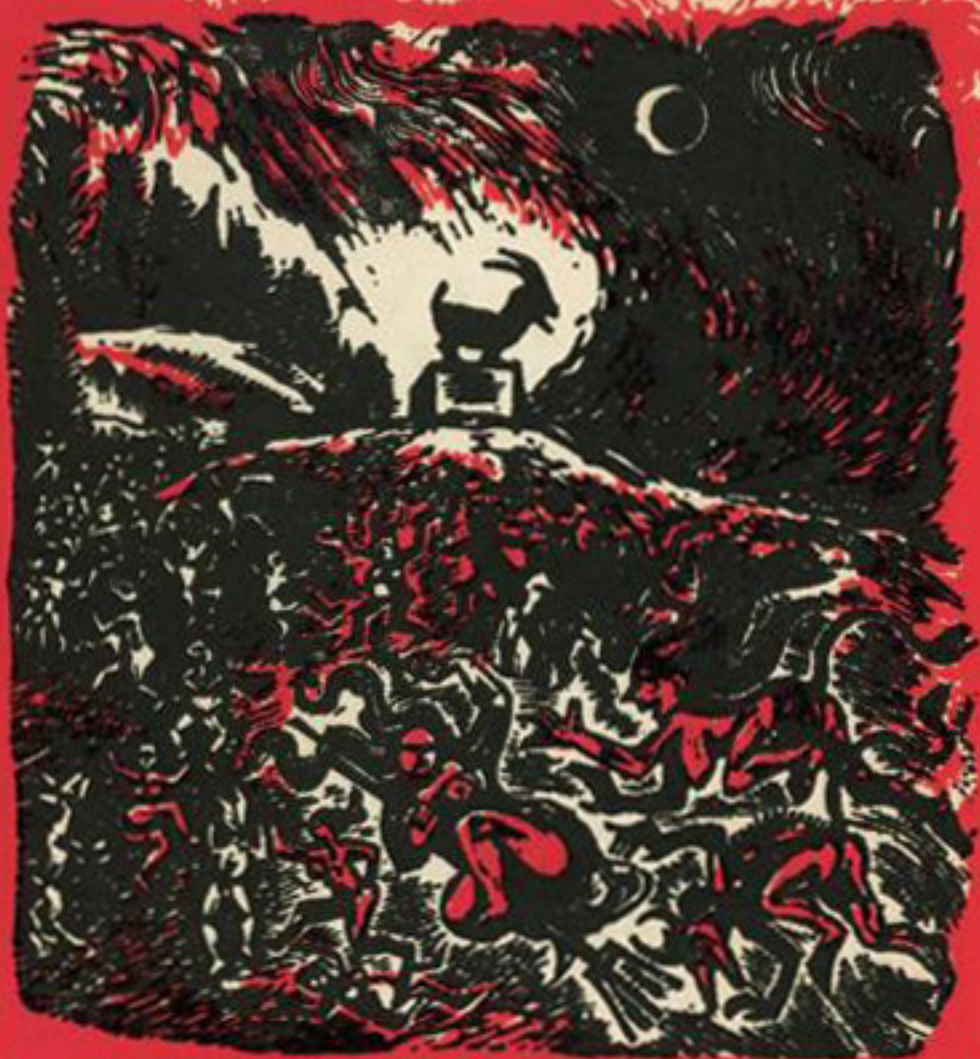


HEINRICH HEINE



DOKTOR FAUST

A DANCE POEM

PETER NEVILL
LONDON • NEW YORK

DOKTOR FAUST

A DANCE POEM

HEINRICH HEINE
DOKTOR FAUST
A DANCE POEM

TOGETHER WITH SOME RARE ACCOUNTS OF
WITCHES, DEVILS AND THE ANCIENT ART OF SORCERY

Done into English and edited by
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*TO MARGOT FONTEYN
WITH ADMIRATION
AND RESPECT*

PREFACE

*... Or, yet later in watch
On the roof of the Brocken tower
Thou standest, gazing! to see
The broad red sun, over field
Forest and city and spire
And mist track'd stream of the wide
Wide German land, going down
In a bank of vapours—again
Standest! at nightfall, alone.*

MATTHEW ARNOLD (*Heine's Grave*)



EINRICH HEINE's letter to Lumley, manager of Her Majesty's Theatre, London, in the pages that follow, was written from Paris on 1st October 1851: almost exactly a century before the date of this preface. It would be over four years before the poet died in the small hours of a dreary February morning. The 'dance poem' had not been performed, and it has never been: a hundred years later all we have is the exciting scenario, with the prefatory letter to Lumley, both of which reach us now in the apt, sensitive translation by Basil Ashmore.

Consider Heine's condition at the time that he imagined the Faust ballet, its rush of fantastic invention, its insistence on sounds and colours that warmed and lighted the imagination of a mortally sick man in darkness and pain. Heine, over fifty, was pinned to his 'mattress-grave' in Paris in a terrible condition of life-in-death. He had had his first paralytic stroke in 1845, the paralysis of which he wrote later to his friend Varnhagen von Ense, 'eats into my chest like an iron frost'. Four years passed before he took finally to the bed on which he lingered so long. At first he could use his legs, but his left eye was closed and he had himself to work the lid of the failing right eye. His lips were

becoming locked: he spoke only with difficulty. In September 1846 he wrote to Julius Campe, the publisher:

I have grown horribly emaciated, my poor stomach has disappeared in a melancholy way, and I have the look of a wizened one-eyed Hannibal. My conviction tends to the conclusion that no cure is possible, for me—that I shall perhaps while away some time, one or at most two years, in a pitiful agony.

It was in the winter of 1848-9 that his disease, a softening of the spinal marrow, was at its most painful. From 1849, thanks to the treatment of Gruby, a Hungarian doctor, his pain was slightly relieved, though the long last years, mostly spent in the Rue d'Amsterdam in Paris, were weary and dark: towards the end fewer and fewer people came to see him. (The last months were cheered by the strange appearances of the woman Camille Selden whom he called La Mouche.) In 1851 we find Heine writing in the postscript to his collection of poems, the *Romanzero* (it must be remembered that his *Faust* comes from the same period):¹

. . . But I do still exist. My body is so shrivelled up that barely anything remains of me now but my voice, and my bed reminds me of the vocal grave of the wizard Merlin, which lies in the forest of Broceliande in Brittany, under tall oaks whose summits flicker up into heaven like green flames. Alas! I envy thee, my colleague Merlin, those trees and their fresh motion, for no green leaf rustles over my mattress-grave in Paris, where early and late I hear only the rattle of carriages, hammering, wrangling, and piano-strumming—a grave without peace, death without the privilege of the dead, for these have no occasion to pay money or to write letters or books.

¹ His poetry he generally contrived to write down himself, reserving his prose for dictation, and in order to enable him to write his verse, he provided himself with a large portfolio, with folio sheets of paper laid upon it, on which he traced painfully with a pencil large letters . . . a distressing contrast to the neat handwriting of his youth. —William Stigand, *The Life of Heine* (1875), ii, 405.

Heine's plight is described, most movingly, in Antonina Valentin's biography, *Poet in Exile*.¹ Here we are shown No. 50, Rue d'Amsterdam, the second-floor room that looked upon an inner courtyard; the darkened apartment (guarded by a mulatto woman) with a greenish light that filtered through curtained windows; 'an acrid smell of burned flesh' in the air (the nerves of Heine's back had frequently to be cauterized); and a wasted body, 'scarcely larger than a child's', lying upon a pile of mattresses. Heavy lids hid the eyes; the emaciated face had been compared to that of a traditional portrait of Christ. The face, in repose, was like a death-mask; at other times Heine raised his left lid to stare glassily with his blue eye. The hands, though the fingers were half-paralysed, remained beautiful: in Gautier's words, 'small hands, soft and slender, and as white as a wafer'. Heine's deep, warm voice was still his own.

There, through the years, Heine dragged out his life, watched by Mathilde, his name for the Frenchwoman, Crescence Eugénie Mirat, whom he had met in the autumn of 1834 and who had been his wife since August 1841. One of the visitors to him during the last period was Gérard de Nerval, who translated his poems into French, and of whom it was said that he was the only man Heine sincerely loved. De Nerval was subject to fits of madness, but, when lucid, was able to talk and argue in a cascade-stream:

Whenever his mind was properly under control he would always appear in the little room in the Rue d'Amsterdam, and there would take place long, strange conversations between the paralytic, waging a hopeless fight against the inferno of pain which racked his body, and the man of healthy appearance, who was already vowed to madness.

It must indeed have been a touching and bewildering sight to have seen and heard Heine and de Nerval in talk, now remembering past flippancies in an effort to forget the present,

¹ Victor Gollancz, 1934.

and now arguing closely and urgently about de Nerval's translations. Once, when the Frenchman recited to Heine a poem of his own about Jesus on the Mount of Olives, he had a fit and fell into a semi-stupor. He could be stirred only by the arrival of the concierge (trained for such moments as this), with the message: 'M. Alexandre Dumas has sent me. He has been taken ill nearby, and has asked me to take you to him.' 'Dumas ill!' cried de Nerval hoarsely, and rushed away—to be guided discreetly to a doctor's clinic. Next morning he remembered nothing. Gerard de Nerval died a year before Heine: one January night of snow in 1855, he hanged himself in the Rue de la Vieille-Lanterne.

Heine, by then, had left the Rue d'Amsterdam. After a few months in 1854, on the outskirts of the city, he settled at last to his end on the fifth floor at No. 3, Avenue Matignon. It was here that he died in the early hours of 17th February 1856, and it was thence that, on February 20th, a dim, foggy morning, he was taken to burial in the cemetery of Montmartre in the presence of Alexandre Dumas, Théophile Gautier, and a few of his friends.

