

drama and its connection with early religious rites and tribal customs. Music is anti-rational, morally indifferent. Goethe, representative of the German spirit as he may be in other respects, was not very much interested in music; and, since music undoubtedly constitutes the most overwhelming and characteristic German achievement, Goethe and his non-musical Faust are not entirely representative of the German character. In his speech on "Germany and the Germans" (1945) Thomas Mann said: "It is a great fault of the legend and poem, that they do not link Faust with music. He should be a musical person, a musician."

In a world as complicated and specialized as ours no man can hope to branch out in as many fields and activities as Dr. Faust has done. Goethe has often been called the last universal mind of the Western World, and the catalogue of Faust's deeds is, indeed, well matched by his creator's activities. The nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have forced professional limitations on man without which even the most gifted genius would remain an amateur. It is a life job in our days to know one's field fully. Consequently, Thomas Mann—who, unlike Goethe, is not a prime minister or a theatre manager or a scientist—has made his Leverkuehn a musician and nothing else—except perhaps an unusually intelligent and mentally alert musician whose mind explores the limits of our modern physical experience. Leverkuehn is as much interested in unknown organic ocean life as in the astronomical facts of the universe, just as Faust would be if he were to explore the macrocosm today.

Martin Luther threw his ink-well at the devil and Goethe's Mephistopheles put in a very real physical appearance, but Leverkuehn's pact with the devil is, of course, an affair of his mind, a day-dreaming feat recorded in a letter, and entirely within the limits of modern psychology. The pact is not a real pact either; it is only the confirmation of the composer's previous determination to forgo human relations such as warmth and love for the sake of creative inspiration. No doubt this is only a new variation of Mann's old artist-bourgeois conflict, most eloquently voiced by Tonio Kroeger in his desperate perception that, in order to create, he would have to stand aside and let life go by. "Thou shalt not love!" is the price Adrian Leverkuehn is ready to pay, in return for which he is granted twenty-four years of the most exalted musical creation conceivable. Eleven compositions are the fruits which, incidentally, parallel in masterful fashion

the whole development of modern music, from the first impressionistic orchestra piece, "Phosphorescence of the Sea," to the last oratorio, significantly named "Doctor Faust's Lament." Having completed his last and most monumental work, Leverkuehn pays the price: the devil takes him, i.e., his latent insanity violently breaks out, and, after being temporarily confined to an asylum, he lingers on as a human wreck until his physical death in 1940.

If one concedes the demoniacal character of music as such, the conclusion is inescapable that a nation which has given the world its greatest music is more threatened by demonic forces than any other. As Thomas Mann would put it, such a nation must pay for its achievement in another sphere. It is the social and political sphere that suffers most. And is not Germany's history, with her abundance of brilliantly creative minds, a sad example of her equally characteristic inability to compromise in life and to get along with others? When Germany surrendered to Hitler and his loud-mouthed promises for world domination, did not the devil take her soul? When Leverkuehn renounced human warmth and affection in order to enjoy the most exalted creativeness in arrogant isolation, was he not symbolic of a nation that forfeited in a blind stupor of intoxication the love of all other countries in order to dominate the world? Is not Leverkuehn Germany?

THAT Adrian Leverkuehn should really represent Germany, something else is needed besides modernizing Faust's pact with the devil and making him a musician. He has to be tinted with the iridescent and seductive color of romanticism. To be sure, at the beginning of the last century, there was a wave of romanticism all over Europe, and the trend was by no means restricted to Germany. Yet the Germans have always considered it their most characteristic invention—not without reason, because in no other country has the anti-rational, death-celebrating movement of romanticism left so deep and lasting an imprint. The untranslatable quality of German *Innerlichkeit*, for instance, the lyricism and musicality of the German soul, the longing for death and inclination toward suicide, in short, everything that seems so unmistakably German, is it not in the last analysis romantic? The great Germans of the last hundred years—Schopenhauer, Wagner, Nietzsche, Freud, Mann—are they not deeply rooted in romanticism? Does not a direct road lead from the superman of Nietzsche to the master race of Hitler? Was not

