

FAUST; A TRAGEDY

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Faust; a tragedy by T. W. von Goethe & Charles Hartpole Bowen

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T. W. VON GOETHE & CHARLES HARTPOLE BOWEN

FAUST; A TRAGEDY

F A U S T.

A TRAGEDY

BY

T. W. von GOETHE
"

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH VERSE

BY

CHARLES HARTPOLE BOWEN

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

LONDON
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
1878.

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ESB

FORTY YEARS have well nigh elapsed since the following translation of FAUST was written. Put aside for so long a period, it may well seem strange that it should now appear in print. The only reason for this that the writer has to give, is a desire to save any friends who may hereafter care to read it the trouble of perusing a manuscript.

KILNACOURT, QUEEN'S COUNTY:

May 24, 1877.

452889

F A U S T.

DEDICATION.

YE wild and spectre forms, again ye rise,
The troubled vision of my earliest youth ;
Say ! shall I grasp ye ere once more it flies,
And do I feel that this delusion sooth
My heart still haunts ? Come then before my eyes,
Crowd forth from mist and vaporous cloud uncouth ;
My spirit feels within its inmost source
The wizard breath that wafts your onward course.

With ye, ye bring the thoughts of happy days,
And much-loved shades long lost again appear,
Whilst friendship's voice like half-remembered lays
Of some old tale, and early love's, I hear,
And then the pang returns and memory strays
Life's tangled paths anew. While sorrow near
With echoing plaint oft names the dear ones gone
From this dark way that I now tread alone.

Alas ! they never more shall hear my song,
The souls for whom I first awoke its strain.
For ever vanished is the friendly throng,
I loathe the strange applause that comes in vain,
Since those to whom it rightly should belong
Relentless fate hath bound with noiseless chain ;
Or spared as yet, their weary course she goads
Through distant lands whilst void our old abodes.

Again th' unwonted longing for the still
And earnest spirit realm my heart recalls ;
The fleeting tones with half-formed numbers fill
My murmuring song. As when the low breeze falls
Upon the Folian string I feel its thrill ;
Tear follows tear, awe softens, not appals
My nerved heart, that now grows mild and weak,
Earth fades away, and with the past I speak.

PROLOGUE.

In Heaven.

THE LORD; THE HEAVENLY HOST. *Afterwards* ME-
PHISTOPHELES. THE THREE ARCHANGELS *come forward*

RAPHAEL

The sun chimes on in ancient wise
Amid the brother spheres of heaven ;
And his forewritten task still plies
With thunderspeed for ever driven.
Immortal strength the angels drain
Whilst gazing on the unfathomed truth.
The high and boundless works remain
All bright as in creation's youth.

GABRIEL

And swiftly, ever swiftly spinning,
Earth her varied pomp revolves,
Deep and fearful, night beginning,
Still as heavenly light dissolves
In mountain waves, the restless ocean
Foams the deep-based rocks among,
And rocks and seas with endless motion
In one swift course are whirled along.

Faust.

MICHAEL

And storms with storms in might contending
From land and sea for ever roar,
Their mingled breath around is blending
A chain of deep unresting power.
The flashing blast on high careering,
Flames before the thunder's way ;
But we thy servants, Lord ! revering,
Enjoy the mildly changing day.

ALL THREE

Immortal strength the angels drain,
Tho' none thy purpose fathom may ;
Thy high and glorious works remain
All bright as at creation's day.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Since thou, O Lord, once more dost condescend
To ask for our affairs, we venture near ;
And as at times thine eye on me doth bend
Without displeasure, therefore am I here
Amid the general throng, and I beseech,
Although this goodly circle should cry shame,
That thou wilt pardon my uncourtly speech,
Which, to say truth, now feels a little lame ;
My pathos, too, I fear I must confess,
Might chance to draw from thee a laugh, unless

To laugh is not thy wont ; its theme being low,
As I of suns and worlds but little know,
And merely occupy myself with man,
Since first to plague his neighbour he began ;
For still unchanged I find earth's little god,
And all his ways and actions quite as odd
As when thou sent'st him forth ; indeed he might
Have gone on smoothly if of heaven's light
Thou hadst not given him that small glimpse which he
Calls knowledge, and contrives through it to be
More beastly than the beast, a mode of living
Whereby he thanks thee humbly for the giving.
He seems most like—I trust if 'tis improper
Thou wilt excuse my saying—a grasshopper,
That little long-legged thing that flits and springs,
Then down amid the grass its old song sings,
And in the grass he ever should repose !
In every filthy mess he pokes his nose.

THE LORD

Hast thou then nothing more to tell or ask ?
Still to find fault for ever thy sole task.
On the whole earth is nothing to thy will ?

MEPHISTOPHELES

No, Lord. I find all there as ever ill,
Man's wretched lot with troubles so beset
That even to plague him I myself must fret.