The poet of those tragic years wrote to his publisher, Julius Campe: '*Doktor Faust* is one of my greatest works, greater than any single poem I have written. It is a ballet in form only, and has the greatest significance for those with the necessary perception to understand its worth.' Oddly, its very existence has long been overlooked.

Mr. Ashmore, who has a gift for literary detection—and whose discoveries or re-discoveries include a new play of Chekhov—found a reference to Heine's *Faust* when he was preparing his edition of Marlowe's *Faustus* and, incidentally, of the *Faustbuch*. Experts upon Heine were incredulous when he told them. At least one distinguished European actor, who had studied Heine for many years and who possessed the complete works, denied that there could be a *Faust* in the canon. Mr.

Ashmore went to the British Museum, and here now is his find: the 'dance poem', in the restoration and translation of which he has performed more than a pious act. Read the translation; and then remember Matthew Arnold at the poet's grave in Montmartre:

Ah! not little, when pain
Is most quelling, and man
Easily quell'd, and the fine
Temper of genius alive
Quickest to ill, is the praise
Not to have yielded to pain!
No small boast, for a weak
Son of mankind, to the earth
Pinn'd by the thunder, to rear
His bolt-scathed front to the stars;
And, undaunted, retort
'Gainst thick-crashing, insane,
Tyrannous tempests of bale,
Arrowy lightnings of soul!

What seems to me so remarkable is the dramatic impact of this *Faust* as a piece of narrative. Heine has made his scenario eloquent. Every line speaks from a charged imagination: an uncommonly theatrical imagination that may make people who come to Heine for the first time, or who know him only through his poems (the voice so hard to translate), ask what else the man did in the theatre. The curious thing is that he did so little. In his early twenties he wrote in verse *Almanzor* and *William Ratcliff*. The first was set in Granada of the Moors. The second, dashed off at high speed, had oddly a Scottish setting: it was a wildly romantic affair in which much use was made of the old Scots ballad, 'Why does thy sword so drop with blood, Edward, Edward?' Neither matters very much to-day: they are collectors' pieces and must always remain so. Heine, it would appear, kept his love of the theatre—he translated Byron's tragedies—and it was a pity that he never produced a comedy for the exercise of his bladed wit:

The spirit of the world
Beholding the absurdity of men—
Their vaunts, their feats—let a sardonic smile
For one short moment wander o'er his lips.
That smile was Heine! . . .

It is not surprising that, in his last years, when bound to his 'mattress-grave', his mind should have played again about the theatre. All who read Mr. Ashmore's translation of his *Faust* will be impressed by the poet's visual sense. He had the producer's feeling for the broad effect, the use of what a poet of our own day has called 'brushes of comets' hair'. And he knew all about the use of contrast. Imagine this dance-poem on the stage. After the whirling fury of the Brocken scene—'Hell is empty and all the devils are here'—we come suddenly into the serene noon of the Greek island, the marble and the gold. And, at the last, we are borne into a scene from a Dutch Old Master. Heine has not dabbed or flicked at his scenes. They are created verbally in quick, broad strokes. They cry for the other partners in a stage rendering: for the scenic artist, the dancers, the musicians. Here, in England, one must think immediately of the Sadler's Wells company—begin, indeed, to cast the ballet: Margot Fonteyn for Mephistophela, Robert Helpmann to mime Faust, Moira Shearer as Helen of Troy. And, for the music, surely there is a theme ready to the hand of Benjamin Britten. It does no harm to speculate. It is not often that a Heine opens his script before one. What could Lumley have been thinking about?

As readers will observe, Heine, in his long and relishing prefatory letter, offers a pleasant bit of special pleading for the appearance of the Devil and his companions as ballerinas. But it is the dance-poem itself that takes our imagination. Notice such passages as these:

A monstrous blood-red tiger leaps from a flaming chasm which appears in the floor. . . . There are terrible peals of thunder and

a monstrous serpent appears, writhing across the floor in a sea of flame.

Faust and Mephistophela mount a pair of coal-black horses that have quietly ascended from the ground. They fly away into the upper air and disappear.

Mephistophela finds herself a suitable companion . . . in Spanish courtier's costume, with a blood-red feather in his hat.

The learned Doktor Faust is seated in it, dressed in gold and scarlet like a mediaeval alchemist. Mephistophela, dressed in flowers and ribbons, rides the foremost horse. . . .¹

Read those passages and many more that shine with colour or pulsate with movement, and then remember that dark room in the Rue d'Amsterdam; the jangle of noises without; the paralysed poet in his agony, with closed eyes; the acrid smell; the voice of Mathilde . . . and, waiting always outside the door, the shadow of Death that in his last days Heine would apostrophize:

*O Tod! mit deiner Grabesstille, du
Nur du kannst uns die beste Wolluste geben.*²

*Hampstead,
January 1952*

J. C. TREWIN

¹ The malady which kept Heine prisoner in semi-darkness turned him into a painter. Behind the closed eyelids such vivid pictures had been formed that, once read, they remain for ever on the memory.—Antonina Vallentin.

Some may think of the English poet James Elroy Flecker, who, lying in the weariness of a sanatorium among the glare of the Alpine snows, saw, set down, and worked over such a poem as 'The Old Ships' with all the qualities we think of when Flecker's name is spoken: the colour, the radiance, the play of epithet and vowel, the glow of time remembered.

² O death, with thy graveyard stillness, only thou canst give us the purest joy.—Vallentin.



DOKTOR FAUST

Introductory Remarks



R. LUMLEY, the director of Her Majesty's Theatre, London, once begged me to compose a ballet scenario for him. To gratify his wish I decided to write the following work, calling it: 'Doktor Faust, a dance poem'. Unfortunately this was never staged, partly because the appearance of the famous Swedish Nightingale at Her Majesty's Theatre postponed all other productions indefinitely, partly because the resident ballet master considered my work to be a dangerous novelty. The reputation of his art, in his opinion, would be much endangered if a poet were allowed to write the story, thus displacing ballet-monkeys working in collaboration with some starving hack! Alas poor Faust! Poor master of the magic art: because of envy and the British nation's love of Jenny Lind you were refused the honour of appearing with your necromantic spells before the great Victoria of England! Will you, I wonder, fare any better if you chance to show your face in your own country?¹

¹ If, against all expectations, some German theatre tries to demonstrate its good taste by producing my opus, I would take this opportunity of asking the Honourable Directors not to fail in paying the poet the royalties which will be due to him! I would also point out that I have already caused a French translation to be printed, thus securing my rights in France. The legally prescribed number of copies have already been deposited at the proper places!—Heine.

But to return to my subject: when I had the pleasure of delivering the manuscript of this ballet to Mr. Lumley we discussed the history of Faust (in the characteristic English manner) over a fragrant cup of tea. The impresario then urged me to indite our conversation so that, at a later date, he might include it in the programme he intended to disseminate among the audience on the night of the performance. I complied with his request and, as the letter may be of some interest to my readers, it is included, in a shortened form, as the appendix to this book. Mr. Lumley, however, received but the outline of the historical and mythological background to the Faust legend, and I feel compelled to add a few more words as a result of recent investigations into the origins of that worthy Doktor.

Strictly speaking, the ancient poem by Theophilus (major domo to the Bishop of Adama in Sicily) is not the real basis of the Faust legend, though many people imagine it to be so. The work contains Anglo-Saxon phrases and archaisms which prove it beyond doubt to be but an imitation of some older original, probably lost in the course of time. This Anglo-Saxon drama must have been in existence shortly after the Norman invasion of England, for it was copied almost word for word by a French troubador, Rutebeouf, and performed as an ancient mystery in France itself.¹

This work by troubador Rutebeouf has obviously influenced the author of the German chapbook . . . which

¹ This mystery-play is printed in the Mommerque collection. Those who cannot obtain this collection may read a very comprehensive account of the work by the learned Magnin in the *Journal des Savants* published some years ago.—Heine.

in turn (through a contemporary English translation) was utilized by the poet Marlowe when he came to write his play. This famous drama may therefore be said to have originated from several sources; the Anglo-Saxon mystery, the poem by Theophilus, and last of all the analogous legend of the German magician as related in the chapbook.

Marlowe's hero, however, bears little resemblance to the profligate rebel described by Theophilus. That gentleman, on being seduced by a magician, assigns his soul to the devil in order to attain worldly riches, but is saved by the grace of the Virgin Mary who ultimately fetches the contract back from Hell itself. Marlowe's protagonist is himself a magician and performs his necromantic spells before the mighty ones of the earth. Owing, however, to his Protestant upbringing he is denied the assistance of the Holy Virgin and is finally claimed by the devil without pardon or pity. Puppet-masters, who flourished in Elizabethan England, were swift to seize on any play which proved to be a popular success, and Marlowe's masterpiece was speedily transformed to fit the puppet-market. Thus bowdlerized, it travelled through the length and breadth of Europe till, at last, larded with good earthy German jokes it reached the market stalls of my own country. Here it greatly entertained the lower strata of the populace, at the same time inflaming the imagination of our mighty Goethe. For it was from the puppet version of the legend that our poet took the shape and form of his own masterpiece.¹

¹ This is most obvious when we study the original version of Goethe's play. In that form the work hardly diverges in any way from the simple shape of the puppet play.—Heine.

Thus do we see the genesis of Faust, from the poem of Theophilus to the Saxon epic, from the chapbook on to Marlowe, through the puppet plays and finally to Goethe. Abraham begat Isaac, Isaac begat Jacob and Jacob begat Juda in whose hands the sceptre will remain forever. In literature, as well as in life, every son has a father whom, of course, he may not know . . . or knowing, would wish to deny!

HEINRICH HEINE (*Written in Paris, 1st October 1851*)

LETTER TO LUMLEY, ESQ.

