

ON THE TRANSLATION OF FAUST.

"THE translator," says Goethe, "is a person who introduces you to a veiled beauty; he makes you long for the loveliness behind the veil." In *Faust* this beauty is the cloud vision of the fourth act in the Second Part: —

"A form gigantic, truly, like a god divine,
I see it now, as Juno, Leda, Helena,
Majestical and lovely, float before the eye."

The poet will "sweep with his thought through all the universe, and bring it all down to a point of light, a burning point, that shall mirror for us the great Whole of life." "When the true poetic genius is born," Goethe says elsewhere, "he will set the moods of the inner life before us as the Universal, the World-life." "The Individual will represent the Universal, not as a dream and shadow, but as a living and visible revelation of the Inscrutable."

This is the majestic figure which the poet brings before us, and which the translator has to show us, through such more or less transparent medium as he can command.

In the notes to his *West-Eastern Divan*, Goethe sets forth this whole subject of translation and its uses. He there says: "Translation is of three kinds: First, the prosaic prose translation, which is useful as enriching the language of the translator with new ideas, but gives up all poetic art, and reduces even the poetic enthusiasm to one level watery plain. Secondly, the re-creation of the poem as a new poem, rejecting or altering all that seems foreign to the translator's nationality, producing a paraphrase which might, in the primal sense of the word, be called a parody. And, thirdly," a form which he would call "the highest and last, where one strives to make the translation identical with the original; so that one is not instead of the other, but in

the place of the other. This sort of translation," he says, "approaches the interlinear version, and makes the understanding of the original a much easier task; thus we are led into the original, — yes, even driven in; and herein the great merit of this kind of translation lies."

The translator of great poetry, poetry as distinguished from even the most splendid rhetorical verse, must be content with this function of introducer and guide. Poetry of this finer kind is so alive with the breath of the poet's life, one can no more take it to pieces and entirely reconstruct it than he can dissect and revivify any other living organism.

"He then has all the parts in hand;
Alas! he only lacks the spirit's band,"

as Mephistopheles tells the Student.

We have in the current translations of *Faust* representatives of the first and second kinds of translation, but not of the third kind, spoken of by Goethe as the "highest," the reproduction of both word and style, with the movements of the original verse. This has not been attempted in any of the yet known versions, though Mr. Charles T. Brooks, the first to translate *Faust* in the metres of the original, made a long step in this direction, for he strove to reproduce the form of the verse. It is true, as Goethe remarked to Eckermann, that "the mysterious influence of poetic form is very great. If the import of my Roman elegies were put into the measure and style of Byron's *Don Juan*, it would scarcely be endured." But, aiming wholly at form, Mr. Brooks overlooked the greater importance of the style within the form, and in this case the style is peculiarly the man. "Indeed," Eckermann elsewhere reports Goethe as saying, — "indeed, the style of a writer is almost

always the faithful representative of his mind: therefore, if any one wishes to write a clear style, let him begin by making his thoughts clear; and if any would write a noble style, let him first possess a noble soul." Mr. Brooks, with all his fine qualities as a pioneer, gave us a style full of Latinization, in the attempt to reproduce the feminine rhyme wherever Goethe had used it in the loose iambic recitative of the original. But Goethe, speaking of his use of rhyme in recitative, has elsewhere said, "I have neither sought the rhyme nor avoided it in the recitative." In the recitative portions of the First Part of Faust, the principal aim is simplicity, the directness of colloquial speech; the rhyme is of secondary importance, and used, or even at times omitted, with entire freedom.

Mr. Taylor announces his intention of striving to reproduce the original; that is, after the third manner mentioned by Goethe, though he does not allude to Goethe's words on the subject. But he follows closely after Mr. Brooks, and even extends his Latinization and inversion, and strives here and there to improve the simple diction of his great original; as, for instance, he gives us with round mouth,

"The joy which touched the verge of pain,"
for Goethe's simple

"Das tiefe schmerzenvolle Glueck,"

though this is one of the least marked variations in this direction, — a straw which shows the way of the wind. He dissents, too, from Goethe's view of the office of a translator, and recalls certain very clever renderings of English verse into German, apparently as sustaining the contrary opinion.

