



FAUST

JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE

Global Grey ebooks

FAUST

**BY
JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE**

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED 1808 - 1832

Faust By Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe.

This edition was created and published by Global Grey

©GlobalGrey 2019



globalgreyebooks.com

CONTENTS

Dedication

Prologue In The Theatre

Prologue In Heaven

FIRST PART OF THE TRAGEDY

Night

Before The Gate

Study (Poodle Scene)

Study (Pact)

Auerbach's Cellar In Leipzig

Witches' Kitchen

A Street

Evening. A Small And Neat Room

Promenade

The Neighbour's House

A Street

Garden

A Summer-House

Forest And Cavern

Margaret's Room

Martha's Garden

At The Well

Zwinger

Night

Cathedral

Walpurgis-Night

Walpurgis-Nacht's Dream

A Gloomy Day

Night

Dungeon

SECOND PART OF THE TRAGEDY

Act 1

Act 2

Act 3

Act 4

Act 5

DEDICATION

Ye wavering shapes, again ye do enfold me,
 As erst upon my troubled sight ye stole;
 Shall I this time attempt to clasp, to hold ye?
 Still for the fond illusion yearns my soul?
 Ye press around! Come then, your captive hold me,
 As upward from the vapoury mist ye roll;
 Within my breast youth's throbbing pulse is bounding,
 Fann'd by the magic breath your march surrounding.

Shades fondly loved appear, your train attending,
 And visions fair of many a blissful day;
 First-love and friendship their fond accents blending,
 Like to some ancient, half-expiring lay;
 Sorrow revives, her wail of anguish sending
 Back o'er life's devious labyrinthine way,
 And names the dear ones, they whom Fate bereaving
 Of life's fair hours, left me behind them grieving.

They hear me not my later cadence singing,
 The souls to whom my earlier lays I sang;
 Dispersed the throng, their severed flight now winging;
 Mute are the voices that responsive rang.
 For stranger crowds the Orphean lyre now stringing,
 E'en their applause is to my heart a pang;
 Of old who listened to my song, glad hearted,
 If yet they live, now wander widely parted.

A yearning long unfelt, each impulse swaying,
 To yon calm spirit-realm uplifts my soul;
 In faltering cadence, as when Zephyr playing,
 Fans the Aeolian harp, my numbers roll;
 Tear follows tear, my steadfast heart obeying
 The tender impulse, loses its control;

What I possess as from afar I see;
Those I have lost become realities to me.

PROLOGUE IN THE THEATRE

MANAGER. DRAMATIC POET. MERRYMAN.

MANAGER

Ye twain, in trouble and distress
 True friends whom I so oft have found,
 Say, for our scheme on German ground,
 What prospect have we of success?
 Fain would I please the public, win their thanks;
 They live and let live, hence it is but meet.
 The posts are now erected, and the planks,
 And all look forward to a festal treat.
 Their places taken, they, with eyebrows rais'd,
 Sit patiently, and fain would be amaz'd.
 I know the art to hit the public taste,
 Yet ne'er of failure felt so keen a dread;
 True, they are not accustomed to the best,
 But then appalling the amount they've read..
 How make our entertainment striking, new,
 And yet significant and pleasing too?
 For to be plain, I love to see the throng,
 As to our booth the living tide progresses;
 As wave on wave successive rolls along,
 And through heaven's narrow portal forceful presses;
 Still in broad daylight, ere the clock strikes four,
 With blows their way towards the box they take;
 And, as for bread in famine, at the baker's door,
 For tickets are content their necks to break.
 Such various minds the bard alone can sway,
 My friend, oh work this miracle to-day!

POET

Oh of the motley throng speak not before me,
At whose aspect the Spirit wings its flight!

Conceal the surging concourse, I implore thee,
Whose vortex draws us with resistless might.
No, to some peaceful heavenly nook restore me,
Where only for the bard blooms pure delight,
Where love and friendship yield their choicest blessing,
Our heart's true bliss, with god-like hand caressing.

What in the spirit's depths was there created,
What shyly there the lip shaped forth in sound;
A failure now, with words now fitly mated,
In the wild tumult of the hour is drown'd;
Full oft the poet's thought for years bath waited
Until at length with perfect form 'tis crowned;
What dazzles, for the moment born, must perish;
What genuine is posterity will cherish.

MERRYMAN

This cant about posterity I hate;
About posterity were I to prate,
Who then the living would amuse? For they
Will have diversion, ay, and 'tis their due.
A sprightly fellow's presence at your play,
Methinks should also count for something too;
Whose genial wit the audience still inspires,
Knows from their changeful mood no angry feeling;
A wider circle he desires,
To their heart's depths more surely thus appealing.
To work, then! Give a master-piece, my friend;
Bring Fancy with her choral trains before us,
Sense, reason, feeling, passion, but attend!
Let folly also swell the tragic chorus.

MANAGER

In chief, of incident enough prepare!
 A show they want, they come to gape and stare.
 Spin for their eyes abundant occupation,
 SO that the multitude may wondering gaze,
 You by sheer bulk have won your reputation,

By mass alone can you subdue the masses,
 Each then selects in time what suits his bent.
 Bring much, you something bring for various classes,
 And from the house goes every one content.
 You give a piece, abroad in pieces send it!
 'Tis a ragout--success most needs attend it;
 'Tis easy to serve up, as easy to invent.
 A finish'd whole what boots it to present!
 Full soon the public will in pieces rend it.

POET

How mean such handicraft as this you cannot feel!
 How it revolts the genuine artist's mind!
 The sorry trash in which these coxcombs deal,
 Is here approved on principle, I find.

MANAGER

Such a reproof disturbs me not a whit!
 Who on efficient work is bent,
 Must choose the fittest instrument.
 Consider! 'tis soft wood you have to split;
 Think too for whom you write, I pray!
 One comes to while an hour away;
 One from the festive board, a sated guest;
 Others, more dreaded than the rest,
 From journal-reading hurry to the play.
 As to a masquerade, with absent minds, they press,
 Sheer curiosity their footsteps winging;
 Ladies display their persons and their dress,
 Actors unpaid their service bringing.

What dreams beguile you on your poet's height?
 What puts a full house in a merry mood?
 More closely view your patrons of the night!
 The half are cold, the half are rude.
 One, the play over, craves a game of cards;
 Another a wild night in wanton joy would spend.
 Poor fools the muses' fair regards.
 Why court for such a paltry end?
 I tell you, give them more, still more, 'tis all I ask,
 Thus you will ne'er stray widely from the goal;
 Your audience seek to mystify, cajole;--
 To satisfy them--that's a harder task.
 What ails thee? art enraptured or distressed?

POET

Depart! elsewhere another servant choose
 What! shall the bard his godlike power abuse?
 Man's loftiest right, kind nature's high bequest,
 For your mean purpose basely sport away?
 Whence comes his mastery o'er the human breast,
 Whence o'er the elements his sway,
 But from the harmony that, gushing from his soul,
 Draws back into his heart the wondrous whole?
 With careless hand when round her spindle, Nature
 Winds the interminable thread of life;
 When 'mid the clash of Being every creature
 Mingles in harsh inextricable strife;
 Who deals their course unvaried till it falleth,
 In rhythmic flow to music's measur'd tone?
 Each solitary note whose genius calleth,
 To swell the mighty choir in unison?
 Who in the raging storm sees passion low'ring?
 Or flush of earnest thought in evening's glow?
 Who every blossom in sweet spring-time flowering
 Along the loved one's path would strow?

Who, Nature's green familiar leaves entwining,
 Wreath's glory's garland, won on every field?
 Makes sure Olympus, heavenly powers combining?
 Man's mighty spirit, in the bard reveal'd!

MERRYMAN

Come then, employ your lofty inspiration,
 And carry on the poet's avocation,
 Just as we carry on a love affair.
 Two meet by chance, are pleased, they linger there,
 Insensibly are link'd, they scarce know how;
 Fortune seems now propitious, adverse now,
 Then come alternate rapture and despair;
 And 'tis a true romance ere one's aware.
 Just such a drama let us now compose.
 Plunge boldly into life--its depths disclose!
 Each lives it, not to many is it known,
 'Twill interest wheresoever seiz'd and shown;
 Bright pictures, but obscure their meaning:
 A ray of truth through error gleaming,
 Thus you the best elixir brew,
 To charm mankind, and edify them too.
 Then youth's fair blossoms crowd to view your play,
 And wait as on an oracle; while they,
 The tender souls, who love the melting mood,
 Suck from your work their melancholy food;
 Now this one, and now that, you deeply stir,
 Each sees the working of his heart laid bare.
 Their tears, their laughter, you command with ease,
 The lofty still they honour, the illusive love.
 Your finish'd gentlemen you ne'er can please;
 A growing mind alone will grateful prove.

POET

Then give me back youth's golden prime,
 When my own spirit too was growing,
 When from my heart th' unbidden rhyme
 Gush'd forth, a fount for ever flowing;
 Then shadowy mist the world conceal'd,
 And every bud sweet promise made,
 Of wonders yet to be reveal'd,
 As through the vales, with blooms inlaid,
 Culling a thousand flowers I stray'd.
 Naught had I, yet a rich profusion!
 The thirst for truth, joy in each fond illusion.
 Give me unquell'd those impulses to prove;--
 Rapture so deep, its ecstasy was pain,
 The power of hate, the energy of love,
 Give me, oh give me back my youth again!

MERRYMAN

Youth, my good friend, you certainly require
 When foes in battle round are pressing,
 When a fair maid, her heart on fire,
 Hangs on your neck with fond caressing,
 When from afar, the victor's crown,
 To reach the hard-won goal inciteth;
 When from the whirling dance, to drown
 Your sense, the night's carouse inviteth.
 But the familiar chords among
 Boldly to sweep, with graceful cunning,
 While to its goal, the verse along
 Its winding path is sweetly running;
 This task is yours, old gentlemen, to-day;
 Nor are you therefore less in reverence held;
 Age does not make us childish, as folk say,
 It finds us genuine children e'en in eld.

MANAGER

A truce to words, mere empty sound,
Let deeds at length appear, my friends!
While idle compliments you round,
You might achieve some useful ends.
Why talk of the poetic vein?
Who hesitates will never know it;
If bards ye are, as ye maintain,
Now let your inspiration show it.
To you is known what we require,
Strong drink to sip is our desire;
Come, brew me such without delay!
To-morrow sees undone, what happens not to-day
Still forward press, nor ever tire!
The possible, with steadfast trust,
Resolve should by the forelock grasp;
Then she will ne'er let go her clasp,
And labours on, because she must.
Therefore in bringing out your play,
Nor scenes nor mechanism spare!
Heaven's lamps employ, the greatest and the least,
Be lavish of the stellar lights,
Water, and fire, and rocky heights,
Spare not at all, nor birds, nor beast.
Thus let creation's ample sphere
Forthwith in this our narrow booth appear,
And with considerate speed, through fancy's spell,
Journey from heaven, thence through the world, to bell!

PROLOGUE IN HEAVEN

THE LORD. THE HEAVENLY HOSTS.
Afterwards MEPHISTOPHELES.

Time three Archangels come forward

RAPHAEL

The Sun, in ancient guise, competing
With brother spheres in rival song,
With thunder-march, his orb completing,
Moves his predestin'd course along;
His aspect to the powers supernal
Gives strength, though fathom him none may;
Transcending thought, the works eternal
Are fair as on the primal day.

GABRIEL

With speed, thought baffling, unabating,
Earth's splendour whirls in circling flight;
Its Eden-brightness alternating
With solemn, awe-inspiring night;
Ocean's broad waves in wild commotion,
Against the rocks' deep base are hurled;
And with the spheres, both rock and ocean
Eternally are swiftly whirled.

MICHAEL

And tempests roar in emulation
From sea to land, from land to sea,
And raging form, without cessation,
A chain of wondrous agency,
Full in the thunder's path careering,

Flaring the swift destructions play;
 But, Lord, Thy servants are revering
 The mild procession of thy day.

THE THREE

Thine aspect to the powers supernal
 Gives strength, though fathom thee none may;
 And all thy works, sublime, eternal,
 Are fair as on the primal day.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Since thou, O Lord, approachest us once more,
 And how it fares with us, to ask art fain,
 Since thou hast kindly welcom'd me of yore,
 Thou see'st me also now among thy train.
 Excuse me, fine harangues I cannot make,
 Though all the circle look on me with scorn;
 My pathos soon thy laughter would awake,
 Hadst thou the laughing mood not long forsworn.
 Of suns and worlds I nothing have to say,
 I see alone mankind's self-torturing pains.
 The little world-god still the self-same stamp retains,
 And is as wondrous now as on the primal day.
 Better he might have fared, poor wight,
 Hadst thou not given him a gleam of heavenly light;
 Reason, he names it, and doth so
 Use it, than brutes more brutish still to grow.
 With deference to your grace, he seems to me
 Like any long-legged grasshopper to be,
 Which ever flies, and flying springs,
 And in the grass its ancient ditty sings.
 Would he but always in the grass repose!
 In every heap of dung he thrusts his nose.

THE LORD

Hast thou naught else to say? Is blame
 In coming here, as ever, thy sole aim?
 Does nothing on the earth to thee seem right?

MEPHISTOPHELES

No, Lord! I find things there, as ever, in sad plight.
 Men, in their evil days, move my compassion;
 Such sorry things to plague is nothing worth.

THE LORD

Know'st thou my servant, Faust?

MEPHISTOPHELES

The doctor?

THE LORD

Right.

MEPHISTOPHELES

He serves thee truly in a wondrous fashion.
 Poor fool! His food and drink are not of earth.
 An inward impulse hurries him afar,
 Himself half conscious of his frenzied mood;
 From heaven claimeth he the fairest star,
 And from the earth craves every highest good,
 And all that's near, and all that's far,
 Fails to allay the tumult in his blood.

THE LORD

Though in perplexity he serves me now,
 I soon will lead him where more light appears;
 When buds the sapling, doth the gardener know
 That flowers and fruit will deck the coming years.

MEPHISTOPHELES

What wilt thou wager? Him thou yet shall lose,
 If leave to me thou wilt but give,
 Gently to lead him as I choose!

THE LORD

So long as he on earth doth live,
 So long 'tis not forbidden thee.
 Man still must err, while he doth strive.

MEPHISTOPHELES

I thank you; for not willingly
 I traffic with the dead, and still aver
 That youth's plump blooming cheek I very much prefer.
 I'm not at home to corpses; 'tis my way,
 Like cats with captive mice to toy and play.

THE LORD

Enough! 'tis granted thee! Divert
 This mortal spirit from his primal source;
 Him, canst thou seize, thy power exert
 And lead him on thy downward course,
 Then stand abash'd, when thou perforce must own,
 A good man in his darkest aberration,
 Of the right path is conscious still.

MEPHISTOPHELES

'Tis done! Full soon thou'lt see my exultation;
 As for my bet no fears I entertain.
 And if my end I finally should gain,
 Excuse my triumphing with all my soul.
 Dust he shall eat, ay, and with relish take,
 As did my cousin, the renowned snake.

THE LORD

Here too thou'rt free to act without control;
 I ne'er have cherished hate for such as thee.
 Of all the spirits who deny,
 The scoffer is least wearisome to me.
 Ever too prone is man activity to shirk,
 In unconditioned rest he fain would live;
 Hence this companion purposely I give,
 Who stirs, excites, and must, as devil, work.
 But ye, the genuine sons of heaven, rejoice!
 In the full living beauty still rejoice!
 May that which works and lives, the ever-growing,
 In bonds of love enfold you, mercy-fraught,
 And Seeming's changeful forms, around you flowing,
 Do ye arrest, in ever-during thought!
Heaven closes, the Archangels disperse.

MEPHISTOPHELES *alone*

The ancient one I like sometimes to see,
 And not to break with him am always civil;
 'Tis courteous in so great a lord as he,
 To speak so kindly even to the devil.

FIRST PART OF THE TRAGEDY

NIGHT

A high vaulted narrow Gothic chamber.

FAUST, restless, seated at his desk.

FAUST

I have, alas! Philosophy,
 Medicine, Jurisprudence too,
 And to my cost Theology,
 With ardent labour, studied through.
 And here I stand, with all my lore,
 Poor fool, no wiser than before.
 Magister, doctor styled, indeed,
 Already these ten years I lead,
 Up, down, across, and to and fro,
 My pupils by the nose,--and learn,
 That we in truth can nothing know!
 That in my heart like fire doth burn.
 'Tis true I've more cunning than all your dull tribe,
 Magister and doctor, priest, parson, and scribe;
 Scruple or doubt comes not to enthrall me,
 Neither can devil nor hell now appal me--
 Hence also my heart must all pleasure forego!
 I may not pretend, aught rightly to know,
 I may not pretend, through teaching, to find
 A means to improve or convert mankind.
 Then I have neither goods nor treasure,
 No worldly honour, rank, or pleasure;
 No dog in such fashion would longer live!
 Therefore myself to magic I give,
 In hope, through spirit-voice and might,
 Secrets now veiled to bring to light,
 That I no more, with aching brow,

Need speak of what I nothing know;
 That I the force may recognise
 That binds creation's inmost energies;
 Her vital powers, her embryo seeds survey,
 And fling the trade in empty words away.
 O full-orb'd moon, did but thy rays
 Their last upon mine anguish gaze!
 Beside this desk, at dead of night,
 Oft have I watched to hail thy light:
 Then, pensive friend! o'er book and scroll,
 With soothing power, thy radiance stole!
 In thy dear light, ah, might I climb,
 Freely, some mountain height sublime,
 Round mountain caves with spirits ride,
 In thy mild haze o'er meadows glide,
 And, purged from knowledge-fumes, renew
 My spirit, in thy healing dew!
 Woe's me! still prison'd in the gloom
 Of this abhorr'd and musty room!
 Where heaven's dear light itself doth pass,
 But dimly through the painted glass!
 Hemmed in by book-heaps, piled around,
 Worm-eaten, hid 'neath dust and mould,
 Which to the high vault's topmost bound,
 A smoke-stained paper doth enfold;
 With boxes round thee piled, and glass,
 And many a useless instrument,
 With old ancestral lumber blent--
 This is thy world! a world! alas!
 And dost thou ask why heaves thy heart,
 With tighten'd pressure in thy breast?
 Why the dull ache will not depart,
 By which thy life-pulse is oppress'd?
 Instead of nature's living sphere,
 Created for mankind of old,

Brute skeletons surround thee here,
And dead men's bones in smoke and mould.

Up! Forth into the distant land!
Is not this book of mystery
By Nostradamus' proper hand,
An all-sufficient guide? Thou'lt see
The courses of the stars unroll'd;
When nature doth her thoughts unfold
To thee, thy soul shall rise, and seek
Communion high with her to hold,
As spirit doth with spirit speak!
Vain by dull poring to divine
The meaning of each hallow'd sign.
Spirits! I feel you hov'ring near;
Make answer, if my voice ye hear!

He opens the book and perceives the sign of the Macrocosmos.

Ah! at this spectacle through every sense,
What sudden ecstasy of joy is flowing!
I feel new rapture, hallow'd and intense,
Through every nerve and vein with ardour glowing.
Was it a god who character'd this scroll,
The tumult in my spirit healing,
O'er my sad heart with rapture stealing,
And by a mystic impulse, to my soul,
The powers of nature all around revealing.
Am I a God? What light intense!
In these pure symbols do I see,
Nature exert her vital energy.
Now of the wise man's words I learn the sense;

"Unlock'd the spirit-world is lying,
Thy sense is shut, thy heart is dead!
Up scholar, lave, with zeal undying,

Thine earthly breast in the morning-red!"

He contemplates the sign.

How all things live and work, and ever blending,
Weave one vast whole from Being's ample range!
How powers celestial, rising and descending,
Their golden buckets ceaseless interchange!
Their flight on rapture-breathing pinions winging,
From heaven to earth their genial influence bringing,
Through the wild sphere their chimes melodious ringing!

A wondrous show! but ah! a show alone!
Where shall I grasp thee, infinite nature, where?
Ye breasts, ye fountains of all life, whereon
Hang heaven and earth, from which the withered heart
For solace yearns, ye still impart
Your sweet and fostering tides--where are ye--where?
Ye gush, and must I languish in despair?
(He turns over the leaves of the book impatiently, and perceives
the sign of the Earth-spirit.)

How all unlike the influence of this sign!
Earth-spirit, thou to me art nigher,
E'en now my strength is rising higher,
E'en now I glow as with new wine;
Courage I feel, abroad the world to dare,

The woe of earth, the bliss of earth to bear,
With storms to wrestle, brave the lightning's glare,
And mid the crashing shipwreck not despair.

Clouds gather over me--
The moon conceals her light--
The lamp is quench'd--
Vapours are rising--
Quiv'ring round my head
Flash the red beams--
Down from the vaulted roof

A shuddering horror floats,
 And seizes me!
 I feel it, spirit, prayer-compell'd, 'tis thou
 Art hovering near!
 Unveil thyself!
 Ha! How my heart is riven now!
 Each sense, with eager palpitation,
 Is strain'd to catch some new sensation!
 I feel my heart surrender'd unto thee!
 Thou must! Thou must! Though life should be the fee!
 (He seizes the book, and pronounces mysteriously the sign
 of the spirit. A ruddy flame flashes up; the spirit appears in the
 flame.)

SPIRIT

Who calls me?
FAUST *turning aside*
 Dreadful shape!

SPIRIT

With might, thou hast compelled me to appear,
 Long hast been sucking at my sphere,
 And now--

FAUST

Woe's me! I cannot bear the sight!

SPIRIT

To see me thou dost breathe thine invocation,
 My voice to hear, to gaze upon my brow;
 Me doth thy strong entreaty bow--
 Lo! I am here I--What cowering agitation
 Grasps thee, the demigod! Where's now the soul's deep cry?
 Where is the breast, which in its depths a world conceiv'd
 And bore and cherished? which, with ecstasy,

To rank itself with us, the spirits, heaved?
 Where art thou, Faust? whose voice I heard resound,
 Who towards me press'd with energy profound?
 Art thou he? Thou,--who by my breath art blighted,
 Who, in his spirit's depths affrighted,
 Trembles, a crush'd and writhing worm!

FAUST

Shall I yield, thing of flame, to thee?
 Faust, and thine equal, I am he!

SPIRIT

In the currents of life, in action's storm,
 I float and I wave
 With billowy motion!
 Birth and the grave
 A limitless ocean,
 A constant weaving
 With change still rife,
 A restless heaving,
 A glowing life--
 Thus time's whirring loom unceasing I ply,
 And weave the life-garment of deity.

FAUST

Thou, restless spirit, dost from end to end
 O'ersweep the world; how near I feel to thee!

SPIRIT

Thou'rt like the spirit, thou dost comprehend,
 Not me! *Vanishes.*

FAUST *deeply moved*

I, God's own image!
 And not rank with thee! A knock.

Oh death! I know it--'tis my famulus--
 My fairest fortune now escapes!
 That all these visionary shapes
 A soulless groveller should banish thus!
 (**WAGNER** in his dressing gown and night-cap, a lamp
 in his hand. **FAUST** turns round reluctantly.)

WAGNER

Pardon! I heard you here declaim;
 A Grecian tragedy you doubtless read?
 Improvement in this art is now my aim,
 For now-a-days it much avails. Indeed
 An actor, oft I've heard it said, as teacher,
 May give instruction to a preacher.

FAUST

Ay, if your priest should be an actor too,
 As not improbably may come to pass.

WAGNER

When in his study pent the whole year through,
 Man views the world, as through an optic glass,
 On a chance holiday, and scarcely then,
 How by persuasion can he govern men?

FAUST

If feeling prompt not, if it doth not flow
 Fresh from the spirit's depths, with strong control
 Swaying to rapture every listener's soul,
 Idle your toil; the chase you may forego!
 Brood o'er your task! Together glue,
 Cook from another's feast your own ragout,
 Still prosecute your paltry game,
 And fan your ash-heaps into flame!
 'Thus children's wonder you'll excite,

And apes', if such your appetite;
 But that which issues from the heart alone,
 Will bend tile hearts of others to your own.

WAGNER

The speaker in delivery will find
 Success alone; I still am far behind.

FAUST

A worthy object still pursue!
 Be not a hollow tinkling fool!
 Sound understanding, judgment true,
 Find utterance without art or rule;
 And when in earnest you are moved to speak,
 Then is it needful cunning words to seek?
 Your fine harangues, so polish'd in their kind,
 Wherein the shreds of human thought ye twist,
 Are unrefreshing as the empty wind,
 Whistling through wither'd leaves and autumn mist!

WAGNER

Oh God! How long is art,
 Our life how short! With earnest zeal
 Still as I ply the critic's task, I feel
 A strange oppression both of head and heart.
 The very means how hardly are they won,
 By which we to the fountains rise!
 And haply, ere one half the course is run,
 Check'd in his progress, the poor devil dies.

FAUST

Parchment, is that the sacred fount whence roll
 Waters, he thirsteth not who once hath quaffed?
 Oh, if it gush not from thine inmost soul,
 Thou has not won the life-restoring draught.

WAGNER

Your pardon! 'tis delightful to transport
 Oneself into the spirit of the past,
 To see in times before us how a wise man thought,
 And what a glorious height we have achieved at last.

FAUST

Ay truly! even to the loftiest star!
 To us, my friend, the ages that are pass'd
 A book with seven seals, close-fasten'd, are;
 And what the spirit of the times men call,
 Is merely their own spirit after all,
 Wherein, distorted oft, the times are glass'd.
 Then truly, 'tis a sight to grieve the soul!
 At the first glance we fly it in dismay;
 A very lumber-room, a rubbish-hole;
 At best a sort of mock-heroic play,
 With saws pragmatistical, and maxims sage,
 To suit the puppets and their mimic stage.

WAGNER

But then the world and man, his heart and brain!
 Touching these things all men would something know.

FAUST

Ay! what 'mong men as knowledge doth obtain!
 Who on the child its true name dares bestow?
 The few who somewhat of these things have known,
 Who their full hearts unguardedly reveal'd,
 Nor thoughts, nor feelings, from the mob conceal'd,
 Have died on crosses, or in flames been thrown.--
 Excuse me, friend, far now the night is spent,
 For this time we must say adieu.

WAGNER

Still to watch on I had been well content,
 Thus to converse so learnedly with you.
 But as to-morrow will be Easter-day,
 Some further questions grant, I pray;
 With diligence to study still I fondly cling;
 Already I know much, but would know everything.
Exit.

FAUST *alone*

How him alone all hope abandons never,
 To empty trash who clings, with zeal untired,
 With greed for treasure gropes, and, joy-inspir'd,
 Exults if earth-worms second his endeavour.

And dare a voice of merely human birth,
 E'en here, where shapes immortal throng'd, intrude?
 Yet ah! thou poorest of the sons of earth,
 For once, I e'en to thee feel gratitude.
 Despair the power of sense did well-nigh blast,
 And thou didst save me ere I sank dismay'd,
 So giant-like the vision seem'd, so vast,
 I felt myself shrink dwarf'd as I survey'd!

I, God's own image, from this toil of clay
 Already freed, with eager joy who hail'd
 The mirror of eternal truth unveil'd,
 Mid light effulgent and celestial day:--
 I, more than cherub, whose unfetter'd soul
 With penetrative glance aspir'd to flow
 Through nature's veins, and, still creating, know
 The life of gods,--how am I punish'd now!
 One thunder-word hath hurl'd me from the goal!

Spirit! I dare not lift me to thy sphere.
 What though my power compell'd thee to appear,
 My art was powerless to detain thee here.
 In that great moment, rapture-fraught,

I felt myself so small, so great;
 Fiercely didst thrust me from the realm of thought
 Back on humanity's uncertain fate!
 Who'll teach me now? What ought I to forego?
 Ought I that impulse to obey?
 Alas! our every deed, as well as every woe,
 Impedes the tenor of life's onward way!

E'en to the noblest by the soul conceiv'd,
 Some feelings cling of baser quality;
 And when the goods of this world are achiev'd,
 Each nobler aim is termed a cheat, a lie.
 Our aspirations, our soul's genuine life,
 Grow torpid in the din of earthly strife.

Though youthful phantasy, while hope inspires,
 Stretch o'er the infinite her wing sublime,
 A narrow compass limits her desires,
 When wreck'd our fortunes in the gulf of time.
 In the deep heart of man care builds her nest,
 O'er secret woes she broodeth there,
 Sleepless she rocks herself and scareth joy and rest;
 Still is she wont some new disguise to wear,
 She may as house and court, as wife and child appear,
 As dagger, poison, fire and flood;
 Imagined evils chill thy blood,
 And what thou ne'er shall lose, o'er that dost shed the tear.
 I am not like the gods! Feel it I must;
 I'm like the earth-worm, writhing in the dust,
 Which, as on dust it feeds, its native fare,
 Crushed 'neath the passer's tread, lies buried there.

Is it not dust, wherewith this lofty wall,
 With hundred shelves, confines me round;
 Rubbish, in thousand shapes, may I not call
 What in this moth-world doth my being bound?
 Here, what doth fail me, shall I find?

Read in a thousand tomes that, everywhere,
 Self-torture is the lot of human-kind,
 With but one mortal happy, here and there?
 Thou hollow skull, that grin, what should it say,
 But that thy brain, like mine, of old perplexed,
 Still yearning for the truth, hath sought the light of day.
 And in the twilight wandered, sorely vexed?
 Ye instruments, forsooth, ye mock at me,--
 With wheel, and cog, and ring, and cylinder;
 To nature's portals ye should be the key;
 Cunning your wards, and yet the bolts ye fail to stir.
 Inscrutable in broadest light,
 To be unveil'd by force she doth refuse,
 What she reveals not to thy mental sight,
 Thou wilt not wrest me from her with levers and with screws.
 Old useless furnitures, yet stand ye here,
 Because my sire ye served, now dead and gone.
 Old scroll, the smoke of years dost wear,
 So long as o'er this desk the sorry lamp hath shone.
 Better my little means hath squandered quite away,
 Than burden'd by that little here to sweat and groan!
 Wouldst thou possess thy heritage, essay,
 By use to render it thine own!
 What we employ not, but impedes our way,
 That which the hour creates, that can it use alone!

But wherefore to yon Spot is riveted my gaze?
 Is yonder flasket there a magnet to my sight?
 Whence this mild radiance that around me plays,
 As when, 'mid forest gloom, reigneth the moon's soft light?

Hail precious phial! Thee, with reverent awe,
 Down from thine old receptacle I draw!
 Science in thee I hail and human art.
 Essence of deadliest powers, refin'd and sure,
 Of soothing anodynes abstraction pure,

Now in thy master's need thy grace impart!
 I gaze on thee, my pain is lull'd to rest;
 I grasp thee, calm'd the tumult in my breast;
 The flood-tide of my spirit ebbs away;
 Onward I'm summon'd o'er a boundless main,
 Calm at my feet expands the glassy plain,
 To shores unknown allures a brighter day.

Lo, where a car of fire, on airy pinion,
 Comes floating towards me I I'm prepar'd to fly
 By a new track through ether's wide dominion,
 To distant spheres of pure activity.
 This life intense, this godlike ecstasy--
 Worm that thou art such rapture canst thou earn?
 Only resolve with courage stern and high,
 Thy visage from the radiant sun to turn!
 Dare with determin'd will to burst the portals
 Past which in terror others fain would steal
 Now is the time, through deeds, to show that mortals
 The calm sublimity of gods can feel;
 To shudder not at yonder dark abyss,
 Where phantasy creates her own self-torturing brood,
 Right onward to the yawning gulf to press,
 Around whose narrow jaws rolleth hell's fiery flood;
 With glad resolve to take the fatal leap,
 Though danger threaten thee, to sink in endless sleep!

Pure crystal goblet! forth I draw thee now,
 From out thine antiquated case, where thou
 Forgotten hast reposed for many a year!
 Oft at my father's revels thou didst shine,
 To glad the earnest guests was thine,
 As each to other passed the generous cheer.
 The gorgeous brede of figures, quaintly wrought,
 Which he who quaff'd must first in rhyme expound,
 Then drain the goblet at one draught profound,

Hath nights of boyhood to fond memory brought.
 I to my neighbour shall not reach thee now,
 Nor on thy rich device shall I my cunning show.
 Here is a juice, makes drunk without delay;
 Its dark brown flood thy crystal round doth fill;
 Let this last draught, the product of my skill,
 My own free choice, be quaff'd with resolute will,
 A solemn festive greeting, to the coming day!
He places the goblet to his mouth.
Tue ringing of bells, and choral voices.

Chorus of **ANGELS**

Christ is arisen!
 Mortal, all hail to thee,
 Thou whom mortality,
 Earth's sad reality,
 Held as in prison.

FAUST

What hum melodious, what clear silvery chime
 Thus draws the goblet from my lips away?
 Ye deep-ton'd bells, do ye with voice sublime,
 Announce the solemn dawn of Easter-day?
 Sweet choir! are ye the hymn of comfort singing,
 Which once around the darkness of the grave,
 From seraph-voices, in glad triumph ringing,
 Of a new covenant assurance gave?

CHORUS OF WOMEN

We, his true-hearted,
 With spices and myrrh,
 Embalmed the departed,
 And swathed him with care;
 Here we conveyed Him,
 Our Master, so dear;

Alas! Where we laid Him,
The Christ is not here.

CHORUS OF ANGELS

Christ is arisen!
Blessed the loving one,
Who from earth's trial throes,
Healing and strengthening woes,
Soars as from prison.

FAUST

Wherefore, ye tones celestial, sweet and strong,
Come ye a dweller in the dust to seek?
Ring out your chimes believing crowds among,
The message well I hear, my faith alone is weak;
From faith her darling, miracle, hath sprung.
Aloft to yonder spheres I dare not soar,
Whence sound the tidings of great joy;
And yet, with this sweet strain familiar when a boy,
Back it recalleth me to life once more.
Then would celestial love, with holy kiss,
Come o'er me in the Sabbath's stilly hour,
While, fraught with solemn meaning and mysterious
Chim'd the deep-sounding bell, and prayer was bliss;
A yearning impulse, undefin'd yet dear,
Drove me to wander on through wood and field;
With heaving breast and many a burning tear,
I felt with holy joy a world reveal'd.
Gay sports and festive hours proclaim'd with joyous pealing,
This Easter hymn in days of old;
And fond remembrance now doth me, with childlike feeling,
Back from the last, the solemn step, withhold.
O still sound on, thou sweet celestial strain!
The tear-drop flows,--Earth, I am thine again!

CHORUS OF DISCIPLES

He whom we mourned as dead,
 Living and glorious,
 From the dark grave bath fled,
 O'er death victorious;
 Almost creative bliss
 Waits on his growing powers;
 Ah! Him on earth we miss;
 Sorrow and grief are ours.
 Yearning he left his own,
 Mid sore annoy;
 Ah! we must needs bemoan.
 Master, thy joy!

CHORUS OF ANGELS

Christ is arisen,
 Redeem'd from decay.
 The bonds which imprison
 Your souls, rend away!
 Praising the Lord with zeal,
 By deeds that love reveal,
 Like brethren true and leal
 Sharing the daily meal,
 To all that sorrow feel
 Whisp'ring of heaven's weal,
 Still is the master near,
 Still is he here!

BEFORE THE GATE

Promenaders of all sorts pass out.

ARTISANS

Why choose ye that direction, pray?

OTHERS

To the hunting-lodge we're on our way.

THE FIRST

We towards the mill are strolling on.

A MECHANIC

A walk to Wasserhof were best.

A SECOND

The road is not a pleasant one.

THE OTHERS

What will you do?

A THIRD

I'll join the rest.

A FOURTH

Let's up to Burghof, there you'll find good cheer,
The prettiest maidens and the best of beer,
And brawls of a prime sort.

A FIFTH

You scapegrace! How;
 Your skin still itching for a row?
 Thither I will not go, I loathe the place.

SERVANT GIRL

No, no! I to the town my steps retrace.

ANOTHER

Near yonder poplars he is sure to be.

THE FIRST

And if he is, what matters it to me!
 With you he'll walk, he'll dance with none but you,
 And with your pleasures what have I to do?

THE SECOND

To-day he will not be alone, he said
 His friend would be with him, the curly-head.

STUDENT

Why how those buxom girls step on!
 Come, brother, we will follow them anon.
 Strong beer, a damsel smartly dress'd,
 Stinging tobacco,—these I love the best.

BURGHER'S DAUGHTER

Look at those handsome fellows there!
 'Tis really shameful, I declare,
 The very best society they shun,
 After those servant girls forsooth, to run.

SECOND STUDENT *to the first*

Not quite so fast! for in our rear,
 Two girls, well-dress'd, are drawing near;
 Not far from us the one doth dwell,

And sooth to say, I like her well.
 They walk demurely, yet you'll see,
 That they will let us join them presently.

THE FIRST

Not I! restraints of all kinds I detest.
 Quick! let us catch the wild-game ere it flies,
 The hand on Saturday the mop that plies,
 Will on the Sunday fondle you the best.

BURGHER

No, this new Burgomaster, I like him not, God knows,
 Now, he's in office, daily more arrogant he grows;
 And for the town, what doth he do for it?
 Are not things worse from day to day?
 To more restraints we must submit;
 And taxes more than ever pay.

BEGGAR *sings*

Kind gentleman and ladies fair,
 So rosy-cheek'd and trimly dress'd,
 Be pleas'd to listen to my prayer,
 Relieve and pity the distress'd.
 Let me not vainly sing my lay!
 His heart's most glad whose hand is free.
 Now when all men keep holiday,
 Should be a harvest-day to me.

ANOTHER BURGHER

On holidays and Sundays naught know I more inviting
 Than chatting about war and war's alarms,
 When folk in Turkey, up in arms,
 Far off, are 'gainst each other fighting.
 We at the window stand, our glasses drain,
 And watch adown the stream the painted vessels gliding,

Then joyful we at eve come home again,
And peaceful times we bless, peace long-abiding.

THIRD BURGHER

Ay, neighbour! So let matters stand for me!
There they may scatter one another's brains,
And wild confusion round them see--
So here at home in quiet all remains!

OLD WOMAN to the BURGHERS' DAUGHTERS

Heyday! How smart! The fresh young blood!
Who would not fall in love with you?
Not quite so proud! 'Tis well and good!
And what you wish, that I could help you to.

BURGHER'S DAUGHTER

Come, Agatha! I care not to be seen
Walking in public with these witches. True,
My future lover, last St. Andrew's E'en,
In flesh and blood she brought before my view.

ANOTHER

And mine she show'd me also in the glass,
A soldier's figure, with companions bold;
I look around, I seek him as I pass,
In vain, his form I nowhere can behold.

SOLDIERS

Fortress with turrets
And walls high in air,
Damsel disdainful,
Haughty and fair,
These be my prey!
Bold is the venture,
Costly the pay!

Hark how the trumpet
 Thither doth call us,
 Where either pleasure
 Or death may befall us.
 Hail to the tumult!
 Life's in the field!
 Damsel and fortress
 To us must yield.
 Bold is the venture,
 Costly the pay!
 Gaily the soldier
 Marches away.

FAUST and WAGNER

FAUST

Loosed from their fetters are streams and rills
 Through the gracious spring-tide's all-quickenning glow;
 Hope's budding joy in the vale doth blow;
 Old Winter back to the savage hills
 Withdraweth his force, decrepid now.
 Thence only impotent icy grains
 Scatters he as he wings his flight,
 Striping with sleet the verdant plains;
 But the sun endureth no trace of white;
 Everywhere growth and movement are rife,
 All things investing with hues of life:
 Though flowers are lacking, varied of dye,
 Their colours the motly throng supply.
 Turn thee around, and from this height,
 Back to the town direct thy sight.
 Forth from the hollow, gloomy gate,
 Stream forth the masses, in bright array.
 Gladly seek they the sun to-day;
 The Lord's Resurrection they celebrate:
 For they themselves have risen, with joy,

From tenement sordid, from cheerless room,
 From bonds of toil, from care and annoy,
 From gable and roof's o'er-hanging gloom,
 From crowded alley and narrow street,
 And from the churches' awe-breathing night,
 All now have come forth into the light.
 Look, only look, on nimble feet,
 Through garden and field how spread the throng,
 How o'er the river's ample sheet,
 Many a gay wherry glides along;
 And see, deep sinking in the tide,
 Pushes the last boat now away.
 E'en from yon far hill's path-worn side,
 Flash the bright hues of garments gay.
 Hark! Sounds of village mirth arise;
 This is the people's paradise.

Both great and small send up a cheer;
 Here am I man, I feel it here.

WAGNER

Sir Doctor, in a walk with you
 There's honour and instruction too;
 Yet here alone I care not to resort,
 Because I coarseness hate of every sort.
 This fiddling, shouting, skittling, I detest;
 I hate the tumult of the vulgar throng;
 They roar as by the evil one possess'd,
 And call it pleasure, call it song.

PEASANTS *under the linden-tree*

Dance and song
 The shepherd for the dance was dress'd,
 With ribbon, wreath, and coloured vest,
 A gallant show displaying.
 And round about the linden-trees,

They footed it right merrily. Juchhe! Juchhe!
 Juchheisa! Heisa! He!
 So fiddle-bow was braying.

Our swain amidst the circle press'd,
 He push'd a maiden trimly dress'd,
 And jogg'd her with his elbow;
 The buxom damsel turn'd her head,
 "Now that's a stupid trick!" she said, Juchhe! Juchhe!
 Juchhesia! Heisa! He!
 Don't be so rude, good fellow!

Swift in the circle they advanced,
 They danced to right, to left they danced,
 And all the skirts were swinging.
 And they grew red, and they grew warm,
 Panting, they rested arm in arm, Juchhe! Juchhe!
 Juchheisa! Heisa! He!
 To hip their elbow bringing.

Don't make so free! How many a maid
 Has been betroth'd and then betray'd;
 And has repented after!
 Yet still he flatter'd her aside,
 And from the linden, far and wide, Juchhe! Juchhe!
 Juchheisa! Heisa! He!
 Rang fiddle-bow and laughter.

OLD PEASANT

Doctor, 'tis really kind of you,
 To condescend to come this way,
 A highly learned man like you,
 To join our mirthful throng to-day.
 Our fairest cup I offer you,
 Which we with sparkling drink have crown'd,
 And pledging you, I pray aloud,
 That every drop within its round,

While it your present thirst allays,
May swell the number of your days.

FAUST

I take the cup you kindly reach,
Thanks and prosperity to each!
The crowd gather round in a circle.

OLD PEASANT

Ay, truly! 'tis well done, that you
Our festive meeting thus attend;
You, who in evil days of yore,
So often show'd yourself our friend!
Full many a one stands living here,
Who from the fever's deadly blast,
Your father rescu'd, when his skill
The fatal sickness stay'd at last.
A young man then, each house you sought,
Where reign'd the mortal pestilence.
Corpse after corpse was carried forth,
But still unscath'd you issued thence.

Sore then your trials and severe;
The Helper yonder aids the helper here.

ALL

Heaven bless the trusty friend, and long
To help the poor his life prolong!

FAUST

To Him above in homage bend,
Who prompts the helper and Who help doth send.
He proceeds with **WAGNER.**

WAGNER

What feelings, great man, must thy breast inspire,
 At homage paid thee by this crowd! Thrice blest
 Who from the gifts by him possessed
 Such benefit can draw! The sire
 Thee to his boy with reverence shows;
 They press around, inquire, advance,
 Hush'd is the fiddle, check'd the dance.
 Where thou dost pass they stand in rows,
 And each aloft his bonnet throws,
 But little fails and they to thee,
 As though the Host came by, would bend the knee.

FAUST

A few steps further, up to yonder stone!
 Here rest we from our walk. In times long past,
 Absorb'd in thought, here oft I sat alone,
 And disciplin'd myself with prayer and fast.
 Then rich in hope, with faith sincere,
 With sighs, and hands in anguish press'd,
 The end of that sore plague, with many a tear,
 From heaven's dread Lord, I sought to wrest.
 The crowd's applause assumes a scornful tone.
 Oh, could'st thou in my inner being read,
 How little either sire or son,
 Of such renown deserves the meed!
 My sire, of good repute, and sombre mood,
 O'er nature's powers and every mystic zone,
 With honest zeal, but methods of his own,
 With toil fantastic loved to brood;
 His time in dark alchemic cell,
 With brother adepts he would spend,
 And there antagonists compel,
 Through numberless receipts to blend.
 A ruddy lion there, a suitor bold,
 In tepid bath was with the lily wed.

Thence both, while open flames around them roll'd,
 Were tortur'd to another bridal bed.
 Was then the youthful queen descried
 With varied colours in the flask
 This was our medicine; the patients died,
 "Who were restored?" none cared to ask.
 With our infernal mixture thus, ere long,
 These hills and peaceful vales among,
 We rag'd more fiercely than the pest;
 Myself the deadly poison did to thousands give;
 They pined away, I yet must live,
 To hear the reckless murderers blest.

WAGNER

Why let this thought your soul o'ercast?
 Can man do more than with nice skill,
 With firm and conscientious will,
 Practise the art transmitted from the past?
 If thou thy sire dost honour in thy youth,
 His lore thou gladly wilt receive;
 In manhood, dost thou spread the bounds of truth,
 Then may thy son a higher goal achieve.

FAUST

How blest, in whom the fond desire
 From error's sea to rise, hope still renews!
 What a man knows not, that he doth require,
 And what he knoweth, that he cannot use.
 But let not moody thoughts their shadow throw
 O'er the calm beauty of this hour serene!
 In the rich sunset see how brightly glow
 Yon cottage homes, girt round with verdant green!
 Slow sinks the orb, the day is now no more;
 Yonder he hastens to diffuse new life.
 Oh for a pinion from the earth to soar,

And after, ever after him to strive!
 Then should I see the world below,
 Bathed in the deathless evening-beams,
 The vales reposing, every height a-glow,
 The silver brooklets meeting golden streams.
 The savage mountain, with its cavern'd side,
 Bars not my godlike progress. Lo, the ocean,
 Its warm bays heaving with a tranquil motion,
 To my rapt vision opes its ample tide!
 But now at length the god appears to sink;
 A new-born impulse wings my flight,
 Onward I press, his quenchless light to drink,
 The day before me, and behind the night,
 The pathless waves beneath, and over me the skies.
 Fair dream, it vanish'd with the parting day!
 Alas! that when on spirit-wing we rise,
 No wing material lifts our mortal clay.
 But 'tis our inborn impulse, deep and strong,
 Upwards and onwards still to urge our flight,
 When far above us pours its thrilling song
 The sky-lark, lost in azure light,
 When on extended wing amain
 O'er pine-crown'd height the eagle soars,
 And over moor and lake, the crane
 Still striveth towards its native shores.

WAGNER

To strange conceits oft I myself must own,
 But impulse such as this I ne'er have known:
 Nor woods, nor fields, can long our thoughts engage,
 Their wings I envy not the feather'd kind;
 Far otherwise the pleasures of the mind,
 Bear us from book to book, from page to page!
 Then winter nights grow cheerful; keen delight
 Warms every limb; and ah! when we unroll

Some old and precious parchment, at the sight
All heaven itself descends upon the soul.

FAUST

Thy heart by one sole impulse is possess'd;
Unconscious of the other still remain!
Two souls, alas! are lodg'd within my breast,
Which struggle there for undivided reign:
One to the world, with obstinate desire,
And closely-cleaving organs, still adheres;
Above the mist, the other doth aspire,
With sacred vehemence, to purer spheres.
Oh, are there spirits in the air,
Who float 'twixt heaven and earth dominion wielding,
Stoop hither from your golden atmosphere,
Lead me to scenes, new life and fuller yielding!
A magic mantle did I but possess,
Abroad to waft me as on viewless wings,
I'd prize it far beyond the costliest dress,
Nor would I change it for the robe of kings.

WAGNER

Call not the spirits who on mischief wait!
Their troop familiar, streaming through the air,
From every quarter threaten man's estate,
And danger in a thousand forms prepare!
They drive impetuous from the frozen north,
With fangs sharp-piercing, and keen arrowy tongue
From the ungenial east they issue forth,
And prey, with parching breath, upon thy lungs;
If, waft'd on the desert's flaming wing,
They from the south heap fire upon the brain,
Refreshment from the west at first they bring,
Anon to drown thyself and field and plain.
In wait for mischief, they are prompt to hear;

With guileful purpose our behests obey;
 Like ministers of grace they oft appear,
 And lisp like angels, to betray.
 But let us hence! Grey eve doth all things blend,
 The air grows chill, the mists descend!
 'Tis in the evening first our home we prize--
 Why stand you thus, and gaze with wondering eyes?
 What in the gloom thus moves you?

FAUST

Yon black hound
 See'st thou, through corn and stubble scampering round?

WAGNER

I've mark'd him long, naught strange in him I see!

FAUST

Note him! What takest thou the brute to be?

WAGNER

But for a poodle, whom his instinct serves
 His master's track to find once more.

FAUST

Dost mark how round us, with wide spiral curves,
 He wheels, each circle closer than before?
 And, if I err not, he appears to me
 A line of fire upon his track to leave.

WAGNER

Naught but a poodle black of hue I see;
 'Tis some illusion doth your sight deceive.

FAUST

Methinks a magic coil our feet around,
He for a future snare doth lightly spread.

WAGNER

FAUST

The circle narrows, he's already near!

WAGNER

A dog dost see, no spectre have we here;
He growls, doubts, lays him on his belly, too,
And wags his tail--as dogs are wont to do.

FAUST

Come hither, Sirrah! join our company!

WAGNER

A very poodle, he appears to be!
Thou standest still, for thee he'll wait;
Thou speak'st to him, he fawns upon thee straight;
Aught thou mayst lose, again he'll bring,
And for thy stick will into water spring.

FAUST

Thou'rt right indeed; no traces now I see
Whatever of a spirit's agency.
'Tis training.--nothing more.

WAGNER

A dog well taught
E'en by the wisest of us may be sought.
Ay, to your favour he's entitled too,
Apt scholar of the students, 'tis his due!
They enter the gate of the town.

STUDY (POODLE SCENE)

FAUST entering with the poodle

Now field and meadow I've forsaken;
 O'er them deep night her veil doth draw;
 In us the better soul doth waken,
 With feelings of foreboding awe,
 All lawless promptings, deeds unholy,
 Now slumber, and all wild desires;
 The love of man doth sway us wholly,
 And love to God the soul inspires.

Peace, poodle, peace! Scamper not thus; obey me!
 Why at the threshold snuffest thou so?
 Behind the stove now quietly lay thee,
 My softest cushion to thee I'll throw.
 As thou, without, didst please and amuse me
 Running and frisking about on the hill,
 So tendance now I will not refuse thee;
 A welcome guest, if thou'lt be still.

Ah! when the friendly taper gloweth,
 Once more within our narrow cell,
 Then in the heart itself that knoweth,
 A light the darkness doth dispel.
 Reason her voice resumes; returneth
 Hope's gracious bloom, with promise rife;
 For streams of life the spirit yearneth,
 Ah! for the very fount of life.

Poodle, snarl not! with the tone that arises.
 Hallow'd and peaceful, my soul within,
 Accords not thy growl, thy bestial din.
 We find it not strange, that man despises

What he conceives not;
 That he the good and fair misprizes--
 Finding them often beyond his ken;
 Will the dog snarl at them like men?