Director of the Theatre of Her Majesty the Queen



DEAR SIR,

It was with an understandable diffidence that I came to select, as a basis for my ballet, the subject which was handled by Wolfgang Goethe in his masterpiece. It would have been foolish enough to compete with him even when granted equal means of expression, but surely you were asking me to risk my very neck in attempting such a contest armed with far inferior weapons! In order to express himself, our poet had at his disposal all the majestic arsenal of the spoken word. None can doubt, in fact, that Goethe was the master of the German language, in itself so fine a vehicle for depths of thought. Ancient sounds, emotions long forgotten and a verbal magic rarely heard in daily life resound through every passage of his work, exciting the reader's fancy to a marvellous degree. Against all that, how feeble are the means with which this poor devil finds himself equipped! How meagrely can I express all that I think and feel! I can but strive, in a scenario, to say how ballet dancers should behave, and to suggest the kind of scenery and music that I feel would be appropriate. In spite of this I dared to write my ballet, wrote it in spite of Goethe who has taken the bloom off the subject and who had a long and flourishing life in which to carry out his project . . . whilst you, my friend, allowed a careworn invalid but four short weeks in which he was supposed to write a masterpiece!

I wish I had been able to transcend the limits of the medium you thus imposed upon me, but within those limits I have surely achieved as much as any honest man may hope to do. I have, at least, tried to deserve one creditable mark which Goethe could not boast of earning: in his *Faust* one cannot help but notice a complete lack of concern for the true spirit of the ancient legend. This inner spirit was nothing more or less than a profound religious piety, a condition of soul which Goethe, that glorious old sceptic, could never hope to understand. In this respect, however, he was guilty of an arbitrary licence which must surely be condemned aesthetically, and which finally revenged itself upon the poet's work. Indeed, the very weaknesses of the poem may be said to have arisen from a sceptic's lack of understanding. Although he departed from the simple piety of the original tale . . . a piety which had its roots deep in the conscience of the German people . . . he was never able to achieve a new symmetry according to his own heretical outlook. His *Faust* has always lacked a feeling of completeness, indeed it never *was* completed unless one is prepared to accept the puerile second part (written forty years later) as a true fulfilment! Goethe, in this sequel, delivers his necromancer from the Devil, evading the inevitable dénouement, and allows him to enter Paradise triumphantly to the accompaniment of dancing cherubims and heavenly choirs. The horrifying pact with evil, which inspired hair-raising terrors in our fathers, ends like a frivolous farce. . . . I nearly said: like a ballet!

My own work, on the other hand, contains all the essential elements of the original legend. Though I may have handled certain details with poetic freedom, I have

always remained true to the basic tradition of the story as I found it in the original chapbooks sold among the market stalls, or as I saw it played upon the puppet-booths whilst I was still a child.

The chapbooks which I mentioned are by no means unanimous in their treatment of the tale. Many of them were patched up out of earlier books, but they are all far too important to be overlooked. The oldest Faustbook appeared in 1587, printed (and apparently written) by Johannes Spies of Frankfurt. It is a far more poetic work than the other Faustbook, written by George Rudolph Widman and printed at Hamburg in 1599. The second book, however, had the bigger sales (mainly because it had been stuffed full of saws and homilies) and caused the finer work to sink into near oblivion. Both books were written with the same pious purpose . . . to warn man against forming pacts with the Devil. A third work, written partly in German and partly in Latin and attributed to Dr. Faust himself, informs us how to invoke spirits. This was circulated under various titles, the most famous being named only in tremulous whispers, and the MS. of which was locked with iron chains in the library of a famous abbey. However, after an outrageous indiscretion, the work was printed in Amsterdam in 1692 at Holbeck in the Kohl Steg!

In addition to these Faust-books one occasionally finds an equally singular work about the Doktor's well-versed famulus whose name was Christopher Wagner (the latter's magical adventures and practical jests being sometimes ascribed to his more famous teacher). The author of the book, which was published in 1594, calls himself Tholeth Schotus, and alleges that it has been translated

from a Spanish original. This I take leave to doubt, but if it happens to be true we might have a clue to the remarkable conformity between the Faust legends and those of Don Giovanni!

You may ask, has there ever been a real Doktor Faust? In common with many other miracle-workers Faust has often been declared a myth. Indeed he has suffered worse! The Poles, those unfortunate romantic souls, have claimed that once he lived among them, being known under the name of Twardowski! I must admit that Faust, according to certain sources of information, was stated to have studied magic at the University of Cracow.¹ It is also true that many Poles were known at one time to be excellent wizards (though this can hardly be accorded to them nowadays!). Nevertheless, our good Doktor Faust is such a deeply honest, thoughtful, simple character, yearning after the truth at all costs and remaining, even in his voluptuous excesses, so entirely scientific, that I can only dub him a German or a myth!

It is a common error among the public to suppose that our magician is that same Faust who invented the art of printing. The Church deliberately confused the two because, in its opinion, necromancy has found its most wicked tool in the diffusion of thought by means of printing. To such minds Thought is a terrible menace to that blind credo demanded in the Middle Ages, which requires acceptance of the Church's total authority in matters spiritual and temporal, and keeps the humble charcoal burner on his knees. Faust began to *think*. His impious intellect rebelled against the meek acceptance

¹ Magic being publicly taught there under the pseudonym of 'Free Science'.—Heine.

of his forefathers. He was not content to tread in dark places and to trifle with simple arts. He longed for scientific knowledge and lusted for worldly power.¹ He demanded to be allowed to think, to act and to enjoy life to its full extent, and so . . . to use the language of the ancients . . . he became an apostate, renounced all hope of heavenly bliss, and turned to Satan and his earthly ways and promises. This single man's revolt was most certainly spread abroad by means of the printers' art, so that his doctrine was very soon assimilated, not merely by a handful of intellectual rebels, but by whole populations. Small wonder then, that men of God denounced the art of printing as an attribute of Satan. Indeed they sought to identify our necromancer with the founder of printing himself. This will be noticed in the puppet plays where one sometimes finds Dr. Faust domiciled at Mayence, whilst the chapbook always gave his home as Wittenberg.²

The puppet plays, which I have mentioned so often, never appeared in print until recently. But a friend of mine, Mr. Karl Simrock, has now published an edition based on ancient manuscripts. He has restored missing portions with erudition and tact; carefully selecting his material from the existing variations. His treatment of

¹ It is probably for this reason that the legend has so much attraction for our intellectuals to-day. They, too, have joined in the age-long battle between religion and science, between authority and sense, between belief and thought, between humble renunciation and a thirst for sensual pleasure. It has always been a battle to the death . . . let us hope that they, like the poor doctor of Anhalt, may not find themselves at last caught by the Devil himself!

² It should not escape notice that Wittenberg was also the birth-place and hothouse of Protestantism!

the comic interludes shows a particularly fine knowledge of German archaeology . . . probably gained from the Schlegel lectures at Bonn University. And how delightful is the dialogue! Take for example the opening of the play where Faust sits alone in his study and speaks the following monologue:

I have attained so much with all my studies
That I am being laughed at everywhere!
I've rummaged through my books from end to end,
Yet cannot find the true Philosopher's stone.
Religion, medicine, law, all are as nought
Compared with necromantic skill and magic art.
What have I gained by this Theology?
Who shall repay my endless, sleepless nights?
Not one sound garment do I now possess;
I do not know where I can turn for debt.
No, I must make a solemn pact with Hell,
And plumb the depths of Nature's mysteries.
Therefore to books of magic I'll repair
And learn how I may conjure spirits up.

The scenes that follow are often very moving and contain the germs of true poetic tragedy . . . being, indeed, adapted from a great poetic original: *The Tragedy of Doctor Faustus* by Christopher Marlowe. The puppet-authors imitated that Elizabethan masterpiece not only with regard to the story, but also to its form. Marlowe's drama, therefore, may be accepted as the prototype from which our modern Faust emerged. Apart from being imitated in the puppet-booths his work was also translated into German and acted by the so-called English Comedians upon the German stage. This adaptation has actually survived in an emasculated form

through the years, having been handed down by word of mouth to strolling troupes of players of the lowest grade. I, myself, have seen these vagabonds on two occasions acting the life of Faust; not according to a modern writer's script but basing their material upon old and half-forgotten fragments. The first time was about twenty-five years ago in an obscure theatre on the so-called Hamburg Mountain.

So far as I remember the devils, when conjured, came on dressed in voluminous grey sheets. On being asked by Faust: 'Are you men or women?' they answered: 'We have no sex.' When Faust enquired about their actual appearance, they replied: 'We have no particular figure. We assume, at our discretion, any shape which you desire. We always appear in the form of your most secret thoughts.' On signing the pact (by means of which he is promised Knowledge and enjoyment of all earthly things) the Doktor starts to enquire about the nature of Heaven and Hell. After he has been informed accordingly he remarks that it must be 'too cool in Heaven and too hot in Hell. The climate of our dear earth is obviously the most satisfactory!' He proceeds to win the most delightful women by means of a handsome uniform and a magic ring, the latter bestowing the gifts of youth, beauty and virility. Having passed several years in drunkenness and whoring Faust commences an affair with Signora Lucrezia, a famous Venetian courtesan, only to abandon her and sail away to Athens. On arrival the Duke's daughter falls madly in love with him and demands an immediate marriage. Lucrezia, desiring vengeance, seeks the Devil's aid herself. Satan informs her that Faust's magnificence depends upon the magic

ring he wears. Disguised as a pilgrim, Lucrezia travels to Athens and arrives at Court at the very moment when the Doktor, dressed in wedding garments, is about to lead the Duke's young daughter to the altar. Before the wedding ring is placed in position, however, the shrouded pilgrim tears the magic ring away from Faust, and he is transformed in a twinkling. In place of golden curls, his poor old head is surrounded by grey wisps. His teeth drop out, the glittering garments fall from his shrunken body like leaves from an autumn bough, leaving him covered with rags. To increase the jest, the wretched man is unaware that the hellish delusion is lifted and that he now appears in his true form. He cannot understand why everyone retreats in horror. He is amazed when his bride-to-be calls out: 'Remove that disgusting old beggar.' But the revengeful Lucrezia, in malicious delight, holds a mirror to his eyes and allows him to discover his shame before the servants kick him out of doors like a scabby old dog.

