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The Daily Record

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and THE DRESDEN DAILY.

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"FAUST" TRANSMOGRIFIED.

THE GOSPEL OF GOETHE ACCORDING TO MR. TREE.

(From a London correspondent.)

When Mr. Beerbohm Tree paid a visit to Berlin, many of the leading German dramatic critics fell foul of him for what, in their opinion, was his over-elaboration of Shakesperian plays. It is difficult to imagine what these same critics would say were they to witness the travesty of Goethe's sublime drama which Mr. Tree is now presenting at His Majesty's theatre. The popular actor-manager is quite unmoved by any such criticism and, not content with gilding refined gold, proceeds to be-ornulu it and be-jewel it until the simplicity which should be the keynote of the great tragedy is entirely lost. Nothing less like the dignified representation of the Faust drama so often to be witnessed in Germany can be imagined than the pantomimic spectacle which will doubtless draw all London to His Majesty's. Mr. Tree cannot conceive anyone taking an adverse view of his production, and, indeed, in an interview with a Press representative, pats himself on the back for having, forsooth, done honour to Goethe's memory by this "adequate" presentment of "Faust." Sad to say, his enterprise meets with the almost unanimous approval of the Press critics, but their attitude may be understood in the light of the statement of one of the chief of them, that Goethe's masterpiece is "portentously heavy and eminently edifying"! As a fact, in Mr. Tree's production the poetry and the philosophy are smothered in pantomime. For three mortal hours violins shriek, trumpets blare, and drums bang, the while *Mephisto* delivers himself of reams of windy verse, for Mr. Stephen Phillips' warmest admirers will hardly claim that he has enriched the language by his version of "Faust." Some day, perhaps, we shall have a sober, scholarly translation of Goethe's verse which will give English theatre-goers a chance of understanding the simple solemnity of the actual drama, not, as in the present instance, overloaded with tinsel and every imaginable spurious ornamentation.

Mr. Tree's production opens in the clouds, some place "midway 'twixt heaven and earth," where *Mephistopheles* in bottle-green armour, a very Miltonic fiend, makes a wager with the three Archangels that he will ruin a human soul, to wit, that of *Dr. Faust*. This by way of a prologue. The play proper begins in the study of *Dr. Faust* who, upon the arrival of *Mephistopheles*, now in the traditional scarlet garb, announces that

"If in thy boasted store of rich delights
 Thou hast but one that is not linked with pain;
 If from all Time one moment thou canst pluck
 So rich in beauty that my soul shall cry
 'Tarry! thou art so fair!
 Then shalt thou claim the immortal part in me!"

The devil accepts the challenge, and we are transported to the witches' kitchen—Drury Lane pantomime at its worst—where Faust is rejuvenated. The scene changes to the Platz outside the cathedral, where Faust is at once attracted by the sight of an exquisitely childish Margaret. *Mephistopheles* professes himself amazed at this fascination for pure innocence, and not a little disgusted. As he expresses it:

"I could have set the fairest at thy feet,
 Disrobed an empress but to serve thy sport,
 Or sacked the centuries to yield thee back
 Dead Queens whose beauty wrecked an elder world,
 Yet with this feast outspread thou needs must choose
 A wild-flower from the hedgerow."

There follow the jewel scene in Margaret's bed-chamber, the love scenes in the garden, and a curious interpolation,—Faust flying, to escape the temptation aroused by Margaret's sweet presence, to a desert place, whither he is followed by the mocking fiend who successfully draws him back to consummate his crime. The third act passes in the Platz, and Valentine, returning, learns of his sister's shame, fights his duel, and dies cursing poor Margaret, whose pathetically frail appearance gives an added touch of horror to the scene. We are then treated to more pantomime on the summit of the Brocken. Curiously enough—for Mr. Tree admittedly excels in such stage effects—this scene is hardly so effective as in the late Sir Henry Irving's production at the Lyceum. True, there is a sufficiently

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imposing earthquake, and the tableaux of Helen, Cleopatra, and Messaline are beautifully carried out; but the groaning and gibbering of the scantily-clad wraiths that fill the scene are tiresome to a degree, and the spirits that flit across in mid-air are painfully reminiscent of the flying ballet at Drury Lane. There follows the death of Margaret in her cell, while the production is rounded up by a second appearance of the armour-clad fiend in the clouds amid which the drama began, and we learn that Faust has been redeemed by the good work he has done for mankind. *Mephistopheles* voices his bitter regret that he is for ever destined "to will the evil and achieve the good," and disappears.

