

masonry where even the loved sunlight creeps dimly through the painted windows" dreaming of "mountain caverns" where the moonlight weaves spirits from the uncertain shadows." He was a true seeker after knowledge—a man who had drained the then scanty cup of learning and finding it insufficient sought to quench his thirst with intoxicating poisons. His picture hints of many who slowly suffocated in that sad time; who died of thirst in the midst of pleasant waters. His strength was wasted in raising the heavy stone of falsehood, ever falling back by its own weight: in listening with every nerve intent for harmony, when the very music of the spheres was drowned only by the din of his misdirected efforts. He invoked the very powers of darkness to bring to his eyes the light excluded by his own ignorant act and true to their nature they only made the blackness more intense. It was despair, not idle curiosity which drove the old magician into his terrible compact with evil. His stormy soul had long been lashing itself on the rocky unknown, seeing only bubbles and froth of its own substance as a result. His aim was to dash beyond that boundary and he saw not, nor would he have been content had he seen that grain by grain, a pebble at a time the shore was yielding. There is a grandeur in the mind that loses all thought of self, of present or future happiness in struggling with its human limitation.

Nowhere on his journey through the world does Faust stoop to any familiarity save that of contempt with his unearthly servant. Condemned by fate to yield to the enemy he never loses his proud superiority. And we can believe that had the utmost penalty, the last letter of his contract, been demanded of him, the same contempt of evil even in himself, the same lofty nature looking down upon his imperfection, would have remained with him to the end. His long battle with a finally irresistible power, a power licensed by the Almighty himself to drag him down; his fall and subsequent repentance, all merit and obtain our sympathy not our condemnation. Little need was there for Faust to caution his companion "Be not a devil so dilute!" There is found in him none of the faint heartedness of Marlowe's Mephistopheles, sighing for the lost delight of heaven. No conception of evil has even been so complete with the single exception, perhaps, of Shakespeare's Iago.

Göthe has shown us a strangely assorted trio,—Faust, Mephistopheles and pure Margaret: Margaret, the most beautiful and touching picture the world has ever seen trusting so much and so deeply deceived, innocent even in her deepest sin; Faust, with such strength, such powers, and with the hand of destiny upon him Satan, so weak in himself, so strong when allied with human passion. The world has seen this sad drama many, many times. The Middle Age saw it on the grandest scale though not for the first time then did humanity follow falsehood while hand in hand with truth; one day no doubt to see his leader as he is and turning and right ever at his side.

The first part of this tragedy is complete in itself,—as complete as anything can be that begins not with creation and ends not with the end of time. The second part loses all human interest. The mind is lost in an attempt to bring the whole course of human progress and the universe of men's passions into a single view; each passage with its manifold meanings is like to a movable

guide-board pointing as the wind or the imagination may direct, to ways that are no thoroughfares. Few read the second part of Göthe's "Faust;" fewer still, read it a second time in spite of the fact, or rather because of the fact that with each meaning seen another rises in perspective like images in parallel mirrors. The work of the "German Shakespeare's" life from his boyhood to his death with four score years behind him may well bewilder any mind less great than his own and until such a one appears to enlighten us, it must remain a mystery.

Humanity too, has arrived at an age when meanings multiply,—when only a small part of the whole can be the portion of any one man. We still await the interpreter who will one day see things as they are,—as grand, a symmetrical unit. Once only in the history of mankind has such an interpreter appeared—many hundreds of years ago, but we may hope for the coming of such another, in which time the dark places of earth shall be made light.

1884.

*Drift.*

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS:

**YOUTHFUL INQUIRER.** You show much genius for one so slightly advanced in years, but we fear that your brilliant plan for reforming the Literary Societies and their slates is scarcely feasible. There might be objections in various directions to having the slates as well as the programs published in the daily papers. Give us something easier next time.

**BOB INGERSOLL:** These columns are no place for religious controversies. However, we have carefully investigated the Holy Writ and are totally unable to quote a single passage favorable to Greek-Letter societies. The verse—"Men of Athens, in all things ye are too superstitious"—may possibly refer to the goat and greased pole. Still there is a difference of opinion among commentators which we cannot here agree to settle.

**FRESHIE:** Yes you certainly took the right course in having it removed, especially as the barber was so conscientious as to charge you half rates only. But we scarcely like to say that it would look well when braided into a ring for your girl. Perhaps you can dispose of it to the Oleomargarine manufacturers. If it is as crisp and tender as you affirm, it might prove quite appetizing when served cold with boarding-house butter and the other conventional entrees.

**PREP. GIRL:** No; there is no way that we know of in which you can convert your second-hand chewing gum into class-pins. There are several slight points of difference between the two articles.

**JOHN JONES:** We fear that there is no way for you to restrain the Palladians from their customary allusions to you on Friday night. It is certainly embarrassing to hear ones name shouted out in discordant tones by a whole society, but the law will be unlikely to give you any great degree of satisfaction.

**INJURED INNOCENCE:** We are surprised that you should ask us so simple a question. Of course it was the dog and not her pa as you seem to imagine. How could any one save a canine get away with a square foot of your "wardrobe" in a single round? There is still hope for you and you must not despair.