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The Faust legend occupied the mind of Gérard de Nerval during a long period of his literary activity. In Germany he explored all popular traditions in regard to Faust, even down to the puppet-plays. The oldest Faust-book of 1587, which he read in connection with his translation of the First Part of Goethe’s Faust, is printed at the end of his translation of the Second Part of this poem (1840).

Gérard de Nerval cherished for many years the project of a French adaptation of the Faust legend. He left behind a manuscript fragment of a Faust play, containing the first act and the beginning of the second act. The manuscript is interrupted at the point where Mephistopheles counsels Faust to forget Margaret for the beautiful courtesans of antiquity, Helena, Cleopatra and Aspasia.

Gérard de Nerval abandoned the project of finishing this play of Faust when a copy of Klinger’s work already mentioned finally fell into his hands. This philosophical novel was well known to the French public. It was translated into French six years after its first publication and again in 1808 and 1823. Among the dramatizations of this novel in France may be mentioned les Aventures de Faust et sa descente aux enfers by de Saur and de Saint-Génies, which was produced for the first time in 1825, and M. E. Théaulon’s lyrical play Faust, first produced on October 27, 1827.

30 On Helena, see note 16.
31 Cleopatra was the last queen of Egypt. Her beauty fascinated Cesar and Antony.
32 Aspasia, the famous courtesan of antiquity, was the mistress of Pericles and the friend of all the writers and philosophers of her time, especially of Socrates. See “Pericles and Artaxerxes” in Plutarch’s Lives.
The story of the latter play is as follows: The protagonist, a young and melancholy savant, inventor of the art of printing, sells himself to the Devil because the father of the beautiful Marguerite hesitates to give him his daughter in marriage. Fortunately the girl is protected by the statue of a woman saint, endowed with miraculous powers. With her iron arm, she forces Mephistopheles to return the infernal pact.

The Faust of Klinger deeply impressed Gérard de Nerval when, as a school-boy, he caught sight of it on a bookstall along the banks of the Seine. He turned its leaves, but could not purchase it for lack of sufficient pocket-money. When he returned the following day, he found that it had been sold. He searched for a copy of this book for almost thirty years, and when he finally discovered it in the library of his friend Monselet, his joy knew no bounds. He forthwith set out to employ this novel as a model for the long contemplated play on the old Faust legend, leaving the play based on the first Faust chap-book unfinished, and published it in 1851, under the following title: l’Imagier de Harlem ou la Découverte de l’imprimerie.

Though principally an adaptation of Klinger’s novel, this play also contains several reminiscences from the Second Part of Goethe’s Faust. The similarity of the plots in the works of Klinger and Gérard de Nerval is very striking. Both Klinger’s hero and Gérard de Nerval’s protagonist discovered the art of printing, but this discovery plays a much smaller part in the German novel than in the French play based upon it. Why Gérard de Nerval replaced Johann Faust by Laurens Coster of Harlem, Holland, one of the reputed inventors of printing, is difficult to explain. Did he wish to return the credit for the discovery of printing to the Dutchman, for whom his counymen had long claimed the glory of the invention of this art? Or did he simply wish to bring an element of originality into a work which is otherwise merely a mosaic of borrowings? The question is not easy to answer.

Gérard de Nerval’s play of the printer of Harlem has for its principal plot the invention of printing, and its central idea is the fact that the Devil takes hold of this discovery and makes of it one of his tools to ruin mankind. Satan, assuming the form and language of a Machiavelli who is more Machiavellian than his proto-
type, enlightens Coster on the lamentable consequences of his invention. He takes him on a tour of the European capitals to show him how the tyrants of the earth turn his invention into a tool for the oppression of the masses. He also evokes for his companion a panorama of history to show him the fatal fruits of his discovery. At the court of Frederick III at Aix-la-Chapelle, Satan applies Coster's invention to the printing of paper money.34

Gérard de Nerval's principal originality consists in the creation of his diabolical personages. Klinger's Leviathan, as well as Goethe's Mephistopheles, is effaced in this play behind a Satan with several avatars. The Devil does not show himself here in propia persona. He tempts, perverts, and leads men astray under endless incarnations. The chamberlain of the Archduke of Austria, who answers to the name of Blocksberg,35 is the first of Satan's seven avatars. The most original diabolical personage in this play is a sort of phantom of beauty named Alilah, who appears under various and ambiguous forms. She shows herself to Coster as Aspasia,36 as the Imperia,37 as the Lady of Beaujeu,38 and finally as a Muse. Coster permits himself to be held under the spell of this phantasmal woman for a dozen years, but in the end this ally of the Devil is herself instrumental in his salvation.

The motif of the devil-pact also appears in two stories generally attributed to Gérard de Nerval. In "les Deux notes" (1831), Satan appears to propose an insidious pact to Paganini, the famous Italian violinist, and in "Ugolino" (1833), we meet a lunatic virtuoso, who sells his own soul and that of his young child in order to obtain from Satan a miraculous violin.

