaneous articles we can see a slight change.
Although still misunderstood, Goethe is regarded more kindly, more sympathetically
than in the preceding articles.

Parke Godwin speaks as follows in Putnam's Monthly of 1856: "'Faust' is the
most original, grand, versatile and altogether wonderful of Goethe's dramas; it
is epic, tragic and lyric all at the same time. Almost every feeling of the
human breast is expressed in it, in every style of art. Wild as the drama is,
however tumultuous and many voiced as are its sounds from the harsh discords of
devil's laughs to the sweetest, tenderest human utterences, it is singularly true
in delineation of character." 3

"It is the grand resume and consummation of his thought and hope. Abysmal,
wild and heterogeneous as it seems there is yet a unity pervading it which,
though not wholly organiz gives to it a certain consistency and life.... All
the spiritual worlds are gathered to watch its issues; all humanity is involved

2. Ibid, p. 22.
in the result. As a legend the fable had its origin in the middle ages but in its actual working out, the century of Goethe is transfixed on every page.\textsuperscript{1}

After a brief outline of the poem Godwin continues: "This of course is the very meagerest outline of Goethe's richly varied magnificent representation, like a single thread drawn from a tissue of cloth-of-gold and yet we venture to say, that it will not fall upon the reader with a stronger sense of the impotence of the conclusion than the original does amid all its splendid accessories of music and picture. For everybody must feel howmuchsoever he may be impressed the miraculous vigor and variety of the poem that it nowhere strikes the highest key; and that the massive and beautiful world it builds up in the realm of thought is after all a bubblee world, destined to no continuous life..... Glimpses there are of the great open secret of destiny but the author has not surrendered himself fully and joyously to its divine inspiration. Neither he nor his age felt, thought it might have seen nor does our age feel what it sees, that out of the heart are the issues of life; that goodness is greater than truth; that affection is better than culture; that wisdom is only wisdom in so far as its a manifestation of love."\textsuperscript{2}

The Atlantic Monthly of 1858 has an article on the legend of Dr. Faustus containing some critical remarks on Goethe's poem. "Goethe fused himself and his inner life into the mould of Faustus with all his craving for knowledge, his passionate love of nature, his unsatisfied longings and powerful temptations. Faust is the production of his life time. There is no other poem which contains such a diversity of thought and feeling such a variety of sentences, pictures, scenes and situations."

"We must confess we have never felt any desire to see 'Faust' continued. It ought to have remained a fragment. It's last scene perhaps, in sublimity and

heart-rending power surpasses anything ever written. By the appearance of the Second part the magic spell was completely broken. No work of Art of a more chilling disenchancing character was ever produced. For the striking individuality of the first part we have here nothing but abstractions; for its deep poetry, symbolism; for its glow and thrilling pathos, a plastic finish; for its psychological truth, a bewildering mysticism — all the abundance of poetical passages scattered like jewels through the thick mist of the whole work cannot compensate for its total want of interest.\(^1\)

In the New Englander, Mrs. C. B. Corsen of Philadelphia gives us a fairly sympathetic and artistic appreciation of Goethe's "Faust", "Goethe's great soul breathed into it his own philosophy, tuned it to the melody of true poesy and harmonized it with the reality of life and transported it into the domain of high art, where it will stand forever as a masterpiece. In Faust, we see man, man striving upwards in spite of the manifold fetters that chain him to earth. Vanity, ambition, the innumerable errors through which he must wade to arrive at the truth necessarily mislead him in the labyrinths of life. His whole existence is spent in searching for the right path and he reaches old age to die in sight of the cherished object of life long pursuit."\(^2\)

It is interesting to note her remarks concerning Margaret for she seems to regard her in a different manner from any of the preceding critics. "Margaret inspires in us a profound pity. We see in her woman wronged, an innocent girl destined to become the prey of the Evil One. Our sense of justice would revolt at such an idea had not the great poet thrown out hints that make us feel that Margaret's innocence was merely negative. We are told that she was vain, that in secret she had already murmured over the domestic duties that had made her hands rough and confined her to humble work. Martha was her friend before she met Faust.

It is true that her sense of propriety revolted at the audacious insolence of the seducer's first addresses and she answered him accordingly. But we are told also that she cast a furtive glance at the comely adventurer and we may almost say she met him half way. This circumstance is of considerable importance when we consider that if it were otherwise, if Margaret was perfectly pure and innocent much of our sympathy with Faust would be destroyed.\(^1\)

It seems to me in this discussion of Margaret, Mrs. Corsen utterly fails to interpret Goethe's meaning. I do not think we ever carry away from "Faust" any other idea, but that Gretchen is "perfectly pure and innocent" in her intentions and is only led astray by her great and overpowering love.

"Now follows the Second part generally considered as not having a sufficient connection with the first but it is a perfectly natural sequel and a necessary one. 'Faust' would be a most incomplete story could we not after witnessing his many errors follow him through the various experiences that are to shape him."\(^2\)

"The descent and ascent of Faust to the Mothers is of weighty significance. We may see in it a transformation of his nature. He passes from the rigidly intellectual man, struggling through the inefficient agency of the mere reason to solve spiritual problems, to the emotional man, whose soul accords with the harmonies of nature and thus reaches her secrets intuitively. In other words he develops into an artist."\(^3\)

"The third act appears, at first sight, as an unpardonable digression. The rigid law of the three unities is unmercifully trodden under foot; but we must excuse the emancipating genius of the author in view of the greatness of his subject, too universal to be tied to either time or place. He had undoubtedly in view the regeneration of man through error that it takes all the multifarious

3. Ibid, p. 11.
influence of art and nature to educate the soul of man. The Intermezzo is then the solemn Andante of the composition, beautiful of itself yet connected with the whole by ties artistically concealed. Faust is still its theme."

