

# FAUST

[ANNOTATED]

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# FAUST

[ANNOTATED]

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BY

JOHANN WOLFGANG  
VON GOETHE

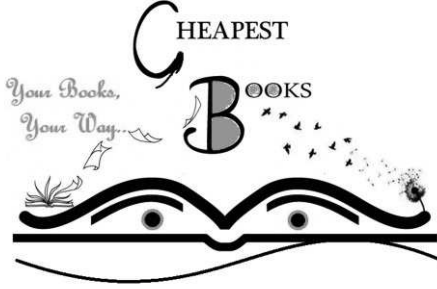
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## About Author

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***Johann Wolfgang von Goethe** (German; 28 August 1749 – 22 March 1832) was a German writer and polymath. His body of work includes epic and lyric poetry written in a variety of metres and styles; prose and verse dramas; memoirs; an autobiography; literary and aesthetic criticism; treatises on botany, anatomy, and colour; and four novels. In addition, numerous literary and scientific fragments, more than 10,000 letters, and nearly 3,000 drawings by him are extant.*



After returning from a tour of Italy in 1788, his first major scientific work, the *Metamorphosis of Plants*, was published. In 1791 he was made managing director of the theatre at Weimar, and in 1794 he began a friendship with the dramatist, historian, and philosopher Friedrich Schiller, whose plays he premiered until Schiller's death in 1805. During this period Goethe published his second novel, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, the verse epic *Hermann and Dorothea*, and, in 1808, the first part of his most celebrated drama, *Faust*. His conversations and various common undertakings throughout the 1790s with Schiller, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Johann Gottfried Herder, Alexander von Humboldt, Wilhelm von Humboldt, and August and Friedrich Schlegel have, in later years, been collectively termed Weimar Classicism.

Arthur Schopenhauer cited *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* as one of the four greatest novels ever written and Ralph Waldo Emerson selected Goethe, along with Plato, Napoleon, and William Shakespeare, as one of six "representative men" in his work of the same name. Goethe's comments and observations form the basis of several biographical works, most notably Johann Peter Eckermann's *Conversations with Goethe*. There are frequent references to Goethe's various sayings and maxims throughout the course of Friedrich Nietzsche's work and there are numerous allusions to Goethe in the novels of Hermann Hesse and Thomas Mann as well as in the psychological writings of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. Goethe's poems were set to music throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by a number of composers, including Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ludwig van Beethoven, Franz Schubert,

## **Faust**

Robert Schumann, Johannes Brahms, Charles Gounod, Richard Wagner, Hugo Wolf, and Gustav Mahler.

## **Biography**

### **Early life**

Goethe's father, Johann Caspar Goethe, lived with his family in a large house in Frankfurt, then an Imperial Free City of the Holy Roman Empire. Though he had studied law in Leipzig and had been appointed Imperial Councillor, he was not involved in the city's official affairs. 38-year-old Johann Caspar married Goethe's mother, Catharina Elizabeth Textor, the daughter of the mayor of Frankfurt Johann Wolfgang Textor and his wife Anna Margaretha Lindheimer, when she was 17 at Frankfurt on 20 August 1748. All their children, except for Goethe and his sister, Cornelia Friederike Christiana, who was born in 1750, died at early ages.

His father and private tutors gave Goethe lessons in all the common subjects of their time, especially languages (Latin, Greek, French, Italian, English and Hebrew). Goethe also received lessons in dancing, riding and fencing. Johann Caspar, feeling frustrated in his own ambitions, was determined that his children should have all those advantages that he had not.

Goethe had a persistent dislike of the Roman Catholic Church, and characterized its history as a "hotchpotch of fallacy and violence" (*Mischmasch von Irrtum und Gewalt*). His great passion was drawing. Goethe quickly became interested in literature; Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock and Homer were

among his early favourites. He had a lively devotion to theatre as well and was greatly fascinated by puppet shows that were annually arranged in his home; a familiar theme in *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*.

