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THE LEGEND OF THEOPHILUS

Frontispiece to the Open Court
THE DEVIL-COMPACT IN LEGEND AND LITERATURE

BY MAXIMILIAN RUDWIN

The tradition of the devil-compact took deep roots in popular fancy as well as in Catholic belief. It loomed up in the tenth century as the vital point of a legend and gathered around itself an enormous material. In the form of the Theophilus-legend, which, in the sixteenth century, merged into the Faust-myth, it entered the literatures of all European countries and formed the subject of poem and play, novel and short story, throughout the civilized world for full thousand years.

The story of the compact closed by Theophilus with the Devil is briefly as follows: Theophilus was a bishop's seneschal or vice-dominus, living in the sixth century, at Adana in Cilicia, Asia Minor. He was so highly esteemed by the priesthood and by the community that, upon the death of his bishop, he was considered worthy of the bishopric. But, through modesty, he declined the preferred dignity. The new bishop, to whom Theophilus was calumniated, resenting the fact that he was second choice, was only too glad to deprive him of his position in the church. In order to recover his post, he enlisted the services of a Jewish magician, who secured for him an appointment with the Devil. Diabolus demanded of Theophilus a document signed and sealed with his own hand, in which the deposed priest promised to deliver to the Devil his own soul and in addition agreed to deny Christ and the Virgin. The day following the conclusion of the contract, the bishop honorably reinstated Theophilus in his former position. But after seven years of riotous living, realizing that his end was near, he repented of his act. For forty days and forty nights he fasted and prayed to the Blessed Virgin for pardon of his sins. She, however, first turned
a deaf ear to his prayers because he had broken faith with her. But finally the Mother of all Mercies took pity on the repentant sinner. As he prostrated himself in his church at the foot of her altar at midnight, she descended from heaven, bent over him, stroked his burning brow, and assured him of pardon if he would deny the Devil and return to Christ. Mother Mary then interceded with her Son to show indulgence toward the penitent sinner. She demanded from the Devil the parchment and placed it upon the breast of Theophilus as he lay asleep in the Church. Upon awaking, the repentant priest found the fatal contract, by which he had pawned his soul to Satan, and cast the document into the flames. Three days later, after having publicly proclaimed before the congregation his penitence and the miracle of his preservation, Theophilus passed gently away in blessed peace, and the Church inscribed his name on the roll of her saints as Theophilus the Penitent.

The story of Theophilus was purported to have been told by his pupil, Eutychianus, as a living witness. It was translated in the ninth century from the original Greek into Latin by Paulus Diaconus, spread in a variety of versions through Eastern and Western Christendom, and became one of the treasures of saintly legend in the Western Catholic Church. This story was a stock item in medieval collections of miracles and exampla. Vincent von Beauvais inserted it in his Speculum Historiale and Jacobus de Voragine introduced it into his Legenda aurea (both manuscripts of the thirteenth century).

The first poetical treatment given the Theophilus legend was the play in Latin hexameters Lapsus et conversio Theophili vice-dominii written in the tenth century by the first original German woman poet and dramatist, Hroswitha or Roswitha, the learned abbess of the Benedictine convent of Gandersheim. Brun von Schönbecke incorporated this legend in his poem, Die Ehre der Maria, composed about 1276. In this quaint poem, the contract was sealed not with blood, but with a ring, a motif which frequently occurs in medieval literature. Three low German and two Icelandic dramatic versions of this legend date from the fourteenth century.

1 On the Theophilus legend, see E. Sommer's Latin thesis De Theophilii cum Diabolo foedere (Halle, 1844).

2 For the bibliography on the low German versions of the Theophilus play, see the present writer's book, A Historical and Bibliographical Survey of the German Religious Drama (Pittsburgh, 1924), pp. 65-67.
The first poetic treatment of this legend in France is the early thirteenth-century poem of Gautier de Coincy, *le Miracle de Théophile*. It was given dramatic form in France toward the end of that century by a *trouvère* named Rutebeuf in his *Miracle de Théophile*.

There are also five renderings of the Theophilus legend in Spanish.

The Theophilus legend made its appearance in English about the year 1000, when Ælfric, in a *Homily on the Assumption of the Blessed Mary*, summarized it briefly with full mention of the written compact. Poetic versions of this legend are included in both the *South English Legendary* (thirteenth century) and in the *North English Homilies* (fourteenth century). There is still a third poetic version extant in Middle English. The story also appears in the *Alphabet of Tales* written in fifteenth-century English. In 1572 the priest Wiliam Forrest rhymed the legend afresh in a poem, which forms part of his work, *Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary with other Poems* and which was intended as a kind of apology for the Roman Catholic religion. A prose version of it occurs also in Thomas Heywood’s *Hierarchie of the Blessed Angells* (1635).

Among the recent dramatizations of this story may be mentioned Mr. B. C. Greene’s *Théophile* (1903), and A. Kingsley Porter’s *The Virgin and the Clerk* (1929). The latter play is a clever work of satire, philosophy, and religion. According to Porter’s interpretation of the old legend, Canon Theophilus refuses the bishopric of Adana in order to dedicate himself to the writing of a hymn to the Virgin. Unable to accomplish this task, he sells his soul in exchange for success. The roots of the soul, however, are deep, and the song to the Virgin is, after all, heard—and answered.