## My Current Reading

Thomas Mann, whose "Doctor Faustus" will probably soon be on everyone's reading list, has on his own desk:

DICHTUNG UND WAHRHEIT, by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

SOME PLAYS, by William Shakespeare

GREGORIUS AUF DEM STEIN, by Hartman von Aue

THE KING AND THE CORPSE, by Heinrich Zimmer, edited by Joseph Campbell (Pantheon)

APE AND ESSENCE, by Aldous Huxley (Harper)

TOWARD WORLD PEACE, by Henry A. Wallace (Reynal & Hitchcock)

THE ROOSEVELT I KNEW, by Frances Perkins (Viking)

THE PLAGUE, by Albert Camus (Knopf)

A LITTLE TREASURY OF AMERICAN POETRY, edited by Oscar Williams (Scribner)

MUSIC HERE AND NOW, by Ernst Krennek (Norton)

the latter, incidentally, an ardent admirer of that other great post-romanticist, Wagner?

One knows that the German dictator used to visit Nietzsche's sister in Weimar and, although it is extremely questionable that he ever read or comprehended the life-glorifying works of the sick philosopher, the affinity of Nazism to misunderstood Nietzscheism is a matter of history. In short: Nietzsche is not only the most potent heir of the romantic spirit in modern times but his very personality is representative of the German character; to know him means to understand Germany. And this is the reason why Leverkuehn must be Nietzsche, too.

In a speech on "Nietzsche in the Light of Modern Experience" (1947), Thomas Mann has masterfully evaluated the influence of the German philosopher. Delivered after the completion of "Doctor Faustus," the speech is in several respects a commentary on Leverkuehn, too:

In the last analysis there are but two mental and inner attitudes, an esthetic and a moral one, and Socialism is a strictly moral way of looking at the world. Nietzsche, on the other hand, was the most complete and unredeemable esthete known to the history of the human mind, and his premise which contains his Dionysian pessimism, i.e., that life can be justified only as an esthetic phenomenon—applies most exactly to himself, to his life, and to his work as a thinker and poet.

Leverkuehn is an artist, a musician,

an esthete. His life, with its physical torments, its disease, its unbearable loneliness, is the life of Nietzsche. Some of his desperate outcries are literal quotations from the works of the philosopher. The letter to his friend and biographer, Serenus Zeitblom, in which he relates an incident that had brought him by mistake into a brothel in Leipzig, is almost identical with a letter written by Nietzsche to his friend Paul Deussen about a visit to a disreputable house in Cologne. It is this incident to which Thomas Mann attributes tremendous importance. Leverkuehn-Nietzsche, devoted to the spirit, unknowing and innocent in the matters of the flesh, experiences what the Freudians would call a fixation of his libido, a trauma: he returns to the prostitute, and through the unholy union—not meant for men like him—defying his nature and despite the warnings of the diseased girl, he infects himself. This is Leverkuehn's pact with the devil, and after twenty-four years of intensified and heightened musical creation such as "beyond this world," he pays the horrible price of paralysis of the brain. Like Nietzsche, he lingers on in the darkness of his mind until death takes away his mortal frame.

It may be argued that the insane philosopher Nietzsche is hardly representative of a whole nation. However, from the days of antiquity to the recent theories of psychoanalysis, the affinity of genius and mental disorder has been noticed and admitted—and not the least by Freud's faithful disciple Thomas Mann. And who has not been startled by the high percentage of insanity and suicide among Germany's greatest minds? In modeling Leverkuehn after Nietzsche, Thomas Mann seized upon the most valid symbolic figure of modern Germany, for—as he said in his speech:

... who was more German than he, who so beautifully demonstrated to the Germans once again all those things that had made them a scourge and terror to the world and by which they themselves have been ruined: romantic passion, the urge to let the ego forever expand into the limitless without setting it a fixed object, the will that is free because it has no aim and strays into the infinite?