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As in Gérard de Nerval's case, what all other French Romantics seized upon in Goethe's great poem was its medieval sorcery. Its philosophical and symbolic contents escaped them as they did its best translator. What interested them most in Faust were its fan-

34 Those of us who lived in Europe after the Great War, during the currency-inflation period, will heartily agree that paper money was the Devil's own invention.
35 Blocksberg is the popular name for the Brocken, which is the German mount of witches.
36 On Aspasia, see note 32.
37 The Imperia (1455-1511) was an Italian courtesan, who enjoyed great celebrity during the pontificates of Julius II and Leon X.
38 The Lady of Beaujeu (1460-1522), is Anne of France, daughter of Louis XI, and wife of Pierre de Bourbon, who was lord of Beaujeu when he married her. She was very famous for her beauty and wit.
tastic parts. Thus George Sand counted *Faust* among the great fantastic plays in her "Essai sur le drame fantastique: Goethe, Byron, Mickiewicz" (1839).

*Faust*, especially in its diabolical aspects, strongly influenced French imagination during the Romantic period. Mephistopheles with his *rictus infernal* was the rage of the Romantics. These children of the Revolution, with their strong swayings toward Satanism, went wild over the wit of this Mocker of Mankind. They almost deified the Devil and actually swore by Mephistopheles and the Walpurgis Night. Painters devoted their talents to transferring this "Satanism" to their canvases. Delacroix painted the Walpurgis Night, and Louis Boulanger the Witches' Sabbath. The great Romantic composer, Berlioz, in his *Damnation de Faust* (1846), based on Gérard de Nerval's version, knew how to bring out the diabolical element in the Goethean poem, the appeal of which its French translator rendered so well into French. This opera is the full expression of Romantic music. It contains, as Gautier has well remarked, what Gounod's lacks—the diabolical irony of negation, which is the chief trait of Mephistopheles's character.

The influence of Goethe's *Faust*, insofar as its devil-compact is concerned, is evident in many poems, novels and short stories not only of the Romantic period but also in later times. We will refer to a few of the French works of the last century which particularly show reminiscences of the Goethean poem.39

Théophile Gautier's poem *Albertus* (1830) is a sort of sardonic burlesque upon *Faust* and certain Romantic works which were tinged with medievalism. This poem has been called by its author "half diabolical, half fashionable." It certainly is semi-supernatural and semi-sensual, fantastic and funereal, impertinent and indecent. This "theological legend," as its subtitle runs, was written completely in the spirit of a period which was revelling in everything connected with metamorphoses, black arts, devil-compacts and Witches' Sabbaths.

*Albertus*, a young Italian painter, offers his soul to Satan for the possession of Veronica, a wicked woman and hideous hag, who, by means of magic, has succeeded in transforming herself into a marvelously beautiful young girl, but who in his very arms changes again to her original form. At this sight Albertus is seized with

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39 The *Légendes françaises* (1829) and the *Nouvelles légendes* (1833) by Edouard d'Anglemont contain several legends figuring a devil-compact.
terror. The blood in his veins runs cold. He wishes to escape, but he cannot free himself from her cold and clammy arms. He belongs to her through a rash word uttered in the madness of delirium.

Albertus is forced to accompany Veronica to the Witches' Sabbath. They mount two broomsticks, bridled and saddled, which carry them through the air to the infernal tryst. Now they reach their destination.

"The place was lighted by a flame, casting a blue light like that of a blazing punch. It was an open spot within the forest's depths. Wizards in their gowns and witches nude astride upon their goats adown the four corners of the world arrived at once. Investigators into sciences occult, Fausts of every land, magi of every rite, dark-faced gypsies, and rabbis red-haired, cabalists, diviners, hermeticists black as ink and asthmatically gasping—not one of them failed to appear at the meeting place" (XI).40

All wait for Satan who is to preside in propria persona over the ceremonies.

"At last he came; but no devil of sulphur and of aspect terrific; no devil old-fashioned, but the dandiest of fiends, wearing imperial and slight moustache, twirling his cane as well as could have done a boulevard swell. You could have sworn he's just come from a performance of Robert the Devil or The Temptation, or had been attending some assembly fashionable. He limped like Byron (but no worse than he), and with his haughty mien, his aristocratic looks, and his exquisite talent for tying his cravat, in every drawing-room a sensation he would have made" (CXIV).