But ah! Despite my will, it stands confessed,
 Contentment welleteth up no longer in my breast.
 Yet wherefore must the stream, alas, so soon be dry,
 That we once more athirst should lie?
 Full oft this sad experience hath been mine;
 Nathless the want admits of compensation;
 For things above the earth we learn to pine,
 Our spirits yearn for revelation,
 Which nowhere burns with purer beauty blent,

Than here in the New Testament.
 To ope the ancient text an impulse strong
 Impels me, and its sacred lore,
 With honest purpose to explore,
 And render into my loved German tongue.
 He opens a volume, and applies himself to it.
 'Tis writ, "In the beginning was the Word!"
 I pause, perplex'd! Who now will help afford?
 I cannot the mere Word so highly prize;
 I must translate it otherwise,
 If by the spirit guided as I read.
 "In the beginning was the Sense!" Take heed,
 The import of this primal sentence weigh,
 Lest thy too hasty pen be led astray!
 Is force creative then of Sense the dower?
 "In the beginning was the Power!"
 Thus should it stand: yet, while the line I trace.
 A something warns me, once more to efface.
 The spirit aids! from anxious scruples freed,
 I write, "In the beginning was the Deed!"

Am I with thee my room to share,
 Poodle, thy barking now forbear,
 Forbear thy howling!
 Comrade so noisy, ever growling,
 I cannot suffer here to dwell.
 One or the other, mark me well,
 Forthwith must leave the cell.
 I'm loath the guest-right to withhold;
 The door's ajar, the passage clear;
 But what must now mine eyes behold!
 Are nature's laws suspended here?
 Real is it, or a phantom show?
 In length and breadth how doth my poodle grow!
 He lifts himself with threat'ning mien,
 In likeness of a dog no longer seen!
 What spectre have I harbour'd thus!
 Huge as a hippopotamus,
 With fiery eye, terrific tooth!
 Ah I now I know thee, sure enough!
 For such a base, half-hellish brood,
 The key of Solomon is good.

SPIRITS without

Captur'd there within is one!
 Stay without and follow none!
 Like a fox in iron snare,
 Hell's old lynx is quaking there,
 But take heed!
 Hover round, above, below,
 To and fro,
 Then from durance is he freed!
 Can ye aid him, spirits all,
 Leave him not in mortal thrall!
 Many a time and oft bath he
 Served us, when at liberty.

FAUST

The monster to confront, at first,
The spell of Four must be rehears'd;

Salamander shall kindle,
Writhe nymph of the wave,
In air sylph shall dwindle,
And Kobold shall slave.

Who doth ignore
The primal Four,
Nor knows aright
Their use and might,
O'er spirits will he
Ne'er master be!

Vanish in the fiery glow,
Salamander!
Rushingly together flow.
Undine!
Shimmer in the meteor's gleam,
Sylphide!
Hither bring thine homely aid,

Incubus! Incubus!
Step forth! I do adjure thee thus!
None of the Four
Lurks in the beast:
He grins at me, untroubled as before;
I have not hurt him in the least.
A spell of fear
Thou now shalt hear.
Art thou, comrade fell,
Fugitive from hell?

See then this sign,
Before which incline

The murky troops of Hell!
With bristling hair now doth the creature swell.

Canst thou, reprobate,
Read the uncreate,
Unspeakable, diffused
Throughout the heavenly sphere,
Shamefully abused,
Transpierced with nail and spear!

Behind the stove, tam'd by my spells,
Like an elephant he swells;
Wholly now he fills the room,
He into mist will melt away.
Ascend not to the ceiling! Come,
Thyself at the master's feet now lay!
Thou seest that mine is no idle threat.
With holy fire I will scorch thee yet!
Wait not the might
That lies in the triple-glowing light!
Wait not the might
Of all my arts in fullest measure!

MEPHISTOPHELES

(As the mist sinks, comes forward from behind the stove, in the dress of a travelling scholar)

Why all this uproar? What's the master's pleasure?

FAUST

This then the kernel of the brute!
A travelling scholar? Why I needs must smile.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Your learned reverence humbly I salute!
You've made me swelter in a pretty style.

FAUST

Thy name?

MEPHISTOPHELES

The question trifling seems from one,
Who it appears the Word doth rate so low;
Who, undeluded by mere outward show,
To Being's depths would penetrate alone.

FAUST

With gentlemen like you indeed
The inward essence from the name we read,
As all too plainly it doth appear,
When Beelzebub, Destroyer, Liar, meets the ear.
Who then art thou?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Part of that power which still
Produceth good, whilst ever scheming ill.

FAUST

What hidden mystery in this riddle lies?

MEPHISTOPHELES

The spirit I, which evermore denies!
And justly; for whate'er to light is brought
Deserves again to be reduced to naught;
Then better 'twere that naught should be.
Thus all the elements which ye
Destruction, Sin, or briefly, Evil, name,
As my peculiar element I claim.

FAUST

Thou nam'st thyself a part, and yet a whole I see.

MEPHISTOPHELES

The modest truth I speak to thee.
 Though folly's microcosm, man, it seems,
 Himself to be a perfect whole esteems:
 Part of the part am I, which at the first was all,
 A part of darkness, which gave birth to light,
 Proud light, who now his mother would enthrall,
 Contesting space and ancient rank with night.
 Yet he succeedeth not, for struggle as he will,
 To forms material he adhereth still;
 From them he streameth, them he maketh fair,
 And still the progress of his beams they check;
 And so, I trust, when comes the final wreck,
 Light will, ere long, the doom of matter share.

FAUST

Thy worthy avocation now I guess!
 Wholesale annihilation won't prevail,
 So thou'rt beginning on a smaller scale.

MEPHISTOPHELES

And, to say truth, as yet with small success.
 Oppos'd to naught, this clumsy world,
 The something--it subsisteth still;
 Not yet is it to ruin hurl'd,
 Despite the efforts of my will.
 Tempests and earthquakes, fire and flood, I've tried;
 Yet land and ocean still unchang'd abide!
 And then of humankind and beasts, brood,--
 Neither o'er them can I extend my sway.
 What countless myriads have I swept away!
 Yet ever circulates the fresh young blood.
 the accursed

It is enough to drive me to despair!
 As in the earth, in water, and in air,
 A thousand germs burst forth spontaneously;

In moisture, drought, heat, cold, they still appear!
 Had I not flame selected as my sphere
 Nothing apart had been reserved for me.

FAUST

So thou with thy cold devil's fist
 Still clench'd in malice impotent
 Dost the creative power resist,
 The active, the beneficent!
 Henceforth some other task essay,
 Of Chaos thou the wondrous son!

MEPHISTOPHELES

We will consider what you say,
 And talk about it more anon!
 For this time have I leave to go?

FAUST

Why thou shouldst ask, I cannot see.
 Since thee I now have learned to know,
 At thy good pleasure, visit me.
 Here is the window, here the door,
 The chimney, too, may serve thy need.

MEPHISTOPHELES

I must confess, my stepping o'er
 Thy threshold a slight hindrance doth impede;
 The wizard-foot doth me retain.

FAUST

The pentagram thy peace doth mar?
 To me, thou son of hell, explain,
 How earnest thou in, if this thine exit bar?
 Could such a spirit aught ensnare?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Observe it well, it is not drawn with care,
One of the angles, that which points without,
Is, as thou seest, not quite closed.

FAUST

Chance hath the matter happily dispos'd!
So thou my captive art? No doubt!
By accident thou thus art caught!

MEPHISTOPHELES

In sprang the dog, indeed, observing naught;
Things now assume another shape,
The devil's in the house and can't escape.

FAUST

Why through the window not withdraw?

MEPHISTOPHELES

For ghosts and for the devil 'tis a law.
Where they stole in, there they must forth. We're free
The first to choose; as to the second, slaves are we.

FAUST

E'en hell hath its peculiar laws, I see!
I'm glad of that! a pact may then be made,
The which you gentlemen will surely keep?

MEPHISTOPHELES

What e'er therein is promised thou shalt reap,
No tittle shall remain unpaid.
But such arrangements time require;
We'll speak of them when next we meet;
Most earnestly I now entreat,
This once permission to retire.

FAUST

Another moment prithee here remain,
Me with some happy word to pleasure.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Now let me go! ere long I'll come again,
Then thou may'st question at thy leisure.

FAUST

'Twas not toy purpose thee to lime;
The snare hast entered of thine own free will:
Let him who holds the devil, hold him still!
So soon he'll catch him not a second time.

MEPHISTOPHELES

If it so please thee, I'm at thy command;
Only on this condition, understand;
That worthily thy leisure to beguile,
I here may exercise my arts awhile.

FAUST

Thou'rt free to do so! Gladly I'll attend;
But be thine art a pleasant one!

MEPHISTOPHELES

My friend,
This hour enjoyment more intense,
Shall captivate each ravish'd sense,
Than thou could'st compass in the bound
Of the whole year's unvarying round;
And what the dainty spirits sing,
The lovely images they bring,
Are no fantastic sorcery.
Rich odours shall regale your smell,
On choicest sweets your palate dwell,
Your feelings thrill with ecstasy.

No preparation do we need,
Here we together are. Proceed.

SPIRITS

Hence overshadowing gloom,
Vanish from sight!
O'er us thine azure dome,
Bend, beauteous light!
Dark clouds that o'er us spread,
Melt in thin air!
Stars, your soft radiance shed,
Tender and fair.
Girt with celestial might,
Winging their airy flight,
Spirits are thronging.
Follows their forms of light
Infinite longing!
Flutter their vestures bright
O'er field and grove!
Where in their leafy bower
Lovers the livelong hour
Vow deathless love.
Soft bloometh bud and bower!
Bloometh the grove!
Grapes from the spreading vine
Crown the full measure;
Fountains of foaming wine
Gush from the pressure.
Still where the currents wind,
Gems brightly gleam.
Leaving the hills behind
On rolls the stream;
Now into ample seas,
Spreadeth the flood;
Laying the sunny leas,

Mantled with wood.
 Rapture the feather'd throng,
 Gaily careering,
 Sip as they float along;
 Sunward they're steering;
 On towards the isles of light
 Winging their way,
 That on the waters bright
 Dancingly play.
 Hark to the choral strain,
 Joyfully ringing!
 While on the grassy plain
 Dancers are springing;
 Climbing the steep hill's side,
 Skimming the glassy tide,
 Wander they there;
 Others on pinions wide
 Wing the blue air;
 All lifeward tending, upward still wending,
 Towards yonder stars that gleam,
 Far, far above;
 Stars from whose tender beam
 Rains blissful love.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Well done, my dainty spirits! now he slumbers!
 Ye have entranc'd him fairly with your numbers!
 This minstrelsy of yours I must repay,--
 Thou art not yet the man to hold the devil fast!--
 With fairest shapes your spells around him cast,
 And plunge him in a sea of dreams!
 But that this charm be rent, the threshold passed,
 Tooth of rat the way must clear.
 I need not conjure long it seems,
 One rustles hitherward, and soon my voice will hear.

The master of the rats and mice,
Of flies and frogs, of bugs and lice,
Commands thy presence; without fear
Come forth and gnaw the threshold here,
Where he with oil has smear'd it.--Thou
Com'st hopping forth already! Now
To work! The point that holds me bound
Is in the outer angle found.
Another bite--so--now 'tis done--
Now, Faustus, till we meet again, dream on.

FAUST awaking

Am I once more deluded! must I deem
That thus the throng of spirits disappear?
The devil's presence, was it but a dream?
Hath but a poodle scap'd and left me here?

STUDY (PACT)

FAUST. MEPHISTOPHELES

FAUST

A knock? Come in! Who now would break my rest?

MEPHISTOPHELES

'Tis I!

FAUST

Come in!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Thrice be the words express'd.

FAUST

Then I repeat, Come in!

MEPHISTOPHELES

'Tis well,

I hope that we shall soon agree!

For now your fancies to expel,

Here, as a youth of high degree,

I come in gold-lac'd scarlet vest,

And stiff-silk mantle richly dress'd,

A cock's gay feather for a plume,

A long and pointed rapier, too;

And briefly I would counsel you

To don at once the same costume,

And, free from trammels, speed away,

That what life is you may essay.

FAUST

In every garb I needs must feel oppress'd,
 My heart to earth's low cares a prey.
 Too old the trifler's part to play,
 Too young to live by no desire possess'd.
 What can the world to me afford?
 Renounce! renounce! is still the word;
 This is the everlasting song
 In every ear that ceaseless rings,
 And which, alas, our whole life long,
 Hoarsely each passing moment sings.
 But to new horror I awake each morn,
 And I could weep hot tears, to see the sun
 Dawn on another day, whose round forlorn
 Accomplishes no wish of mine--not one.
 Which still, with froward captiousness, impains
 E'en the presentiment of every joy,
 While low realities and paltry cares
 The spirit's fond imaginings destroy.
 Then must I too, when falls the veil of night,
 Stretch'd on my pallet languish in despair,
 Appalling dreams my soul affright;
 No rest vouchsafed me even there.
 The god, who throned within my breast resides,
 Deep in my soul can stir the springs;
 With sovereign sway my energies he guides,
 He cannot move external things;
 And so existence is to me a weight.
 Death fondly I desire, and life I hate.

MEPHISTOPHELES

And yet, methinks, by most 'twill be confess'd
 That Death is never quite a welcome guest.

FAUST

Happy the man around whose brow he binds
 The bloodstain'd wreath in conquest's dazzling hour;
 Or whom, excited by the dance, he finds
 Dissolv'd in bliss, in love's delicious bower!
 O that before the lofty spirit's might,
 Enraptured, I had rendered up my soul!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Yet did a certain man refrain one night,
 Of its brown juice to drain the crystal bowl.

FAUST

To play the spy diverts you then?

MEPHISTOPHELES

I own,
 Though not omniscient, much to me is known.

FAUST

If o'er my soul the tone familiar, stealing,
 Drew me from harrowing thought's bewild'ring maze,
 Touching the ling'ring chords of childlike feeling,
 With sweet harmonies of happier days:
 So curse I all, around the soul that windeth
 Its magic and alluring spell,
 And with delusive flattery bindeth
 Its victim to this dreary cell!
 Curs'd before all things be the high opinion,
 Wherewith the spirit girds itself around!
 Of shows delusive curs'd be the dominion,
 Within whose mocking sphere our sense is bound!
 Accurs'd of dreams the treacherous wiles,
 The cheat of glory, deathless fame!
 Accurs'd what each as property beguiles,
 Wife, child, slave, plough, whate'er its name!

Accurs'd be mammon, when with treasure
 He doth to daring deeds incite:
 Or when to steep the soul in pleasure,
 He spreads the couch of soft delight!
 Curs'd be the grape's balsamic juice!
 Accurs'd love's dream, of joys the first!
 Accurs'd be hope! accurs'd be faith!
 And more than all, be patience curs'd!

CHORUS OP SPIRITS *invisible*

Woe! woe!
 Thou hast destroy'd
 The beautiful world
 With violent blow;
 'Tis shiver'd! 'tis shatter'd!
 The fragments abroad by a demigod scatter'd!
 Now we sweep
 The wrecks into nothingness!
 Fondly we weep
 The beauty that's gone!
 Thou, 'mongst the Sons of earth,
 Lofty and mighty one,
 Build it once more!
 In thine own bosom the lost world restore!
 Now with unclouded sense
 Enter a new career;
 Songs shall salute thine ear,
 Ne'er heard before!

MEPHISTOPHELES

My little ones these spirits be.
 Hark! with shrewd intelligence,
 How they recommend to thee
 Action, and the joys of sense!
 In the busy world to dwell,

Fain they would allure thee hence:
 For within this lonely cell,
 Stagnate sap of life and sense.

Forbear to trifle longer with thy grief,
 Which, vulture-like, consumes thee in this den.
 The worst society is some relief,
 Making thee feel thyself a man with men.
 Nathless, it is not meant, I trow,
 To thrust thee 'mid the vulgar throng.

I to the upper ranks do not belong;
 Yet if, by me companion'd, thou
 Thy steps through life forthwith wilt take;
 Upon the spot myself I'll make
 Thy comrade;-- Should it suit thy need,
 I am thy servant, am thy slave indeed!

FAUST

And how must I thy services repay?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Thereto thou lengthen'd respite hast!

FAUST

No! No!
 The devil is an egoist I know:
 And, for Heaven's sake, 'tis not his way
 Kindness to any one to show.
 Let the condition plainly be exprest!
 Such a domestic is a dangerous guest.

MEPHISTOPHELES

I'll pledge myself to be thy servant here,
 Still at thy back alert and prompt to be;

But when together yonder we appear,
Then shalt thou do the same for me.

FAUST

But small concern I feel for yonder world;
Hast thou this system into ruin hurl'd,
Another may arise the void to fill.
This earth the fountain whence my pleasures flow,
This sun doth daily shine upon my woe,
And if this world I must forego,
Let happen then,--what can and will.
I to this theme will close mine ears,
If men hereafter hate and love,

FAUST

And if there be in yonder spheres
A depth below or height above.

MEPHISTOPHELES

In this mood thou mayst venture it. But make
The compact! I at once will undertake
To charm thee with mine arts. I'll give thee more
Than mortal eye hath e'er beheld before.

FAUST

What, sorry Devil, hast thou to bestow?
Was ever mortal spirit, in its high endeavour,
Fathom'd by Being such as thou?
Yet food thou hast which satisfieth never,
Hast ruddy gold, that still doth flow
Like restless quicksilver away,
A game thou hast, at which none win who play,
A girl who would, with amorous eyen,
E'en from my breast, a neighbour snare,
Lofty ambition's joy divine,

That, meteor-like, dissolves in air.
 Show me the fruit that, ere 'tis pluck'd, doth rot,
 And trees, whose verdure daily buds anew!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Such a commission scares me not,
 I can provide such treasures, it is true;
 But, my good friend, a season will come round,
 When on what's good we may regale in peace.

FAUST

If e'er upon my couch, stretched at my ease, I'm found,
 Then may my life that instant cease!
 Me canst thou cheat with glozing wile
 Till self-reproach away I cast,--
 Me with joy's lure canst thou beguile
 Let that day be for me the last!
 Be this our wager!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Settled!

FAUST

Sure and fast!
 When to the moment I shall say,
 "Linger awhile! so fair thou art!"
 Then mayst thou fetter me straightway,
 Then to the abyss will I depart!
 Then may the solemn death-bell sound,
 Then from thy service thou art free,
 The index then may cease its round,
 And time be never more for me!

MEPHISTOPHELES

I shall remember: pause, ere 'tis too late.

FAUST

Thereto a perfect right hast thou.
 My strength I do not rashly overrate.
 Slave am I here, at any rate,
 If thine, or whose, it matters not, I trow.

MEPHISTOPHELES

At thine inaugural feast I will this day
 Attend, my duties to commence.--
 But one thing!--Accidents may happen, hence
 A line or two in writing grant, I pray.

FAUST

A writing, Pedant! dost demand from me?
 Man, and man's plighted word, are these unknown to thee?
 Is't not enough, that by the word I gave,
 My doom for evermore is cast?
 Doth not the world in all its currents rave,
 And must a promise hold me fast?
 Yet fixed is this delusion in our heart;
 Who, of his own free will, therefrom would part?
 How blest within whose breast truth reigneth pure!
 No sacrifice will he repent when made!
 A formal deed, with seal and signature,
 A spectre this from which all shrink afraid.
 The word its life resigneth in the pen,
 Leather and wax usurp the mastery then.
 Spirits of evil! what dost thou require?
 Brass, marble, parchment, paper, dost desire?
 Shall I with chisel, pen, or graver write?
 Thy choice is free; to me 'tis all the same.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Wherefore thy passion so excite
 And thus thine eloquence inflame?

A scrap is for our compact good.
 Thou under-signest merely with a drop of blood.

FAUST

If this will satisfy thy mind,
 Thy whim I'll gratify, howe'er absurd.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Blood is a juice of very special kind.

FAUST

Be not afraid that I shall break my word!
 The scope of all my energy
 Is in exact accordance with my vow.
 Vainly I have aspired too high;
 I'm on a level but with such as thou;
 Me the great spirit scorn'd, defied;
 Nature from me herself doth hide;
 Rent is the web of thought; my mind
 Doth knowledge loathe of every kind.
 In depths of sensual pleasure drown'd,
 Let us our fiery passions still!
 Enwrapp'd in magic's veil profound,
 Let wondrous charms our senses thrill!
 Plunge we in time's tempestuous flow,
 Stem we the rolling surge of chance!
 There may alternate weal and woe,
 Success and failure, as they can,
 Mingle and shift in changeeful dance!
 Excitement is the sphere for man.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Nor goal, nor measure is prescrib'd to you,
 If you desire to taste of every thing,
 To snatch at joy while on the wing,

May your career amuse and profit too!
Only fall to and don't be over coy!

FAUST

Hearken! The end I aim at is not joy;
I crave excitement, agonizing bliss,
Enamour'd hatred, quickening vexation.
Purg'd from the love of knowledge, my vocation,
The scope of all my powers henceforth be this,
To bare my breast to every pang,--to know
In my heart's core all human weal and woe,
To grasp in thought the lofty and the deep,
Men's various fortunes on my breast to heap,
And thus to theirs dilate my individual mind,
And share at length with them the shipwreck of mankind.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Oh, credit me, who still as ages roll,
Have chew'd this bitter fare from year to year,
No mortal, from the cradle to the bier,
Digests the ancient leaven! Know, this Whole
Doth for the Deity alone subsist!
He in eternal brightness doth exist,
Us unto darkness he hath brought, and here
Where day and night alternate, is your sphere.

FAUST

But 'tis my will

MEPHISTOPHELES

Well spoken, I admit!
But one thing puzzles me, my friend;
Time's short, art long; methinks 'twere fit
That you to friendly counsel should attend.
A poet choose as your ally!

Let him thought's wide dominion sweep,
 Each good and noble quality,
 Upon your honoured brow to heap;
 The lion's magnanimity,
 The fleetness of the hind,
 The fiery blood of Italy,
 The Northern's stedfast mind.
 Let him to you the mystery show
 To blend high aims and cunning low;
 And while youth's passions are aflame
 To fall in love by rule and plan!
 I fain would meet with such a man;
 Would him Sir Microcosmus name.

FAUST

What then am I, if I aspire in vain
 The crown of our humanity to gain,
 Towards which my every sense doth strain?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Thou'rt after all--just what thou art.
 Put on thy head a wig with countless locks,
 And to a cubit's height upraise thy socks,
 Still thou remainest ever, what thou art.

FAUST

I feel it, I have heap'd upon my brain
 The gather'd treasure of man's thought in vain;
 And when at length from studious toil I rest,
 No power, new-born, springs up within my breast;
 A hair's breadth is not added to my height,
 I am no nearer to the infinite.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Good sir, these things you view indeed,
 Just as by other men they're view'd;
 We must more cleverly proceed,
 Before life's joys our grasp elude.
 The devil! thou hast hands and feet,
 And head and heart are also thine;
 What I enjoy with relish sweet,
 Is it on that account less mine?
 If for six stallions I can pay,
 Do I not own their strength and speed?
 A proper man I dash away,
 As their two dozen legs were mine indeed.
 Up then, from idle pondering free,
 And forth into the world with me!
 I tell you what;--your speculative churl
 Is like a beast which some ill spirit leads,
 On barren wilderness, in ceaseless whirl,
 While all around lie fair and verdant meads.

FAUST

But how shall we begin?

MEPHISTOPHELES

We will go hence with speed,
 A place of torment this indeed!
 A precious life, thyself to bore,
 And some few youngsters evermore!
 Leave that to neighbour Paunch!--withdraw,
 Why wilt thou plague thyself with thrashing straw?
 The very best that thou dost know
 Thou dar'st not to the striplings show.
 One in the passage now doth wait!

FAUST

I'm in no mood to see him now,

MEPHISTOPHELES

Poor lad! He must be tired, I trow;
 He must not go disconsolate.
 Hand me thy cap and gown; the mask
 Is for my purpose quite first rate.
He changes his dress.
 Now leave it to my wit! I ask
 But quarter of an hour; meanwhile equip,
 And make all ready for our pleasant trip!
Exit FAUST.

MEPHISTOPHELES *in FAUST'S long gown*

Mortal! the loftiest attributes of men,
 Reason and Knowledge, only thus contemn,
 Still let the Prince of lies, without control,
 With shows, and mocking charms delude thy soul,
 I have thee unconditionally then!
 Fate hath endow'd him with an ardent mind,
 Which unrestrain'd still presses on for ever,
 And whose precipitate endeavour
 Earth's joys o'erleaping, leaveth them behind.
 Him will I drag through life's wild waste,
 Through scenes of vapid dulness, where at last
 Bewilder'd, he shall falter, and stick fast;
 And, still to mock his greedy haste,
 Viands and drink shall float his craving lips beyond--
 Vainly he'll seek refreshment, anguish-tost,
 And were he not the devil's by his bond,
 Yet must his soul infallibly be lost!

A STUDENT enters

STUDENT

But recently I've quitted home,
 Full of devotion am I come

A man to know and hear, whose name
With reverence is known to fame.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Your courtesy much flatters me!
A man like other men you see;
Pray have you yet applied elsewhere?

STUDENT

I would entreat your friendly care!
I've youthful blood and courage high;
Of gold I bring a fair supply;
To let me go my mother was not fain;
But here I longed true knowledge to attain.

MEPHISTOPHELES

You've hit upon the very place.

STUDENT

And yet my steps I would retrace.
These walls, this melancholy room,
O'erpower me with a sense of gloom;
The space is narrow, nothing green,
No friendly tree is to be seen:
And in these halls, with benches filled, distraught,
Sight, hearing fail me, and the power of thought.

MEPHISTOPHELES

It all depends on habit. Thus at first
The infant takes not kindly to the breast,
But before long, its eager thirst
Is fain to slake with hearty zest:
Thus at the breasts of wisdom day by day
With keener relish you'll your thirst allay.

STUDENT

Upon her neck I fain would hang with joy;
To reach it, say, what means must I employ?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Explain, ere further time we lose,
What special faculty you choose?

STUDENT

Profoundly learned I would grow,
What heaven contains would comprehend,
O'er earth's wide realm my gaze extend,
Nature and science I desire to know.

MEPHISTOPHELES

You are upon the proper track, I find;
Take heed, let nothing dissipate your mind.

STUDENT

My heart and soul are in the chase!
Though to be sure I fain would seize,
On pleasant summer holidays,
A little liberty and careless ease.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Use well your time, so rapidly it flies;
Method will teach you time to win;
Hence, my young friend, I would advise,
With college logic to begin!
Then will your mind be so well braced,
In Spanish boots so tightly laced,
That on 'twill circumspectly creep,
Thought's beaten track securely keep,
Nor will it, ignis-fatuus like,
Into the path of error strike.
Then many a day they'll teach you how

The mind's spontaneous acts, till now
 As eating and as drinking free,
 Require a process;--one! two! three!
 In truth the subtle web of thought
 Is like the weaver's fabric wrought:
 One treadle moves a thousand lines,
 Swift dart the shuttles to and fro,
 Unseen the threads together flow,
 A thousand knots one stroke combines.
 Then forward steps your sage to show,
 And prove to you, it must be so;
 The first being so, and so the second,
 The third and fourth deduc'd we see;
 And if there were no first and second,
 Nor third nor fourth would ever be.
 This, scholars of all countries prize,--
 Yet 'mong themselves no weavers rise.--
 He who would know and treat of aught alive,
 Seeks first the living spirit thence to drive:
 Then are the lifeless fragments in his hand,
 There only fails, alas the spirit-band.
 This process, chemists name, in learned thesis,
 Mocking themselves, Naturer encheiresis.

STUDENT

Your words I cannot fully comprehend.

MEPHISTOPHELES

In a short time you will improve, my friend,
 When of scholastic forms you learn the use;
 And how by method all things to reduce.

STUDENT

So doth all this my brain confound,
 As if a mill-wheel there were turning round.

MEPHISTOPHELES

And next, before aught else you learn,
 You must with zeal to metaphysics turn!
 There see that you profoundly comprehend,
 What doth the limit of man's brain transcend;
 For that which is or is not in the head
 A sounding phrase will serve you in good stead.
 But before all strive this half year
 From one fix'd order ne'er to swerve!

Five lectures daily you must hear;
 The hour still punctually observe!
 Yourself with studious zeal prepare,
 And closely in your manual look,
 Hereby may you be quite aware
 That all he utters standeth in the book;
 Yet write away without cessation,
 As at the Holy Ghost's dictation!

STUDENT

This, Sir, a second time you need not say!
 Your counsel I appreciate quite;
 What we possess in black and white,
 We can in peace and comfort bear away.

MEPHISTOPHELES

A faculty I pray you name.

STUDENT

For jurisprudence, Some distaste I own.

MEPHISTOPHELES

To me this branch of science is well known,
 And hence I cannot your repugnance blame.
 Customs and laws in every place,

Like a disease, an heir-loom dread,
 Still trail their curse from race to race,
 And furtively abroad they spread.
 To nonsense, reason's self they turn;
 Beneficence becomes a pest;
 Woe unto thee, that thou'rt a grandson born!
 As for the law born with us, unexpressed;--
 That law, alas, none careth to discern.

STUDENT

You deepen my dislike. The youth
 Whom you instruct, is blest in sooth!
 To try theology I feel inclined.

MEPHISTOPHELES

I would not lead you willingly astray,
 But as regards this science, you will find
 So hard it is to shun the erring way,
 And so much hidden poison lies therein,
 Which scarce can you discern from medicine.
 Here too it is the best, to listen but to one,
 And by the master's words to swear alone.
 To sum up all--To words hold fast!
 Then the safe gate securely pass'd,
 You'll reach the lane of certainty at last.

STUDENT

But then some meaning must the words convey.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Right! But o'er-anxious thought, you'll find of no avail,
 For there precisely where ideas fail,
 A word comes opportunely into play
 Most admirable weapons words are found,
 On words a system we securely ground,

In words we can conveniently believe,
Nor of a single jot can we a word bereave.

STUDENT

Your pardon for my importunity;
Yet once more must I trouble you:
On medicine, I'll thank you to supply
A pregnant utterance or two!
Three years! how brief the appointed tide!
The field, heaven knows, is all too wide!
If but a friendly hint be thrown,
'Tis easier then to feel one's way.

MEPHISTOPHELES *aside*

I'm weary of the dry pedantic tone,
And must again the genuine devil play.

Aloud

Of medicine the spirit's caught with ease,
The great and little world you study through,
That things may then their course pursue,
As heaven may please.
In vain abroad you range through science' ample space,
Each man learns only that which learn he can;
Who knows the moment to embrace,
He is your proper man.
In person you are tolerably made,
Nor in assurance will you be deficient:
Self-confidence acquire, be not afraid,
Others will then esteem you a proficient.
Learn chiefly with the sex to deal!
Their thousands ahs and ohs,
These the sage doctor knows,
He only from one point can heal.
Assume a decent tone of courteous ease,
You have them then to humour as you please.

First a diploma must belief infuse,
 That you in your profession take the lead:
 You then at once those easy freedoms use
 For which another many a year must plead;
 Learn how to feel with nice address
 The dainty wrist;--and how to press,
 With ardent furtive glance, the slender waist,
 To feel how tightly it is laced.

STUDENT

There is some sense in that! one sees the how and why.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Grey is, young friend, all theory:
 And green of life the golden tree.

STUDENT

I swear it seemeth like a dream to me.
 May I some future time repeat my visit,
 To hear on what your wisdom grounds your views?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Command my humble service when you choose.

STUDENT

Ere I retire, one boon I must solicit:
 Here is my album, do not, Sir, deny
 This token of your favour!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Willingly!
He writes and returns the book.

STUDENT *reads*

ERITIS SICUT DEUS, SCIENTES BONUM ET MALUM

He reverently closes the book and retires.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Let but this ancient proverb be your rule,
My cousin follow still, the wily snake,
And with your likeness to the gods, poor fool,
Ere long be sure your poor sick heart will quake!

FAUST *enters*

Whither away?

MEPHISTOPHELES

'Tis thine our course to steer.
The little world, and then the great we'll view.
With what delight, what profit too,
Thou'lt revel through thy gay career!

FAUST

Despite my length of beard I need
The easy manners that insure success;
Th' attempt I fear can ne'er succeed;
To mingle in the world I want address;
I still have an embarrass'd air, and then
I feel myself so small with other men.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Time, my good friend, will all that's needful give;
Be only self-possessed, and thou hast learn'd to live.

FAUST

But how are we to start, I pray?
Steeds, servants, carriage, where are they?

MEPHISTOPHELES

We've but to spread this mantle wide,
'Twill serve whereon through air to ride,

No heavy baggage need you take,
When we our bold excursion make,
A little gas, which I will soon prepare,
Lifts us from earth; aloft through air,
Light laden, we shall swiftly steer;--
I wish you joy of your new life-career.

AUERBACH'S CELLAR IN LEIPZIG

A Drinking Party

FROSCH

No drinking? Naught a laugh to raise?
 None of your gloomy looks, I pray!
 You, who so bright were wont to blaze,
 Are dull as wetted straw to-day.

BRANDER

'Tis all your fault; your part you do not bear,
 No beastliness, no folly.

FROSCH

pours a glass of wine over his head

There,
 You have them both!

BRANDER

You double beast!

FROSCH

'Tis what you ask'd me for, at least!

SIEBEL

Whoever quarrels, turn him out!
 With open throat drink, roar, and shout.
 Hollo! Hollo! Ho!

ALTMAYER

Zounds, fellow, cease your deaf'ning cheers!
 Bring cotton-wool! He splits my ears.

SIEBEL

'Tis when the roof rings back the tone,
Then first the full power of the bass is known.

FROSCH

Right! out with him who takes offence!
A! tara lara da!

ALTMAYER

A! tara lara da!

FROSCH

Our throats are tuned. Come let's commence!

Sings

The holy Roman empire now,
How holds it still together?

BRANDER

An ugly song! a song political!
A song offensive! Thank God, every morn
To rule the Roman empire, that you were not born!
I bless my stars at least that mine is not
Either a kaiser's or a chancellor's lot.
Yet 'mong ourselves should one still lord it o'er the rest;
That we elect a pope I now suggest.
Ye know, what quality ensures
A man's success, his rise secures.

Faoscn sings

Bear, lady nightingale above,
Ten thousand greetings to my love.

SIESEL

No greetings to a sweetheart!
No love-songs shall there be!

FROSCH

Love-greetings and love-kisses! Thou shalt not hinder me!

Sings

Undo the bolt! in silly night,
 Undo the bolt! the lover wakes.
 Shut to the bolt! when morning breaks,

SIEBEL

Ay, sing, sing on, praise her with all, thy might!!
 My turn to laugh will come some day.
 Me hath she jilted once, you the same trick she'll play.
 Some gnome her lover be! where cross-roads meet,
 With her to play the fool; or old he-goat,
 From Blocksberg coming in swift gallop, bleat
 A good night to her, from his hairy throat!
 A proper lad of genuine flesh and blood,
 Is for the damsel far too good;
 The greeting she shall have from me,
 To smash her window-panes will be!

BRANDER *striking on the table*

Silence! Attend! to me give ear!
 Confess, sirs, I know how to live:
 Some love-sick folk are sitting here!
 Hence, 'tis but fit, their hearts to cheer,
 That I a good-night strain to them should give.
 Hark! of the newest fashion is my song!
 Strike boldly in the chorus, clear and strong!

He sings

Once in a cellar lived a rat,
 He feasted there on butter,
 Until his paunch became as fat
 As that of Doctor Luther,
 The cook laid poison for the guest,

Then was his heart with pangs oppress'd,
As if his frame love wasted.

Chorus shouting
As if his frame love wasted.

BRANDER

He ran around, he ran abroad,
Of every puddle drinking.
The house with rage he scratch'd and gnaw'd,
In vain,--he fast was Sinking;
Full many an anguish'd bound he gave,
Nothing the hapless brute could save,
As if his frame love wasted.

CHORUS

As if his frame love wasted.

BRANDER

By torture driven, in open day,
The kitchen he invaded,
Convulsed upon the hearth he lay,
With anguish sorely jaded;
The poisoner laugh'd, Ha! ha! quoth she,
His life is ebbing fast, I see,
As if his frame love wasted.

CHORUS

As if his frame love wasted.

SIEBEL

How the dull boors exulting shout!
Poison for the poor rats to strew
A fine exploit it is no doubt.

BRANDER

They, as it seems, stand well with you!

ALTMAYER

Old bald-pate! with the paunch profound!
The rat's mishap hath tamed his nature;
For he his counterpart bath found
Depicted in the swollen creature.

FAUST AND MEPHISTOPHELES

MEPHISTOPHELES

I now must introduce to you
Before aught else, this jovial crew,
To show how lightly life may glide away;
With the folk here each day's a holiday.
With little wit and much content,

Each on his own small round intent,
Like sportive kitten with its tail;
While no sick-headache they bewail,
And while their host will credit give,
Joyous and free from care they live.

BRANDER

They're off a journey, that is clear,--
From their strange manners; they have scarce been here
An hour.

FROSCH

You're right! Leipzig's the place for me
'Tis quite a little Paris; people there
Acquire a certain easy finish'd air.

SIEBEL

What take you now these travellers to be?

FROSCH

Let me alone! O'er a full glass you'll see,
 As easily I'll worm their secret out,
 As draw an infant's tooth. I've not a doubt
 That my two gentlemen are nobly born,
 They look dissatisfied and full of scorn.

BRANDER

They are but mountebanks, I'll lay a bet!

ALTMAYER

Most like.

FROSCH

Mark me, I'll screw it from them yet!

MEPHISTOPHELES to FAUST

These fellows would not scent the devil out,
 E'en though he had them by the very throat!

FAUST

SIEBEL

Thanks for your fair salute.

*Aside, glancing at **MEPHISTOPHELES**.*

How! goes the fellow on a halting foot?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Is it permitted here with you to sit?

Then though good wine is not forthcoming here,
 Good company at least our hearts will cheer.

ALTMAYER

A dainty gentleman, no doubt of it.

FROSCH

You're doubtless recently from Rippach? Pray,
Did you with Master Hans there chance to sup?

MEPHISTOPHELES

To-day we pass'd him, but we did not stop!
When last we met him he had much to say
Touching his cousins, and to each he sent
Full many a greeting and kind compliment.
With an inclination towards FROSCH.

ALTMAYER *aside to FROSCH*

You have it there!

SIEBEL

Faith! he's a knowing one!

FROSCH

Have patience! I will show him up anon!

MEPHISTOPHELES

We heard erewhile, unless I'm wrong,
Voices well trained in chorus pealing?
Certes, most choicely here must song
Re-echo from this vaulted ceiling!

FROSCH

That you're an amateur one plainly sees!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Oh no, though strong the love, I cannot boast much skill.

ALTMAYER

Give us a song!

MEPHISTOPHELES

As many as you will.

SIEBEL

But be it a brand new one, if you please!

MEPHISTOPHELES

But recently returned from Spain are we,
The pleasant land of wine and minstrelsy.

Sings

A king there was once reigning,
Who had a goodly flea--

FROSCH

Hark! did you rightly catch the words? a flea!
An odd sort of a guest he needs must be.

MEPHISTOPHELES *sings*

A king there was once reigning,
Who had a goodly flea,
Him loved he without feigning,
As his own son were he!
His tailor then he summon'd,
The tailor to him goes:
Now measure me the youngster
For jerkin and for hose!

BRANDER

Take proper heed, the tailor strictly charge,
The nicest measurement to take,
And as he loves his head, to make
The hose quite smooth and not too large!

MEPHISTOPHELES

In satin and in velvet,
Behold the yonker dressed;

Bedizen'd o'er with ribbons,
 A cross upon his breast.
 Prime minister they made him,
 He wore a star of state;
 And all his poor relations
 Were courtiers, rich and great.

The gentlemen and ladies
 At court were sore distressed;
 The queen and all her maidens
 Were bitten by the pest,
 And yet they dared not scratch them,
 Or chase the fleas away.
 If we are bit, we catch them,
 And crack without delay.

CHORUS *shouting*

If we are bit, &c.

FROSCH

Bravo! That's the song for me!

SIEBEL

Such be the fate of every flea!

BRANDER

With Clever finger catch and Kill!

ALTMAYER

Hurrah for wine and freedom still!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Were but your wine a trifle better, friend,
 A glass to freedom I would gladly drain.

SIEBEL

You'd better not repeat those words again t

MEPHISTOPHELES

I am afraid the landlord to offend;
Else freely I would treat each worthy guest
From our own cellar to the very best.

SIEBEL

Out with it then! Your doings I'll defend.

FROSCH

Give a good glass, and straight we'll praise you, one and all.
Only let not your samples be too small;
For if my judgment you desire,
Certes, an ample mouthful I require.

ALTMAYER *aside*

I guess they're from the Rhenish land.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Fetch me a gimlet here!

BRANDER

Say, what therewith to bore?
You cannot have the wine-casks at the door?

ALTMAYER

Our landlord's tool-basket behind doth yonder stand.

MEPHISTOPHELES *takes the gimlet*

To **FROSCH**

Now only say! what liquor will you take?

FROSCH

How mean you that? have you of every sort?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Each may his own selection make.

ALTMAYER to FROSCH

Ha! Ha! You lick your lips already at the thought.

FROSCH

Good, if I have my choice, the Rhenish I propose;
For still the fairest gifts the fatherland bestows.

MEPHISTOPHELES

(boring a hole in the edge of the table opposite to where **FROSCH** is sitting)

Give me a little wax--and make some stoppers--quick!

ALTMAYER

Why, this is nothing but a juggler's trick!

MEPHISTOPHELES to BRANDER

And you?

BRANDER

Champagne's the wine for me;
Right brisk, and sparkling let it be!

(**MEPHISTOPHELES** bores; one of the party has in the meantime prepared the wax-stoppers and stopped the holes.)

BRANDER

What foreign is one always can't decline,
What's good is often scatter'd far apart.
The French your genuine German hates with all his heart,
Yet has a relish for their wine.

SIEBEL.

as MEPHISTOPHELES approaches him

I like not acid wine, I must allow,
Give me a glass of genuine sweet!

MEPHISTOPHELES *bored*

Tokay
Shall, if you wish it, flow without delay.

ALTMAYER

Come! look me in the face! no fooling now!
You are but making fun of us, I trow.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Ah! ah! that would indeed be making free
With such distinguished guests. Come, no delay;
What liquor can I serve you with, I pray?

ALTMAYER

Only be quick, it matters not to me.
After the holes are bored and stopped.

MEPHISTOPHELES *with strange gestures*

Grapes the vine-stock bears,
Horns the buck-goat wears!
Wine is sap, the vine is wood,
The wooden board yields wine as good.
With a deeper glance and true
The mysteries of nature view!
Have faith and here's a miracle!
Your stoppers draw and drink your fill!

ALL.

(as they draw the stoppers and the wine chosen by each runs into his glass)

Oh beauteous spring, which flows so far!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Spill not a single drop, of this beware! *They drink repeatedly.*

ALL *sing*

Happy as cannibals are we,
Or as five hundred swine.

MEPHISTOPHELES

They're in their glory, mark their elevation!

FAUST

Let's hence, nor here our stay prolong.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Attend, of brutishness ere long
You'll see a glorious revelation.

SIEBEL

(drinks carelessly; the wine is spilt upon the ground, and turns to flame)

Help! fire! help! Hell is burning!

MEPHISTOPHELES

addressing the flames

Stop,
Kind element, be still, I say!

To the Company.

SIEBEL

What means the knave! For this you'll dearly pay!
Us, it appears, you do not know.

FROSCH

Such tricks a second time he'd better show!

ALTMAYER

Methinks 'twere well we pack'd him quietly away.

SIEBEL

What, sir! with us your hocus-pocus play!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Silence, old wine-cask!

SIEBEL

How! add insult, too!
Vile broomstick!

BRANDER

Hold, or blows shall rain on you!

ALTMAYER

draws a stopper out of the table; fire springs out against him
I burn! I burn!

SIEBEL

'Tis sorcery, I vow!
Strike home! The fellow is fair game, I trow!
They draw their knives and attack **MEPHISTOPHELES**.

MEPHISTOPHELES *with solemn gestures*

Visionary scenes appear!
Words delusive cheat the ear! Be ye there, and be ye here!
They stand amazed and gaze at each other.

ALTMAYER

Where am I? What a beauteous land!

FROSCH

Vineyards! unless my sight deceives?

SIEBEL

And clust'ring grapes too, close at hand!

BRANDER

And underneath the spreading leaves,
What stems there be! What grapes I see!

(He senses **SIEBEL** by the nose.

The others reciprocally do the same, and raise their knives.)

MEPHISTOPHELES *as above*

Delusion, from their eyes the bandage take!

Note how the devil loves a jest to break!

(He disappears with **FAUST**; the fellows draw back from one another.)

SIEBEL

What was it?

ALTMAYER

How?

FROSCH

Was that your nose?

BRANDER *to SIEBEL*

And look, my hand doth thine enclose!

ALTMAYER

I felt a shock, it went through every limb!
A chair! I'm fainting! All things swim!

FROSCH

Say what has happened, what's it all about?

SIEBEL

Where is the fellow? Could I scent him out,
His body from his soul I'd soon divide!

ALTMAYER

With my own eyes, upon a cask astride,
Forth through the cellar-door I saw him ride--
Heavy as lead my feet are growing.
Turning to the table.
I wonder is the wine still flowing!

SIEBEL

'Twas all delusion, cheat and lie.

FROSCH

'Twas wine I drank, most certainly.

BRANDER

But with the grapes how was it, pray?

ALTMAYER

That none may miracles believe, who now will say?

WITCHES' KITCHEN

A large caldron hangs over the fire on a low hearth; various figures appear in the vapour rising from it. **A FEMALE MONKEY** sits beside the caldron to skim it, and watch that it does not boil over. The **MALE MONKEY** with the young ones is seated near, warming himself. The walls and ceiling are adorned with the strangest articles of witch-furniture.

FAUST, MEPHISTOPHELES

FAUST

This senseless, juggling witchcraft I detest!
 Dost promise that in this foul nest
 Of madness, I shall be restored?
 Must I seek counsel from an ancient dame?
 And can she, by these rites abhorred,
 Take thirty winters from my frame?
 Woe's me, if thou naught better canst suggest!
 Hope has already fled my breast.
 Has neither nature nor a noble mind
 A balsam yet devis'd of any kind?

MEPHISTOPHELES

My friend, you now speak sensibly. In truth,
 Nature a method giveth to renew thy youth:
 But in another book the lesson's writ;--
 It forms a curious chapter, I admit.

FAUST

I fain would know it.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Good! A remedy
 Without physician, gold, or sorcery:
 Away forthwith, and to the fields repair,
 Begin to delve, to cultivate the ground,
 Thy senses and thyself confine
 Within the very narrowest round,
 Support thyself upon the simplest fare,
 Live like a very brute the brutes among,
 Neither esteem it robbery
 The acre thou dost reap, thyself to dung;
 This is the best method, credit me,
 Again at eighty to grow hale and young.

FAUST

I am not used to it, nor can myself degrade
 So far, as in my hand to take the spade.
 This narrow life would suit me not at all.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Then we the witch must summon after all.

FAUST

Will none but this old beldame do?
 Canst not thyself the potion brew?

MEPHISTOPHELES

A pretty play our leisure to beguile!
 A thousand bridges I could build meanwhile.
 Not science only and consummate art,
 Patience must also bear her part.
 A quiet spirit worketh whole years long;
 Time only makes the subtle ferment strong.
 And all things that belong thereto,
 Are wondrous and exceeding rare!
 The devil taught her, it is true;

But yet the draught the devil can't prepare.

Perceiving the beasts.

Look yonder, what a dainty pair!

Here is the maid! the knave is there!

To the beasts

It seems your dame is not at home?

THE MONKEYS

Gone to carouse,

Out of the house,

Thro' the chimney and away!

MEPHISTOPHELES

How long is it her wont to roam?

THE MONKEYS

While we can warm our paws she'll stay.

MEPHISTOPHELES to FAUST

What think you of the charming creature?

FAUST

I loathe alike their form and features!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Nay, such discourse, be it confessed,

Is just the thing that pleases me the best.

To the MONKEYS

Tell me, ye whelps, accursed crew!

What Stir ye in the broth about?

MONKEYS

Coarse beggar's gruel here we stew.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Of customers you'll have a rout.

THE HE-MONKEY

*approaching and fawning on **MEPHISTOPHELES***

Quick! quick! throw the dice,
 Make me rich in a trice,
 Oh give me the prize!
 Alas, for myself!
 Had I plenty of pelf,
 I then should be wise.

MEPHISTOPHELES

How blest the ape would think himself, if he
 Could only put into the lottery!

(In the meantime the young **MONKEYS** have been playing with a large globe, which they roll forwards)

THE HE-MONKEY

The world behold;
 Unceasingly roll'd,
 It riseth and falleth ever;
 It ringeth like glass!
 How brittle, alas!
 'Tis hollow, and resteth never.
 How bright the sphere,
 Still brighter here!
 Now living am I!
 Dear son, beware!
 Nor venture there!
 Thou too must die!
 It is of clay;
 'Twill crumble away;
 There fragments lie.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Of what use is the sieve?

THE HE-MONKEY *taking it dozen*

The sieve would show,

If thou wert a thief or no?

*He runs to the **SHE-MONKEY**, and makes her look through it.*

Look through the sieve!

Dost know him the thief,

And dar'st thou not call him so?

MEPHISTOPHELES *approaching the fire*

And then this pot?

THE MONKEYS

The half-witted sot!

He knows not the pot!

He knows not the kettle!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Unmannerly beast!

Be civil at least!

THE HE-MONKEY

Take the whisk and sit down in the settle!

*He makes **MEPHISTOPHELES** sit down.*

FAUST

(who all this time has been standing before a looking-glass,
now approaching, and now retiring from it)

What do I see? what form, whose charms transcend

The loveliness of earth, is mirror'd here!

O Love, to waft me to her sphere,

To me the swiftest of thy pinions lend!

Alas! If I remain not rooted to this place,
 If to approach more near I'm fondly lur'd,
 Her image fades, in veiling mist obscur'd
 Model of beauty both in form and face!
 Is't possible? Hath woman charms so rare?
 In this recumbent form, supremely fair,
 The essence must I see of heavenly grace?
 Can aught so exquisite on earth be found?

MEPHISTOPHELES

The six days' labour of a god, my friend,
 Who doth himself cry bravo, at the end,
 By something clever doubtless should be crown'd.
 For this time gaze your fill, and when you please
 Just such a prize for you I can provide;
 How blest is he to whom kind fate decrees,
 To take her to his home, a lovely bride!

(**FAUST** continues to gaze into the mirror. **MEPHISTOPHELES**
 stretching himself on the settle and playing with the whisk,
 continues to speak.)

Here sit I, like a king upon his throne;
 My sceptre this;--the crown I want alone.

THE MONKEYS

(who have hitherto been making all sorts of strange gestures, bring
MEPHISTOPHELES a crown, with loud cries)

Oh, be so good,
 With Sweat and with blood
 The crown to lime!

(They handle the crown awkwardly and break it in two
 pieces, with which they skip about.)

'Twas fate's decree!
 We speak and see!
 We hear and rhyme.

FAUST *before the mirror*

Woe's me! well-nigh distraught I feel!

MEPHISTOPHELES

pointing to the beasts

And even my own head almost begins to reel.

THE MONKEYS

If good luck attend,
 If fitly things blend,
 Our jargon with thought
 And with reason is fraught!

FAUST *as above*

A flame is kindled in my breast!
 Let us begone! nor linger here!

MEPHISTOPT'IELES

in the same position

It now at least must be confessed,
 That poets sometimes are sincere.

