

Wie das Gestirn,
Ohne Hast,
Aber ohne Rast,
Drehe sich jeder
Um die eigne Last.

LITERAL TRANSLATION.

"Immortality thou hast then in mind,
Canst thou find?"
Yes, right well! The chief ground is
just this;
That we are not able to do without it.

Nought of the Transitory,
Happen as it may!
Ourselves to immortalize
For that are we here.

The Able, be it false, as it often may,
Works from house to house, day by
day;
The Able, when it is really true,
Works ever the Ages through.

Just as our Planet Star,
Without haste,
Yet without rest,
Let each the circle
Of his duty trace.

These little jewels out of many intimate the scientific solution clearly enough—each one being a consequent step to the other.

Note how he drops all the silly "arguments" for immortality, and, like Kant in his Practical Reason, takes its NECESSITY as its only ground. Then next note how he drops all those "celestial mansions"—ourselves to immortalize are we HERE.

Next note: How are we to do it? By becoming "the Able," that is, "the fit to survive," the capable, the excellent, extending the "powers of the good"—living in the whole, the true, and so in the good.

Note finally when and where are we to do this? On this our blessed little Mother Earth Planet, as she revolving each day, yearly circles the central sun. So we each day without haste, yet without rest, follow the attractive power by which our duty holds and revolves us in her circle.

It is shallow to talk about quoting Goethe as a "fad." Find some one else who went and "did it." Who else wields Mimir's sword, or the battle ax of Odin, to set us free? When, at the height of his power, Goethe wrote his Masonic Poems, only about half a dozen pages, but in them no "mortal man" has ever thought and felt out so much. Carlyle says that their opening chant "The Lodge Symbol" is the greatest of "uninspired" writings; we think that the intellectual pathos of the closing "Song of the Worthy Brothers" is also "inspired," if anything ever was.

In the middle, or the heart, of these poems lies the "Between Song" or Interlude, by which he clears the way of the Brethren from old notions of immortality, by giving the new in these lines which we translate lineally and literally; they cannot be rendered poetically without still greater loss of meaning. Those who try to do it will discover, why Goethe is the "despair

of translators," as Emerson said.

ZWISCHEN GESANG.

Lasset fahren hin das allzu Flüchtige!
Ihr sucht bei ihm vergebens Rath;
In dem Vergangnen lebt das Tüchtige;
Verewigt sich in schöner That.

Und so gewinnt sich das Lebendige
Durch Folg' aus Folge neue Kraft;
Denn die Erinnerung, die Beständige,
Sie macht allein den Menschen dauer-
haft.

So löst sich jene grosse Frage
Nach unserm zweiten Vaterland;
Denn das Beständige der ird'schen
Tage
Verbürgt uns ewigen Bestand.

IMMORTALITY.

(Interlude in the Masonic Poem.)
Let pass the Transitory as it may;
Counsel from that thou't seek in vain;
What is fit to live grows ever from the
Past,
In beautiful deeds will ever remain.

And so the Living Powers, gaining
ever,
By change to change new strength
secure.

For, purposes which are permanent,
They alone make man endure.

So solves itself that great query
About our second Fatherland,
For the Enduring in our earthly days
Ensures that time itself we shall with-
stand.

Like unto this is his reflection
from Herder:

Im höchsten sinn der Zukunft zu be-
gründen,
Humanität sey unser ewig Ziel.
Durch Menschlichkeit geheilt die
Schwersten Plagen.

In the highest sense the future to
found,
Humanity must be our constant aim,
Through the Human is it that our
heaviest ills are healed.

Or again he says it in presenting
to the Actor Krueger his Iphigenia,
at Tauris:

"So in Handeln, so in Sprechen,
Liebevoll, ver kund' es weit,
Alle Menschliche Gebrechen
Sühnet reine Menschlichkeit."

As in words, so in action
Full of love, proclaim it far:
All human failings
A pure Humanity heals."

But we must close the poetry by
giving the end of the Masonic
Poems.

SONG AT FESTIVAL OF WORTHY BROTHERS
(St. John's Day, 1830.)

