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Goethe on Paper Money.

IT is somewhat singular that in the struggle for a stable and honest currency which has been going on ever since our civil war, in the series of conflicts with greenbackers, silver inflationists, and Populists, we have seen no allusion to the admirable satire upon fiat money, "based on the undeveloped resources of the country," which is contained in the first act of the Second Part of "Faust." Goethe drew his material, of course, from the then comparatively recent performances of the Scotch financier, Law, in France; but he gave his parable a touch of universality which makes it in some ways curiously prophetic of the monetary insanities of our own time.

He significantly ascribes the invention of fiat money to the father of lies. Mephistopheles, who has undertaken to deliver Faust from ennui, brings him (immediately after the Gretchen episode) to the court of the emperor. The court jester is thrown into a trance, and Mephistopheles takes his place. The imperial ministers draw a gloomy picture of the state of the empire. The chancellor bewails the disregard of justice, the reign of violence and fraud; the chief commander complains of the disorganization of the army, largely due to the impossibility of paying the soldiers; the treasurer laments the emptiness of his coffers and the failure of the imperial credit; and the marshal protests his inability to defray the expenses of the imperial cellar. The emperor asks the new jester if he cannot add something to this dreary litany of complaints. Mephistopheles cheerfully remarks that the root of all the evils in the empire seems to be the lack of money, and there is plenty of that—underground. The emperor has, indeed, given away most of his rights, as the treasurer has already said, but the right to all buried treasure is still in the crown—and what a quantity of wealth must have been hidden away and forgotten in the centuries of war and anarchy since the first Roman invasions! He pledges himself to devise a means of making this wealth available.

In an ensuing mask, in which Faust is introduced as the god of riches, the emperor's signature is obtained to a note secured by all the buried treasure in the realm, and redeemable as soon as the said treasure is unearthed. The note is manifolded that very night (Mephistopheles seems to have invented printing for the purpose), and is issued in various denominations from ten to one hundred crowns.

The next day the ministers rush into the imperial presence with glad tidings: all loans have been extinguished, and the court is out of the claws of the usurers; all current bills have been met; the soldiers have received their arrears of pay, and are full of wine and loyalty. The emperor, who had not realized what he was doing, is at first angry at the supposed forgery of his signature, then mystified that his people will take these bits of paper for good gold; but so long as they do, he can hardly quarrel with the relief so opportunely afforded him. In the rest of the scene the effects of the sudden inflation of the currency are indicated in a remarkably vivid manner. The money-changers are taking the notes, and paying gold and silver for them—"with a discount, to be sure," but, still, they are taking them. Half the world is thinking only of revelry, the other (and better) half of new clothes, and everybody is cheering the emperor.

Mephistopheles, in praising the convenience of the new money, anticipates one of the stock arguments of the greenbacker: heavy purses and pouches are done away with; a scrap of paper is easily tucked away in a breast-pocket, in a love-letter, or between the leaves of a breviary. "Majesty will pardon me if, by entering into these petty details, I seem to make little of the great achievement." Faust interpolates a grave sentence or two on the advantage of utilizing undeveloped resources, and on the practical value of the imagination. The wealth on which the notes are based is boundless, and therefore the really profound mind accepts them "with boundless confidence." Mephistopheles reverts to his more practical point of view. The notes are not only handy, but they furnish a stable standard of value. All the trouble of haggling over the exchange of different kinds of coin is done away with. If any one wants metal, he can get it from the money-changers; if they hesitate, "one can dig awhile," auction off the cups and chains he disinters, redeem his notes for himself, and put skeptics and scoffers to shame. The people are rapidly becoming used to the new money, and will soon refuse to do without it. Jewels, coin, and paper will furnish an abundant medium of exchange, easily kept equal to the demands of the country.

The emperor is now seized with a spirit of prodigality, and begins to distribute notes to his courtiers, asking each what he means to do with the largess. He is somewhat disappointed to find that no spirit of enterprise is awakened, that no new social forces are set in motion. The squire, indeed, proposes to pay off his mortgages, a highly laudable intention; but the *bon vivant* proposes to live even better; the gambler's dice jump in his pocket; the miser will add the notes to his hoard. Human nature is just as human as ever, and its various manifestations are simply intensified.

At the end of the scene the old jester reappears, and begs for a share of the imperial bounty. The emperor tosses him paper to the amount of five thousand crowns, with the prophecy that he will use it foolishly, and leaves the stage. The jester incredulously asks Mephistopheles if this stuff has really money value. Mephistopheles tells him that he can eat and drink his fill with it. The jester persists with growing excitement: "Can I buy with it acres, house, and cattle? A castle with a forest, hunting, fishing?" Assured of this, he hurries off, exclaiming:

> This very night in real estate I 'll revel.
>
> MEPHISTOPHELES (*solus*): Who longer doubts that our fool's head is level?

Verily, verily, there is nothing new under the sun.

Munroe Smith.

The Head of Sir Walter Scott.

