THESIS
Symbolism in Goethe's Faust
and
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SYMBOLISM

IN

GOETHE'S "FAUST" AND DANTE'S "INFERNO."

A COMPARATIVE STUDY.

Amid all the well-known books of the world, those of present interest or of past fame, those which are entertaining, or instructive, or popular, we find a few that are all this and infinitely more. There have been in the world's history a few great writings of immortal vitality, of permanent human interest, of ever-increasing value to thinking men in all ages. To be immortal a writer must touch and appeal to the immortal element, the real truth in man, and this eternal reality is the problem of human nature, the mystery of life. To fathom this mystery is the task which Dante has set himself in the "Divina Commedia," Goethe in "Faust."

The conflict of good and evil appealed not only to the exiled, disappointed Florentine, the sad-faced, thought-burdened man, whose life was one of sorrow and struggle; but also to the strong, handsome German, the man for whom fame
and fortune had reserved so many of their choicest gifts,— whose material life was one of comfort and enjoyment, though he too knew the struggles and sorrows of the soul. Dante saw heart-hunger in the world about him but he saw also physical hunger, want, and wretchedness. He saw suffering as a result of evil and corruption in society, politics and the church, and he asked himself the questions, "What is life? What is truth?" Pondering over the sin and grief of the world, wondering how much this life meant, and what the future life would be, he lost the straight way and found himself at last in the dark forest of doubt and despair.

To Goethe, ever seeking, ever striving, for something which should satisfy him,— master, like his creation "Faust," of all known learning, feeling like him that all was vanity, that pleasure and fame were a mockery,— the same great questions presented themselves, "What is life? What is truth?" He asked himself whether the time would ever come when those restless, uncontrollable longings would cease to torment him, when he should be happy and say to the fleeting moment, "Tarry a little, thou art so sweet." Dante asked for his fellow-men, fellow-sufferers, and through them for himself; Goethe asked first for himself, and through himself for the race. But when such questions came to men like these
they had to be solved and they both solved them in a characteristic way. The problem was mystical, beyond the scope of mathematical formulae or metaphysical rules, it appealed to the divine, the superhuman element in man, and to that element the solution had to respond. Accordingly the response was allegorical, symbolic. In Dante the allegory concerns itself with the punishment and purification of the soul in the future life. In Faust the soul descends into the Inferno of sin and denial, is punished therein and gradually purified until it ascends into the new and higher life, but all in this world.

In both the course is the same: first, dark despair, doubt and denial in which the soul was lost; then comes fear --- Dante trembles before the three wild beasts, Faust, before the strange spirits he has conjured up. Then to each comes a guide with offers of service. To Dante it is Virgil, the great master whom he has long worshipped so reverently; to Faust it is Mephisto, incarnation of the black magic to which he has appealed. Here lies one strong point of difference in the two. Both guides have been sent from heaven, but the conditions are by no means the same. Beatrice, the inspiration, the guiding star, the hope and comfort of Dante's lonely life, has seen from heaven his need and danger
and has sent the willing poet to lead her lover to the gates of Paradise where she awaits him. In how strange a contrast with this act of loving solicitude are the mocking, jeering words of Mephisto as he challenges the Lord to a combat over the soul of his servant Faust. The Lord consents to the trial knowing that Faust will still have 'an instinct of the one true way' and will be lead at last out of all these temptations into 'the clearer morning.' So Mephisto undertakes Faust's ruin but in the very means he employs for destruction Faust at last finds his salvation, for though the Gretchen story is but an episode in the Faust tragedy it is the indispensable incident, and sounds the key-note not only of Faust's sin but of his final salvation. His salvation like Dante's is to be accomplished through a woman's influence.

In Dante we feel the knightly spirit of mediaeval Italy with all its ancient traditions of sainted women and loyal worshippers. In Faust we breathe the sceptical atmosphere of modern Germany, placing woman on no higher a level than man morally and spiritually and very much below him intellectually. Beatrice is a goddess, a divine being whose "beautiful eye sees all," and whom Dante may worship and adore but to whom he dare scarcely lift his eyes unless it
be in prayer. Gretchen is at first only a pure, beautiful girl in whom feeling is the guide and mainspring of life, whose goodness is of the heart and not of the intellect, who can love but cannot reason, and who is finally led into sin through her very innocence and the weakness of love. Her spirit however leads Faust to heaven at last but it is because she too has sinned and has been purified through sorrow, pain, disgrace, insanity and death. Faust does not know at first of this guiding spirit whose purification is at last to save him, while Dante knows almost from the beginning of Beatrice's intervention.

The Italian poet has put into his great creation a stronger and more vital personality than we find in the most of our immortal poems, and yet he is in one sense much less subjective than Goethe. Faust is by no means an autobiography and yet the hero is thoroughly subjective. He does not simply look on the sins and temptations of others, but he is a real man who lives through in an ordinary lifetime the soul experiences of a whole race. He has external experiences also, it is true, but these spectacular views are in reality only an outward representation of inward conflict or corruption. Dante's "Inferno" on the other hand would have been the same had he and Virgil never entered it. The
hero is there merely as a spectator and reporter. Dante sees the Inferno, Faust creates his Inferno in his own heart and lives it in all its stages.

A strong contrast is seen in the order of stages in the two. Dante entering from the outside views first the sins meriting most lenient punishment, those of ignorance and frailty, and later, those of conscious rebellion and denial. Faust's Inferno is within him, having its origin in the innermost depths of his being and so it begins with the furthest extreme of rebellion and denial. In each the order is reasonable and logical but moving in opposite directions.