The second Faust-play which I mentioned was enacted at a horse-fair in a little Hanoverian hamlet. A small stage had been put together in an open meadow, and though the whole performance took place in daylight the conjuration scenes were particularly effective. The demon in this version called himself, not Mephistophilis, but Astoroth¹. Prior to the exorcism Faust complains of being: "so poor that he cannot afford to ride in a coach and so ugly that even the girl in the cowshed refuses to kiss him." He desires to sell himself to the devil, for the sole purpose of winning a horse to ride upon and a beautiful princess

¹ Husband to Astarte, Phœnician goddess of the moon, who was famous in the ancient books of magic.—Heine.

to marry. The Devil, on being conjured, appears several times in the shape of various animals, such as a pig, an ox, a monkey, all of which are spurned by Faust with the comment: 'Appear in a more frightful form before you hope to frighten me.' On hearing this the demon reappears as a roaring lion, but failing to impress the dauntless necromancer he retires into the wings with his tail between his legs, only to return as an enormous serpent. 'No, no! You are still not horrible enough to frighten me,' cries Faust. The devil makes one last attempt and assumes the shape of a handsome man dressed in a red coat. Faust is astounded, but the red-coat says: 'This is the best that I can do, for there is nought more terrifying and horrible than Man. Within his nature is the bleating, hissing, roaring, grunting nature of all animals. He is as filthy as the pig, as stupid as the ox, as brutal as the lion, as poisonous as the serpent, and as ridiculous as the monkey. Being a mixture of so many beasts his nature is far worse than any single one of them.'¹

After the Devil's pact has been signed Astoroth produces several famous women of history who are offered to Faust. First of all comes Judith, but the magician refuses her on the ground that he wants 'no woman who cuts off a man's head'. 'Very well,' answers the spirit, 'what about Cleopatra?' 'Oh no,' Faust replies 'she is far too extravagant! She drinks pearls. Even Anthony could not restrain her.' 'In that case I recommend Helen of Sparta,' says the smiling Astoroth, adding ironically:

¹ Nothing astonished me more than finding such a speech (almost identical with one of the principal theses of modern philosophy) set in the middle of this strolling player's comedy.—Heine.

'You can talk Greek to her.' The learned Doktor is charmed at the idea and requests to be invested with corporeal beauty and a splendid costume so that he may 'be able the better to compete with the knight Paris'. He also asks for a horse so that he may ride at once for Troy. After this scene he retires with the demon. The two then reappear outside the theatre-shed, mounted on fine horses. They throw their coats away, revealing themselves clothed in the manner of old English knights-at-arms. Fantastic riding tricks are performed, to the great astonishment of the assembled horse-dealers. The latter, with their red Hanoverian faces, gather round excitedly and clap their hands in rhythm on their yellow leather breechies . . . a clapping such as I have never heard before at any dramatic performance. Astoroth, who rode exceedingly well, was a slim and beautiful young girl, with the large black eyes of hell. Faust was a handsome young lad who wore his costume with a deal of panache and rode better than any German Doktor I have ever seen upon a horse. Together with his attendant demon he hurtled round about the little stage where one now perceived the town of Troy with all its pinnacles and, waiting beneath these, the lovely Helena.

The appearance of this fascinating woman in the History of Faust is of the utmost importance, for she is the very symbol of the spirit of those times which produced the legend. She also provides the key to the secret of that legend. This splendid, flowering ideal of grace and beauty—Helena of Troy—can be regarded as the very apotheosis of Homeric Greece, the guiding star of that Hellenic Age which suddenly arose within the heart of Germany as though itself conjured up by means of alchemy. The

magic power responsible for this renaissance was the book *Homeros*—this it was which lured the intellectuals of Germany with greater force than any power of Hell. The historic, as well as the legendary Doktor Faust, was one of those humanists who greeted the discovery of Grecian art and science with enthusiastic joy, and then proceeded to disseminate that knowledge through the length and breadth of Europe. Strangely enough, much of the original impulse to revive this ancient glory came from the Holy City itself! There was a period when the highest dignitaries of the Vatican adhered to the cult of the Old Gods, even the Pope himself united in one person the offices of Pagan Pontifex Maximus and that of spiritual head of the Catholic Church. These were the times of the Renaissance, that resurrection of the antique Greek philosophy, which came to flower, alas, less easily in Germany! This was mainly so because my country was receiving at the same time, another and a hostile renaissance, that of the ancient spirit of the Jewish race. Translations of the Bible had appeared, and the spirit they engendered opposed that of the Greeks iconoclastically and fanatically. How strange it was—Humanity's two greatest books, Homer and The Bible, which fought so bitterly a thousand years before, finally retreating during the Middle Ages as though weary of the battle, emerging once again engaged in combat during the first half of the sixteenth century! When I stated just now that this revolution of humanists, realists and *bon viveurs* against the spiritual asceticism of the Catholic Church could be regarded as the true foundation of the Faust legend, I meant, of course, to point out that the sensualism and *joie de vivre* can be attributed directly to the

scholars' sudden discovery of the original works of Homer, Plato and Aristotle.

It has certainly been stated specifically in every traditional source that Faust himself studied these works very deeply. In fact he was known to have said that, should those ancient works get lost, he could himself immediately reconstruct them from his memory, as Esra was said to have done with the Old Testament. How profoundly he had studied Homer, for example, may be seen from the manner in which he conjured up the heroes of the Trojan war during a lecture on the subject. On another occasion, at the earnest request of some guests, he conjured Helen herself, and, becoming enamoured with her charms, kept and possessed her until his death at the Devil's hands. The appropriate passage in the history runs as follows:

'The Sunday following came these Students home to Faustus his own house, and brought their meat and drink with them: these men were right welcome guests unto Faustus, wherefore they all fell to drinking of wine smoothly: and being merry, they began some of them to talk of the beauty of women, and every one gave forth his verdict what he had seen and what he had heard. So one among the rest said, I never was so desirous of anything in this world, as to have a sight (if it were possible) of fair Helena of Greece, for whom the worthy town of Troie was destroyed and razed down to the ground, therefore saith he, that in all men's judgment she was more than commonly fair, because that when she was stolen away from her husband, there was for her recovery so great bloodshed.

'Doktor Faustus answered: For that you are all my

friends and are so desirous to see that famous pearl of Greece, fair Helena, the wife of King Menelaus, and daughter of Tindalus and Laeda, sister to Castor and Pollux, who was the fairest Lady in all Greece: I will therefore bring her into your presence personally, and in the same form of attire as she used to go when she was in her chiefest flowers and pleasantest prime of youth. The like I have done for the Emperor Carolus Quintus. At his desire I shewed him Alexander the Great, and his Paramour: but (said Doktor Faustus) I charge you all that upon your perils you speak not a word, nor rise up from the Table so long as she is in your presence. And so he went out of the Hall, returning presently again, after whom immediately followed the fair and beautiful Helena, whose beauty was such that the Students were all amazed to see her, esteeming her rather to be a heavenly than an earthly creature. This Lady appeared before them in a most sumptuous gown of purple Velvet, richly embroidered, her hair hanged down loose as fair as the beaten Gold, and of such length that it reached down to her hams, with amorous coal-black eyes, a sweet and pleasant round face, her lips red as a Cherry, her cheeks of rose all colour, her mouth small, her neck as white as the Swan, tall and slender of personage, and in sum, there was not one imperfect part in her: she looked round about her with a rolling Hawk's eye, a smiling and wanton countenance, which near hand inflamed the hearts of the Students, but that they persuaded themselves she was a Spirit, wherefore such fantasies passed away lightly with them, and thus fair Helena departed and Doktor Faustus his entering again into the Hall, they requested of him to let them see her again the next day, for that

they would bring with them a painter and so take her counterfeit: which he denied, affirming that he could not always raise up her spirit, but only at certain times: yet (said he) I will give you her counterfeit, which shall be always as good to you as if yourselves should see the drawing thereof, which they received accordingly to his promise, but soon lost it again. The Students departed from Faustus' home everyone to his house, but they were not able to sleep the whole night for thinking on the beauty of fair Helena. Wherefore a man may see that the Devil blindeth and enflameth the heart with lust often times, that men fall in love with Harlots, nay, even with Furies, which afterward cannot lightly be removed.'

Later we read:

'To the end that this miserable Faustus might fill the lust of his flesh, and live in all manner of voluptuous pleasures, it came in his mind after he had slept his first sleep and in the twenty-third year past of his time, that he had a great desire to lie with fair Helena of Greece, especially her whom he had seen and shewed unto the Students of Wittenberg, wherefore he called unto him his Spirit Mephistophiles, commanding him to bring him the fair Helena, which he also did. Whereupon he fell in love with her, and made her his common Concubine and bedfellow, for she was so beautiful and delightful a piece that he could not be one hour from her, if he should therefore have suffered death, she had so stolen away his heart, and to his seeming, in time she was with child, and in the end brought him a man child, whom Faustus named Justus Faustus: this child told Doktor Faustus many things that were to come, and what strange matters were done in foreign countries: but in the end when

Faustus lost his life, the mother and the child vanished away together.¹

These passages may only be discovered by referring to the earliest Faust-books. In Widman's edition, for example, they are completely omitted, with the following excuse: 'I seek not to withhold from the reader that certain passages of this history have now been silently passed over, this being done for reasons of Christian modesty. For I was fain to forget that part of the history wherein the Devil holds Doktor Faust from lawful marriage and hunts him into an abominable and hellish nest of whores! Also where he produced him Helen of Troy to be his harlot, she being said to have borne the Doktor a terrible monster, though others say rather that it was a son named Justus.'