3 This play will be found in the first complete edition of the works of Rutebeuf prepared by Achille Jubinal in 1874, t. 11, p. 231 sqq. A critical edition of Rutebeuf’s *Théophile* was prepared in 1925 by an American woman, Mrs. Grace Frank. Léon Clédat has put this medieval text into a modern French version.—This interesting play also attracted the latter-day diabolist, Remy de Gourmont, who, in 1896, brought out a modern version accompanied by an excellent introductory essay.

The legend of Militarius is an adaptation of that of Theophilus. It is the story of a soldier who, in order to prolong a life of pleasure, forms a bond with Beelzebub, but is finally saved and restored to salvation through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, whom he has not named among the saints of heaven he has renounced.5

**

The idea of the devil-compact was also introduced into the medieval legend of St. Cyprian, which Calderón, the greatest of Spanish dramatists, took, in the seventeenth century, for the subject of his lyrical play, El Mágico prodigioso. In this version, Cyprian, of Antioch, a great philosopher and a very expert magician, is in love with Justina, a damsels living in his native city. She is of high birth and great beauty, and, moreover, is an ardent Christian. He tries in many ways to win her love, and she, in just as many ways, resists his every effort. As a last resort, Cyprian sells his soul to the Devil, who promises to put Justina in his possession. But finding that the Devil has no power over the fair Christian, who renders all his temptations impotent by calling on God, Cyprian will no longer have anything to do with a weak devil, is converted to the stronger power, received into the Church, and dies the death of a martyr with Justina, in the reign of the Roman Emperor Diocletian (284-305).

The contract between the Devil and Cyprian is first mentioned in the Golden Legend, where the agreement is verbal. In Calderón's drama, however, the pact between the Devil and Cyprian is signed with blood. Comparing Goethe's play with that of Calderón, we find that the two have in common the point that the demon is not in a position to perform his exact engagements, and consequently loses out in the end. The two plays differ in the fact that Cyprian gives himself to the Devil to have and to hold with a definite desire as the incentive, but Faust closes a contract with the Devil in order to obtain such general objects as strength, self-development and enjoyment.6

5 The legend of Militarius was treated by Gottfried von Thienen (Gottfried von Thienen) in a narrative written in lionine hexameters, of which a specimen is given by Professor Karl Alexander von Reichlin-Meldegg in his study on the subject.

6 Concerning the parallels between the Cyprian-legend and the Faust-saga, consult Sánchez Antonio Moguel: Memoria acerca de “El Mágico prodigioso” de Calderón y su especial sobre las relaciones de este drama con el “Fausto” de Goethe, Madrid, 1881. This work was translated into French by J. G. Magnabel (Paris, 1883), and into German by Johannes Fastenrath (Leipzig, 1882). See also Zahn: Cyprian von Antiochien und die deutsche Faustsage, Erlangen, 1882.
Many other legends of devil-compacts will be found in medieval writings. Among the good deeds of St. Wulfric, the hermit of Hasellbury in Dorset, who died in 1154, we find that on a certain occasion he forced the return of a contract signed with the Devil by a Northern man who, under stress of poverty, had formed an alliance with hell, but who later repented and appealed for help to the pious hermit. Walter Map, writing in the same country, tells of Eudo, a rich young baron, who, after having been reduced to poverty by extravagance, closed a pact with the Devil and grew rich by robbery and murder. But he at last repented of his rash act, and sought out the Bishop of Beauvais, whom he found beyond the walls of the city near a great pyre that had been kindled to burn a witch. The wrathful bishop imposed upon him the penance of leaping upon this pyre. Eudo straightway obeyed and was burned to death.7

Among the legendary figures believed to have closed a compact with the Devil we may also mention Zythe, who lived in Bohemia in the fifteenth century, and Twardowski, the Polish equivalent of the German Faust, who is said to have been a contemporary of the wizard of Wittenberg. Twardowski made rather unusual demands upon the Devil, requiring the latter to build a house for him out of poppy-seeds and to cover it with a roof composed of the beards of Jews. It should be added that he had his specifications fulfilled and was finally carried off to hell through the chimney of his curiously constructed house.8

The legend of the devil-compact attaches itself also to a great number of historic personages. Among philosophers and scientists Professor James Geddes has recently brought out an excellent critical edition of Calderón’s play for American classes. The influence of Calderón’s drama is evident in Jules Lemaître’s story, “la Vierge sarrasine” (1889), in which, by the purity of a young and innocent girl, the Devil is driven out of a statue of the Black Virgin, which he inhabited.

7 These two instances of medieval pacts have been taken from Professor Kittredge’s book already mentioned.

8 Mr. Sutherland-Edwards has interpreted the legend of Twardowski for English readers in his article “The Faust Legend,” Macmillan Magazine, XXXIV (1876), 268-75. Among the poetical versions of this legend, Mickiewicz’s Pan Twardowski (1828) is best known. Other Polish poets, who treated this subject, are Korsak, Zielinski, Grosza, Szujski, Kaminski, Kraszewski and Urchlicky.
who were said to have sold their souls to Satan, for one consideration or another, are included Socrates, Apollonius of Tyana, Apuleius, Roger Bacon, Raymond Lulle, Lully or Lullus, Scaliger, Cornelius Agrippa, Paracelsus, Nostradamus, Servetus, Giordano Bruno, and Galileo. Of the theologians and religious reformers reputed to have entered into a pact with hell, we may mention Tri-thenius, Luther, Melanchthon and Calvin. Among the magicians and thaumaturgists believed to have leagued themselves with Lucifer, Simon Magus of biblical times and Jean de Fontenelle of the fifteenth century are best known. Among the men of the eighteenth century who were suspected of traffic with the infernal powers, we may include Cagliostro, a clever Italian student of the occult and magician, and the Duke of Luxembourg, the famous general of the imperial army and Marshal of France, the companion and successor of Condé and the opponent of William of Orange. The compact, which the Duke was believed to have concluded with the Devil, was given to the public full and complete in every paragraph.