Fünfzig Jahre sind vorüber,
Wie gemischte Tage flohn;
Fünfzig Jahre sind hinüber
In das ernst Vergangne schon.

Doch lebendig, stets auf's neue,
Thut sich edles Wirken kund,
Freundes Liebe, Männer Treue,
Und ein ewig sichrer Bund.

Ausgesät in weiter Ferne,
Nah, getrennt, ein erndstes Reich,
Schimmern sie, beschnedner Sterne
Leis' wohlthätigem Lichte gleich.

So, die Menschheit fort zu ehren,
Lasset, freudig überein;
Als wenn wir beisammen wären,
Kräftig uns zusammen seyn!

Fifty years have rolled away
As mingled days have flown;
Fifty years are over now,
Into that Earnest Past so soon!

Yet ever living, and ever new
Are noble works made known;
The love of friends, the faith of man
And a bond forever true:—

Thus sown in the distance far
Near, or scattered, an Earnest Realm;

Still glow they, as the modest stars'
Soft beneficent light.

So Humanity to honor ever,
Let us, uniting joyfully,
As though we, by each other were,
With our powers together be.

So! The "Spirit World" is now,
in fact, our "Earnest Realm" of
Earth; and it is lighted by the radi-
ance of good works as by the mild
light from the starry millions! Af-
ter this the vast starry night may
help us to realize in it our illumina-
ted Heaven, and help us to live in
that without longing for some other.

So far with Goethe in poetry. We only give a similar touch, near the close of his life, in prose. His biographer, Heinemann, says (page 345, vol. 2) in his later years he advised away from the consideration of these questions. "The capable (tüchtiger) man," said he, "leaves the future world to rest on itself, and is active and useful in this. Activity, unceasing activity is our magic word" (Zauberwort), and with this came "reverence for that above, around and below us." We illustrate all this with his conception of the Continuity of Humanity from his letter from Dornberg. In the Dornberg Castle near Weimar, he went as a refuge from the grief, and from the confusion, which attended the death of his old friend the Duke, and the incoming of his successor in the summer and fall of 1828. His years were then drawing to a close, but he never refers to any un-earthly or unhuman matters or longings, but sends the "new administration" his blessing and a sermon in the high courtier German of that day, of which this is the substance—(As it is prose a translation only will suffice):
"All the surrounding landscape improving from generation to generation speaks out all that which the troubled mind would so gladly comprehend: that the rational human world is inevitably moved forward, from generation to generation, so as to secure the consequent succession of its activity."

* * *
"For here a government well ordered and mindful has beneficently continued from prince to prince. The laws stand firmly; according to the need of the times come improvements. Thus was it before, so will it be after us; and so the grand word of the Sage [Pascal] will be fulfilled." "The rational human world is to be considered as one great immortal individual, who unceasingly works the Necessary, and thereby raises himself to be the Master over his environment."

Of the poetry of this anxious Dornberg period, we have only room for the parting touch, thus:—

Und wenn mich am Tag die Ferne
Blauer Berge sehnlich zieht,
Nachts das Übermass der Sterne
Prächtig mir zu Häupten glüht.
Alle Tag' und alle Nächte
Rühm' ich des Menschen Loos:

Denkt er ewig sich ins Rechte,
Is er ewig schön und gross!

And when by day, the Far
Of mountain-blue draws me longingly,
And by night the over-depth of stars
Glow in the splendor o'er my head.

Then every day and every night,
Extol I man's beneficence,
Forever as he wills the right,
Is he ever beautiful and great!

Thus with the prose and poetry of the new Life and Immortality [for the Fifth Act of Faust is filled with similar human inspiration] the first great man of the new scientific world closed his days. The final change came in the forenoon of March 22, 1832. As he sat in his chair the poetic memory seemed to recall the good and the loved he had known, and he muttered "See her brow and curly locks" and motioned to open the window and said, "More light." These were his last words, for with them he had joined the "Choir Invisible."

There were no clergy or death terrors. No thought or word about "immortality." That had become secure by the investment of his life in the "permanent which for age endures." T. B. W.

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