Dante's way, like Faust's is to lead from the individual to its universal consecration, so, like a sculptor, the mediaeval poet pictures to us thousands of men of all ages and nations, in whom are typified certain sins and punishments, some of them in vital relation to his own life, others comparatively external. Faust embodies the two great divisions of the Inferno, denial and rebellion against the world's-order, or as the commentators style it, Malice; and Incontinence. The special sins corresponding to the minor subdivisions are typified in him, that is, as far as is possible in any one life, but sometimes even here we must
see a sin through his eyes and not as personified in him.

The gateway of hell is the same to both. It is always the same: "Leave all hope behind who enter here."

The narrow, dingy Gothic chamber, so typical of the dreary barrenness of his life, is to Faust what the dark gateway with its dolorous inscription is to Dante. Both men have lost themselves unconsciously and do not know just when they left the true way. Out of the dark forest they both come to at least a temporary light. Dante stands at the foot of the "Delectable Mountain" and beholds the glorious sunlight, just as Faust is awakened to the glory and beauty of the world by the sound of the Easter chimes. The sunlight and the angels' song are both rays of divine truth, a hint of the realization of their high aims in seeking truth. The way cannot be direct however, they cannot ascend the mountain straightway, so Dante is led through the lower world, Faust through his disciplinary experiences of human life.

Dante sees first the indifferent, the selfishly indolent, "Who live without praise or blame." They are little souls, impotent, will-less, too insignificant to be put anywhere except in this vestibule of the Inferno. Such littleness is something never to be laid to Faust's account but Goethe did not for that reason leave it out of his
universal soul-history. It was one of the beasts which as­sailed Faust, for at the very beginning we meet it in the person of Wagner, Faust's famulus, a dry, self-satisfied nonentity.

In the first circle we meet, for almost the only time, Dante the theologian, who includes unbaptized infants and unevangelized heathen in his eternal punishment. We cannot help wondering what Dante would have done with Faust, for one thing is certain, Faust was utterly outside the lim­its of the Christian religion as he showed plainly in the conversation with Margaret in which he tried not to confess this to her. The beginning of his downward career lay in his denial of all faith, and he is not simply unevangelized, he is an infidel.

Virgil leads Dante next into the second circle, to the beginning of grief and dolorous lamentation, where at the entrance Minos stands, snarling horribly, as he jud­ges from their own confessions the souls that come to him. Then Dante sees those "whom Love has separated from our life;" not true, holy love but unrestrained passion. It is the passion of the "Witches' Kitchen," perverted and unholy; the passion which subjects reason to appetite and lives for the senses alone. At first it is only revolting and terrible,
as before the witche's draught it was to Faust. Then comes the sweet, sad story of Paolo and Francesca, so touching, so universally pathetic, that it has become the most famous, as it is the most beautiful and tragic passage in the Inferno. A striking counterpart of this is the Gretchen story in Faust. Strangely enough this is to Dante the first and least severely punished sin in the Inferno, while in Faust's case it is the great culmination of the sins of his life. Possibly the explanation of both is along the same line, although opposite in direction. To both poets Love is, as it always must be, the highest quality in man and woman, the most godlike attribute of humanity, and yet for that very reason most subject to perversion by frail, erring mortals. To Dante the most natural sin is the least criminal; to Goethe the violation of what was intended to be the highest good becomes the worst crime. To Dante the nobleness of the passion in a case like Francesca's alleviates the guilt; to Goethe the corruption of what is purest and most sacred in Nature is one of the very worst sins.

In Faust we must retrace our steps from the Witches' Kitchen to Auerbach's Cellar; in Dante the way is directly from carnality to gluttony. Nevertheless there is a striking similarity in the thought of the two poets. The three-
throated dog Cerberus might have felt quite as much at home in the German tavern amid the guzzling, rioting, jolly good fellows there, as in the third circle of the Inferno where Dante sees him, cruel and uncouth amid the filth-begrimed beings who lie prone upon the earth beaten by the cold, eternal rain. To Faust the drunken carousal is disgusting and revolting in the extreme but he, like Dante, must pass through all the circles of his Inferno before he attains the better life. He passes from the tavern to the Witches' Kitchen, of which we have anticipated a view, but here Goethe has combined what Dante puts into two different circles. The Witches' Kitchen itself is sensuality and wantonness but the father mercat is an unmistakable type of unscrupulous avarice, which as Mephisto knows has only to be given the money for which it whines and begs, to transform it into equally unrestrained prodigality, the two opposing forms of incontinence which so puzzle Dante in the fourth circle. Faust's own experience is probably not lacking in conflicts with avarice on the one hand and prodigality on the other, but the poet has chosen here as in many other instances to show the internal quality by an objective representation.

Dante passes from these who are incontinent in their passions and appetites to the still more hateful beings
who cannot restrain their temper. The same logical transition occurs in Faust after he has yielded to appetite. The tortured slave rebels, rages, storms against his tempter as in the 'Dreary Day' seen in the field. Or else he sullenly and in silence accepts his self-invited bondage and yields to Mephisto, 'chiefly because he must.' His wrath tears him piecemeal, his sullenness sinks him into the gurgling mire with the awful creatures of Dante's fifth circle; the eternal fire within burns him and the relentless Furies scourge him with the pangs of conscience.