The splendid success of Coleridge in rendering Schiller might also be cited in support of Taylor's position; the English poet has distinctly improved Schiller's poem, or rather he has given us a better one. But that is just the difference between the verse of a splendid

rhetorical verse-maker, like Schiller, and the inimitable poetry of a world-poet of the very first rank, — that rank whose numbers we may yet count on the fingers of a single hand.

An instance, a fine one, too, of the second kind of translation is given by Shelley in his translations of detached portions of Faust. But when our greatest purely lyrical master tries to take to pieces and reproduce the magnificent lyrical outburst with which the drama of Faust opens, he gives us an interesting English poem, with several fine Shelleyan touches. He has not tried, he says in the footnote appended to what he there styles "this astonishing chorus," "to represent in another language the melody of the versification; and even the volatile strength and delicacy of the ideas escape in the crucible of translation, and the reader is surprised to find a *caput mortuum*."

It does not seem to have occurred to Shelley that "the volatile strength and delicacy of the ideas" are indissolubly connected with this same "melody of the versification" from which he tries to divorce them, and that therefore he finds as a result a *caput mortuum*.

But one can no more divorce the music from the meaning of the words of Goethe's Faust than one can subject the operas of Wagner to the same process with any result worth considering. Wagner, with his elaborated theory of the marriage of music and meaning, has been hailed as a new Avatar in the world of art. He is so in the world of operatic art, undoubtedly; but his theory of a musical atmosphere, enveloping and suggesting the characters, was — though this fact appears not to have been before insisted on — worked out in practice by Goethe in his Faust, that drama of human life: the conflict of Celestial Love and Demoniac Selfishness; the wish to give one's self as opposed to the desire to get. The musical motives assigned to the characters of Tannhäuser,

Venus, and Elizabeth have their counterparts in the verse movements which surround and envelop as with an atmosphere, a singing-robe, the characters of their direct predecessors, Faust, Mephistopheles, and Margaret. Whenever Mephistopheles speaks, we seem to hear the clatter of those tambourines and triangles with which the entrance of the Venus motive is always announced; and the Celestial Love movement steals, like the influence of moonlight, over the scene, the moment its reflection shines upon us from the Witch's mirror.

The analogy is close, but it has in it this very important element of dissimilarity. In Goethe's verse we enter a region where meaning and music and this exquisite moonlight of the imagination are one, and spring spontaneously from the poetic nature. In Wagner we have the more or less mechanical elaboration of a theory of stage representation. With this important distinction, the analogy is marked, though it seems generally to have escaped attention. Both Mr. Taylor and his forerunner, Mr. Brooks,—to whom he owes an unacknowledged debt,—insist on the importance of preserving the metres of the original. Mr. Taylor has even called attention to the change of musical atmosphere with the entrance of Margaret upon the scene, and observes in his note that "Goethe was not only keenly sensitive to the operation of atmospheric influences upon the mind, but he also believed in the existence of a spiritual *aura*, through which impressions, independent of the external senses, might be communicated."

Mr. Taylor and Mr. Brooks seem, however, to have been led somewhat astray by their notion that this atmosphere was the result of Goethe's constant use of the feminine rhyme, whereas the distinguishing feature of Goethe's verse is the entire absence of any of the Latinized and inverted phrases common to ordinary literature, and the absolute

directness and simplicity of his Teutonic speech. The verse sings in all keys, but the characters speak as directly and simply as if they had never heard of a book.

Hans Sachs, the cobbler poet, was confessedly Goethe's model. He writes to Schiller that their "ballad studies" had carried him back along this path; and throughout the poem the end and aim of his style is *simplicity*. "The True, the Good, and the Excellent are always simple," he writes in his Sayings; "Error is elaborate." From beginning to end of this great poem of 12,110 lines of nearly every known metre, we have hardly one Latinized word, and not a single poetical trope or purely literary expression. This being so, it is clear that Faust cannot be adequately represented by the constant use of Latinized words and literary phrases. Sir Theodore Martin seems to be the only translator of Faust who has kept this aim of Goethe's always in view; but he undertakes to make a new English poem, and follows Shelley in altering at will the melody of the versification, and loses at once the spiritual aura and all the impressions which the poet strives to or does convey by the music which is the accompaniment and illumination of the words.