He also took great pleasure in reading from the great works about history and religion. He writes about this period:

I had from childhood the singular habit of always learning by heart the beginnings of books, and the divisions of a work, first of the five books of Moses, and then of the 'Aeneid' and Ovid's 'Metamorphoses'. . . If an ever busy imagination, of which that tale may bear witness, led me hither and thither, if the medley of fable and history, mythology and religion, threatened to bewilder me, I readily fled to those oriental regions, plunged into the first books of Moses, and there, amid the scattered shepherd tribes, found myself at once in the greatest solitude and the greatest society.

## **Legal career**

Goethe studied law in Leipzig from 1765 to 1768. He detested learning age-old judicial rules by heart, preferring instead to attend the poetry lessons of Christian Fürchtegott Gellert. In Leipzig, Goethe fell in love with Anna Katharina Schönkopf and wrote cheerful verses about her in the Rococo genre. In 1770, he anonymously released *Annette*, his first collection of poems.



**Anna Katharina (*Käthchen*) Schönkopf**

His uncritical admiration for many contemporary poets vanished as he became interested in Lessing and Wieland. Already at this time, Goethe wrote a good deal, but he threw away nearly all of these works, except for the comedy *Die Mitschuldigen*. The restaurant Auerbachs Keller and its legend of Faust's 1525 barrel ride impressed him so much that Auerbachs Keller became the only real place in his closet drama *Faust Part One*. As his studies did not progress, Goethe was forced to return to Frankfurt at the close of August 1768.

In Frankfurt, Goethe became severely ill. During the year and a half that followed, because of several relapses, the relationship with his father worsened. During convalescence, Goethe was nursed by his mother and sister. In April 1770,

Goethe left Frankfurt in order to finish his studies in Strasbourg.

In Alsace, Goethe blossomed. No other landscape has he described as affectionately as the warm, wide Rhine area. In Strasbourg, Goethe met Johann Gottfried Herder. The two became close friends, and crucially to Goethe's intellectual development, it was Herder who kindled his interest in Shakespeare, Ossian and in the notion of Volkspoesie (folk poetry). On October 14, 1772 he held a gathering in his parental home in honour of the first German "Shakespeare Day". His first acquaintance with Shakespeare's works is described as his personal awakening in literature.

At the end of August 1771, Goethe acquired the academic degree of the *Lizenziat* (Licentia docendi) in Frankfurt and established a small legal practice. Although in his academic work he had expressed the ambition to make jurisprudence progressively more humane, his inexperience led him to proceed too vigorously in his first cases, and he was reprimanded and lost further ones. This prematurely terminated his career as a lawyer after only a few months. At this time, Goethe was acquainted with the court of Darmstadt, where his inventiveness was praised. From this milieu came Johann Georg Schlosser (who was later to become his brother-in-law) and Johann Heinrich Merck. Goethe also pursued literary plans again; this time, his father did not have anything against it, and even helped. Goethe obtained a copy of the biography of a noble highwayman from the German Peasants' War. In a couple of weeks the biography was reworked into a colourful