The Inferno with its two divisions of country and city corresponds to the two divisions in Faust's life of sin, incontinence and rebellion. In his case the rebellion came first; he went from the city of denial to the open country of license, by giving free rein to his appetites and desires. The separation is the same however --- one class of sins chiefly individual and committed through ignorance or weakness, the other a perversion of the whole social structure by the sins of malice or intentional evil and rebellion. Into perverted society, the city of Malice, Faust and Dante now enter, the one to be a rebel and a heretic, the other to witness the punishment of rebellion and heresy.
In both the sin is the same. It is, as Dante styles it, Epicureanism, the speculative denial which may and in Faust's case does come from culture. Farinata in this sixth circle is the type of Faust, the man of learning and culture but the reviver of heathen pride and scepticism; Faust has relapsed from Christian light to heathen magic, the sin is against the "World-Spirit" of advancement.

This sin against himself and against society leads one into still more tragic depths, the circle of the violents—murderers, tyrants, suicides, the violent against God, Nature, and Art. The conflict is between man's personal freedom and the divine order of the universe. Faust through his primary denial becomes a heretic, and then in logical sequence a murderer who has to flee from the scene of Valentine's death. The pain of guilt, the agonizing torture of his own conscience, forms a desert in his soul like the burning Sahara of the Inferno, upon which rain down continually flakes of fire punishing and destroying.

A man rebels against God and puts himself in opposition to the eternal world-order and as he has thus deceived and defrauded himself he becomes most naturally the deceiver and defrauder of others. So in the eighth circle Dante places the fraudulent—seducers, flatterers, simon-
iacs, soothsayers, peculators, hypocrites, thieves, evil counsellors, schismatics and alchemists. The image of Fraud at the entrance has the face of a just man but the tail of a scorpion and is painted in many colors "with knots and little wheels;" an outward symbol of the tortuous deceit within. Faust has sinned against and defrauded his own conscience but he did not stop there. Taught and guided by that incarnation of deceit, Mephisto, he has become like him and Dame Martha, a seducer and flatterer who leads astray a gentle, pure-hearted maiden; then too, he is a simoniac,---he has sold his liberty, the gift of the Holy Spirit, for the paltry gold of worldly pleasure; he has been among the soothsayers, has drunk the magic draught from the Witches' Kitchen, and he knows by personal experience these false prophets and magicians for he has himself invoked their aid. Peculation and political sin have not met him in the little world of the First Part, yet hypocrisy was not excluded, for in that carnival of selfishness, the Brocken, we see perverted society with all its deceit and hypocrisy.

There are luxury and prodigality, the offspring of the coveted riches, the mad pursuit each for himself ---some openly and coarsely demonic, others veiling their selfishness under the cloak of hypocrisy. They are thieves,
robbing mankind of its highest and most inalienable rights; demons, who have counselled men to take the evil instead of the true way; schismatics, who have mutilated or rent in twain the most vital institutions of the world, not only the church, but society in all its phases, and worst of all, the home. Such a criminal is Faust --- he has destroyed a home and thereby has made a great breach in human society. Then come alchemists, perverters and falsifiers of nature as was Faust, when, dissatisfied with heavenly aid and guidance, he called up by magic the infernal spirits. It is the great sin against God in Nature and is punished with fever and thirst, the disease of the body symbolizing the unlawful thirst or disease of mind in those who pervert the physical world about them. This is treason against nature and leads quite consistently to the last division of the Inferno and the primary sin in Faust's case,--- treason against the Divine Order, first of all, then against society and individuals.

In this ninth circle are the great rebels, Nimrod and Ephialtes and Briareus, who tried to scale heaven itself and hurl the Almighty, be he Jehovah or Jove, from his throne of power. Here at last Faust finds his place. He too as a fierce rebel has sought to scale the heights of divine law
and snatch therefrom for himself a life of perfect happiness and intellectual greatness.

With Dante we descended from the dark forests of doubt step by step through the various grades and degrees of sin in the Inferno until we reached at last the primal sin in rebellion against the Almighty. This is just where Faust began. He, like Dante, has sought long and thus far in vain for Truth --- he cannot find it in the four Faculties or sciences and, overwhelmed and discouraged, his intellect denies that there is truth in them. Aspiration however still yearns for it and Faust, abjuring the way of the intellect, declares that "Man cannot know Truth." This is the great denial, the conscious rebellion against the eternal spirit of the universe, which is Truth. He is like those in the last circles of the Inferno who "have denied the good of the intellect," and his punishment is like theirs. His denial of Truth is treason against that which has formerly been lord of his actions and greatest benefactor of his life. It is treason like that which hurled Lucifer from the courts of heaven into the very abyss of the Inferno; the treason of Brutus and Cassius against one whom they were in honor and duty bound to serve; the treason of Judas against Him who was the Truth. He, like them, is congealed, icy cold in the denial which has frozen and petrified the mainspring of life, but he is also a victim of the gnawing, gnashing teeth of the great Denier himself. Aspir-
ation, which was intended to be the incentive toward the true life becomes now to him an acute, biting pain which nothing can relieve.

In the despairing struggle of his spirit with aspiration, Faust turns away from God-given knowledge and gives himself up to magic. The sign of the macrocosm at first gives him some hope but immediately comes the bitter disillusioning, "What a show, but alas! only a show," and again rises the demon of denial. Then Faust compels the Earth Spirit to appear, "thou must, thou must, though it cost my life." The "awful face" terrifies him, it is the "soul of all terrestrial activity grasped together" and no wonder it overwhelms the finite man. But he asserts his birthright and feels near to this busy spirit until his rapturous exclamation receives the crushing response, "Thou art like the spirit thou comprehendest, not like me." In the dismal depths into which this reply hurls him, Faust is left yearning with the question, "If not thee, whom am I like?" The question is answered. Wagner, his famulus, enters. Faust realizes the meaning — he is like Wagner and Wagner is only a mockery, the dry husk of erudition.