Now as many of the Faustbooks are based on Widman's edition the beautiful Helen rarely appears in them and her importance in the legend has often been overlooked. Goethe completely ignored her at first (if in fact, he knew the Faustbooks at all and did not rely entirely on the puppet-plays). Only when he penned his *Faust Part Two*, four decades later, did he repair this sad omission. It must be admitted, however, that when he finally drew a portrait of the lovely wench he drew her *con amore*! In fact, her's is the only good scene in the whole of that vast boring allegory which Goethe called *Faust Part Two*. Suddenly, in the very centre of that labyrinthine wilderness, a marvellously executed statue rises on its pedestal and gazes at us with its lovely Grecian eyes. It is perhaps the finest work that ever left the master's

¹ These passages are taken from the Elizabethan translation of the Faust Book imprinted at London in 1592, and published as an appendix to my own version of Marlowe's Faustus.—Editor.

studio, and one can scarcely believe that it was sculptured by an old man's hand. It is, of course, a work of intellect, thought out in quietness and retrospect. She bears no trace of fantasy or personal excitement. Romantic feeling was never one of Goethe's chief accomplishments, any more than it was with his master. They both possessed more feeling for harmonic form than for frenzied fullness of creation, more talent for the art of style than for imagination. Indeed, I must pronounce the heresy, and say: more art than poetry!

After all this, my friend, you will perceive the reason why I dedicated one whole act to Helen in my ballet. The island, incidentally, to which I have transferred her was a real one, and not my own invention. The Greeks discovered it, according to Plinius, in the Pontus Euxinus, approximately at the mouth of the Danube. The place was called Achillea on account of the temple to Achilles which once stood on that spot. The celebrity himself, so it is said, still walks there in the company of ancient heroes (not to mention Helena herself) flowering eternally. Thus, though beauty fades and heroes die the generous poet tears them from the grave and bears them to some fortunate isle where the flowers do not wither nor the heart decay!

You will have observed that I am not afraid to judge the second part of Goethe's *Faust* sternly, even harshly. Exception must be made for the manner in which he treats the episode of Helena . . . for once the poet has remained true to the story's origin. Unfortunately, such faithful adherence to the legend is very rare in Goethe's play and for this great fault I can scarcely find language strong enough with which to censure him! The Devil

has most cause for complaint on this account, for the poet's Mephistophiles bears not the slightest resemblance to the fallen angel of the chapbooks. This fact alone lends strength to my suspicion that Goethe had not read these works when he wrote his play. If he had, how dared he make this character appear in such a swineish, jocular and cynically scurrilous a mask? The original Mephistophiles was no ordinary rogue from hell, he was a subtle spirit, 'Sweet Mephistophiles . . . Great Mephistophiles' as Marlowe called him, very superior and noble and highly placed in the hierarchy of hell. I have no doubt that, in the underworld, he was one of those statesmen of whom Prime Ministers are made. In my poem, therefore, I have bestowed on him a shape commensurate with his real dignity, that of a lovely wench. Nor is this fancy of mine out of keeping with the original legend. Mephistophiles was said to have lured the Doktor in such a shape when (as occasionally happened) the poor fellow was overcome by pious scruples. The early Faustbook states specifically: 'When Faust was alone and intent on pondering the word of God, the Devil overcame him by dressing himself in the shape of lovely women, falling on his neck and engaging him in promiscuity so that he forgot the word of God and continued in his evil ways.'

By making the devil and his companions appear as ballerinas I have also remained much closer to tradition than you may suppose. It was not merely in your friend's imagination that a hellish *corps de ballet* danced around Doktor Faust. This actually happened, as I can prove by means of the book of Christopher Wagner, at one time a disciple of the Doktor. We read in the 16th chapter of this work that the cunning rogue gave a banquet in

Vienna 'where the devils, in the persons of lovely women, made music on stringed instruments, while dancing the most singular and lascivious dances, making a circle and performing French ballets to the great astonishment of all'. The devil Akercock, however (Wagner's familiar and servant), usually appeared in the shape of a monkey, and, as the old book relates: 'danced a galliard and other exuberant dances, occasionally drumming on a chopping board, and blowing on a flute'.

At this point, my dear friend, I can no longer resist a desire to explain what the old biographer meant by 'dancing a galliard'. As a matter of fact, according to another ancient book, this dance was invented by no less a personage than the Devil himself! The author, Johann Pratprius, states distinctly: 'It may be said of the new galliardic volta, that not only is such a whirling jigging dance full of depraved and filthy gestures and lascivious movements, but also that many murders and abortions may be traced thereto. From which cause it should be strictly denounced to a well-ordered police force and should then truly be forbidden. It is notorious that as the city of Geneva hates dancing in particular, so the Devil taught a daughter of the city to make all those with whom she came in contact dance by means of an iron rod, which the Devil gave her. She also mocked her judges and said they "could not kill her", thus showing no repentance for her evil ways.'

You may see from these quotations, dearest friend, exactly what the galliard represented . . . also that the Devil furthers the act of dancing for the very reason that it may annoy the pious. The fact that he worked his arts in the city of Geneva, that Calvinistic Jerusalem,

was surely the very depth of depravity! Just think of it! All these little Geneva saints, all those God-fearing watchmakers, all the elected of the Lord, all the virtuous old governesses, all the angular preachers and teachers and students suddenly starting to dance the galliard! Surely the story must be true, I cannot find it in my heart to think otherwise. Also I seem to remember that I have read about it in the *Daemonomania* of Bodinus and I should very much like to make a second ballet on the subject. It could be called 'Geneva Dances'.

But to return to my theme. The Devil, as you have seen, is such a pastmaster in the art of terpsichore, that no one should really be surprised if he presents himself to the public in the shape of a ballerina. And surely it is no more strange than the transformations (mentioned in the chapbooks) wherein he changes to a winged horse on whose back Faustus travels round about the Universe whenever he desired? Even that, of course, has its poetic significance. Not only does the spirit possess the speed of thought, but also the power of poetry . . . one might almost say that it was Pegasus which bore the Doktor to the splendours and enjoyments of the earth. In this case sensual delight directed Faust to Constantinople, straight into the Great Turk's harem. Here he had a glorious time among the astonished inmates (who took him for Mahomet). Afterwards he flew to Rome, entered the Vatican clad in a cloak of invisibility, stealing the food from beneath the Pope's nose and frightening that gentleman into a fit. Animosity to Popery is certainly written on every page of the chapbooks, and it is quite characteristic that Faust, in one version, orders Mephistophiles to appear 'in the shape and habit of an old Franciscan

monk'. Another chapbook dresses the Devil in this same attire whenever he discusses matters of divinity with the Doktor. Here breathes the very spirit of the Reformation!

As you will have observed by now the real Mephistophiles possesses no shape which one might call peculiarly his own. In this he is unlike all other chapbook characters. Tyl Eulenspiegel, for example, was always the Spirit of Laughter incarnate in the form of a German handyman, while the eternal Wandering Jew was never known to have appeared without his great eighteen-hundred-year-old beard whose whiteness constantly turned black at the tips as though rejuvenated. On the other hand no book of olden times ever gave a definite shape to Mephistophiles. In this he stands apart from every other spirit.

When you attempt the problem of a form of transport for our demon I am prepared to leave the matter to your technical resources. If aerial horses seem to present difficulties you might let the Devil and the Doktor ride through the air wrapped in a large magician's cloak. This would be in complete accordance with ancient folklore. You must, on the other hand, allow the witches to ride to their Sabbath on appropriate household utensils. German witches are said to use the handle of a broom. This they rub with a special ointment that has previously anointed their naked bodies. Should her lover fetch a witch in person he will sit in front and she behind upon their aerial steed. French witches scream 'Emen-Hetan, Emen-Hetan' during the period of anointment. German witches shout 'Out of the top and touch nowhere' as they rush up the chimney. Meetings are often arranged in mid-air so that the hags arrive at the Sabbath in different

groups. Owing to the fact that they detest the sound of church bells, witches often tear these bells down as they pass a steeple, flinging them into some morass to the accompaniment of dreadful laughter. These facts have emerged during several witch-trials, and a French proverb states, very rightly, that one should fly in haste if one is accused of taking the bell of Notre Dame!

There have been various opinions as to the exact place where these infernal Sabbats (sometimes known as a Witches' Parliament) are held. But according to the statements made by these wretched sinners (under torture) the spot is normally to be found upon the summit of a bare mountain, and I have set my third act there accordingly. In Germany the site is said to be upon the Blocksberg, the central peak of the Harz Mountains. So important is this particular meeting place that many foreign, as well as native witches meet there. The Sabbat also attracts tormented spirits, those who cannot find rest in their tombs. These include the Willis, werewolves, vampires, and all those who, after death, are still tormented by a lust for luxury and lust and dancing. One can see, therefore, at Witches' Sabbats, costumes out of every age and country. Ladies of noble birth are sometimes masked, being often persons who, in their ordinary life, pass as sober decent Christians. As for the witches' demon-lovers, they are of various ranks so that, for example, ancient cooks and milk-maids have to content themselves with low-class devils, whilst ladies of nobility enjoy the company of educated, long-tailed gallant knights of hell. This class of demon often wears old Spanish or Burgundian courtiers' dress, completely black with one red feather sported in the hat. As a result these

gentry seem, at first glance, to be exquisitely turned out, but closer observation shows a certain offensive disharmony. They always lack a certain 'finish', and, in their persons appear either too thin or too fat, with faces too pallid or too red, noses too short or too long, and possess, in addition, fingers like birds' claws or even a cloven hoof. However, they never smell of sulphur as is usually the case with those inferior devils, known as 'firemen of the lower grade'. But one fatal infirmity is common to the whole of Hell's vast population, and that lies in the icy coldness of their amorous embraces. Witches of all ranks have made the same complaint concerning their paramours during judicial investigations.