Gautier now amuses himself by composing the grand symphony of the adepts of Satan. When the concert is finished, the dancing begins. Poor Albertus is the unwilling spectator of the most monstrous diabolical diversions. In the midst of the ceremonies, the Devil sneezes. The odor of the company is too strong for his fashionable nostrils. "God bless you," Albertus says courteously. No sooner has he uttered these words when the whole frightful pageant disappears. Devil, demons, wizards, witches, all vanish into the air. Albertus feels sharp claws and teeth tear his flesh. His shrieks avail him not. The next morning, peasants find on the Appian road, near Rome, a man's body, with broken thighs and twisted neck.41


41 Reminiscences of Albertus will be found in the description of the Black Mass in Oscar Wilde's story, "The Fisherman and his Soul" (1891).
The story, *l'Amour et le Grimoire*, originally called *le Nouveau Faust et la Nouvelle Marguerite, ou Comment je me suis donné au Diable* (1832), by Charles Nodier, is likewise a burlesque of *Faust*. In it, Nodier brings down Goethe's lofty poem to the level of a very ordinary *bourgeois* affair.

Maxime, who tells the story in the first person, summons Satan and offers his soul to the Devil on condition that the latter bring to his room at midnight a certain Marguerite, to whom the young man has taken a passing fancy. Satan, however, turns a deaf ear and refuses to submit to the beck and call of a mere school-boy who has by chance got hold of a grimoire (book of conjurations). By a curious coincidence, the girl appears in his room without the aid of the Devil. A friend of the young man, who has succeeded in persuading Marguerite to elope with him, has sent her up to the room of her would-be seducer there, in hiding, to await the morning coach. Maxime's anxiety not to betray a trusting friend shows that he is too good a man to sell his soul to Satan.

Charles Nodier's story, "la Combe de l'homme mort" (1833), based on a sixteenth century legend of a bargain with Beelzebub, shows many reminiscences of the Faust story. On the eve of All Saints' Day in the year fifteen hundred and sixty-one, the Devil seized a man riding along the road and bore him off thirty leagues to a narrow valley in the Jura mountains. Many years ago this man had murdered an old hermit in order to obtain his wealth, after having won his confidence through hypocritical piety; and when trapped by the villagers and threatened with death, he had sold his soul to Satan in exchange for a thirty years' respite. The contract was written in Satan's scrawl on a slip of paper stained with blood and marked with five black finger-nails like a royal seal.

The man was as eager for knowledge as he was for wealth. After having escaped punishment through the aid of the Devil, he studied at the Universities of Metz and Strasbourg, sat at the feet of the famous Cornelius Agrippa, and obtained his doctorate in

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42 Cornelius Agrippa of Nettesheim (born in Cologne 1486, died in France 1535) was a sceptic philosopher and student of alchemy and magic, who was considered by his contemporaries a great magician and necromancer. He was also supposed to have formed a pact with the Devil, who attended him in the shape of a black dog. In the French mysteries, he himself has even been transformed into a devil. Some of his necromantic feats are recorded in Thomas Nashe's *Unfortunate Traveller* (1594). Read also Southey's ballad "Cornelius Agrippa" (1799). The best biography of Cornelius Agrippa is Henry Morley's *The Life of Cornelius Agrippa, doctor and knight, commonly called magician*. 2 vols., London, 1856.
four faculties. His reputation as a scholar spread far and wide, and he was finally called to fill a chair at the University of Heidelberg. Men and women came from the four corners of the continent to study under this professor. Satan himself, attracted by this scholar’s reputation, enrolled as one of his students. The professor, by dint of his great scholarship, was soon elected rector of the celebrated German university. He possessed fame and fortune and never thought of his pact with the Devil. But Satan had a better memory than even the rector of the University of Heidelberg. At the expiration of the term, the Devil was at hand to claim fulfillment of the terms of the compact. As the rector rode one day along the highway, pleased with himself and the world, the Devil appeared, snatched him up, and brought him to the spot of the murder. When the rector ascertained his whereabouts, he was assailed by unpleasant memories. An old woman, urged on by the Evil One, helped along the poor professor’s memory by a full and detailed recital of the events which had occurred thirty years before and which gave the valley its name—the Valley of the Dead Man. As he finally rushed out, anxious to disappear in the dark of the night, the Devil followed him and wrung his neck.

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The idea of a devil-compact occurred frequently in the literatures of the various European countries, during the first half of the last century, even in works which cannot be traced to Goethe’s influence. Medievalism, which formed an important part of Romanticism in all European countries, also implied diabolism. The Devil, as is well known, occupied a position of paramount importance in medieval arts and letters. He was a prominent and popular character in the mystery-plays. The interest which Romanticism showed in

43 It is not within the scope of this paper to treat of Goethe’s influence in works which do not contain the devil-compact. We will, however, refer to George Sand and Flaubert, who composed many of their works under the inspiration of the Goethean poem. George Sand’s fantastic drama, les Sept cordes de la lyre (1839), is copied from Faust. Its principal character Albertus is a replica of the German philosopher. He, too, is tempted by Mephistopheles in his ambition to know and comprehend all. The Witches’ Sabbath in her novel, le Château des Déserts (1847), is a clear imitation of the Walpurgis Night in Faust. Flaubert’s juvenilia as well as his Tentation de saint Antoine (1874) likewise show many reminiscences of the Goethean poem, Louis Ménard’s story, “le Diable au café” (1876), which contains a philosophical discussion between the Devil and the author, shows Goethe’s conception of Mephistopheles.
medieval legend and history brought into literature magic potions, Witches' Sabbaths, devil-compacts and all other sorts of Satanism.\(^4^4\) In England, the Gothic School of fiction brought diabolism into vogue as far back as the last quarter of the eighteenth century.