(The caldron begins to boil over; a great flame arises,
 which streams up the chimney. The **WITCH** comes down the
 chimney with horrible cries.)

THE WITCH

Ough! ough! ough! ough!
 Accursed brute! accursed **SOW**!
 The caldron dost neglect, for shame!
 Accursed brute to scorch the dame!

Perceiving **FAUST** and **MEPHISTOPHELES**

Whom have we here?
 Who's sneaking here?
 Whence are ye come?
 With what desire?
 The plague of fire
 Your bones consume!

(She dips the skimming-ladle into the caldron and throws flames at **FAUST**, **MEPHISTOPHELES**, and the **MONKEYS**. The **MONKEYS** whimper.)

MEPHISTOPHELES

(twirling the whisk which he holds in his hand, and striking among the glasses and pots)

Dash! Smash!
 There lies the glass!
 There lies the slime!
 'Tis but a jest;
 I but keep time,
 Thou hellish pest,
 To thine own chime!

*While the **WITCH** steps back in rage and astonishment.*

Dost know me! Skeleton! Vile scarecrow, thou!
 Thy lord and master dost thou know?
 What holds me, that I deal not now
 Thee and thine apes a stunning blow?
 No more respect to my red vest dost pay?
 Does my cock's feather no allegiance claim?
 Have I my visage masked to-day?
 Must I be forced myself to name?

THE WITCH

Master, forgive this rude salute!
 But I perceive no cloven foot.
 And your two ravens, where are they?

MEPHISTOPHELES

This once I must admit your plea;--
 For truly I must own that we
 Each other have not seen for many a day.
 The culture, too, that shapes the world, at last
 Hath e'en the devil in its sphere embraced;
 The northern phantom from the scene hath pass'd,
 Tail, talons, horns, are nowhere to be traced!
 As for the foot, with which I can't dispense,
 'Twould injure me in company, and hence,
 Like many a youthful cavalier,
 False calves I now have worn for many a year.

THE WITCH *dancing*

I am beside myself with joy,
 To see once more the gallant Satan here!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Woman, no more that name employ!

THE WITCH

But why? what mischief hath it done?

MEPHISTOPHELES

To fable-books it now doth appertain;
 But people from the change have nothing won.
 Rid of the evil one, the evil ones remain.
 Lord Baron call thou me, so is the matter good;
 Of other cavaliers the mien I wear.
 Dost make no question of my gentle blood;

See here, this is the scutcheon that I bear!
He makes an unseemly gesture.

THE WITCH

laughing immoderately

Ha! Ha Just like yourself! You are, I ween,
 The same mad wag that you have ever been!

MEPHISTOPHELES to FAUST

My friend, learn this to understand, I pray!
 To deal with witches this is still the way.

THE WITCH

Now tell me, gentlemen, what you desire?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Of your known juice a goblet we require.
 But for the very oldest let me ask;
 Double its strength with years doth grow.

THE WITCH

Most willingly! And here I have a flask,
 From which I've sipp'd myself ere now;
 What's more, it doth no longer stink;
 To you a glass I joyfully will give.
Aside.

If unprepar'd, however, this man drink,
 He hath not, as you know, an hour to live.

MEPHISTOPHELES

He's my good friend, with whom 'twill prosper well;
 I grudge him not the choicest of thy store.
 Now draw thy circle, speak thy spell,
 And straight a bumper for him pour!

(The **WITCH**, with extraordinary gestures, describes a circle, and places strange things within it. The glasses meanwhile begin to ring, the caldron to sound, and to make music. Lastly, she brings a great book; places the **MONKEYS** in the circle to serve her as a desk, and to hold the torches. She beckons **FAUST** to approach.)

FAUST to MEPHISTOPHELES

Tell me, to what doth all this tend?
Where will these frantic gestures end?
This loathsome cheat, this senseless stuff
I've known and hated long enough.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Mere mummary, a laugh to raise!
Pray don't be so fastidious! She
But as a leech, her hocus-pocus plays,
That well with you her potion may agree.
*He compels **FAUST** to enter the circle.*

*The **WITCH**, with great emphasis, begins to declaim the book.*

This must thou ken:
Of one make ten,
Pass two, and then
Make square the three,
So rich thou'lt be.
Drop out the four!
From five and six,
Thus says the witch,
Make seven and eight.
So all is straight!
And nine is one,
And ten is none,
This is the witch's one-time-one!

FAUST

The hag doth as in fever rave.

MEPHISTOPHELES

To these will follow many a stave.
 I know it well, so rings the book throughout;
 Much time I've lost in puzzling o'er its pages,
 For downright paradox, no doubt,
 A mystery remains alike to fools and sages.
 Ancient the art and modern too, my friend.
 'Tis still the fashion as it used to be,
 Error instead of truth abroad to send
 By means of three and one, and one and three.
 'Tis ever taught and babbled in the schools.
 Who'd take the trouble to dispute with fools?
 When words men hear, in sooth, they usually believe.
 That there must needs therein be something to conceive.

THE WITCH *continues*

The lofty power
 Of wisdom's dower,
 From all the world conceal'd!
 Who thinketh not,
 To him I wot,
 Unsought it is reveal'd.

FAUST

What nonsense doth the hag propound?
 My brain it doth well-nigh confound.
 A hundred thousand fools or more,
 Methinks I hear in chorus roar.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Incomparable Sibyl cease, I pray!
 Hand us thy liquor without more delay.
 And to the very brim the goblet crown!
 My friend he is, and need not be afraid;

Besides, he is a man of many a grade,
Who bath drunk deep already.

(The **WITCH**, with many ceremonies, pours the liquor into a cup;
as **FAUST** lifts it to his mouth, a light flame arises.)

MEPHISTOPHELES

Gulp it down!
No hesitation! It will prove
A cordial, and your heart inspire!
What! with the devil hand and glove,
And yet shrink back afraid of fire?

*The **WITCH** dissolves the circle. **FAUST** steps Out.*

MEPHISTOPHELES

Now forth at once! thou dar'st not rest.

WITCH

And much, sir, may the liquor profit you!

MEPHISTOPHELES to the WITCH

And if to pleasure thee I aught can do,
Pray on Walpurgis mention thy request.

WITCH

Here is a song, sung o'er, sometimes you'll see,
That 'twill a singular effect produce.

MEPHISTOPHELES to FAUST

Come, quick, and let thyself be led by me;
Thou must perspire, in order that the juice
Thy frame may penetrate through every part.
Then noble idleness I thee will teach to prize,
And soon with ecstasy thou'lt recognise
How Cupid stirs and gambols in thy heart.

FAUST

Let me but gaze one moment in the glass!
Too lovely was that female form!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Nay! nay!

A model which all women shall surpass,
In flesh and blood ere long thou shalt survey.
As works the draught, thou presently shalt greet
A Helen in each woman thou dost meet.

A STREET

FAUST MARGARET passing by

FAUST

Fair lady, may I thus make free
To offer you my arm and company?

MARGARET

I am no lady, am not fair,
Can without escort home repair.
She disengages herself and exit.

FAUST

By heaven! This girl is fair indeed!
No form like hers can I recall.
Virtue she hath, and modest heed,
Is piquant too, and sharp withal.
Her cheek's soft light, her rosy lips,
No length of time will e'er eclipse!
Her downward glance in passing by,
Deep in my heart is stamp'd for aye;
How curt and sharp her answer too,
To ecstasy the feeling grew!

MEPHISTOPHZLES enters.

FAUST

This girl must win for me! Dost hear?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Which?

FAUST

She who but now passed.

MEPHISTOPHELES

She from confession coineth here,
 From every sin absolved and free;
 I crept near the confessor's chair.
 All innocence her virgin soul,
 For next to nothing went she there;
 O'er such as she I've no control!

FAUST

She's past fourteen.

MEPHISTOPHELES

You really talk
 Like any gay Lothario,
 Who every floweret from its stalk
 Would pluck, and deems nor grace, nor truth,
 Secure against his arts, forsooth!
 This ne'er the less won't always do.

FAUST

Sir Moralizer, prithee, pause;
 Nor plague me with your tiresome laws!
 To cut the matter short, my friend,
 She must this very night be mine,--
 And if to help me you decline,
 Midnight shall see our compact end.

MEPHISTOPHELES

What may occur just bear in mind!
 A fortnight's space, at least, I need,
 A fit occasion but to find.

FAUST

With but Seven hours I could succeed;
Nor should I want the devil's wile,
So young a creature to beguile.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Like any Frenchman now you speak,
But do not fret, I pray; why seek
To hurry to enjoyment straight?
The pleasure is not half so great,
As when at first around, above,
With all the fooleries of love,
The puppet you can knead and mould
As in Italian story oft is told.

FAUST

No such incentives do I need.

MEPHISTOPHELES

But now, without offence or jest!
You cannot quickly, I protest,
In winning this sweet child succeed.
By storm we cannot take the fort,
To stratagem we must resort.

FAUST

Conduct me to her place of rest!
Some token of the angel bring!
A kerchief from her snowy breast,
A garter bring me,--any thing!

MEPHISTOPHELES

That I my anxious zeal may prove,
Your pangs to sooth and aid your love,
A single moment will we not delay,
Will lead you to her room this very day.

FAUST

And shall I see her ?--Have her?

MEPHISTOPHELES

No!

She to a neighbour's house will go;
But in her atmosphere alone,
The tedious hours meanwhile you may employ,
In blissful dreams of future joy.

FAUST

Can we go now?

MEPHISTOPHELES

'Tis yet too soon.

FAUST

Some present for my love procure!
Exit.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Presents so soon! 'tis well! success is sure!
Full many a goodly place I know,
And treasures buried long ago;
I must a bit o'erlook them now.
Exit.

EVENING. A SMALL AND NEAT ROOM

MARGARET

braiding and binding up her hair

I would give something now to know,

Who yonder gentleman could be!

He had a gallant air, I trow,

And doubtless was of high degree:

That written on his brow was seen--

Nor else would lie so bold have been.

Exit.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Come in! tread softly! be discreet!

FAUST after a pause

Begone and leave me, I entreat!

MEPHISTOPHELES looking round

Not every maiden is so neat.

FAUST gazing round

Welcome sweet twilight, calm and blest,

That in this hallow'd precinct reigns!

Fond yearning love, inspire my breast,

Feeding on hope's sweet dew thy blissful pains!

What stillness here environs me!

Content and order brood around.

What fulness in this poverty!

In this small cell what bliss profound!

(He throws himself on the leather arm-chair beside
the bed.)

Receive me thou, who hast in thine embrace,
 Welcom'd in joy and grief the ages flown!
 How oft the children of a by-gone race
 Have cluster'd round this patriarchal throne!
 Haply she, also, whom I hold so dear,
 For Christmas gift, with grateful joy possess'd,
 Hath with the full round cheek of childhood, here,
 Her grandsire's wither'd hand devoutly press'd.
 Maiden! I feel thy spirit haunt the place,
 Breathing of order and abounding grace.
 As with a mother's voice it prompteth thee,
 The pure white cover o'er the board to spread,
 To strew the crisping sand beneath thy tread.
 Dear hand! so godlike in its ministry!
 The hut becomes a paradise through thee!
 And here
 He raises the bed-curtain.
 How thrills my pulse with strange delight!
 Here could I linger hours untold;
 Thou, Nature, didst in vision bright,
 The embryo angel here unfold.
 Here lay the child, her bosom warm
 With life; while steeped in slumber's dew,
 To perfect grace, her godlike form,
 With pure and hallow'd weavings grew!

 And thou! ah here what seekest thou?
 How quails mine inmost being now!
 What wouldst thou here? what makes thy heart so sore?
 Unhappy Faust! I know thee now no more.

 Do I a magic atmosphere inhale?
 Erewhile, my passion would not brook delay!
 Now in a pure love-dream I melt away.
 Are we the sport of every passing gale?

Should she return and enter now,
 How wouldst thou rue thy guilty flame!
 Proud vaunter--thou wouldst hide thy brow,--
 And at her feet sink down with shame.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Quick! quick! below I see her there.

FAUST

Away! I will return no more!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Here is a casket, with a store
 Of jewels, which I got elsewhere.
 Just lay it in the press; make haste!
 I swear to you, 'twill turn her brain;
 Therein some trifles I have placed,
 Wherewith another to obtain.
 But child is child, and play is play.

FAUST

I know not--shall I?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Do you ask?
 Perchance you would retain the treasure?
 If such your wish, why then, I say,
 Henceforth absolve me from my task,
 Nor longer waste your hours of leisure.
 I trust you're not by avarice led!
 I rub my hands, I scratch my head,--
 He places the casket in the press and closes the lock,
 Now quick! Away!
 That soon the sweet young creature may
 The wish and purpose of your heart obey;

Yet stand you there
 As would you to the lecture-room repair,
 As if before you stood,
 Arrayed in flesh and blood,
 Physics and metaphysics weird and grey!--
 Away! Exeunt.

MARGARET with a lamp
 Here 'tis so close, so sultry now,
 She opens the window.
 Yet out of doors 'tis not so warm.
 I feel so strange, I know not how--
 I wish my mother would come home.
 Through me there runs a shuddering--
 I'm but a foolish timid thing!
 While undressing herself she begins to sing.

There was a king in Thule,
 True even to the grave;
 To whom his dying mistress
 A golden beaker gave.

At every feast he drained it,
 Naught was to him so dear,
 And often as he drained it,
 Gush'd from his eyes the tear.

When death came, unrepining
 His cities o'er he told;
 All to his heir resigning,
 Except his cup of gold.

With many a knightly vassal
 At a royal feast sat he,
 In yon proud ball ancestral,
 In his castle o'er the sea.

Up stood the jovial monarch,
 And quaff'd his last life's glow,
 Then hurled the hallow'd goblet
 Into the flood below.

He saw it splashing, drinking,
 And plunging hi the sea;
 His eyes meanwhile were sinking,
 And never again drank he.
 (She opens the press to put away her clothes, and perceives the
 casket.)

How comes this lovely casket here? The press
 I locked, of that I'm confident.
 'Tis very wonderful! What's in it I can't guess;
 Perhaps 'twas brought by some one in distress.
 And left in pledge for loan my mother lent.
 Here by a ribbon hangs a little key!

I have a mind to open it and see!
 Heavens! only look! what have we here!
 In all my days ne'er saw I such a sight!
 Jewels! which any noble dame might wear,
 For some high pageant richly dight!
 This chain--how would it look on me!
 These splendid gems, whose may they be?
 She puts them on and steps before the glass.

Were but the ear-rings only mine!
 Thus one has quite another air.
 What hoots it to be young and fair?
 It doubtless may be very flue;
 But then, alas, none cares for you,
 And praise sounds half like pity too.
 Gold all doth lure,

Gold doth secure
All things. Alas, we poor!

PROMENADE

FAUST walking thoughtfully up and down. To him
MEPHISTOPHELES.

MEPHISTOPHELES

By all rejected love! By hellish fire I curse,
Would I knew aught to make my imprecation worse!

FAUST

What aileth thee? what chafes thee now so sore?
A face like that I never saw before!

MEPHISTOPHELES

I'd yield me to the devil instantly,
Did it not happen that myself am he!

FAUST

There must be some disorder in thy wit!
To rave thus like a madman, is it fit?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Think! only think! The gems for Gretchen brought,
Them hath a priest now made his own!--
A glimpse of them the mother caught,
And 'gan with secret fear to groan.
The woman's scent is keen enough;
Doth ever in the prayer-book snuff;
Smells every article to ascertain
Whether the thing is holy or profane,
And scented in the jewels rare,
That there was not much blessing there.
"My child," she cries, "ill-gotten good

Ensnares the soul, consumes the blood;
 With them we'll deck our Lady's shrine,
 She'll cheer our souls with bread divine!"
 At this poor Gretchen 'gan to pout;
 'Tis a gift-horse, at least, she thought,
 And sure, he godless cannot be,
 Who brought them here so cleverly.
 Straight for a priest the mother sent,
 Who, when he understood the jest,
 With what he saw was well content.
 "This shows a pious mind!" Quoth he:
 "Self-conquest is true victory.
 The Church bath a good stomach, she, with zest,
 Whole countries hath swallow'd down,
 And never yet a surfeit known.
 The Church alone, be it confessed,
 Daughters, can ill-got wealth digest."

FAUST

It is a general custom, too.
 Practised alike by king and jew.

MEPHISTOPHELES

With that, clasp, chain, and ring, he swept
 As they were mushrooms; and the casket,
 Without one word of thanks, he kept,
 As if of nuts it were a basket.
 Promised reward in heaven, then forth he hied--
 And greatly they were edified.

FAUST

And Gretchen!

MEPHISTOPHELES

In unquiet mood
Knows neither what she would or should;
The trinkets night and day thinks o'er,
On him who brought them, dwells still more.

FAUST

The darling's sorrow grieves me, bring
Another set without delay!
The first, methinks, was no great thing.

MEPHISTOPHELES

All's to my gentleman child's play!

FAUST

Plan all things to achieve my end!
Engage the attention of her friend!
No milk-and-water devil be,
And bring fresh jewels instantly!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Ay, sir! Most gladly I'll obey.

FAUST exit.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Your doting love-sick fool, with ease,
Merely his lady-love to please,
Sun, moon, and stars in sport would puff away.
Exit.

THE NEIGHBOUR'S HOUSE

MARTHA *alone*

God pardon my dear husband, he
Doth not in truth act well by me!
Forth in the world abroad to roam,
And leave me on the straw at home.
And yet his will I ne'er did thwart,
God knows, I lov'd him from my heart.
She weeps.

Perchance he's dead!--oh wretched state!--
Had I but a certificate!

MARGARET *comes*

MARGARET

Dame Martha!

MARTHA

Gretchen?

MARGARET

Only think!
My knees beneath me well-nigh sink!
Within my press I've found to-day,
Another case, of ebony.
And things--magnificent they are,
More costly than the first, by far.

MARTHA

You must not name it to your mother!
It would do shrift, just like the other.

MARGARET

Nay look at them! now only see!

MARTHA *dresses her up*

Thou happy creature!

MARGARET

Woe is me!

Them in the street I cannot wear,
Or in the church, or any where.

MARTHA

Come often over here to me,
The gems put on quite privately;
And then before the mirror walk an hour or so,
Thus we shall have our pleasure too.
Then suitable occasions we must seize,
As at a feast, to show them by degrees:
A chain at first, pearl ear-drops then,--your mother
Won't see them, or we'll coin some tale or other.

MARGARET

But, who, I wonder, could the caskets bring?
I fear there's something wrong about the thing!
a knock,

MARTHA *peering through the blind*

'Tis a strange gentleman, I see.
Come in!

MEPHISTOPHELES *enters*

MEPHISTOPHELES

I've ventur'd to intrude to-day.
 Ladies, excuse the liberty, I pray.
He steps back respectfully before MARGARET.

After dame Martha Schwerdtlein I inquire!

MARTHA

'Tis I. Pray what have you to say to me?

MEPHISTOPHELES *aside to her*

I know you now,--and therefore will retire;
 At present you've distinguished company.
 Pardon the freedom, Madam, with your leave,
 I will make free to call again at eve.

MARTHA *aloud*

Why, child, of all strange notions, he
 For some grand lady taketh thee!

MARGARET

I am, in truth, of humble blood--
 The gentleman is far too good--
 Nor gems nor trinkets are my own.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Oh 'tis not the mere ornaments alone;
 Her glance and mien far more betray.
 Rejoiced I am that I may stay.

MARTHA

Your business, Sir? I long to know

MEPHISTOPHELES

Would I could happier tidings show!
 I trust mine errand you'll not let me rue;
 Your husband's dead, and greeteth you.

MARTHA

Is dead? True heart! Oh misery!
My husband dead! Oh, I shall die!

MARGARET

Alas! good Martha! don't despair!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Now listen to the sad affair!

MARGARET

I for this cause should fear to love.
The loss my certain death would prove.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Joy still must sorrow, sorrow joy attend.

MARTHA

Proceed, and tell the story of his end!

MEPHISTOPHELES

At Padua, in St. Anthony's,
In holy ground his body lies;
Quiet and cool his place of rest,
With pious ceremonials blest.

MARTHA

And had you naught besides to bring?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Oh yes! one grave and solemn prayer;
Let them for him three hundred masses sing!
But in my pockets, I have nothing there.

MARTHA

No trinket! no love-token did he send!
What every journeyman safe in his pouch will hoard
There for remembrance fondly stored,
And rather hungers, rather begs than spend!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Madam, in truth, it grieves me sore,
But he his gold not lavishly bath spent.
His failings too he deeply did repent,
Ay! and his evil plight bewail'd still more.

MARGARET

Alas! That men should thus be doomed to woe!
I for his soul will many a requiem pray.

MEPHISTOPHELES

A husband you deserve this very day;
A child so worthy to be loved.

MARGARET

Ah no,
That time bath not yet come for me.

MEPHISTOPHELES

If not a spouse, a gallant let it be.
Among heaven's choicest gifts, I place,
So sweet a darling to embrace.

MARGARET

MEPHISTOPHELES

Usage or not, it happens so.

MARTHA

Go on, I pray!

MEPHISTOPHELES

I stood by his bedside. Something less foul it was than dung;
 'Twas straw half rotten; yet, he as a Christian died.
 And sorely hath remorse his conscience wrung.
 "Wretch that I was," quoth he, with parting breath,
 "So to forsake my business and my wife!
 Ah! the remembrance is my death,
 Could I but have her pardon in this life! "--

MARTHA *weeping*

Dear soul! I've long forgiven him, indeed!

MEPHISTOPHELES

"Though she, God knows, was more to blame than I."

MARTHA

He lied! What, on the brink of death to lie!

MEPHISTOPHELES

If I am skill'd the countenance to read,
 He doubtless fabled as he parted hence.--
 "No time had I to gape, or take my ease," he said,
 "First to get children, and then get them bread;
 And bread, too, in the very widest sense;
 Nor could I eat in peace even my proper share."

MARTHA

What, all my truth, my love forgotten quite?
 My weary drudgery by day and night!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Not so! He thought of you with tender care.
 Quoth he: "Heaven knows how fervently I prayed,
 For wife and children when from Malta bound;--
 The prayer hath heaven with favour crowned;

We took a Turkish vessel which conveyed
 Rich store of treasure for the Sultan's court;
 It's own reward our gallant action brought;
 The captur'd prize was shared among the crew
 And of the treasure I received my due."

MARTHA

How? Where? The treasure hath he buried, pray?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Where the four winds have blown it, who can say?
 In Naples as he stroll'd, a stranger there,--
 A comely maid took pity on my friend;
 And gave such tokens of her love and care,
 That he retained them to his blessed end.

MARTHA

Scoundrel! to rob his children of their bread!
 And all this misery, this bitter need,
 Could not his course of recklessness impede!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Well, he bath paid the forfeit, and is dead.
 Now were I in your place, my counsel hear;
 My weeds I'd wear for one chaste year,
 And for another lover meanwhile would look out.

MARTHA

Alas, I might search far and near,
 Not quickly should I find another like my first!
 There could not be a fonder fool than mine,
 Only he loved too well abroad to roam;
 Loved foreign women too, and foreign wine.
 And loved besides the dice accurs'd.

MEPHISTOPHELES

All had gone swimmingly, no doubt,
 Had he but given you at home,
 On his side, just as wide a range.
 Upon such terms, to you I swear,
 Myself with you would gladly rings exchange!

MARTHA

The gentleman is surely pleas'd to jest!

MEPHISTOPHILES *aside*

Now to be off in time, were best!
 She'd make the very devil marry her.
 To MARGARET.

How fares it with your heart?

MARGARET

How mean you, Sir?

MEPHISTOPHELES *aside*

The sweet young innocent!
aloud

Ladies, farewell!

MARGARET

Farewell!

MARTHA

But ere you leave us, quickly tell!
 I from a witness fain had heard,
 Where, how, and when my husband died and was interr'd.
 To forms I've always been attached indeed,
 His death I fain would in the journals read.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Ay, madam, what two witnesses declare
Is held as valid everywhere;
A gallant friend I have, not far from here,
Who will for you before the judge appear.
I'll bring him straight.

MARTHA

I pray you do!

MEPHISTOPHELES

And this young lady, we shall find her too?
A noble youth, far travelled, he
Shows to the sex all courtesy.

MARGARET

I in his presence needs must blush for shame.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Not in the presence of a crowned king!

MARTH A

The garden, then, behind my house, we'll name,
There we'll await you both this evening.

A STREET

FAUST. MEPHISTOPHELES

FAUST

How is it now? How speeds it? Is't in train?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Bravo! I find you all aflame!

Gretchen full soon your own you'll name.

This eve, at neighbour Martha's, her you'll meet again;

The woman seems expressly made

To drive the pimp and gipsy's trade.

FAUST

Good!

MEPHISTOPHELES

But from us she something would request.

FAUST

A favour claims return as this world goes.

MEPHISTOPHELES

We have on oath but duly to attest,

That her dead husband's limbs, outstretch'd, repose

In holy ground at Padua.

FAUST

Sage indeed!

So I suppose we straight must journey there!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Sancta simplicitas! For that no need!
Without much knowledge we have but to swear.

FAUST

If you have nothing better to suggest,
Against your plan I must at once protest.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Oh, holy man! methinks I have you there!
In all your life say, have you ne'er
False witness borne, until this hour?
Have you of God, the world, and all it doth contain,
Of man, and that which worketh in his heart and brain,
Not definitions given, in words of weight and power,
With front unblushing, and a dauntless breast?
Yet, if into the depth of things you go,
Touching these matters, it must be confess'd,
As much as of Herr Schwerdtlein's death you know!

FAUST

Thou art and dost remain liar and sophist too.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Ay, if one did not take a somewhat deeper view!
To-morrow, in all honour, thou
Poor Gretchen wilt befool, and vow
Thy soul's deep love, in lover's fashion.

FAUST

And from my heart.

MEPHISTOPHELES

All good and fair!
Then deathless constancy thou'lt swear;

Speak of one all o'ermastering passion,--
Will that too issue from the heart?

FAUST

Forbear!

When passion sways me, and I seek to frame
Fit utterance for feeling, deep, intense,
And for my frenzy finding no fit name,
Sweep round the ample world with every sense,
Grasp at the loftiest words to speak my flame,
And call the glow, wherewith I burn,
Quenchless, eternal, yea, eterne--
Is that of sophistry a devilish play?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Yet am I right!

FAUST

Mark this, my friend,
And spare my lungs; who would the right maintain,
And hath a tongue wherewith his point to gain,
Will gain it in the end.
But come, of gossip I am weary quite;
Because I've no resource, thou'rt in the right.

GARDEN

MARGARET on FAUST'S arm. MARTHA with
MEPHISTOPHELES walking up and down

MARGARET

I feel it, you but spare my ignorance,
The gentleman to shame me stoops thus low.
A traveller from complaisance,
Still makes the best of things; I know
Too well, my humble prattle never can
Have power to entertain so wise a man.

FAUST

One glance, one word from thee doth charm me more,
Than the world's wisdom or the sage's lore.
He kisses her hand.

MARGARET

Nay! trouble not yourself! A hand so coarse,
So rude as mine, how can you kiss!
What constant work at home must I not do perforce!
My mother too exacting is.
They pass on.

MARTHA

Thus, sir, unceasing travel is your lot?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Traffic and duty urge us! With what pain
Are we compelled to leave full many a spot,
Where yet we dare not once remain!

MARTHA

In youth's wild years, with vigour crown'd,
 'Tis not amiss thus through the world to sweep;
 But ah, the evil days come round!
 And to a lonely grave as bachelor to creep,
 A pleasant thing has no one found.

MEPHISTOPHELES

The prospect fills me with dismay.

MARTHA

Therefore in time, dear sir, reflect, I pray.
They pass on.

MARGARET

Ay, out of sight is out of mind!
 Politeness easy is to you;
 Friends everywhere, and not a few,
 Wiser than I am, you will find.

FAUST

O dearest, trust me, what doth pass for sense
 Full oft is self-conceit and blindness!

MARGARET

How?

FAUST

Simplicity and holy innocence,--
 When will ye learn your hallow'ed worth to know!
 Ah, when will meekness and humility,
 Kind and all-bounteous nature's loftiest dower--

MARGARET

Only one little moment think of me!
 To think of you I shall have many an hour.

FAUST

You are perhaps much alone?

MARGARET

Yes, small our household is, I own,
Yet must I see to it. No maid we keep,
And I must cook, sew, knit, and Sweep,
Still early on my feet and late;
My mother is in all things, great and small,
So accurate!
Not that for thrift there is such pressing need;
Than others we might make more show indeed;
My father left behind a small estate,
A house and garden near the city-wall.
But fairly quiet now my days, I own;
As soldier is my brother gone;
My little sister's dead; the babe to rear
Occasion'd me some care and fond annoy;
But I would go through all again with joy,
The darling was to me so dear.

FAUST

An angel, sweet, if it resembled thee!

MARGARET

I reared it up, and it grew fond of me.
After my father's death it saw the day;
We gave my mother up for lost, she lay
In such a wretched plight, and then at length
So very slowly she regain'd her strength.
Weak as she was, 'twas vain for her to try
Herself to suckle the poor babe, so I
Reared it on milk and water all alone;
And thus the child became as 'twere roy own;

Within my arms it stretched itself and grew,
And smiling, nestled in my bosom too.

FAUST

Doubtless the purest happiness was thine.

MARGARET

But many weary hours, in sooth, were also mine.
At night its little cradle stood
Close to my bed; so was I wide awake
If it but stirred;
One while I was obliged to give it food,
Or to my arms the darling take;
From bed full oft must rise, whene'er its cry I heard,
And, dancing it, must pace the chamber to and fro;
Stand at the wash-tub early; forthwith go
To market, and then mind the cooking too--
To-morrow like to-day, the whole year through.
Ah, sir, thus living, it must be confess'd
One's spirits are not always of the best;
Yet it a relish gives to food and rest.
They pass on.

MARTHA

Poor women! we are badly off, I own;
A bachelor's conversion's hard, indeed!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Madam, with one like you it rests alone,
To tutor me a better course to lead.

MARTHA

Speak frankly, sir, none is there you have met?
Has your heart ne'er attach'd itself as yet?

MEPHISTOPHELES

One's own fire-side and a good wife are gold
And pearls of price, so says the proverb old.

MARTHA

I mean, has passion never stirred your breast?

MEPHISTOPHELES

I've everywhere been well received, I own.

MARTHA

Yet hath your heart no earnest preference known?

MEPHISTOPHELES

With ladies one should ne'er presume to jest.

MARTHA

Ah! you mistake!

MEPHISTOPHELES

I'm sorry I'm so blind!

But this I know--that you are very kind.

They pass on.

FAUST

Me, little angel, didst thou recognise,
When in the garden first I came?

MARGARET

Did you not see it? I cast down my eyes.

FAUST

Thou dost forgive my boldness, dost not blame
The liberty I took that day,
When thou from church didst lately wend thy way?

MARGARET

I was confused. So had it never been;
 No one of me could any evil say.
 Alas, thought I, he doubtless in thy mien,
 Something unmaidenly or bold hath seen?
 It seemed as if it struck him suddenly,
 Here's just a girl with whom one may make free!
 Yet I must own that then I scarcely knew
 What in your favour here began at once to plead;
 Yet I was angry with myself indeed,
 That I more angry could not feel with you.

FAUST

Sweet love!

MARGARET

Just wait awhile!
 (She gathers a star-flower and plucks off the leaves one after another.)

FAUST

A nosegay may that be?

MARGARET

No! It is but a game.

FAUST

How?

MARGARET

Go, you'll laugh at me!
She plucks off the leaves and murmurs to herself.

FAUST

What murmurest thou?

MARGARET *half aloud'*

He loves me--loves me not.

FAUST

Sweet angel, with thy face of heavenly bliss!

MARGARET *continues*

He loves me--not--he loves me--not--
Plucking off the last leaf with fond joy.

He loves me!

FAUST

Yes!
 And this flower-language, darling, let it be,
 A heavenly oracle! He loveth thee!
 Know'st thou the meaning of, He loveth thee?
He seizes both her hands.

MARGARET

I tremble so!

FAUST

Nay! Do not tremble, love!
 Let this hand-pressure, let this glance reveal
 Feelings, all power of speech above;
 To give oneself up wholly and to feel
 A joy that must eternal prove!
 Eternal!--Yes, its end would be despair.
 No end!--It cannot end!
 (MARGARET presses his hand, extricates herself,
 and runs away. He stands a moment in thought, and then follows
 her.)

MARTHA *approaching*

Night's closing.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Yes, we'll presently away.

MARTHA

I would entreat you longer yet to stay;
But 'tis a wicked place, just here about;
It is as if the folk had nothing else to do,
Nothing to think of too,
But gaping watch their neighbours, who goes in and out;
And scandal's busy still, do whatsoe'er one may.
And our young couple?

MEPHISTOPHELES

They have flown up there.
The wanton butterflies!

MARTHA

He seems to take to her.

MEPHISTOPHELES

And she to him. 'Tis of the world the way!

A SUMMER-HOUSE

(MARGARET runs in, hides behind the door, holds the tip of her finger to her lip, and peeps through the crevice.)

MARGARET

He comes!

FAUST

Ah, little rogue, so thou
Think'st to provoke me! I have caught thee now!
He kisses her.

MARGARET

embracing him, and returning the kiss

Dearest of men! I love thee from my heart!
MEPHISTOPHELES knocks.

Who's there?

FAUST *stamping*

MEPHISTOPHELES

A friend!

FAUST

A brute!

MEPHISTOPHELES

MARTHA comes

Ay, it is late, good sir.

FAUST

Mayn't I attend you, then?

MARGARET

Oh no--my mother would--adieu, adieu!

FAUST

And must I really then take leave of you? Farewell!

MARTHA

Good-bye!

MARGARET

Ere long to meet again!

Exeunt FAUST and MEPHISTOPHELES.

MARGARET

Good heavens! how all things far and near

Must fill his mind,--a man like this!

Abash'd before him I appear,

And say to all things only, yes.

Poor simple child, I cannot see,

What 'tis that he can find in me.

Exit.

FOREST AND CAVERN

FAUST *alone*

Spirit sublime! Thou gav'st me, gav'st me all
 For which I prayed! Not vainly hast thou turn'd
 To me thy countenance in flaming fire:
 Gayest me glorious nature for my realm,
 And also power to feel her and enjoy;
 Not merely with a cold and wondering glance,
 Thou dost permit me in her depths profound,
 As in the bosom of a friend to gaze.
 Before me thou dost lead her living tribes,
 And dost in silent grove, in air and stream
 Teach me to know my kindred. And when roars
 The howling storm-blast through the groaning wood,
 Wrenching the giant pine, which in its fall
 Crashing sweeps down its neighbour trunks and boughs,
 While hollow thunder from the hill resounds;
 Then thou dost lead me to some shelter'd cave,
 Dost there reveal me to myself, and show
 Of my own bosom the mysterious depths.
 And when with soothing beam, the moon's pale orb
 Full in my view climbs up the pathless sky,
 From crag and dewy grove, the silvery forms
 Of by-gone ages hover, and assuage
 The joy austere of contemplative thought.

Oh, that naught perfect is assign'd to man,
 I feel, alas! With this exalted joy,
 Which lifts me near and nearer to the gods,
 Thou gav'st me this companion, unto whom
 I needs must cling, though cold and insolent,
 He still degrades me to myself, and turns

Thy glorious gifts to nothing, with a breath.
 He in my bosom with malicious zeal
 For that fair image fans a raging fire;
 From craving to enjoyment thus I reel,
 And in enjoyment languish for desire. (MEPHISTOPHELES
 enters.)

MEPHISTOPHELES

Of this lone life have you not had your fill?
 How for so long can it have charms for you?
 'Tis well enough to try it if you will;
 But then away again to something new!

FAUST

Would you could better occupy your leisure,
 Than in disturbing thus my hours of joy.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Well! Well! I'll leave you to yourself with pleasure,
 A serious tone you hardly dare employ.
 To part from one so crazy, harsh, and cross,
 Were not in truth a grievous loss.
 The live-long day, for you I toil and fret;
 Ne'er from his worship's face a hint I get,
 What pleases him, or what to let alone.

FAUST

Ay truly! that is just the proper tone!
 He wearies me, and would with thanks be paid

MEPHISTOPHELES

Poor Son of Earth, without my aid,
 How would thy weary days have flown?
 Thee of thy foolish whims I've cured,
 Thy vain imaginations banished,

And but for me, be well assured,
 Thou from this sphere must soon have vanished.
 In rocky hollows and in caverns drear,
 Why like an owl sit moping here?
 Wherefore from dripping stones and moss with ooze embued,
 Dost suck, like any toad, thy food?
 A rare, sweet pastime. Verily!
 The doctor cleaveth still to thee.

FAUST

Dost comprehend what bliss without alloy
 From this wild wand'ring in the desert springs?--
 Couldst thou but guess the new life-power it brings,
 Thou wouldst be fiend enough to envy me my joy.

MEPHISTOPHELES

What super-earthly ecstasy! at night,
 To lie in darkness on the dewy height,
 Embracing heaven and earth in rapture high,
 The soul dilating to a deity;
 With prescient yearnings pierce the core of earth,
 Feel in your labouring breast the six-days' birth,
 Enjoy, in proud delight what no one knows,
 While your love-rapture o'er creation flows,--
 The earthly lost in beatific vision,
 And then the lofty intuition--.
With a gesture.

I need not tell you how--to close!

FAUST

Fie on you!

MEPHISTOPHELES

This displeases you? "For shame!"
 You are forsooth entitled to exclaim;

We to chaste ears it seems must not pronounce
 What, nathless, the chaste heart cannot renounce.
 Well, to be brief, the joy as fit occasions rise,
 I grudge you not, of specious lies.
 But long this mood thou'lt not retain.
 Already thou'rt again outworn,
 And should this last, thou wilt be torn
 By frenzy or remorse and pain.
 Enough of this! Thy true love dwells apart,
 And all to her seems flat and tame;
 Alone thine image fills her heart,
 She loves thee with an all-devouring flame.
 First came thy passion with o'erpowering rush,
 Like mountain torrent, swollen by the melted snow;
 Pull in her heart didst pour the sudden gush,
 Now has thy brookiet ceased to flow.
 Instead of sitting throned midst forests wild,
 It would become so great a lord
 To comfort the enamour'd child,
 And the young monkey for her love reward.
 To her the hours seem miserably long;
 She from the window sees the clouds float by
 As o'er the lofty city-walls they fly,
 "If I a birdie were!" so runs her song,
 Half through the night and all day long.
 Cheerful sometimes, more oft at heart full sore;
 Fairly outwept seem now her tears,
 Anon she tranquil is, or so appears,
 And love-sick evermore.

FAUST

Snake! Serpent vile!

MEPHISTOPHELES *aside*

Good! If I catch thee with my guile!

FAUST

Vile reprobate! go get thee hence;
 Forbear the lovely girl to name!
 Nor in my half-distracted sense,
 Kindle anew the smouldering flame!

MEPHISTOPHELES

What wouldst thou! She thinks you've taken flight;
 It seems, she's partly in the right.

FAUST

I'm near her still--and should I distant rove,
 Her I can ne'er forget, ne'er lose her love;
 And all things touch'd by those sweet lips of hers,
 Even the very Host, my envy stirs.

MEPHISTOPHELES

'Tis well! I oft have envied you indeed,
 The twin-pair that among the roses feed.

FAUST

Pander, avaunt!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Go to! I laugh, the while you rail,
 The power which fashion'd youth and maid,
 Well understood the noble trade;
 So neither shall occasion fail.
 But hence!--A mighty grief I trow!
 Unto thy lov'd one's chamber thou
 And not to death shouldst go.

FAUST

What is to me heaven's joy within her arms?
 What though my life her bosom warms!--

Do I not ever feel her woe?
 The outcast am I not, unhoused, unblest,
 Inhuman monster, without aim or rest,
 Who, like the greedy surge, from rock to rock,
 Sweeps down the dread abyss with desperate shock?
 While she, within her lowly cot, which graced
 The Alpine slope, beside the waters wild,
 Her homely cares in that small world embraced,
 Secluded lived, a simple, artless child.
 Was't not enough, in thy delirious whirl
 To blast the stedfast rocks;
 Her, and her peace as well,
 Must I, God-hated one, to ruin hurl!
 Dost claim this holocaust, remorseless Hell!
 Fiend, help me to cut short the hours of dread!
 Let what must happen, happen speedily!
 Her direful doom fall crushing on my head,
 And into ruin let her plunge with me!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Why how again it seethes and glows!
 Away, thou fool! Her torment ease!
 When such a head no issue sees,
 It pictures straight the final close.
 Long life to him who boldly dares!
 A devil's pluck thou'rt wont to show;
 As for a devil who despairs,
 Nothing I find so mawkish here below.

MARGARET'S ROOM

MARGARET
alone at her spinning wheel

My peace is gone,
My heart is Sore,
I find it never,
And nevermore!

Where him I have not,
Is the grave; and all
The world to me
Is turned to gall.

My wilder'd brain
Is overwrought;
My feeble senses
Are distraught.

My peace is gone,
My heart is sore,
I find it never,
And nevermore!

For him from the window
I gaze, at home;
For him and him only
Abroad I roam.

His lofty step,
His bearing high,
The smile of his lip,
The power of his eye,

His witching words,
Their tones of bliss,

His hand's fond pressure,
And ah--his kiss!

My peace is gone,
My heart is sore,
I find it never,
And nevermore.

My bosom aches
To feel him near;
Ah, could I clasp
And fold him here!

Kiss him and kiss him
Again would I,
And on his kisses
I fain would die.

MARTHA'S GARDEN

MARGARET and FAUST

MARGARET

Promise me, Henry!

FAUST

What I can!

MARGARET

How thy religion fares, I fain would hear.

Thou art a good kind-hearted man,

Only that way not well-disposed, I fear.

FAUST

Forbear, my child! Thou feelest thee I love;

My heart, my blood I'd give, my love to prove,

And none would of their faith or church bereave.

MARGARET

That's not enough, we must ourselves believe!

FAUST

Must we?

MARGARET

Ah, could I but thy soul inspire!

Thou honourest not the sacraments, alas!

FAUST

I honour them.

MARGARET

But yet without desire;
 'Tis long since thou hast been either to shrift or mass.
 Dost thou believe in God?

FAUST

My darling, who dares say,
 Yes, I in God believe?
 Question or priest or sage, and they
 Seem, in the answer you receive,
 To mock the questioner.

MARGARET

Then thou dost not believe?

FAUST

Sweet one! my meaning do not misconceive!
 Him who dare name?
 And who proclaim,
 Him I believe?
 Who that can feel,
 His heart can steel,
 To say: I believe him not?
 The All-embracer,
 All-sustainer,
 Holds and sustains he not
 Thee, me, himself?
 Lifts not the Heaven its dome above?
 Doth not the firm-set earth beneath us lie?
 And beaming tenderly with looks of love,
 Climb not the everlasting stars on high?
 Do we not gaze into each other's eyes?
 Nature's impenetrable agencies,
 Are they not thronging on thy heart and brain,
 Viewless, or visible to mortal ken,
 Around thee weaving their mysterious chain?

Fill thence thy heart, how large soe'er it be;
 And in the feeling when thou utterly art blest,
 Then call it, what thou wilt,--
 Call it Bliss! Heart! Love! God!
 I have no name for it!
 'Tis feeling all;
 Name is but sound and smoke
 Shrouding the glow of heaven.

MARGARET

All this is doubtless good and fair;
 Almost the same the parson says,
 Only in slightly different phrase.

FAUST

Beneath Heaven's sunshine, everywhere,
 This is the utterance of the human heart;
 Each in his language doth the like impart;
 Then why not I in mine?

MARGARET

What thus I hear
 Sounds plausible, yet I'm not reconciled;
 There's something wrong about it; much I fear
 That thou art not a Christian.

FAUST

My sweet child!

MARGARET

Alas! it long bath sorely troubled me,
 To see thee in such odious company.

FAUST

How so?

MARGARET

The man who comes with thee, I hate,
Yea, in my spirit's inmost depths abhor;
As his loath'd visage, in my life before,
Naught to my heart e'er gave a pang so great.

FAUST

Him fear not, my sweet love!

MARGARET

His presence chills my blood.
Towards all beside I have a kindly mood;
Yet, though I yearn to gaze on thee, I feel
At sight of him strange horror o'er me steal;
That he's a villain my conviction's strong.
May Heaven forgive me, if I do him wrong!

FAUST

Yet such strange fellows in the world must be!

MARGARET

I would not live with such an one as he.
If for a moment he but enter here,
He looks around him with a mocking sneer,
And malice ill-conceal'd;
That he with naught on earth can sympathize is clear;
Upon his brow 'tis legibly revealed,
That to his heart no living soul is dear.
So blest I feel, within thine arms,
So warm and happy,--free from all alarms;
And still my heart doth close when he comes near.

FAUST

Foreboding angel! check thy fear!

MARGARET

It so o'ermasters me, that when,
Or wheresoe'er, his step I hear,
I almost think, no more I love thee then.
Besides, when he is near, I ne'er could pray.
This eats into my heart; with thee
The same, my Henry, it must be.

FAUST

This is antipathy!

MARGARET

I must away.

FAUST

For one brief hour then may I never rest,
And heart to heart, and soul to soul be pressed?

MARGARET

Ah, if I slept alone! To-night
The bolt I fain would leave undrawn for thee;
But then my mother's sleep is light,
Were we surprised by her, ah me!
Upon the spot I should be dead.

FAUST

Dear angel! there's no cause for dread.
Here is a little phial,--if she take
Mixed in her drink three drops, 'twill steep
Her nature in a deep and soothing sleep.

MARGARET

What Do I not for thy dear sake!
To her it will not harmful prove?

FAUST

Should I advise it else, sweet love?

MARGARET

I know not, dearest, when thy face I see,
What doth my spirit to thy will constrain;
Already I have done so much for thee,
That scarcely more to do doth now remain.
Exit,

MEPHISTOPHELES *enters*

MEPHISTOPHELES

The monkey! Is she gone?

FAUST

Again hast played the spy?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Of all that pass'd I'm well apprized,
I heard the doctor catechised,
And trust he'll profit much thereby!
Fain would the girls inquire indeed
Touching their lover's faith and creed,
And whether pious in the good old way;
They think, if pliant there, us too he will obey.

FAUST

Thou monster, does not see that this
Pure soul, possessed by ardent love,
Full of the living faith,
To her of bliss
The only pledge, must holy anguish prove,
Holding the man she loves, Fore-doomed to endless death!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Most sensual, supersensualist? The while
A damsel leads thee by the nose!

FAUST

Of filth and fire abortion vile!

MEPHISTOPHELES

In physiognomy strange skill she shows;
She in my presence feels she knows not how;
My mask it seems a hidden sense reveals;
That I'm a genius she must needs allow,
That I'm the very devil perhaps she feels.
So then to-night--

FAUST

What's that to you?

MEPHISTOPHELES

I've my amusement in it too!

AT THE WELL

MARGARET and BESSY, with pitchers

BESSY

Of Barbara hast nothing heard?

MARGARET

I rarely go from home,--no, not a word

BESSY

'Tis true: Sybilla told me so to-day!
That comes of being proud, methinks;
She played the fool at last,

MARGARET

How so?

BESSY

They say
That two she feedeth when she eats and drinks.

MARGARET

Alas!

BESSY

She's rightly served, in sooth,
How long she hung upon the youth!
What promenades, what jaunts there were,
To dancing booth and village fair!
The first she everywhere must shine,
He always treating her to pastry and to wine.
Of her good looks she was so vain,

So shameless too, that to retain
 His presents, she did not disdain;
 Sweet words and kisses came anon--
 And then the virgin flower was gone.

MARGARET

Poor thing!

BESSY

Forsooth dost pity her?
 At night, when at our wheels we sat,
 Abroad our mothers ne'er would let us stir.
 Then with her lover she must chat,
 Or on the bench or in the dusky walk,
 Thinking the hours too brief for their Sweet talk;
 Her proud head she will have to bow,
 And in white sheet do penance now!

MARGARET

But he will surely marry her?

BESSY

Not he!
 He won't be such a fool! a gallant lad
 Like him, can roam o'er land and sea,
 Besides, he's off.

MARGARET

That is not fair!

BESSY

If she should get him, 'twere almost as bad!
 Her myrtle wreath the boys would tear;
 And then we girls would plague her too,
 For we chopp'd straw before her door would strew!
Exit.

MARGARET *walking towards home*

How stoutly once I could inveigh,
If a poor maiden went astray;
Not words enough my tongue could find,
'Gainst others' sin to speak my mind!
Black as it seemed, I blacken'd it still more,
And strove to make it blacker than before.
And did myself securely bless--
Now my own trespass doth appear!
Yet ah!--what urg'd me to transgress,
God knows, it was so sweet, so dear!

ZWINGER

Enclosure between the City-wall and the Gate.
(In the niche of the wall a devotional image of the Mater
dolorosa, with flower-pots before it.)

MARGARET

putting fresh flowers in the pots

Ah, rich in sorrow, thou,
Stoop thy maternal brow,
And mark with pitying eye my misery!
The sword in thy pierced heart,
Thou dost with bitter smart,
Gaze upwards on thy Son's death agony.
To the dear God on high,
Ascends thy piteous sigh,
Pleading for his and thy sore misery.
Ah, who can know
The torturing woe,
The pangs that rack me to the bone?
How my poor heart, without relief,
Trembles and throbs, its yearning grief
Thou knowest, thou alone!
Ah, wheresoe'er I go,
With woe, with woe, with woe,
My anguish'd breast is aching!
When all alone I creep,
I weep, I weep, I weep,
Alas! my heart is breaking!
The flower-pots at my window
Were wet with tears of mine,
The while I pluck'd these blossoms,
At dawn to deck thy shrine!

When early in my chamber
Shone bright the rising morn,
I sat there on my pallet,
My heart with anguish torn.
Help! from disgrace and death deliver me!
Ah! rich in sorrow, thou,
Stoop thy maternal brow,
And mark with pitying eye my misery!

NIGHT

STREET BEFORE MARGARET'S DOOR

VALENTINE

a soldier, MARGARET'S brother

When seated 'mong the jovial crowd,
 Where merry comrades boasting loud
 Each named with pride his favourite lass,
 And in her honour drain'd his glass;
 Upon my elbows I would lean,
 With easy quiet view the scene,
 Nor give my tongue the rein until
 Each swaggering blade had talked his fill.
 Then smiling I my beard would stroke,
 The while, with brimming glass, I spoke;
 "Each to his taste!--but to my mind,
 Where in the country will you find,
 A maid, as my dear Gretchen fair,
 Who with my sister can compare?"
 Cling! Clang! so rang the jovial sound!
 Shouts of assent went circling round;
 Pride of her sex is she!--cried some;
 Then were the noisy boasters dumb.

And now I--I could tear out my hair,
 Or dash my brains out in despair!--
 Me every scurvy knave may twit,
 With stinging jest and taunting sneer!
 Like skulking debtor I must sit,
 And sweat each casual word to hear!
 And though I smash'd them one and all,--
 Yet them I could not liars call.
 Who comes this way? who's sneaking here?
 If I mistake not, two draw near.

If he be one, have at him;--well I wot
 Alive he shall not leave this spot!

FAUST. MEPHISTOPHELES

FAUST

How from yon sacristy, athwart the night,
 Its beams the ever-burning taper throws,
 While ever waning, fades the glimmering light,
 As gathering darkness doth around it close!
 So night-like gloom doth in my bosom reign.