## **Faust**

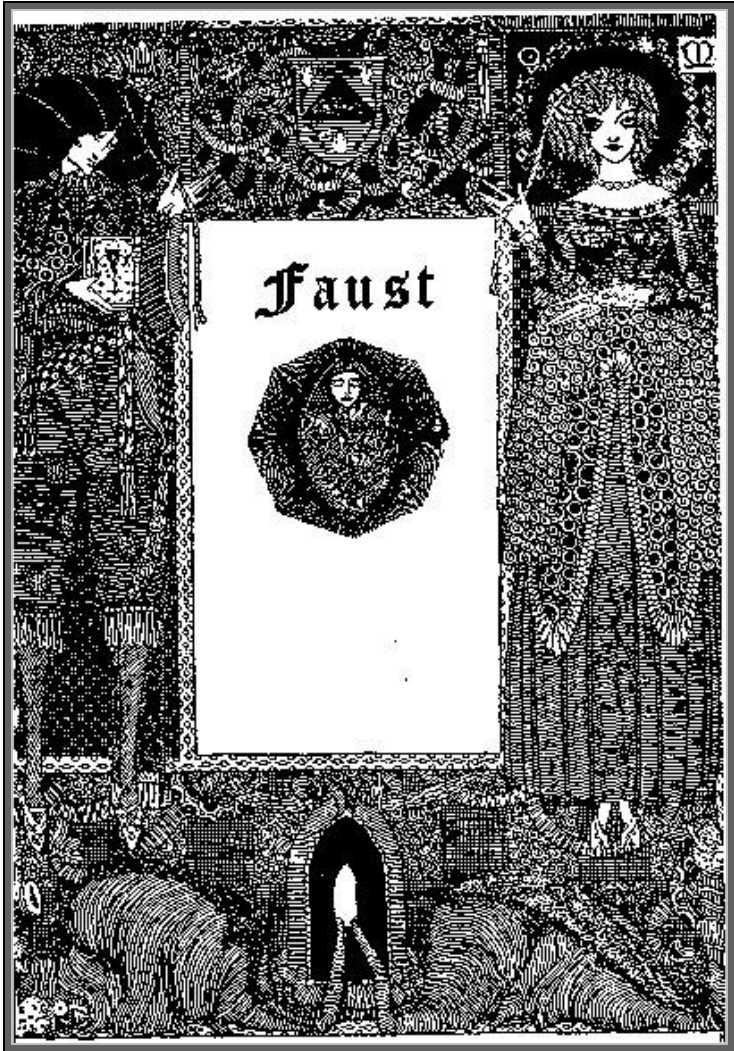
drama. Entitled *Götz von Berlichingen*, the work went directly to the heart of Goethe's contemporaries.

Goethe could not subsist on being one of the editors of a literary periodical (published by Schlosser and Merck). In May 1772 he once more began the practice of law at Wetzlar. In 1774 he wrote the book which would bring him worldwide fame, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. The outer shape of the work's plot is widely taken over from what Goethe experienced during his Wetzlar time with Charlotte Buff (1753–1828) and her fiancé, Johann Christian Kestner (1741–1800), as well as from the suicide of the author's friend Karl Wilhelm Jerusalem (1747–1772); in it, Goethe made a desperate passion of what was in reality a hearty and relaxed friendship. Despite the immense success of *Werther*, it did not bring Goethe much financial gain because copyright laws at the time were essentially nonexistent. (In later years Goethe would bypass this problem by periodically authorizing "new, revised" editions of his **Complete Works**.)

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## Preface (About the Book)

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Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Faust* is a tragic play in two parts: *Faust. Der Tragödie erster Teil* translated as: *Faust: The First Part of the Tragedy*) and

## **Faust**

*Faust. Der Tragödie zweiter Teil* (*Faust: The Second Part of the Tragedy*). Although rarely staged in its entirety, it is the play with the largest audience numbers on German-language stages. *Faust* is Goethe's most famous work and considered by many to be one of the greatest works of German literature.

Goethe completed a preliminary version of *Part One* in 1806. The 1808 publication was followed by the revised 1828–29 edition, which was the last to be edited by Goethe himself. Prior to these appeared a partial printing in 1790 of *Faust, a Fragment*.

The earliest forms of the work, known as the *Urfaust*, were developed between 1772 and 1775; however, the details of that development are no longer entirely clear. *Urfaust* has twenty-two scenes, one in prose, two largely prose and the remaining 1,441 lines in rhymed verse. The manuscript is lost, but a copy was discovered in 1886.

Goethe finished writing *Faust Part Two* in 1831. In contrast to *Faust Part One*, the focus here is no longer on the soul of Faust, which has been sold to the devil, but rather on social phenomena such as psychology, history and politics, in addition to mystical and philosophical topics. The second part formed the principal occupation of Goethe's last years. It appeared only posthumously in 1832.