Even the popes were not free from the suspicion of dealing with the Devil. An English poem of the fourteenth century ascribed the signing of a Satanic pact to Pope Cælestinus, who died in 432. The story of Gerbert (Sylvester II) and his pact with the Devil, by means of which the eminent medieval savant attained to the summit of earthly ambition at the cost of his immortal soul, is familiar to all who may be acquainted with medieval writings. It will be found in the Gesta Regum (twelfth century) of William of Malmesbury, from whom both Robert Holkot and Vincent of Beauvais borrowed it. This story also appears in the vernacular in the fifteenth-century Alphabet of Tales already mentioned, and is repeated by Bishop Pilkington, who lived in the following century. In Walter Map’s account of Gerbert’s ascension to the seat of Peter, Gerbert’s supernatural protector is Meridiana, a fairy, in whom Professor Kittredge recognizes a feminine form of the daemonium meridianum or Midday Demon.9 Others thought that Gerbert had sold his soul to Satan not in return for the papacy, but in order to obtain from the Devil a knowledge of physics, arithmetic and music. Gerbert, as well as two distinguished Englishmen, Roger Bacon and Bishop Grosseteste, was popularly credited with the invention

9 George Lyman Kittredge, op. cit., p. 240.
of a magical speaking head of brass.\textsuperscript{10} Another illustrious occupant of St. Peter’s Chair, Gregory VII, was also believed to have sold himself to the Devil, and to have paid the last penalty for his familiarity with the Fiend. The Popes Paul II and the notorious Alexander VI (Rodrigo Borgia),\textsuperscript{11} were likewise supposed to have held commerce with the powers of hell.

* * *

The story of Dr. Faustus is the most famous version of the legend of the devil-compact. Johannes Faustus, a laborious student, has drained dry the sources of intellectual satisfaction to be found in the various ordinary departments of human knowledge. Wearied and worried, but unsated, the voracious student turns to magic, and finally conjures up the demon Mephistopheles. With this demon Faust enters into a contract, binding Faust to surrender his body and soul to Mephistopheles at the end of twenty-four years and reciprocally binding Mephistopheles to be at Faust’s command during that period, providing for him during that quarter-century his fill of miraculous exploits and sensual delights.

The legend of Dr. Faustus, as compared with that of Theophilus, shows the contrast between Protestantism and Catholicism with regard to the devil-compact. The arch-deacon of Adana, as we have seen, succeeded, through the intervention of the Blessed Virgin, in escaping his punishment for daring to deal with the Devil. But the wizard of Wittenberg was duly carried off to Hell by way of payment at the expiration of the bond. The Church, which forfeited its power at the Reformation, could not aid the man who had mortgaged his soul to Mephistopheles. Faust had to meet with the traditional doom. He was irrevocably damned, lost and fallen into the power of the Devil. The friend of the Fiend belonged to Hell.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{10} The legend of Sylvester II will be found in J. von Döllinger’s book, \textit{Die Papsfabeln des Mittelalters}, Stuttgart, 1863, second edition, 1890. English translation (\textit{Fables Respecting the Popes of the Middle Ages}), London 1871. A brief account of this legend will also be found in Paul Carus’s interesting book, \textit{The History of the Devil and the Idea of Ezil} (Chicago, 1900).

\textsuperscript{11} A good biography of this pope is F. L. Glaser’s book, \textit{Pope Alexander VI}. The infernal pact of this pontifical Faust has been treated by Barnabe Barnes in his play, \textit{The Devil's Charter}, or \textit{a Tragedy Containing the Life and Death of Pope Alexander VI} (1607). This play is the first attempt, after Marlowe’s \textit{Dr. Faustus}, to make a devil-motif the basis of a serious drama.

\textsuperscript{12} A very interesting Protestant version of the devil-compact is the play, “The Bottomless Sack,” written by Hans Sachs, a friend of Luther, on October 15, 1563. An English translation of this farce will be found in William Leighton’s \textit{Merry Tales and Shrovetide Plays by Hans Sachs} (London, 1910), pp. 210-15.
It should be added, however, that in the Faust legend the devil-compact is not the root but the fruit of Faust’s sin, which consists in the abandonment of sacred for secular learning. The Faust legend is the creation of orthodox Protestantism, which, through it, expresses disapproval of the humanistic movement of its day. In fact, Faust had that interest in secular learning and that love of the beauty of the ancients which was common to all men of the Renaissance. He shared with the humanists of his day the wish to know all things, to do all things and to enjoy all things. Faust pays, by the forfeit of his soul, not so much for the foul pact with the Enemy of Mankind as for his revolt against the Word of God. The oldest Faust-book represents its hero as selling his soul solely in order to augment his learning and to comprehend that which cannot be known by the natural faculties of man. It is said of Faust in this book that he resolved “to search into all the deep things of heaven and of earth.” Marlowe’s play, Dr. Faustus, based on this account of Faust’s life, also has its protagonist consign himself to the Devil in order to obtain from him a deeper understanding of the mysterious operations or secrets of natural laws. It was G. R. Widmann, in his Faust-book, who added the search for sensuous enjoyments to the conditions of the contract drawn up between Faust and the Fiend.