Adrian Leverkuehn has a friend and biographer: the urbane and humane high-school teacher and classical philologist Serenus Zeitblom. It is Thomas Mann himself who hides behind the faithful, modest, unassuming professor. The mentor of Dr. Faustus is the *mentor Germaniae*. Thus, the author is able to contrast his demon-ridden hero with a de-demonized counterpart, the intellectual extremist with the civilized humanist. The image of Germany  
(Continued on page 37)

**Fiction.** *The most satisfactory storyteller of our time is Somerset Maugham. Over seventy titles are listed under his name. There is good reason why in his seventy-fifth year he should be called "the old master," for he has mastered the novel, short stories, plays, autobiography, and criticism. He is a magician who can turn any theme, any period into wit, drama, and subtle enchantment. This week we are reviewing his latest novel, "Catalina," in which sixteenth-century Spain is stamped with his own image, certified as pure Maugham. Two other novels are recommended to the reader's attention, "Stalin-grad," by Theodore Plivier, (see p. 15) and its opposite in scene and mood, Mark Aldanov's "The Third Symphony," (p. 27) about a French artist who painted Marie Antoinette and lived long enough to be decorated by Napoleon III.*

## A Soul Seeking Heaven

**CATALINA.** By W. Somerset Maugham. New York: Doubleday & Co. 1948. 275 pp. \$3.

Reviewed by THOMAS SUGRUE

**T**HE story is always the same, yet somehow different. The old tale-teller wanders into the market place, chooses the warmest pool of sunshine, and sits on the ground, crossing his legs and placing before him a bowl for the reception of coins. Customers gather quietly, squatting in a half-circle, and the tale-teller speaks the first words of his magic. Out of the nothingness in the mind of each listener, a world is swiftly made, and in this world a soul wanders, anxiously seeking the heaven it dimly remembers as its home, the static state of being it calls happiness. For each tale the world is freshly made, the soul attired in a new personality, the enemies of its progress given a change of linen and name. When the first

enemy appears, the tale-teller pauses; he seems to drowse, forgetting his purpose. A coin clinks in the bowl; he blinks, recovers his memory, and goes on with the story.

The world this time is Spain at the close of the sixteenth century, with the king's armies at war in the Low Countries, the Holy Office examining heretics, and Carmelite nuns split by the reform of Teresa de Cepeda of Avila into the Discalced Order of Teresa and those remaining under the mitigated rule of Pope Eugenius IV. In the city of Castel Rodriguez on the morning of a holiday celebrating the homecoming of two illustrious natives, the soul appears on the steps of the Carmelite church. She is Catalina, a beautiful girl of sixteen who walks on crutches because her right leg is useless, having been crushed by a bull. (The listeners nod; lameness is a sign of divinity; the bull is Brahma, who limits or lames the soul to bring about its evolution.) She weeps because she cannot follow the townspeople to meet the illustrious natives, the sons of Juan Suarez de Valero: Friar Blasco, the Bishop of Segovia, and his brother Don Manuel, a captain in the king's armies. She weeps also because her infirmity has cost her the young man she loves, Diego, the tailor's son. As she sobs, a strange and beautiful woman appears behind her on the steps (the listeners lean forward; this is the goddess, Maya-Shakti, the World Soul). The woman tells Catalina that "the son of Juan Suarez de Valero who has best served God has it in his power to heal you." Then she disappears.

Now the story is under way. Catalina tells her mother that the Blessed Virgin appeared to her and promised that Friar Blasco, the bishop, would heal her. Her uncle Domingo questions her closely; Domingo is a worldly



—Etching by H. A. Freeth.

"Anyone can tell it; the only requirement is that he be W. Somerset Maugham."