Horace Walpole, author of The Castle of Otranto (1764), was the first of a group of writers who took supernatural terrors as the principal subject of interest. He may be regarded as the founder of the Gothic and ghost-haunted fiction in England. Of greater influence on her contemporaries was Mrs. Ann Radcliffe, “the mighty magician of the Mysteries of Udolpho” (1794), who introduced into the popular novel deep dungeons and haunted houses, spirits and spooks.

The leader in this field of fiction, however, was Matthew Gregory Lewis, author of Ambrosio the Monk (1795 or 1796). In contrast to Ann Radcliffe, this novelist employed a supernaturalism which disdains all rational explanation. He introduced diabolical machinery into the popular novel, and created the so-called diabolical supernaturalism. His novel just mentioned is the final word in the English School of Terror. Lewis may be given the credit for having introduced the Devil into modern fiction. In Ambrosio the Monk, the Devil is not brought in with an allegorical or satirical aim, but is the leading character, the mainspring of the action. This novel may have been influenced by Jacques Cazotte's romance, le Diable amoureux (1772), but it advanced far beyond its model, although a sense of mystery and even of the supernatural is already to be found in the French romance. The novel, Ambrosio the Monk, tells the story of a licentious monk named Ambrosio, a superior of a monastery in Madrid, who delivers himself to the Devil in order to accomplish his infamous designs. He goes from crime to crime, from perjury to incest, and from rape to murder, until he is finally carried off by the Devil.

Not far behind Lewis was the Reverend Charles Robert Maturin, author of Melmoth the Wanderer (1820). The central episode of this novel is also a devil-compact. The unique feature of this work

\(^{4^4}\) Thus Victor Hugo's Notre-Dame de Paris (1831), which is a resuscitation of medievalism, contains the medieval belief in sorcery, alchemy, the devil-compact and the Witches' Sabbath. The arch-deacon of Notre-Dame, Claude Frollo, an alchemist, if not a sorcerer, is believed to have closed a compact with the Devil. Quasimodo, the hunchbacked bell-ringer, is supposed to be a demon bound to serve the arch-deacon for a given time, at the end of which he will carry off his soul by way of payment.
is the fact that a human being solicits souls for Satan as a kind of recruiting sergeant for hell. The aim of the author, a good Irish clergyman, in writing a novel so full of horrors, was to show that any man who deals with the Devil is doomed to perdition.

The writers of these novels of wonder and terror are mostly forgotten now, but they were once famous. Walter Scott and Byron were proud to be their friends. The former praised Horace Walpole, and the latter thought The Castle of Otranto the most beautiful novel in the English language. Scott, Charles James Fox and Richard Sheridan likewise praised the novels of Ann Radcliffe in the warmest terms. Byron admired this woman novelist and mentioned her in Childe Harold (1812) together with Shakespeare, Otway and Schiller. Moore, Shelley and Keats were also under her influence. Scott called Ambrosio the Monk "an effort of a genius hardly ordinary." Byron likewise admired this novel, although he later satirized it in his English Bards and Scotch Reviewers (1809). Polidori and Shelley were so strongly impressed by this novel that they decided to try their hands at writing supernatural stories of the same sort. Mrs. Shelley was inspired by these writers to compose her Frankenstein (1818). Maturin also enjoyed a great reputation in his own country, even Scott and Byron exaggerating his talent.45

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The writers of the English School of Terror likewise left their marks on the minds of the French of the Romantic period. The novels of this school circulated all over the European continent during the first half of the past century, but took hold particularly in France. They were repeatedly translated into French and devoured by the French reading public. These romances were also redacted into dramatic and operatic form and met with great success. Berlioz furnished the music for the libretto of Ambrosio the Monk. Mrs. Ann Radcliffe is especially considered the literary embassadress from England to France. The horrors and terrors of these English romances had a great attraction for the French

45 Concerning these novelists, the reader is referred to Edith Birkhead's thesis, The Tale of Terror; a study of the Gothic romance (London, 1921), which is a detailed and documented account of the growth of supernatural fiction in England from Horace Walpole to Wilkie Collins. Jakob Brauchli's German thesis, Der englische Schauerroman um 1800 (Weida i. Thür., 1928), will also be consulted with profit.
nation, which had experienced the Reign of Terror, at which time it seemed, as a writer in the Journal des Débats so aptly expressed it, as if "Hell had vomited its inhabitants on earth."  