Faust may be considered a counterpart of Luther. Both Luther and Faust broke away from Rome. Luther drew nearer to the Lord; Faust looked to Lucifer for aid. Both Luther and Faust had dealings with the Devil. Luther warded off the Devil in the Wartburg by throwing an inkstand at his head; Faust summoned the Devil and admitted him into his cell. Both Luther and Faust had a thirst for knowledge. Luther loved sacred lore; Faust preferred secular learning. Both Luther and Faust disapproved of the celibacy of the clergy. Luther married; Faust sought sensual delights out of wedlock. Luther was victorious over the Devil; Faust finally fell into the Devil’s clutches.

* * *

The historicity of Faust has long been doubted. So much legend has been woven about his stark figure that historians have been hard put to arrive at the truth. On the strength of the testimony
of a few contemporaries, however, it is now generally accepted that Faust was an historical person, having lived during the first half of the sixteenth century. He was born in Kundling (Knittlingen) near Bretten, the birth place of Melanchthon, between 1480 and 1490, studied at the University of Cracow, and died, about the year 1549, in Staufen (Breisgau).

Faust appeared to his contemporaries as a doubtful wizard and a charlatan. According to their testimony, he was an eccentric fellow who supported himself by going about the country and passing himself off on the credulous folk as a great sorcerer and necromancer. He either hinted mysteriously or boasted openly of his knowledge of the occult, and the common folk of his day readily accepted his stories. Faust styled himself Magus Secundus Magister Georgius Sabellicus Faustus Junior and even assumed the title of Philosophus Philosophorum. He was accompanied by a younger man named Wagner, whom he called his famulus, and by a black dog trained to fetch him food, also called a famulus. Since both—his assistant and his dog—bore the same enigmatical name, might they not be one and the same—an embodied demon contrived by this master of Schwarzkunst or black magic?

When Faust met with a violent death toward the middle of the sixteenth century, it was believed that the wicked wizard had been carried off by the Devil, with whom he had concluded a compact, and who had helped him to perform the supernatural acts. Legend later elaborated the details of Faust's magic deeds and sad end. It was said that he had studied at the University of Wittenberg and come in contact with Martin Luther. It was reported that in 1525 he had incurred opprobrium by bestriding a barrel in Auerbach's wine-cellar at Leipzig. Rumor had it also that, when the period of the fatal contract between Faust and the Fiend was ended, the demons appeared at midnight and beckoned Faust to follow them. The next morning his body, torn limb from limb, was found lying on a dunghill in the village of Rimlich, near the town of Wittenberg. A number of his contemporaries, among them Melanchthon and Johann Wier, believed that the Devil had wrung Faust's neck. Johann Gast affirmed that Faust had been strangled by the Devil. This Protestant minister of Basel also recorded that Faust's "corpse
lay face downward on the bier all the time, though it was turned over five times."

About forty years after Faust's death, his story was first told in a popular chap-book entitled *Historia von D. Johann Fausten* and printed by Johann Spiess in the year 1587 at Frankfort-on-the-Main. This work was the basis of a long series of popular books on Faust, chief among which figures Widmann's account published in 1599.

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Christopher Marlowe, a predecessor of Shakespeare, is the first great dramatist who was attracted to the Faust legend. His powerful drama, *The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus* (c. 1589), is founded on an English translation, which appeared within less than two years after the publication of the original Frankfort Faust-book and which was entitled *History of the Damnable Life and Deserved Death of Dr. John Faustus*.  

Marlowe's play follows in spirit and in details the popular account of Faust's character and career. The devil-compact is its central point and chief motive. Marlowe took the legend as he found it and turned it into a grim tragedy of sin and damnation. He did not give his play any philosophical interpretation, but it is pregnant with the old warning: "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark viii. 36). If Calderón's *El Mágico prodigioso* already mentioned

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14 A modernized edition of this Faust-book has been brought out by William Rose and published, in 1925, in the Broadway Translations. See W. E. P. Pantin's article "The Sources of Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus*," *Academy*, XXXI (1887), 449.
can be considered an apotheosis of the Catholic dogma of free-will, Marlowe’s *Dr. Faustus* is the poetic illustration of Protestant fatalism. Marlowe makes the Devil finally victorious. Faust has his period of power and pleasure by the Devil’s aid, but the Devil must have his pay, and his pay is the soul of his ally. Faust technically repents, but not until his lease of enjoyment is run out, and Hell stands pyrotechnically agape. The sincerity of this kind of repentance, caused by the necessity of discharging a poignantly unpleasant debt, may well be questioned. There is actually no trace of regret for entering the infernal compact until punishment is impending; and then, by a stupendous touch of irony, Faust is dragged away to Hell just as his parched lips twist to shriek, in terror-stricken babblement, that sugared and langorous verse which Ovid whispered in Corinna’s arms at the summit of life’s felicity: “O lente, lente, currite noctis equi!”

Marlowe is at his unrivalled best in rehandling the legend of Faust. The scene of Faust’s soliloquy as he awaits the stroke of midnight, which shall end the twenty-four years and bring his self-imposed doom, is impressive in its intensity and deservedly ranks among the finest specimens of poetic composition in any language.

