

Corder's "Faust Legend."

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CORRESPONDENCE.

"FAUST" AT THE LYCEUM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—Your correspondent, in his article last month on "Faust" at the Lyceum," writes of "the entire and absolute indifference of an English theatrical audience as to what music is played. In 'Faust' Mr. Irving has certainly deserved the thanks of musicians, though I fear he has earned something very unlike thanks from the bulk of his audience. * * * *Entr'acte* music is simply not listened to, so that the vulgarest of dance music, abominably played, is sufficient cover for conversation." The truth of these remarks must be fully admitted.

During a recent tour, in the capacity of conductor, I visited a large number of the principal provincial theatres, and was much struck with the general indifference of managers and public alike to the doings of the orchestra during the *entr'acte*.

That, however, it is possible for a manager to enlist the sympathy of the public to this not unimportant part of his programme, is more than proved nightly at the excellently conducted Theatre Royal, Edinburgh, and also at the Royal Princess's, Glasgow, both under the management of Mr. H. Cecil Beryl.

At these theatres respectively, Mr. Poyser and Herr Brousil direct performances of classical *entr'acte* music, and Scotch theatre-goers fully show their appreciation by close attention and hearty applause. Mr. Beryl takes a personal pride in his orchestras, and is to be congratulated on his success.

If Mr. Irving and other London managers continue to persevere in the same direction, the theatre will give a mighty impulse to the progress of orchestral music in this country.—Yours truly,

22, Maude Grove, S.W.

CHURCHILL SIBLEY.

CORDER'S "FAUST LEGEND."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—Will you give me space in your esteemed columns for a few words in regard to Mr. F. Corder's article on "The Faust Legend, and its Musical Treatment by Composers," in your January issue? It contains so much valuable information, and is so eloquently written, that a theory, which is certainly questionable, might, I fear, under cover of the brilliant qualities of the writer, gain currency, if not combated. Mr. Corder is evidently not an unqualified admirer of Goethe's genius, and he belongs to the number of those who cannot sympathise with the second part of "Faust." He is of opinion that the second part "had better, perhaps, have never been written at all, at least as regards the unity of the work." German connoisseurs were for many years at variance in regard to its merits. The party Mr. Corder represents was headed by the celebrated F. T. Vischer, and by Kuno Fischer, and they condemned the second part unremittingly, the former even writing a satirical third part, under the characteristic *nom-de-plume* of *Deutobold Symbolizetti Alegoriowitzsch Mystifizinski*. The opposition maintained that the whole of "Faust"—from the dedication, preceding the first part, to the chorus mysticus at the end of the second part—was worked on a grand fundamental plan, and that all *excrescences*, such as the Walpurgis Night, or the scene in Auerbach's cellar, had a certain significance, and were of importance in the development of the whole, which would suffer if any part were removed. This opinion, with certain modifications, has spread widely of late, and the recent performances of the whole drama on most of the better German theatres—when, for the first time, it was possible to give a clear representation of the entire colossal poem—have made numerous proselytes on the other side. The first authorities on Goethe—Loeper, Düntzer, Oettingen, Schrouer, &c., have declared themselves for it, and Professor Schreyer has summed up the *pros* and *cons* of the *vexata questio* in a volume on "Goethe's 'Faust,' als einheitliche Dichtung erläubert und verteidigt (Halle, 1881)," which makes believe that there can hardly be two opinions on the subject. It is shown that a great moral truth is taught in the whole of "Faust," while the first part by itself contains absolutely no moral at all. The

Lord makes a wager with *Mephistopheles*, permitting him to tempt *Faust*, and to do with him whatever he likes, if he can disprove the Lord's word—

A good man, in his dim self-consciousness,
Is of the right road always well aware.

Youth, love, power, riches, the craving of his age—(time of the renaissance)—the beau-ideal of antiquity are the baits held forth by *Mephistopheles* to the insatiable *Faust*. But nothing *Mephistopheles* can provide gives *Faust* real happiness, which he at last finds in devoting his best energies to advance the welfare of his fellow-creatures, and in leading a life of useful toil. *Mephistopheles* has lost his wager, and *Faust's* soul is carried to heaven by angels.

It is, perhaps, the only actual fault in that wonderful production at the Lyceum Theatre—if it is not ungenerous to find fault, where almost everything is admirable—that the ending is not in harmony with Goethe's plan. But as Mr. Irving in his first night speech promised to do all in his power to make his production, by degrees, resemble the original more and more, it is to be hoped that this important point will not escape his notice. If, as I do not even venture to hope, he should ever crown his first great effort by a still greater one and produce the second part of "Faust" before an English audience, I think Mr. Corder and most of those who will not now admit the unity of "Faust" would then be compelled to allow that, contradictory and paradox as the different parts may appear, they still all help to make up a very harmonious whole.

It may be worth while mentioning one small inaccuracy in Mr. Corder's paper. "The first part," he says, "completed in 1797, Goethe re-wrote the whole." &c. The first part was not completed till 1806, only a "fragment"—as it is styled on the title-page—having previously appeared, in 1790.

With apologies for the length to which my letter has inadvertently grown,

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

January 9, 1886.

WM. HEINEMANN.

[I have remarked before that one can never let fly an assertion but it is sure to break a window somewhere. A feuilletonist in the *Globe* happened once in a sprightly article to speak disparagingly of the multiplication table. He was instantly deluged with letters accusing him of denying that twice two made four. While thanking Herr Heinemann for his courteous letter, I must beg leave to point out that my article deals with its lofty subject from an irreverent and matter-of-fact point of view, being intended, not as a grave philosophical criticism, but as a simple prosaic account, written for the general reader.—F. C.]

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—It may interest some of your readers to know that a reprint of the English translation of the old "Faust" story, referred to by Mr. Corder in his interesting article on the subject in the current number of THE MUSICAL TIMES, was published just over a year ago by Messrs. Routledge, in a small volume of "Mediaeval Tales," edited by Professor Henry Morley. Mr. Corder mentions its having appeared in Thorn's "Early English Prose Romances," but the last edition of that book was issued (according to Professor Morley) as far back as 1858.—Faithfully yours,

LEONARD G. WINTER.

11, Cecil Road, Upton Manor, E.,

January 23, 1886.

CONCERT-GOERS AND CONCERT-GIVERS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—The article in your current number which has arisen out of the correspondence between Mr. Manns and "Subscriber," opens up a wide question—the composition of concert programmes. With your permission I will offer a few remarks thereon.

But first let me say I cannot bring myself to feel much sympathy for "Subscriber." Granting that the facts of her letter were true—which Mr. Manns has shown is not the case—the thoughtless and intemperate tone of her communication very naturally led Mr. Manns to assume that he had to deal with an ignoramus. Small wonder then if he regarded her interference as an unwarrantable