Even the leaders of the Romantic movement in France did not disdain these novels. Chateaubriand read and praised them. He speaks, in 1822, of the English "romancers af ruins and phantoms" (Mémoires d'outre-tombe, 1848). Nodier mentioned the English "romanesque" romances in his essay, Du fantastique en littérature (1832) and imitated Lewis in his story, Inez de las Sierras (1837). Mérimée, in his essay on Alexander Pushkin (1868), mentions William Beckford, author of Vathek (1781), who was also a member of the English School of Terror. The influence of Ambrosio the Monk is evident in Mérimée’s play “la Femme est un diable" (1825) and in his story les Ames du purgatoire (1834). Victor Hugo likewise admired the English novelists and tried to rival them in their own effects. His story Han d'Islande (1823) contains several quotations from Maturin's novel. The influence of Ambrosio the Monk is evident in Victor Hugo's ballad "la Légende de la Nonne" (1828) and in his novel Notre-Dame de Paris (1831).

Of all French Romantics, however, Balzac was the greatest admirer and imitator of the English novelists of the School of Terror. He fairly revelled in their works "like a janitress" (to employ Théophile Gautier’s expression). The great French novelist refers to these English writers in several of his works. He mentions Mrs. Radcliffe in his preface to the Histoire des Treize (1833-34), in the episode "la Fille aux yeux d'or," which forms a part of this book, and in la Grande Bretèche (1832). Traces of the influence of this woman novelist may be seen in Balzac's novel, l'Héritière de Birague (1822). Lewis and Maturin, however, were Balzac's first masters in the art of fiction and continued to be his inspiration to the end. In Honorine (1836), Balzac refers to Lewis’s Ambrosio the Monk. The Frenchman’s novel, le Vicaire des Ardennes (1822), is for the most part an imitation of this English novel. It was seized almost in the moment of its publication and destroyed by the government, but was later reprinted under the title le Sorcier. Lewis's influence can also be detected in Balzac's maturer works.

46 For the influence of the English School of Terror in France, consult Alice M. Killen's thesis, le Roman “terrifiant” ou "roman noir" de Walpole à Anne Radcliffe et son influence sur la littérature française jusqu’en 1840 (1920; 2nd ed., 1924).
Of all the novels of the English School of Terror, *Melmoth the Wanderer* with its theme of a devil-compact left the deepest impression on the mind of Balzac. He held its author in high esteem and listed him among the poets who used the idea of an angel drawn by a demon to hell in order to refresh him with the dews of heaven (L'Elixir de longue vie, 1830). In a moment perhaps of undiscriminating enthusiasm, Balzac brackets the Melmoth of Maturin with the Don Juan of Molière, the Faust of Goethe, and the Manfred of Byron as “the great characters drawn by the greatest geniuses of Europe.” Again, in his preface to the already quoted *Histoire des treize*, the French novelist speaks of Melmoth in the same breath with Faust and Manfred. Maturin’s book, thanks to the honor which Balzac granted its author by borrowing his subject, continued to enjoy a high reputation among the French writers. Thus the novel *Île de Feu* (1870) by Dumas fils recalls the thesis of *Melmoth the Wanderer*.

Balzac’s novel, *le Centenaire ou les Deux Behringheld* (1832), is an imitation, almost a translation of *Melmoth the Wanderer*. The centenarian, named Behringheld, is a sorcerer born in the fifteenth century. He can live eternally, as a result of a compact concluded with the powers of hell, on condition that he shall always find new human victims and induce them to sell themselves to him. Like Melmoth, he always seeks his victims among the unfortunate of the earth; but while Melmoth, in exchange for the gifts he can bestow, asks only for the souls of his victims, Behringheld sacrifices them to the very last drop of their blood. In the end, the centenarian, deprived of his prey in the final moment, is condemned to death.

In *Melmoth the Wanderer*, written by Balzac thirteen years later, Maturin’s novel is given a different ending. In the English work, Melmoth’s efforts to hand over the infernal pact to another person are unsuccessful and, in the end, this bondman of Beelzebub is lawfully carried off by the Devil. In Balzac’s story, Melmoth, after several centuries of wandering over the face of the earth, succeeds in changing destinies with another mortal. The French novelist also alters the character of the Wanderer. Maturin’s Melmoth is anxious to continue living eternally, whereas Balzac’s yearns for death. The hero of Balzac possesses the power of endless life, but has not the right to lay it down at will. He has obtained, under the terms of the contract, the power to know all, to comprehend
all and to do all. He is the "peer of Lucifer," the Lord of life, by virtue of the indwelling demon. He has everything that makes for happiness, but still he is unhappy. He has finally realized the biblical truth that it profits no man to gain this world at the cost of his own soul.