Thus far Faust has failed and he is still suffering the curse of falsehood which is defrauding his life of
the real joy of existence, and burning him up with the con-
suming fever, the devouring thirst of the alchemists in the
Inferno. He has wilfully placed himself among the fraudulent
and now there is no choice; he must run the whole gamut of
fraud and deceit. He has deceived himself, he will deceive
others. Then again comes aspiration,--- he dreams of a fu-
ture existence,--- there is no immortal truth in this life,
there may be in the life to come. He will cast off the
finite to attain the infinite, but how? By violation of one
of the most sacred laws of nature, of the deity in man. He
is going to destroy his own earthly life in the hope of at-
taining an after life of truth. Was ever a man more self-de-
ceived? He takes the cup to drink the poison draught, but
suddenly he stops. He hears the Easter bells and sweet voi-
ces chanting the angelic chorus,""Christ hath risen!" The
words are for Faust. "He need not suffer death for the truth
of immortality; it has been suffered for him and Truth is
here before him." But he cannot accept the message for his
faith has been lost in denial. Yet even he has had a glimpse
of the Truth; the song has revealed the finite, self-destruc-
tive nature of the mortal, and Faust is saved,--- if not to
belief in the resurrection, at least from the sin of suicide.
He exclaims, "Sound on, ye sweet sounds of heaven; the tears
flow, earth has me again."

This angel song has revealed to him a way out of the dense, rough wood of suicide, that wild, pathless wood of Dante's, where men who have destroyed their human bodies are changed into trees, knotted and eternally preyed upon by the Harpies, who devour the leaves and tear the bark with their sharp, merciless talons. Faust knows these Harpies for he has felt their teeth and their sharp claws, biting and tearing his own heart. But the Easter chorus has driven the Harpies away and restored the man to earth and to his human form. His salvation is assured but he has rejected the way of faith, and henceforth he cannot be saved, except through the long, hard way down into the very depths of the Inferno and finally to the true life above. Now he is starting on the downward journey, and his aspiration seeks a new channel. "If he cannot know, he can at least enjoy. Though the intellect be a lie the senses will give pleasure, and he is bound to have it." Mephisto is already born in his soul and his life of rebellion now includes a life of sensuality.

Faust goes forth into the world accompanied by Wagner with his dry and blind erudition of which Faust is soon to be free. They join the surging throng, artisans, servant-girls, students, citizens and soldiers. Faust meets the pi-
ous peasant whose expressions of gratitude and confidence are torture to his doubting heart, and throw him into paroxysms like the contortions of the hypocrites. Our hero now begins to realize the two spirits within him by the contrast between him and the single-hearted Wagner. It is the conflict between Good and Evil, between Aspiration and Denial. This double nature within him recognizes the supernatural in the poodle, and sees the trail of fire which follows him. Faust has eaten of the tree of knowledge and "contentment flows from his breast no longer." The poodle returns with him to his study and snarls and growls at his New Testament translations, until at last it becomes an enormous monster with terrible teeth and fiery eyes. Then Faust exorcises the spirit of the beast and it transforms itself into the man Mephisto, embodiment of the denial of Divine Truth.

Attired as a wandering scholar, Faust nevertheless knows that he is an incarnation of evil and compels him to declare himself. Then Mephisto says that he is "a part of that power which always wills the Bad, but always works the Good," and, on further questioning, "I am the spirit which denies." Mephisto has now met the man on his own ground. Faust has already made the formal denial, now his human character is to be filled with this negation and left to work.
itself out in action. Mephisto knows without asking whether "a contract cannot be made with the gentleman." He promises first enjoyment, then amusement and Faust becomes his servant in seeking gratification of the senses.

The Prince of Darkness is now a gentleman and invites Faust to be his companion in seeing life. The man sells his divine liberty for wealth and pleasure, sealing the contract with his own blood. He has put himself among the simoniacs, has imbedded himself within the livid stone of bondage, but there is no rest there, every limb and muscle writhes and quivers from the fierce fires of outraged conscience and liberty.

Mephisto leads him forth to the gratification of the senses. Faust is to see the "perverted world" in its various phases; in Auerbach's Cellar, in the Witches' Kitchen, and on the Brocken on Walpurgis Night. This is a veritable Dantean pilgrimage taken in the world above,— though it is nevertheless a supernatural world,— by a man whose life experience will finally include every phase of sin which he there sees represented.

Gluttony as he sees it in Auerbach's Cellar has little charm for him; it is revolting and disgusting and he turns away from it, but the very fact that he has passed
through such an experience leaves its mark upon him. He has not sunk in the filthy, loathsome mire where Dante sees Ciacco wallowing, but some of it has stained his garments and the heavy rain has chilled him through and through.

Mephisto leads his victim next into the Witches' Kitchen, the realm of carnality and sensuality, where they see the mercat family, "the family with its rational or spiritual element eliminated." They correspond, though with all the elements of beauty obliterated, to the empress Semiramis, abandoned to sensual vices, or to Cleopatra the voluptuous, whom Dante sees in the first circle, driven by the infernal hurricane of desire, wailing and shrieking, deprived of comfort and repose forevermore. Faust looks into the magic mirror and sees for the first time the ideal beauty of the human body, but inflamed with the poison of the witches' draught it remains for him no longer an ideal, but a mad, resistless craving to satisfy this newly-awakened passion. It is the infernal hurricane within him which will never allow him to rest.