Soon after its appearance, Marlowe’s *Dr. Faustus*, together with other English plays, was brought over to Germany by strolling bands of English comedians, who performed it early in the seventeenth century in various German cities. The subject was soon taken up by companies of German actors, who followed Marlowe’s play on broad lines. In this way, the dramatic form of the Faust legend was shaped in Germany for almost two hundred years. The Faust play, in a great variety of forms, continued as a popular item in the repertoires of the theatrical companies of Germany, until it was crowded off the stage by the French classical drama, which was considered the epitome of all excellence. The Faust-theme fell into the hands of travelling showmen, who amused the young with their marionettes. In this way, through a long procession of puppet-plays, handed down by tradition through generations of showmen, the Faust-story retained its popularity until almost to our own

15 As we shall see later, Goethe first became acquainted with the Faust subject in the form of a puppet-play. On the popular Faust drama, see K. Engel: *Das Volksschauspiel von Doktor Johann Faust*, 2. Aufl., Oldenburg, 1882. This author has also published several volumes of old puppet-plays, among which will be found texts of Faust marionette-plays, Otto Schade’s edition of the Faust puppet-play, first published in 1856, has been reprinted in the Insel-Bücherei No. 125.
days. The following is the plot of a Faust puppet-play as summarized by Bielschowsky in his Life of Goethe:

"An investigator, unsatisfied by all his learning and deep meditation, consigns himself to the Devil, in order, through him, to acquire all sciences and arts, all treasures and enjoyments of the world, and for a period of time to feel like God. This he does, so far as lies within the Devil's power. Faust travels with the Devil through the world, becomes a magician, who has power over the living and dead, and tastes every kind of pleasure, even that of living at a ducal court, where he calls up the dead and wins the heart of the princess. until finally, sated with everything, though not satisfied, he repents and turns in earnest prayer to God. At this critical moment the Devil brings him Helena. Captivated by her beauty, Faust gives up all pious thoughts of repentance, rushes toward her and embraces her. In his arms she is transformed into a Fury, and, robbed of earthly enjoyment and heavenly bliss, he is dragged away to Hell."

Lessing was the first to point out the poetic possibilities of the Faust legend. In his opposition to the vapid imitations of the French tragedies, and with the aim of showing what power lay in the old German popular plays, he essayed the subject of Faust in 1759 but never finished it. Lessing wished to turn the conclusion of his play to Faust's salvation. He would not permit his hero to fall into the power of the Devil. In the century of enlightenment, in which Lessing lived, love of secular learning, even error and heresy, were no longer considered crimes. Referring to the desire of knowledge and the love of truth which, in the century of the Reformation, constituted Faust's sin, Lessing wrote: "God has not given man the noblest of impulses to make him unhappy."

The subject of Faust was essayed by many other German writers in the latter half of the eighteenth century. The new interest and new attraction that the Faust legend had for those men Bielschowsky explains by the striking similarity of that period to the Renaissance epoch. The poet-painter Friedrich Müller, known in Germany as

16 Helena was the wife of Menelaus, a woman of surpassing beauty, who was carried off to Troy by Paris and thus became the cause of the Trojan Wars (Iliad iii. 165).
Maler Müller and also as Teufelsmaler Müller, who worked on this material in 1776 to 1778, wished in his Fausts Leben dramatisiert to employ the Faust legend as a satirical portrait of the age. The Faust dramas by Julius Graf von Soden and Johann Friedrich Schink also merit attention.

Friedrich Maximilian Klinger's philosophical work, Fausts Leben, Taten und Höllenfahrt (1791), is less a novel than a political pamphlet. It may aptly be called a devil's-eye view of human history. In his novel, Klinger follows that version of the Faust legend which identified the famous magician Johannes Faust of the chap-books with Hans Fust or Johannes Faust, a goldsmith and member of a rich burgher-family of Mayence, who was the financial backer and partner of Gutenberg, the inventor of the art of printing. The two partners were suspected of meddling with forbidden books of magic, and of performing evil witchery. They were also accused of plunging into sorcerous formulæ in a quest for the magic stone of the old philosophers and for their lost secret of transforming cheap metals into gold. Faust, who later obtained the machinery from Gutenberg and set up a printing press in Paris, was especially considered a magician and a servant of Satan. The red letters, which he used in the colophons at the close of his earliest printed volumes, were interpreted by his contemporaries as proof of the black art which originated the works so easily produced by him. The multiplication of the Bible considered especially dangerous and sinful by the Catholics also contributed to the diabolical reputation of the Paris printer.

In Klinger's novel, Faust is a superman superb in his spirit of rebellion against "all the old-established customs of society." He is the incarnation of the Romantic revolt against all social and moral laws that hold men in chains. Faust sells himself to Satan not to obtain from him wealth or physical enjoyment but in order to learn from him "the secrets of human destiny and the reason for moral evil in the world." And for Faust the Devil can invent no greater agony than to keep him ignorant of the very problems that torment him. Faust's own personal sufferings concern him less than man's moral misery. He has great faith in the goodness of man. "You