Melmoth, in his search for a soul, is unceasingly harried across the world by the hounds of hell. He can obtain the boon of death and the bliss of heaven only if he can find another soul to deliver to the Devil in compensation for his own. He seeks his victim among the unfortunates of the earth; but no man, even in the most abject poverty and the greatest suffering, will buy health and wealth in exchange for his soul. Wherever he turns his steps, Melmoth meets with a tragic refusal—until finally he comes to Paris. In this city, he at last finds a man who is willing to sell his soul to him for cash. The man is M. Castanier, a bank-cashier, who has forged a signature and fears arrest. The Parisian enters upon the heritage of the Irishman. But he also repents of his act, and is anxious to hand over the infernal gifts to another. This cashier, who received two million francs for his soul, now buys the soul of a broker for a few hundred thousand francs. It is now the broker's turn to get rid of his bargain, and he obtains for the small sum of ten thousand francs the soul of another man. In this manner, the price of souls sinks from day to day. The poor devil is given no rest and passes through a number of bodies until he finally lands in a mere notary's clerk, whom he carries off in the end. The secret of the infernal power, brought to earth by the Irishman Melmoth, spiritual son of the old Reverend Charles Robert Maturin, is thus lost forever.47

Alexander Dumas's play, Don Juan de Moraña ou la Chute d'un ange (1836), though an imitation of Mérimée's story, "les Ames du purgatoire," published two years previously, really goes back to Lewis's Ambrosio the Monk.48 Don Juan, in company with his familiar demon, enters a convent, in which Martha is on the point of death. But this fact does not confound the famous sensualist nor the demon. Martha accepts the demon's proposal to lead her to her lover, Don Juan, if she will abandon her soul to hell. Immed-

47 Robert Louis Stevenson's "The Bottle Imp" (1891) is mainly an imitation of this novel by Balzac.

48 There are also reminiscences in this play of Goethe, Scott and Shakespeare. Cf. Loëve-Veimars' criticism of the first production of this play in a feuilleton of the Journal des Débats, May 4, 1836.
Itately after signing the compact with her blood, however, she dies and escapes Don Juan’s pursuits.

Don Juan de Moraña should not be confused with the famous or rather infamous Don Juan de Teñorio. The former, in contrast to the latter, was not carried off to hell, but ascended to heaven. He too began as a sinner, but ended as a saint. This Don Juan de Moraña, a blasphemous, sacrilegious, adulterous assassin, dripping with the blood of countless victims, the enemy of the whole world, which he had filled with horrors and atrocities, finally repented, entered a monastery and died a saint, venerated, blessed and canonized, with an epitaph he had himself placed on his tombstone: “Here lies the worst man that ever lived.”

Frédéric Soulié’s novel, *les Mémoires du diable* (1837-38), although revealing influences from many authors, both French and foreign, is, as far as its subject-matter is concerned, a work primarily related to the blood-and-thunder school of English fiction and recalls especially Lewis’s *Ambrosio the Monk* and Maturin’s *Melmoth the Wanderer*. But, as often happens, the disciple outdoes his master. The work by Soulié in many portions is just a mass of horrors and abominations. In fact, the author reached the extreme in barbarity and monstrosity. Of his predecessors in France, Soulié is particularly indebted to LeSage, author of *le Diable boiteux* (1707), from whom he borrowed the idea of introducing into a work of satire a personage whose universal knowledge shall work out the scheme of the author and make the hero acquainted with all the vicissitudes, mysteries and hypocrisies of the human species.  

The idea of editing the Devil’s memoirs was also not original with Frédéric Soulié. Jean Paul Richter was perhaps the first to edit *Selections from the Papers of the Devil* (1787). Wilhelm Hauff, another German Romantic author, brought out, in 1828, a series of autobiographical papers under the title “From the Memoirs of Satan.” There were others, even after Frédéric Soulié, who claimed the honor of appointment by his Satanic Majesty to edit his “journal.” In 1872, J. R. Beard, a Unitarian minister, published an *Autobiography of Satan*. Another autobiography of the Devil was

Soulié’s novel, although not much read at present, was very popular in its day and frequently adapted for the stage. A phantastic drama entitled *la Sonnette du diable*, based on Soulié’s novel, was written in 1849 by Bourgeois Anicet and Guerville. Paul Féval’s novel, *les Mémoires du Diable* (1832), is a poor imitation of Soulié’s work.
found among the posthumous works of Leonid Andreev and appeared in English under the title Satan's Diary (1920). Our own H. L. Mencken also favored us, in his Book of Burlesques (1916), with selections "From the Memoirs of the Devil." The American satirist, Oliver Bainbridge, brought The Devil's Note-Book to light in 1908 and had it illustrated by "Vet" Anderson.

The originality of Frédéric Soulié in this novel consists in the terms demanded by the human party of the devil-compact. Armand de Luizzi sells his soul to Satan for a rather uncommon consideration. What tempts him is not wealth, which, indeed, he possesses, nor pleasure, which he probably thinks he can procure for himself without the Devil's aid. What he wants in exchange for his soul is to know the past lives, the trials and temptations, of his fellow-men and women. As Mr. George Saintsbury, in his History of the French Novel (1919), well remarks, this is "a thing which a person of sense and taste would do anything, short of selling himself to the Devil, not to know."