## *The First Part of the Tragedy*



**Faust I, first edition, 1808**

The principal characters of *Faust Part One* include:

**Heinrich Faust**, a scholar, sometimes said to be based on the real life of Johann Georg Faust, or on Jacob Bidermann's dramatized account of the *Legend of the Doctor of Paris, Cenodoxus*

**Mephistopheles**, a Devil (Demon)

**Gretchen**, Faust's love (short for Margaret; Goethe uses both forms)

**Marthe**, Gretchen's neighbour

**Valentin**, Gretchen's brother

**Wagner**, Faust's famulus

*Faust Part One* takes place in multiple settings, the first of which is heaven. Mephistopheles makes a bet with God: he says that he can lure God's favourite human being (Faust), who is

## ***Faust***

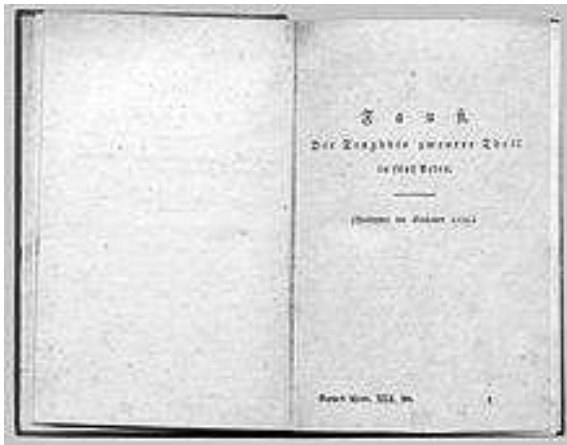
striving to learn everything that can be known, away from righteous pursuits. The next scene takes place in Faust's study where Faust, despairing at the vanity of scientific, humanitarian and religious learning, turns to magic for the showering of infinite knowledge. He suspects, however, that his attempts are failing. Frustrated, he ponders suicide, but rejects it as he hears the echo of nearby Easter celebrations begin. He goes for a walk with his assistant Wagner and is followed home by a stray poodle (the term then meant a medium-to-big-size dog, similar to a sheep dog).

In Faust's study, the poodle transforms into the devil (Mephistopheles). Faust makes an arrangement with the devil: the devil will do everything that Faust wants while he is here on Earth, and in exchange Faust will serve the devil in Hell. Faust's arrangement is that if he is pleased enough with anything the devil gives him that he wants to stay in that moment forever, then he will die in that moment.

When the devil tells Faust to sign the pact with blood, Faust complains that the devil does not trust Faust's word of honor. In the end, Mephistopheles wins the argument and Faust signs the contract with a drop of his own blood. Faust has a few excursions and then meets Margaret (also known as Gretchen). He is attracted to her and with jewellery and help from a neighbor, Martha, the devil draws Gretchen into Faust's arms. With influence from the devil, Faust seduces Gretchen. Gretchen's mother dies from a sleeping potion, administered by Gretchen to obtain privacy so that Faust could visit her. Gretchen discovers she is pregnant. Gretchen's brother condemns Faust, challenges him and falls dead at the hands of

Faust and Mephistopheles. Gretchen drowns her illegitimate child and is convicted of the murder. Faust tries to save Gretchen from death by attempting to free her from prison. Finding that she refuses to escape, Faust and the devil flee the dungeon, while voices from Heaven announce that Gretchen shall be saved – "Sie ist gerettet" – this differs from the harsher ending of *Urfaust* – "Sie ist gerichtet!" – "she is condemned." It was reported that members of the first-night audience familiar with the original *Urfaust* version cheered on hearing the amendment.

## *The Second Part of the Tragedy*



**Faust II, first edition, 1832**

Rich in classical allusion, in Part Two the romantic story of the first Faust is forgotten, and Faust wakes in a field of fairies to initiate a new cycle of adventures and purpose. The piece

## ***Faust***

consists of five acts (relatively isolated episodes) each representing a different theme. Ultimately, Faust goes to heaven, for he loses only half of the bet. Angels, who arrive as messengers of divine mercy, declare at the end of Act V: "He who strives on and lives to strive/ Can earn redemption still" (V, 11936–7).

### **Relationship between the parts**

Throughout *Part One*, Faust remains unsatisfied; the ultimate conclusion of the tragedy and the outcome of the wagers are only revealed in *Faust Part Two*. The first part represents the "small world" and takes place in Faust's own local, temporal milieu. In contrast, *Part Two* takes place in the "wide world" or *macrocosmos*.