18 On this work consult G. J. Pfeiffer's study, F. Klinger's "Faust," Eine literarhistorische Untersuchung, Würzburg, 1890. Klinger's Faust was translated by George Borrow and published in London in 1825. A later issue of this translation was published by Kent in 1864. The translator took considerable liberties with the text.
will avow to me,” he says to the Devil, “that man is the apple of the eye of him whom I now no longer must name.” But the Demon replies: “Then I will return to hell a convicted liar, and give thee back the bond which thou wilt presently sign with thy blood.” Thereupon the Devil makes a wager with Faust to prove to him the utter corruption of man; and to his end drags him into an endless course across Europe at the dawn of the Renaissance. Faust visits the Germany of Frederick III, the France of Louis XI and the Italy of the Borgias. The Devil has no difficulty in proving to his companion that man, far from needing a Devil to tempt him to evil, puts the very Devil to blush by his evil deeds. He shows Faust that, in this God-governed world, “evil arises from good,” predicts that the art of printing, with which its inventor intended to benefit mankind, would turn out to be an instrument of evil, by converting the small stream, which had previously poisoned the human mind, into a tremendous flood. Faust, who considered himself to be the benefactor of mankind by his discovery of printing, later destined to become the right handmaiden of our civilization, is disappointed and disillusioned, seeing the seeds of good he tried to sow among men already turned into disasters, and proudly accepts eternal damnation. He feels no regret in quitting the earth after having found that it surpasses Hell in wickedness.

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Goethe, the greatest son of that century and the stoutest champion of its new ideas, next took hold of the Faust myth. In his hands, it has become the most poetical expression of the eternal combat between good and evil in the heart of man. The impression of the Faust legend gained from a puppet-play seen when a boy in Frankfort remained with him to the day of his death. He began working on the material in 1772 and finished the first draft in 1775. His Faust-fragment appeared in 1790, the First Part of the poem in 1808, and the Second Part posthumously in 1832.

Goethe follows the first Faust-book in ascribing to his hero the thirst for knowledge as the primary motive of his compact with Hell. The Goethean Faust, “recognizing the vanity of abstract learning and intuition, but eager to the point of frenzy to understand and possess the world, makes a pact with the Spirit of Negation, so as to throw himself into the experimental forms of learning.” Goethe deviates from the legend.
however, on two important points. First he substitutes for a fixed period—the traditional quarter-century—the agreement that Faust is to be the Devil's property at any moment whatsoever, when Faust shall be brought to the point of saying to the ecstatic moment, "Bleibe doch; du bist so schön." The moment of complete and forgetful self-satisfaction is the price of his damnation. Secondly, following the lead of Lessing, Goethe represents his hero in the end as saved from perdition by Gretchen and triumphantly borne aloft by angels, leaving Mephistopheles crestfallen and defeated. The Devil thought to lure Faust with the woman, but he lost him through her influence. Thus Mephistopheles becomes the power which e'er accomplishes the good.

Through Goethe's poem, the Faust legend has obtained a place second to no other in the poetic literature of the world. The diabolical parts of Goethe's poem influenced the imagination of the poets and playwrights in all European countries. Among his German imitators may be mentioned E. A. F. Klingemann, who wrote a tragedy (1815), Nikolaus Lenau, also a tragedy (1838), and Heinrich Heine, a ballet (1851). Christian Grabbe brought together Don Juan and Faust in his drama written in 1824.

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The tradition of the original Don Juan Teñorío, who lived in the fourteenth century and who is said to have been the associate of King Pedro the Cruel of Castille, contains, notwithstanding what has been said in the previous paper, the element of a diabolical pact. But the Devil is absent in the earlier versions of the legend. As all know, who are acquainted with Don Juan in play and opera,


20 The question as to whether or not Goethe was indebted to Lessing for the "happy" ending of his poem has recently been revived by Ernst Bergmann in his article "Ist die 'Rettung' des Goetheschen Faust auf Lessings Faust-Fragmente zurückzuführen?" Jahrbuch des Braunschweigischen Geschichtsvereins, 2. Folge, Bd. 2 (1929).

21 The first definite appearance of Don Juan Teñorío in literary fiction dates back to the Burlador de Sevilla y Convidado de Piedra, by Gabriel Tellez (1571-1648), better known under the name of Tirso do Molina, first published at Barcelona in 1630. The typical seducer appears in the folk-lore of many countries, but the Spaniard presented the character so masterfully that it is accepted as a Spanish conception. Don Juan is also the hero of Molière and Mozart, of Byron and Shaw. Bernard Shaw's Man and Superman (1905) contains an interlude in the form of a dream on the theme of Don Juan and the Devil.
it is the Dead Guest, the Commander, who is the executor of the divine sentence against the arch-seducer and mocker. In later versions, however, this character is represented as the Devil in disguise, who helps Don Juan in his numberless conquests of women and who accepts the invitation to the banquet to put an end to his career of seduction. Thus in the play, *The Rest of Don Juan*, by Henry Morford (1848), a continuation of Byron's *Don Juan* (1819-24), we find the following ending: One night, at a banquet, a tall dark stranger enters the room and beckons Don Juan away. The two depart together while the lights burn blue and the guests smell brimstone. On the morrow, Don Juan's body is found in a cemetery.