Then he goes out into the street and meets Margaret, the pure, true, innocent-hearted girl, passing from the church to her peaceful home, the two places which form her entire world. To her Faust offers "arm and escort" with
flattering words. Her angry rejection inflames him still more and he tells Mephisto, "You must get me that girl."

There are obstacles in the way; she cannot be taken without strategy away from her mother's care. Faust, once so high-minded, so true and honorable, now becomes, almost without protest, a flatterer and seducer. He leaves costly jewels in Margaret's room to entice her childish fancy and she falls into the snare. However Faust still has a conscience. In the holy purity of her room he hesitates for the horned demons with their sharp scourges are lashing him. No need for Dante to descend to the lower world to see the punishment of seducers of innocence; they are already submerged in the filth of their own flattery in the present world, and lashed by the fury of their guilty consciences.

The pangs of Faust's conscience however do not help matters now for Margaret is won away from confiding in her mother and meets Faust at Dame Martha's house. She loves and admires him, and his love for her almost conquers denial, at least for the moment. But the old temptation arises in him again and the old struggle becomes still more intense. In the bitterness of the conflict Faust has to flee from the presence of his loved one to the cavern in the woods where he prays for calm. Instead comes Mephisto who gets the bet-
ter of Faust after a bitter struggle. The spiritual, eternal
side of love is undermined by his destroying intellect and
that first denial. The evil spirit "degrades him before him-
self" and is ever "busily fanning in his breast a lawless
flame for that fair image."

Faust and Margaret meet again in a scene of which
one critic says: "It shows faith bewildered; knowledge de-
nied; but out of these confusions comes a light which shines
over the whole drama and which particularly reveals their
talk on religion as the spiritual preparation for the deed
of ruin that follows, putting to sleep not merely the mother,
with the sleep of death, but benumbing and estranging for
the present, the other guardian, the church." The result is
Margaret's fall, making her an outcast and a criminal. Then
comes the meeting between the brother and the lover when
Faust, aroused by Mephisto, kills Valentine, and immediately
has to fly to escape the consequence of his bloody deed. He
is borne away upon the boiling river of blood in which Dante
has submerged the murderers; pierced with the arrows of the
centaurs, and ever trying to escape just vengeance. Carried
on this boiling stream, conscience, which tries in vain to
escape from itself and its evil deed, Faust is taken by Mephis-
to that veritable hell on earth, Walpurgis Night on the
Brocken.

This is the great carnival of selfishness and in its underlying significance as well as in its infernal form, it corresponds with Dante's lower world. It is the vain conflict of man's self-will against the supreme will of the universe which is in reality the highest self-will of the individual. The ascent of the Brocken is the attempt of the individual to attain his own freedom of will and yet there is a deeper impulse which would compel him to ascend even against his will: "The whirlpool strives to get above, while you are shoved you think you shove." Men here are jostling each other in their mad race for power, money, fame, or whatever their individual aim may be, yet they must of necessity add their impulse to the surging crowd and help to push it on to the top of the Brocken. Never in any Inferno was there a more vivid picture of selfish, struggling humanity where the destructive forces of passion and appetite have full play without any check or control.

Faust and Mephisto come first to the palace of "Mammon glowing in the mountain." There they see luxury, and prodigality, the lawless squandering of ill-gotten wealth. Here the storm rages, smiting the wayfarer and dashing him along like the mad semicircles of the avaricious and prodigal
in the great Florentine's vision. They are hurled to and fro, backward and forward, without rest, without possibility of satisfaction.

Behind old Baubo come the formalists, "eternally washing but eternally sterile, clean in externals, faultless but fruitless." They cannot climb alone, they are will-less, inefficient, like those whom Dante has placed just within his Inferno yet outside the limits of even the first circle. There is no place for them in the world above or the world below, and Goethe leaves them where they must always be, eternally climbing and struggling.

Faust has been with a young witch, but he becomes frightened and leaves her when a red mouse springs out of her mouth. Then the ideal rises before him again, "Behold yonder a pale, fair child alone and distant --- it is like Margaret,"--- he sees "a single scarlet band around her fair neck, no broader than a knife blade." Mephisto is alarmed by Faust's vision and conjures up a theatrical dream to drive it from his mind. It is given by dilletanti, those who have denied the truth in art and write for an unworthy end --- money, fame, honor, or some individual satisfaction. The Brocken is full of deniers, Mephisto's spirit rules them all and Faust learns what his negation is and means. This
sensuous indulgence however has not quenched his aspiration, and now his experience with Margaret has transformed his aspiration into love. He now comprehends her wretched condition and forces the betrayer Mephisto to lead him back to her and aid in her rescue. This is the beginning of hope for Faust since he has commanded Mephisto and is determined henceforth to be master and not slave to the devil. In the gloomy day scene we witness first this changed relation between the two. It is dark and dismal as the sombre shores of the Styx in the fourth circle of the Inferno. Faust is standing in the marsh of despairing rage, stripped of power to undo the evil he has done, tearing his heart piecemeal with his own dark sorrow. Never did the naked, angry culprits, on the malign gray shores of the Styx suffer more than this sin-cursed victim, enraged against himself and the friend who has driven him to the sin which brings such ruin on the gracious, ill-starred life of Margaret. In their struggle Mephisto quails before the torrent of Faust's wrathful reproaches, "Thou hast lulled me in insipid distractions" while Gretchen is "in misery! in despair! in prison!" Faust is frantic with grief and remorse, and in his compassion wholly unmoved by Mephisto's rage and the grinding of the voracious jaws. He has no fear of danger, he cares not that "the
avenging spirits hover over the place of blood in wait for the murderer who returns" but with unfaltering voice he gives the command, "Take me hither and free her." Faust is consumed with rage, a rage which is more fearful agony than all the tortures Dante has beheld, but he rises from the mire into which his own guilt has sunk him and commands his tempter to rescue that other fair soul whom he has dragged with him into the abyss. Mephisto obeys, he has to obey, as far as it is within his power. So they mount their magic steeds, "dark horses which travel in the dark," and pass by the Ravenstone surrounded by the wild witches, then on "storming in on black horses," through the guards, walls, and doors of the prison; Mephisto clouds the jailer's senses and Faust gets the keys of Margaret's prison.