"In the infancy of art, the artist struggles with matter to express himself but only with partial success - the material predominates over the spiritual which is only dimly shadowed forth.

This is the symbolic period and finds its representation in Egyptian sculpture. Faust therefore is first seen wandering among the Sphinxes of Egypt. In a higher stage of development the artist acquires that power over his material that it becomes a full and adequate expression of his idea. Matter and Spirit are in equipose so to speak. This is the classic period represented by Greek art - Faust in Helena's presence. In a still more advanced stage the idea frees itself from the form in which it was enshrined and comes forth independent of its coefficient - Helena leaving her mortal frame."  

The editor adds this note which shows the old prejudice once again coming to light. "(We could wish that the Author of this article had appended to this penetrating and genial interpretation an equally felicitous exposure of the deadly fallacy that sin and crime inwrap the seeds of holiness, that self restoration or restoration by powers of nature is a lawful hope for him who has delivered himself up of the powers of evil..... Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil; that put darkness for light and light for darkness.)"

2. Ibid, p. 15.
CONCLUSION.

In the preceding pages we have attempted to show the gradual change in the attitude of the American people toward Goethe, between the years of 1813 and 1870. He was naturally the outstanding figure of German literature during this period and therefore has borne the brunt of that part of the criticism which was unfavorable. As an artist he has been greatly admired and also harshly criticized; as a man he has been usually condemned because his life failed to measure up to the Puritan standards. Despite his many enemies Goethe greatly influenced the thought of early American culture.

Many prejudices had to be overcome to bring about this change of attitude, which has been shown in the previous chapters. Compare the words of the early critics, Bancroft and E. Everett, with those of Margaret Fuller and Sarah H. Whitman and one may realize at once the change that the years had brought. It was not an easy victory for many obstacles stood in the way.

English criticism was still dominated by the rigid rules of French classicism. Its rationalistic view of aesthetics could not comprehend such figures as Mephistopheles and the Earth Spirit; to the English critics Goethe's works were full of superstition and mysticism. The Devil was not a creature to be spoken of above a whisper and such subjects as the tragedy of Cretchen's life would contaminate one's thoughts. Then, in regard to technique, to ignore the
unities was to miss the highest measure of achievement. All these ideas spread to America and caused most of the prejudices against which the early critics had to fight.

Another drawback to the growth of Goethe's followers was the fact that practically none of his own countrymen took up his cause until some years after his death. Such men as Wolfgang Menzel, who denounced Goethe as an Epicurean sage and a sensualist, contributed to the existing prejudice in America. Also Charles Follen at Harvard and Friedrich List in Pennsylvania, both political refugees from Germany, were partisans of Schiller and associates of Menzel, thus hostile to Goethe.

In briefly reviewing the period we have attempted to cover we might divide it into two parts at the year 1834, that year when facilities in transportation began to increase; when commerce grew with rapid strides; when literature and education became subjects of paramount interest; when many new magazines came into existence to spread the increasing amount of current literature.

During this period from 1813 to 1834 Bancroft, E. Everett and G. Calvert wrote their criticisms which we have reviewed. All of these men visited Goethe and felt the influence of his magnetic personality yet failed to interpret it at its true value. However they found inspiration in the German methods of education, which they introduced into America and which have given such progress to many of our great institutions of learning. Most of this group of early critics wrote, after reading a translation of the German works instead of the original and this, together with the many prejudices we have mentioned, caused their meagre understanding of such works as Faust. Although it was but a small beginning of the great task at hand, this little band at Harvard had its place, and an important one too, in disseminating the newly acquired learning of German. They paved the way for the latter part of the period.
During the years 1835-1870, especially the first two decades German thought, German philosophy and German literature had a great influence in the cultural life of America. We find on the one hand such bitter denunciations of Goethe as those of Reverend A. Norton and Reverend William Ware; on the other, the extravagant praise of the poet written by Reverend T. Parker in his review of W. Menzel's "History of German Literature". These criticisms aroused the interest of many to study the originals of Goethe's works and thus arose some of the more appreciative critics as Margaret Fuller, who first among the Goethe disciples presented the historical point of view. She was the first editor of the Dial, which proved to be the most vital factor in overcoming the existing antagonism to German. In this little magazine Goethe received the lion's share of attention.

Another important agent in the spread of favorable criticism was Thomas Carlyle. His works were well known in America about the time of the Dial's activity and even before that. In such essays as "Goethe" or "Goethe's Helena", Carlyle showed himself to be a staunch friend and admirer of Germany's great poet. In the former essay he says: "He (Goethe) is neither noble nor plebian, neither liberal nor servile, nor infidel nor devotee; but the best excellence of all these joined in pure union; a clear and universal man. Goethe's poetry is no separate faculty, no mental handicraft; but the voice of the whole harmonious manhood." 1

As we have shown in the preceding chapter, Goethe was more highly praised and less severely criticized in these later years. Yet above all criticism, favorable or not, he seems to stand calm, serene, unmoved. He gave his message to the world, and a wonderful message it was, whose culmination is found in Faust. It now behooves the world to interpret it aright. Goethe set

forth Christ's own teaching, that of man's activity for others and God's eternal love.

When reading the many criticisms of both Goethe's life and works, we feel inclined to say as Margaret Fuller did, "Let one speak who was all Goethe was not."
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