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FAUST

*by*

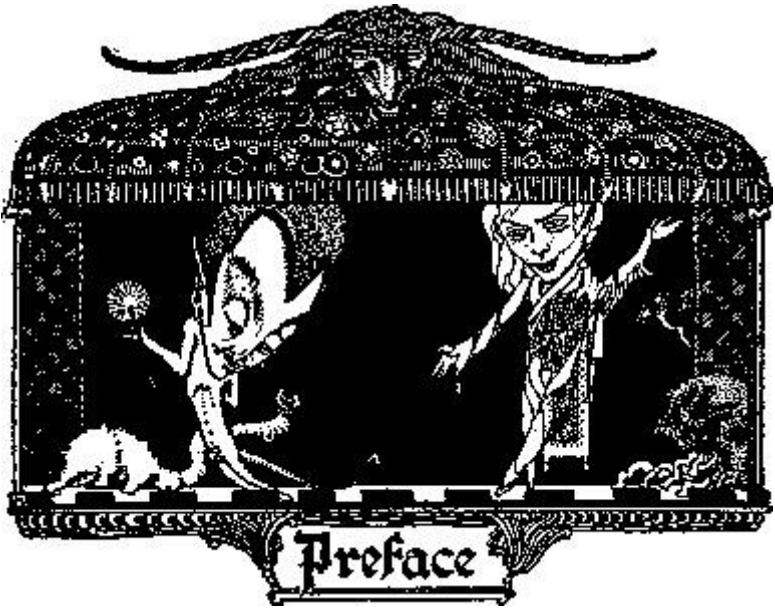
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY

Harry Clarke

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH, IN THE  
ORIGINAL METRES, BY

Bayard Taylor



## Preface

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It is twenty years since I first determined to attempt the translation of *Faust*, in the original metres. At that time, although more than a score of English translations of the First Part, and three or four of the Second Part, were in existence, the experiment had not yet been made. The prose version of Hayward seemed to have been accepted as the standard, in default of anything more satisfactory: the English critics, generally sustaining the translator in his views concerning the secondary importance of form in Poetry, practically discouraged any further attempt; and no one, familiar with rhythmical expression through the needs of his own nature, had devoted the necessary love and patience to an adequate reproduction of the great work of Goethe's life.

Mr. Brooks was the first to undertake the task, and the publication of his translation of the First Part (in 1856) induced me, for a time, to give up my own design. No previous English version exhibited such abnegation of the translator's own tastes and habits of thought, such reverent desire to present the original in its purest form. The care and conscience with which the work had been performed were so apparent, that I now state with reluctance what then seemed to me to be its only deficiencies,—a lack of the lyrical fire and fluency of the original in some passages, and an occasional lowering of the tone through the use of words which are literal, but not equivalent.



The plan of translation adopted by Mr. Brooks was so entirely my own, that when further residence in Germany and a more careful study of both parts of *Faust* had satisfied me that the field was still open,—that the means furnished by the poetical affinity of the two languages had not yet been exhausted,—nothing remained for me but to follow him in all essential particulars. His example confirmed me in the belief that there were few difficulties in the way of a nearly literal yet thoroughly rhythmical version of *Faust*, which might not be overcome by loving labor. A comparison of seventeen English translations, in the arbitrary metres adopted by the translators, sufficiently showed the danger of allowing license in this respect: the white light of Goethe's thought was thereby passed through the tinted glass of other minds, and assumed the coloring of each. Moreover, the plea of selecting different metres in the hope of producing a similar effect is unreasonable, where the identical metres are possible.