MEPHISTOPHELES

I'm like a tom-cat in a thievish vein,
 That up fire-ladders tall and steep,
 And round the walls doth slyly creep;
 Virtuous withal, I feel, with, I confess,
 A touch of thievish joy and wantonness.
 Thus through my limbs already burns
 The glorious Walpurgis night!
 After to-morrow it returns,
 Then why one wakes, one knows aright!

FAUST

Meanwhile, the treasure I see glimmering there,
 Will it ascend into the open air?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Ere long thou wilt proceed with pleasure,
 To raise the casket with its treasure;
 I took a peep, therein are stored,
 Of lion-dollars a rich hoard.

FAUST

And not a trinket? not a ring?
 Wherewith my lovely girl to deck?

MEPHISTOPHELES

I saw among them some such thing,
A string of pearls to grace her neck.

FAUST

'Tis well! I'm always loath to go,
Without some gift my love to show.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Some pleasures gratis to enjoy,
Should surely cause you no annoy.
While bright with stars the heavens appear,
I'll sing a masterpiece of art:
A moral song shall charm her ear,
More surely to beguile her heart.
Sings to the guitar.'

Kathrina say,
Why lingering stay
At dawn of day
Before your lover's door?
Maiden, beware,
Nor enter there,
Lest forth you fare,
A maiden never more.

Maiden take heed!
Reck well my rede!
Is't done, the deed?
Good night, you poor, poor thing!
The spoiler's lies, His arts despise,
Nor yield your prize,
Without the marriage ring!

VALENTINE steps forward
Whom are you luring here? I'll give it you!

Accursed rat-catchers, your strains I'll end!
First, to the devil the guitar I'll send!
Then to the devil with the singer too!

MEPHISTOPHELES

The poor guitar! 'tis done for now.

VALENTINE

Your skull shall follow next, I trow!

MEPHISTOPHELES to FAUST

Doctor, stand fast! your strength collect!
Be prompt, and do as I direct.
Out with your whisk, keep close, I pray,
I'll parry I do you thrust away!

VALENTINE

Then parry that!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Why not?

VALENTINE

That too!

MEPHISTOPHELES

With ease!

VALENTINE

The devil fights for you!
Why how is this? my hand's already lamed!

MEPHISTOPHELES to FAUST

Thrust home!

VALENTINE falls

Alas!

MEPHISTOPHELES

There! Now the lubber's tamed!
But quick, away! We must at once take wing;
A cry of murder strikes upon the ear;
With the police I know my course to steer,
But with the blood-ban 'tis another thing.

MARTHA at the window

Without! without!

MARGARET at the window

Quick, bring a light!

MARTHA as above

They rail and scuffle, scream and fight!

PEOPLE

One lieth here already dead!

MARTHA coming out

Where are the murderers? are they fled?

MARGARET coming out

Who lieth here?

PEOPLE

Thy mother's son.

MARGARET

Almighty God! I am undone!

VALENTINE

I'm dying--'tis a soon-told tale,
 And sooner done the deed.
 Why, women, do ye howl and wail?
 To my last words give heed! All gather round him.
 My Gretchen, see! still young art thou,
 Art not discreet enough, I trow,
 Thou dost thy matters ill;
 Let this in confidence be said:
 Since thou the path of shame dost tread,
 Tread it with right good will!

MARGARET

My brother! God! what can this mean?

VALENTINE

Abstain,
 Nor dare God's holy name profane!
 What's done, alas, is done and past!
 Matters will take their course at last;
 By stealth thou dost begin with one,
 Others will follow him anon;
 And when a dozen thee have known,
 Thou'lt common be to all the town.
 When infamy is newly born,
 In secret she is brought to light,
 And the mysterious veil of night
 O'er head and ears is drawn;
 The loathsome birth men fain would slay;
 But soon, full grown, she waxes bold,
 And though not fairer to behold,
 With brazen front insults the day:
 The more abhorrent to the sight,
 The more she courts the day's pure light.

The time already I discern,
 When thee all honest folk will spurn,
 And shun thy hated form to meet,
 As when a corpse infects the street.
 Thy heart will sink in blank despair,
 When they shall look thee in the face!
 A golden chain no more thou'lt wear!
 Nor near the altar take in church thy place!
 In fair lace collar simply dight
 Thou'lt dance no more with spirits light!
 In darksome corners thou wilt bide,
 Where beggars vile and cripples hide,
 And e'en though God thy crime forgive,
 On earth, a thing accursed, thou'lt live!

MARTHA

Your parting soul to God commend!
 Your dying breath in slander will you spend?

VALENTINE

Could I but reach thy wither'd frame,
 Thou wretched beldame, void of shame!
 Full measure I might hope to win
 Of pardon then for every sin.

MARGARET

VALENTINE

I tell thee, from vain tears abstain!
 'Twas thy dishonour pierced my heart,
 Thy fall the fatal death-stab gave.
 Through the death-sleep I now depart
 To God, a soldier true and brave.
 dies.

CATHEDRAL

Service, Organ, and Anthem

MARGARET amongst a number of people

EVIL-SPIRIT behind MARGARET

EVIL-SPIRIT

How different, Gretchen, was it once with thee,

When thou, still full of innocence,

Here to the altar camest,

And from the small and well-conn'd book

Didst lisp thy prayer,

Half childish sport,

Half God in thy young heart!

Gretchen!

What thoughts are thine?

What deed of shame

Lurks in thy sinful heart?

Is thy prayer utter'd for thy mother's soul,

Who into long, long torment slept through thee?

Whose blood is on thy threshold?

--And stirs there not already 'neath thy heart

Another quick'ning pulse, that even now

Tortures itself and thee

With its foreboding presence?

MARGARET

Woe! Woe!

Oh could I free me from the thoughts

That hither, thither, crowd upon my brain,

Against my will!

CHORUS

Dies irae, dies illa,
 Solvet saeculum in favilla.
The organ sounds.

EVIL-SPIRIT

Grim horror seizes thee!
 The trumpet sounds!
 The graves are shaken!
 And thy heart
 From ashy rest
 For torturing flames
 Anew created,
 Trembles into life!

MARGARET

Would I were hence!
 It is as if the organ
 Choked my breath,
 As if the choir
 Melted my inmost heart!

CHORUS

Judex ergo cum sedebit,
 Quidquid latet adparebit!
 Nil inultunt remanebit.

MARGARET

I feel oppressed!
 The pillars of the wall
 Imprison me!
 The vaulted roof
 Weighs down upon me I--air!

EVIL-SPIRIT

Wouldst hide thee? sin and shame
Remain not hidden!
Air! light!
Woe's thee!

CHORUS

Quid sum miser tunc dicturus?
Quem patronum rogaturus!
Cum vix justus sit securus.

EVIL-SPIRIT

The glorified their faces turn
Away from thee!
Shudder the pure to reach
Their hands to thee!
Woe!

CHORUS

Quid sum miser tunc dicturus--

MARGARET

Neighbour! your smelling bottle!
She swoons away.

WALPURGIS-NIGHT

THE HARTZ MOUNTAINS. DISTRICT OF SCHIERKE ANDELEND

FAUST and MEPHISTOPHELES

MEPHISTOPHELES

A broomstick dost thou not at least desire?
The roughest he-goat fain would I bestride,
By this road from our goal we're still far wide.

FAUST

While fresh upon my legs, so long I naught require,
Except this knotty staff. Beside,
What boots it to abridge a pleasant way?
Along the labyrinth of these vales to creep,
Then scale these rocks, whence, in eternal spray,
Adown the cliffs the silvery fountains leap:
Such is the joy that seasons paths like these!
Spring weaves already in the birchen trees;
E'en the late pine-grove feels her quickening powers;
Should she not work within these limbs of ours?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Naught of this genial influence do I know!
Within me all is wintry. Frost and snow
I should prefer my dismal path to bound.
How sadly, yonder, with belated glow
Rises the ruddy moon's imperfect round,
Shedding so faint a light, at every tread
One's sure to stumble 'gainst a rock or tree!
An Ignis Fatuus I must call instead.
Yonder one burning merrily, I see.
Holla! my friend! may I request your light?

Why should you flare away so uselessly?
Be kind enough to show us up the height!

IGNIS FATUUS

Through reverence, I hope I may subdue
The lightness of my nature; true,
Our course is but a zigzag one.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Ho! ho!
So men, forsooth, he thinks to imitate!
Now, in the devil's name, for once go straight!
Or out at once your flickering life I'll blow.

IGNIS FAPUUS

That you are master here it obvious quite;
To do your will, I'll cordially essay;
Only reflect! The hill is magic-mad to-night;
And if to show the path you choose a meteor's light,
You must not wonder should we go astray.

FAUST, MEPHISTOPHELES, IGNIS FATUUS
in alternate song

Through the dream and magic-sphere
As it seems, we now are speeding;
Honour win, us rightly leading,
That betimes we may appear
In yon wide and desert region!

Trees on trees, a stalwart legion,
Swiftly past us are retreating,
And the cliffs with lowly greeting;
Rocks long-snouted, row on row,
How they snort, and how they blow!

Through the stones and heather springing,
 Brook and brooklet haste below;
 Hark the rustling! Hark the singing!
 Harken to love's plaintive lays;
 Voices of those heavenly days--
 What we hope, and what we love!
 Like a tale of olden time,
 Echo's voice prolongs the chime.

To-whit! To-whoo! It sounds more near;
 Plover, owl, and jay appear,
 All awake, around, above?
 Paunchy salamanders too
 Peer, long-limbed, the bushes through!
 And, like snakes, the roots of trees
 Coil themselves from rock and sand,
 Stretching many a wondrous band,
 Us to frighten, us to seize;
 From rude knots with life embued,
 Polyp-fangs abroad they spread,
 To snare the wanderer! 'Neath our tread,
 Mice, in myriads, thousand-hued,
 Through the heath and through the moss!
 And the fire-flies' glittering throng,
 Wildering escort, whirls along,
 Here and there, our path across.

Tell me, stand we motionless,
 Or still forward do we press?
 All things round us whirl and fly;
 Rocks and trees make strange grimaces,
 Dazzling meteors change their places,
 How they puff and multiply!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Now grasp my doublet--we at last
 A central peak have reached, which shows,
 If round a wondering glance we cast,
 How in the mountain Mammon glows.

FAUST

How through the chasms strangely gleams,
 A lurid light, like dawn's red glow,
 Pervading with its quivering beams,
 The gorges of the gulf below!
 Here vapours rise, there clouds float by,
 Here through the mist the light doth shine;
 Now, like a fount, it bursts on high,
 Meanders now, a slender line;
 Far reaching, with a hundred veins,
 Here through the valley see it glide;
 Here, where its force the gorge restrains,
 At once it scatters, far and wide;
 Anear, like showers of golden sand
 Strewn broadcast, sputter sparks of light:
 And mark yon rocky walls that stand
 Ablaze, in all their towering height!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Doth not Sir Mammon for this fete
 Grandly illumine his palace! Thou
 Art lucky to have seen it; now,
 The boisterous guests, I feel, are coming straight.

FAUST

How through the air the storm doth whirl!
 Upon my neck it strikes with sudden shock.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Cling to these ancient ribs of granite rock,
 Else to yon depths profound it you will hurl.
 A murky vapour thickens night.
 Hark! Through the woods the tempests roar!
 The owlets flit in wild affright.
 Hark! Splinter'd are the columns that upbore
 The leafy palace, green for aye:
 The shivered branches whirr and sigh,
 Yawn the huge trunks with mighty groan.
 The roots upriven, creak and moan!
 In fearful and entangled fall,
 One crashing ruinwhelms them all,
 While through the desolate abyss,
 Sweeping the, wreck-strewn precipice,
 The raging storm-blasts howl and hiss!
 Aloft strange voices dost thou hear?
 Distant now and now more near?
 Hark! the mountain ridge along,
 Streameth a raving magic-song!

WITCHES *in chorus*

Now to the Brocken the witches hie,
 The stubble is yellow, the corn is green;
 Thither the gathering legions fly,
 And sitting aloft is Sir Urial seen:
 O'er stick and o'er stone they go whirling along,
 Witches and he-goats, a motley throng.

VOICES

Alone old Baubo's coming now;
 She rides upon a farrow sow.

CHORUS

Honour to her, to whom honour is due!
 Forward, Dame Baubo! Honour to you!

A goodly sow and mother thereon,
The whole witch chorus follows anon.

VOICE

Which way didst come?

VOICE

O'er Ilsenstein!
There I peep'd in an owlet's nest.
With her broad eye she gazed in mine!

VOICE

Drive to the devil, thou hellish pest!
Why ride so hard?

VOICE

She has graz'd my side,
Look at the wounds, how deep and how wide!

WITCHES *in chorus*

The way is broad, the way is long;
What mad pursuit! What tumult wild!
Scratches the besom and sticks the prong;
Crush'd is the mother, and stifled the child.

WIZARDS *half chorus*

Like house-encumber'd Snail we creep;
While far ahead the women keep,
For when to the devil's house we speed,
By a thousand steps they take the lead.

THE OTHER HALF

Not so, precisely do we view it;---
They with a thousand steps may do it;

But let them hasten as they can,
With one long bound 'tis clear'd by man.

VOICES *above*

Come with us, come with us from Felsensee.

VOICES *from below*

Aloft to you we would mount with glee!
We wash, and free from all stain are we,
Yet barren evermore must be!

BOTH CHORUSES

The wind is hushed, the stars grow pale,
The pensive moon her light doth veil;
And whirling on, the magic choir
Sputters forth sparks of drizzling fire.

VOICE *from below*

Stay! stay!

VOICE *from above*

What voice of woe
Calls from the cavern'd depths below?

VOICE *from below*

Take me with you! Oh take me too!
Three centuries I climb in vain,
And yet can ne'er the summit gain!
To be with my kindred I am fain.

BOTH CHORUSES

Broom and pitch-fork, goat and prong,
Mounted on these we whirl along;
Who vainly strives to climb to-night,
Is evermore a luckless wight!

DEMI-WITCH *below*

I hobble after, many a day;
Already the others are far away!

No rest at home can I obtain--
Here too my efforts are in vain!

CHORUS OF WITCHES

Salve gives the witches strength to rise;
A rag for a sail does well enough;
A goodly ship is every trough;
To-night who flies not, never flies.

BOTH CHORUSES

And when the topmost peak we round,
Then alight ye on the ground;
The heath's wide regions cover ye
With your mad swarms of witchery!
They let themselves down.

MEPHISTOPHELES

They crowd and jostle, whirl and flutter!
They whisper, babble, twirl, and splutter!
They glimmer, sparkle, stink and flare--
A true witch-element!
Beware!
Stick close! else we shall severed be.
Where art thou?

FAUST *in the distance*

Here!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Already, whirl'd so far away!
The master then indeed I needs must play.

Give ground! Squire Voland comes!
 Sweet folk, give ground!
 Here, doctor, grasp me! With a single bound
 Let us escape this ceaseless jar;
 Even for me too mad these people are.
 Hard by there shineth something with peculiar glare,
 Yon brake allureth me; it is not far;
 Come, come along with me! we'll slip in there.

FAUST

Spirit of contradiction! Lead! I'll follow straight!
 'Twas wisely done, however, to repair
 On May-night to the Brocken, and when there
 By our own choice ourselves to isolate!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Murk, of those flames the motley glare!
 A merry club assembles there.
 In a small circle one is not alone,

FAUST

I'd rather be above, though, I must own!
 Already fire and eddying smoke I view;
 The impetuous millions to the devil ride;
 Full many a riddle will be there untied.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Ay! and full many a riddle tied anew.
 But let the great world rave and riot!
 Here will we house ourselves in quiet.
 A custom 'tis of ancient date,
 Our lesser worlds within the great world to create!
 Young witches there I see, naked and bare,
 And old ones, veil'd more prudently.
 For my sake only courteous be!

The trouble's small, the sport is rare.
 Of instruments I hear the cursed din--
 One must get used to it.
 Come in! come in!
 There's now no help for it. I'll step before
 And introducing you as my good friend,
 Confer on you one obligation more.
 How say you now? 'Tis no such paltry room
 Why only look, you scarce can see the end.
 A hundred fires in rows disperse the gloom;
 They dance, they talk, they cook, make love, and drink:
 Where could we find aught better, do you think?

FAUST

To introduce us, do you purpose here
 As devil or as wizard to appear?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Though I am wont indeed to strict incognito,
 Yet upon gala-days one must one's orders show.
 No garter have I to distinguish me,
 Nathless the cloven foot doth here give dignity.
 Seest thou yonder snail? Crawling this way she hies:
 With searching feelers, she, no doubt,
 Hath me already scented out;
 Here, even if I would, for me there's no disguise.
 From fire to fire, we'll saunter at our leisure,
 The gallant you, I'll cater for your pleasure.
To a party seated round some expiring embers.
 Old gentleman, apart, why sit ye moping here?
 Ye in the midst should be of all this jovial cheer,
 Girt round with noise and youthful riot;
 At home one surely has enough of quiet.

GENERAL

In nations put his trust, who may,
 Whate'er for them one may have done;
 For with the people, as with women, they
 Honour your rising stars alone!

MINISTER

Now all too far they wander from the right;
 I praise the good old ways, to them I hold,
 Then was the genuine age of gold,
 When we ourselves were foremost in men's sight.

PARVENU

Ne'er were we 'mong your dullards found,
 And what we ought not, that to do were fair;
 Yet now are all things turning round and round,
 When on firm basis we would them maintain.

AUTHOR

Who, as a rule, a treatise now would care
 To read, of even moderate sense?
 As for the rising generation, ne'er
 Has youth displayed such arrogant pretence.

MEPHISTOPHELES

suddenly appearing very old

Since for the last time I the Brocken scale,
 That folk are ripe for doomsday, now one sees;
 And just because my cask begins to fail,
 So the whole world is also on the lees.

HUCKSTER-WITCH

Stop, gentlemen, nor pass me by,
 Of wares I have a choice collection:
 Pray honour them with your inspection.
 Lose not this opportunity

Yet nothing in my booth you'll find
 Without its counterpart on earth; there's naught,
 Which to the world, and to mankind,
 Hath not some direful mischief wrought.
 No dagger here, which bath not flow'd with blood,
 No chalice, whence, into some healthy frame
 Hath not been poured hot poison's wasting flood.
 No trinket, but bath wrought some woman's shame,
 No weapon but bath cut some sacred tie,
 Or from behind bath stabb'd an enemy.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Gossip! For wares like these the time's gone by,
 What's done is past! what's past is done!
 With novelties your booth supply;
 Us novelties attract alone.

FAUST

May this wild scene my senses spare!
 This, may in truth be called a fair!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Upward the eddying concourse throng;
 Thinking to push, thyself art push'd along.

FAUST

Who's that, pray?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Mark her well! That's Lilith.

FAUST

Who?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Adam's first wife. Of her rich locks beware!
 That charm in which she's parallel'd by few;
 When in its toils a youth she doth ensnare,
 He will not soon escape, I promise you.

FAUST

There sit a pair, the old one with the young;
 Already they have bravely danced and sprung!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Here there is no repose to-day.
 Another dance begins; we'll join it, come away!

FAUST

dancing with the young one

Once a fair vision came to me;
 Therein I saw an apple-tree,
 Two beauteous apples charmed mine eyes;
 I climb'd forthwith to reach the prize.

THE FAIR ONE.

Apples still fondly ye desire,
 From paradise it hath been so.
 Feelings of joy my breast inspire
 That such too in my garden grow.

MEPHISTOPHELES *with the old one*

Once a weird vision came to me;
 Therein I saw a rifted tree.
 I had a have ready here,
 But as it was it pleased me too.

THE OLD ONE

I beg most humbly to salute
 The gallant with the cloven foot!

Let him a . . . have ready here,
If he a . . . does not fear.

PROCTOPHANTASMIST

Accursed mob! How dare ye thus to meet?
Have I not shown and demonstrated too,
That ghosts stand not on ordinary feet?
Yet here ye dance, as other mortals do!

THE FAIR ONE *dancing*

Then at our ball, what doth he here?

FAUST *dancing*

Oh! He must everywhere appear.
He must adjudge, when others dance;
If on each step his say's not said,
So is that step as good as never made.
He's most annoyed, so soon as we advance;
If ye would circle in one narrow round,
As he in his old mill, then doubtless he
Your dancing would approve,—especially
If ye forthwith salute him with respect profound!

PROCTOPHANTASMIST

Still here! what arrogance! unheard of quite!
Vanish; we now have fill'd the world with light!
Laws are unheeded by the devil's host;
Wise as we are, yet Tegel hath its ghost!
How long at this conceit I've swept with all my might,
Lost is the labour: 'tis unheard of quite!

THE FAIR ONE

Cease here to teaze us any more, I pray.

PROCTOPHANTASMIST

Spirits, I plainly to your face declare:
 No spiritual control myself will bear,
 Since my own spirit can exert no sway.
The dancing continues.

To-night, I see, I shall in naught succeed;
 But I'm prepar'd my travels to pursue,
 And hope, before my final step indeed,
 To triumph over bards and devils too.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Now in some puddle will he take his station,
 Such is his mode of seeking consolation;
 Where leeches, feasting on his rump, will drain
 Spirits alike and spirit from his brain.
To FAUST, who has left the dance.

But why the charming damsel leave, I pray,
 Who to you in the dance so sweetly sang?

FAUST

Ah, in the very middle of her lay,
 Out of her mouth a small red mouse there sprang.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Suppose there did! One must not be too nice.
 'Twas well it was not grey, let that suffice.
 Who 'mid his pleasures for a trifle cares?

FAUST

Then saw I--

MEPHISTOPHELES

What?

FAUST

Mephisto, seest thou there
 Standing far off, a lone child, pale and fair?
 Slow from the spot her drooping form she tears,
 And seems with shackled feet to move along;
 I own, within me the delusion's strong,
 That she the likeness of my Gretchen wears.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Gaze not upon her! 'Tis not good! Forbear!
 'Tis lifeless, magical, a shape of air,
 An idol. Such to meet with, bodes no good;
 That rigid look of hers doth freeze man's blood,
 And well-nigh petrifies his heart to stone:--
 The story of Medusa thou hast known.

FAUST

Ay, verily! a corpse's eyes are those,
 Which there was no fond loving hand to close.
 That is the bosom I so fondly press'd,
 That my sweet Gretchen's form, so oft caress'd!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Deluded fool! 'Tis magic, I declare!
 To each she doth his lov'd
 one's image wear.

FAUST

What bliss! what torture! vainly I essay
 To turn me from that piteous look away.
 How strangely doth a single crimson line
 Around that lovely neck its coil entwine,
 It shows no broader than a knife's blunt edge!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Quite right. I see it also, and allege
 That she beneath her arm her head can bear,
 Since Perseus cut it off.--But you I swear
 Are craving for illusion still!
 Come then, ascend yon little hill!
 As on the Prater all is gay,
 And if my senses are not gone,
 I see a theatre,--what's going on?

SERVIRILIS

They are about to recommence;--the play
 Will be the last of seven, and spick-span new--'
 'Tis usual here that number to present.
 A dilettante did the piece invent,
 And dilettanti will enact it too.
 Excuse me, gentlemen; to me's assign'd
 As dilettante to uplift the curtain.

MEPHISTOPHELES

You on the Blocksberg I'm rejoiced to find,
 That 'tis your most appropriate sphere is certain.

WALPURGIS-NACHT'S DREAM

or

Oberon and Titania's golden wedding-feast

Intermezzo

THEATRE MANAGER

Vales, where mists still shift and play,
To ancient hills succeeding,--
These our scenes;--so we, to-day,
May rest, brave sons of Mieding.

HERALD

That the marriage golden be,
Must fifty years be ended;
More dear this feast of gold to me,
Contention now suspended.

OBERON

Spirits, if present, grace the scene,
And if with me united,
Then gratulate the king and queen,
Their troth thus newly plighted!

PUCK

Puck draws near and wheels about,
In mazy circles dancing!
Hundreds swell his joyous shout,
Behind him still advancing.

ARIEL

Ariel wakes his dainty air,
 His lyre celestial stringing.--
 Fools he lureth, and the fair,
 With his celestial singing.

OBERON

Wedded ones, would ye agree,
 We court your imitation:
 Would ye fondly love as we,
 We counsel separation.

TITANIA

If husband scold and wife retort,
 Then bear them far asunder;
 Her to the burning south transport,
 And him the North Pole under.

THE WHOLE ORCHESTRA *fortissimo*

Flies and midges all unite
 With frog and chirping cricket,
 Our orchestra throughout the night,
 Resounding in the thicket!

Solo

Yonder doth the bagpipe come!
 Its sack an airy bubble.
 Schnick, schnick, schnack, with nasal hum,
 Its notes it doth redouble.

EMBRYO SPIRIT

Spider's foot and midge's wing,
 A toad in form and feature;
 Together verses it can string,
 Though scarce n living creature.

A LITTLE PAIR

Tiny step and lofty bound,
Through dew and exhalation;
Ye trip it deftly on the ground,
But gain no elevation.

INQUISITIVE TRAVELLER

Can I indeed believe my eyes?
Is't not mere masquerading?
What! Oberon in beauteous step
Among the groups parading!

ORTHODOX

No claws, no tail to whisk about,
To fright us at our revel;--
Yet like the gods of Greece, no doubt,
He too's a genuine devil.

NORTHERN ARTIST

These that I'm hitting off to-day
Are sketches unpretending;
Towards Italy without delay,
My steps I think of bending.

PURIST

Alas! ill-fortune leads me here,
Where riot still grows louder;
And 'mong the witches gather'd here
But two alone wear powder!

YOUNG WITCH

Your powder and your petticoat,
Suit hags, there's no gainsaying;
Hence I sit fearless on my goat,
My naked charms displaying.

MATRON

We're too well-bred to squabble here,
 Or insult back to render;
 But may you wither soon, my dear,
 Although so young and tender.

LEADER OF THE BAND

Nose of fly and gnat's proboscis,
 Throng not the naked beauty!
 Frogs and crickets in the mosses,
 Keep time and do your duty!

WEATHERCOCK *towards one side*

What charming company I view
 Together here collected!
 Gay bachelors, a hopeful crew.
 And brides so unaffected!

WEATHERCOCK *towards the other side*

Unless indeed the yawning ground
 Should open to receive them,
 From this vile crew, with sudden bound,
 To Hell I'd jump and leave them.

XENIEN

With small sharp shears, in insect guise
 Behold us at your revel!
 That we may tender, filial-wise,
 Our homage to the devil.

HENNINGS

Look now at yonder eager crew,
 How naively they're jesting!
 That they have tender hearts and true,
 They stoutly keep protesting!

MUSAGET

Oneself amid this witchery
 How pleasantly one loses;
 For witches easier are to me
 To govern than the Muses!

CI-DEVANT GENIUS OF THE AGE

With proper folks when we appear,
 No one can then surpass us!
 Keep close, wide is the Blocksberg here
 As Germany's Parnassus.

INQUISITIVE TRAVELLER

How name ye that stiff formal man,
 Who strides with lofty paces?
 He tracks the game where'er he can,
 "He scents the Jesuits' traces."

CRANE

Where waters troubled are or clear,
 To fish I am delighted;
 Thus pious gentlemen appear
 With devils here united.

WORLDLING

By pious people, it is true,
 No medium is rejected;
 Conventicles, and not a few,
 On Blocksberg are erected.

DANCER

Another chorus now succeeds,
 Far off the drums are beating.
 Be still! The bitterns 'mong the reeds
 Their one note are repeating.

DANCING MASTER

Each twirls about and never stops,
 And as he can he fareth.
 The crooked leaps, the clumsy hops,
 Nor for appearance careth.

FIDDLER

To take each other's life, I trow,
 Would cordially delight them!
 As Orpheus' lyre the beasts, so now
 The bagpipe doth unite them.

DOGMATIST

My views, in spite of doubt and sneer,
 I hold with stout persistence,
 Inferring from the devils here,
 The evil one's existence.

IDEALIST

My every sense rules Phantasy
 With sway quite too potential;
 Sure I'm demented if the I
 Alone is the essential.

REALIST

This entity's a dreadful bore,
 And cannot choose but vex me;
 The ground beneath me ne'er before
 Thus totter'd to perplex me.

SUPERNATURALIST

Well pleased assembled here I view
 Of spirits this profusion;
 From devils, touching angels too,
 I gather some conclusion.

SCEPTIC

The ignis fatuus they track out,
 And think they're near the treasure,
 Devil alliterates with doubt,
 Here I abide with pleasure.

LEADER OF THE BAND

Frog and cricket in the mosses,--
 Confound your gasconading!
 Nose of fly and gnat's proboscis;--
 Most tuneful serenading!

THE KNOWING ONES

Sans-souci, so this host we greet,
 Their jovial humour showing;
 There's now no walking on our feet,
 So on our heads we're going.

THE AWKWARD ONES

In seasons past we snatch'd, 'tis true,
 Some tit-bits by our cunning;
 Our shoes, alas, are now danced through,
 On our bare soles we're running.

WILL-O'-THE-WISPS

From marshy bogs we sprang to light,
 Yet here behold us dancing;
 The gayest gallants of the night,
 In glitt'ring rows advancing.

SHOOTING STAR

With rapid motion from on high,
 I shot in starry splendour;
 Now prostrate on the grass I lie;--
 Who aid will kindly render?

THE MASSIVE ONES

Room! wheel round! They're coming lo!
Down sink the bending grasses.
Though spirits, yet their limbs, we know,
Are huge substantial masses.

PUCK

Don't stamp so heavily, I pray;
Like elephants you're treading!
And 'mong the elves be Puck to-day,
The stoutest at the wedding!

ARIEL

If nature boon, or subtle sprite,
Endow your soul with pinions;--
Then follow to yon rosy height,
Through ether's calm dominions!

ORCHESTRA *pianissimo*

Drifting cloud and misty wreathes
Are fill'd with light elysian;
O'er reed and leaf the zephyr breathes--
So fades the fairy vision!

A GLOOMY DAY

A PLAIN

FAUST and MEPHISTOPHELES

FAUST

In misery! despairing! long wandering pitifully on the face of the earth and now imprisoned! This gentle hapless creature, immured in the dungeon as a malefactor and reserved for horrid tortures! That it should come to this! To this!--Perfidious, worthless spirit, and this thou hast concealed from me!--Stand! ay, stand! roll in malicious rage thy fiendish eyes! Stand and brave me with thine insupportable presence! Imprisoned! In hopeless misery! Delivered over to the power of evil spirits and the judgment of unpitying humanity!--And me, the while, thou wert lulling with tasteless dissipations, concealing from me her growing anguish, and leaving her to perish without help!

MEPHISTOPHELES

She is not the first.

FAUST

Hound! Execrable monster!--Back with him, oh thou infinite spirit! back with the reptile into his dog's shape, in which it was his wont to scamper before me at eventide, to roll before the feet of the harmless wanderer, and to fasten on his shoulders when he fell! Change him again into his favourite shape, that he may crouch on his belly before me in the dust, whilst I spurn him with my foot, the reprobate!--Not the first!--Woe! Woe! By no human soul is it conceivable, that more than one human creature has ever sunk into a depth of wretchedness like this, or that the first in her writhing death-agony should not have atoned in the sight of all-pardoning Heaven for the guilt of all the rest! The misery of this one pierces

me to the very marrow, and harrows up my soul; thou art grinning calmly over the doom of thousands!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Now we are once again at our wit's end, just where the reason of you mortals snaps! Why dost thou seek our fellowship, if thou canst not go through with it? Wilt fly, and art not proof against dizziness? Did we force ourselves on thee, or thou on us?

FAUST

Cease thus to gnash thy ravenous fangs at me! I loathe thee!--Great and glorious spirit, thou who didst vouchsafe to reveal thyself unto me, thou who dost know my very heart and soul, why hast thou linked me with this base associate, who feeds on mischief and revels in destruction?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Hast done?

FAUST

Save her!--or woe to thee! The direst of curses on thee for thousands of years!

MEPHISTOPHELES

I cannot loose the bands of the avenger, nor withdraw his bolts.--Save her!--Who was it plunged her into perdition? I or thou?

FAUST looks wildly around.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Would'st grasp the thunder? Well for you, poor mortals, that 'tis not yours to wield! To smite to atoms the being however innocent, who obstructs his path, such is the tyrant's fashion of relieving himself in difficulties!

FAUST

Convey me thither! She shall be free!

MEPHISTOPHELES

And the danger to which thou dost expose thyself? Know, the guilt of blood, shed by thy hand, lies yet upon the town. Over the place where fell the murdered one, avenging spirits hover and watch for the returning murderer.

FAUST

This too from thee? The death and downfall of a world be on thee, monster I Conduct me thither, I say, and set her free!

MEPHISTOPHELES

I will conduct thee. And what I can do,--hear! Have I all power in heaven and upon earth? I'll cloud the senses of the warder,--do thou possess thyself of the keys and lead her forth with human hand! I will keep watch! The magic steeds are waiting, I bear thee off. Thus much is in my power.

FAUST

Tip and sway!

NIGHT

OPEN COUNTRY

FAUST. MEPHISTOPHELES

Rushing along on black horses

FAUST

What weave they yonder round the Ravenstone?

MEPHISTOPHELES

I know not what they shape and brew.

FAUST

They're soaring, swooping, betiding, stooping.

MEPHISTOPHELES

A witches' pack.

FAUST

They charm, they strew.

MEPHISTOPHELES

On! On!

DUNGEON

FAUST

with a bunch of keys and a lamp before a small iron door

A fear unwonted o'er my spirit falls;
 Man's concentrated woe o'erwhelms me here!
 She dwells immur'd within these dripping walls;
 Her only trespass a delusion dear!
 Thou lingerest at the fatal door,
 Thou dread'st to see her face once more?
 On! While thou dalliest, draws her death-hour near.
 He seizes the lock. Singing within.
 My mother, the harlot,
 She took me and slew!
 My father, the scoundrel,
 Hath eaten me too!
 My sweet little sister
 Hath all my bones laid,
 Where soft breezes whisper
 All in the cool shade!
 Then became I a wood-bird, and sang on the spray,
 Fly away! little bird, fly away! fly away!

FAUST opening the lock

Ah! she forebodes not that her lover's near,
 The clanking chains, the rustling straw, to hear.
 He enters.

MARGARET

hiding her face in the bed of straw

Woe! woe! they come! oh bitter 'tis to die!

FAUST softly

Hush! hush! be still! I come to set thee free!

MARGARET

throwing herself at his feet

If thou art human, feel my misery!

FAUST

Thou wilt awake the jailor with thy cry!

He grasps the chains to unlock them.

MARGARET on her knees

Who, headsman, unto thee this power

O'er me could give?

Thou com'st for me at midnight-hour.

Be merciful, and let me live!

Is morrow's dawn not time enough?

She stands up.

I'm still so young, so young--

And must so early die!

Fair was I too, and that was my undoing.

My love is now afar, he then was nigh;

Torn lies the garland, the fair blossoms strew'd.

Nay, seize me not with hand so rude!

Spare me! What harm have I e'er done to thee?

Oh let me not in vain implore!

I ne'er have seen thee in my life before!

FAUST

Can I endure this bitter agony?

MARGARET

I now am at thy mercy quite.

Let me my babe but suckle once again!

I fondled it the live-long night;

They took it from me but to give me pain,

And now, they say that I my child have slain.
 Gladness I ne'er again shall know.
 Then they sing songs about me,--'tis wicked of the throng--
 An ancient ballad endeth so;
 Who bade them thus apply the song?

FAUST

throwing himself on the ground

A lover at thy feet bends low,
 To loose the bonds of wretchedness and woe.

MARGARET

throws herself beside him

Oh, let us kneel and move the saints by prayer!
 Look! look! yon stairs below,
 Under the threshold there,
 Hell's flames are all aglow!
 Beneath the floor,
 With hideous noise,
 The devils roar!

FAUST aloud

Gretchen! Gretchen!

MARGARET listening

That was my lov'd one's voice!
 She springs up, the chains fall off.

Where is he? I heard him calling me.
 Free am I! There's none shall hinder me.
 To his neck will I fly,
 On his bosom will lie!

Gretchen, he called!--
 On yon threshold he stood;
 Amidst all the howling of hell's fiery flood,

The scoff and the scorn of its devilish crew,
The tones of his voice, sweet and loving, I knew.

FAUST

'Tis I!

MARGARET

'Tis thou! O say so once again!
embracing him.

'Tis he! 'Tis he! where's now the torturing pain?
Where are the fetters? where the dungeon's gloom?
'Tis thou! To save me thou art come!
And I am sav'd!--
Already now the street I see
Where the first time I caught a glimpse of thee.
There too the pleasant garden shade,
Where I and Martha for thy coming stay'd.

FAUST

endeavouring to lead her away,

Come! come away!

MARGARET

Oh do not haste!
I love to linger where thou stayest. caressing him.

FAUST

Ah haste! For if thou still delayest,
Our lingering we shall both deplore.

MARGARET

How, dearest? canst thou kiss no more!
So short a time away from me, and yet,
To kiss thou couldst so soon forget!
Why on thy neck so anxious do I feel--

When formerly a perfect heaven of bliss
 From thy dear looks and words would o'er me steal?
 As thou wouldst stifle me thou then didst kiss!--
 Kiss me!
 Or I'll kiss thee! She embraces him.

Woe! woe! Thy lips are cold,-- Are dumb!
 Thy love where hast thou left?
 Who bath me of thy love bereft?
 She turns away from him.

FAUST

Come! Follow me, my dearest love, be bold!
 I'll cherish thee with ardour thousand-fold;
 I but entreat thee now to follow me!

MARGARET

turning towards him

And art thou he? and art thou really he?

FAUST

'Tis I! O come!

MARGARET

Thou wilt strike off my chain,
 And thou wilt take me to thine arms again.
 How comes it that thou dost not shrink from me?--
 And dost thou know, love, whom thou wouldst set free?

FAUST

Come! come! already night begins to wane.

MARGARET

I sent my mother to her grave,
 I drown'd my child beneath the wave.
 Was it not given to thee and me--thee too?

'Tis thou thyself! I scarce believe it yet.
 Give me thy hand! It is no dream! 'Tis true!
 Thine own dear hand!--But how is this? 'Tis wet?
 Quick, wipe it off! Meseems that yet
 There's blood thereon.
 Ah God! what hast thou done?
 Put up thy sword, I beg of thee!

FAUST

Oh, dearest, let the past forgotten be!
 Death is in every word.

MARGARET

No, thou must linger here in sorrow!
 The graves I will describe to thee,
 And thou to them must see
 To-morrow:
 The best place give to my mother,
 Close at her side my brother,
 Me at some distance lay--
 But not too far away!
 And the little one place on my right breast.
 Nobody else will near me lie!
 To nestle beside thee so lovingly,
 That was a rapture, gracious and sweet!
 A rapture I never again shall prove;
 Methinks I would force myself on thee, love,
 And thou dost spurn me, and back retreat--
 Yet 'tis thyself, thy fond kind looks I see.

FAUST

If thou dost feel 'tis I, then come with me!

MARGARET

What, there? without?

FAUST

Yes, forth in the free air.

MARGARET

Ay, if the grave's without,--
If death lurk there!
Hence to the everlasting resting-place,
And not one step beyond!--
Thou'rt leaving me?
Oh Henry! would that I could go with thee!

FAUST

Thou canst! But will it!
Open stands the door.

MARGARET

I dare not go! I've naught to hope for more.
What boots it to escape? They lurk for me!
'Tis wretched to beg, as I must do,
And with an evil conscience thereto!
'Tis wretched, in foreign lands to stray.
And me they will catch, do what I may.

FAUST

With thee will I abide.

MARGARET

Quick! Quick!
Save thy poor child!
Keep to the path
The brook along,
Over the bridge
To the wood beyond,
To the left, where the plank is,
In the pond.

Seize it at once!
 It fain would rise,
 It struggles still!
 Save it. Oh save!

FAUST

Dear Gretchen, more collected be!
 One little step, and thou art free!

MARGARET

Were we but only past the hill!
 There sits my mother upon a stone--
 My brain, alas, is cold with dread!--
 There sits my mother upon a stone,
 And to and fro she shakes her head;
 She winks not, she nods not, her head it droops sore;
 She slept so long, she waked no more;
 She slept, that we might taste of bliss:
 Ah! those were happy times, I wis!

FAUST

Since here avails nor argument nor prayer,
 Thee hence by force I needs must bear.

MARGARET

Loose me! I will not suffer violence!
 With murderous hand hold not so fast!
 I have done all to please thee in the past!

FAUST

Day dawns! My love! My love!

MARGARET

Yes! day draws near.
 The day of judgment too will soon appear!

It should have been my bridal! No one tell,
 That thy poor Gretchen thou hast known too well.
 Woe to my garland!
 Its bloom is o'er!
 Though not at the dance--
 We shall meet once more.
 The crowd doth gather, in silence it rolls;
 The squares, the streets,
 Scarce hold the throng.
 The staff is broken,--the death-bell tolls,--
 They bind and seize me!
 I'm hurried along,
 To the seat of blood already I'm bound!
 Quivers each neck as the naked steel
 Quivers on mine the blow to deal--
 The silence of the grave now broods around!

FAUST

Would I had never been born!

MEPHISTOPHELES appears without

Up! or you're lost.
 Vain hesitation! Babbling, quaking!
 My steeds are shivering,
 Morn is breaking.

MARGARET

What from the floor ascendeth like a ghost?
 'Tis he! 'Tis he! Him from my presence chase!
 What would he in this holy place?
 It is for me he cometh!

FAUST

Thou shalt live!

MARGARET

Judgment of God! To thee my soul I give!

MEPHISTOPHELES to FAUST

Come, come! With her I'll else abandon thee!

MARGARET

Father, I'm thine! Do thou deliver me!

Ye angels! Ye angelic hosts! descend,

Encamp around to guard me and defend!--

Henry! I shudder now to look on thee!

MEPHISTOPHELES

She now is judged!

VOICES from above

Is saved!

MEPHISTOPHELES to FAUST

Come thou with me!

Vanishes with FAUST

VOICE from within, dying away

Henry! Henry!

SECOND PART OF THE TRAGEDY

ACT 1

Scene 1: A Pleasant Landscape

(Faust is lying on flowery turf, tired and restless, trying to sleep. A circle of tiny, graceful spirits hovers round him.)

Ariel (Chanting, accompanied by Aeolian Harps.)

When the springtime blossoms, falling,
Shower down, and cover all things,
When the fields with greener blessing
Dazzle all the world of earthlings,
Little elves, but great in spirit,
Haste to help, where help they can,
And, be he holy, be he wicked,
Pity they the luckless man.

You, hovering in airy circles, round his head
Show yourselves in proud elf-form, instead,
Calm all the fierce resistance of his heart,
Remove the bitter barbs of sharp remorse,
Free him from past terrors, by your art.
Four are the watches night makes in its course,
At once, now, mercifully, let the dark depart.

Let his head sink down on pillow's coolness,
 Next sprinkle him with dew from Lethe's stream:
 Then let his joints be free of cramps and stiffness,
 So that he's strong enough to greet day's gleam:
 Elves exert your sweetest right,
 Return him to the holy light!

Choir (Singly, and two or more, alternately and together.)

When the balmy breezes smother
 All the green-encircled land,
 Sweetly fragrant and mist-covered,
 Twilight gathers all around.
 Sweet peace then whispers softly,
 Rocks the heart on childhood's shores,
 And on the eyelids, tired and weary,
 Closes daylight's golden doors.

Here the night's already passing,
 Sacred stars set, star by star,
 Great lights, and the lesser glittering,
 Sparkling near, and gleaming far:
 Sparkling, where the lake reflects her,
 Gleaming bright in cloudless height,

Protecting the deep bliss of rest, there,
Moon, in splendour, rules the night.

The hours have vanished now, already
Joy and pain have flown away,
You are whole! Recover, wholly:
Trust the sight of breaking day.
Greening valleys, swelling hills there,
Rise from out their shadowy sleep:
And, drifting in its waves of silver,
On to harvest, flows the wheat.

Wish then, to achieve your wishes,
Gaze up, at the brightness there!
You are lightly tangled: this is
Sleep, a shell, so now emerge!
Don't delay, walk bravely, tall,
When the crowd waits, hesitating:
The noblest man achieves his all,
By seeing, and then, swiftly, taking.

Ariel

Listen! Hear the hour nearing!
Ringing out to spirit-hearing,

Now, the new day is appearing.
 Doors of stone creak and chatter,
 Phoebus' wheels roll and clatter,
 What a din the daylight's bringing!
 Trombone- and trumpeting,
 Eyes amazed, and ears ringing,
 The Unheard drops out of hearing.
 Slip into the flowers presence,
 Deeper, deeper, lie there silent,
 In the pebbles, where the leaves bend:
 If it strikes you, you'll be deafened.

Faust

Life's pulses beating now, with new existence,
 Greet the mild ethereal half-light round me:
 You, Earth, stood firm tonight, as well: I sense
 Your breath is quickening all the things about me,
 Already, with that joy you give, beginning
 To stir the strengthening resolution in me,
 That strives, forever, towards highest Being. –
 Now the world unfolds, in half-light's gleam,
 The wood's alive, its thousand harmonies singing,
 While through the valleys, misted ribbons stream:
 And heavenly light now penetrates the deep:

Twigs, branches shoot, with fresher life it seems,
From fragrant gulfs, where they were sunk in sleep:
Colour on colour lifts now from the ground,
As leaf and flower with trembling dewdrops weep –
And a paradise reveals itself, all round.
Gaze upwards! – The vast mountain heights
Already with the solemn hour resound:
They are the first to enjoy the eternal light
That later, for us, will work its way below.
Now, to the sloping Alpine meadows bright,
It gives a fresh clarity, a newer glow,
And step by step it reaches us down here: –
It blazes out! – Ah, already blinded, though
I turn away, my eyesight wounded, pierced.
So it is, when to the thing we yearn for
The highest wish so intimately rehearsed,
We find fulfilment opening wide the door:
And then, from eternal space, there breaks
A flood of flame, we stand amazed before:
We wished to set the torch of life ablaze,
A sea of fire consumes us, and such fire!
Love, is it, then? Or hate? This fierce embrace,
The joy and pain of alternating pyres,

So that, gazing back to earth again,
 We seek to veil ourselves in youth's desire.
 Let the sun shine on, behind me, then!
 The waterfall that splits the cliffs' broad edge,
 I gaze at with a growing pleasure, when
 A thousand torrents plunge from ledge to ledge,
 And still a thousand more pour down that stair,
 Spraying the bright foam skywards from their beds.
 And in lone splendour, through the tumult there,
 The rainbow's arch of colour, bending brightly,
 Is clearly marked, and then dissolved in air,
 Around it the cool showers, falling lightly.
 There the efforts of mankind they mirror.
 Reflect on it, you'll understand precisely:
 We live our life amongst refracted colour.

Scene 2: The Emperor's Castle: The Throne Room

(A council of state waits for the Emperor. Trumpets.)

(Enter court attendants of all kinds, splendidly dressed. The Emperor approaches the throne: the Astrologer is to his right.)

The Emperor

I greet you all, the loved, and true,
 Gathered here from far and wide: -
 I see a wise man's at my side,

But where on earth's the fool?

Attendant

Right behind your mantle there,
He suddenly tumbled on the stair,
They dragged away the pile of fat.
Dead: or drunk? No man knows that.

A Second Attendant

At once, and at a wondrous pace,
Another came to take his place.
Quite extravagantly dressed,
Yet troubling, since he's so grotesque:
Guards closed the door in his face,
Their halberds held crosswise too –
Yet here he comes, the daring fool!

Mephistopheles (Kneeling in front of the throne.)

What is cursed, and yet is welcomed?
What's desired, yet chased away?
What's always carefully defended?
What's abused: condemned, I say?
What do you not dare appeal to?

What will all, happily, hear named?

What stands on the step before you?

What's banished from here, all the same?

The Emperor

For once, at least, spare us your babble!

This is no time or place for riddles,

They're a matter for these gentlemen. –

Solve it! I'll gladly hear it all again.

I fear my old fool's wandered far in space:

Come to my side, here, and take his place.

(Mephistopheles places himself on the Emperor's left.)

Murmurs From the Crowd

A newer fool – for newer cares –

Where's he from? – How'd he get there? –

The old one fell – He's all done in –

He was fat – Now this one's thin –

The Emperor

So now, my faithful and beloved,

Welcome here from near and far!

We meet beneath a lucky star,

Since health and luck are written above.
But tell me, why in days like these,
When we've conquered care,
And carnival masks are all our wear,
And delightful things are waiting,
We trouble ourselves with debating?
Yet since you say we have to do it,
It's settled then, and we'll go to it.

The Chancellor

The highest virtue, like a sacred halo
Circles the Emperor's head: and so
He alone may validly exercise it:
Justice! – All men love and prize it,
What all ask, yet wish they could do without,
The people look to him to hand it out.
But ah! What help can human wit deliver,
Or kindly heart, or willing hand, if fever
Rages wildly through the state, and evil
Itself is broodingly preparing evil?
Look about, from this height's extreme,
Across the realm: it seems like some bad dream,
Where one deformity acts on another,

Where lawlessness by law is furthered,
And an age of crime is discovered.
Here one steals cattle, there, a wife,
Cross, cup and candlestick, from the altar,
And boasts of it for many a year,
His skin's intact, and so's his life.
Then they take their claims to court
The judge, in pomp, on his high cushion,
Meanwhile there grows a furious roar,
From swelling tides of revolution.
They insist it's crime and disgrace,
With their accomplices beside them,
And 'Guilty!' is the verdict in a case,
Only where Innocence is its own defence.
So all the world will slash and chop,
Destroying just what suits themselves:
How then can that true sense develop
That shows the morally acceptable?
At last the well-intentioned man
Yields to the bribe, the flatterer:
And the judge who can't convict, is hand
In hand with the criminal offender.
I've painted in black, but I'd rather draw

Its image in the deeper colour that I saw.

(Pause)

The conclusion's inescapable:

If all men suffer when all cause trouble,

Then His Majesty himself is harmed.

The Commander in Chief

How riotous things are in this wild age!

They all lash out, and are lashed, these days,

And everyone is deaf to all command.

The citizen behind his wall,

The knight in his cliff-top tower,

Have sworn to defy us all,

And hold fast to their power.

The impatient mercenaries

Impetuously demand their pay,

And if we owed them less, already

They'd be off, and march away.

If one forbids what all desire,

He's disturbed a hornet's nest:

The kingdom, they should keep entire,

Is plundered, and distressed.
They'd like to wreak a wild disorder,
Half the world has been dissolved:
There are still kings beyond our border,
But none of them think they're involved.

The Treasurer

In allies, then, who'd put their trust!
The subsidies they promised us,
Like water pipes are all blocked up.
And, Sire, in all your wide estate,
Who's benefited from the take?
Wherever you go, there's some new pup,
Who declares his independence.
We watch, while they carry on:
We've given away our rights, and hence,
No rights are left for us, not one.
Our parties too, however called,
Can't be depended on today:
They like to praise, and blame: it's all
Impartial both their love and hate.
They're resting: they take cover,
The Ghibelline, and Guelph.

Now, who'll help his neighbour?
Each man just helps himself.
The golden doors are fastened tight,
Men scrape and scratch and glean, all right,
But our coffers still are empty.