Then the lover appears at the door of her cell; he shudders at the damp, dark walls; he hears the plaintive song, the rattling chain, the rustling straw. He unlocks the door. What can picture the anguish of his soul when he sees Gretchen's wretched condition, insane, terrified, now thinking him her executioner, now transported with rapture that her lover is with her, the next moment in the depths of remorse and sorrow for the past days of happiness and bles-

sing. They are the Paolo and Francesca of the Inferno ---
suffering eternal punishment for the sweet sin which they have committed. It is the same story — all that drove their hearts to the deed was so dear, so good, and true. Dante is lenient with the two; they are in the second circle driven by the hurricane but permitted to be together forevermore. Their crime has conducted them to one death and together they are to expiate their guilt. The German poet has been obliged to accept a different conception. Margaret too suffers the penalty of her deed, which is death and this proves to be her salvation. She cannot be rescued in the external way by Faust; shame, insanity and death are the Inferno which burns her pure, and the voice from heaven proclaims that she is saved. Faust must work out his salvation in another way and overcome the great rebellion by coming gradually into harmony with the supreme world-order.

He has reached the lowest depths of his Inferno and now like Dante he must turn about straightway and through an equally great transition come to the foot of the mount of Purgatory; must experience in himself the purification which is to lead him at last to heaven.

This grand symbolism of the whole has been worked out by both poets in the separate parts as well and made to
blend in one perfect harmony. The figures used by each are characteristic of the authors and the theme and the style of their work, but in several instances there is a great similarity in the symbolism. Both poets used all the elements of the physical world,—fire, water, natural scenery, together with a strong flavor of the supernatural. In Dante the scene is laid in a supernatural world, and the views and experiences of earth serve to make the pictures more clear and vivid. In Goethe we see simply a man's life but with the supernatural influences and conditions fully revealed.

Dante is the world's great symbol-maker. There is no word, no sentence, no scene of the Divine Comedy which does not contain a hidden spiritual meaning, not so hidden however, that it cannot be understood by every thinking man. Dante is writing for the people and he uses the figures and illustrations of common, every-day life to make his symbolism vivid and plain to his readers. He takes a supernatural theme but expresses and explains it in the language of the people, embodying in it their knowledge and experiences.

Goethe's theme is, to the undiscerning mind, simply the dramatic history of one man's life, (rather strangely in company with a visible devil) and culminating in an unfortunate and tragic love affair. Few students, however, so
fail to appreciate the spiritual meaning of Faust. The hero is not one man, he is all men; he is the universal human soul, and in this apparently simple biography is included the soul-history of the race. Dante has taken a spiritual theme with a practical explanation, Goethe has taken a practical tale with a deep spiritual meaning.

Accordingly Dante's symbols are clear-cut, sculpturesque, panoramic, usually impossible to be misunderstood. Goethe's are like the wierd, mystic strains of a minor symphony — we feel the subtle, almost incomprehensible significance which enters our souls and becomes a part of our being, but we cannot describe or explain it.

There is a deep significance in even the structure of the Inferno and the physical features of the different circles, just as the change of scene or environment effects or accompanies a corresponding change in Faust's feelings. The suggestion in the shape of the Inferno is strong indeed: --- "deeper and deeper into the earth and the earthy is further and further away from heaven and the spiritual; the infernal journey is narrowed yet intensified, till it reaches the last point of opposition to the Divine, where is the center of all terrestrial gravitation." The whole material world sweeps onward and downward to get rid of itself. The divi-
sion into city and country is also significant, the former with its more highly organized and complex society, and the accompanying social and political vices of organized sin; while the sins of the culprits in the rural circles are individual and those rather of incontinence than of malice.

There is no such structural significance in Faust but this lack is compensated by the sympathetic variations of the verse — the different meters in their exquisite adaptation almost telling the story itself. The symbolism, however, is deep and comprehensive. As Snider says: "Goethe has defined the poet as one who 'calls the individual to its universal consecration.' Such is his definition of symbolism and his 'Faust' is to be understood as a symbolic poem in this sense." In the same manner Dante takes the particular, the limited, the imperfect, the transitory in man and nature, and transfigures them all into symbols, through which we are to catch a glimpse of the future, that is, of the eternal world.

Symbolism does not mean personification or allegory but is something far deeper, suggesting an infinite and universal meaning. There is strong symbolism in the fact noted by one commentator that, "Satan starts from the Empyrean, falls past all the stars of heaven, flies by the sun in all
his glory, till he strikes head-foremost the little earth-ball amid the celestial spaces, producing there a double effect, Hell on the one hand and Purgatory on the other, doing the evil and undoing it in the same act, like Mephisto 'Willing the bad' fiend that he is, yet 'working the good' fool that he is. It is to be remarked that man has to travel in the contrary direction, has to go up the way Satan fell down, all the way up to the vision of God in the Empyrean."