Faust must remain, after all, the enchanted palace; and the bodies and the bones of those who, in other days, strove to pierce its encircling hedge lie scattered thickly about it. But if the translator will keep both of these distinct aims of Goethe constantly in view, simplicity and directness of speech, and the musical suggestiveness of the versification; in short, if he will follow Goethe's "third" method of translation, he will, at least, show us the hidden beauty through a more diaphanous veil than has yet been held before her. He will not fall into the error of striving to reproduce her counterfeit presentment upon an opaque canvas, a process which

has sometimes resulted in an image bearing a close family resemblance to the sailcloth advertisement of the Circassian beauty. We are not tempted by the painted copy to pay the price of admission to the show within.

Let us see what results have been attained by the translators who, neglecting the advice of this great master, have pursued what he calls the "first" and "second" methods, — the "watery plain," or the soaring attempt to rewrite the poem. There are two lines in *Faust* which, for pathos and this subtle quality of suggestiveness, are hardly equaled by even that musical heart-break of Ophelia's, "No more, but — so" — They also illustrate so well what has been attempted and done by the different translators that we recall a few specimens of the different renderings of them.

Margaret says to *Faust*, in answer to his remark that simplicity and innocence never recognize their own holy worth: —

"Denkt ihr an mich ein Augenblickchen nur,
Ich werde Zeit genug an euch zu denken haben."

That is: —

You think of *me* a little moment only;
I shall have time *enough* to think of you."

Mr. Taylor and Mr. Brooks, both intent on placing the feminine rhyme just where it occurs in the loose iambic of the German, give us: —

"So you but think a moment's space on me,
All times I have to think on you, all places."
(Taylor.)

"One little moment only think of me,
I shall to think of you have ample time and leisure."
(Brooks.)

Professor Blackie, Miss Swanwick, and Sir Theodore Martin rewrite the poem in different movement, and give us for these lines: —

"Do thou bestow a moment's thought on me,
I shall have time enough to think on thee."
(Blackie.)

"Only one little moment think of me!
To think of you I shall have many an hour."
(Swanwick.)

"A little moment only think of me;
I shall have time enough to think of you."
(Martin.)

Mr. Hayward, in his translation of *Faust*, has given us an example of the "first" method mentioned by Goethe. He has certainly reduced it to a "watery plain," but, as Goethe also suggests, the method has its own peculiar advantages, though Hayward goes far to lose them in his often entire neglect of the simplicity of the German style. He gives us for these two lines, "Only think of me one little minute; I shall have time enough to think of you." And here we have Mr. Hayward at his very best, because he has closely translated the simple words of that simple maiden, who never uses anything approaching a literary phrase. She speaks constantly in those homely Teutonic words which we all use when, under deep stress of feeling, we speak directly from the heart. No one will disagree with Mr. Hayward's statement that *Faust* "deserves to be translated as literally as the genius of our language will admit; with an almost exclusive reference to the strict meaning of the words, and a comparative disregard of the beauties which are commonly thought peculiar to poetry should they prove irreconcilable with the sense." But to disregard the style is to alter one half the sense. Take a line in the very next speech of Margaret, referring to her mother's household economies: —

"Nicht das sie just so sehr sich einzuschränken hat."

As Margaret, perhaps, in her homely phrase might have said: —

Not that she has to keep herself just so cramped down.