The plot of this novel is based upon the idea of successive bargains between the Lords of Ronquerolles and the Prince of Darkness. A fresh one is opened whenever the last inheritor of an ancestral curse has gone to close his account. The story, as given by Mr. Saintsbury, is briefly as follows:

The new Count de Luizzi summons Satan by means of a certain little silver bell at the not most usual but sufficiently witching hour of two a. m., saying at the same time, "Come!" After a slightly trivial farce-overture of apparitions in various banal forms, Luizzi compels the Devil to show himself in his proper shape. The bargain contains, as in Melmoth's case, a redemption clause, though of a different kind. If the man can say and show, after ten years, that he has been happy, he will escape from the Devil's clutches. What Luizzi demands of the Devil in exchange for his soul is to know everything about other people, and to be permitted even to reveal and print it. In certain circumstances, he can rid himself of his ally, when unwelcome, and perform other acts at the price of forfeiting a month of his life, which naturally will abridge the ten years.

Obedient to the wishes of Satan, the Baron de Luizzi goes out into the great world, and meets with numerous adventures, all containing the principles of the great moral of this novel, which is to
teach us not to trust to first appearances. For instance, he sees an old lady, who is notorious for her prudish behavior, her sanctified conduct, and her religious turn of mind; and then he falls in love with a beautiful young lady, whose levity of disposition has raised the breath of scandal to such an extent, that she is at length driven from society. The Baron summons the Devil to narrate to him the history of those two women. To his astonishment, he finds that the former was stained with every crime—an adulteress, and a wretch who had poisoned her husband; and the latter was as pure and virtuous a creature as any human being can be!

The end of the novel is the usual sudden “foreclosure” by Diabolus despite the effort, to employ the words of Mr. Saintsbury, “of no less than three Gretchens who go upwards, and of a sort of inchoate repentance on Luizzi’s own part before he goes downwards.”

Dumas fils follows his father’s foot-steps across the Middle Ages and brings back that astonishing novel Tristan le Roux (1850), which may be counted among the most jovial parodies ever written on the pseudo-historical novel. Tristan the Red-headed, son of Gilles de Retz, evokes from the dead a demon named Saracen, who, as it seems in this instance, can be dead, and forms a pact with him, through the intermediary of a Breton sorceress, in order to obtain the love of his cousin Alix. The demon Saracen has, however, been especially commissioned by hell to effect the ruin of the Maid of Orleans.50

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But if French Romanticism, particularly in its employment of the devil-compact as subject-matter, is indebted to England, it amply repaid its debt to that country by influencing many of the leading English Romantics. Thus Thackeray’s story, “The Painter’s Bargain” (1834), was written under the influence of the French Romantics, as is admitted by the author himself in the “Divertisement, to the First Edition” of his Paris Sketch Book.

50 Marshal Gilles de Retz or Rais (the “French Bluebeard”) was a Grand Master in the medieval witch-cult and is said to have sacrificed about 150 women and children in the witch-rites. According to the theory developed by Miss Alice Murray, in The Witch-Cult in Western Europe (Oxford, 1921), he was the chief of the witch-group to which Joan of Arc belonged, but made no attempt to rescue her. Nine years after her death, he, too, was tried on the same charges and condemned.
(1840). It was Thackeray's good fortune to live in Paris during the wildest and most brilliant years of Romanticism; and while his attitude toward the movement and its leaders, as presented in the Paris Sketch Book, is not wholly sympathetic, he is indebted to it for his interest in the Devil. The Romanticism of Thackeray has been denied with great obstinacy and almost passion, for like Heinrich Heine, the chief of German Romantic ironists, he poked fun at this contemporary movement. But "to laugh at what you love," as Mr. Saintsbury has pointed out in his History of the French Novel, "is not only permissible, but a sign of love itself."

Thackeray's story, "The Painter's Bargain," is a dream-fantasy, in which the devil-compact is treated in a rather unusual way. The soliloquy of impieties of Simon Gambouge, a poor French painter, is acknowledged by an invisible devil, and his question, "Where are you?" is answered in the smallest of voices "S-q-u-e-e-z-e!" Immediately, after the nail has been pricked from a bladder of crimson lake in the hand of the artist, a little imp spirits out on the palette, a little blood-colored imp of expanding dimensions—as big at first, we are told, as a tadpole, then as a mouse, as a cat—when it jumps off the palette and turns a somersault. The Devil offers to help Simon Gambouge to all the good things of life for full seven years (seven is a sacred number even to Satan) in exchange for the poor painter's soul. The contract was already drawn up by the Devil on "a sheet as big as a double Times, only there was a different stamp in the corner.

In Thackeray's earlier and poorer story, "The Devil's Wager" (1833), which was also written under the inspiration of the French Romantics, a priest, who is under a bond to Satan, finally forfeits his body and soul by reciting a prayer contrary to the express condition of the infernal contract. But by sacrificing himself, he saves his brother's soul from "those regions of fire and flames where poor sinners fry and roast in *sacra saculorum*." This story is very laughable, if one can laugh at the idea of being damned.