Dante demonizes and infernalizes the whole physical world from its most minute features of landscape to its intensest activity in life, and makes it all the environment of the wicked spirit. Goethe uses fewer phases of the natural world but when he uses them at all they are portrayed with a master hand. Thus on Easter morning the resurrection of the world from the chill dreariness of winter to the glorious promise of spring calls Faust forth to a new life, away from his individual life into the experiences of humanity which are finally to become the means of his complete salvation.

Three shapes rise against Faust, the nature spirit, the earth spirit, and Wagner, personifying respectively the spirit world, or the perfect harmony of the universe; the soul of human activity, a type of what Faust is to become; and finally the spiritless, soulless knowledge of the Past ---
the "dry sneak"—Wagner. They are like the three wild beasts that appear in Dante's path and they terrify and discourage Faust as the leopard, the lion, and the wolf did Dante. Commentators cannot agree on the interpretation of the three beasts, but it seems more in accord with the soul history idea to explain the leopard as sensuous pleasure, the lion as pride, and the wolf as greed.

Dante personifies sin also in the shape of monsters; Cerberus with his three throats to swallow the earth and its fullness is the figure of gluttony. His "red eyes, slimy beard, huge belly and the hooked hands—-with which he claws the spirits, skins them, and tears them to pieces"—form a picture of bestiality loathsome and yet terribly vivid.

The wolf Plutus is the type of avarice, always lean and hungry, always seeking to grasp more, while its inflated visage hints of prodigality and surfeit of food, though he is still condemned to "consume himself within."

The Minotaur, half man, half bull — the violence which seeks blood and ever failing of satisfaction, gnaws itself with anger; the centaurs — piercing the guilty with their sharp arrows; and the harpies with their fierce claws showing the mind preying upon itself after a man has taken
his life with his own hand; all are graphic pictures of the sins they embody and punish.

The serpents also image the sin and punish it at the same time, crawling about stealthily in dark, hidden places,—sneaks and deceivers with craft in their souls.

Geryon is the great image of fraud and deceit with the face of a just man but the tail of a scorpion. He ought not to be able to deceive, however, for he is painted all over in many colors with "knots and little wheels, outwardly showing that he has all sorts of turns and twists within.

The symbolism of landscape adopted by Dante is too minute and detailed to permit the giving of more than one or two specimens. The wrathful are in the mud of the bog Styx --- for Styx means hate --- and hate befouls those who make themselves its slaves and yield to anger; it impedes their activity and takes away the power of vision.

The suicides have been transformed into trees forming a dense, rough wood through which there is no path. It is veritably the wood of despair, the cause and punishment of the sin of self-destruction. These spirits can never again have human bodies "for it is not just that the man possess what he takes away from himself."

The judgement of God, "vendetta di Dio," is shown
by punishing with fire, --- the great element of destruction, --- fire kindled by their own guilt, those who have destroyed the source of Being in sinning against God, Nature and Art.

The great traitors who by their deception have violated the most sacred personal bonds of relationship, friendship, patriotism and gratitude, who have wronged the heart and trampled the emotional nature under foot, are justly turned to ice, and held, congealed prisoners in the frozen lake of lamentation. Their hearts were ice --- and ice is their eternal torment.

There is also a symbolism of persons --- like Brunetto Latini, Filippo Argenti, Paolo and Francesca --- in which as in Faust the individual stands for many, so that, taken in its entirety, it forms a table of sinful humanity in some part of which every soul may find its place.

Classic and mythologic references are numerous and their meaning is apparent. The lance of Achilles which makes the wound and then heals it, like Virgil's symbolic action, "his tongue first bit me, then handed me the medicine," is negation overcoming negation; a significant hint at the beginning of the lowest circle of torment: that all punishment even the Inferno is in its nature remedial, and that good comes at last from evil.
As a distinct and in itself impressive symbol, few are superior to the Image of Time --- the source of the rivers of the Inferno: "The tears of Time form the rivers of Hell for the punishment of the guilty." It is the total cycle of sin and its punishment whereby the guilty soul is punished by his own sin. The four metals suggest the four ages, gold, silver, brass and iron, and it is a significant fact that "every part except the gold is broken and tears fall from the fissure." It is wisdom alone which is perfect and free from the tribulation of pain and sin. Thus the image combines personification, allegory and symbolism, blending them all into one universal and eternal fact --- the key-note of the Inferno --- "Sin is its own punishment." Goethe's definition shows that the symbolic element is strong in Faust:---

"Das ist die wahre Symbolik wo das Besondere das Allgemeine repraesentirt, nicht als Traum und Schatten sondern als lebendig augenblickliche Offenbarung des Unerforschlichen," ---

"That is the true symbolism in which the Particular represents the Universal, not as dream and shadow but as living, instantaneous revelation of the unfathomable." The symbolism in Faust is introduced by the Archangels' Song in the Prologue and forms a fair type of the symbolism in general. As one says, "A colossal imagery floats by outlining things of an infinite
greatness." It is the loftiest imagery, a harmonious song of the physical universe, sun, earth and elements; and it shadows forth the divine, spiritual process. First Raphael sees the sun's clear unbroken rays as the image of eternal harmony, "the unclouded light of truth." Gabriel beholds the eternal struggle between sea and land, revealing the first negation, but finally all is perfectly harmonized in one beautiful unity. Michael goes farther into the struggles and storms of the elements, destructive forces in the world, and a more active form of negation. Yet at the close he joins the Lord's messengers in praising the "peaceful movement of His day." Thus gradually the angelic songs have risen to a dim prophecy of the strife and conflict which is to take place in the soul and life of man. To Faust, alone in his study, the sign of the macrocosm is the great harmony of the universe, the heavenly forces rising and descending between heaven and earth.