The Steward

What evils, too, I must endure!
We try to save each day, I'm sure,
But every day sees greater need:
So, daily, some new torment's mine.
The cooks, alas, have all they want:
Boar, pheasant, hare and venison,
Ducks and peacocks, chickens, geese,
Payment in kind, and guaranteed,
They keep coming all the time,
But in the end we're short of wine.
Though cask on cask once filled the cellar,
The best of vintages, and names, there,
These noble lords can drink forever,
And haven't left a single drop.
The council too must have their fill,
They grasp their tankards tight until,

Under the table, they have to stop.
 Now I'll count the cost, you'll see,
 The moneylenders won't spare me,
 The advances that they give gladly,
 Will eat the future years, on top.
 Pigs don't have time to fatten: instead
 Men seize the pillows from your bed,
 Even the bread from your table's gone.

The Emperor (After reflection, to Mephistopheles.)

Fool, do you know anything else that's wrong?

Mephistopheles

Me? Nothing at all! I see splendour, as I must,
 Around me, of you and yours! – Lack trust,
 Where Majesty commands so, without question,
 Where ready force scatters the enemy faction?
 Where strong wills, with wit to understand,
 Active and various, are all at hand?
 What, for some evil purpose, could combine,
 For darkness, then, where such stars shine?

Murmurs

Here's a rogue – who understands –
 He'll tell lies – as long as he can –
 I wonder too – what lies behind –
 And what's in front? – A project of some kind –

Mephistopheles

In this world, what isn't lacking, somewhere, though?
 Sometimes it's this, or that: here what's missing's gold.
 True you can't just rake it up from the floor,
 But wisdom knows the mines where one gets more.
 In mountain veins, foundation walls,
 Coined and un-coined golden hoards,
 And ask me, now, who'll bring it to the light:
 One gifted with Mind's power and Nature's might.

The Chancellor

Mind and Nature – don't speak to Christians so.
 That's why men burn atheists, below,
 Such speech is dangerous, all right,
 Nature is sin, and Mind's the devil,
 It harbours within it, Doubt, that evil,
 Their misshapen hermaphrodite.
 Not so with us! – In the Emperor's land

Two kinds of men are still at hand
 Worthy alone to defend the throne:
 The Saints are they, and the Knights:
 They enter life's uncertain fights,
 Rewards of Church and State they own:
 Firm in their resistance, check
 The confused aims of everyman.
 No, Nature and Mind are heretics!
 Wizards! Ruining town and land.
 And you, with brazen impudence still
 Invoke them here in this high circle:
 You're fostering the corrupted will,
 Fools are always hand in hand.

Mephistopheles

By this I recognise a most learned lord!
 What you can't feel lies miles abroad,
 What you can't grasp, you think, is done with too.
 What you don't count on can't be true,
 What you can't weigh won't weigh, of old,
 What you don't coin: that can't be gold.

The Emperor

You won't sort out our faults like that,
 Will Lenten sermons make men fat?
 I'm tired of the eternal 'if and when':
 We're short of gold, well fine, so fetch some then.

Mephistopheles

I'll fetch what you wish, and I'll fetch more:
 Easy it's true, but then easy things weigh more:
 It's there already, yet how we might achieve it,
 That's the tricky thing, knowing how to seize it.
 Just think how, in those times of consternation,
 When a human flood drowned land and nation,
 People were so terrified, everywhere,
 They hid their treasures, here and there.
 So it was when mighty Rome held sway,
 And so it goes on, yesterday and today.
 Still buried in the earth, why, there it is:
 The earth is the Emperor's, so it's his.

The Treasurer

For a Fool his aim's not out of sight:
 It's true, that's an old Imperial right.

The Chancellor

Satan lays out his gilded nets, for you,
These things don't square with what's good and true.

The Steward

Only bring them to court: I'll welcome the sight,
And I'll gladly accept the thing as not quite right.

The Commander in Chief

The Fool's clever, to promise what each of us needs:
A soldier will never ask from whence it all proceeds.

Mephistopheles

If you think I'm cheating you, maybe,
Why here's the man: ask Astrology!
He knows each circling hour and house:
So ask him: how are the Heavens now?

Murmurs

Two rogues, there – already known –
Fool and Dreamer – so near the throne –
An idle song – an ancient rhyme –
The Fool plays – the Wise Man speaks, in time –

The Astrologer (*Speaks, with Mephistopheles prompting him.*)

The Sun, himself, he is of purest gold:

Mercury, messenger, of riches told:

Venus has bewitched you all, and she

Looks on you, soon and late, quite lovingly:

The chaste Moon's mood holds fast:

Mars won't harm: his strength won't last:

And Jupiter remains the loveliest sight:

While Saturn's great, but far away and slight.

His metal we don't greatly venerate,

Light of worth, though leaden in its weight.

Yes! When Sun and Moon are conjoined fine,

Silver and gold will make the whole world shine:

The rest as well in turn are all achieved,

Palaces, gardens proud, and rosy cheeks:

All this he brings this highly knowledgeable man:

He can deliver, too, what nobody else here can.

The Emperor

The words they say, I hear them twice,

And yet I'm not convinced they're right.

Murmurs

What's all that? - A joke gone flat –
Horoscopy – And Chemistry –
I've heard that vein – Hoped in vain –
Come, quick – It's still a trick –

Mephistopheles

They stand around: they're all amazed,
They don't trust what can be found,
One babbles about deadly nightshade,
The other of some jet-black hound.
What matter if one thinks I'm jesting,
Or another calls it sorcery,
If the soles of their feet are itching,
If their firm step totters towards me.
All can feel the secret working
Of Nature's everlasting power,
And from its deepest lurking,
A living vein shall rise and flower.
When every member twitches,
When all looks strange to your eyes,
Make up your minds, be delvers,
Here the players, there the prize!

Murmurs

It's like a lead-weight on my feet –
 My arm's swollen – but then, it's gouty –
 There's a tickle here in my big toe –
 All the way down my back it goes –
 From these signs, I'd say we're near
 A rich vein of treasure, here.

The Emperor

Quick then! Don't slope off there!
 Let's test your froth of lies,
 Show us, all, this rarest prize.
 I'll lay down the sword and sceptre,
 With my own noble hands, as well,
 If you don't lie, complete the work myself,
 And, if you lie, then send you down to Hell!

Mephistopheles

I'll find the way there anyway –
 Yet I really can't exaggerate
 What's lying round ownerless, everywhere.
 The farmer, ploughing the furrows, lays bare
 A crock of gold the clods unfold:

Seeks saltpetre from damp limy walls,
And finds there golden rolls of gold,
In his poor hands: frightened by all.
What caverns exist to be blown open,
Through what shafts and cuttings then,
Burrow those gold-divining men,
Those neighbours of the Underworld!
Secure in vast ancient cellars, find,
Golden plates, bowls, cups for wine,
In rows, and heaps where they were hurled:
Goblets fashioned out of rubies,
And if they wants to try their uses,
Beside them there's the ancient fluid.
Yet – I would trust the expert though –
The wooden casks rotted long ago,
The wine makes tartar, in the liquid.
Not just gold, and jewels, fine
But the essence then of noble wine
Terror hides, and night, as stark.
So quiz the wise untiringly:
It's trivial, by day, to see:
Mystery: houses in the dark.

The Emperor

See to it then! What use is it out of sight?
 Whatever's valuable must see the light.
 Who knows a rogue for certain but by day?
 At night all cows are black, and cats are grey.
 The pots down there, full of golden weight –
 Drive your plough, and, ploughing, excavate.

Mephistopheles

Take hoe and spade: and dig yourself,
 Labouring will make you great,
 A herd of golden calves, you'll help
 To rise from out their buried state.
 Then with delight, without delay,
 You can, yourself, your love array:
 Glittering colours, shining gems, will best
 Enhance your majesty, and her loveliness.

The Emperor

Quick then, quick! How slow it always is!

The Astrologer (*Prompted by Mephistopheles.*)

Sire, restrain your urgent passion, please.

First let all your pleasant pastimes go:
 Distracted natures won't achieve the goal.
 First we must atone for them in quiet,
 Lower things are gained by the higher.
 Who wants the good, must first be good:
 Who wants delight, must calm the blood:
 Who longs for wine, treads ripened grapes:
 Who hopes for miracles, strengthens then his faith.

The Emperor

So let the time be passed in merriment!
 Ash Wednesday will achieve our grave intent.
 And we can celebrate, wild Carnival,
 More riotously, meanwhile, after all.

(They exit to the sound of trumpets.)

Mephistopheles

How merit and luck are linked together
 These fools can't see, no, not a one:
 If they'd the Philosopher's Stone, as ever,
 There'd lack a philosopher for the stone.

Scene III: A Spacious Hall with Adjoining Rooms

(Arranged and decorated for a Carnival Masque.)

Herald

In our German lands, fear no evil,
Dance of Death or Fool, or Devil:
There's a cheerful feast, here: wait.
Our Sire, on his Roman travels,
Has, for his profit, and our revels,
Crossed the highest Alpine levels,
And gained himself a happier State.
The Emperor kissed the holy slipper,
First, won sovereign rights, and as,
He was gifted with the crown, there,
Accepted a fool's cap, for us.
We're all newly born, now:
Every sophisticated man,
Pulls it snug over ears and brow:
He seems a poor fool, but he'll vow
To wear it wisely as he can.
I see they're gathering already,
Hesitant alone, or paired off intimately:
Chorus on chorus pushing through.
In, and out, quite undeterred:

And end up where they were before, too.
With its hundred thousand scenes of the absurd,
The World itself is just one giant Fool.

Flower Girls (*Singing, accompanied by mandolins.*)

Dressed to win your praises,
We are here tonight,
Young Florentine ladies,
At the German Court of light.

Many a bright flower we wear
To adorn our tawny hair:
Silken threads, silken gear,
They play their own part here.

Then our position's well deserved, oh,
Worth your praise, without a doubt,
Our shining-flowers, by hand we sew,
So they bloom year in, year out.

All kinds of coloured snippets,
Placed with perfect symmetry:
You might mock us bit by bit, yes,

But the whole attracts you see.

We are pretty things to look on,
Flower Girls, and very smart:
Then, the temperament of Woman
Is so very close to Art.

Herald

Let's see those trays of flowers
That you carry on your heads,
That paint your arms with colours:
What each likes, let her select.
Quick: in walks and branches
What a garden we will share!
They are fit to crowd around us,
Flower sellers and their wares.

The Flower Girls

Haggle in this cheerful place,
But seek no market here!
At a quick and witty pace,
Let all know what you bear.

An Olive-Branch with Olives

I don't envy flowery ones,
 Every kind of strife I shun:
 It's unnatural, to me:
 So I am the sign of nations,
 And I seal their obligations,
 Mark of peace in any field.
 I hope I'm worth good luck today:
 Some lovely head I might array.

A Garland of Wheat-Ears (*Golden*)

Ceres gift, for you to wear,
 Charming, sweet, we were all sent:
 The most desired of uses, here
 As your beautiful adornment.

A Fancy Garland

Like a mallow, bright with colour,
 A marvellous flower grew from the moss!
 Never known before to Nature,
 Yet Fashion brought it us.

A Fancy Bouquet

My name's for you to know,
Theophrastus couldn't tell you though:
Yet I hope, if not all do,
Many of us will still please you,
She, I'd like, most to possess us,
Who might twine us in her tresses:
Or if she should so decide,
Set beside her heart, I'd ride.

Rosebuds

Many-coloured fancies may
Form the fashion of the day,
Strange and curious of shape,
Such as Nature never made:
Stalks of green and bells of gold,
Show in tresses all untold! –
Yet we – remain here, covered up:
Lucky those who first discover us.
When the summer is proclaimed,
Then the rosebuds are in flame,
Who would do without such pleasures?
Promises, and yielded treasures,

That, in the flowery kingdom, rule,
Mind and heart and glances, too.

(The Flower Girls garland themselves, and show their wares, gracefully, in the green leafy arcades.)

The Gardeners (*Singing, accompanied by lutes.*)

See the flowers quietly growing,
On your brows, sweetly amuse you,
And their fruit will not seduce you,
One may taste delight in knowing.

Sunburned faces offer up,
Peaches, plums, and cherries, yet.
Buy! Against the tongue and palate,
The eye is the worst way to judge.

Come, of all this ripest fruit,
Eat with taste, and delight!
Poems on roses might still suit,
But on the apple man must bite.

So then let us join with their
Flowering youth itself,
And we'll dress our riper wares

In our neighbour's wealth.

Dressed in cheerful garlands, there,
 Along this jewelled leafy route,
 All things can be found together,
 Buds and leaves, and flowers and fruit.

(Both choruses set out their goods on the flight of steps, with alternating song accompanied by the lutes and mandolins, and offer their wares to the spectators.)

A Mother (*With her daughter.*)

Child, when you came to light,
 I dressed you in your little hat:
 Your face was so sweet and bright,
 And your body was soft at that.
 I thought you'd soon be a bride,
 To the wealthiest of men allied,
 I thought you'd find a match.

Ah! Now already many a year
 Has flown by, uselessly,
 The motley crowd of suitors here,
 Pass you quickly by, I see:
 With him you danced a lively dance,

Gave that other a knowing glance
 With your elbow, sharply.

I've thought about the many feasts
 We went to, all in vain,
 Forfeits, and Hide and Seek,
 Couldn't help, that's plain:
 Today the fools are out the trap,
 Darling, open then your lap,
 There's someone you can gain.

(Other young and lovely girls join the Flower Girls, and they gossip together. Fishermen and bird-catchers with fishing rods, nests, limed twigs and other implements appear, and scatter themselves among the girls. Mutual attempts to win over, catch, escape and embrace, allow the most agreeable conversation.)

Wood-cutters (*Entering, loudly and boisterously.*)

Make way! Stand back!
 We must be free,
 We fell the trees,
 They crash, and smash:
 And when we pass,
 Expect a smack.
 To give us praise
 Consider this:

If coarser ways,
Weren't in this land,
How'd the finest,
Have means to stand,
Despite they're jesting?
So learn our meaning!
For you'd be freezing,
If we weren't sweating.

Pulcinelli

You're fools, a troop,
That's born to stoop.
We're the wise,
We see through lies:
And then our bags
Our caps and rags,
Are light to wear:
And free from care,
We're always idle,
Slippered, we sidle,
Through market crowds,
Slithering about,
Standing to gaze,

And croak, amazed:

And at that sound,

Through heaving mounds,

Eel-like slipping,

Lightly skipping,

We romp together.

Praise us ever,

Or scold us so,

We let both go.

The Parasitical (*Fawning, and lustful.*)

You brave woodsmen,

And your next of kin,

The charcoal-burners,

You're the men for us.

Since all the stooping,

The ready nodding,

The winding phrase,

That plays both ways,

That warms or chills,

Just as one feels,

What profit is it then?

The mighty fire

From heaven or higher,
Might come in vain
Without logs again,
And coal heaps there,
To light the oven
And make it glare.
It roasts and steams,
It boils and teems.
The finger-picker,
The plate-licker,
He sniffs the fry,
Suspects the fish:
Rules, by and by,
The patron's dish.

A Drunk (*Confused.*)

Nothing seems bad to me today!
I feel so frank, and free:
New joys, and happy songs, I say.
I brought them both with me!
So let's drink! Drink, and drink!
Drink up, you! Clink, and clink!
You behind me, come around!

Drink it up, and send it down.

My wife was so outraged, she screamed,
When I turned up, dressed so funny,
However much I boasted, she
Kept calling me a tailor's dummy.
So I drink! Drink, and drink!
Clink the tankards! Clink, and clink!
Tailor's dummy: swill it round!
When it's clinked, drink it down!

Don't you say, I've lost my way:
I'm here, where I've got it made.
If host and hostess won't play,
I'll get credit from the maid.
Always drinking! Drink, and drink!
Lift, you others! Clink, and clink!
Each to each! So it goes round!
Too soon, I know, it's all gone down.

However I please myself, may I
Have it happen at my command:
Let me lie here, where I lie,

If I can't, any longer, stand.

Chorus

Every pal, now: drink and drink!

A toast again, a clink and clink!

Hold tight now to bench and ground!

Under the table, he'll be found.

(The Herald announces sundry poets – Poets of Nature, and Court, and Minstrels, Sentimentalists and Enthusiasts. In this competitive crowd no one allows anyone else to start reciting. One slips by with a few words.)

A Satirical Poet

As a poet, do you know

What I'd most enjoy, here?

If I dared to sing, or bellow

What no one wants to hear.

(The Night and Church Poets excuse themselves having become engaged in a very interesting conversation with a newly-risen Vampire, from which a new school of poetry might derive. The Herald has to accept their excuses, and meanwhile calls on characters from Greek Mythology, who even in modern masks lose neither their character nor power to charm.)

(The Three Graces appear.)

Aglaia

Grace it is we bring, to living:

So be graceful in your giving.

Hegemone

Gracefully may you receive:

Lovely is the wish achieved.

Euphrosyne

And in quieter hours, and places,

Chiefly, in your thanks, be gracious.

(The Three Fates appear)

Atropos

I, the eldest, I, the spinning

Am lumbered with this time: I've

Need of lots of pondering, thinking,

To yield the tender threads of life.

So you may be soft and supple,

I sift through the finest flax:

Drawn through clever fingers, double

Fine, and even, smooth as wax.

If you wish all joy and dancing,

Excessive now, in what you take,

Think about those threads: their ending.

Then, take care! The threads might break.

Clotho

Know that in these latter days,
I was trusted with the shears:
Since our eldest sister's ways,
Failed to help men, it appears.

She dragged all her useless spinning,
Endlessly to air and light,
While the hopes of wondrous winnings,
Were clipped and buried out of sight.

I too made a host of errors:
Myself, in my younger years,
But, to keep myself in check, there's
The case, in which I keep my shears.

And so, willingly restrained,
I look kindly on this place,
In these hours, your freedom gained,
Run on and on, at your wild pace.

Lachesis

I, the only one with sense,
To twist the threads am left:
My ways brook no nonsense,
I've never hurried yet.

Threads they come, threads I wind,
Guiding each one on its track,
Letting no thread wander blind,
Twining each one in the pack.

If I, once, forgot myself, my fears
For the world would give me pause:
Counting hours, measuring years,
So the Weaver holds her course.

Herald

You wouldn't recognise the ones who come now,
However much you know of ancient troubles,
To look at them, the cause of many evils,
You'd call them welcome guests, and bow.

They're the Furies: no one will believe me,

Pretty, shapely, friendly, young in years:

But meet with them, you'll quickly learn I fear,

How serpent-like these doves are to hurt freely.

Though they're malicious, in modernity,

Where fools now boast about their sinful stories,

They too have ceased to want the Angels' glories:

Confess themselves the plague of land and city.

(The Furies approach.)

Alecto

What does that matter? You still believe in us:

Then, we're pretty, young, and fawning kittens:

If one of you has a lover, with whom he's smitten,

We'll tickle his ears at length, sweetly fuss,

Till it would be safe to tell him, eye to eye,

That she waves to him, and him, the same,

She's thick up top, a crooked back, and lame,

And married, she'd be no good, by and by.

We know how to pester the bride-to-be as well:

Scarcely a week ago, her lover himself,

Said nasty things to her about *herself*! –
 They're reconciled, but something rankles still.

Megaera

That's a joke! Let them be married, any way,
 I'll take it up, and know, whatever may befall,
 Through wilfulness the sweetest joys will pall,
 Man's changeable, and changeable the day.

And no one holds the desired one in his arms,
 Without longing, foolishly, for the more-desired,
 Leave's his good fortune, with which he was fired:
 Flies from the sun, and asks the frost for warmth.

I know how to give birth to those things: there,
 Is Asmodi, who is my faithful servant,
 To work true mischief at the proper moment,
 And send to ruin all Mankind, in pairs.

Tisiphone

Instead of malice: poison and the knife
 I'm mixing, sharpening for that betrayer:
 Love another, and sooner now or later,

Ruin itself will penetrate your life.

Gall and wormwood they must roam
Through all those sweetest moments!
No bargaining here, no bartering, come –
The perpetrator must atone.

Let no one sing about forgiveness!
I cry my cause to the cliffs again,
Echo! Hear! Reply: Avenge!
Let him who alters, cease existence.

The Herald

I'll ask you please, to move aside,
Since what comes next, is otherwise.
You can see, here's a mountain coming,
Decked with princely coloured trappings,
A tusked head, snaking trunk, there too,
A mystery, but I'll reveal the key to you.
A delicate and dainty girl sits on its neck,
And with a thin wand keeps the beast in check:
Another, up there, standing, wonderfully,
Surrounded with light, almost blinding me.

Beside it, two girls walk in chains, one fearful,
While the other girl seems quite cheerful:
One wishes to be, and one feels she is, free.
Let each of them declare who they might be.

Fear

Smoking torches, flares and lights,
Are burning at the troubled feast:
Among all these deceptive sights,
Ah, I'm held fast by the feet.

Away, you ridiculous smilers!
I suspect those grins so bright:
All my enemies, beguilers,
Press towards me through the night.

Here! A friend becomes a foe,
Yet I know that mask, I'd say:
One that wants to kill me, though,
Now unmasked he creeps away.

Gladly, heedless of direction
I'd escape from out this world:

But, beyond, there roars destruction:

In mists of terror I am furl'd.

Hope

I greet you, sisters! Though today,

And the whole of yesterday,

You enjoyed the masquerade,

I know all will be displayed:

In the morning you'll unveil.

And if, in the torchlight, we

Don't feel particular delight,

Yet the days to come, so bright,

More wholly suited, we shall hail,

Now as one, now solitary,

Through fair fields, we'll roam loose,

To act, or rest, as we choose,

And in that carefree way of living,

Dispense with nothing, go on striving:

Guests are welcome everywhere,

Confidently, let's appear:

Surely, the best anywhere,

Must be somewhere, here.

Intelligence

Two of Man's worst enemies,
 Fear and Hope, I bind for you,
 Now this country worries me.
 Make room! I'll rescue you.

I lead the living Colossus,
 Turret-crowned, as you see,
 Step by step, he crosses,
 The highest passes, tirelessly.

But above me, on the summit,
 Is a goddess, there, who's bearing
 Outspread wings, and turns about,
 Everywhere, to see who's winning.

Ringed by splendour, and by glory,
 Shining far, on every side:
 She calls herself – Victory,
 Goddess of the active life.

Zoilo-Thersites (*An Ugly Dwarfish Warrior.*)

Ah, ha! I've come just in time,

I hold you *all* guilty of crime!
 Yet my goal I assume to be
 Her up there: Queen Victory.
 With her pair of snowy wings,
 She's an eagle, she must think:
 And that whenever she's on hand,
 To her belong the folk and land:
 But when famous deeds are done,
 At once I'm here with armour on,
 When low is high, and high is low,
 Bent is straight, and straight not so,
 That alone fills me with mirth,
 I wish it so throughout the Earth.

The Herald

So I'll lend you, dog from birth,
 This good baton's masterstroke!
 Twist and turn now: it's no joke! –
 See how the twin dwarfish ape,
 Rolls into a foul lumpish shape!
 A wonder – the lump's an egg, on cue,
 It swells and then it cracks in two:
 Now a pair of twins appear,

An adder and a bat roll clear.
One through the dust is swiftly winding,
The black one's flitting round the ceiling.
They hurry outside, in company,
I wouldn't choose to be number three.

Murmurs

Lively now! There's dancing there –
No! I'd much rather be elsewhere –
Can't you feel some ghostly race
Fly about us, through this place? –
Something just rushed through my hair –
Round my feet, it's flying, where? –
None of us are injured though –
But we all are frightened so –
All the fun is spoilt completely –
As those creatures wished, you see.

The Herald

Since I play the herald's role,
As this masquerade unfolds,
I watch sternly at the door,
In case some devious outlaw

To this happy place, comes creeping:
Never yielding, never wavering.
Through the window, though, I fear
Airborne spectres enter here:
From magic and from devilry
Alas, I cannot set you free.
All this makes the dwarf suspicious,
Now! From behind, a new masque issues.
And I must dutifully explain
The meaning of the forms, again.
But I can't easily announce
What cannot be understood:
Help me explain it, if you would! –
See it wander through the crowd?
A splendid chariot, a four-in-hand,
Rolling through them, where they stand:
But it doesn't split the people,
I see no one's crushed at all.
Colours glitter in the distance,
Sundry wandering stars for instance,
A magic-lantern-like performance.
It blows along, a storm's assault.
Make way, there! I shudder!

The Boy Charioteer

Halt!

Dragons, your wings restrain,

Feel your accustomed rein,

Control yourselves, if I control you,

Sweep away when I inspire you –

Let us do honour to this place!

Look round, a widening display

Of admirers, circle now on circle.

Herald, now, then! As you will,

Before we leave you all,

Describe us, and say our name:

Since we're allegorical,

You should know us, plain.

Herald

No, indeed, I can't tell your name:

I'll try and describe you all the same.

The Boy Charioteer

So try!

The Herald

I must confess

To young and handsome, before the rest.

You're a half-grown boy: yet a woman

Would prefer to see you fully grown.

You seem to me a wooer, in future,

Out of her house, a real seducer.

The Boy Charioteer

Let's hear more! Go on: go on,

Find the riddle's bright solution.

The Herald

Dark eyes that shine: night-black hair

Which brightly jewelled bands enclose:

And what a dainty garment flows

From shoulder down to ankle, there:

With purple hem its glittering shows!

One might take you for a girl:

Yet for good or ill, you'd be,

Prized already by any girl,

She'd teach you your ABC.

The Boy Charioteer

And he, who like a splendid vision,
Sits on the chariot, enthroned there?

The Herald

He seems a king, a rich and kind one,
Blessed are they who gain his favour!
He has no further need to strive,
His eyes observe whatever's lacking,
And to spread his pure delight,
Is more to him than joy and owning.

The Boy Charioteer

You daren't stop there: what you see,
You must describe it precisely.

The Herald

I can't express all the dignity.
But the glowing moon face, I see,
The full mouth, the bright cheeks, then
That shine beneath the jewelled turban:
Rich comfort in the clothes he's wearing!
What shall I say about his bearing?

As a ruler he seems known to me.

The Boy Charioteer

Plutus the God of Riches, this is he!

He's come himself in all his splendour,

The Emperor wished greatly he were here.

The Herald

Explain your own *what* and *how* to me!

The Boy Charioteer

I am Extravagance: I am Poetry:

I am the Poet, who is self-perfected

When his special gift is squandered.

Yet I'm immeasurably wealthy,

Like Plutus, worth as much as he,

I adorn, enliven, dance and feast,

And whatever he lacks, I complete.

Herald

Your boasting makes you handsomer,

But let's see all your skill appear.

The Boy Charioteer

Just watch me snap my fingers, now,

The chariot will gleam and glow.

There a string of pearls appear!

(He continues to snap his fingers, in all directions.)

Golden jewels for neck and ear:

Flawless combs and diadems,

Set in a ring, rare precious gems:

I scatter flames too, here and there,

Waiting for their chance to flare.

The Herald

How the dear crowd snatch, I see!

The giver's soon in difficulty.

He snaps out jewels, as in a dream,

And they all snatch them, in a stream.

But now a different trick, you see:

What each has grasped so eagerly,

Has gained him but a poor reward,

The gifts already fluttering skyward.

The pearls are loosened from their band,

And beetles crawl there in his hand,

The poor man shakes them off, instead
 They're humming now around his head.
 Another, for some solid thing,
 Catches at a butterfly's wing.
 That's what the rascal's promise means:
 He only lends them golden gleams!

The Boy Charioteer

You know how to announce masks: it's true,
 But it's not the herald's task to search below
 The outer surface of existence:
 That requires a keener sense.
 Still I'm wary of all disputes.
 Lord, I'll direct my speech and questioning to you.
 (*Turning towards Plutus.*)
 Have you not trusted me with the task, to stand
 And guide the tempest of your four-in-hand?
 Don't I steer well, as you direct?
 Am I not there, when you expect?
 And don't I know how to win
 The palm, for you, on daring wing?
 When I've fought for you in war, now,
 I've been successful every time:

When laurel wreaths adorn your brow
 Have I not fashioned them with hand and mind?

Plutus

If I'm required to be a witness to it,
 I'd say: You are the spirit of my spirit.
 You always act according to my wishes,
 And as I gain myself, you too are richer.
 To reward your services, I value now
 The green branch higher than my crown.
 One true word, then, for everyone:
 I've found delight in you, dear Son.

The Boy Charioteer

The greatest gifts from my hand,
 See! I've scattered them around.
 On every head there's the glow
 Of some little flame I throw:
 Leaping from one brow to another,
 Halts on him, then leaves his brother,
 But rarely does the flame-let rise,
 And briefly flower in bright skies:
 For many, before they know, it's vanished,

Sadly, it's burnt out, and finished.

Women (*Chatting to each other.*)

Up there, on the four-in-hand,
 He's certainly a charlatan:
 And there's a clown perched behind,
 By hunger and thirst he's been refined,
 Like nothing one's ever seen before:
 Pinch, and he'll feel nothing at all.

The Starveling

Disgusting women, leave me alone!
 Not to come here again, I'll know.
 When women kept to their hearths, then
Avaritia, Greed: was my name:
 The houses were fine, all about,
 Lots came in, nothing went out!
 I took care of cupboard and chest:
 That was a burden, to top the rest.
 But now in this younger age,
 Wives don't know how to save,
 And like all those wicked students,
 They have more desires than 'talents',

And their men have much to suffer,
 Their debts are left about all over.
 They spend whatever they can extract,
 On their lovers, and on their backs:
 They eat of the best, and drink deeper,
 With their wretched army of admirers:
 Which adds to the value of gold, for me:
 We're manly fellows, the Miserly!

Leader of the Women

Let dragon be miserly with dragon:
 In the end it's merely lies, illusion!
 Men flock around, and turn the charm on,
 But they're soon annoyance and confusion.

The Crowd of Women

That Scarecrow! Give him a poke!
 What's the Wooden Rake threaten?
 We'll all shun his ugly looks, then!
 Dragons of wood and paper: a joke!
 Look lively, now, and we'll do him in!

The Herald

By my wand! Keep the peace! –
 Though there's no need for my assistance:
 Look at those grim monsters, how each
 Clears round itself a proper distance,
 Unfolding its quadruple wings, the beast.
 The dragons shake themselves, indignant,
 With fiery throats, their tails rampant:
 The place is cleared: the people flee.

(Plutus descends from the chariot.)

The Herald

He steps down, in a kingly manner!
 He beckons, and the dragons stir:
 From the chariot bearing Avarice,
 And gold, down comes the chest,
 See, there at his feet, it's landed:
 It's a wonder how it happened.

Plutus (To the Boy Charioteer)

Now you've left that troubling burden here,
 You're free: so, fly now to your own sphere!
 Not this! Where, confused, motley, wild,

Distorted objects crowd around us, child.
 No: where you see clear, with sweetest Clarity,
 Self-possessed, trusting in your own self: flee,
 Where Goodness and Beauty may be viewed,
 And there create *your* world – in Solitude!

The Boy Charioteer

So, I'll be your worthy envoy then,
 So, I'll love you like my dearest kin.
 Where you live, is Plenty: and where
 I am, all feel they gain in splendour.
 And often hesitate in life's uncertainty:
 Should they yield to you, or yield to me?
 Certainly your followers will have rest:
 Who follows me, with work's forever blessed.
 My actions are never kept a secret,
 I only have to breathe and I'm apparent.
 Farewell, then! You granted me my joy:
 But whisper low, and you shall have your boy!
 (*He exits as he came.*)

Plutus (*Faust in disguise.*)

And now it's time to reveal the treasure!

I strike the lock with the herald's wand.
 It's open! Look! Vessels of noblest measure,
 Pour the golden blood through your hands,
 First it swells, roars, writhes as if it's molten:
 A jewelled hoard of crowns, rings, and chains.

Various Shouts from the Crowd.

Look here, oh, there! How rich it flows:
 The chest, right to the brim, it glows. –
 Golden vessels, molten too,
 Rolls of coins, turning too. –
 Minted ducats leaping,
 Oh, how my heart is beating –
 I see all, for which I'm yearning,
 On the floor there, burning! –
 It's offered you, don't be a fool,
 Be rich, you only need to stoop. –
 For, quick as lightning, all the rest,
 Will take possession of the chest.

The Herald

What's this, you Fools? Ah, yes,
 It's no more than a maskers' jest.

Tonight, don't ask for any more:
 Think you, we'd give you golden ore?
 In this game there are any amount
 Of pennies: too many for you to count.
 You clumsy idiots! A fine appearance,
 Seems, to you, truth's naked essence.
 What is your Truth? – Hollow illusion
 Grasps you, with its fool's cap on. –
 Heroic Mask, Plutus that conceals,
 Drive these folk, then, from the field.

Plutus

Your wand's best by a mile,
 Lend it me for a little while. –
 I'll dip it, quick, in heat and glow. –
 You Maskers, all take care then, now!
 It gleams and bursts and throws off sparks!
 The wand already shines in the dark.
 And anyone who gets too near me,
 Will be scorched, as well, mercilessly. –
 And now I'll sweep with my brand.

Shouts and Confusion

Ah! We're done for every man. –
 Fly, now, whoever can! –
 Back, back, the hindmost man! –
 It's shining brightly in my eyes. –
 On me the wand's hot weight lies –
 We're all lost, lost for good. –
 Back, back, you masks in flood!
 Back, back, you senseless mob! –
 If I'd wings, I'd soar aloft. –

Plutus

The circle backwards sinks,
 Yet no one's scorched, I think.
 The crowd will now give way,
 They're only scared I'd say. –
 But to guarantee good order,
 I'll mark out an unseen border.

The Herald

You've done a fine job all right,
 Thanks to your cunning, and might.

Plutus

Noble friend, you'll still need patience:

All kinds of turmoil still threaten us.

Avarice

Now, if it pleases you, you may

Cast your eye around with pleasure:

The women are to the fore as ever,

Where they can nibble things, or gaze.

Still, I'm not completely rusty!

A lovely woman's always lovely:

And since, today, it costs me nothing,

With confidence, I too go wooing.

Still, here, in such a crowded space,

Lest words fall in an idle place,

I'll try being clever, attempt success,

And in clear mime make my address.

Hands, feet, gesturing won't cut the ice,

So, I'll have to employ a comical device.

I'll shape the gold like moistened clay,

Since the metal's malleable anyway.

The Herald

What's he up to that skinny Fool!

Is there a jest in the starveling too?

He kneads the gold just like dough,

It's soft between his hands, although

However he squeezes and forms it all,

It still remains a shapeless ball.

He turns now towards the women,

They all scream, and start to run,

Gesturing in complete disgust:

That rascal's up to no good.

I fear he'll be in ecstasy

If he can offend morality.

I shan't remain silent, anyway

Give me the wand: I'll drive him away.

Plutus

He doesn't see what we threaten here:

Let him pursue his foolishness!

There'll be no room left for his excess:

The law is great, but necessity's greater.

Tumult and Singing

The wild crowd come here, specially,

From mountain-top, and wooded valley,

Shouting forcefully, as they can:
 They celebrate the great god Pan.
 They know what none can know,
 And into the empty circle flow.

Plutus

‘I know you well, and your great Pan!
 Together these daring steps you plan.
 I know all that no one knows,
 And clear for you this narrow close.’
 May good fortune follow them too!
 The strangest things may happen:
 They don’t know where they’re going to:
 Since they never look before them.

Wild Singing

You plaster people: you tinsel show!
 Rough and coarse is how *they* go,
 Leaping: wild is their track ahead,
 Solid and sturdy is their tread.

Fauns

The Faun flocks

In happy dance,
Oaken garlands,
On curling locks,
Fine pointed ears
Through tangled hair,
Snub noses, faces broad and flat,
The women can't fault any of that:
When the Fauns begin to prance,
The loveliest won't scorn the dance.

A Satyr

The Satyr's leaping here behind,
Goat's foot, and lean of thigh,
Sinewy, skinny he'll go by,
And chamois-like, on mountain height,
He looks around, and takes delight.
He's alive in the free air,
Mocks at man, child, woman there,
Who deep in the valley's damp flue,
Think, cosily, they're living too,
While, still pure and undisturbed,
To him alone is the upper world.

The Gnomes

The little crowd trips by there,
They don't like to travel in pairs:
In mossy clothes with lanterns bright,
They pass together, quick and light,
Each one passing on his own,
Like glowing ants swarming home:
And always busy, here and there,
Industrious, and everywhere.
Kin to the 'Little People', known
As surgeons to the rock and stone:
'We bleed the mountains high,
We drain the deep veins dry:
We hurl the metals round,
With hearty greetings: Luck! Well found!
And it's always kindly meant: again,
We're the friends of all good men.
Yet we the gold to light deliver,
So men may steal, and covet ever,
So princely hand won't lack the steel
That worldwide murder longs to deal.
Who those three commandments breaks
Scant heed of the other seven takes.

But of all that we're innocent:
About it all, like us, be patient.'

The Giants

The wild men, we are named,
Known in all the Hartz range:
Natural, plain, in all our antics,
Appearing frightfully gigantic.
A fir-tree trunk in each right hand,
Round our body a thick band,
A solid apron of branches, not
The bodyguard the Pope has got.

Nymphs in Chorus (*Surrounding Great Pan, who is the masked Emperor.*)

Here he'll stand! –
The world's All,
Is shown to all,
In mighty Pan.
You the happiest, surround him,
In magic dances soar around him:
Here now, serious and good, he
Wishes all men to be happy.
Under the curving roof of blue

He seems endlessly wakeful, too,
Yet the streams flow gently for him,
And the breezes gently rock him,
And, when he sleeps at noon, the leaf
Is motionless in the branches' wreath:
The rich plants' fragrant balsams there
Fill all the still and silent air:
The Nymph no longer dares to leap,
And where she stands, falls fast asleep.
But when his powerful shout,
Unexpectedly, rings out,
Like thunder crack, or wave's roar,
Who knows what's happening any more,
The army's witless in the fight,
The hero in battle's filled with fright.
So honour him, where honour's due,
And hail him, who led us to you!

A Deputation of Gnomes (*To Great Pan.*)

When the rich and shining goods,
Spread threadlike through the deep,
Then delicate divining rods,
Reveal what labyrinths keep.

Bending in our dark vaults, there,
As troglodytes we're measured,
While in the purest daylight air,
Gracious, you divide the treasure.

Now we find we've discovered
A marvellous fountain here,
Promising, easily, to deliver
Things that infrequently appear.

It all waits for your command:
Master, take and care for it: do.
Every treasure in your hand,
Helps the whole world too.

Plutus (*To the Herald.*)

We must grasp things in the highest sense,
And let what may come, come, with confidence.
You've shown the highest courage once before.
So now too what is fearful, we must try it:
World, and posterity, will stubbornly deny it,
So pen it faithfully in your report.

The Herald (*Grasping the wand in Plutus' hand, and assisting with the Masquerade.*)

The dwarves lead on great Pan,
Gently, to the fiery fountain:
It boils from the deep profound,
Then sinks again, through the ground,
And gloomy is its open round:
Yet shows again the heat and glow.
Great Pan stands there, well disposed,
Pleased with all this wondrous thing,
Pearl foam, right, left, showering.
How can he trust such a show?
He bends to look inside, and so,
His beard gets caught within! –
Who's made that hairless chin?
His hand hides it from our vision. –
What follows is all clumsy action:
The beard, on fire, flies back, soon
Scorching garland, chest and head:
Delight is turned to pain instead. –
They rush to quench it all again,
But none of them are free of flames,
And how they flare and dart,

Exciting fire in every part:
Wreathed in that element,
The whole masked crowd is burnt.
But what's all this news about,
Ear after ear, mouth after mouth!
O eternally unlucky night
So little of it's turned out right!
Tomorrow's dawn will declare
What nobody wants to hear:
In every ear we'll hear it plain:
'The Emperor is in such pain.'
O, would that it were something other!
Burnt, Emperor and Court together.
Cursed be those who led him astray,
In resinous twigs did him array,
To rage, and bellow out that song,
To the ruin of all that throng.
O Youth, Youth will you never
Restrict joy's purest measure?
O Power, Power, will you never,
Sense *and* Omnipotence treasure?
The 'forest' too is soon in flames,
The pointed tongues play their games,

To the real wooden beams lick higher:
We're threatened by universal fire.
The cup of misery overflows,
Who will save us? No one knows.
See, Imperial splendour, by dawn's light,
Turned to a heap of ash, in a single night.

Plutus

That's enough terror overhead,
Let help arrive here, instead! –
Strike, you heavenly wand, with power,
So the earth will ring and tremor!
You, the wide realms of air,
Fill with cool fragrance there!
Hurry down, to sweep around us,
Cloudy mists and swelling vapours,
Quench the thronging flames!
Murmuring, trickling, fogs gather,
Sliding, rolling, softly drenching,
Slipping everywhere, and quenching.
You, the moist, who soothe forever,
Change them all to gleaming weather,
All these empty fiery games! –

Threatening Spirits, that would harm,
We, by magic, will disarm.

Scene IV: A Pleasure Garden in the Morning Sun

(The Emperor, his Court, Noblemen and Ladies: Faust and Mephistopheles dressed fashionably but not ostentatiously, both kneel.)

Faust

Sire, forgive the fiery conjuring tricks?

The Emperor (*Beckoning to him to rise.*)

More fun, in that vein, would be my wish. –
At once, I saw myself in a glowing sphere,
It seemed as if I were divine Pluto, there.
A rocky depth of mine, and darkness, lay
Glowing with flame: out of each vent played
A thousand wild and whirling fires,
And flickered in the vault together, higher,
Licking upwards to the highest dome,
That now seemed there, and now was gone.
Through a far space wound with fiery pillars,
I saw a long line of people approach us,
Crowding till they formed a circle near,
And paid me homage, as they do forever.
From Court, I knew one face, and then another's,

I seemed the Prince of a thousand salamanders.

Mephistopheles

You are, Sire! Since every element
Knows your Majesty, amongst all men.
You've now proved the fire obedient:
Leap in the sea, in its wildest torrent,
You'll barely touch its pearl-strewn bed,
A noble dome will rise round you, instead:
You'll see green translucent waves swelling
Purple edged, to make the loveliest dwelling,
And you will be its centre. At each step
Wherever you go, the palace follows yet,
The very walls themselves delight in life,
Flash to and fro, in swarming arrow-flight.
Sea-wonders crowd around this sweet new sight,
Shoot past, still not allowed to enter quite.
There, golden-scaled, bright sea-dragons play,
The shark gapes wide, you smile in his face.
However much your court attracts you now,
You've never seen such an amazing crowd.
Nor will you part there from the loveliest:
The Nereids will be gathering, curious,

To this wondrous house, in seas eternally fresh,
 The youngest shy and pleasure-loving, like fish,
 The old ones: cunning. Thetis at the news,
 Gives hand and lips to this second Peleus. –
 A seat there, on the height of Olympus, too...

The Emperor

I'll leave the airy spaces all to you:
 Soon enough we'll be climbing to that throne.

Mephistopheles

And, Sire, the Earth already is your own!

The Emperor

What brought you here, now: what good fortune,
 Straight from the Thousand Nights and One?
 If you're as fertile as Scheherezade
 I'll guarantee you a sublime reward.
 Be ready then, when your world's light,
 As it often does, disappoints me quite.

The Steward (*Entering hastily.*)

Your Supreme Highness, I never thought

To announce such luck, the finest wrought,
 As this is, for me the greatest blessing,
 Which I've revealed in your presence:
 For debt after debt I've accounted,
 The usurer's claws now are blunted,
 I'm free of Hell's pain, and then,
 It can't be any brighter in Heaven.

The Commander in Chief (*Follows hastily.*)

Something's paid of what we owe,
 The Army's all renewed their vow,
 The Cavalry's fresh blood is up,
 And girls and landlords can sup.

The Emperor

Now your chests breathe easier!
 Now your furrowed brows are clear!
 How quickly you hurried to the hall!

The Treasurer (*Appearing.*)

Ask *them*: it was they who did it all.

Faust

It's right the Chancellor should read the page.

The Chancellor (*Coming forward slowly.*)

I'm happy enough to do so, in my old age. –
See and hear the scroll, heavy with destiny,
That's changed to happiness, our misery.
'To whom it concerns, may you all know,
This paper's worth a thousand crowns, or so.
As a secure pledge, it will underwrite,
All buried treasure, our Emperor's right.
Now, as soon as the treasure's excavated,
It's taken care of, and well compensated.'

The Emperor

I smell a fraud, a monstrous imposture!
Who forged the Emperor's signature?
Have they gone unpunished for their crime?

The Treasurer

Remember! You yourself it was that signed:
Last night. You acted as great Pan,
Here's how the Chancellor's speech began:
'Grant yourself this great festive pleasure,

The People's Good: a few strokes of the feather.'
 You wrote it here, and while night ruled the land,
 A thousand artists created another thousand,
 So all might benefit from your good deed,
 We stamped the whole series with your screed,
 Tens, Thirties, Fifties, Hundreds, all are done.
 You can't think how well the folk get on.
 See your city once half-dead with decay,
 Now all's alive, enjoying its new day!
 Though your name's long filled the world with glee,
 They've never gazed at it so happily.
 Now the alphabet's superfluous,
 In these marks there's bliss for all of us.

The Emperor

And my people value it as gold, you say?
 The Court and Army treat it as real pay?
 Then I must yield, though it's wonderful to me.

The Steward

It was impossible to catch the escapee:
 It flashed like lightning through the land:
 The moneychanger's shops are jammed,

Men pay, themselves, the papers mount
 They're gold and silver, and at a discount.
 Now used by landlords, butchers, bakers:
 Half the world think they're merrymakers,
 The others, newly clothed, are on show.
 The drapers cut the cloth: the tailors sew.
 The toast is 'Hail, the Emperor!' in the bars,
 With cooking, roasting, tinkling of jars.

Mephistopheles

Strolling, lonely, on the terrace,
 You see a beauty, smartly dressed,
 One eye hidden by her peacock fan,
 She smiles sweetly, looks at your hand:
 And, quicker than wit or eloquence,
 Love's sweetest favour's arranged at once.
 You're not plagued with pouch or wallet,
 A note beneath the heart, install it,
 Paired with love-letters, conveniently.
 The priest carries his in a breviary,
 And wouldn't the soldier be quicker on his way,
 With a lighter belt around his middle, say.
 Your Majesty will forgive me if, in miniature,

I produce a low note, in our high adventure.

Faust

The wealth of treasure that solidifies,
That in your land, in deep earth lies,
Is all unused. In our boldest thought,
Such riches are only feebly caught:
Imagination, in its highest flight,
Strives to, but can't reach that height.
But grasping Spirits, worthy to look deeply,
Trust in things without limit, limitlessly.

Mephistopheles

Such paper's convenient, for rather than a lot
Of gold and silver, you know what you've got.
You've no need of bartering and exchanging,
Just drown your needs in wine and love-making.
If you lack coin, there's moneychangers' mile,
And if it fails, you dig the ground a while.
Cups and chains are auctioned: well,
Since the paper, in this way, pays for itself,
It shames the doubters, and their acid wit,
People want nothing else, they're used to it.

So now in all of your Imperial land
You've gems, gold, paper enough to hand.

The Emperor

The Empire thanks you deeply for this bliss:
We want the reward to match your service.
We entrust you with the riches underground,
You are the best custodians to be found.
You know the furthest well-concealed hoard,
And when men dig, it's you must give the word.
You masters of our treasure, then, unite,
Accept your roles with honour and delight:
They make the Underworld, and the Upper,
Happy in their agreement, fit together.

The Treasurer

No dispute will divide us in the future:
I'm happy to have a wizard for a partner.
(He exits with Faust.)

The Emperor

Now, presents for the court: everyone
Confess to me whatever it is you want.

A Page (*Accepting his present.*)

I'll live well, happy, have the best of things.

Another (*Also.*)

I'll quickly buy my lover chains and rings.

A Chamberlain

I'll drink wines that are twice as fine.

A Second Chamberlain

The dice in my pockets itch I find.

A Knight (*Thoughtfully.*)

My lands and castle will be free of debt.

A Second Knight

It's treasure: a second treasure I will get.

The Emperor

I hoped for desire and courage for new deeds:

But whoever knows you, thinks you slight indeed.

I see, clearly: despite this treasure and more,

You're all the same, still, as you were before.

The Fool (*Recovered, and approaching the throne.*)

You're handing presents out: give me one too!

The Emperor

Alive again? You'd drink it all you fool.

The Fool

Magic papers! I don't understand them, truly.

The Emperor

That I'd believe: you'll only use them badly.

The Fool

Others are falling: I don't know what to do.

The Emperor

Just pick them up: those are all yours too.

(The Emperor exits.)

The Fool

Five thousand crowns I'm holding, in my hand!

Mephistopheles

You two-legged wineskin, so you still stand?

The Fool

I've had my luck, but this is the best yet.

Mephistopheles

You're so delighted: look, it's made you sweat.

The Fool

But see here, is it truly worth real gold?

Mephistopheles

You've there just what belly and throat are owed.

The Fool

And can I buy a cottage, cow and field?

Mephistopheles

Why yes! There's nothing to it: make a bid.

The Fool

A castle: with forests, hunting, fishing?

Mephistopheles

Trust me!

To see you a proper Lord would make me happy!

The Fool

Tonight I'll plant my weight on what I'll get! –

(He Exits.)

Mephistopheles

Who doubts now that our Fool's full of wit!

Scene V: A Gloomy Gallery

(Faust. Mephistopheles.)

Mephistopheles

Why bring me here to this dark passage?

Isn't there fun enough inside,

In the Court's colourful tide,

Opportunities for jests and sharp practice?

Faust

Don't give me that: in the good old days

You wore us out in a thousand ways:
 And now this wandering, there and here,
 Is only so I can't catch your ear.
 But there's something I need done:
 Commander and Chamberlain egg me on.
 The Emperor, I must work quickly for him,
 Wants Helen and Paris to appear before him:
 He wants to see the ideal form of Man
 Clearly revealed to him, and Woman.
 Get to work! I daren't break my word.

Mephistopheles

Such a thoughtless promise was absurd.

Faust

Friend, you haven't considered
 Where your powers have lead us:
 First we made him rich, and how,
 So he wants us to amuse him now.

Mephistopheles

You think it's fixed that quickly:
 We're looking at a deeper track,

To the strangest realm, and wickedly,
 Adding new faults to the old,
 Do you think it's easy to call Helen back,
 Like a pasteboard spirit edged with gold –
 Witch-bitches, ghost-hostesses, freely,
 Or dwarf-maidens, I'll serve you equally:
 But Devil's sweethearts, though you're for them,
 Still you can't, as heroines, applaud them.

Faust

Still the same old story, every day!
 With you, things are always difficult.
 You're the father of all obstacles,
 For every miracle you want more pay.
 I know: a little muttering, and it's done:
 At a blink, you'll bring her here.

Mephistopheles

With Pagan folk I don't get on:
 They live in their own Hell there:
 Yet, there is a way.

Faust

Tell, without delay!

Mephistopheles

Unwillingly! There's a greater mystery, I say,

Goddesses, enthroned on high, and solitary.

No space round them, not even time: only

To speak of them embarrasses me.

They are The Mothers!

Faust (*Terrified.*)

Mothers!

Mephistopheles

Are you afraid?

Faust

The Mothers! Mothers! It sounds so strange!

Mephistopheles

As, it is. Goddesses, unknown, as you see,

To you Mortals, not named by us willingly.

You must dig in the Depths to reach them:

It's your own fault that we need them.

Faust

Where is the path?