Mr. Hayward makes her say here, as a Yankee "school-marm" might, "Not that she has such pressing occasion to restrict herself," and the whole character of Margaret has evaporated and slipped from our grasp. The simple, lovable woman disappears in the learned preceptress. This illustrates the impor-

tance of the style as a factor in the development of the characters. It is apparent in a less degree in the passages before given; and in connection with this one would like to discuss at some length the effect of the musical pause, and of the retarding or quickening of the measure in creating this musical atmosphere of which we have spoken. It is much more the result of time than of rhyme, of the measure than of the assonance; though the rhyme, and even the use of the feminine rhyme, becomes of importance when we leave the freer recitative, and strive to reproduce the strictly lyrical verse.

Goethe does not, however, tie himself down to rules of rhythm. On the contrary, he has said expressly, in answer to the criticism that he violated the rules of prosody: "As a poet I have grown so weary of the eternal iambics, trochees, and dactyls, with their little measure and narrow bound, that I have intentionally deviated from them. . . . I begin also to interrupt even the flowing movement of the aria, or, rather more, to raise and strengthen it wherever passion enters on the scene; . . . to neglect the similarity, or, rather, with diligence seek to destroy it."

It is to be noticed, in the first speech of Margaret, how completely the atmosphere of tender longing and regret, all the musical suggestion of the lovely woman-soul, is dissipated when the translators omit the *cæsura*, the pause in the first line, and quicken the measure. Mr. Hayward has given us almost the exact equivalent of each of the German words except the *ihr*, "you," and yet we get from him no hint of this musical meaning, which is the half sense and all the beauty of the lines. Eckermann tells us of Goethe's once exclaiming "he did not know what people meant by enjoying the music of an opera apart from the words." The music and the words, to his mind, must be identical. He points out, in his *Rules for the Players*,

VOL. LXVI. — NO. 398.

47

the analogy between declamation and music, and insists on the great value of giving the pause in the verse always at the right moment. We cannot here stop to illustrate this dictum by examples, other than the one given, of the value of the pause; but there is one such striking instance of the effect of the melody of the verse, the musical accompaniment, that we will compare the varied versions of the passage. It also illustrates very well the results of the three different aims of the translator of which Goethe speaks in the note quoted from the West-Easterly Divan. The lines are the concluding Angels' Chorus, Easter Morning, from the scene where Faust is called by these old songs from his intention of suicide "back into life once more."

In the music of the original words we seem to hear the exulting outburst of the angels' song, and then, in the five times repeated resonant triple rhyme, the bells of heaven, and again a single strain of song as the scene closes.

Here are the lines as they stand in the original: —

CHOR DER ENGEL.

Christ ist erstanden
Aus der Verwesung Schoosz
Reiszet von Banden
Freudig euch los!
Thaetig ihn preisenden,
Liebe beweisenden,
Bruederlich speisenden,
Predigend, reisenden,
Wonne verheisenden,
Euch ist der Meister nah,
Euch ist er da!

Here even Mr. Hayward feels called on to print his prose in the shape of verse to suggest it. He shall give us the meaning: —

"Christ is arisen
Out of corruption's lap!
Joyfully tear yourselves
Loose from your bonds!
Ye, in deeds giving praise to him,
Love manifesting,
Living brethren-like,
Traveling and preaching him,

Bliss promising, —
 You is the Master nigh,
 For you is he here ! ”

The subtle suggestion of the music has vanished, and we have a *caput mortuum* indeed.

The passage is of greatest difficulty, and a really successful translation is impossible. Mr. Brooks here, for once only, surrenders the rhyme, and gives us : —

“ Christ has arisen
 Out of corruption's gloom.
 Break from your prison,
 Burst every tomb !
 Lovingly crowning him,
 Lovingly throning him,
 Feasting fraternally,
 Praying diurnally,
 Bearing his messages,
 Sharing his promises.
 Find ye the Master near,
 Find ye him here.”

Martin gives us : —

“ From the lap of corruption
 Lo ! Christ has ascended !
 Rejoice, for the fetters
 That bound you are rended !
 Praise him unceasingly,
 Love one another.
 Break bread together, like
 Sister and brother.
 Bear the glad tidings
 To all who will hear you ;
 So will the Master be
 Evermore near you.”