There is an intense meaning in the genesis of Mephisto from the poodle. The devil appeals first to the dog nature in man, the sensuous and material, and failing to obtain ascendency by that means, adopts next the garb of scholarship, with promise of mental excellence; and last of all appears as the wise cultured man of the world with all
the resources of wealth, knowledge and experience at his command.

One Faust scholar comments on the hidden meaning in Wagner's words about the dog, "He will spring into the water for your stick," by saying that it represents Wagner himself, a learned man without originality or true insight, who is simply fishing out of the stream of Time the sticks which somebody else has thrown in. Faust's bitter scoffing words, that "There is no spirit, it is all training," seem to justify the interpretation.

The pentagram on the threshold is the magic sign of the Christian Religion, a 'triple symbol of the Three in One' and as such it has power over the enemy and denier of Christ.--- Then when the lullaby has put Faust to sleep --- Mephisto shows himself master of the destructive forces of nature, and commands the rat to gnaw away the obstructing point, upon which he has placed a drop of oil to make it taste good, and be sure that his command will be obeyed. It is the last scruple of the conscientious soul --- Faust,--- oiled with sensuous delight and gnawed away by the devil. Mephisto is now free to go and come and he is also master of Faust.

The lullaby which has previously put Faust to sleep
was a dreamy mass of cloud-like imagery, sung by a chorus of spirits. It hinted a new world of delight; lover's bower, vineyards and wine, singing and dancing, winged sons of Heaven mounting into a bright, many colored existence of new life and love. It is only a cloud picture but it paints clearly enough the manner in which Mephisto will seduce Faust.

Faust is already so much in Mephisto's power that he signs the contract with his own blood, "a juice of rarest quality," and symbol of his very life which he has given conditionally, at least, to the devil.

Faust is himself a symbol of aspiration for the whole, the complete life,--- in other words, perfection and universality of thought, and so he is directly opposed to Mephisto who is only a part. Mephisto is Understanding, expediency, seeking a material, selfish or finite end; Faust is the aspiration for Reason which seeks the totality of Reason as the supreme end. This is the philosophic symbolism of Faust but there are other figures of a different kind.

In Auerbach's Cellar we find a type very similar to those Dante uses in the Inferno. The swollen rat is described so vividly that one of the drinkers sees in it his exact picture, a true image of the results of sensuous, gluttonous
self-indulgence, a very Cerberus in its voracious appetite
but even more loathsome and disgusting than the Dantecan mon-
ster.

In the Witches' Kitchen we see the symbols of
witchcraft; the globe — which is the world, hollow but
 glittering according to the mercat's idea; — the sieve,
through which the witches look upon men and life; the pot in
which is boiled the poisonous draught which is to vitiate
the whole world for the victim, Faust; the brush, Mephisto's
scepter, for he is king in this witch world; and the crown
of his authority, — which is broken however before he re-
ceives it. The Witches' multiplication table with its rapid
increment from one to ten, is a figure of the fearful rate at
which indulgence increases from small sins to absolute bes-
tiality. The magic mirror in which Faust first sees Margaret
has been defined as "the human body reflecting the ideal,
a glimpse of the esthetic love for the beautiful which is to
prove Faust's salvation in the second part.

Walpurgis Night defies any universal interpretation,
as each reader must find a meaning for himself, but the gener-
al lines along which the meaning is plain have already been
mentioned in their relation to Faust's experience. The lit-
tle red mouse which drives him away from the young witch, is
the symbol of the bestial element in the Witches' Sabbath which disgusts and repels him. The Golden Wedding is primarily a satire on the dilettanti, men who have degraded the good of the intellect to mean, selfish ends, money, fame, honor or caprice; who have denied or attempted to destroy Truth. But there is still another symbolism within this; the Golden Wedding is the final reconciliation of the conflicting elements in German literature --- Oberon representing the classic school or reason, and Titania, the romantic or imagination. The different characters sustain this literary figure: Puck being the whimsical, perverse element which controls the taste of the multitude, and Ariel, poetry, the high, pure element which is unaffected by whims and changing fashions. There was also a strong personal element in other references, as to the weathercocks, the orthodox and others, being satires on some of Goethe's contemporaries who, according to his idea, were false to their high mission.

The vision of Margaret on the Brocken is Faust's aspiration for the ideal rising out of this mad carnival of lust and selfishness and foreshadowing his final redemption. Here Goethe joins hands with Dante. The depths of sin and torment have been reached, the soul has gone as far as it can go in that direction, and a sudden turn is made leading
to the mount of Purgatory. Dante passes through this middle realm, with its various stages of purification, into Paradise, led always by the love of Beatrice. Faust's cleansing is on earth and step by step he frees himself from his denial and realizes the great truth of existence, usefulness to his fellow men, in obtaining for them their freedom, until finally he says to the fleeting moment "Tarry a little, thou art so fair." He has then realized true happiness, and he is led by Margaret's love into the eternal love of God. Mephisto has to surrender his long-sought prize and the angelic chorus bursts forth in songs of praise, as sweet as those which Dante hears in the highest circle of the blessed. Both have traveled the long, hard way but they have reached the end at last;--- "Das Ewigweibliche has led them upward and on."