The President of this infernal Parliament is always Lucifer himself, King of Darkness and Disgrace of God. He assumes, on these occasions, the shape of a black ram with a human face, carrying a light between its horns. His Highness always stands upon a pedestal mounted on a table of stone in the centre of the assembly. His looks are said to be extremely serious at all times and often very melancholy as if he were terribly bored. The company of devils, witches, vampires and magicians starts the ceremony by paying homage to their lord. This is done by holding a torch in the left hand, bending the knee and devoutly kissing His Majesty's backside. Even this profession of loyalty rarely amuses the Prince of Darkness who remains in a state of melancholy while the entire company proceeds to dance in wildest jubilation all around him. This is known as the devil's rondo, characterized by the fact that every witch and demon dances back to back, none seeing their partner's face. This is done as a means of precaution so that witches,

being put to the question at judicial enquiries, are unable to denounce their accomplice at the celebration. Noble ladies, as I said before, usually appear masked for greater precaution, though their only other garment may probably be a shift, and that will be stripped off during the dance. It is common to cross the arms when in a frenzy and then fling them wide apart, shouting meanwhile: 'Har! Har! Sabbat!' But should a shoe fall off during the tumult it will be considered a bad omen. Those to whom the accident occurs are said to be predestined for the pile of fiery faggots within the space of a year.

Musicians who provide the dancers' music are either fabulous spirits with hellish faces, or wandering musicians picked from off the road. Blind fiddlers are preferred as being less liable to take fright during the entertainment at the sight of Sabbatical Horrors. Pre-eminent among these horrors is the ceremony of introducing novices into the Devil's Black League. They are married into Hell, so to speak, and the Devil, their sinister husband, gives them a new name . . . a *nom d'amour* . . . while burning his secret mark on to their bodies to the accompaniment of gruesome mysteries. This mark is placed so that they may remember his caresses. It is always very carefully hidden, so much so that it causes the investigating judge at witches' trials a dreadful lot of worry, the poor man being frequently forced to ask the beadle to cut off every trace of hair upon the body of the accused to enable him to find it!

Lucifer always selects one particular witch at every assembly and bestows on her the title of Bride-Elect, Archi-Sposa and Royal-Mistress. This lady's costume is very simple, in fact it consists of nothing but a single

golden shoe, and on account of this she is frequently known as Domina of the Gilded Shoe. She is always beautiful, tall and of full proportions. The devil, being an artist, is a connoisseur of female form and as a result prefers to have as much of it as possible. Being a lover of the flesh he believes that the more flesh there is the greater the delight. Indeed, in an ultra-refinement of sinning, he never chooses an unmarried woman for his Bride-Elect, but always takes a married one, thus achieving the cumulative effect of combining simple lasciviousness with adultery. The chosen Bride must also be an expert dancer, for at the height of the festival, the illustrious ram descends from his pedestal and performs a most singular dance with his naked mistress. I do not propose to describe this, however, 'for reasons of Christian modesty', as old Widman remarked. I shall only say that it is an ancient national dance of Sodom, the form of which was preserved by the daughters of Lot and maintained until this day. I, myself, have seen it performed quite often in Paris in the Rue St-Honoré, 359, next to the Church of the Holy Assumption. If one takes into consideration the fact that witches fear no raids by municipal policemen it is easy to imagine what bacchanalian capers are performed during the Devil's *pas de deux*.

According to various reports the great ram and his Bride-Elect preside over a brilliant banquet immediately after this dance, the food being excellent, the crockery and linen of the finest quality. Yet if anyone chooses to pocket souvenirs of the feast he would find, on departure, that the golden goblet was only simple earthenware, and the exquisite cake but a chunk of farmyard manure. One

feature of the devil's banquet is a complete absence of salt. The songs of entertainment are pure blasphemy adapted to the melodies of pious canticles. Ceremonies of religious dignity are aped by depraved gestures and perverted jokes. Toads, for example, are often baptised . . . strictly according to the rites of Mother Church, with demon godfathers and wicked godmothers acting their parts with hypocritical faces. The 'holy water' used for the ceremony is a horrible liquid, namely the water of the Devil himself. Witches give the sign of the holy cross, performing it with the left hand in the wrong direction, while attendant demons cry in loud tones: *'In nomine patrica aragueace petrica, agera, agera, valentia, jouande gorre gais gourstia.'*

Finally, in derision of the Christian gospel of love and forgiveness the mighty ram arises and pronounces in a voice of thunder: 'Take vengeance, take vengeance. If you do not, you shall die.' These sacramental words lead into a spectacular parody of the sublime passion of Christ, the ram bursting into flames and destroying himself, not for the salvation of mankind but for the opposite purpose. Witches fight and struggle in a mad endeavour to secure a handful of the ashes for later usage. Suddenly a cock crows and the ladies begin to feel the cold. The dance and the meal are over and everyone departs as they came (though in greater haste) and many a woman slides into bed beside a snoring husband, the latter little knowing that an effigy of wood had lain by his side for the better part of the night.

I, too, propose to retire at last; for I have written late into the night in order that my dear friend might have the notes he asked me to put on to paper. My thoughts

were less on the director who intended to stage my ballet than on a gentleman of education who is interested in all works of art and intellect. You, my dear sir, understand the feelings of a poet. Each fleeting transitory thought of his acts as a fertilizer to your imagination. It will always amaze me that a business man, practical and tested in the fight as you have been, should nevertheless be endowed with so much love of Beauty. It astonishes me even more how, with the tribulations of your work, you can still hold on to your love and true enthusiasm for the art of poetry.

Your true friend,
Heinrich Heine.

EDITOR'S NOTE

This, the official letter from poet to theatrical director, was supplemented by another note, less florid in tone, which provides a touching postscript.

To Benjamin Lumley, February 27th.

Here is the manuscript as promised. I can assure you that I shall never make another promise of the kind. You can have no idea how I have harmed myself, in my present condition, by determined attempts to solve your task in a worthy manner. Keep the name of the ballet a secret until the last moment, and if necessary, call it Astoroth. You would be very touched if you knew how much trouble and pain I had taken to make it clear that this is the *real* Faust according to the legend.

Heinrich Heine.

Heine's hopes that the ballet would make a deep impression on the public remained unrealized. It was never performed, and the poet obtained his initial fee only after further correspondence and repeated demands.



*You have conjured me out of my tomb
By means of your magical art;
Restore me and bring me to life.
Sweet friend, do not let me depart!*

*Haste! Press your warm lip to my lip—
The breath of a man is divine;
Let me taste of the fountain of life,
Let the frenzy of living be mine!*

DOKTOR FAUST

A Dance Poem

ACT I

A study, large, vaulted and Gothic in style and sparsely illuminated. Bookcases line the walls. On the shelves are astrological and alchemistical implements. These include zodiacal pictures, retorts and many oddly shaped glasses. Anatomical specimens are also seen, including human and animal skeletons and other necromantic requisites.



MIDNIGHT chimes are heard as the curtain rises. Doktor Faust is discovered seated by a table covered with books and scientific instruments. He wears the costume of an alchemist of the sixteenth century. After a pause, during which he sits engrossed in thought, the Doktor rises somewhat uncertainly, then walks with wavering steps towards a bookcase in which a huge chained volume may be seen. This is the so-called 'Power of Hell'. He unlocks the tome and bears it to the table. His looks suggest an inner struggle between fear and courage; his manner is that of an awkward village schoolmaster at variance with an intellectual don. Having marked several magic circles on the floor with the point of a sword, he places lighted candles thereon, and, opening the book, begins an incantation. His secret terrors are revealed in all his gestures. The scene darkens. There is lightning and thunder. A monstrous blood-red tiger leaps from a flaming chasm which

appears in the floor. Faust does not appear to be afraid of the beast and orders it away with gestures of contempt. After a few moments the animal sinks back from whence it came. Once more the Doktor starts his incantation. There are terrible peals of thunder and a monstrous serpent appears, writhing across the floor in a sea of flame. This, in its turn, is treated with contempt by Faust so that it finally crawls back hissing to the fiery abyss. With increasing ardour Faust continues conjuring the Devil. He orders him to appear in his most terrible shape. Suddenly the darkness is banished by a blaze of light. In place of thunder and lightening the most charming dance music is heard, and a basket of flowers appears from the chasm in the floor. It breaks apart and a lovely ballerina steps forth, clad in the usual costume, circling around the conjuror in a characteristic *pas de seul*.

