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C. A. BUCHHEIM

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GERMAN CLASSICS

GOETHE

EGMONT, A TRAGEDY

BUCHHEIM

London

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Clarendon Press Series

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GERMAN CLASSICS

LESSING, GOETHE, SCHILLER

EDITED

WITH ENGLISH NOTES, ETC.

BY

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VOLUME I

Egmont, a Tragedy by Goethe

THIRD EDITION

Oxford

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M.DCCCLXXXI

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SIXTH THOUSAND

P R E F A C E.

IN the year 1825 Goethe had, as we are told by Eckermann, the gratification of hearing from an Englishman 'that the interest felt by his countrymen in the German language was already considerable, and was growing daily, so that there was no young Englishman of good family who did not learn German.' How much more rejoiced would Goethe, who had a great admiration for everything English, have been, could he have lived to see the vast progress which the study of German has made in this country since that time; could he have lived to witness the general acknowledgment of German as an essential element of a liberal education for the merchant, the scholar, and the man of science; the warm appreciation of German poetry by all well-educated Englishmen; and the official recognition of the German language and literature in the great seats of learning in this country. The last-mentioned circumstance, in particular, has greatly contributed to raise the standard of the study of German. It is now universally admitted that German must be studied as a classical language, and that the great authors of Germany require, and fully deserve a more scholarly interpretation than they received in former times. In my editions of German Classics I have long ago acted on this principle, and I have spared no pains to edit them—to the best of my ability—in the manner in which Greek and Latin Classics have been edited by learned commentators.

As to this volume, which forms the first part of the series of German Classics confided to my editorship by the Delegates

of the Clarendon Press, I will be brief. My commentary to *Egmont* is the result of several years' study and labour. This drama is replete with historical allusions, far more so than is generally supposed. On account of this fact, I have carefully studied all the original sources, and have accordingly explained almost every passage which has a historical bearing. In doing so I have thought it right to quote verbatim those passages from Strada's work on the 'Belgian War,' upon which nearly all the historical allusions in the drama are founded. These passages I have given both in the Latin original and in an English translation; thinking that the former will be of interest to classical students, and the latter absolutely necessary to those who may not be acquainted with Latin. For my references to that remarkable work I have used the 12mo. edition printed at Rome in 1648, which consists of two volumes. Goethe required for his purpose the first volume only, the title of which runs, 'Famiani Stradae Romani E Societate Jesu de Bello Belgico Decas Prima. Ab Excessu Caroli V. Imp. etc.*'

In point of language this drama is (particularly in the conversations between the citizens) perhaps more difficult than any other German classical work; and therefore, knowing as I do from practical experience, how necessary it is to remove all unusual difficulties from the path of the student of German, I have given such explanations and renderings of idiomatic phrases, as seemed to me needful for the generality of readers. In this task I have found considerable help in the two excellent translations of *Egmont*, which this country is fortunate enough to possess. I refer to the English version by Miss Swanwick, the well-known learned translator from Greek and German, and to the recent translation by the

* The well-known and learned commentator Heinrich Düntzer was the first to accumulate a mass of historical and other information with reference to Goethe's *Egmont*, in his valuable running Commentary, published in 1834, and his minute researches have considerably lightened my task in collecting the necessary materials.

accomplished scholar, Mr. A. D. Coleridge. The other translations of *Egmont*, published in this country and in America, are of but small value.

The *Notes* will also be found to contain a number of grammatical and etymological remarks, and various philological comparisons, referring to modern and ancient languages. The text of the original has been carefully revised, and Arguments have been prefixed to each Act.

The chief *modern* sources which I have used for the Historical Introduction are the well-known works of Schiller, Prescott, and Motley on the History of the Netherlands; and likewise the elaborate introduction to the *Correspondance de Philippe II*, by the learned Belgian archivist, M. Gachard, and the excellent vindication of *Egmont* and *Horn*, based on authentic documents, which has been published by M. T. Juste, under the title *Le Comte d'Egmont et le Comte d'Horne*.

In the Critical Analysis I have given the history of the composition of the drama, in accordance with the data gathered from Goethe's own writings; and I have also availed myself in my criticisms of his own opinions on his production, which give us the right clue to the standpoint from which the critic ought to view his drama. I have further given nearly all the salient points of Schiller's criticism on *Egmont*.

It is to be hoped that the *Life of Goethe*—brief and incomplete as it is—will be useful to those to whom the subject is new, and will, at least, lead them on to peruse the works pointed out as giving full information on the life and writings of our author. The appended Bibliographical Tables—arranged according to subjects—will show at a glance the principal works of Goethe, with the date of their composition, and the existing English translations.

In conclusion I have to render my thanks to the Rev. G. W. Kitchin, M.A., who has given me much assistance in my task, and to whom I should like to be able to express my gratitude as warmly as I feel it.