The value of form, in a poetical work, is the first question to be considered. No poet ever understood this question more thoroughly than Goethe himself, or expressed a more positive opinion in regard to it. The alternative modes of translation which he presents (reported by Riemer, quoted by Mrs. Austin, in her "Characteristics of Goethe," and accepted by Mr. Hayward),[A] are quite independent of his views concerning the value of form, which we find given elsewhere, in the clearest and most emphatic manner.[B] Poetry is not simply a fashion of expression: it is the form of expression absolutely required by a certain class of ideas. Poetry, indeed, may be distinguished from Prose by the single circumstance, that it is the utterance of whatever in man cannot be perfectly uttered in any other than a rhythmical form: it is useless to say that the naked meaning is independent of the form: on the contrary, the form contributes essentially to the fullness of the meaning. In Poetry which endures through its own inherent vitality, there is no forced union of these two elements. They are as intimately blended, and with the same mysterious beauty, as the sexes in the ancient Hermaphroditus. To attempt to represent Poetry in Prose, is very much like attempting to translate music into speech.[C]

[A] "'There are two maxims of translation,' says he: 'the one requires that the author, of a foreign nation, be brought to us in such a manner that we may regard him as our own; the other, on the contrary, demands

of us that we transport ourselves over to him, and adopt his situation, his mode of speaking, and his peculiarities. The advantages of both are sufficiently known to all instructed persons, from masterly examples." Is it necessary, however, that there should always be this alternative? Where the languages are kindred, and equally capable of all varieties of metrical expression, may not both these "maxims" be observed in the same translation? Goethe, it is true, was of the opinion that *Faust* ought to be given, in French, in the manner of Clement Marot; but this was undoubtedly because he felt the inadequacy of modern French to express the naive, simple realism of many passages. The same objection does not apply to English. There are a few archaic expressions in *Faust*, but no more than are still allowed—nay, frequently encouraged—in the English of our day.

[B] "You are right," said Goethe; "there are great and mysterious agencies included in the various forms of Poetry. If the substance of my 'Roman Elegies' were to be expressed in the tone and measure of Byron's 'Don Juan,' it would really have an atrocious effect."—*Eckermann.*

"The rhythm," said Goethe, "is an unconscious result of the poetic mood. If one should stop to consider it mechanically, when about to write a poem, one would become bewildered and accomplish nothing of real poetical value."—*Ibid.*

"*All that is poetic in character should be rhythmically treated!* Such is my conviction; and if even a sort of poetic prose should be gradually introduced, it would only show that the distinction between prose and poetry had been completely lost sight of."—*Goethe to Schiller, 1797.*

Tycho Mommsen, in his excellent essay, *Die Kunst des Deutschen Uebersetzers aus neueren Sprachen*, goes so far as to say: "The metrical or rhymed modelling of a poetical work is so essentially the germ of its being, that, rather than by giving it up, we might hope to construct a similar work of art before the eyes of our countrymen, by giving up or changing the substance. The immeasurable result which has followed works wherein the form has been retained—such as the Homer of Voss, and the Shakespeare of Tieck and Schlegel—is an incontrovertible evidence of the vitality of the endeavor."

[C] "Goethe's poems exercise a great sway over me, not only by their meaning, but also by their rhythm. It is a language which stimulates me to composition."—*Beethoven*.



The various theories of translation from the Greek and Latin poets have been admirably stated by Dryden in his Preface to the "Translations from Ovid's Epistles," and I do not wish to continue the endless discussion,—especially as our literature needs examples, not opinions. A recent expression, however, carries with it so much authority, that I feel bound to present some considerations which the accomplished scholar seems to have overlooked. Mr. Lewes[D] justly says: "The effect of poetry is a compound of music and suggestion; this music and this suggestion are intermingled in words, which to alter is to alter the effect. For words in poetry are not, as in prose, simple representatives of objects and ideas: they are parts of an organic whole,—they are tones in the harmony." He thereupon illustrates the effect of translation by changing certain well-known English stanzas into others, equivalent in meaning, but lacking their felicity of words, their grace and melody. I cannot accept this illustration as valid, because Mr. Lewes purposely omits the very quality which an honest translator should exhaust his skill in endeavoring to reproduce. He turns away from the *one best* word or phrase in the English lines he quotes, whereas the translator seeks precisely that one best word or phrase (having *all* the resources of his language at command),