THE "Journal" of Scott tells us scarcely anything new in the way of facts, but it has had the effect of setting his character in a new light, not so much by altering as by deepening our previous conception of it. But in all the close sifting of the man it has called out, I have seen no mention of the death-mask which, by some miscarriage of taste, disfigures the outer covers of the two volumes, one giving a front, the other a side view. A death-mask always has something of the

repulsiveness of death; it is more deathly than the dead face itself, which often retains the living expression, while the cast retains only the sunken and hardened shape impressed by the "marring finger" of death. These post-mortem transcripts of Scott's head are by no means decorative, and should have been placed within and not without, especially as the shape is almost deformity. They are, however, of the utmost interest as revealing the shape of the head, which is only partly suggested in the portraits.

Scott's head has always been a puzzle to those who connect cranial proportion with mental traits, and they have been more willing to pass him by than to attempt to explain him, or they have credited him with qualities not sustained by the record. While I have no disposition to come to the rescue of the philosophers of the tactual and tape-line school, I can assure them that their case is not so bad as it seems; they have only to study it more closely, and by the light of a wider science, in order to bring it within their theories, with the exception of the size of the brain, which, like Byron's, was uncommonly small. But even this need not disturb the phrenologist, for recent science tells us that it is not the size of the brain that determines thought-power, but the amount of surface presented by its convolutions. A large brain may have relatively few convolutions or little working-surface, and a small brain may be so convoluted as to be nearly all surface, the difference being somewhat analogous to that between the radiating power of a cube of metal and half the amount spread out into a thin sheet. The trouble with this explanation is that the phrenologist can make no practical use of it, inasmuch as he cannot thumb and finger the inside of the head. A tape-line no longer suffices to measure mental capacity, and those who wear a hat of the same number as Daniel Webster must forego the happy inference that they could be as great as he if they should try. We are all driven to the old maxim, "Judge no man till he is dead," or to the still older rule of measuring greatness by deeds.

According to the distribution of Scott's brain as indicated by the outside, he should have been a conceited religious fanatic; but he was neither conceited, nor fanatical, nor over-religious. The head suggests by its height, or rather by its retreating length and narrowness, artificial compression,—not wholly a wrong suggestion, for it was by compression that its peculiar shape was produced. The matter is of intense interest when we realize that only a freak of nature prevented that matchless brain from being locked within an inclosure which would have made it that of a microcephalous idiot.

The peculiar shape of the skull is closely associated with his lameness: both were due to a congenital error in bone-making. When about eighteen months old he had a slight illness, caused by dentition. On recovery, he was found to have lost — as was thought at the time —"the power of his leg"; the real fact being that the child refused to move a suffering limb. From some cause, probably congenital, and brought into action by dentition, the process of bone-making was arrested, inducing swelling and shrinking of the limb and lameness, from which he never recovered, though it did not prevent great activity upon his feet. The defect or fault in the bones of the leg extended also to the skull, or, rather, another error in bone-making then showed itself. After death, the examination revealed that there had been "a premature union of the two parietal bones along the sagittal suture," due to an arrest of bone-making along the edges of the suture, which closed like a vise upon the expanding brain. This closure affected only the sagittal suture; the coronal suture was left free, and the brain pushed the vault of the skull up and back, creating the oblong shape so noticeable in the mask, and so similar to that of the microcephalous idiot. When Dr. Charles Creighton once happened to show to a distinguished French anthropologist a skull of one of this unfortunate class, with its boat-shape formation and effaced sagittal suture, the *savant* held it up and exclaimed, "*Voilà*, Walter Scott!" Had this defect in bone-making extended to the other sutures, there would have been no Sir Walter Scott, no increase of horse-hire in the Trosachs, no Scotland of romance, and no Waverleys for the world.

Questions arise which the anatomist and psychologist must answer. The brain of Scott was small; if the bone-making had been natural, and the brain had not been forced to the labor of lifting the skull, would it not have been larger and its convolutions more numerous? In that case, granting that there is a proportion between the size and convolutions of the organ and the mental faculties, what sort of man should we have had? Scott is already called Shaksperean; might he not have been another Shakspere in full measure?

Other questions arise. Some of Scott's senses were very dull, and all were far from being acute. He had but a slight ear for music, never getting farther in his enjoyment of it than ballads of a simple character; his daughter Anne sang down to him. Lockhart says of his sense of smell that when by chance the venison was so ripe as to make the company uncomfortable, Scott was indifferent to it. As to wines, he could scarcely distinguish them apart, confounding them in an amusing manner. His eye was far from being correct. He worked at nothing so hard as upon oil-painting, but with most dismal success — evidently from defect of eye. May not this dullness of the senses be connected with the crowding of the brain, by which the various nerves were weakened? It might also be asked if this unnatural handling of the organ by nature may not have had some effect in inducing that nervous energy with which he wrought, the misplacement turning his energies in a single direction. The most marvelous thing about Scott is the rapidity with which he worked. Carlyle, in his essay, often speaks of the healthiness of the man, which is true so far as his feelings and thought are concerned; but his rapidity suggests morbidness. May it not be connected with the trick nature played upon his brain? Nor can we fail to suspect that it may have had some relation to the disease of which he died. That he died of worry and overwork there is no doubt, but may not an ulterior cause be found in this crowding of the brain into unnatural shape and compass, with the effect of making it unduly sensitive, and predisposed to the malady which carried him off?

The point of these suggestions is that vast and splendid as were Scott's gifts and achievements, he is still entitled to allowance for what Nature intended but failed to do for him through her own fault.

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