Mephistopheles

No path! Into the un-enterable,
 Never to be entered: One path to the un-askable,
 Never to be asked. Are you ready?
 No locks, no bolts to manipulate,
 You'll drift about in solitary space.
 Can you conceive the waste and solitary?

Faust

I think you might spare the speeches then:
 They always smell of the witches' kitchen,
 Of a long forgotten time, to me.
 Have I not trafficked with the world?
 Learned the void, the void unfurled? –
 When I spoke with reason, as I descried,
 Contradiction, doubly loud, replied:
 Have I not fled, from hateful trickery,
 Into the wild, into the solitary,
 And, not to lose all, and live alone,

Surrendered to the Devil's own?

Mephistopheles

And if you'd swum through every ocean,
And seen the boundless space all round
You'd still have seen wave on wave in motion,
Though you might have been afraid to drown.
You'd have seen *something*. Seen, within
The green still seas, the leaping dolphin:
Seen clouds go by, Sun, Moon and star –
You'll see none in the endless void, afar,
Hear not a single footstep fall,
Find no firm place to rest at all.

Faust

You speak as chief of all Mystagogues, who
Deceive their neophytes, the loyal and true:
Only reversed. You send me to the Void,
So I'll increase the power and skill employed:
To use me, like a cat, that's your desire:
Just to claw your chestnuts from the fire.
The same as ever! I'll find what I'll discover:
In your Nothingness, I hope, the All I will recover.

Mephistopheles

I'll praise you, before you separate from me,
That you know the Devil, I can truly see:
Here take this key.

Faust

That tiny thing!

Mephistopheles

Grasp it, it has a worth you're undervaluing.

Faust

It's growing in my hand, it shines and glows!

Mephistopheles

What one possesses in it, would you now know?
The key will sniff the place out, from all others.
Follow it down: it leads you to the Mothers.

Faust

The Mothers! That always strikes me like a blow!
What is that word that, once heard, scares me so?

Mephistopheles

Are you so limited one new word disturbs you?
 Will you only hear what you're accustomed to?
 Don't be troubled, whatever strange sound rings,
 You've already long been used to marvellous things.

Faust

Yes, there's no good for me in lethargy.
 A shudder's the truest sign of humanity:
 Though the world is such we may not feel it,
 Once seized by it, we feel Immensity deeply.

Mephistopheles

Then, descend! I might as easily say rise!
 It's all the same. Escape from what exists,
 Into the boundless realm where all Form lies!
 Delight in what's no longer on the list:
 Where turmoil rolls along all cloudily:
 Then, far from your body, swing the key!

Faust (*Inspired.*)

Good! I feel new strength, firmly grasped,

My heart expands, on now to the great task.

Mephistopheles

Sight of a glowing tripod will tell you, finally,
You're in the last deep, deepest there might be.

By its light you'll see the Mothers,
Some sit about, as they wish, the others,
Stand and move. Formation, Transformation,
Eternal minds in eternal recreation.

Images of all creatures float, portrayed:
They'll not see you: they only see a shade.
Be of good heart, the danger there is great,
Go to the tripod: don't hesitate,
And touch it with the key!

(Faust assumes a commanding attitude with the key.)

Mephistopheles (Watching him.)

That's right!
It will close itself, and follow as a servant might:
Exalted by your good luck, you'll calmly rise,
And be back with it, before you've blinked your eyes.
And, once you've brought it here all right,
Call the Hero and Heroine from the night,

The first man who has ever achieved it:
 It's done, and you're the one who did it.
 By magic process then you'll surely find,
 The incense' vapour will become divine.

Faust

And now: what?

Mephistopheles

Strain with all your being: downward.
 Stamp to descend, stamp again to go upward.
(Faust stamps and sinks out of sight.)
 If he might only gain some good from that key!
 I'm curious as to whether he'll return to me.

Scene VI: Brilliantly Lit Halls

(The Emperor and Princes. The Court in Action.)

The Chamberlain (To Mephistopheles)

You still owe us that scene with the Spirits:
 The Emperor's impatient. Get on with it!

The Steward

That's what His Grace just now was saying:

You! Don't offend His Majesty by delaying.

Mephistopheles

That's why my companion has just gone:
 He knows how to put the whole thing on,
 And has to labour away in silence: still,
 All the most special diligence he applies:
 He who'd own that treasure, the Beautiful,
 Needs highest arts, the magic of the wise.

The Steward

The arts you need are neither here nor there:
 The Emperor orders it to be prepared.

A Blonde Lady (*Approaching Mephistopheles.*)

Sir, a word! You see a clear complexion,
 Yet it's not so in summertime's dejection!
 A hundred red-brown freckles all sprout there,
 And cover my white skin: I'm in despair.
 A cure!

Mephistopheles

A pity! Such a shining beauty,

Spotted like a panther-cub, in May!
 Take frogspawn, toads' tongues, in cohabitation,
 Skilfully, under a full moon, make a distillation,
 When it wanes, apply it undiluted,
 When spring comes, the spots have been uprooted.

A Dark-haired Lady

The crowd are pressing round to squeeze you dry.
 I ask a cure! For a frozen foot
 That hinders me in dancing, walking by,
 And I curtsy awkwardly to boot.

Mephistopheles

Permit a little kick from my foot.

The Dark-haired Lady

Well, between lovers that's occurred before.

Mephistopheles

Child! My kick means something more.
 Like cures like, when one's suffering:
 Foot heals foot, and so with every member.
 Come! Pay attention! No retaliation there.

The Dark-haired Lady (*Crying out.*)

Ouch! Ouch! That hurt! I call that kicking

Like a horse's hoof.

Mephistopheles

With that the cure I bring.

You can indulge in any amount of dancing,

Touch feet under the table with your darling.

A Lady (*Pushing forward.*)

Let me through! My suffering is so great,

He used to hold me in his heart's embrace:

Yesterday his joy was in my glances,

He turns his back on me: with her romances.

Mephistopheles

That's serious, but listen to me now.

You must gently press your advances,

Take this charcoal: mark him anyhow,

On his cloak or on his sleeve alight,

He'll feel sweet Remorse's blow.

Swallow the charcoal straight away,

No wine or water on your lips all day:
He'll be sighing at your door tonight.

The Lady

It's not poisonous?

Mephistopheles (*Offended.*)

Respect now, where it's due!
You'd have to travel far to find such charcoal:
It comes from the dying pyre at a funeral,
On which I, once more, diligently blew.

A Page

I'm in love: they say I'm not old enough to.

Mephistopheles (*Aside.*)

I'm not sure now, whom I should listen to.

(To the Page.)

Don't set your heart on the younger ones.

The older will value what they've won.

(Others crowd round.)

More, already! What a demanding crew!

I'll help myself, and out now with the truth:

The worst expedient! The pain is great, you see. –

O Mothers, Mothers! Just let Faust go free!

(Gazing round him.)

The lights burn dim, already, in the hall,

The Court's moving off, and they're all

Arranged in their proper rank, I see,

Through the far aisles and galleries.

Now they assemble in the largest place,

The vast Hall of the Knights, there's barely space,

Who bought the mass of bright tapestry,

Filled corners, niches like an armoury.

Here I doubt there's need of magic spells:

The ghosts will find this place for themselves.

Scene VII: The Hall of the Knights, Dimly Lit

(The Emperor and Court.)

The Herald

My ancient duty, to announce the play,

Is thwarted by the Spirits' secret action:

Please forgive: there's no sensible way

To explain such confused transformation.

The chairs are here: the stools and all:

The emperor's high up, by the wall:

He can see the battles on the tapestry
 From mighty ages: watching comfortably.
 Here they all sit now, Prince, Court around,
 Benches packed together, as background:
 In this hour of spirits, too, the lovers
 Have lovingly found room beside their lovers.
 And now that all have found their proper places,
 We're ready: let the spirits show their faces!
 (*Trumpets.*)

The Astrologer

Begin the drama then without delay,
 The Emperor commands: take walls away!
 No further hindrance, here magic is at hand:
 The Tapestry's shrivelled as if by burning brand.
 The walls divide, and sweep apart, as one,
 An empty stage it seems has been created,
 A mysterious light falls on our faces,
 And I climb up to the proscenium.

Mephistopheles (*Rising to view in the prompter's box.*)

From here I hope for general acclamation,
 Prompting is the devil's true oration.

(To the Astrologer.)

You know the measures that all the stars obey,
You'll understand my whispers in a masterly way.

The Astrologer

By miraculous power appears to view,
A massive temple-front: it's ancient too.
Like Atlas, who once held up the sky,
The many rows of columns stand on high.
They might well bear the stony weight,
Since two could raise a building straight.

The Architect

That's the antique! It doesn't earn my praise,
Clumsy, overstretched we call it, nowadays.
Men think that crude is noble: bulk is greatness.
I love slender shafts, uplifting, boundless:
A pointed arch sends the spirit to the sky:
Architecture such as that will edify.

The Astrologer

Receive with reverence these hours the stars allow:
Let words of magic bind pure Reason now:

Let marvellously daring Fantasy,
 In return, sweep onward, wide and free.
 Your eyes see what you daringly conceived:
 It's impossible, so more worthy to be believed.
(Faust rises into view on the other side of the proscenium.)
 In priestly vestments, crowned, a wondrous man,
 Fulfilling what he confidently began.
 A tripod rises with him from deep abyss,
 I smell the odour of incense in the dish.
 He prepares to bless this sacred labour:
 From this moment on it will find favour.

Faust (*Sublimely.*)

In your name, Mothers, you enthroned
 In boundlessness, set eternally alone,
 And yet together. All the Forms of Life
 Float round your heads, active, not alive.
 Whatever was, in all its glow and gleam,
 Moves there still, since it must always be.
 And you assign it, with omnipotent might,
 To day's pavilion or the vault of night.
 Life holds some fast on its sweet track,
 Others the bold magician must bring back:

Filled with faith, and richly generous,
He shows, what each desires, the Marvellous.

The Astrologer

The glowing key has scarcely touched the dish,
At once the room is filled with darkened mist:
It swirls about, as puffs of cloud will do,
Grows, condenses, shrinks, and splits in two.
And now behold a spirit-masterpiece!
As it moves about, there's music without cease.
In heavenly tones, pours out a who-knows-how,
And while it moves, all's turned to melody now.
The pillared shafts, even the tri-glyph, ringing
I think that the whole temple's singing.
The dark sinks down: from the light mist,
A handsome youth steps out in time to it.
I needn't name him, so my task is finished,
Who doesn't know the name of charming Paris!

A Lady

O! What a shining healthy powerful youth!

A Second

Like a peach, so fresh and full of juice!

A Third

The finely delineated, sweetly swelling lip!

A Fourth

From such a cup you'd surely like to sip?

A Fifth

He's quite pretty, but a little unrefined.

A Sixth

He could be a bit more graceful, to my mind.

A Knight

I sense the shepherd here, I think,

No trace of Courtier or Prince.

Another

Yes! Half naked the youth's quite handsome

We'd need to see him first with armour on!

A Lady

He sits down so gently and pleasantly.

A Knight

You'd like to sit on his lap, comfortably?

Another

He lifts his arm so lightly above his head.

A Chamberlain

The lout! That's not acceptable: how ill-bred!

A Lady

You lords find fault with everything.

The Chamberlain

In the Emperor's presence, all that stretching!

The Lady

He's posed there! He thinks he's quite alone.

The Chamberlain

Even a play should be polite in tone.

The Lady

Now sleep has overcome the charming boy.

The Chamberlain

And now he'll snore: that's natural, what joy!

A Young Lady

What refreshes my heart so deeply, that fragrance

Mixed with fumes from the burning incense?

An Older Lady

Truly! It's breath penetrates one's nature,

It comes from him!

An Elderly lady

It's the sap of nurture,

It's generated in youth, like ambrosia,

And spreads around in the atmosphere.

(Helen emerges.)

Mephistopheles

So that's her! I'd not lose sleep for that. She

Is quite pretty, true, but doesn't do much for me.

The Astrologer

There's nothing more now for me to do,
 As men of honour confess, I confess it too.
 Beauty comes: if only I'd a tongue of fire! –
 Beauty so many songs has forever inspired –
 Whom she appears to, of self he's dispossessed,
 Whom she belonged to, was too greatly blessed.

Faust

Is this the fount of beauty? Have I still, eyes?
 What pours here, through my mind, so richly?
 My dreadful journey yields a blessed prize.
 How void the world was, undeveloped for me!
 What is it now since my priesthood?
 Desirable, lasting, solid underfoot!
 The power of my life's breath should
 Fail, if I'm ever again estranged from you! –
 The perfect form that drew me before,
 Delighting me, in the magic mirror,
 Was only an airy phantom of such beauty! – You
 Are the true embodiment of my passion:
 Towards you is my powers' whole direction

To you, love, feeling, faith, madness are owed.

Mephistopheles (*From the prompter's box.*)

Calm yourself, now, and don't fail in your role!

An Older Lady

Tall, well formed, only the head is small.

A Younger Lady

Just look! Could clumsier feet exist at all?

A Diplomat

I've seen princesses of this kind: though

I think she's beautiful, from head to toe.

A Courtier

Soft and sly, she goes towards the sleeper.

A Lady

How ugly, near that form so young and pure.

A Poet

From her Beauty shines towards him.

A Lady

A picture! Luna and Endymion!

The Poet

Quite so! The goddess seems to descend,
 Leans above him to drink his breath, ah then:
 Envable! – A Kiss! – The cup's full to excess.

A Duenna

In front of everyone! What utter madness!

Faust

A dreadful favour to grant a boy! –

Mephistopheles

Quiet now! Be still!
 And let the spectre do what it will.

A Courtier

She slips away, lightly: he awakes.

A Lady

Just as I thought! That glance she takes!

A Courtier

He stares! It's wonderful what's happening.

A Lady

But not so wonderful what she sees in him.

A Courtier

She turns towards him now with dignity.

A Lady

I see she'll soon take him through his lesson:

At such times men behave quite stupidly,

Perhaps he even thinks that's he the first one.

A Knight

Let me be worthy! Majestically fine! –

A Lady

The trollop! I'd call that table wine!

A Page

I'd like to swap his place for mine!

A Courtier

Who wouldn't be tangled in such a net?

A Lady

That treasure's been handled often, you forget,
And the gilding's mostly rubbed away.

Another

Worthless since it was ten years old, I'd say.

A Knight

Sometimes one takes the best that one can get:
I'd be content with the loveliness that's left.

A Learned Man

I see clearly but I'll confess, quite freely
It's doubtful if that's the true one I see.
The Present's tempted to exaggerate,
I hold to what the ancient texts relate.
There I read she gave particular joy
To all the grey-bearded men of Troy:

And that fits perfectly here too, you see:

I'm not young: still she gives joy to me.

The Astrologer

No longer a boy! A daring hero, he:

Grasped she defends herself, but barely.

He lifts her high in his strong arms, too,

Will he carry her off?

Faust

Audacious fool!

You dare? Do you hear? Stop! Enough, I say!

Mephistopheles

You created the mime these phantoms play!

The Astrologer

A word! After what we've been given,

I'll call this piece: *The Rape of Helen*.

Faust

What rape! Am I nothing in this place!

Is this key no longer in my hand!

It led me through terror, waste and wave,
 Through solitude, to where, set firm, I stand.
 Here's a foothold! Here's reality,
 Where spirit dare with spirits disagree,
 And prepare itself for its great, dual mastery.
 She was so far: how could she closer shine!
 I'll rescue her, and she'll be doubly mine.
 The risk! The Mothers! They must grant her!
 Who knows her once, can never live without her.

The Astrologer

What are you doing, Faust! Faust! –With force
 He seizes her, the form dims in its course.
 He turns the key against the youth, and then,
 Touches him! – Ah! – Gone, in a moment! Gone!
 (*An explosion. Faust falls to the ground. The spirits vanish in mist.*)

Mephistopheles (*Taking Faust on his shoulders.*)

You've done it now! Carrying fools, my friend,
 Brings harm to the Devil himself, in the end.
 (*Darkness. Tumult.*)

ACT 2

Scene I: A High-Arched, Narrow, Gothic Chamber

Formerly Faust's, Unchanged

Mephistopheles (*Entering from behind a curtain. As he holds it up and looks behind him, Faust is seen lying stretched out on an antiquated bed.*)

Lie there, unlucky man! One tempted by
The bonds of a love not readily undone!
The man whom Helena shall paralyse
Won't find it easy to regain his reason.

(Looking around him.)

I look upwards, here, around me,
All's unaltered, and undamaged:
Stained glass, there, shows darkly,
Spiders have added to their webs:
The ink is dry: the paper's yellow,
But everything's still in its place:
Even the quill-pen's here, on show,
With which Faust and the Devil embraced.
Yes! Deeper in the nib there's still
A drop of blood, I tempted him to spill.
It's a unique piece, in my book,
So I'll wish the great collectors luck.
The old fur-robe, on the hook, too,

Reminds me of a joke or two,
 That time when I taught the student,
 What, perhaps, in youth, he's glad he learnt.
 Truly the same desire is on me, for
 You, smoke-singed gown: you and I,
 To flaunt ourselves once more as a professor,
 And speak as one who's always in the right.
 How to achieve that all the learned know:
 It's something the Devil lost long ago.
(He shakes the fur as he takes it down, and moths, crickets and beetles fly out.)

Chorus of Insects

Greetings! We're greeting
 Our Patron of old,
 We're floating and buzzing,
 To us you're well known.
 Singly, in silence,
 You sowed us like plants.
 Father, in thousands
 We've come to the dance.
 The jester is snugly
 Contained in the breast,
 The lice in the fur they

Are sooner expressed.

Mephistopheles

What a nice surprise, this young brood of mine!

One merely sows, and harvests in due time.

I'll shake this ancient fleece about,

Here and there, one flutters out. –

Away! Around! In a hundred leavings,

Hurry and hide yourself, you darlings.

There, where the ancient boxes lie,

Here, in the smoky parchment try,

In that broken dusty old pottery,

Or the skull, its eye-sockets empty.

All this jumbled mildewed existence,

Always gives one whims and fancies.

Again let's dress up as a lecturer!

Today I'll be the Principal, once more.

But it's no use naming myself, you see:

Where are the people, to welcome me?

Famulus (*A College Servant, tottering here, down the long gallery*)

What a noise! What a quake!

The stairs sway, the walls shake:

Through the windows' trembling colours

I see the lightning gleam above us.

The floor leaps, and, on high,

Plaster, rubble from the sky.

And the door, once tightly locked,

By wondrous force is thrown back. –

There! How fearful! A giant

Look, in Faust's old garment!

At his gazing, and his pleas,

I want to sink to my knees.

Shall I go? Shall I remain?

Oh, what will happen to me, then!

Mephistopheles

Here, my friend! – You're called Nicodemus.

Famulus

Honoured Sir! That's my name – Oremus.

Mephistopheles

Enough of that!

Famulus

How pleased I am you knew me!

Mephistopheles

I know you well: a student still, I see,
Mossy Sir! After all, a learned man
Studies hard, and does the best he can.
So one builds a respectable house of cards,
That greater minds can't finish afterwards.
But he's a witty fellow, is your master,
Who doesn't know the noble Doctor Wagner?
He's the first in all the world of learning!
He's unique: wisdom, each day increasing,
And all of it he still holds together,
Crowds, around him, panting, gather
Listeners, eaves'-droppers, welcome.
Alone, he shines there at the rostrum.
He holds a key, just like Saint Peter,
That unlocks the lower, and the higher.
He glows and sparkles above the rest,
No name and fame has wider standing:
Even that of Faust has dimmed, at best:
He's the one who's always inventing.

Famulus

Forgive me, honoured Sir, if I dare
 To speak, and contradict you, there:
 There's no question of that, I must declare:
 Since modesty's his role, as all discern.
 Discovering nothing of the circumstances,
 Baffled by the great man's disappearance:
 He seeks all health and comfort in his return.
 The room waits for its old master
 While Doctor Faustus is away,
 Untouched, still, as in his day.
 And I scarcely dare to enter.
 What can the stars be doing? –
 The walls themselves are frightening me:
 The doorframes quiver, bolts work free,
 Or you yourself couldn't have got in.

Mephistopheles

And your great man where is he?
 Lead me there: or bring him here to me!

Famulus

Oh! His warnings are quite clear,

I'm not allowed to interfere.
 For months I've left him in utter peace,
 Till his great work is complete.
 He, the most delicate of scholars,
 His face looks like a charcoal burner's,
 Blackened now from nose to ears,
 Eyes crimson, blowing up the fires,
 All the while, so enthusiastic:
 Clinking of tongs, that's his music.

Mephistopheles

Why would he deny an entrance to me?
 I'm one who'd speed his luck, you see.
(The Famulus exits: Mephistopheles sits down, gravely.)
 I've hardly taken my seat here,
 And I see a guest behind my chair.
 But he's one of the new school's persuasion:
 He'll be arrogant, I think, on this occasion.

Baccalaureus (Storming along the corridor.)

I find the gates and doors are open!
 Now there's room at last for hope then,
 That it won't be merely as before,

A live man, acting as a corpse,
Wasting away, and rotting,
Till he merely dies of living.

These walls and these partitions,
Bow and sink towards perdition,
And if we don't look about us,
Their decline and fall will rout us.
I'm audacious, no one more so,
But no further in do I go.

What will I find here today?
It's years since I've been this way,
Where timid and innocent
As a freshman I was sent!
Where I trusted in my elders,
Edified by all their blather.

From the dry old books, they knew
They lied to me: what they knew,
Not believing in it truly,
Stealing life itself, from me.
What? – There, in his cell,

Sits a darkly bright one still!

With astonishment now, nearer,
 See him sitting in his dark fur,
 Truly, as I left him sitting
 Still in all his coarse wrapping!
 Then he seemed a fount of wisdom,
 Since I didn't understand him.
 He won't find me so today,
 Fresh and new, I'm on my way!

Sir, if in Lethe's melancholy stream
 That bald nodding head's not swum,
 See your grateful scholar come,
 Outgrown, his academic dream.
 I find you now, as I saw you:
 I was another though: that's true.

Mephistopheles

I'm glad the ringing brought you.
 I rated you once before as high:
 The caterpillar, the chrysalis too,
 Showed the bright future butterfly.

Your curly hair and pointed collar,
Made you a childishly pleasing scholar.
You never wore pigtails I believe? –
And today you're cropped like a Swede.
I see you're bold and resolute:
But don't go home too absolute!

Baccalaureus

My old master! We're in our old places:
But don't think to renew time's journey,
And spare me words with dual-faces:
I treat them now quite differently.
You teased the true, and honest youth.
It wasn't difficult for you to do
It's what no one dares to do today.

Mephistopheles

Pure truth on the young is thrown away,
The little beaks don't like it, any way,
But afterwards when years have passed,
And they've learnt it for themselves at last,
And think it came from them, not school:
Then we hear: 'The Master was a fool.'

Baccalaureus

A rascal, maybe! – What teacher ever shows us
 The Truth directly, underneath our noses?
 They know the way to make it seem more, or less,
 Now serious, now playful, as suits the children best.

Mephistopheles

There's a moment given us for learning, truly:
 But you're ready now to teach, yourself, I see.
 For many moons, united with their suns,
 You the riches of experience have won.

Baccalaureus

Experience! Mist and Foam!
 And not the Spirit's equal.
 Confess! What one has known,
 Is not worth knowing at all.

Mephistopheles (*After a pause.*)

I've thought so for ages. I was a Fool,
 But I think that shallow now I'm sensible.

Baccalaureus

That pleases me! I hear pure Reason's sound:
The first old man of sense I've ever found.

Mephistopheles

I sought for treasure, buried gold,
And brought to light frightful coals.

Baccalaureus

Confess now, your skull, bald and old,
Is worth no more than that empty poll.

Mephistopheles (*Amiably.*)

Do you know, my friend, how rude you seem to me?

Baccalaureus

In German, one's lying if one speaks politely.

Mephistopheles (*Wheeling his chair nearer to the proscenium and the audience.*)

Up here I'm dazed by light and air:
Shall I take shelter with you down there?

Baccalaureus

I find it arrogant that in times like these,
 A man wants to be what he no longer is.
 Man's life is in his arteries, and when
 Are they so vibrant as in younger men?
 There the fresh blood full of strength
 Creates new life from its own life again.
 There all works, and things get done,
 The waverers fall, the capable get on.
 While we've conquered half the world,
 What have you done? Nodded, curled
 In the sun, dreamed, weighed, plan on plan.
 For sure, age is a chilling fever:
 The frost of whims and need ahead.
 When your thirtieth year is over,
 A man's as good as dead.
 It would be best to seek an early grave.

Mephistopheles

That leaves the Devil nothing more to say.

Baccalaureus

Unless I will it, no Devil can exist.

Mephistopheles (*Aside.*)

The Devil will still trip you, in a bit.

Baccalaureus

This is youth's noblest profession!

The world was nothing before my creation:

I drew the Sun out of the sea:

The Moon began her changeful course with me:

The daylight decked my path to greet me,

The Earth flowered, grew green, to meet me.

At my command, in primal night,

The stars in splendour swam to sight.

Who, but I, loosed from its prison

Cramped thought's philistinism?

I, quite free, as my spirit cites,

Happily following my inner light,

And speeding on, in delight,

Darkness behind: and all before me, bright.

Mephistopheles

Go forth in splendour, you primal man! –

How could insight harm you, ever:

Who can think of stupid things or clever,

That past ages didn't, long ago, understand.

Yet there's no danger from him, you see,

He'll think about it differently in time:

Even if the grape-juice acts absurdly,

In the end it changes into wine.

(To the younger members of the audience, who do not applaud.)

My words have left you cold, I gather,

May it be so for you, sweet children:

But think: the Devil's a lot older,

So you need to be old to understand him!

Scene II: A Laboratory

(In the fashion of the Middle Ages: lots of heavy apparatus for strange purposes.)

Wagner *(At the furnace.)*

The fearful bell is sounding,

The soot-black walls shudder.

My deepest expectation

Will be unsure no longer.

Soon the dark itself will lighten:

Soon in the innermost phial,

It will glow like living fire,

Yes, like the noblest ruby's glow,

Lightning flashing in the shadow.

A clearest white light shines now!

Ah, not to lose it once more! –

Oh, God! Who's rattling at the door?

Mephistopheles (*Entering.*)

Greetings! And kindly meant now.

Wagner (*Anxiously.*)

Welcome, to the planet of the hour!

(*Whispering.*)

But stifle your breath, and words' power,

A noble work is likewise being weighed.

Mephistopheles (*Whispering.*)

What might it be?

Wagner (*Whispering.*)

A Man is being made.

Mephistopheles

A Man? And what loving couple

Have you got hidden, up the chimney?

Wagner

God Forbid! How unfashionable!

We're free of all that idle foolery.

The tender moment from which life emerged,

The charming power with which its inner urge,

Took and gave, and clearly stamped its seal,

First in a near, and then a further field,

We now divest of all that dignity:

Though the creatures still enjoy it, we,

As Men, with all our greater gifts, begin,

To have, as we should, a nobler origin.

(He turns towards the furnace.)

It brightens! See! – Now there's a real chance,

That, if from the hundred-fold substance,

By mixing – since mixing makes it happen –

The stuff of human life's compounded,

And distilled in a flask, well-founded,

And in proper combination, grounded,

Then the silent work is done.

(He turns again to the furnace.)

It will be! The mass is clearer!

The proof comes nearer, nearer:

What man praises in deepest Nature,

Through Reason we dare to probe it,
 And what she organises, here,
 We're now able to crystallise it.

Mephistopheles

Who lives a while, gains much experience,
 And nothing new can happen on his journey.
 In years of travelling, and in my presence,
 I've seen, already, crystallised humanity.

Wagner (*Up till now attending to the phial.*)

It rises: flashes, there's expansion
 In a moment more it will be done.
 Great aims seem foolish at the outset:
 But we'll laugh at Chance itself, yet,
 And brains, with thoughts to celebrate,
 In the future, a Thinker will create.
(He inspects the phial, rapturously.)
 The glass rings with sweet power,
 It darkens, clears: it must have being!
 In a delicate form I see appear
 A well-behaved little Man behaving.
 What can the world ask more, what can we?

Now that this mystery's visible to each.
 Give ear to what these sounds may be,
 They make a voice: they're forming speech.

Homunculus (*From the phial, to Wagner.*)

Now, father! That was no joke. How are you?
 Come: press me tenderly to your heart, too!
 But not too hard, the glass may be too thin.
 It's in the very nature of the thing:
 For the natural the world has barely space:
 What's artificial commands a narrow place.

(To Mephistopheles.)

But you, Rascal, my dear Cousin, are you
 Here at the right moment? I thank you, too.
 Good fortune's led you here to me:
 Since I exist, I must be doing, you see.
 I'd like to begin my work today:
 You're skilful at shortening the way.

Wagner

But first, a word! Till now I've had no direction,
 When old or young teased me with a question.
 For example: no one's found out, ever,

What makes body and soul fit together:
Stick tight, as if there'll be no separation,
Yet always cause each other irritation.
So then, -

Mephistopheles

Stop! I'd rather he told me,
Why married people get by so wretchedly?
You'll never discover that, my friend.
There's work to do the little Man can tend.

Homunculus

What work's to do?

Mephistopheles (*Pointing to a side door.*)

Employ your gifts on this!

Wagner (*Still gazing at the phial.*)

Truly, you're the loveliest boy there is!

(The side-door opens: Faust is seen stretched out on a couch.)

Homunculus (*Astonished.*)

Interesting!

(The phial slips out of Wagner's hands, hovers over Faust, and shines on him.)

Lovely surroundings! – Clear water

In thick forest! Women there: undressing.

The loveliest of all! – It's getting clearer.

One's left, different from the rest, gleaming:

Of highest race, for sure, a heavenly name.

She places her foot in the transparent glow,

Her noble body's sweetly living flame

Cools itself in the yielding crystal flow. –

But what's that rush of beating wings for:

That thrashing, splashing, in the mirror?

The lovely girls, intimidated, flee:

Their queen, alone, looks on, composedly,

To see, with a proud feminine pleasure,

The Swan-Prince press against her knee, there,

Forward yet tame. Familiar, he seems. –

But suddenly a vapour heaves,

And covers, with the veil it weaves,

The loveliest of scenes.

Mephistopheles

All the things that you could murmur!

So little: and such a great dreamer.

I see nothing –

Homunculus

So I believe. You're Northern,
 In the age of mist you're born then,
 In a jumble of priest-craft and chivalry,
 So how could your sight be free!
 You're at home with darkness.

(He gazes around.)

Brown repulsive, mildewed walls,
 Low, pointed arches, full of scrolls! –
 One wakes, and gives another pain,
 On the spot, dead then, he'll remain.
 Wooded founts, swans, naked beauty,
 That was his far-sighted dream:
 How could this place do duty!
 I can scarcely endure the scene.
 Carry him off!

Mephistopheles

I'd be happy: a last chance.

Homunculus

Order the soldier to the fight,
 Lead the maiden to the dance,
 Then everything's done right.
 Even now, thinks, quick as light,
 It's Classical Walpurgis Night:
 That's the best, if he were sent
 To his own true element!

Mephistopheles

I've never heard that event named, here.

Homunculus

How could it come to your ear?
 Only Romantic ghosts, for you:
 A true ghost must be Classic too.

Mephistopheles

Which path do we take there? Already
 Your antique colleagues quite repel me.

Homunculus

North-westward Satan, is your pleasure ground,
 But this time we're South-eastward bound –

In wider space flows Peneus, the free
By bushes, groves, and damp still bays:
Its levels stretch to mountain ways,
And over it Pharsalus: old, yet contemporary.

Mephistopheles

Oh! Enough! And keep all the fight,
Of tyranny and slavery, out of sight.
It bores me: they're scarce done when
They start the whole thing over again:
And no one sees: they're being re-aligned,
By Asmodeus, who works them from behind.
They clash, it's said, for Freedom's right:
Seen rightly, slave with slave is all the fight.

Homunculus

Leave Mankind's wilfulness to me, then.
Each man defends himself, as best he can,
From childhood, till, at last, he is a man.
Just ask how we can get back there again.
Have you a method, then, let's see:
If you haven't, leave it all to me.

Mephistopheles

There's many a Brocken trick I could display,
 But I find that Pagan bolts have barred the way.
 The whole Greek race was never that much use!
 They dazzle with the senses' freer play: it's true:
 They lure the heart of man to happier sins:
 While ours, one always finds, are gloomy things.
 And now, what?

Homunculus

Once you weren't so witless:
 When I spoke about Thessalian witches.
 I can deliver what I said: just think a little.

Mephistopheles (*Lustfully.*)

Thessalian witches! Good! They're the people
 I once enquired about long ago.
 I don't think it would suit me, at all,
 To live with them night after night, though,
 Still, a visit, and a trial –

Homunculus

This mantle here,

Fold it around your knight there!
 As before, the cloak can carry another,
 One of you, along with the other.
 I'll light the way.

Wagner (*Anxiously.*)

And I?

Homunculus

Well, now, you
 Stay home, there are important things to do.
 Unfold all your ancient parchments,
 Then, by rote, collect life's elements,
 And place them together with due care,
 Consider *What*, more deeply consider *How*.
 Meanwhile round the world, a bit, I'll fare,
 And find the last dot on the 'i', for now.
 Then the great work will see its final stage:
 Great effort will merit great reward, you'll see:
 Gold, honour, fame, a long and ripe old age,
 And science too – and virtue, possibly.
 Farewell!

Wagner (*Sadly.*)

Farewell! It gives me pain.

Already, I fear, I'll not see you again.

Mephistopheles

Now to Peneus, lively, on!

Sir Cousin's highly rated.

(To the audience.)

In the end we're dependent on

The creatures we've created.

Scene III: Classical Walpurgis Night. The Pharsalian Fields.

(Darkness.)

Erichtho (*The Thessalian Witch, see Lucan's Pharsalia*)

This night's awesome feast, as so often in the past,

I enter now, I, Erichtho, the gloomy one:

Not so abominable as the wretched poets

Painted me, with excessive slander... they never

Cease their blame or praise... I see the valley whiten

With waves of tents that gleam greyer in the distance,

The after-image of that anxious, fearful night.

How often it's repeated! In eternity

Acted out, again, forever... No one gives the realm

To another: to the one whose power won it:
Whose strength rules. Since each, incapable of ruling
His inner self, would gladly rule his neighbour's will,
In the manner that his proud mind dictates to him...
But here a great instance was fought out, to the end,
Of how force may battle against a greater force,
Freedom's lovely thousand-blossomed garland be torn,
And stubborn laurel be wound round the ruler's brow.
Here, Pompey dreams of his youth and former greatness,
There, Caesar, listening, watches the balance tremble!
It settles, and the world knows whom it sinks towards.
The watch fires, glowing, send out their crimson flames:
The field exhales those images of squandered blood,
And lured by the strange wondrous splendour of the night,
A legion of Hellenic legends gather here.
They hover around all the fires uncertainly,
Or sit nearby, the fabled forms of ancient days....
The Moon, not full it is true, but of clearest light,
Rises, scattering mild radiance everywhere:
The ghostly tents vanish: the fires burn bluish now.
But, over my head, what sudden meteor's this?
It shines, illuminates the material globe.
I smell Life. It's not fitting for me to approach

Closer to the living, since I'm harmful to them:

It gives me a bad name, and is no benefit to me.

It sinks down already. I give way, thoughtfully!

(She Exits. The Airy Travellers speak from above.)

Homunculus

Once again float round the circle

Over flames and shuddering horror:

On the ground, and in the vale still,

It's quite ghostly, we discover.

Mephistopheles

It's the same as through my old window

In the grim and tangled north,

Really loathsome ghosts below,

I'm at home here: and there, of course.

Homunculus

See! There's a tall one striding,

With gigantic steps, before us.

Mephistopheles

As if she were afraid, now: gliding

Through the air above, she saw us.

Homunculus

Let her stride! Right away,
Set the knight down there:
He'll return to life again,
Once he breathes this mythic air.

Faust (*As he touches the ground.*)

Where is she?

Homunculus

We can't say, I fear,
But you can probably enquire here.
Hurry now before it's daylight,
Go and search, from fire to fire:
Who found his way to the Mothers' side,
Won't find this harder to survive.

Mephistopheles

On my own behalf too, I'm here:
But I don't know anything better
Than each to seek, among the fires,

The adventure he desires.

Then, so that we can reunite,

Little one, shine your ringing light.

Homunculus

It shines like this, and rings.

(The glass shines and rings out powerfully.)

Now off to new and wondrous things!

Faust (Alone.)

Where is she? – But no further answer seek...

If this is not the soil she trod,

Nor the wave that bathed her foot,

It is the air that spoke her speech.

Here! By a miracle, on Hellenic land!

I feel, the earth, too, where I stand:

A fresh power glows in me, the Sleeper,

So I am Antaeus-like in nature.

And I find the strangest things lie here,

First let me search this Labyrinth of fire.

(He moves away.)

(On the Upper Peneus)

Mephistopheles (*Looking around.*)

And as I wander through these fires,
 I feel myself a total stranger: in the event,
 They're mostly naked, a shirt here and there:
 The Sphinx shameless, the Gryphon impudent:
 And what's more, curly-haired and winged,
 Before, behind, in eyes, reflected things...
 Of course, at heart, indecency's my ideal,
 But I find the Antique is a little too real.
 One should control all with a modern mind,
 Overlay it with fashions of assorted kinds....
 Repulsive people! Yet still I have to meet them,
 And, as a new guest too, correctly greet them...
 Luck to you, fair ladies, and men, you wise grey ones!

A Gryphon (*Snarling. For the gold-guarding Gryphons see Herodotus' Histories.*)

Not Grey ones! Gryphons! – No one likes the name
 Of something grey. Every word rings
 With what conditioned it: its origins:
 Grey, grievous, grumpy, gruesome, gravely, grimly,
 Similarly harmonious etymologically,
 Disharmonise us.

Mephistopheles

And yet, without deviation,

You like the *gryp* in your proud name of Gryphon.

The Gryphon (*Snarling continuously.*)

Naturally! The relationship's tried and tested:

It was often censured, but more often praised:

One *grips* maidens, money, gold,

To the gripper, Fortune's never cold.

Giant Ants

You spoke of gold: we've collected lots of it,

In rocks and caves, secretly, we've crammed it:

The Arimaspi, discovered it all, one day,

They're laughing now: they took it far away.

The Gryphon

We'll soon make them confess.

The Arimaspi*(For the Scythian race of the Arimaspi and their association with gold mining see Herodotus' Histories)*

But not on this night of public festival.

By morning we'll have spent it all.

This time at least we'll achieve success.

Mephistopheles (*Sitting among the Sphinxes.*)

How free, and easy, I feel here,
 I understand you, one and all.

Sphinx

We breathe out spirit-tones, clear,
 That for you become substantial.
 Now name yourself, so we can know your fame.

Mephistopheles

Men choose to saddle me with a host of names...
 Are there Britons here? They travel about so much,
 Looking for battlefields, and ruined walls,
 The dullest classical places, waterfalls:
 Here's a site that's worth all their fuss.
 They spoke of me too: in their Mysteries:
 And portrayed me there as Old Iniquity.

A Sphinx

How so?

Mephistopheles

I don't know why that should be.

A Sphinx

Perhaps you've knowledge of the stars?

What do you think of the present hour?

Mephistopheles (*Gazing upwards.*)

Star glides by star, the horned moon shines bright,

And I feel happy here, in this mournful site,

I warm myself on a lion skin: your right.

To have to take off, again: that would be hard:

Give us a riddle, or at least charades.

Sphinx

To express yourself, that would be a riddle.

Try for once to solve your own inner muddle:

'Needed by the good man and the sinful,

To the first a breastplate in ascetic swordplay,

A wild friend for the other, to show the way,

And both amusing Zeus with their display.'

The First Gryphon (*Snarling.*)

I don't like him!

The Second Gryphon (*Snarling more fiercely.*)

What's he after?

Both Gryphons

The nasty thing, he's not been heard of here!

Mephistopheles (*Nastily*)

Perhaps you think a guest's nails can't claw

Every bit as sharply as those talons of yours?

Just try it, then!

A Sphinx (*Gently.*)

You'll only stay until,

You leave our company, yourself, as you will:

In your own land everything worked for you,

But this if I'm not wrong's too much for you.

Mephistopheles

Looked at above, you're rather appetising,

But lower down the creature's somewhat frightening.

A Sphinx

False one, you'll do bitter penance,
 These claws of ours are sound and good:
 You with your withered horse's hoof,
 Aren't comfortable in our presence.
(The Sirens start to sing, above them.)
 What are those birds shaking
 The poplar branches by the stream?

A Sphinx

Take care! The song they're making
 Conquered the best there's ever been.

The Sirens

Ah, why should you choose to live
 Amongst amazing ugliness!
 Listen, we flock to you, ah yes,
 With tuneful sounds, in excess,
 That Sirens ought to give.

The Sphinxes (*Mocking them.*)

Make them fly down here to us!
 Their falcon-claws, so hideous,
 They've hidden in the leaves:

They'll fall on you, cruelly, you see
If you choose to hear them sigh.

The Sirens

Away with hate! Away with envy!
We gather purest ecstasies,
Scattered through the sky!
On the earth, or on the sea,
With the happiest gestures, we
Greet men who wander by.

Mephistopheles

This is news of the sweetest,
Here from lyre and chest,
One note twines round another.
But this warbling's lost on me:
It crawls into my ear, you see,
Yet my heart feels nothing, here.

The Sphinxes

Don't talk of hearts! That's idle:
A leather bag would do as well,
To match that face you wear.

Faust (*Approaching.*)

Marvellous! Gazing's enough for me,
At grand repulsiveness, and solidity:
I suspect I'll find good fortune shortly:
Where will this serious gazing take me?

(He points at the Sphinxes.)

Once Oedipus stood in front of them:

(He points at the Sirens.)

Ulysses writhed in ropes for them:

(He points to the Ants.)

They gathered a mighty treasure.

(He points to the Gryphons.)

They guarded it in fullest measure.

I feel new power flowing through me:

Mighty these forms: of mighty memory.

Mephistopheles

Once you'd have run from things like these,

But now they look good to you:

When a man seeks his beloved, he's

Ready to meet monsters too.

Faust (*To the Sphinxes.*)

You female forms, tell me then,
Have any of you seen Helen?

The Sphinxes

None of us lasted till her day,
Hercules the last did slay.
You can ask Chiron, anyway:
He gallops round in this spirit night:
When he stops for you, you might.

The Sirens

You will not fail at all!...
How Ulysses lingered with us,
Not hurrying scornfully by us,
He'd many times recall:
All will be shown you,
If you make your journey to
Our fields, in the green sea.

A Sphinx

Don't let yourself be deceived.
Instead of Ulysses self-bonded,

We bind with good advice. On!

When you reach noble Chiron,

You'll find it's as I promised.

(Faust wanders off.)

Mephistopheles (*In a temper.*)

What croaks by me on beating wing,

So quick that one can't see a thing.

And one behind the other, flying?

Even a hunter would weary of these.

A Sphinx

That storm, like the winds of winter, here,

Hercule's arrows could scarce get near:

They are the swift Stymphalides,

And their croaked greetings are well-meant,

The vulture-beaked, and goose-webbed.

They'd gladly appear in our place,

As a closely-related race.

Mephistopheles (*As if intimidated.*)

Something else is having a hissing fit.

Sphinx

Don't be worried about those either!
 They're the heads of the Lernaean Hydra,
 Lopped from the trunk, but think they're it.
 But, what's the matter, now then?
 Why all the restless movements?
 Where are you going? He's gone!...
 I see that Chorus over there, that one,
 Has turned your head. You'll get nowhere,
 Go on: greet every sweet face there!
 They're Lamiae, the lustful girls,
 With smiling lips, impudent curls,
 The race of Satyrs all delight in:
 With them a cloven foot's the very thing.

Mephistopheles

Will you stay here? So I can find you again.

Sphinx

Yes! Mix with the flighty rabble.
 In Egypt, we were accustomed, you know,
 To rule for a thousand years or so.
 And if you respect our location,

We'll regulate the days of Moon and Sun.

We'll sit in front of the Pyramids,

To pass judgement on the nations:

With changeless faces, there, amid

War and peace, and inundations.

(On the Lower Peneus.)

(The river-god, surrounded by nymphs and tributary streams.)

Peneus

Stir, you reed-beds, whispering, flowing!

Sigh softly, slender rushes, bowing,

Lightly, willow-bushes, rustling,

Lisp, you poplar-branches trembling,

Through the broken dream!....

Dreadful premonitions wake me,

Secret quivering, now, shakes me,

In my peaceful wandering stream.

Faust (*Approaching the river.*)

If I heard true, as I believe:

From behind the tangled leaves

Of these shrubs and branches,

Came sounds of human voices.

Then the fount seemed to chatter,
And the breeze filled with laughter.

The Nymphs (*To Faust.*)

Just to lie here, now,
For you would be best,
Reviving your wearied
Body with coolness,
Enjoy here forever
Your fugitive rest:
Murmuring, trickling,
We'll whisper, and bless.

Faust

I'm awake! O let them linger there
Those images without compare,
As they reached my sight.
I'm moved so marvellously!
Is it dream? Or is it memory?
Once before, I knew this delight.
The waters creep through the freshness,
The softly swaying bushes' thickness,
Without rushing, barely trickling:

A hundred founts from all sides press,
And gather to the purest brightness,
Fill the pool's shallow ring.
Glowing limbs of young girls are
Reflected by the liquid mirror,
And added to the eye's delight!
Companionably, bathing joyfully,
Swimming boldly, wading shyly,
Crying out, at last, in watery fight.
This sight's enough to renew
My eyes with gazing at the view,
But ever wider vision strains.
My glance cuts sharply through the cover,
Rich foliage, green wealth, around her,
Serves to hide the noble queen.

Marvellous! The swans approaching:
From the bays, come softly swimming,
Majestically pure their movement.
Floating calm, in sweet society,
But how proudly, self-delightedly,
Head and neck are lifted, bent.....
One shines out above all others,

Boasting boldly of his favours,
 Sailing swiftly in their race:
 His ruffled plumage swelling,
 Wave-like, on the wave he's stirring,
 He hastens to the sacred place...
 The others swimming here and there,
 With their smooth shining feathers,
 Soon meet in fine contention,
 Drive away the frightened maidens,
 Not thinking of their service, then
 But only of their own protection.

The Nymphs

Sisters, bend and set you ears
 To the river-banks' green turf:
 If I hear rightly, coming near,
 That's the sound of hooves on earth.
 If I only knew who that message might
 Be bringing, swiftly, to the Night!

Faust

To me, the ground seems ringing, too
 Echoing to some swift stallion's hoof.

There, gaze, my eyes!
Good luck, is nigh,
Will it come to me as well?
O, wonder without parallel!
A rider trots towards us, now,
Gifted, shines with spirit and power
Grafted to a snow-white horse...
I know him too, I can't be wrong,
It's Philyra's famous son! –
Halt, Chiron! Halt! Hear my discourse...

Chiron (*The Centaur.*)

What then? What is it?

Faust

Delay a moment!

Chiron

I never rest.

Faust

Well, take me with you, then!

Chiron

Mount! And I can question you, at leisure:
 Where are you going? You're by the river,
 I'll carry you through the flood, with pleasure.

Faust (*Mounting his back.*)

Wherever you wish. My thanks forever...
 You, the great man, the noble teacher,
 Famed for educating the race of heroes,
 That splendid company of the Argonauts,
 And all who edified the Poets' thoughts.

Chiron

All that in its proper place!
 As Mentor, even Pallas wasn't rated:
 In the end they do things their own way,
 As if they'd none of them been educated.

Faust

The doctor who can name the plants,
 And roots, profoundly, understands:
 Who heals the sick, and soothes the wound,
 Here, strong in mind and body, have I found!

Chiron

When a hero was injured near me.
I gave the right assistance and advice:
But, at last, bequeathed my art, you see,
To priests, and herb-gathering old wives.

Faust

You've a truly great man's ways:
He won't hear a word of praise.
He'll modestly defer to us
And act as if all were equals.

Chiron

You seem artful at those pretences,
Which flatter common folk and princes.

Faust

But surely you'd confess today:
You saw the greatest, of your age,
Among the noblest deeds, you trod,
And lived life as a demi-god.
Among those great heroic forms,
Who was the finest of them all?

Chiron

Among the Argonauts, in my day,
 Each was worthy, in his own way.
 And with the powers he inhaled,
 Knew enough when others failed.
 Castor and Pollux always conquered,
 When youth and beauty were honoured.
 In determination, and swift help to others,
 First was Calais, and Zetes his brother,
 Thoughtful, clever, strong, well-advised,
 Jason conquered, woman-folk's delight.
 Then Orpheus: gentle, always brooding,
 Sounding the lyre, quite over-powering.
 Sharp-eyed Lynceus, by night and day,
 Steering the sacred ship past reef and bay...
 Let such dangers always be faced as brothers:
 If one achieves he's praised by all the others.

Faust

Of Hercules, you say nothing?

Chiron

Oh! Don't rouse my yearning....

Never noting how Phoebus

Ares, or Hermes, were defined,

With my own eyes I saw before us

What all men praise as divine.

He was born a king, no other,

A splendid youth to gaze upon:

Yielding to his elder brother,

And the loveliest of women.

Gaea's never known a second,

Nor Hebe led such on to heaven's zone:

In vain for him they sing the songs,

In vain for him they carve the stone.

Faust

The sculptors never caught his form,

However many images they made.

You've spoken of the loveliest man,

Now speak about the loveliest maid!

Chiron

What!... I won't talk of woman's beauty,

It's so often a frozen mask to me:

I can only praise that nature, truly,
Flowing freely, and cheerfully.
Beauty's delighted with itself:
Grace makes it irresistible,
Like Helen, whom I carried.

Faust

You carried her?

Chiron

Yes on this very back.

Faust

Was I not sufficiently aroused?
Such a seat, now, will bring me luck!

Chiron

She gripped me by the mane, so,
As you are doing.

Faust

I'm vanquished, oh,
Completely! Tell me, why here?

She is my one and only desire!

Carried her from where, to where?

Chiron

That's easy to tell, since you enquire.

At that time, the Dioscuri, Castor and Pollux,

Freed their sister, Helen, from a nest of robbers.

The robbers then, not used to being conquered,

Regained their courage, and chased them onward.

The sister and brothers' hasty course was halted

By all the swamps that lie below Eleusis:

The brothers waded: I swam over, swiftly:

Then she sprang off, and, stroking gently

My wet mane, caressed me, thanked me,

Confident, sweetly clever were her ways.

She was so charming! Youth, delighting Age!

Faust

Only ten years old!...

Chiron

The philologists deceive you,

I see, while deceiving themselves too.

It's strange that with a mythological woman,
 Poets use her, at will, to draw our attention,
 She can never age, is never old,
 Cast in the same enticing mould,
 Seduced when young, in age delights:
 Enough, no age restricts a poet's flights.

Faust

Then let her be as if no age has bound her!
 As Achilles on Pherae once found her,
 Beyond all ages. What rare luck:
 In spite of every fate, to win her love!
 And shall I, by the strength of my yearning,
 Not draw that unique form towards me, living,
 That eternal being, equal to the divine,
 Great yet tender: kind as she's sublime.
 You saw her once: today I too have seen her,
 Lovely in her attraction: as lovely as desired.
 Now my soul and being is strongly tied:
 If I can't win her, I shan't survive.

Chiron

Ah, stranger! You're enraptured like Mankind:

Among us Spirits you seem maddened, blind.