## **Faust**

to represent what is said in *another* language. More than this, his task is not simply mechanical: he must feel, and be guided by, a secondary inspiration. Surrendering himself to the full possession of the spirit which shall speak through him, he receives, also, a portion of the same creative power. Mr. Lewes reaches this conclusion: "If, therefore, we reflect what a poem *Faust* is, and that it contains almost every variety of style and metre, it will be tolerably evident that no one unacquainted with the original can form an adequate idea of it from translation,"[E] which is certainly correct of any translation wherein something of the rhythmical variety and beauty of the original is not retained. That very much of the rhythmical character may be retained in English, was long ago shown by Mr. Carlyle,[F] in the passages which he translated, both literally and rhythmically, from the *Helena* (Part Second). In fact, we have so many instances of the possibility of reciprocally transferring the finest qualities of English and German poetry, that there is no sufficient excuse for an unmetrical translation of *Faust*. I refer especially to such subtle and melodious lyrics as "The Castle by the Sea," of Uhland, and the "Silent Land" of Salis, translated by Mr. Longfellow; Goethe's "Minstrel" and "Coptic Song," by Dr. Hedge; Heine's "Two Grenadiers," by Dr. Furness and many of Heine's songs by Mr Leland; and also to the German translations of English lyrics, by Freiligrath and Strodtmann.[G]

[D] Life of Goethe (Book VI).

[E] Mr. Lewes gives the following advice: "The English reader would perhaps best succeed who should first read Dr.

Anster's brilliant paraphrase, and then carefully go through Hayward's prose translation." This is singularly at variance with the view he has just expressed. Dr. Anster's version is an almost incredible dilution of the original, written in *other* metres; while Hayward's entirely omits the element of poetry.

[F] Foreign Review, 1828.

[G] When Freiligrath can thus give us Walter Scott:—

"Kommt, wie der Wind kommt,  
Wenn Wälder erzittern  
Kommt, wie die Brandung  
Wenn Flotten zersplittern!  
Schnell heran, schnell herab,  
Schneller kommt Al'e!—  
Häuptling und Bub' und Knapp,  
Herr und Vasalle!"

or Strodtmann thus reproduce Tennyson:—

"Es fällt der Strahl auf Burg und Thal,  
Und schneeige Gipfel, reich an Sagen;  
Viel' Lichter wehn auf blauen Seen,  
Bergab die Wasserstürze jagen!  
Blas, Hüfthorn, blas, in Wiederhall erschallend:  
Blas, Horn—antwortet, Echos, hallend, hallend, hallend!"

—it must be a dull ear which would be satisfied with the omission of rhythm and rhyme.

I have a more serious objection, however, to urge against Mr. Hayward's prose translation. Where all the restraints of verse are flung aside, we should expect, at least, as accurate a reproduction of the sense, spirit, and tone of the original, as the genius of our language will permit. So far from having given us such a reproduction, Mr. Hayward not only occasionally mistakes the exact meaning of the German text,<sup>[H]</sup> but, wherever two phrases may be used to express the meaning with equal fidelity, he very frequently selects that which has the less grace, strength, or beauty.<sup>[I]</sup>

[H] On his second page, the line *Mein Lied ertönt der unbekanntten Menge*, "My song sounds to the unknown multitude," is translated: "My *sorrow* voices itself to the strange throng." Other English translators, I notice, have followed Mr. Hayward in mistaking *Lied* for *Leid*.

[I] I take but one out of numerous instances, for the sake of illustration. The close of the Soldier's Song (Part I. Scene II.) is:—

"Kühn is das Mühen,  
Herrlich der Lohn!



Und die Soldaten  
Ziehen davon."

Literally:

Bold is the endeavor,  
Splendid the pay!  
And the soldiers  
March away.

This Mr. Hayward translates:—

Bold the adventure,  
Noble the reward—  
And the soldiers  
Are off.

For there are few things which may not be said, in English, in a twofold manner,—one poetic, and the other prosaic. In German, equally, a word which in ordinary use has a bare prosaic character may receive a fairer and finer quality from its place in verse. The prose translator should certainly be able to feel the manifestation of this law in both languages, and should so choose his words as to meet their reciprocal requirements. A man, however, who is not keenly sensible to the power and beauty and value of rhythm, is likely to overlook these delicate