At first the Doktor shows surprise that Mephistopheles has chosen to appear in such a shape. But after a time he seems to be impressed by the gracious, smiling apparition, and stepping outside the circle, he pays his compliments to her in a courteous old-world manner. Mephistophela, as the spirit is now called, responds delightedly to the Doktor's advances. The two begin to dance a flirtatious *pas de deux*, the Doktor's steps being slow, awkward and painful. After a while the spirit snatches up a magic wand and proceeds to transform everything within the room. She does this, however, in such a manner that the shape of the original object is not entirely extinguished. The gloomy zodiacal pictures glow with bright inward colours. Exotic birds appear on the brackets which had previously contained dead specimens. Little owls fly around with nosegays in their beaks. The walls

begin to flower with golden ornaments, Venetian mirrors, antique friezes and a hundred *objets d'art*. The whole impression is chaotic, ghostly and, at the same time, exquisitely beautiful, like a monstrous arabesque. Mephistophela now presents a parchment to the Doktor, but he shows some signs of hesitation. She urges him to add his signature but he refuses. At this she waves her wand once more, and various weird shapes rise up from the floor. These are the *élite* of Hell. They appear in the form of mythological monsters with terrible claws and frightful faces. All of them wear crowns upon their heads and bear a sceptre in their paws. Faust is introduced to each of them in turn by Mephistophela. The presentation is carried out with strict court etiquette. After the ceremony the beasts begin a scurrilous, fantastic round-dance, tottering about with clumsy gestures. Suddenly, after a movement of Mephistophela's magic wand, their ugly shapes fall off, and they are transformed to a troupe of lovely ballerinas. These flutter round the Doktor wreathing him in garlands of flowers. Though he is amused by the metamorphosis he seems to be unable to find anyone among the pretty ballerinas who appeals to him entirely. Mephistophela on observing this, twirls her wand again and in a mirror on the wall we see the image of a lovely woman. She is dressed in court attire and wears a ducal crown upon her head. Faust is transported with love at sight of the vision. He approaches it with every sign of tenderness and longing. The woman in the mirror, who appears to live, rejects him with contemptuous gestures. He kneels imploringly, but she repeats the gestures more insultingly. The wretched man turns to Mephistophela. He implores her to aid him, but she only responds with

an affected shrug of the shoulders and another movement of the magic wand. At this a hideous monkey rises from the ground. He approaches Mephistophela who shakes her head in anger. The monkey disappears for a moment, and then returns as a young and handsome ballet-dancer. This apparition executes a few conventional steps and then approaches the vision in the mirror. He offers it a demonstration of graceful homage and the lovely woman smiles on him immediately. She stretches out her arms to him in a languishing display of love and wantonness. On seeing this Faust rages in desperation. Mephistophela produces the parchment and offers it to him once more. Without further hesitation he opens a vein in his arm and signs the pact with his own blood. Mephistophela snatches the parchment (which is Faust's renunciation of celestial salvation) and then directs the ballet-dancer to return from whence he came. The latter does so, having first cast down his gaudy raiment on the floor. This is immediately seized by Faust who discards his sober magisterial gown and starts to array himself in the Devil's borrowed finery. He changes very clumsily, being interrupted, rather than helped by the Satanic *corps de ballet*. After finally assuming the array he asks for some instruction in the art of dancing. Grotesque and laughable effects are now created by the Doktor's awkwardness and stiffness as he clumsily attempts to imitate a ballet-dancer's elegance and grace. The *corps de ballet* strive to assist him, each member trying to explain, in her own particular style, the necessary steps. He is hurled from one dancer to another, whirled around and sent pirouetting to and fro. Eventually Mephistophela takes the lesson in hand and, by constant beating of the magic wand,

controls and guides his movements. Before long her apprentice is dancing a brilliant *pas de seul*, to the great amusement of the *corps de ballet* who applaud enthusiastically. Having achieved so much virtuosity as a dancer, Faust presents himself once more before the lovely woman in the mirror. This time she responds to his advances with expressions of fervent love and Faust continues his *pas de seul* in a delirium of joy. At length Mephistophela draws him away from the mirror, which she taps with her wand. The lovely image disappears and Faust is made to commence an advanced lesson in virtuoso dancing as

The Curtain Falls





ACT II

A vast square in front of a Norman castle which stands on the right. The Duke and Duchess sit on high-backed gilded chairs which stand upon a ramp. They are surrounded by court attendants, knights and ladies. The Duke is a short, stiff, elderly gentleman. His wife, a young voluptuous creature, bears a remarkable resemblance to the vision that appeared in the mirror in Act I. It is noticeable that she wears a gilded shoe upon her left foot.



he scene is magnificently decorated as if for a court festivity. An ancient mystery play is being performed upon a little stage. The miming seems outmoded and insipid, and the audience show every sign of boredom. The performance is interrupted by the arrival of Faust and Mephistophela who make a dramatic entry to the accompaniment of trumpet fanfares. Faust is gorgeously attired and attended by a following of Satanic ballerinas. He pays his formal addresses to the ducal couple, giving special marks of attention to the Duchess, who appears to recognize him. The Duke, in the meantime, has been much attracted by the seductive appearance of Mephistophela. He begins to dance an impetuous *pas de deux* with her, thus leaving Faust the opportunity of pouring out his passion to the wife. She asks her admirer, as a proof of his necromantic skill, if he can conjure up the late King David dancing before the Ark of the Covenant. In answer to this demand Faust snatches the magic wand from Mephistophela and strikes the earth, which opens letting forth a small cart drawn by Levites. On this cart stands the Ark of the Covenant with David dancing before it. He seems to be amused and is dressed like a king of cards. Behind the cart march David's royal guards, all dressed like Polish Jews, with long, loose gowns of silk, fur caps and pointed beards. After the caricature is ended the procession disappears into the earth to the accompaniment of thunder.

Once more Mephistophela entices the Duke, leaving Faust free to dance attendance on the Duchess. The illustrious couple lose all feeling of restraint and join their new guests in a passionate quadrille. Faust now discovers a Devil's mark upon the neck of his beloved, thus proving

her to be a sorceress. He demands an assignation at the Witches' Sabbath. She is terrified at first, and tries to deny all knowledge of his meaning. Faust, however, points to the gilded shoe by means of which Domina, Satan's Elected, can be recognized. At this sign she agrees to do whatever he desires. The Duke has simultaneously been asking Mephistophela for a secret meeting. She agrees to this with every sign of maiden bashfulness. The quadrille comes to a close as the principals retire for a quiet *tête-à-tête*. Their dance is still continued, however, by the attendant *corps de ballet* who indulge in a demoniac parody of lovers' ecstasies.

On returning the Duchess asks that Faust shall give a new display of necromantic skill. He waves the wand once more and touches the attendant dancers. At this the ballerinas cease their whirling movements and become once more great clumsy monsters, plodding round and round until they disappear into the earth in showers of flame. The Duchess and the court applaud this feat with great enthusiasm.

The principals once more begin a passionate quadrille. It seems as if their lust is uncontrollable. Faust openly importunes the Duchess, who returns his passion with a hundred compromising gestures. The Duke, like a voluptuous old satyr, kneels imploringly before the fascinating Mephistophela. Unfortunately he looks around and catches sight of Faust embracing the Duchess. In a rage, he rises and attempts to stab the sorcerer. The latter, grasping the magic wand, touches the old man on the forehead, from which a pair of antlers sprout immediately. This provokes a show of rage and consternation among the courtiers and knights. The Duke is held back from a

further attempt at violence by his wife who clings to the horns on his head. The knights draw their swords and move to attack the visitors. Martial trumpets and a peal of thunder are heard. A troop of armoured men suddenly materialize. They draw their swords and move against the courtiers, who fly in terror. Faust and Mephistophela mount a pair of coal-black horses that have quietly ascended from the ground. They fly into the upper air and disappear. The phantom men-at-arms now melt away like a chimaera, leaving the stage in semi-darkness as a thunderstorm breaks out in all its violence.

The Curtain Falls





The Witches' Sabbath. It is night on a high mountain. A few black stunted trees support strange lanterns which illuminate the scene. In the centre of the stage stands a great stone pedestal, somewhat like an altar in appearance, on which a huge black ram is sitting. Its face is human and a burning light hangs between its horns. High rocks form a natural amphitheatre in the background on whose colossal steps sit the nobility of the underworld. They are the monstrous beasts whom we have seen before, and who appear still more gigantic in the unnatural light. On smaller rocks and stunted trees sit the musicians. They have the faces of birds and play upon fantastic instruments.



As the curtain rises the stage is seen to be alive with dancing couples. These are dressed in costumes of every country and epoch, thus creating the appearance of a fancy dress ball. This is even more marked by the fact that many of the ladies are disguised with masks. However whimsical, baroque and strange these shapes may be, they must on no account offend one's sense of beauty! All feeling of grotesqueness and horror is offset by the lavish splendour of this fabulous scene. Witches are constantly arriving, riding through the air on broomsticks, dungforks, cooking utensils and, occasionally, farmyard animals. They seek their lovers, who are usually awaiting them and then proceed towards the Devil's altar. Picking up a flaming torch they kneel and pay the black ram their respects in the traditional manner.

Her Grace the Duchess flies in on a huge grey bat. She is dressed as flimsily as possible and wears the one gilt

shoe upon her foot. She surveys the crowd with great impatience. Shortly after her arrival Faust and Mephistophela fly in above the heads of the dancers mounted on a pair of coal-black horses. Faust is dressed in the gallant uniform of a knight-at-arms, his familiar wears the chaste clothes of a mediaeval German lady. The Duchess throws herself into her lover's arms with every sign of ardour and hot lust. They now begin a *pas de deux* of ecstasy. In the meantime, Mephistophela finds herself a suitable companion, an emasculated squire in Spanish courtier's costume with a blood-red feather in his hat. She flirts with him. The dance that follows, in complete contrast to the passionate display of the human lovers, is a cynical affair that seems to mock itself and laugh at all desires of the flesh. Finally the four take torches, pay their homage to the ram and then join the assembled company who start to dance around the altar.

As the devilish carnival reaches its climax Faust and the Duchess disappear behind some rocks. The rondo comes to a close. New guests arrive and step up to the altar paying their respects to the Devil. One or two crowned heads are seen among the new arrivals, also several high dignitaries of the Church, clad in their sacramental robes. These are followed by a troupe of monks and nuns who now commence an extravagant polka. This is much applauded by the assembly, who proceed to clap their paws and shriek and scream in demoniac delight. Faust reappears, closely followed by the Duchess. She pursues him with caresses, but he frowns upon her, making it quite plain that he regards her with aversion and disgust. She throws herself upon her knees in front of him. He orders her to rise and then walks

away. At this moment three Moorish servants appear clad in golden uniforms embroidered with black rams. They command the Duchess to attend their lord and master. She appears to hesitate, but is immediately dragged before the altar. Satan descends and, after a few singular compliments, dances a minuet with her in slow and solemn measure. His face still bears the melancholy expression of a fallen angel, mingled with the utter boredom of a blasé earthly prince. The Duchess shows every sign of desperate longing and inconsolable desolation. As the dance comes to a close the black ram climbs once more on to the pedestal, while all the company pay a ceremonious homage to his Bride-Elect. Faust alone remains in the foreground. On perceiving this Mephistophela returns to his side. The Doktor points to the Duchess and appears to relate something horrible concerning her recent behaviour, and demands to be taken away.