In none of these have we the faintest suspicion of that wonderful melody of the verse which carries with it such a world of suggestion.

Mr. Taylor has manfully grappled with the impossible, and preserved his theory of the feminine rhyme intact. Indeed, it justifies itself here, for it is this rhyme which gives the bell-like movement to the verse ; and in the German, like Keats's *forlorn*,

“ The very word is like a bell.”

Mr. Taylor renders the passage : —

“ Christ is arisen,
 Out of Corruption's womb :
 Burst ye the prison,
 Break from your gloom !
 Praising and pleading him,

Lovingly needing him,
 Brotherly feeding him,
 Preaching and speeding him,
 Blessing, succeeding him,
 Thus is the Master near, —
 Thus is He here ! ”

The qualified success is the result of following the verse movement exactly. It is perhaps an unfair advantage to show how every one has not succeeded, and not attempt the trial one's self. We cannot hope for success, but let us see if, by keeping our eyes on Goethe's simple diction, we may draw any nearer the unattainable : —

Christ has arisen,
 Out of corruption's womb :
 Burst from your prison,
 Joyful, from gloom !
 Act praise, and daring all,
 Love show, and bearing all,
 Brotherly sharing all,
 Preaching, declaring all
 His bliss, go faring all, —
 For you the Master's near,
 For you He's here !

The charm of the clanging consonants is beyond reach, but a greater success might be hoped for in the lyrics of the following scene, where all the citizenry come before us, dressed each in his appropriate singing-robe of verse. In the movement of those verses one hears the beggar's hurdy-gurdy, the martial tramp of the soldiery, — which Gounod reproduces for us in his soldiers' chorus in this scene, — and the shouts and swirl of the peasants' dance under the linden, —

“ The shouts with fiddles vying.”

Enough, however, has been given to show how just is Goethe's own estimate of the true course to be pursued by his translators, — that “ highest third method,” which none has as yet attempted. Anster has followed the second method named by Goethe, and given us a very pretty, readable English poem of his own ; which is perhaps as near success as we have yet reached. But if the office of the translator is to produce before

us a veiled beauty, and make us long for the loveliness beyond, surely the introduction must be more satisfactory as the veil becomes more transparent, and more closely follows the contour of the lovely form beneath. As Goethe remarks, such a translation must illuminate the original text even more than an interlinear version, and so lead us in to the original. Thus it would give an adequate reason for its being in this busy world, already surfeited with translations which have scorned this humbler office, and soared only to fall like the boy Euphorion of

the Second Part, because the translator failed to heed the wise caution addressed to that too aspiring Spirit of Poetry by Helena and Faust, — the Essence of Beauty and the Soul of Man : —

Anxiously the mother calleth : Leap and leap
again, with pleasure,
But still guard thyself from flying, — freer
flight's denied to thee.
And thus warns the faithful father : In the
earth lies power, upspringing,
Which will bear thee skyward ; only touch the
firm ground with thy toe-tips ;
Like the Son of Earth, Antæus, thou art
straightway strengthened then.

William P. Andrews.

NON SINE DOLORE.

I.

WHAT, then, is Life, — what Death?
Thus the Answerer saith :
O faithless mortal, bend thy head and listen :
Down o'er the vibrant strings
That thrill, and moan, and mourn, and glisten,
The Master draws his bow.
A voiceless pause ; then upward, see, it springs,
Free as a bird with unimprisoned wings !
In twain the chord was cloven,
While, shaken with woe,
With breaks of instant joy all interwoven,
Piercing the heart with lyric knife, —
On, on the ceaseless music sings,
Restless, — intense, — serene :
Life is the downward stroke ; the upward, Life ;
Death but the pause between.

II.

Then spake the Questioner : If 'twere only this,
Ah, who could face the abyss
That plunges down athwart each human breath?
If the new birth of Death
Meant only more of Life as mortals know it,
What priestly balm, what song of highest poet,
Could heal one sentient soul's immitigable pain?
All, all were vain !
If, having soared pure spirit at the last,
Free from the impertinence and warp of flesh,