On the other hand, Washington Irving, the first of the great American writers, seems, in his story, "The Devil and Tom Walker" (1824), to owe very little to foreign influences. Although, by his interest in popular legends, he shows his sympathy with the Romantic movement of Europe, his story is redolent of the American soil. He presents the Devil as a maker of a contract who
expects his contract to be fulfilled. In this respect, Diabolus is acting according to sound American business principles. Tom Walker shows himself also a good Yankee business man in his attempt to evade payment of the contract. The Devil wins in the end, as no amount of ingenuity on the part of New England skinflints can worst him in a bargain, and Washington Irving must be put down as a realist.\footnote{51}

The redemption clause in the “Devil-Puzzlers” (1871) by the American humorist, Frederick Beecher Perkins, is rather unique. The author of this story follows an old tradition, which attaches a wager to the infernal pact. According to the terms of the contract drawn up between the “hero” of this story and the Devil, the mortal may, at the expiration of the period, be left unharmed in body and soul, provided he can put to the Devil three questions, one of which the subtle spirit cannot answer. The Devil loses because he cannot tell which is the front of a woman’s bonnet. He answers the first two questions dealing with metaphysical problems, but the third, suggested by the mortal’s wife, proves his undoing. This story is a specimen of the laborious methods and clumsy wit of the early American humorists.

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The old tradition of the devil-compact has continued in its appeal to this day and has not failed to attract many eminent contemporary writers in all European countries. John Masefield treats this ancient tradition in his story, “The Devil and the Old Man” (1905).

Max Beerbohm’s story, “Enoch Soames” (1916), is perhaps the most recent treatment by a prominent Englishman of this old tradition. Soames, a representative of the prominent literary leaders of the eighteen nineties, styling himself a Catholic diabolist, makes an extraordinary bargain with the Devil. He is willing to forfeit his soul to Satan for the privilege of visiting the British Museum a hundred years after his death to learn what posterity thinks of him. But he cannot find his name in any catalogue or index or biography, nor anywhere at all, except under the name of Beerbohm, Max, where he is mentioned in the phonetic spelling of 1992, as an

\footnote{51} John B. Hymer has written, in 1908, a “phantastic musical travesty” in one act on Washington Irving’s story and has given it the same title.
“immajnari karrakter” in a short story by this writer. Broken-hearted, Soames then forfeits himself to his purchaser.

The French novelist, Pierre Veber, made the devil-compact the central theme of his novel *l'Homme qui vendit son âme au diable* (1918).

Maurice Magre, in his recently published work, *Lucifer* (1929), is bold enough to treat the old tradition of a devil-compact in a “modern” novel. This work is an exaltation of the pagan ideal of the enjoyment of the flesh. “The only truth is in material enjoyment,” Lucifer is made to say. The novel ends, however, with the declaration that the redemption of man will come from a union, within every one of us, of Christ and Lucifer.  

* * *

What first strikes the reader of all these poems and plays, novels and short stories, which employ the devil-compact, is the lack of variety in their treatment of this subject. Mr. Saintsbury, in his *History of the French Novel*, has already called attention to the monotony in the employment of this motif in literature. This uniformity in the literary treatment of the devil-compact, he says, is especially surprising when it is contrasted with the great variety in circumstances of the bargains with Beelzebub which are transacted daily in actual life. This fact shows us how pitiful a thing the imagination of man is after all.

What we must next gather from this mass of material, treating the motif of the devil-compact, is a conviction of the meanness of man. Almost invariably the Devil is represented as thwarted by trickery and treachery. In John Masefield’s story already quoted, Diabolus dies in his attempt to collect his bill. Naturally, as long as mortals write the stories, the Devil is going to find it difficult to collect his debt. These literary accounts of the devil-compacts do not, as Mark Twain regrets, give Satan’s side of the story. The reader cannot but admit that the Devil appears in these stories much more honest than the men with whom he has to deal. Whether Diabolus gives us ten, twenty or twenty-four years from the signing  

52 See the present writer’s review of this novel in *Books Abroad*, IV (1930), 40.
of the contract, he always keeps his part of the agreement, while we have the perennial hope of cheating him after we have done our worst and enjoyed it. If the stories had been conscientiously written, all of the characters who cheated the Devil would certainly have gone to hell solely for the methods they used in saving their souls.

The Devil should be complimented at the attention given him by the best writers of all ages and languages. He should be offended perhaps at the flippant and audacious manner in which his power is flouted in this world. But he may certainly be satisfied with his influence on earth, manifested in these stories by the devilish ingenuity of the heaven-bound mortals.

But all this leads us to conclude that the Devil will cease to be our most formidable Reality and become only material for Romance as soon as we will have given up the hope of trying to cheat him.