In Rostand's last play *la Dernière nuit de Don Juan* (written in 1911), the Devil, having appeared at Don Juan's banquet to drag the arch-seducer to the bottomless pit, grants his request to return to earth and live ten years longer. When this period has passed, the Devil again appears as a showman with a Punch and Judy box, and summons the shades of the one thousand and three ladies of Don Juan's traditional affairs in order to confuse and confound the host. He asks Don Juan to name the women he has seduced, but this most hardened of rakes has truly known none of them. The cynical lover seduced them when they were ready, and was accepted because he offered himself most frequently. He has had all the women but never possessed one single woman. Then the Devil at last discloses the punishment which he has reserved for him. Not for such as Don Juan exists the flaming pit, to which sinners of the type of Nero and Heliogabalus are condemned! There is another hell for such a sorry and trivial fool. Don Juan shall be a Pulchinello for all eternity. The proud Spaniard begs mercy and asks for the eternal fire. But the Devil inexorably replies that he has reserved the eternal theater for him. At the Devil's behest, Don Juan, he who believed himself to be the irresistible lover, the wickedest sinner, appears, bowing, and scraping and grimacing absurdly, as a puppet, on the Punch and Judy stage, which the Devil, in the guise of the showman, brought with him at the beginning of the play.22

22 The definitive study on the Don Juan legend is the Paris thesis by Georges Gendarme de Bévote, *la Légende de Don Juan; son évolution dans la littérature; des origines au Romantisme* (1906). For further study of this subject, particularly in the post-Romantic period, the reader is referred to the following books and articles: Francisco Augustin: *Don Juan en el teatro, en la novela y en la vida; con un estudio preliminar sobre la vejez de Don Juan*, por el Dr. Gregorio Marañon, Madrid, 1928; S. M. Waxman: "The Don Juan
Karl Immermann's *Merlin* (1832) is perhaps the greatest German attempt to write a Faust in imitation of Goethe. This play is a kind of appendage to the Second Part of the Goethean poem, replacing Mephistopheles by Merlin.

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The influence of Goethe's *Faust* did not make itself sufficiently felt in France until this poem found a worthy translator in the person of Gérard de Nerval, who, in 1828, when he was hardly out of his teens, brought out a French version of the Goethean poem that surprised and enchanted the great German himself. Gérard de Nerval has the great merit of winning the French public for this great German poem, which passed unnoticed among his countrymen in previous translations. Gérard de Nerval's version enjoyed the enthusiastic admiration of the French public and became the Gospel of the French Romantics.

Gérard de Nerval's translation of Goethe's *Faust* gave the impetus to a very great number of adaptations of this poem on the French stage. Among the numerous dramatic adaptations, we will point out the following plays: *l'Amour et la mort*, a play first presented at the Variétés theater on September 6, 1828. This drama contains a witch-scene, in which the Devil is evoked by a sorceress. In another play, *Une nuit de Paris*, given in March, 1829, at the Vaudeville theater, a naive young man, son of a retired court-recorder, on the point of getting married and ready to pay his bachelor's debts, permits himself to be dragged into all sorts of debaucheries by a Mephistopheles in human form. The play, *le Cousin de Faust*, presented the same month at the Gaiété theater, shows by its very title, the influence of the Goethean poem. It need scarcely be said that this statement also holds good with regard to...
Jean Lesguillon's drama, *Méphistophélès, ou le Diable et la jeune Fille*, played at the Panthéon theater in 1832, in which the Devil is caught in his own traps.

Among the other imitations of Goethe's *Faust*, we may mention Emmanuel Arago's Faust-play, produced about 1832, which contains a cohort of demons and witches presided over by Mephistopheles, reminiscent of the Walpurgis-Night in the German poem, and Eugène Robin's dramatic poem, *Livia* (1835), in which the title-character loves Faust for a short time previous to the expiration of his compact. Mephisto puts Livia's love to test by offering her Faust's love in return for the salvation of her soul. Livia loves Faust sufficiently to sign the pact of perdition in her turn. But when Mephistopheles appears to seize her, he finds her dead, with the angel Emmanuel watching by her side.

A rather interesting French adaptation of Goethe's *Faust* is the play by Eugène Scribe and de Saint-Georges, *la Nuit de Walpurgis*, with its subtitle "comédie politique du temps présent," which was presented at the Gymnase theater in 1850. In this comedy, Mephistopheles takes by the hand the Faust of the rue Saint-Denis, the politician Morin, and leads him into the midst of the Witches' Sabbath of 1848.25

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What attracted Gérard de Nerval so powerfully to *Faust* was its devil-myth. The character that appealed to him in this drama was not the wizard of Wittenberg, but his *spiritus familiaris*. In Gérard de Nerval's opinion, which he expresses in the preface to the first edition of his translation of *Faust*, the real hero of this poem was not Faust but Mephistopheles. Gérard de Nerval was discerning enough to discover the fact that Goethe did not conceive of the Devil in the form of a hideous phantom, as he is usually represented to children; but that, on the contrary, he has portrayed him as the Evil Being par excellence, before whom all other poetic personifications of Evil were only novices, hardly worthy to be the minions of Mephistopheles.

The scene in *Faust* that drew its best French translator so irresistibly to Germany was the narration of the prank that the Devil played on the students in Auerbach's Cellar. Gérard de

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25 On this play, see the *Journal des Débats* of June 17, 1850. Mephistopheles plays a rôle also in Edouard Grenier's *Jacqueline Bonhomme*, with its subtitle "tragedie moderne" (1879).
Nerval longed to visit the spot that had witnessed this famous feat, and, as soon as his means permitted him, hurried to Leipzig so that he might lean his elbow on the table from which Mephistopheles had the glowing wine gush forth amidst flaming jets to the utter amazement of the revellers. "Plus heureux que nous," wrote Théophile Gautier in 1867 in his recollections of his poor friend, who had hanged himself twelve years previously, "il s'est assis accoudé sur la table d'où Méphistophélès faisait jaiîlir avec une forêt des fusées de vin incendiaires." 26

When Gérard later sought inspiration in Goethe's Faust for his own works, he imitated only the diabolical parts of the play, such as the conjuration of the Devil, the devil-compact, and the evocation by the Devil of the beauties of antiquity.