It should be obvious that everything concerning the Sabbath now fills him with disgust. All this, he seems to say, is just a mummary . . . as ridiculous as those ecclesiastical rituals which he has recently renounced. At this the spirit asks him what he would prefer to do. Faust thereupon expresses an infinite desire for harmony and beauty after so much Gothic darkness and confusion. Mephistophela understands, and immediately touches the floor with her wand. An image of Helen of Troy appears for a moment and then quietly dissolves. The Doktor is ravished with delight. He demands to be allowed to visit the Classic Grecian world and to know the noble figures out of Homer. Mephistophela calls the coal-black horses, which descend from the upper air. At this moment the

Duchess returns to the fore-stage in search of her lover. She is just in time to see him mount and ride away. She curses him and falls upon the ground in a mad hysteria of rage. Weird and fantastic shapes surround her. She is carried up and down the stage in a mad triumphant rout. A witches' rondo follows. This is suddenly interrupted by a distant cock-crow. A tiny bell is sounded and an ancient organ starts to play a horrible burlesque of the *Dies Irae*. Everyone crowds round the altar. The black ram is now seen to be the centre of a flaming pyre. The outrageous sound of the Black Mass is heard as

The Curtain Falls





ACT IV

An island in the Archipelago. The sea is visible to the left, glittering like an emerald. The sun shines from a turquoise sky upon a perfect landscape. Scenery and architecture blend together forming Homer's Grecian ideal. One can observe a group of pine trees, laurel bushes, tall white statues, marble vases, flowers, crystal streams, a waterfall and, on the right, a temple of the Goddess Aphrodite whose statues stand among the colonades.

Virgins and youths in festal garb, their heads adorned with flowery garlands, sit around in little groups. Others are engaged in ceremonial dances. The whole scene breathes the spirit of serenity and classical ambrosial joy. Here is no superstitious trembling at a Dark Beyond, no mystical shudders of lust and fear, no tortured sublimation of the flesh. Everything portrays a joyous acceptance of the corporeal

world, combined with a complete absence of introspection and melancholy. The ruler of this island is Helena of Troy, the most lovely woman in poetry. As the curtain rises, she can be observed dancing a hymn of praise to Venus at the head of her attendant ladies. The dance, in perfect unison with the surroundings, is formal, chaste and solemn.

Shortly after the scene opens Faust and Mephistophela fly down, still mounted on their coal-black horses. Faust feels that he has been delivered from a nightmare. His previous experience of love seems but an orgiastic madness. His spirits are refreshed at the sight of so much pure primeval loveliness. The Queen and her attendants move towards the visitors, offering hospitality, bringing wine in finely chiselled goblets, and inviting them to live and prosper on this island of eternal spring. Faust and his familiar accept the offer with a *pas de deux* of joy. At its close the company form a procession, moving towards the temple of Venus where they offer libations. After the ceremony Faust and Mephistophela change their gorgeous mediaeval costumes for the simple classic robes of ancient Greece, and having done so step with Helena into the foreground where they begin a solemn *pas de trois*.

On the conclusion of this dance Faust and Helena seat themselves upon a dais leaving Mephistophela who snatches up a tambourine and commences a demoniac *pas de seul*. Helen's virgins are immediately seized by her infectious wildness. They tear the roses from their hair, braid vine-leaves in their loosened curls and, in a frenzy join her in a wild bacchantic dance. The youths then arm themselves with lance and buckler and commence to drive the god-intoxicated girls away. Afterwards they

improvise one of those martial pantomimes often described by ancient authors.

An antique comic interlude now follows. Troupes of cherubims arrive on swans and start an aquatic tournament with bows and arrows. Their pretty play is suddenly disturbed, however, by the arrival of the Duchess flying through the air on a gigantic bat. The cherubims immediately throw themselves from off their swans and flutter out of sight. Like an avenging fury the insulted Duchess mounts the steps towards the throne. She overwhelms Faust with reproaches, threats and gestures of demoniac rage. Mephistophela, who has watched this with malicious glee, begins the bacchanalian dance once more. Striving to overcome their terrified astonishment the virgins join her, but this ecstatic scene appears to enrage the Duchess even more. She snatches Mephistophela's magic wand and commences an exorcism, accompanied with fearful invocations. The sky begins to darken terribly. Thunder and blinding flashes of lightning follow. The sea is lashed into a tempest, and the island undergoes a dreadful transformation. Everything is struck as if by death. The trees decay and lose their foliage, the temple falls in ruins, statues crash from their plinths and, worst of all, the lovely Helena is transformed into a corpse who sits with Faust upon the throne clad in her winding-sheet. The virgins have become a troupe of white emasculated lamiae. Their shrouds are wound about them, yet they still continue their bacchantic dance as if nothing had happened. In fact none of the island's inhabitants appear to observe any change around them. Faust, whose happiness has been destroyed by the vengeance of a jealous woman, leaps in fury

from his throne and thrusts his dagger in the witch's breast.

Mephistophela, in the meantime, has evoked the two black horses. She urges the stricken Doktor to mount at once and ride for safety. He does not appear to notice, so she draws his attention to the dangers that are threatening him. A fearful tempest is now raging. The sea mounts higher and higher until it starts to overwhelm the island. Faust, at last, is persuaded to mount his horse and fly. As he does so the ocean pours over the scene, swamping everything in view. The shrouded lamiae, however, oblivious of the catastrophe, continue their bacchantic revels to the cheerful sound of tambourine and thrusus. They are still dancing as the waves mount over their heads and the island disappears beneath the waters. High in the air above the raging sea one can observe the Doktor and his devilish familiar. They race for safety on their aerial horses as

The Curtain Falls





A large open square in front of a cathedral whose Gothic portals dominate the background. It is a mediaeval feast-day, typical of many such scenes made familiar by Pieter Breughel. Townsfolk, dressed in the costume of the Netherlands, are eating, drinking and dancing. In the background marksmen, armed with cross-bows, shoot at a target tied to the top of a tall pole. To one side is a fair-ground, with colourful stalls, musicians, puppet shows, a jester and a motley crowd of cheerful sightseers. In the centre of the stage a strip of lawn is seen on which the richer classes drink and dance.



The target is shot from the pole after the rise of the curtain and the champion marksman is hoisted upon the shoulders of his fellows in a triumphal march. He is seen to be a great fat drayman, wearing an enormous hat adorned with silver bells. The march is accompanied by a little band of fifes and drums and lead by a tiny urchin swinging an enormous banner in the most ridiculous manner. This procession winds its way across the scene to where the fat mayor, and his equally fat wife are sitting beneath a linden tree. The flag is lowered in homage and the mayor returns the salutation very gravely. His daughter, a perfect example of the Netherlands type of beauty, fills a ceremonial cup and gives it to the champion marksman.

Trumpets are now heard. A high cart, adorned with leaves and flowers and drawn by coal-black horses comes upon the scene. The learned Doktor Faust is seated in it, dressed in gold and scarlet like a mediaeval alchemist. Mephistophela, dressed in flowers and ribbons, rides the

foremost horse. On their arrival she dismounts, blows fanfares on a trumpet, and begins a most alluring dance which soon attracts the public. They begin to press around the cart from which the Doktor starts dispensing medicines in coloured bottles. These medicines achieve miraculous and instantaneous cures. Ancient cripples taste the potion, throw away their crutches and begin to dance ecstatically. The Doktor descends from the cart, which moves away. He distributes his bottles right and left. The onlookers all taste the liquid and are immediately seized by an unholy lust for dancing. The champion marksman, who has swallowed an entire bottle, seizes Mephistophela and commences an impetuous *pas de deux*. Even the mayor and mayoress, the nobility and all the aged couples join together in a gay fantastic rout.

One person alone still sits still and silent. This is Maria, lovely daughter of the mayor. Faust approaches her, entranced by her simplicity and innocence, and shyly speaks



to her of love. He looks towards the church and, with a melancholy gesture, asks for her hand in marriage. On receiving no reply he stops the dancing. The mayor and mayoress, breathing hard, collapse upon a bench. Faust asks for their approval of this marriage. They are highly flattered with the offer and persuade their daughter to consent. She and her lover are immediately decked with flowers and together they begin an artless *pas de deux*. The Doktor radiates an inner happiness. His doubts and longings are now satisfied. His thoughts are centred on his future, full of contentment living modestly with such a bride.

A wedding procession is formed, accompanied by every sign of happiness and joy. It approaches the doors of the cathedral but is brought to a sudden standstill by Mephistophela who stands before the bridegroom and peremptorily orders him to follow her. Faust refuses with every sign of indignation but she repeats the order with a sneering gesture of command. The spectators all watch with astonishment as Mephistophela begins an exorcism. Darkness falls upon the scene. A thunderstorm breaks out. Faust now shows signs of terror, while the people, full of fearful premonitions, fly into the cathedral. They start to ring the bells, while an organ plays an old chorale in startling contrast with the hellish spectacle upon the stage. Rousing himself Faust tries to flee into the church, but is prevented by a huge black hand which stretches from the earth and bars his way. Mephistophela, in triumphant glee, holds out the fatal document, showing the wretched Doktor that his contract has expired. In vain are all Faust's orders and demands, in vain is his final resort to pitiful entreaty. The devilish wench capers

around him in a *pas de seul* of triumph. In every gesture she consigns him, body and soul, to Hell's eternal flames. Finally the ground opens spilling forth hellish monsters. These join with Mephistophela in a triumphant rondo, finally encircling Faust with wild embraces. Flames burst up around the group which sinks into the earth. As they disappear the sound of their hellish revels mingles with the pious organ music and the bells of the cathedral.

The Curtain Falls