Yet now your fate is to be met with here:

Though only for a moment, every year,

I take the time to call on Manto, there,

Aesculapius' daughter: in silent prayer

Imploring her father to add to his fame,

Enlighten, at last, each rash doctor's brain,

And persuade them never to deal death again...

I like her best of all the crowd of Sibyls,

Free of grimaces, kind and generous:

If you stay with her, she's the power too,

To heal you totally: with herbs and roots.

Faust

I don't need healing: my mind is filled with power:

There I'd become as base as others are.

Chiron

Don't scorn the healing of the noble fount!

We've reached the place, so, quick, dismount!

Faust

Tell me, where, through pebbly water,

In the gloomy night, you've brought us?

Chiron

Here Greece and Rome braved the fight,
 Olympus to your left, Peneus on the right,
 The greatest empire lost here to the sand:
 A king flees: and citizens win the land.
 Gaze around! Famous Tempe is nearby,
 Eternal, there, under the moonlit sky.

Manto (*Inside, dreaming.*)

Horses' hooves sound
 On sacred ground,
 Demi-gods are nigh us.

Chiron

Quite right!
 Just open your eyes!

Manto (*Waking.*)

Welcome! I see you don't keep away.

Chiron

And your temple's still here to stay!

Manto

You still gallop round, untiringly?

Chiron

And you, as ever, sit peacefully,

While I enjoy circling round.

Manto

I wait, and Time circles me I've found.

And him?

Chiron

The shadowy night

Has whirled him to our sight.

Helen he wants to win,

Helen's maddening him.

And he doesn't know where or how to begin:

Above all he deserves the Aesculapian healing.

Manto

I like the ones who want impossible things.

(Chiron is already far off.)

Rash man, advance, here's joy for you!

This dark path leads to Persephone too.

Under Olympus' hollow foot, stealing,

She listens for secret, forbidden greeting.

I smuggled Orpheus down here once before:

Use your chance better! Quick! Be sure!

(They descend.)

Scene IV: On The Upper Peneus Again

The Sirens

Plunge now in Peneus' flood!

Here you can delight in swimming,

Song on song too, harmonising,

Does unlucky people good.

There's no healing without water!

With the shining crowd run we

Quick, to the Aegean Sea,

Where every joy's on offer.

(An Earthquake.)

The foaming wave sweeps wider,

Flowing in its bed no longer:

Earth shakes and waters roar,
 Stony banks split once more.
 We fly on! Come, one and all!
 We'll not profit from this at all.
 On! Each noble, happy guest,
 To the ocean's cheerful zest,
 Gleaming, where the trembling waves
 Lightly heaving, wash the bays:
 Where the moon's reflected light,
 Wets with heaven's dew, at night.
 There, a freely flowing life,
 Here, an earthquake's fearful strife:
 Every clever one, hasten on!
 This place is a hideous one.

Seismos (Growling and jolting in the deep.)

Push again, with power,
 With your shoulders, tower!
 So the world above is ours,
 Where all must yield to us.

The Sphinxes

What a horrid shuddering,

Ugly, hideous juddering!
What a quivering and swaying,
Back and forwards, playing!
What an intolerable fuss!
But we'll not lose our place,
Even if all hell shakes.
Now a dome is lifted,
Wonderful. He's gifted
It to us, the ancient one,
Delos' isle was his creation,
Driven from out the wave,
To bring Latona aid.
He with striving, pushing, pressing,
Arms straight, and shoulders bending,
Like an Atlas in his action,
Lifts rock and earth, in motion,
Shingle, gravel, sand: the floors
All along our peaceful shores.
Rips our vale's quiet surface up,
Crosswise, with a single cut:
Fiercely, and unwearied,
A colossal caryatid,
Bears a fearsome weight of boulders,

Still buried, downwards to his shoulders:

But he'll come no further, now,

The Sphinxes' place is here, we vow.

Seismos

I myself achieved all this,

Man should admit it, finally:

If I'd not jolted and shaken it,

How could the world be so lovely? –

How could your peaks stand so high,

In the pure and splendid blue,

If I'd not pushed them to the sky,

Picturesque and charming too?

Then, thinking of my high ancestry,

Night and Chaos, I behaved badly,

And, a company of Titans, we

With Pelion and Ossa played madly,

Romping round in youthful glee,

Till, we tired of it, at last,

And set both mountains, wickedly,

On Parnassus, as a double hat....

There, now, Apollo's sweet retreat,

With the happy band of Muses.

And Jupiter, thunderbolts complete:
I even raised the high seat he uses.
So now with monstrous striving
I've pushed this upwards, from the deep,
And call, aloud, to their new being,
The joyful dwellers of the steep.

The Sphinxes

One would think long ago,
This was lifted to the sky,
Had we not seen from down below,
How it wormed its way on high.
A bushy forest covers it,
And rock on rock is piled around:
Sphinxes don't care about it,
It won't disturb our sacred ground.

The Gryphons

Gold in leaves, and gold in spangles,
Through the cracks, see, it tremble.
Don't you rob us of our treasure,
Ants, come, gather it together!

Chorus of Ants

As this the giant ones
Threw to the sky,
You restless-footed ones,
Quick, climb it on high!
Rapidly in and out!
In cracks like these,
Every crumb about's
Worth you can seize.
You must uncover
Even the slightest,
In every corner
Quick as the brightest.
You must be everywhere,
Swarming around: then,
Only bring gold here!
Forget the mountain.

The Gryphons

Come! Come! Heap the gold!
With our claws, we'll keep hold:
They are the best locks yet:
Great treasures they protect.

The Pygmies (*Classical Dwarves.*)

We've acquired some room,
How, it isn't clear.
Don't ask where we're from:
The main thing is we're here!
Life is cheerfully suited
To every sort of land:
Where a rock is lifted,
Dwarves are there, on hand.
Men and maids, quick and busy,
Exemplary, every pair:
In Paradise, once, maybe,
A similar race lived there.
But the best is here we find,
Thankfully our fate is blessed:
Mother Earth is always kind,
In the East as in the West.

The Dactyls (*Little Ironworkers.*)

If she can bring to light
The Little Ones in a night,
The Littlest Ones, she can make

And each will still find a mate.

The Pygmy-Elders

Hurry: make space:

A convenient place!

Quickly, to work!

Strength, never shirk!

While we're in peace,

Our smithy increase,

To furnish the horde

With armour and sword.

All you ant-forms,

Moving in swarms,

Bring us the ore!

And all you Dactyls,

So many, so little,

You are commanded

To bring us the wood!

Heap it up higher,

Secretive fire,

Fetch coals as you should.

The Pygmy Generalissimo

Look lively, though,
With arrow and bow!
Shoot me the herons
Out in the ponds,
Countless they're nests,
Proud are their breasts,
Shoot them, together,
All in one blow!
So we can show
Helmets with feathers.

Ants and Dactyls

Who now can save us!
We bring the iron
They forge the fetters.
It won't be soon
This thing will end,
Meanwhile we bend.

The Cranes of Ibycus

Cries of murdered, calls of dying!
Fearful fluttering and flying!
Such deep moans, and such groans

Carry to our airy zones!
 All already slaughtered,
 Blood is reddening the water,
 Misshapen dwarfish passions,
 Steal the herons' noblest gems.
 Now they're waving on their helmets:
 Those fat-bellied bow-legged serpents.
 You our armies' members,
 Files of ocean-wanderers,
 You we call to vengeance,
 To kin-related business.
 No one spare his strength or blood!
 Show hatred always to that brood!
 (*They disperse, croaking.*)

Mephistopheles (*On the plain.*)

Northern witches were easily controlled,
 But over foreign spirits I've no hold.
 The Blocksberg's a most convenient locale,
 Wherever you are, you'll find yourself there still.
 Dame Ilse watches for us, from her tall stone,
 And Heinrich's still awake on his high throne,
 At Elend, the Snorers snore away,

All's done for a thousand years and a day.
 Who knows here if, where he sits, you see,
 The Earth won't swell up beneath his feet?....
 I wander happily through a level valley,
 And in a moment there, thrown up behind me,
 A mountain, true it's hardly to be called one,
 But high enough to hide the Sphinxes' home –
 Still, the valley breeds many a fire here,
 And so illuminates this mad affair....
 The magic sparks of that charming chorus.
 Still enticing, vanishing, hover near us.
 Gently now! All too used to nibbling,
 Wherever we are, we find ourselves snatching.

The Lamiae (*Drawing Mephistopheles after them.*)

Faster, and faster!
 And ever further!
 Then hover again,
 Chattering, staying.
 It's such a pleasure,
 To make the old sinner,
 Pursue us, at whim,
 Doing hard penance.

See, with his lame stance,
 He hobbles forwards,
 He stumbles onwards:
 Trailing his leg, mind:
 As we flee from him
 He follows behind!

Mephistopheles (*Standing still.*)

Cursed fate! Cheated every which way!
 Since Adam, seduced and led astray!
 We grow old, but who grows wise?
 Now, I'm tormented to the skies!
 We know they're a wholly useless sex,
 With laced-in bodies, and painted looks.
 No healthy response at all, at bottom,
 Wherever you grip, their limbs are rotten.
 We know, we see, we grasp their ways,
 But still we dance when woman plays!

The Lamiae (*Pausing.*)

Stop! He thinks: pauses: stays too:
 Return, then, lest he should escape you!

Mephistopheles (*Striding forwards.*)

On, then! And let no indecision
 Grip my flesh, some foolish cavil:
 Since if there were no witches given,
 Who the devil'd want to be a devil!

The Lamiae (*Very graciously.*)

We are circling round the hero!
 Let love, in his heart, be sure to
 Choose one of us for certain though.

Mephistopheles

True, in this uncertain shimmer,
 You seem pretty girls together,
 I'd like not to scorn you so.

Empusa (*The demon. Pressing forward.*)

Nor me! I'm the very thing,
 Let me join your following.

The Lamiae

She's one too many in our crowd,
 She'll spoil our game if she's allowed.

Empusa (*To Mephistopheles.*)

Greetings from Empusa, to you,
 Your cousin, with the ass's hoof!
 You've only a horse's hoof, it's true,
 Yet, cousin, all the best to you!

Mephistopheles

I thought there were only strangers here,
 Sadly, now, relatives appear:
 It's the old story: in their dozens,
 From Hartz to Hellas, always cousins!

Empusa

I act quickly with decision,
 I can alter to your vision:
 But to honour you today
 My ass's head I display.

Mephistopheles

I see great things are signified,
 By the relationship implied:
 Be that as it may, yet I,

The ass's head will still deny.

The Lamiae

That ugly thing gives the frights,
To all that's lovely and delights:
The lovely and delightful before,
When she arrives, are so no more!

Mephistopheles

These cousins too, so soft and slender,
Are all suspicious, all that gender:
And beneath their cheeks, those roses,
There too, I fear, are metamorphoses.

The Lamiae

Try us then! We're many.
Grasp! And if you're lucky,
Secure the finest prize.
What was all that lusting for?
You're a miserable suitor,
Strutting, boasting of your size! –
Now he's mixing with our crowd:
Drop your masks: you're allowed:

And bare your being to his eyes.

Mephistopheles

I've chosen the loveliest one...

(Clasping her.)

Oh! What a skinny broom!

(Clasping another.)

And this one?... Wizenen looks!

The Lamiae

You're worth better? Not in our books.

Mephistopheles

That little one might suit my plans...

A lizard gliding through my hands!

And snakelike are her slippery tresses.

I try the tall one to compare...

I grip a *thyrsus* without hair,

A pinecone, for a head, impresses!

What next?....A fat one, see,

Perhaps she'll enliven me:

Let's risk it, then! Here she is!

So puffy, flabby, in the East

There they'd prize her looks, at least...

But, oh! The puff-ball's split!

The Lamiae

Scatter widely, swaying, floating,

Surround him in dark flight, like lightning,

The trespassing witch's son!

Circles, terrifying, winging!

Bat-like in a silent flickering!

He'll be grateful when we've done.

Mephistopheles (*Shaking himself.*)

I'm no cleverer it seems, at all:

Here's absurd, and so's the north,

Here and there, the spirits tricky,

Poetry and people tacky.

Here too it's masquerade, I find:

As everywhere, the dance of mind.

I grasped a lovely masked procession,

And caught things from a horror show...

I'd gladly settle for a false impression,

If it would last a little longer, though.

(He loses his way among the rocks.)

Where am I now? Where will it wander?

There was a path, now it's a horror.

I got here by smooth and level ways,

And now the scree prevents escape.

I clamber up and down in vain,

How shall I find the Sphinx again?

I've never known anything like it, quite,

A mountain range in a single night!

I call it a lively witches' ride,

They've brought the Blocksberg, beside.

An Oread (*A mountain nymph, from the natural rock.*)

Climb up here! My range is old,

In primeval forms the peaks unfold.

Respect the steep and rocky stair,

Pindus' last slopes stretch there!

Unshakeable, once I stood, as now,

When Pompey fled across my brow.

Beside me, illusion's stones will go,

As soon as ever the cock shall crow.

I often see such fables thrown on high,

And suddenly sink back again and die.

Mephistopheles

Honour to you, you noble length,
Garlanded high with oaken strength!
The clearest moonlight never weaves
Through the darkness of your leaves –
I see a light, with parting glow,
Through the silent bushes go.
How all things come together!
Homunculus it is who's there!
Which way now, little fellow?

Homunculus

I flit about from hill to hollow
And, in the truest sense, I'd gladly 'be',
I'm so impatient, now, to smash the glass:
Only, so far, given what I can see,
I wouldn't want to do it in this pass.
But in confidence I confess I was
On the trail of two philosophers,
All I heard them say was: Nature, Nature!
I'll not part from them for anything,
They must know about earthly being:
And in the end I'll find out, too,

The cleverest place to travel to.

Mephistopheles

Well, do it on your own behalf, here.

Where the spirits all find their place,

The Philosopher can show his face.

To please you with his art and favour,

He'll make you a dozen, any flavour.

You'll have no intellect, unless you err.

If you want to 'be', make it your own affair!

Homunculus

Good advice too is not to be disdained.

Mephistopheles

Then off with you! I'll look around again.

(They part.)

Anaxagoras (To Thales.)

The stubborn mind will never ever bend:

What more do you need to be enlightened?

Thales

The waves will gladly bow to every wind,
Yet far from the jagged cliffs they'll end.

Anaxagoras

This cliff came about by fiery vapours.

Thales

By moisture living things were created.

Homunculus (*Between the two.*)

Let me walk beside you, please.

I myself desire to 'be'!

Anaxagoras

Have you, O Thales, in a single night
Brought a mount, from mud, to light?

Thales

Never has nature in her living flow,
Been bound to day, night, and hours, though.
She creates every form by rule,
At her greatest, force is never her tool.

Anaxagoras

Here it was! Furious Plutonic fire,
 Monstrous Aeolian vapours thrown higher,
 Broke through the ancient earth's smooth crust,
 And raised the new mount with a swift up-thrust.

Thales

What more will come of it?
 It's there, that's fine: let it sit.
 One loses time in remonstrance,
 And only lead the patient folk a dance.

Anaxagoras

The Mount quickly filled with Myrmidons,
 Living in the rocky clefts and caverns:
 Pygmies, ants and fingerlings,
 And other active little things.

(To Homunculus.)

You've not striven hard for greatness,
 Lived hermit-like, in narrowness:
 If you can accustom yourself to power,
 I'll crown you their king, in an hour.

Homunculus

What does Thales say?

Thales

It's not my recommendation:

With small means, you'll only do small actions:

With great means, the small achieve great ones.

Look there! A dark cloud, see, the cranes come!

So the excitable crowd will threaten,

And they would threaten the king so.

With sharpened beak, and grasping claw,

They tread the small ones to the floor:

Fate falls like lightning on those below.

It was a crime to kill the herons,

Caught on their quiet and peaceful ponds.

But that rain of arrowed slaughter,

Brings cruel and bloody vengeance after,

Summons the anger of their kin above,

To spill the Pygmies guilty blood.

What need for helmets, shields and spears?

What use the dwarves' heron-feather?

How Dactyls and Ants hide together!

The army wavers, flies, and disappears.

Anaxagoras (*After a moment, solemnly.*)

Till now I've praised the subterranean powers,
But turn, in this case, to higher ones than ours...

You! Above, always evergreen,
Triple-named, triply to be seen,
I cry to you, by my people's woe,
Diana, Luna, Hecate, so!

You, in deepest thought, the heartening,
You power profound, calmly shining,
Reveal your dark side's fearful shower,
Without spells, show your ancient power!

(A pause.)

Am I heard so swiftly?
Has my cry
To the deep sky
Stirred Nature's ranks so quickly?
Already, greater, greater, nearing,
The Goddess' orb'd throne appearing,
Monstrous, fearful to the sight!
With fires that redden in the night...
No closer, threatening disc of power!
You'll straight destroy us: sea and shore!

So it was true, the Thessalian women,
 Trusted with wicked magic runes,
 Enchanted you from your circling path,
 Wrested evil things from you, in wrath?...
 The bright shield now darkens,
 Suddenly splits: flashes, sparkles!
 What a hissing! What a drumming!
 Thunder, wind, and rain are coming! –
 Humbled, on the steps of your throne! –
 Forgive me! I brought this on, alone.
(He throws himself on his face.)

Thales

What has this man not heard and seen!
 I'm not sure what it was that's been,
 I'm not sensitive to it like him, I find.
 We'd confess, these are crazy times,
 The Moon is quivering quite gently,
 In her place, though, just as formerly.

Homunculus

Look there, at the Pygmies seat!
 The mount was round, now it's a peak.

I felt the monstrous recoil's thunder,
 A rock fell from the Moon up yonder:
 All alike, without asking too,
 Friend and foe it squashed and slew.
 I have to praise powers like those,
 All creation in a single night,
 Alike up there as down below,
 Bringing a mountain-heap to light.

Thales

Peace! It was just an imaginary sight.
 So farewell to that ugly brood!
 You didn't become king, that's good.
 Off now to the sea-festival, joy-blessed,
 Where they'll honour a marvellous guest.
 (*They exit.*)

Mephistopheles (*Climbing up the opposite side.*)

I'll have to climb through these steep rocks,
 Through the roots of ancient oaks!
 In my Hartz range, the smell of resin
 Has a hint of pitch, almost as pleasant
 As sulphur... but here, among the Greeks,

There's not a sniff, wherever one seeks:
 But I'm still rather curious to know
 How they make hellfire and brimstone glow.

A Dryad (A wood nymph.)

In your own land, you're naturally adept,
 Abroad, you don't know enough as yet.
 You shouldn't think about home, here
 With these ancient oak trees to revere.

Mephistopheles

One thinks of all one's left: besides,
 What one's used to is paradise.
 But tell me what's in that cave
 Dimly crouching, a triple shape?

The Dryad

Daughters of Phorkyas! Enter the place,
 And speak to them, if you're not afraid.

Mephistopheles

Why not! – I'll look, and I'm amazed!
 Proud as I am, I must confess, though,

I've never seen the likes of those,
 They're as foul as Ugliness any day...
 How can one find deadly sin
 Ugly at all when one has seen
 This triple monstrosity?
 We wouldn't let them cross the sill
 Of the worst chamber of our hell.
 But here, in the land of beauty, all things Greek,
 Are famous now because they're so antique...
 They seem to scent my presence: stirring,
 Like vampire bats, squeaking, twittering.

The Phorkyads (*The Three Graeae*)

Give me the eye, Sisters, so I can find
 Who's wandering so near our shrine.

Mephistopheles

Most Revered! Allow me near,
 To receive a triple blessing here.
 I come, as yet unknown it's true,
 But distantly related, I think, to you.
 I've already seen the elder gods,
 Bowed low before Rhea and Ops:

I even saw the Fates, your sisters,
 Yesterday, or the day before:
 But I've never seen the likes of you.
 I'm silenced now, and delighted too.

The Phorkyads

This spirit seems to have some sense.

Mephistopheles

I'm amazed no poet's had the intelligence
 To sing of you. Tell me, how can that be?
 I've never seen you properly painted:
 The chisel should only try to carve you,
 Not the likes of Pallas, Venus, Juno.

The Phorkyads

Deep in solitude and stillest night,
 No one ever thought to show us three aright.

Mephistopheles

How could they? Here, concealed from view.
 You can't see anyone: and they can't see you.
 You need to achieve a suitable place,

Where art and splendour share the space,
 Where every day, as walking, living heroes,
 With giant steps, each block of marble goes.
 Where –

The Phorkyads

Be silent, and don't tempt us to roam!
 What use would it be to us, to be better known?
 Born in the night, and related to the night,
 To ourselves, almost: to others quite out of sight.

Mephistopheles

In that case, there's little more to say:
 One can oneself to others still betray.
 One eye's enough for three, one tooth as well:
 Then it should be mythically possible,
 To contain three beings in two,
 And leave me the third form, too.
 For a little while.

A Phorkyad

What do you think? Shall we try?

The Others

Let's! – But without the tooth and eye.

Mephistopheles

Now you've denied me the best features of all:

How can I show your strict and perfect form?

A Phorkyad

Shut one eye, that's easy to do,

Let one greedy tooth show too,

In profile you'll at once achieve

A sisterly likeness, to deceive.

Mephistopheles

Many thanks! Done!

The Phorkyads

Done!

Mephistopheles (*As a Phorkyad, in profile.*)

Already I'm one,

Of Chaos's well-beloved sons!

The Phorkyads

We're Chaos's daughters, of undisputed right.

Mephistopheles

O shame, now I'll be called a hermaphrodite.

The Phorkyads

What a beauty in our sisterly trio!

We've two eyes, and two teeth now.

Mephistopheles

I'll hide myself from every eye, as well,

And frighten devils in the lakes of Hell.

(He exits.)

Scene V: Rocky Coves in the Aegean Sea

(The Moon, lingering, at the zenith.)

The Sirens *(Lying on the cliffs round about, playing flutes and singing.)*

Though the Thessalian witch-women

Wickedly, dragged you down to them,

With their horrors, long ago, in the dark,

Look quietly down, now, from the arc

Of night, on waves of glittering sparks:

Mildly flashing, bright crowds, these:
Shine now upon the swelling seas,
Which raise themselves from the deep!
We're sworn to serve you, thus,
Sweet Luna, show grace to us.

The Nereids and Tritons (*As marvels of the deep.*)

Sound out loud, with clearer tones,
Ringing through the sea's wide zones:
Call the peoples of the deep!
Before the storm's ravening face,
We sank to the stillest place,
Now we're drawn, by singing, sweet.
See, how we've adorned ourselves,
In our great delight, as well,
With our crowns, so nobly gemmed,
And our belts with spangles hemmed!
These spoils, now, before you, we lay,
Treasures, shipwrecked here, and swallowed,
Your enticing songs they followed,
You the daemons of our bay.

The Sirens

We know well, in ocean freshness,
Fishes play in slippery smoothness,
Flickering lives, devoid of pain:
Yet you festive crowds that stray
We would rather find today,
That you're more than fish, again.

The Nereids and Tritons

Before we came to meet you,
We were thinking of that too:
Speed away now, sisters: brothers!
It only needs the slightest journey,
For most effective proof that we,
Certainly, are more than fishes.
(They swim off.)

The Sirens

They've vanished in a moment!
To Samothrace they're bent,
Gone, with a favourable breeze.
What is it they think they'll see,
In the realm of the noble Cabiri?
They're gods! But wondrously strange,

Always causing their forms to change,
 Never knowing what they might be.
 Stay at your clear height,
 Sweet Luna, graceful light,
 So we'll remain nocturnal,
 Not chased by the diurnal!

Thales (*On the shore, to Homunculus.*)

I'd gladly lead you to old Nereus:
 His home's not far away and cavernous,
 But his head, it's of the very stubbornest,
 He's a sour-top, and quite the nastiest.
 The whole human race can't satisfy
 Him, the grumbler, and needn't try.
 Yet to him the future is revealed,
 And so all show respect, and yield
 Him honour in his high position:
 He's done quite well by many a one.

Homunculus

Then let's try him, and hurry on!
 My glass and flame won't fail our mission.

Nereus (*The sea-god.*)

Are those human voices, in my ear?
 How quickly my deepest anger stirs!
 Forms, reaching for the gods, in their endeavour,
 Yet condemned to be themselves, forever.
 In ancient times I had heavenly rest,
 Yet drove myself to act well to the best:
 And then, when I'd finished what I'd done,
 It was quite clear that nothing had been won.

Thales

And yet, Old Man of the Sea, we trust you:
 You're the Wise: so don't drive us from you!
 See this flame, he's almost human, really,
 He yields himself to your advice, completely.

Nereus

What advice! Has Mankind valued my advice?
 A wise word's frozen in a stubborn ear.
 No matter how often some harsh action strikes,
 People remain as self-willed as before.
 I warned Paris himself, in a fatherly way,
 Before the foreign girl tempted him to stray.

He stood bravely on the shore of Greece,
 And I told him what my Spirit could see:
 The smoke-filled air, the streaming blood,
 Glowing timbers, slaughter's flood,
 Troy's day of judgement, caught in verse,
 Its horrors known for ten thousand years.
 The old man's words seemed idle to the young,
 He followed his need, and Ilium was gone –
 A bloody corpse, frozen with ancient pain,
 For Pindus' eagles, a literary gain.
 Ulysses too! Didn't I tell him about
 Circe's wiles, that Cyclopean lout?
 The indecision in his own shallow mind,
 And all of it! What benefit did he find?
 Till, late indeed, the ocean favoured him more,
 And brought him, wave-tossed, to a friendly shore.

Thales

Such behaviour brings the wise man pain,
 Yet the good will chance it all again.
 An ounce of thanks will still please them deeply,
 Outweighing tons of ingratitude completely.
 And it's nothing slight we ask of you:

The boy here wants to exist, and wisely too.

Nereus

Don't ruin such a rare mood as this!

Greater needs await me, today, than his:

I've summoned all my daughters here to me,

The Dorides, the Graces of the Sea.

Neither Olympus, nor your lands can show

Such lovely forms, with such delicate flow,

They fling themselves, with graceful actions,

From sea-horses to Neptune's stallions,

Blending so sensitively with the element,

That they seem made of foam, to all intent.

In a play of colours, on Venus' chariot shell,

Galatea, the loveliest, comes to me, as well,

Who, since Cypris turned away from us,

Rules as the new divinity of Paphos.

And so, heiress, for ages now, the sweet one,

Holds town, and temple, chariot and throne.

Away! It's time for a father's enjoyments,

Hearts without hate, lips without judgements.

Away, to Proteus! Ask that wondrous man:

How man exists, and changes, if he can.

(He vanishes into the sea.)

Thales

We'll achieve nothing by that game,
 Meet Proteus: he'll vanish, just the same:
 And if he stays, he'll only tell you,
 What will amaze you, and confuse you.
 But you've need of such advice,
 Well, make tracks, then, and we'll try!
(They depart.)

The Sirens (*On the rocks above.*)

What is it we see whitening
 The realms of ocean, brightening?
 As when the wind prevails,
 And shows the snowy sails,
 So the Ocean's daughters,
 Transfigured, light the waters.
 Let us clamber shore-wards,
 So we can hear their voices.

The Nereids and Tritons

What in our hands we treasure,

Will give you all great pleasure.

Chelone's turtle shield

The shining form we wield:

On it gods we're bringing:

Your noblest songs, be singing.

The Sirens

Little in form,

Great in the storm,

Saving the shipwrecked,

Gods always respected.

The Nereid and Tritons

We bring the peaceful Cabiri

To lead in your festivity,

Since in their holy presence,

Neptune's always pleasant.

The Sirens

We're attendant on you:

When a ship broke in two,

Their sovereign power too,

Protected the crew.

The Nereids and Tritons

We've brought three of them along,
 The fourth said he wouldn't come:
 He said he was the real one,
 The only thinker of the squadron.

The Sirens

One god will always mock
 At some other god.
 Honour all their courtesy,
 Be fearful of their injury.

The Nereids and Tritons

Actually, there are seven.

The Sirens

Where are the other three, then?

The Nereids and Tritons

We really can't tell you that,
 On Olympus one might ask:
 There the eighth pines away,

No one thinks of him today!

Granted us in mercy,

But not yet completely.

These, the incomparable,

Ever wider yearning,

Hungering, are longing

For the unattainable.

The Sirens

We're ones who know

Where it's enthroned,

To moon and to sun,

We pray: and it's done.

The Nereids and Tritons

See how our great glory grows,

We lead them to the feast!

The Sirens

The heroes of ancient story,

Are deficient now in glory,

Whatever we might be told:

Though they won the fleece of gold,

You're the Cabiri.

(Repeated as a full chorus.)

'Though they won the fleece of gold,

We're the Cabiri'.

(The Nereids and Tritons move past.)

Homunculus

I see these unformed ones,

Like pots of shoddy clay,

Against them wise men run,

And break their heads today.

Thales

That's what men ask of the dust:

The coin gains value from its rust.

Proteus (*Unnoticed.*)

It pleases me, an old connoisseur of fable!

The odder it is, the more respectable.

Thales

Where are you, Proteus?

Proteus (*Like a ventriloquist, apparently far, and close to.*)

Here! Here, too!

Thales

An old joke, which I'll forgive you:

No idle words for a friend, please!

I know you're trying to deceive.

Proteus (*As if from the distance.*)

Farewell!

Thales (*Quietly to Homunculus.*)

He's quite near. So, light, afresh!

He's just as curious as any fish:

And whatever form he hides in,

A flame will easily entice him.

Homunculus

I'll pour out a whole flood of light,

But soft, so the glass is still all right.

Proteus (*In the form of a giant turtle.*)

What shines with such grace and beauty?

Thales (*Covering up Homunculus.*)

Good! If you wish, come close to see.

It's worth a little trouble, if you can:

Show yourself two-footed like a man.

At our discretion, and by our favour.

We'll show you what we're hiding here.

Proteus (*In a noble form.*)

You still know all the worldly tricks.

Thales

Changing shape is what you still like best.

(He reveals Homunculus.)

Proteus (*Astonished.*)

A shining dwarf! That, I've never seen!

Thales

He seeks advice, and would gladly 'be'.

He is, as I've heard him say before,

Quite miraculously, only half born.

He's not lacking in mental qualities,

But short of physical capabilities:

Only the glass has given him weight at all,

He'd gladly be embodied, first of all.

Proteus

You are a true virgin's son,

Before you should be, you're already one!

Thales (*Whispering.*)

From another point of view, it's critical:

I think it makes him hermaphroditical.

Proteus

All the easier to achieve success:

Whatever he gets will suit him best.

No need to think about it here:

In the ocean deep you must appear!

There, first, in miniature, one snatches,

Enjoying the smallest things to swallow,

Bigger and bigger, with what one catches,

Forming the higher being to follow.

Homunculus

Here quite gentle breezes blow,
It's open: the fragrance delights me so!

Proteus

I think so too, loveliest of youths!
And, further on, it's more enjoyable:
On that shoreline's slender tooth,
The watery halo's indescribable.
There we'll see the crowds near to,
Drifting smoothly, to our view,
Come with me!

Thales

I'll keep you company.

Homunculus

A triply odd spirit-journey!

Scene VI: The Telchines of Rhodes

(The Telchines, on sea-horses and dragons, wielding Neptune's trident.)

Chorus of Telchines *(The nine dog-headed Children of the Sea)*

Oh, we are the ones who once forged Neptune's trident,

With which he controls the tumultuous torrent.
 When the thunder erupts from the heavens, and rumbles,
 Neptune will reply to those terrible grumbles:
 And however the lightning zig-zags above us,
 Breaker upon breaker beneath will splash upwards:
 And whatever struggles between them in terror,
 Long hurled all about, the deep seas will devour:
 And that's why he's loaned us his sceptre today –
 Now we float, calm and light, in our festive display.

The Sirens

You, to Helios consecrated,
 You, with bright day's blessing freighted,
 Greetings to this hour when
 Luna's high worship rules again!

The Telchines

Loveliest goddess of all in your sphere above!
 To hear your brother praised, is something you love.
 To blessed Rhodes lend an ear, now, from the sky,
 Where an endless Paeon, to him, rises on high.
 He begins the day's course: he ends it again,
 He eyes us all with his radiant fiery eye, then.

The mountains, the city, the sea and the strand,
 Please the great god, lovely and bright is the land.
 No mist drifts above us, and if one appears,
 A ray, and a breeze: and the island shows clear!
 There the high god's in hundreds of statues displayed,
 As a youth, and a giant, the mild and the grave.
 We were the first to carve forms: we began
 The depiction of gods in the image of Man.

Proteus

Let them sing on then, and let them boast!
 To the sun's sacred rays, a living host,
 All their works are an empty jest.
 They melt and shape untiringly:
 And once, in bronze, it's plain to see,
 They think they've caught the very best.
 What happens at last to these proud ones?
 The god's statues standing high –
 An earthquake tosses to the sky:
 Long since, they're all melted down.
 Earth's toil, whatever else it may be,
 Is nothing still, but drudgery:
 The waves grant a life that's better:

I'll bear you to eternal waters,

As Proteus-Dolphin.

(Transforming himself.)

That's soon done!

Now you'll find your fairest luck:

I'm carrying you across my back,

To wed you with the ocean.

Thales

Yield to your praiseworthy wish,

Start at the beginning, with the fish!

Be ready for the swiftest working!

Be ruled by the eternal norms,

Move through a thousand, thousand forms,

And you'll ascend in time to Man.

Proteus

With spirit, join the watery plan,

Equal in size, where all began,

And move here as you wish to do:

Don't wrestle with the higher orders:

Once man, inside mankind's borders,

Then all will be over with you.

Thales

That's as may be: it's still fine,
 To be a real man, in your own time.

Proteus (*To Thales.*)

As long as it's someone of your kind!
 You don't just live for some brief time:
 With your pale and ghostly peers,
 I've watched you already for hundreds of years.

The Sirens (*On the rocky cliffs.*)

What's that ring of little clouds, set
 In a circle round the moon?
 They are doves, by love ignited,
 Winged, white as winter noon.
 All her ardent flocks of birds:
 Paphos, now, has sent to us,
 So our festival's completed,
 Sweet and clear our happy bliss!

Nereus (*Approaching Thales.*)

Though some nocturnal wanderer

Might call it only airy moonshine:
 We spirits think it something other,
 It's one true meaning we can find:
 They are doves that accompany
 My daughter in her moving shell.
 Wondrous flights of artistry,
 Learnt in ancient times, as well.

Thales

I too think that thing is best,
 That can please the real man,
 And in warm and silent nest,
 Keep living Sacredness to hand.

Psylli and Marsi (*Peoples of Italy and North Africa. On sea-bulls, sea-heifers and sea-rams.*)

In the hollow caves of Cyprus
 Not yet rocked, by the sea-god,
 Not yet shaken, by old Seismos,
 Breathed on, by eternal breezes,
 And, as in the ancient days,
 Delighting in peaceful ways,
 With us Venus' chariot stays,
 And through nocturnal murmurs,

Through the sweet entwining waters,
We lead the loveliest of daughters,
Unseen by newer generation.
Travelling on our gentle journey
No winged lion, or eagle fear we,
Neither cross nor crescent,
Though it's throned in heaven,
Though it moves and sways,
Though it drives and slays,
Crops, towns, in ruin lays.
We, swiftly bring on
The loveliest of women.

The Sirens

Lightly now, and gently go,
Round the chariot, ring on ring,
Often weaving, row by row,
All in order, round it, snaking,
Approach you active Nereids
Sturdy women, sweetly wild,
Tender Dorides bring, amidst,
Galatea, Mother's child:
Most, so goddess-like her calm,

Worthy of immortality,
 Yet enticing, with her charm,
 As human femininity.

The Dorides (*In Chorus, mounted on dolphins, passing Nereus.*)

Lend us, Luna, light and shadow,
 Clarity for flowering youth!
 Charming husbands here we show:
 Plead for them with our father, too.

(*To Nereus.*)

They are boys, whom we rescued
 From the breaker's teeth, and then,
 In the reeds and mosses bedded,
 Warmed them back to life again,
 Now with glowing kisses they
 Must thank us truly here today:
 Look with favour now on them!

Nereus

Here there's a dual prize, I find, to treasure:
 You show compassion, and it brings you pleasure.

The Dorides

Father, praise our mission, all,
And sanction our fond request,
Let us hold them fast, immortal,
On each young eternal breast.

Nereus

Be happy with your handsome catch,
Accept the youngsters here, as men:
I can't myself grant what you ask,
Since Zeus alone can make it happen.
The waves that heave and rock you
Leave no place for love to stand,
So when this inclination leaves you,
Send them quietly back to land.

The Dorides

Sweet boys, you are so dear to us,
But sadly we must separate:
We asked eternal faithfulness,
But the gods forbid that fate.

The Young Men

We're the valiant sailor lads,

If you'd refresh us further,
We've never had it quite so good
And we'll never have it better.
(*Galatea approaches on her shell-chariot.*)

Nereus

It's you, my darling!

Galatea

O father! Delight!
Linger, you dolphins, I'm gripped by the sight.

Nereus

Past already, they're moving past,
Wheeling in circular motion:
What care they for the heart's deep emotion!
Ah, if they'd just take me with them, at last!
And yet, a single glance gives here,
Something that will last all year.

Thales

Hail! Hail! Anew!
How happy I feel, too,

Pierced by the Beautiful and True....

All things came from the watery view!

All things are sustained by water!

Ocean, grant us your realm forever.

If you didn't produce the clouds,

No flowing streams would be allowed,

The rivers wouldn't roar and shout,

The streams would never bubble out,

Where would hill, plain, and world be then?

The freshness of life's what you maintain.

An Echo (*A chorus from the collective circles.*)

The freshness of life flows back from you, again.

Nereus

Floating, turning, they change place,

Far off, no longer face to face:

In extended linking circles,

Appropriate to the festival,

The countless company's weaving.

But Galatea's throne of shell,

I see it clearly: see it still.

It gleams like a star,

Through the throng,
A crowd, the Beloved shines among!
Though just as far,
It shimmers bright and clear,
Always true, and near.

Homunculus

In this delightful ocean
Whatever I may shine on,
Is all sweet and fair.

Proteus

In this living ocean,
You light's shining motion,
First rings in splendour there.

Nereus

At the heart of the throng, what mystery
Offers itself for our eyes to see?
What shines round the shell, at Galatea's feet?
Now waxing powerful, now gentle and sweet,
As if it were fed by the pulses of Love.

Thales

Homunculus, drawn there by Proteus....

Those are the symptoms of imperious yearning,

I'd expect now the sound of an anguished ringing:

He'll shatter himself on the glittering throne:

He glitters, he flashes, already, it's done.

The Sirens

What fiery wonder transfigures the waves, there,

As one on another sparkles and breaks, there?

It flashes and flickers and brightens towards us:

The nocturnal tracks of the bodies shine round us,

And everything near is surrounded with flame:

So let Eros rule, now: who started the game!

Hail to the sea! Hail to the waves!

Circled, now, by the sacred blaze!

Hail to water! Hail to fire!

Hail to the rarest sweet desire!

All In Chorus

Hail, the gently flowing breeze!

Hail, hidden caverns of the seas!

Be honoured now, for evermore,

You, the Elemental four!

ACT 3

Scene I: Before the Palace of Menelaus in Sparta

(Helen enters with the Chorus of Captive Trojan Women. Panthalis is leader of the Chorus.)

Helen

I, Helen the much admired yet much reviled,
 Come from the shore, where recently we landed,
 Still drunk with the violent rocking of those waves
 That from Phrygian heights on high-arched backs,
 By Poseidon's favour, and the East Wind's power,
 Carried us here to the coast of my native land.
 There, below us, beside his bravest soldiers
 King Menelaus, now, celebrates his return.
 But you, bid me welcome, you, the lofty house
 Tyndareus my father built when he returned,
 Close by the slope of Pallas Athene's hill:
 Here, where with Clytemnestra, in sisterhood, I
 And Castor and Pollux, grew and happily played:
 You, more nobly adorned than all Sparta's houses.
 Be greeted by me, you honoured double doors!
 Once, Menelaus the shining bridegroom came
 To me, through your friendly inviting portals,

I, the one singled out from among so many.
 Open to me once more, so that I might fulfil,
 The King's command, truly, as a wife should.
 Let me pass! And let everything be left behind,
 That raged round me, till now, so full of doom.
 For since, light in heart, I left this place behind,
 Seeking out Venus' temple, in sacred duty,
 Where instead a Trojan robber abducted me,
 Many things have happened, men, far and wide,
 Gladly tell of, though she's not so glad to hear them,
 Round whom the story grew, and myth was spun.

Chorus

O marvellous woman, don't disdain
 Inheritance of the noblest estate!
 For the highest fate's granted to you alone,
 The glory of beauty that towers above all.
 The Hero's name sounds his advance,
 And proudly he strides:
 But he bows down, most stubborn of men,
 Before conquering Beauty, in mind and sense.

Helen

Enough of that! I'm brought here by my husband,
I've been sent ahead by him, now, to his city:
But what the meaning of it is I can hardly guess.
Do I come as his wife? Do I come as the Queen?
Or a sacrifice, for a Prince's bitter pain,
And the ill fortune long endured by the Greeks?
I'm conquered: but am I a prisoner? I can't tell!
True, the Immortals appointed Fame, and Fate,
As the two ambiguous, doubtful companions
Of Beauty, to stand here at this threshold with me,
The gloomy, threatening presences by my side.
Even in the hollow ship my husband seldom
Gazed at me, or spoke an encouraging word.
He sat in front of me, as if in evil thought.
But scarcely had the foremost ship's prow greeted
Land, in that deep bay Eurotas' mouth has made,
Than he spoke to us, as the gods had urged him:
'Here my soldiers will disembark in ordered ranks,
I'll muster them, ranged along the ocean's-shore:
But you'll go on, ever on along the banks
Of sacred Eurotas, shining with bright orchards,
Guide the horses through gleaming water meadows,
Till of your lovely journey you make an end,

Where Lacedemon, once a rich spreading field,
Surrounded by austere mountains, was created.
Walk through the high-towered house of princes,
And summon the capable old Stewardess
Along with the maidservants I left behind,
Let her display the store of rich treasure to you,
That which your father left, and that I myself
Have added to, amassing it in war and peace.
You'll find it all still in the most perfect order:
It is a prince's privilege that he should find
That all is loyalty, on returning to his house,
All that he's left behind still in its proper place.
Since no slave has the power to effect a change.'

Chorus

Let this treasure, so steadily massed,
Bring you delight, now, in eye and breast!
For the necklace bright, and the crown of gold,
Were resting, and darkening, in proud repose:
But enter now, and claim them all,
They'll quickly respond.
I love to see Beauty itself compete
Against gold and pearls and glittering gems.

Helen

So again there came my lord's imperious speech:

'When you've examined all of it in due order,

Take as many tripods as you think you'll need,

And as many vessels as sacrifice requires,

To fulfil the customs of the sacred rites.

Take cauldrons, and basins, and circular bowls:

The purest of water from the holy fountains,

In deep urns: take care that you've dry wood too,

Such as will quickly catch fire, and hold all ready:

And finally don't forget a well-honed knife:

Everything else I'll leave for your decision.'

So he spoke, at the same time urging my going:

But he who commanded marked out nothing living

To be slain: to honour the Olympian gods.

Essential, but I'll think no more about it,

And leave all things in the hands of the gods:

They fulfil whatever is in their mind to do,

Whether or not we think it good or evil:

In either case we mortals must endure it.

Often the priest's heavy axe has been lifted,

From the bowed neck of the sacrificial victim,

So he could not slaughter it, being hindered,
By enemies near, or the gods' intervention.

Chorus

What might happen, think not of that:
Queen, go on, now, step inside,
And be brave!
Good and evil come
Unannounced, to Mankind:
Though it's proclaimed, we'll not believe.
Troy still burned: did we not see
Death in our faces, shameful death:
And are we not here,
Your friends, happily serving,
Seeing the blinding sun in the sky
Seeing the Loveliest on Earth,
You, the kind: we the joyous?

Helen

Let it be, as it will! Whatever awaits me,
I must go, swiftly, up to that royal house,
Long forsaken, often longed for, almost lost,
That's before my eyes once more: I know not how.

My feet don't carry me onwards so bravely, now,
Up those high steps, I skipped over as a child.

Chorus

Sorrowful prisoners,
Oh, cast away, Sisters,
All your pain, to the winds:
Share in your mistress' joy
Share now in Helen's joy,
Who returns, truly late indeed,
To her father's hearth and home,
But with all the more firm a step,
Delightedly approaching.

Praise the sacred gods,
Creating happiness,
Bringing the wanderer home!
See the freed prisoner
Soar on uplifted wings,
Over harshness, while, all in vain,
The captives, so full of longing,
Pine away, arms still outstretched,
To the walls of their prison.

But a god snatched her up, then,
The far-exiled:
And from Ilium's fall,
Carried her back once more, home
To the old, to the newly adorned, her
Father's house,
From unspeakable
Rapture and torment,
Now, reborn, to remember
The days of her childhood.

Panthalis (*As leader of the Chorus.*)

Now leave behind the joyful path of your singing,
And turn your eyes towards the open doorway!
Sisters, what do I see! Surely the Queen returns
Waking towards us, again, with anxious steps?
What is it, great Queen? What can you have met with,
Within the halls of your house, instead of greetings,
To cause you such trembling? You can hide nothing,
Since I see your reluctance written on your brow,
And amazement competes there with noble anger.

Helen (*Who has left the doors open, in her turmoil.*)

A daughter of Zeus is stirred by no common fear,
 No lightly passing hand of Terror can touch her:
 Only the Horror that the womb of ancient Night,
 Raised from chaos, and shaped in its many forms,
 In glowing clouds that shoot, upwards and outwards,
 From the peak's fiery throat, to shake the hero's breast.
 So here today the Stygian gods have marked
 The entrance to my house with terror: and gladly
 I'd take myself far away, like a guest let go,
 Far from this often trodden, long yearned for threshold.
 But no! I've retreated here now, into the light,
 And you Powers will drive me no further, whoever
 You are. Rather, I'll think of some consecration,
 So the hearth-fire, cleansed, greets the wife, as the lord.

The Leader of the Chorus

Noble lady, reveal to your maidservants here,
 Who help you reverently, what has happened.

Helen

You'll see what I saw yourselves, with your own eyes,
 If ancient Night has not, straight away, swallowed it,

That shape of hers: withdrawn it to her heart's depths.

But I'll picture it to you in words, so you'll know:

As, with those recent orders in mind, I trod,

Gravely, through the palace's innermost room,

Awed by the silence of the gloomy corridors,

No sound of busy labour greeting my ears,

No sound of prompt, diligent effort meeting my eye,

No Stewardess appeared, and no maidservants,

No courtesy such as usually greets the stranger.

But as I approached closer to the hearth stone

Beside the glowing ashes that remained, I saw

A veiled woman, vast shape, seated on the floor,

Not like one who's asleep, but one deep in thought.

I summoned her to work, with words of command,

Thinking she was the Stewardess whom my husband,

Had placed there perhaps, with foresight, when he left.

But she still sat there, crouched and immoveable:

At last, stirred by my threats, she raised her arm,

As if she gestured me away from hearth and hall.

I turned aside from her, angrily, and sped,

To the steps where the Thalamos is adorned

On high, and close beside it the treasure house:

Suddenly that strange shape sprang up from the floor,

Barring my way, imperiously, showing herself,
 Tall and haggard, with hollow, blood-coloured gaze:
 A shape so weird that mind and eye were troubled.
 But I talk to the wind: for words weary themselves
 Trying to conjure forms, vainly, like some creator.
 See for yourselves! She even dares the daylight!
 Here am I mistress, till the King, my lord, shall come.
 Phoebus, beauty's friend, drives the horrid spawn of Night
 To caverns underground, or he binds them fast.
 (*Phorkyas appears on the threshold, between the doorposts.*)

Chorus

Much have I learned, although the locks
 Curl youthfully still across my temples!
 Many the terrible things I've seen,
 The soldiers' misery, Ilium's night,
 When it fell.
 Through the clouded, and dust-filled turmoil,
 The press of warriors, I heard the gods
 Calling terribly, heard the ringing
 Iron voice of Discord through the field,
 City-wards.

Ah! They still stood there, Ilium's
Walls, but the glow of the flames
Soon ran from neighbour to neighbour,
Ever spreading, hither and thither,
With the breath of their storm,
Over the darkening city.
Fleeing, through smoke and heat, I saw
Amid the tongues of soaring fire,
The fearful angry presence of gods,
Marvellous, those striding figures,
Like giants, they were, through the gloom,
The fire-illuminated vapour.

Did I see that Confusion,
Or did the fear-consumed Spirit
Create it? Never will I be able,
To say, but I'm truly certain
Of this, that here I see, Her,
Monstrous shape to my eyes:
My hand could even touch Her,
If terror did not restrain me,
Saving me from danger.

Which of the daughters
Of Phorkyas are you?
Since I liken you
To that family.

Are you perhaps one of the Graeae,
A single eye and a single tooth,
Owned alternately between you,
One born of greyness?

Monster, do you dare
Here, next to Beauty,
Show yourself to Phoebus,
And his knowing gaze?

Then step out before him regardless:
Since he'll not look at what's ugly,
Just as his holy eye,
Has never seen shadow.
Yet we mortals are compelled, ah,
By unfortunate gloomy fate,
To the unspeakably painful sight
She, reprehensible, ever ill fated,

Provokes in the lover of Beauty.

Yet hear me then, if you boldly
 Encounter us: hear the curse,
 Hear the threat of every abuse,
 From the condemnatory mouth of the fortunate,
 Whom the gods themselves have created.

Phorkyas (*The transformed Mephistopheles.*)

The saying is old, with meaning noble and true,
 That Beauty and Shame, together, hand in hand,
 Never pursue the same path, over green Earth.
 Such ancient, deep-rooted hatred lives in both,
 That whenever they meet, by chance, on the way,
 The one will always turn her back on her rival.
 Then quickly and fiercely each goes on, again,
 Shame downcast, but Beauty mocking in spirit,
 Till in the end Orcus' dark void shall take her,
 If age hasn't, long before then, tamed her pride.
 So now I find you, impudent, come from abroad,
 With overflowing arrogance, like the cranes,
 Their noisily croaking ranks, high overhead,
 Their long cloud, sending its creaking tones, down here,

Tempting the quiet traveller to look upwards:
 Yet they pursue their way, while he follows his:
 And that's the way it will be with us as well.
 What then are you, wild Maenads or Bacchantes,
 That dare to rage round the great royal palace?
 Who are you, then, who howl at this high house's
 Stewardess, like a pack of bitches, at the moon?
 Do you think it's hidden from me what race you are?
 You brood, begotten in battle, raised on slaughter,
 Lusting for men, the seducers and the seduced,
 Draining the soldiers' and the citizens' powers!
 To see your crowd's like watching a vast swarm
 Of locusts settle here, darkening the fields.
 You the wasters of others labour! Nibbling,
 Destroying, the ripening crops of prosperity!
 Defeated, bartered, sold in the market, you!

Helen

Who abuses the servants before the mistress,
 Presumptuously usurping a wife's true rights?
 Only to her is it given to praise whatever's
 Praiseworthy: and to punish what is at fault.
 I'm well content, as well, with all the services

They provided to me, when Ilium's great might,
 Stood beleaguered, and fell in ruins: none the less
 Just as we've endured the wretched wandering
 Journey, where often one thinks only of oneself,
 So here I expect it now from a happier crew:
 A lord asks how slaves serve, not what they are.
 So be silent, then, and no longer jeer at them.
 If you've guarded the king's house well until now,
 In place of the mistress, such is to your credit:
 But now that she comes herself, you should draw back,
 Lest you find punishment instead of fair reward.