The first play which Gérard de Nerval planned already showed the influence of Goethe's Faust. The pseudo-medieval mystery-play, le Prince des sots (1830), with its blazing mouth of Hell surmounted by a Paradise of starry azure, reveals reminiscences of the Prologue in the Goethean poem. This French play has for its subject the arrival of a company of jugglers at a feudal castle under the pretext of giving a performance, but in reality for the purpose of rescuing a fair lady held in durance vile by a tyrannical husband or father.

The minor plot, which is a play within a play, tells of an angel, who descends from the azure sphere and throws dice with the Devil, with human souls as the stakes. The angel cheats, through excess of zeal, with the object of taking back as many of his friends as possible into Paradise. The Devil in the end loses his temper, calls the angel "great gawky fellow, sly fool," and threatens, if he catches him again at his tricks, to pull every feather out of his wings, so that he would be unable to fly back to his Master. The quarrel grows bitter, and leads to a row, under cover of which the lover, protected by the Prince of Fools, succeeds in carrying off his lady fair. 27


27 The synopsis of this play has been given after Gautier's account of it in his Histoire du Romantisme (1874). M. Aristide Marie in his study, Gérard de Nerval, le poète et l'homme (Paris, 1914), p. 368, n. 22, maintains that Gautier's memory failed him in his account of the plot of this play. It is not with the Devil but with a juggler placed at the entrance to Hell-mouth that the angel plays the game of dice. Gérard de Nerval, who could not have the play performed, changed it later into a novel, which was published after the original manuscript by L. Ulbach in la Nouvelle Revue for 1887.
Gérard de Nerval's second play, *Nicolas Flamel*, written the same year, bears a still stronger impression of Goethe's *Faust*. The scene in which Satan appears to Flamel on the tower of the Church of Saint-Jacques is an evident imitation of the apparition of Mephistopheles in Faust's study.28

Nicolas Flamel, a man of genius, has been ruined by his alchemistic researches. In his "despair of never attaining," he takes the decision to sell his soul to Satan. Ambition drives him to enter into a pact with the powers of hell. Having been unsuccessful in soaring to the heights, he now contemplates plunging himself to the depths. His decision, however, is actuated not by his material misery so much as by his thirst for learning. He is anxious to be freed from the chains which bind the human mind. He expects from the Devil not material rewards so much as the ability to know all and to comprehend all. He summons Satan and offers to sign away his soul. But the Devil is not content with the scholar's soul. He demands the inclusion of Flamel's wife in the pact for fear that, through her piety, she may in the end obtain her husband's pardon from Heaven and thus snatch his soul from Hell. Flamel, as a good husband, balks at this condition. He is willing to forfeit his own soul as payment for services received, but he will not jeopardize his spouse's soul in the bargain. Satan, however, is stubborn on this point. He will have both or none at all. In the end, as Flamel is hard pressed by his creditors, he expresses his willingness to hand over his beloved wife as well as himself to the Devil.

The long drawn-out negotiations furnish several occasions for the Devil to expound his philosophy. Satan shows himself in this play as a thorough-going dualist. He expresses the idea of two co-equal and co-eternal powers continually engaged in a war for the

28 The substitution of the tower of the Church of St. Jacques de la Boucherie for the scholar's laboratory of alchemy is due to the fact that the name of the protagonist of this play is historically linked with this church. Nicolas Flamel, a member of the University of Paris and a librarian, who died in 1417, is one of the most famous persons buried in the Church of St. Jacques. He left a great sum of money to this church, and his effigy, together with that of his wife, used to be seen kneeling at the Virgin's feet in the tympanum of the porch. Nicolas Flamel was venerated by the alchemists as their patron for having, as it was believed, discovered the philosopher's stone. His house in the Rue des Ecrivains was searched several times in order to find some indication of his secret. In the selection of the church tower as the place of temptation we may perhaps also see a reminiscence of the temptation of Christ on a high mountain.
mastery of the world. The two antagonists—Deus and Diabolus—he maintains, are equal in glory and grandeur, but man, standing between them, is inferior to either of them. The Mighty Abyss, he tells Flamel, has as much beauty as the High Mountain. The ugly, he claims, is that which has neither height nor depth. The bad lies not at the ends, but in the middle. Men should prefer Hell or Heaven rather than earth for a sojourn.

Nicolas Flamel finally becomes conscious of Satan’s sophistry. In the end, the specious arguments advanced by the Devil open his victim’s eyes. Flamel realizes that true happiness lies not on the heights nor in the depths, but mid-way, amidst the sacred and familiar things of the earth. He finally decides to act in the spirit of Aristotle’s “Golden Mean” and according to the Latin proverb: “Medio tutissimus ibis,” refuses to sign the pact, abandons his ambitions, and returns to his desk to earn his living with his pen.29

29 This “drame chronique” was left unfinished by its author. Two small fragments of this play appeared in the Mercure de France au XIXe siècle for 1831. The conclusion is given in the résumé after a recent English translation, which appeared in the Dublin Magazine, I (1923-24), 503-512. Its author, Seumas O’Sullivan, has added a final scene.

(To Be Continued)