The production, as ever at His Majesty's, is magnificently mounted. The Augsburg scenes could not be better, and the management of the stage-crowd when Valentine returns is beyond all praise. Much had been expected of Mr. Tree's *Mephistopheles*, since he delights in the bizarre and weird. But, frankly, his performance is disappointing. His make-up—*Mephisto*, for the nonce, is clean-shaven—gives a curiously plump effect to his face, and his delivery of Mr. Phillips' sonorous lines becomes at times terribly monotonous; in fact, though it be heresy to say it, this *Mephistopheles* is a desperate dull dog. Mr. Ainley makes a gallant enough Faust, but he is apparently depressed by the never-ending music, the lights and the sprites, and his love-making is terribly unconvincing. By far the best performance is that of Miss Marie Löhr, whose extreme youth makes her Margaret a figure of touching pathos. There is real spontaneity in her girlish glee in the jewel scene, and she strikes a note of true anguish in her prayer to the virgin:

"O Mother of all sorrows, thou alone
 Canst pierce my sorrow; thou alone canst cure
 The ceaseless pain that bows me to the earth.
 The prayer I dare not utter thou canst hear!
 And those vain tears that washed thy stainless feet
 Night after night, hast thou not seen them fall?
 I have no hope but thee! no hope but here.
 As thou wast once a maid, be pitiful.
 Take in thy hands my breaking, bleeding heart,
 And save my ruined soul from death's last stain."

Miss Löhr's performance is a surprising one for so very young an actress. Mr. Godfrey Tearle is a soldierly enough Valentine, and Miss Rosina Filippi, as Martha, is traditional to a fault. Mr. Coleridge Taylor's ceaseless music is oleaginous.

GENERAL NEWS.

NEWS FROM ENGLAND.

THE ENGLISH PRESS ON PRINCE BÜLOW'S SPEECH.

London, September 18.
 The *Morning Post*, in an article on the Inter-parliamentary Conference in Berlin, writes: "The

Imperial Chancellor's speech shows a justifiable and prudent reserve as to the wider aims of the International Parliamentary Union." The *Daily Chronicle* writes: "The Chancellor played his part well. His words have a ring of sincerity. Whether Germany's action at The Hague deserves all that Prince Bülow claimed for it, is questionable. Like the rest of Europe, Germany, according to her Chancellor, desires peace. That is a welcome assurance. We only wish that German deeds, in Morocco for instance, were in accord with these admirable German words. We will look hopefully in the future direction of German policy for signs of the enlightened human spirit that pervades Prince Bülow's speech, and which does honour to his good heart and to his feelings."

BRITISH GOVERNMENT ACCEPTS MOROCCAN NOTE.

London, September 17.
 It is officially announced that Great Britain has approved the joint Note of France and Spain relating to Morocco, and has communicated the fact of her approval to the signatory Powers.

IMPORTANT DISCOVERIES IN INDIA.

Allahabad, September 17.
 Dr. Stein, the well-known explorer, reports from Chotau, in a despatch dated July 15, the discovery in the north-east section of the Tarim desert of paintings and sculptures, which give evidence of ancient Greco-Buddhist influence. Excavations among the ruins of a deserted watch tower, crowning an isolated hill in the vicinity of Masar-Tag, revealed a collection of engravings on wood and paper, the characters mostly being Hindustani, Chinese, and Thibetan. It is estimated that the writings date from the eighth or ninth century, and synchronise with the Thibetan invasion. Dr. Stein gives a vivid account of his perilous journey through the Tarim wilderness, where the Kerusa river eventually loses itself in the sand.

NEWS FROM AMERICA.

ORVILLE WRIGHT'S AEROPLANE COMPLETELY DESTROYED.

Washington, September 17.
 Mr. Orville Wright, accompanied by Lieutenant Selfridge, of the U. S. Army Signal Corps, made a special flight with his aeroplane today in an endeavour to attain increased speed. While accomplishing for the fourth time a circle of the drilling ground at Fort Myers, the left wing of the apparatus broke from some as yet unexplained cause, and the aeroplane was capsized, both occupants being hurled to the ground. Mr. Wright received severe injuries to his arm and hip, and is also believed to have sustained internal injury. Lieutenant Selfridge was shockingly injured about the head. The aeroplane was smashed to pieces. The two wounded aeronauts were immediately conveyed to the hospital at Fort Myers, where Lieutenant Selfridge later died from his injuries.

7,000,000 BRYAN SPEECHES.

Washington, September 16.
 Seven million pieces of political publicity comprise the first Democratic contribution to the school of campaign by literature. Of the five "best sellers," Mr. Bryan stars as the author of all. At the head of the list of literary productions which all true Democrats are expected to read is Mr. Bryan's "Speech of Acceptance." It is an entertaining account of a third attempt, and the first edition totals 2,000,000 copies, with a second imprint already in sight. Next on the list, but just as important, is an anonymous production entitled "The Denver Platform." On excellent authority, it is announced that this is by the author of "The Speech of Acceptance." The first edition of this work also covers 2,000,000 copies. In the "1,000,000 copies" class there are three entries by W. J. Bryan—"What I think about the Tariff," "What I would do to the Trusts," and "What I think of guaranteeing Bank Deposits."—*Globe*.

EARTHQUAKE IN ECUADOR.

Guayaquil, September 17.
 An earthquake of exceptional violence occurred here today, and created a panic among the people. No reports of lives lost are yet to hand.

(Continued on page 2.)