Phorkyas

Disciplining servants is a prerogative
 That the noble wife of a king, loved by the gods,
 Has duly earned by years of wise discretion.
 Since you, acknowledged, take up your former place
 Once more, as Queen, and mistress of the house,
 Resume the slackened reins again, and rule here,
 Hold the treasure in your keeping, and us with it.
 But first of all defend me, who am the elder,
 Against this crowd, who if they are compared
 To your swanlike beauty, are only cackling geese.

The Leader of the Chorus

How ugly ugliness looks, next to beauty.

Phorkyas

How stupid the lack of reason, next to sense.

(From here on the Chorus answer in turn, stepping forward one by one.)

First Member of the Chorus

Tell us of Father Erebus: tell us of Mother Night.

Phorkyas

Speak about Scylla, sweet sister of *your* race.

Second Member of the Chorus

There are plenty of monsters in *your* family tree.

Phorkyas

Go down to Orcus, look for *your* tribe down there!

Third Member of the Chorus

Those who are down there are far too young for you.

Phorkyas

Try your arts of seduction on old Tiresias.

Fourth Member of the Chorus

Orion's nurse was your great great-grandchild.

Phorkyas

I suspect that the Harpies raised you all, on filth.

Fifth Member of the Chorus

What do you feed your perfect leanness on?

Phorkyas

Not on the blood that you all lust so much for.

Sixth Member of the Chorus

You hunger for corpses, you, foul corpse yourself!

Phorkyas

Vampire's teeth gleam there, in your shameless muzzle.

The Leader of the Chorus

It would shut yours tight, if I called out who you are.

Phorkyas

Well say your own name first: that'll solve the riddle.

Helen

I intervene, not in anger but in sorrow,
To forbid this alternating discord!
A ruler meets with nothing that's more harmful
Than private disputes of his quarrelling servants.
Then his firm orders are no longer answered
With swiftly answering and harmonious action,
Instead, wilful commotion roars around him:
Self-composure lost, he abuses them in vain.
Not only that. Unacceptably, in anger,
You've summoned the wretched shapes of dreadful forms,
They surround me, so I feel I'm being whirled
To Orcus, from these familiar paternal fields.
Am I remembering? Did delusion grip me?
Was I all of that? Am I, now? And shall be still,
Symbol of dream and fear, to those who waste cities?
The maidservants shudder, but you, the eldest,
Stand there calmly: speak words of reason to me!

Phorkyas

The favour of the gods seems only a dream
 To one who recalls the troubles of long ages.
 But you, blessed, beyond all aim and measure,
 Quickly inflamed to every sort of daring risk,
 Only found fires of love, in the realm of life,
 Theseus, driven by lust, abducted you, a child,
 He strong as Hercules: a man nobly formed.

Helen

He carried me off, a slender ten-year old fawn,
 And caged me in Aphidnus' tower in Attica.

Phorkyas

But soon freed, by the hands of Castor and Pollux,
 A crowd of suitors, the heroes, swarmed round you.

Helen

Yet, I freely confess, above all, Patroclus
 The image of Achilles, had my secret favour,

Phorkyas

But your father's will bound you to Menelaus,

The brave sea rover, the defender of his house.

Helen

He gave him his daughter, and command of the state.

Hermione came from our married existence.

Phorkyas

But while he disputed his right to far off Crete,

To you, the lonely, came all too handsome a guest.

Helen

Why do you recall that semi-widowhood,

And all the terrible ruin it caused around me?

Phorkyas

To me, a free-born Cretan, his same journey

Brought captivity and years of slavery.

Helen

He ordered you here at once, as Stewardess,

Entrusting the fortress and his treasure to you.

Phorkyas

Which you abandoned, for Ilium's high city,
And the inexhaustible delights of love.

Helen

Not delights, be sure! All too bitter a sorrow
Was poured endlessly over my head and breast.

Phorkyas

Yet they say that you appeared in dual form,
Seen in Troy and, at the same time, in Egypt.

Helen

Don't confuse my clouded, wandering mind completely.
To this moment, I don't know which of them I am.

Phorkyas

Then they say: Achilles became your companion,
Came, burning, from the empty realm of shadows!
He'd loved you before, opposing fate's command.

Helen

As phantom, I bound myself to a phantom.
It was a dream, as the tales themselves tell.

I fade, now, become a phantom to myself.

(She sinks into the arms of the Chorus.)

Silence! Silence!

False-seeing one, false-speaking one, you!

Out of the terrible single-toothed

Mouth, what might be breathed, so,

Out of so frightful a throat of horror!

Now the malevolent, seemingly benevolent,

Wolf's anger under the woolly fleece,

Is more terrible to me than the jaws

Of the three-headed dog.

We stand here anxiously listening:

When? How? Where, will such malice

Break out now

From this predatory monster?

Now rather than friendly words, richly laced

With trust, waters of Lethe, sweet and mild,

You stir up all from the past,

The evil more than the good,

And instantly darken

The gleam of the present

And also the future's

Sweetly glimmering, hopeful dawn.

Silence! Silence!

So the Queen's spirit, now,
 Almost ready to leave her,
 Can still hold, and uphold
 This, the form of all forms
 On which the sun ever lighted.

(Helen has recovered, and stands in the centre again.)

Phorkyas

Shining out from fleeting vapours, comes the sunlight of our day, here,
 That when veiled could so delight us, but in splendour only blinds us.
 As the world is open to you, when you show your lovely face, now,
 Though they scorn me so as ugly, still I know the beautiful.

Helen

I step, trembling, from the abyss that, in fainting, closed around me,
 And would gladly rest my body, tired and weary are my limbs:
 But it's proper for a Queen, then, as it is for all about her,
 To be calm, and courageous, whatever harm shall threaten.

Phorkyas

In your Majesty, and Beauty, standing here, now, before us,
Your look says it commands us. What do you command? Speak out.

Helen

Prepare yourselves to atone for what your quarrel has neglected:
Hurry with your sacrifice, now, as the king himself commanded.

Phorkyas

All is ready in the palace, bowls, and tripods, sharpened axe-blade,
For the sprinkling, incense burning: show me now the ready victim!

Helen

That the king has failed to tell me.

Phorkyas

He said nothing? Words of woe!

Helen

What's this woe that overcomes you?

Phorkyas

Queen, it means you must be slaughtered!

Helen

I?

Phorkyas

And them.

Chorus

Oh, pain and suffering!

Phorkyas

You will fall beneath the axe.

Helen

Presaged, though still dreadful: I, alas!

Phorkyas

There's no escaping.

Chorus

Oh! And us? What happens to us?

Phorkyas

She will die a noble death, then:

But you'll hang in rows together, struggling, all along the rafters

Holding up the gabled roof there, as bird-catchers dangle thrushes.

(Helena and the Chorus stand stunned and alarmed, in striking composed groups.)

Phantoms! – Frozen images, you stand, parted

From that light you can't belong to, in your terror.

Men, and the tribe of phantoms you resemble,

Will never willingly forgo the sunlight:

But none are saved from their fate, or can defer it.

All know it's true, but only a few accept it.

Enough, you're lost! Now, quickly: start the work.

(She claps her hands: muffled dwarfish forms appear in the doorway, and quickly carry out her orders.)

This way, you spheres, shadowy rounded forms!

Roll over here: and do what harm you wish.

Set up the gold-horned altar that you carry,

Let the gleaming axe lie there on the silver rim,

Fill the urns with water to wash away

All the hideous stains of darkened blood.

Spread the rich carpets out, here, over the dust,

So the sacrifice can kneel in royal manner,

And be wrapped around, once the head is severed,

And buried decently there, and with due honour.

The Leader of the Chorus

The Queen stands here beside us deep in thought,
 The maidservants wither away like mown grass:
 I think that I, as the eldest, am bound, in sacred duty,
 To barter words with you, the eldest of all by far.
 You're wise, experienced, and seem well-disposed,
 And though this foolish crowd baited you in error,
 Speak of a way to escape this fate, if you know it.

Phorkyas

That's easily done: it depends on the Queen alone,
 To save herself, and you her followers with her.
 But decision is required, and of the swiftest.

Chorus

Most honoured of Fates, wisest of Sibyls, you,
 Hold the gold shears apart: bring both aid and light:
 Already, we feel ourselves swinging, struggling,
 Fearful, for our limbs would rather be dancing,
 And afterwards rest, soft, on our lovers' breast.

Helen

Let them be afraid! I feel pain but no terror:

Yet if rescue's possible, I gladly accept.

To the wise, far-seeing mind, the impossible

Is often revealed as possible. Speak: say on!

Chorus

Speak, and tell us, tell us quickly: how we might escape the terror,

Dreadful nooses that still threaten, like some kind of evil necklace

Wound around our tender necks? Already we, oh, wretched creatures,

Feel the choking, suffocating, if you, Rhea, the great mother

Of the gods, won't show us mercy.

Phorkyas

Have you the patience to listen, to long winded

Speeches, in silence? The history's endless.

Chorus

Patience enough! While we're listening, we're alive.

Phorkyas

He who stays at home to guard his noble wealth

And secures the high walls of his lofty dwelling,

And maintains his roof against the driving rain,

Will prosper in all the days of his long life:
 But whoever, in guilt, crosses the square-cut stones
 Of the sacred threshold, swiftly, with fleeing steps,
 Will, indeed find the ancient place, on their return,
 But altered in every way, if not overthrown.

Helen

Why recount these familiar sayings here?
 If you'd relate things: don't provoke annoyance.

Phorkyas

It's simple fact, in no way a criticism.
 Menelaus sailed from bay to bay, looting,
 Skirted the coast and islands, aggressively,
 Returned with the spoils that are rusting there.
 Then he spent ten long years there in front of Troy:
 And I don't know how many more, on the way home.
 And how are things now with this place where we stand,
 Tyndareus' noble house, and the region round?

Helen

Do you embrace all scorn so completely
 You can only open your mouth to criticise?

Phorkyas

The vales were neglected for so many years,
 Those that rise behind Sparta, to the northward,
 Beyond Taygetus, from where, a living stream,
 Eurotas, pours downward, then along our valley,
 Flows by our broad reed-beds, to feed your swans.
 Up there, in the mountain vales, a bold race settled,
 Pushing southward from Cimmerian darkness,
 And then built an inaccessible fortress there,
 From which, at will, they harass land and people.

Helen

Have they achieved all that? It seems unlikely.

Phorkyas

They've had time, perhaps twenty years in all.

Helena

Is there a leader? Are they a band of robbers?

Phorkyas

Not robbers, but one of them acts as leader.

I don't curse him, though he attacked me too.

He might have taken all, but was satisfied

With gifts, not tribute, as he called them.

Helen

How did he look?

Phorkyas

Less than evil! He pleased me well.

He's vigorous, daring, and sophisticated,

An intelligent man: as few among the Greeks.

They call his race Barbarians, but I'm doubtful

If they are any crueller than those heroes

Who proved such devourers of men, before Troy.

I respected his greatness, and confided in him.

His fortress! You should see with your own eyes!

It's a great deal more than the clumsy masonry

Your father rolled together, higgledy-piggledy,

Cyclopean as a Cyclops, piling raw stone,

Over raw stone: there, instead there, it's all

Plumb line and balance: it's laid out by rule.

Look from outside! It rises straight to the sky,

So firm, tightly jointed – smooth as a steel mirror

To climb – that even your thoughts slide off!
And, inside, great courts with plenty of room,
Ringed by buildings, of every use and nature.
There you'll see pillars, columns, arches, quoins,
Balconies, galleries, facing inwards and outwards,
And coats of arms.

Chorus

What arms are those?

Phorkyas

Ajax carried
A writhing snake on his shield: you yourself saw it.
The Seven against Thebes also bore their symbols
On each of their shields, replete with meaning.
There you saw moons, and stars in the night sky,
Heroes and Goddesses, torches, ladders, swords,
And whatever fierce weapons threaten fine cities.
Our heroic band carries such images too,
In bright colours, bestowed by our ancestors.
There you see lions, eagles with beaks and claws,
Horns of oxen, wings, roses, and peacocks' tails,
Bands too made of gold, black, silver, blue and red.

The like of these hang in their halls, row on row.
 In spacious halls, as wide as the whole wide world:
 You could dance there!

Chorus

Say then, are there dancers, there?

Phorkyas

The best! A lively crowd of golden-haired youths.
 The fragrance of youth! Paris was fragrant, thus,
 When he grew close to the Queen.

Helen

You mistake your role
 Completely: now speak your closing lines to me!

Phorkyas

No, you speak the last! Grave, and distinct say: Yes!
 And I'll surround you with that fortress.

Chorus

O, speak
 That one short word, and save both yourself, and us!

Helen

What? Do I fear King Menelaus would commit
Such a cruel offence as to make me kill myself?

Phorkyas

Have you forgotten how he wreaked mutilation,
Unheard-of, on Deiphobus, dead Paris' brother,
Because he stubbornly claimed you, the widow,
And prized you? He cropped both nose and ears,
And disfigured him, there: It was terrible to see.

Helen

Yes he did that, and he did it for my sake.

Phorkyas

Because of it, now, he'll do the same to you.

Beauty is indivisible: he who owns it

Destroys it, rather than share a part of it.

(Trumpets sound in the distance: the Chorus starts in terror.)

As a trumpet call pierces the ear to grip

And tear the innards: Jealousy drives her claws

Into the breast of him who can never forget

What once he had, and lost, and no longer has.

Chorus

Don't you hear the trumpets calling? Don't you see the flash of swords?

Phorkyas

King and master, now be welcome, gladly I'll offer my account.

Chorus

But, what of us?

Phorkyas

In truth, you know that her death's before your eyes,

Find your own death there within them: there's no hope left for you.

(A Pause.)

Helen

I ponder this simple thing that I might try.

You are a hostile daemon: I feel it deeply,

I'm fearful you'll still make evil out of good.

But then, I'll follow you to that fortress, there:

I know the rest: but what the Queen might conceal

Concerning it, mysteriously, in her heart,
 Be unknown to all. Now, old one, lead the way!

Chorus

O, how gladly we're going,
 On hurrying feet:
 Death is behind:
 Before us again,
 Towering fortress
 Inaccessible walls.
 Though they guard us as well
 As Ilium's citadel,
 Still in the end, it
 Fell, through the basest of ruses.

(Mists rise and spread, obscuring the background, and the nearer part of the scene, at will.)

What is this? How?
 Sisters, look round!
 Wasn't it loveliest day?
 Strips of vapour hover about,
 Rise from Eurotas' holy stream:
 Already the loveliest
 Reed-wreathed shore has vanished from sight:
 And the proud, free, graceful

Gentle glide of the swans
Swimming in sociable joy,
I alas see, no more!

Yet still, still
I hear them calling,
In hoarse tones, calling afar!
Proclaiming death, they are speaking.
Ah, that to us they may not,
Instead of salvation promised,
Proclaim our ruin, at last:
To us, the swanlike, long,
Lovely, white-throated, and ah!
Our Queen born of the swan.
Woe to us, woe!

All's hidden already
Vapour's swirling around.
Now we can't see one another!
What's happening? Are we moving?

We're hovering with
Straggling steps along the ground?

Can't you see? Isn't that Hermes
 Soaring ahead? Doesn't his gold wand gleam,
 Beckoning us, ordering us back again
 To the wholly joyless, and greyly-twilit,
 Intangible, phantom-filled,
 Overcrowded, ever-empty Hades?

Yes, at once, now, all is darkening, dully all the vapours vanish,
 Grey with gloom, and brown as walls. Walls appearing to our vision,
 Blank now to our clearer vision. A court now is it? Or a deep pit?
 Fearful, though, in either case, now! Sisters, oh! We are imprisoned,
 Captives, as we've never been.

Scene II: The Inner Court of The Castle

(Surrounded with richly ornamented buildings of the Middle Ages.)

The Leader of the Chorus

Hasty and foolish, and typical of womankind!
 They hang on the moment, sport of every breeze,
 Of every chance and mischance, never knowing
 How to suffer either calmly! One's always certain,
 Fiercely, to contradict the others, others her:
 Only, they laugh or cry alike, in joy or pain.

Now, hush! And listen to what our high-minded
Mistress may decide, here, for herself and us.

Helen

Pythoness, where are you? However you're named:
Come out from the arches of this dark fortress.
If you come from the wondrous lord and hero
To announce me, and ready a fit reception,
Accept my thanks, and lead me there quickly:
I wish my wanderings ended. I want to rest.

The Leader of the Chorus

Queen, in vain, you look about in all directions:
That wretched shape has vanished, stayed perhaps
There in the vapour, out of whose depths we came,
I cannot tell how, so swiftly, without a footfall.
Perhaps she wanders lost in the vast labyrinth
Of these many castles wondrously merged in one.
Seeking high and princely greeting from her lord.
But see! There a crowd moves about in readiness.
Along galleries, at windows, through the doors
Come a crowd of servants, scurrying to and fro:
It proclaims a noblest welcome for the guest.

Chorus

My heart is eased! O, see over there,
How a company of handsome youths approach
With lingering step, in dignified order,
Marching in ranks. Who gave out the command
To marshal them, and so quickly arranged
All this youthful team of so handsome a race?
What shall I admire most? Is it the graceful step,
Or the curls of hair on the palest of brows,
Or the rounded cheeks with a peach's blushes,
And like it also, in their silkiest down?
I'd gladly bite, yet I'm frightened to try it:
Since in a similar case, and I shudder to say it,
The mouth was as suddenly filled, with ashes!
But the handsomest
Come to us now:
What do they carry?
Steps for the throne,
Carpets and seat,
Curtain, canopy,
Jewelled finery:
Waving above us,

Forming a garland,
 Over the head of our Queen:
 For she, already, invited
 Ascends, to the noble seat.
 Forward now,
 Step by step,
 Solemnly ranked.
 Worthy, O worthy, triply worthy,
 Let such a reception be blessed!

(What the Chorus has described takes place. After the boys and squires have descended in long procession, Faust appears above, at the top of the staircase, in the costume of a knight of the Middle Ages, and then descends slowly and with dignity.)

The Leader of the Chorus (*Observing him closely.*)

If indeed the gods have not, as they often do,
 Only lent this man brave form, for an instant,
 Exalted his dignity, and charming presence,
 As a temporary act, then whatever he does
 He'll succeed, whether it's warring with men,
 Or in the lesser struggles with lovely ladies.
 Truly I prefer him to hosts of others,
 Whom my eyes have seen, the highly praised.
 I see the Prince approach, with slow solemn step,

Restrained by reverence: Queen, turn towards him!

Faust (*Approaching: a man in chains at his side.*)

Instead of the usual calm greeting

Instead of a reverential welcome,

Here I bring a wretch bound fast with chains,

Who failed so in his duty, I failed mine.

Kneel here, so this noble lady

May hear a prompt confession of your guilt.

This, royal Mistress, is the man selected

Because of his keen vision to gaze about

From the high tower, and to look keenly

At heaven's spaces, and the breadth of earth,

To report whatever moves here or there,

From the encircling hills, to the castle,

Whether a transit of the woolly flocks,

Or soldiers: so we can protect the first,

Attack the others. Today, negligence!

You came here: he had nothing to report:

We failed in the reception you deserved,

In honour of the guest. Now he forfeits

His guilty life, and would have shed his blood

In a merited death: but only you alone

Shall pardon him or punish, as you wish.

Helen

Such great power you choose to grant me,
As judge, as Mistress too, though, I suspect
You intend it as a kind of test –
Yet, I'll employ a judge's first duty,
To give the accused a hearing. Speak out.

Lynceus, the Warden of the Tower

Let me kneel, and let me see her,
Let me live, or let me die,
Already I'm devoted to her
Heavenly lady from on high.
Waiting for the dawn's advances,
Gazing at her eastern house,
Suddenly the sunlight dances,
Marvellously in the south!
Drawn to see the marvel closer,
Instead of the ravine and height,
Instead of earth and heaven there,
I gazed at her, the sole delight.
I was granted powers of vision

Like the lynx, high in the tree:
But now I peered in indecision
As in a dark and clouded dream.

How think? Even if I'd so wished?
Wall, and tower? Bolted gate?
Mist, it rose, and cleared the mist,
Came the Goddess here in state!

I surrendered heart and eye
Drinking in the gentle light:
How that beauty blinds, and I
Was blinded wholly by the sight.

I forgot the watchman's duty,
And the promised trumpet call:
Threaten then, now, to destroy me –
Anger lies in Beauty's thrall.

Helen

I cannot punish this evil that I brought here,
With me. Ah me! What a fierce fate it is
Pursues me, so that everywhere I possess

The hearts of men, and that they neither spare
Themselves nor anything else of worth.
They steal, seduce, fight: rushing to and fro,
Demigods, heroes, gods, even daemons
Led me in my wanderings, here and there.
Alone I've confused the world, doubly so:
Now I bring threefold, fourfold woe on woe.
Take this innocent away: let him go.
It's no shame to be deceived by the gods.

Faust

O Queen, amazed, I see them both together:
The certain archer, and the stricken prey:
I see the bow, from which the shaft was loosed,
That wounded him. Arrow after arrow,
Now strikes me. Imagining the feathered whirr
Of arrows crossing every court and hall.
What am I now? My walls you make unsafe
My most faithful servants, you make rebels,
Already I fear my army too obeys
A victorious and unconquered lady.
What's left to do but add myself as well,
And all that I have vainly imagined mine?

Freely and loyally, before your feet,
Let me acknowledge you as Mistress,
Whose presence wins you throne and ownership.

Lynceus (*Carrying a chest, with men bringing others.*)

Queen, once more I advance!
The rich man begs a glance,
He sees you and at a glimpse,
He's a beggar, and a prince.

What am I now? What was I once?
What's to be willed? What's to be done?
What use the eye's clearest sight!
It glances from your royal might.

From the Eastwards we pressed on,
And suddenly the West were gone.
So wide and long the people massed,
The first knew nothing of the last.

The first rank fell: the next stood fast,
The third ranks' lances unsurpassed:
Each man was like a hundredfold,

Thousands died there, all untold.

We pressed forwards: we stormed on,
We were masters, then were gone:
And where I ruled as chief today,
Tomorrow robbed, and stole away.

We looked – and rapid was that look:
The loveliest women there we took,
We took the oxen from the stall,
We took the horses, took them all.

But my delight was to discover
The rarest things I could uncover:
And what other men might grasp,
To me was only withered grass.

I was on the trail of treasure,
Whatever my sharp eye could measure,
In every pocket I could see,
Every chest was glass to me.

Heaps of gold, they were mine,

And the noblest gems I'd find:
Yet now the emeralds alone
Are worthy to adorn your throne.

Sway there now 'twixt ear and lip,
You pearly spheres from oceans deep:
A place the rubies dare not seek,
So pale beside your rosy cheek.

And so the riches, every prize,
I set down here before your eyes:
Before your feet I gladly yield,
The spoils of many a bloody field.

As many chests as I've brought you,
I've many iron caskets too:
Let me follow your path still
And your treasure chambers fill.

You'd scarcely mounted to the throne,
When all bowed down, to you alone,
Wisdom, riches, worldly power,
Before your grace, that very hour.

I held it all fast: that is true
But now it's loosed, and all for you.
I thought its worth was plain to see,
But now it's nothing much, to me.

Everything I've owned will pass
From me like mown and withered grass.
O, give me just one brightening glance,
And all the value's in its dance!

Faust

Quickly, remove the heap that boldness won,
And take no blame for it, but seek no praise.
All is hers already, that the castle
Hides in its lap: you offer these few things
In vain. Go and pile treasure on treasure,
In due order. Present a fine array
Of unseen splendours! Let the vaulted halls
Gleam like the clearest sky, let Paradise
Be created from their dead existence.
Quickly let flowery carpet on carpet
Be unrolled beneath her foot: she'll step

On softest ground: and let her noble gaze,
Blinding all but the Gods, fall on splendour.

Lynceus

What the lord commands is nothing,
For the servants, a mere plaything:
This exalted beauty rules
Over blood and treasure too.
The whole army now is tamed,
All the swords are blunt again,
Near this form of noble gold,
The sun itself is pale and cold,
Near the riches of her face
All is but an empty space.

Helen (*To Faust.*)

I wish to speak to you, come here then
Beside me! For the empty place invites
Its lord, and so secures this place for me.

Faust

First, let my loyal dedication please you,
While I kneel, noble lady: let me kiss

The gracious hand that lifts me to your side.
Confirm me as co-regent of a realm
Of unknown borders, win now for yourself
Protector, slave, worshipper all in one!

Helen

So many wonders do I see, and hear
Amazement grips me, there's much I would know.
But teach me why that man spoke aloud
With curious speech, familiar but strange.
Each sound seeming to give way to the next,
And when a word gave pleasure to the ear,
Another came, as if to caress the first.

Faust

If my people's speech already pleases you,
O, you'll be delighted with our singing:
It completely satisfies the heart and mind.
But to be sure of it, we'll practise too:
Alternate speech entices, calls it, forth.

Helen

You'll tell me how to speak with lovely art?

Faust

It's easy, it must pour forth from the heart.

And if the breast then overflows with yearning,

One looks around and asks –

Helen

- who else is burning.

Faust

Not backwards, forwards is the spirit's sight,

This moment now, alone, –

Helen

- is our delight.

Faust

She's treasure and commitment, wealth and land:

What confirmation does she give –

Helen

– my hand.

Chorus

Who's offended that our Princess
Grants the master of the castle
A show of friendliness?
Let's confess, that we're as fully
Prisoners, as we've been till now
Since the shameful overthrow
Of Ilium, and the anxious,
Sad, and labyrinthine voyage.

Women, used to men's desires,
Are not particular,
They *are* proficient.
And they award an equal right
To shepherds with their golden hair,
Dark, fauns perhaps, bristling there,
As opportunity affords,
To bodies in their vigour.

Already they sit closer, closer,
Drawn towards each other,

Shoulder to shoulder, knee to knee,
 Hand in hand they sway
 Across the thrones'
 Soft cushioned, majesty.
 Their private raptures
 Revealed so boldly
 To the eyes of the people.

Helen

I feel so far away and yet so near,
 And gladly say now: 'Here, I am! Here!'

Faust

I scarcely breathe, I tremble, speech is dead:
 This is a dream: time and place have fled.

Helen

I seem exhausted, yet created new,
 Enmeshed with you, the unknown and the true.

Faust

Don't seek to analyse so rare a fate!
 Our duty is to live: though but a day.

Phorkyas (*Entering suddenly.*)

Spell the letters in love's primer,
Only loving, pass your time here,
Passing, let love be sublime here,
But the moment isn't right.
Don't you feel it, this dark presage?
Don't you hear the trumpet's message?
Your destruction is in sight.
Menelaus with his army
Is advancing on you quickly,
Arm yourself, for bitter fight!
Overwhelmed by the winners,
And defiled, like Deiphobus,
You'll all pay, for this delight.
First the lighter vessels shatter,
Then, for this one, at the altar,
The newly sharpened axe shines bright.

Faust

Rash disturbance! Insistent, she comes pushing in here:
Senseless haste is wrong, even where there's danger.
Unlucky news makes the fairest messenger ugly:

You, ugliest of all, bring only bad news gladly.

But you'll not succeed for once: disturb the air

With your empty breath. There's no danger looming here,

Your danger's only an idle threat to me.

(Calls, and explosions from the towers, trumpets and cornets, martial music. A powerful army marches past.)

No! Now you'll see the heroes gather,

The whole wide land will here unite:

He deserves the ladies' favour,

Who, in their defence, shall fight.

(To the leaders, who step forward from the ranks, and advance.)

Rage silently, and do your duty,

Then you'll achieve the victory,

You, the prime of northern beauty,

You, the flower of the east.

Cased in steel, with steel gleaming,

The army shatters realms at will,

They appear: the earth is shaking,

They advance, it echoes still.

At Pylos, once, we came to shore,

Old Nestor is no longer living,

Our independent army saw

Us shatter all the mighty kings.

From these walls, in an instant,
Send Menelaus back to sea:
There robbing, killing, is his errand,
As is his wish and destiny.

Dukes, I greet you every one,
Commanded by the Spartan Queen:
At her feet lay vale and mountain,
Win the kingdoms in between.

Germans, with your walls and towers,
Defend Corinth and her bays!
Then Achaia's hundred gorges
I'll trust to you, the Goths, always.

Let the Franks advance on Elis,
Messene, to the Saxons brave,
Normans, hold the Argolis,
Rule the shore: and rule the wave.

When everyone has his own land,
At foreign foes, let force be aimed,

While Sparta holds the high command
Our Queen's ancestral domain.

She'll behold you each, delighting
In lands, possessed of every right:
And at her feet you'll seek her blessing,
Acknowledgement, and law and light.

(Faust descends from the throne: the Princes form a circle round him to receive individual commands and instructions.)

Chorus

Who wants the loveliest for himself,
First, above everything,
Would be wise to have weapons about him:
He might well gain by flattery
Whoever is noblest on Earth:
But he won't possess her in peace:
The sly, and insidious tempt her from him,
Robbers will boldly steal her from him:
He must prepare to foil them.

So I praise our Prince the while,
And think him nobler than the rest,
Since he combines wisdom and strength,

So that the powerful show obedience,
Waiting his every command.
They follow his orders faithfully,
Each as much for his own profit
As for the ruler's reward and thanks,
Winning the highest fame for both.

Who now will drag her away
From the powerful possessor?
She belongs to him: let her be his,
Doubly bestowed by us, so she
And he, are surrounded inside by thick walls,
Outside, by the greatest of armies.

Faust

The gifts that, on those here, I bestow –
To each of them a prosperous land –
Are great and glorious, let them go!
We in the middle take our stand.

In their rivalry they'll protect you
Half-island ringed by leaping waves,
While these slender hills connect you

To Europe's last great mountain range.

This land, that outshines every land,
Be blessed for every race forever,
Delivered to my Queen's command,
That, long ago now, wondered at her,

There, by Eurotas' whispering light,
She broke radiant from the shell,
That brightness dazzling the sight
Of siblings: Leda's eyes, as well.

This land now turns to you alone,
Offering you its noblest flower:
Oh, though the whole world is your own,
Let your country hold you in its power!

And though you may endure the sun's cold arrow
Up there, on the mountain's jagged height,
See, how the rocky hillside's green below, now,
Where the goat may crop its meagre right.

The sources leap, all streams rush down as one,

Gorge, slope, and meadow are already green.
On a hundred hills, rock-folded, steep and broken,
The scattered woolly flocks are clearly seen.

Spread all around, with cautious measured stride,
The horned cattle tread the dizzy edge:
But here there's shelter that the caves provide,
Hundreds to hide them all, on the rocky ledge.

Pan guards them too: and lively nymphs live there,
In the damp fresh space of bushy clefts,
And, yearning upward to the higher air,
The crowded tree its slender branches lifts.

Primeval woods! The mighty oaks their cap:
Whose stubborn boughs stick out from them, in state:
While kindly maples, pregnant with sweet sap,
Soar cleanly upward, toying with the weight.

Pure mother's milk, in that still realm of shadows,
Flows rich, in readiness for lamb and child:
Fruit's not lacking, gift of fertile meadows,
And from the hollow trunk drips honey mild.

Here well-being's granted all the race,
Cheek and lips both to joy consent,
Each one is immortal, in their place:
And all there are healthy and content.

And thus the lovely child, of purest days,
Grows, and achieves his father's strength.
We're amazed, the question's still, always:
Are these gods, or are they truly men?

When Apollo took a shepherd's form,
The fairest of them was like the sun:
Since, where pure Nature is the norm,
Then all the worlds must move as one.

(Taking his seat beside her.)

So, this have you, and this have I achieved:
Let the past fade behind us: it is gone!
Oh, know yourself from highest gods conceived,
To the first world, alone then, you belong.

No solid fortresses shall ring you round!
In eternal youth, stands as it stood –

So our stay with all delight be crowned –

Arcadia in Sparta's neighbourhood.

Lured here to tread this blessed ground,

You fled towards a happy destiny!

Let our thrones as arbours now be found,

Our joy be Arcadian, and free!

(The scene is completely transformed. Bowers are built against a range of rocky caverns. A shadowy grove runs to the foot of the rocks that rise on all sides. Faust and Helen are not visible: the Chorus lie scattered about in sleep.)

Phorkyas

I'm not sure how long these women have been sleeping:

Nor do I know whether they allowed themselves

To dream what I saw clearly with my own eyes.

Therefore I'll wake them. The young will be amazed,

You bearded ones, too, who sit waiting there, below,

To understand the meaning of these wonders.

Wake! Wake, and shake the dew from your hair,

The slumber from your eyes! Don't blink so, but hear me!

Chorus

Tell us, quickly, quickly, all the wonders that have happened!

If we can't believe them, we'll enjoy them with more pleasure.

For we're wholly weary sitting, staring at these empty stones.

Phorkyas

You've hardly rubbed your eyes, yet you're already weary, children?

Well, listen: in these caverns, in these grottos, in these arbours,

Shade and shelter have been granted, to the two idyllic lovers,

Our Master and our Mistress.

Chorus

What, within there?

Phorkyas

Sweetly sundered,

From the world, alone they summoned me to grant them quiet service.

At their side I stood there, honoured, yet still, as one who's trusted,

Always gazed at something other, turning here and there at random.

Looked for roots and bark and mosses, being skilled in all the potions,

And so they were left alone.

Chorus

You speak as if a whole world's space were hidden there inside, now,

Woods and fields and lakes and rivers: what a fantasy you spin!

Phorkyas

It's true: you're inexperienced, and its depths are unexplored!

I felt, lost in contemplation, hall on hall there, court on court.

In an instant laughter echoes, through the cavernous recesses:

There I see a boy is springing, from his mother to his father,

From his father to his mother, all is dandling and caressing,

And a foolish, a fond teasing, shouts of play, and cries of joy,

Alternate, there, and I'm deaf.

A naked wingless Spirit, like a faun, and yet no creature,

Leaps across the solid floor, and the ground beneath responding,

Sends him flying through the ether, till the second leap or so, there,

He can touch the cavern roof.

Anxiously his mother's calling: 'Leap as often as you like, dear,

But all flying is forbidden, so beware of taking flight.'

And his loyal father warns him: 'In the earth's the power of swiftness,

That will quickly send you flying: touch the ground then with your toe,

And like that son of Earth's, Antaeus, you'll soon find strength again.'

So he leaps the rocky masses of the cavern, from a cornice,

To another and around then, as a ball does when it's thrown.

But suddenly he's vanished in a crevice of the cavern,

And it seems he's lost. His mother grieves for him, father comforts,

I stand there, wondering anxiously, but there again's the vision!

Do buried treasures lie there? Robes embroidered all with flowers,

He has fittingly assumed.

Tassels tremble from his shoulders, ribbons flutter round his chest,
 In his hand a golden lyre, like a miniature Apollo,
 He steps happily to the overhanging brink: amazing.
 And the parents in delight clasp each other to their hearts,
 What's that shining round his temples? It's hard to see what's gleaming,
 Is it gold and gems, or flames, now, of the spirit's supreme power?
 So he moves as if the stately boy's proclaimed to us already
 The future Lord of Beauty, in whose members the eternal
 Melodies are stirring: and so you too will also hear him,
 And you too will also see him, with the rarest show of wonder.

Chorus

Do you call this a marvel,
 Crete has begotten?
 Can you never have listened
 To what Poetry teaches?
 Have you never once heard Ionia's,
 Have you never listened to Hellas'
 Most ancient of legends
 Of the gods and heroes?

All things that happen
 In this present age,

Are mournful echoes
Of our ancestors' nobler times:
And your story can't equal
That, loveliest of lies,
Easier to believe than Truth,
That they sang of Maia's son.

That delicate and strong, yet
Scarcely born, suckling child,
Would you swaddle him in purest down,
Clothe him in costly jewelled bindings,
The crowd of chattering nurses'
Utterly senseless notion.

But strong and yet delicate,
Already the supple rascal,
Draws forth his lithe body,
Leaves behind that royal,
But timid, constraining shell,
Silent, there, in its place:

Like the finished butterfly,
From the chilly chrysalis,

Slipping, with quick unfolding wings,
Boldly into the sunlit air,
And courageously fluttering.
So did he, the liveliest,

And he quickly demonstrated
By the most skilful arts,
That he'd always be the patron
Daemon of thieves and jesters
And all seekers of profit.

From the Sea God he quickly stole
His trident, and from Ares himself,
Slyly, his sword from its scabbard:
Bow and arrows from Phoebus too,
And tongs from Hephaestus:

He even stole Father Zeus'
Lightning bolts, not scared of fire:
Then he tripped poor Eros up,
In the toils of a wrestling match:
As Venus kissed him, too, stole away,
The ribbons from her breasts.

(A pure melodious and exquisite music echoes from the cave. All listen and appear deeply moved. There is a full musical accompaniment from this point to the designated pause.)

Phorkyas

Hear the loveliest of music,
Free from old mythology!
All your gods and all their antics,
Let them go, they're history.

None can understand you more,
We demand a higher art:
From the heart itself must pour,
What will influence the heart.

(She retires towards the rocks.)

Be you stirred, you awesome being,
By the sweet and flattering sound,
We, renewed to life, are feeling,
Moved to tears of joy, around.

Let the sun be lost from heaven
So it's daylight in the soul,

We'll discover in the heart, then,

What the Earth fails to hold.

(Helen. Faust. Euphorion, in costume as previously described.)

Euphorion

Hear the song of childhood sung now,

Its delight belongs to you,

See me leap about in time, now

Let my parents' hearts leap too.

Helen

It requires two noble hearts

For Love to bless humanity,

But to be a thing apart

They must make a precious three.

Faust

All we sought is now discovered:

I am yours, and you are mine:

And we two are bound together,

There's no better fate to find.

Chorus

They'll delight for many years
 In this child's tender glow,
 Ah, this partnership of peers,
 How it's beauty moves me, so!

Euphorion

Now let me leap, oh,
 Now let me spring!
 High in the air, go
 Circling all things,
 That's the desire
 That's driving me on.

Faust

Yet, gently! Gently!
 Not into danger,
 Lest a chance downfall,
 Awaits the ranger,
 Straight away grounds you,
 Our darling son!

Euphorion

I can't stick fast to

The ground any more:

Let go my hands and

Let go my hair,

Let go my clothes!

They are all mine.

Helen

O think! Please think,

Whom you belong to!

How it would grieve us,

How you'd destroy too,

That sweet achievement,

Yours, his and mine.

Chorus

I fear this unity

Soon will unwind!

Helen and Faust

Calm yourself! Calm excess,

To please your parents,

Too great a liveliness,

Impulsive violence!

In rural peacefulness,
Brighten the plain.

Euphorion

If that's what you wish, yes,
I'll stop, I'll restrain.

(He winds, dancing, through the chorus and draws them along with him.)

I'll hover here, lightly
Lively the crew.
Is this the melody,
And measure too?

Helen

Yes that is neatly done:
Lead all the fairest on,
Through intricacy.

Faust

Would it were over then!
Such entertainment
Won't delight me.

Chorus (*With Euphorion, dancing nimbly and singing, in interlinking ranks.*)

When your arms equally
Are charmingly lifted,
Your curling hair's brightly
Loosened and shifted.

When with a foot so light
Over the earth in flight,
Thither and back again,
Step upon step, you rain,

Then your goal is in sight,
Loveliest child:
All of our hearts, beguiled,
With yours unite.

(Pause.)

Euphorion

You're like so many
Light-footed fawns:
Now to new games we
Are quickly re-born!
I'll be the hunter,

You be the prey.

Chorus

If you would catch us
Don't be so eager,
We too are anxious
When all is over,
To clasp the form,
You so sweetly display!

Euphorion

Now through the vale!
Up hill and down dale!
What I gain easily
Is tedious to see,
Only what's forcibly
Won delights me.

Helen and Faust

How wild he is now! And how stubborn!
There's little hope of moderation.
That's the sound of blowing horns,
Through the woods and valley ringing:

What noise, and what confusion!

Chorus (*Entering one by one, in haste.*)

He is running from us swiftly:

Scorning us and always mocking,

Now he drags one from the crowd: she,

The wildest of us all.

Euphorion (*Dragging along a young girl.*)

Here I'll drag the little quarry,

To enforce my wish entirely:

For my joy, and my desire,

Press her wilful heart, on fire,

Kiss her stubborn mouth at length

And proclaim my will and strength.

The Girl

Let me go! Since there's a strong

Resistant spirit in this body:

My will, like yours, if I'm not wrong,

Says I'm not taken easily.

You think I'm in any danger?

Force of arms is it, you claim!
Hold me fast, you foolish ranger,
And I'll scotch your little game.

(She turns to flame and flashes into the air.)

Follow me through flowing air,
Follow me through caverns bare,
Catch your fleeing prey again!

Euphorion *(Shaking off the flames.)*

Rocks all around me here,
Deep in the forest view,
Make me a prisoner,
Though I'm still young and new.

Breezes are blowing fair,
Waves now are breaking there:
I hear both far away,
I'd gladly be there today.

(He leaps further up the rocks.)

Helen, Faust and the Chorus

A chamois you'd imitate?
We're fearful of your fate.

Euphorion

Ever higher I must climb.
Ever further I must see.

Now I know where I stand!
Amidst this semi-island,
Amidst Pelop's country,
Earth – kindred to the sea.

Chorus

Why not live here, in peace,
Among hills and groves?
Vines then for you we'll seek,
Vines in their rows.

Vines on high ridges stand,
Figs, there, and apples gold,
Stay in this lovely land
Stay, and grow old!

Euphorion

Do you dream of peaceful days?

Dream, then as dreamers may.

War is the watchword though.

Victory! It rings out so.

Chorus

He who in time of peace

Wishes for war, soon

Witness's the decease,

Of hope, and fortune.

Euphorion

Those who made this land,

With danger on every hand,

Free, and courageously,

Gave their blood lavishly:

Bring holy meaning

To that sacrifice –

See us still conquering

All whom we fight!

Chorus

Look up there, how high he climbs!

Yet he seems to us no smaller:

In his armour, as in triumph,

How he gleams in steel and silver.

Euphorion

Each one's no longer conscious

Of the high wall, or the rest:

Since the one enduring fortress,

Is the soldier's iron breast.

If you'd live unconquered,

Quickly arm, and fight the real foe:

Every wife an Amazon bred,

And every child a hero.

Chorus

Sacred Poetry

Climbing, and heavenly!

Shines there, the fairest star,

Far there, and still so far!

And yet it reaches here,

Always, and still we hear,
Joy, where we are.

Euphorion

No, not as a child do I appear,
This youth comes armed, you see:
In spirit he's already a peer,
Of the strong, the bold, and free.
Now I go!
Now, and lo,
The path to glory shines for me.

Helen and Faust

You've scarcely been called to being,
Scarcely come to daylight's gleam,
And from the heights you're yearning,
For the place of pain, it seems.
Are we two
Naught to you?
Is the sweetest bond a dream?

Euphorion

Don't you hear the thundering wave?

Through vale on vale the echoes call,
Host on host, in sand and spray,
Shock on shock, in anguished fall.
Understand
The command
Is death, now and for all.

Helen, Faust and the Chorus

What horror! What disaster!
Is then death ordained for you?

Euphorion

Should I watch it from afar?
No! I'll share their trouble too.

Helen, Faust and the Chorus

Exuberance, danger,
Deadliest fate!

Euphorion

Yes! – I am winged here,
I will not wait!
Onward! I must! I must!

Let me but fly!

(He hurls himself into the air: his clothes bear him a moment, his head is illuminated and a streak of light follows.)

Chorus

Icarus! Icarus!

No more! We sigh.

(A beautiful youth falls at the parents' feet. We imagine we see a well-known form in the dead body, but the physical part vanishes at once, while an aureole rises like a comet to heaven. The clothes, cloak and lyre remain on the ground.)

Helen and Faust

At once, joy is followed,

By bitterest pain.

Euphorion (*From the depths.*)

Mother, don't leave me alone,

In the shadows' domain!

(Pause)

Chorus (*Dirge.*)

Not alone! – No matter where you are,

For we believe in following you:

Oh! Though from the day you part,

Not one heart will part from you.
We scarcely wish to mourn you, even,
We sing in envy of your fate:
To you the clearest light of heaven,
Gave song and courage, true and great.

Ah! You were born for earthly fate,
High descent and supreme power:
Youth, sadly, while you went astray,
Was torn from you in its first hour!
You saw the world, with clearer vision,
You understood the yearning heart,
The glow of lovely woman's passion,
And all singing's rarest art.

Yet, irresistibly, you ran free,
In nets of indiscipline: you
Divorced yourself violently,
From custom, and from rule:
Until at last, through thinking deeper,
You gave courage greater weight,
And wished to win to splendour,
But that could not be your fate.

Whose then? – The gloomy question,
 That destiny itself conceals,
 While in days unblessed by fortune,
 Our people's silent blood congeals.
 But new songs will refresh them,
 No longer bow them to the floor,
 The earth shall see them once again,
 As it saw them once before.

(A complete Pause. The music ends.)

Helen (To Faust.)

Alas, the ancient word proves true for me, as well:
 That joy and beauty never lastingly unite.
 The thread of life, as the thread of love, is torn:
 Painfully, lamenting both, I must say: farewell,
 And enter your embrace, once, and then no more.
 Persephone, receive me, and this child of ours!

(She embraces Faust: her body vanishes, her dress and veil remain in his hands.)

Phorkyas (To Faust.)

Hold tight to what alone remains to you.
 Don't let the garment go. Already, daemons

Pull at its hem, and wish to drag it down
 Into the Underworld. Hold tight to it, now!
 It no longer veils the divinity you've lost,
 But it is divine. Employ then the priceless,
 Noble gift for yourself, and soar on high:
 It will carry you quickly from the lowest
 To the highest ether, while you can endure.
 We'll meet once more, far away from here.

(Helen's garments dissolve in mist, surround Faust, lift him into the air, and drift away with him.)

(Phorkyas takes Euphorion's tunic, cloak and lyre from the ground, steps forward to the proscenium, holds them aloft and speaks.)

As always, I've discovered something good!
 The flame itself has gone, that's understood,
 Yet, for the world, I can't be truly sad.
 Here's enough to fuel the poets' regiment,
 Stir their guild to envy, make them mad,
 And if I still can't lend them any talent,
 At least I'll have a costume for the lad.

(She seats herself on a low column in the proscenium.)

Panthalis

Quick now, girls! We're all free of the magic now,
 That old Thessalian woman's enthralling spell,

That jangling dizziness of confusing sound,
 Troubling the ear, and more the inner sense.
 Down to Hades! Since with solemn step the Queen
 Descended swiftly. Let her faithful servants'
 Footsteps follow her downward path without delay.
 We'll find her beside the Unfathomable Throne.

Chorus

Of course, queens are happy anywhere:
 Even in Hades they're on top,
 Associating proudly with their peers,
 Persephone's intimate company.
 But for us, then, in the background,
 Of the asphodel-meadowed depths,
 With their long rows of poplars,
 Their fruitless crowds of willows,
 What fun is there for us,
 Piping like bats at twilight,
 In cheerless, ghostly whispers?

Panthalis

Who wins no name, and wills no noble work,
 Belongs to the elements: so away with you!

My own intense desire's to be with my Queen,
The individual's loyalty and not just service.

(Exits.)

All

We're returned to the light of day,
No longer individual, it's true,
We feel it, and we know it,
But we'll never go back to Hades.
Ever-living Nature,
Makes the most valid claim
On our spirits, and we on her.

A Section of the Chorus

We in all the thousand branches' whispering tremors, swaying murmurs,
Sweetly rocked, will lightly draw the root-born founts of being upwards,
To the twigs: and now with leaves, and now with the exuberant blossom,
We'll adorn their floating tresses, freely thriving in the breezes.
Straight away, now, as the fruit falls, happy crowds and flocks will gather,
For the picking and the tasting, swift-arriving, busy-thronging:
Bending down, now, all around us, as before the early gods.

A Second Section of the Chorus

We, against the rocky cliff face, by the smooth far-gleaming mirror,
 We will nestle, softly moving, in the gentle waves that flatter:
 Listening, hearing every echo, birdsong, now, or reedy fluting,
 To the fearful voice of Pan, too, we'll provide a ready answer:
 To the murmuring, send a murmur: to the thunder roll our thunder,
 In earth-shaking repetition, in threefold, or tenfold echo.

A Third Section of the Chorus

Sisters! We, of nimbler senses, hurry onwards with the waters:
 For the richly covered, far-off, mountain ranges each entice us.
 Ever deeper, ever downward, in meandering curves we'll water
 First the meadows, then the pastures, then the house and the garden,
 Where the slender tips of cypress, over banks and watery mirror,
 Over all the landscape, mark it, soaring skywards in the air.

A Fourth Section of the Chorus

Wander where you please, you others: we will circle, we will rustle
 Round the densely planted hillside, where the vine stock's growing green:
 There, each day, we'll pay attention to the cultivator's passion,
 Watch his diligence and care, there: watch for its uncertain outcome.
 How he hoes, how he digs there, how he heaps, and prunes, and ties,
 Prays to all the gods above him, most of all prays to the sun god.
 The effeminate one, Bacchus, gives scant thought to faithful servants,

Rests in arbours, lolls in caverns, flirting with the youngest Faun.
 Whatsoever he might need there, for his half-befuddled dreaming,
 Is left for him in wineskins, stored around in jars and vessels,
 Right and left, in cool recesses, gathered through the endless ages.

But when the gods, that's Helios, we mean before all others,
 Cooling, wetting, warming, heating, fill the vineyard's horn of plenty,
 Where the silent grower laboured, suddenly it's all enlivened,
 And in every leaf there's rustling, rustling now from vine to vine.
 Baskets creaking, buckets rattling, the tubs are carried groaning,
 All towards enormous vats there, to the lusty treaders' dance:
 So, then, all the sacred bounty, of the pure bred juicy harvest,
 Fiercely trodden, spurting, foaming, mingled there, is crudely squashed.
 Now the cymbals' brazen clamour's ringing boldly in our ears,
 As Dionysus from his Mysteries is unveiled, and is revealed:
 Here with his goat-foot Satyrs, whirling goat-foot Satyresses,
 And Silenus's, unruly, long-eared ass, that brays amongst them.

Nothing's spared! The cloven feet now, trample on all decency:
 All the senses whirl, bewildered: hideously, ears are stunned, there.
 Drunkards fumble for their wine-cups, head and bellies over-full,
 Here and there one has misgivings, but can only swell the riot,
 Since to hold the latest vintage, one must drain the oldest skin!

(The curtain falls. Phorkyas in the proscenium rises to full height, steps down from her tragic buskins, removes her mask and veil, and reveals herself as Mephistopheles, to point the last lines, by way of epilogue.)

ACT 4

Scene I: High Mountains

(Fierce, jagged rocky peaks. A cloud approaches, pauses and settles on a projecting ledge. It parts.)

Faust (*Steps out.*)

Gazing at those deep solitudes beneath my feet,
I tread the mountain brink with deliberation,
Leaving the cloud-vehicle that carried me,
Softly, through bright day, over land and ocean.
Slowly, not dispersing, now, it moves away.
With a rolling movement, travelling eastward,
And the eye follows in wondering admiration.
Moving it divides, wave-like and changeable.
Yet it shapes itself – My eyes can't deceive me! –
I see, reclining there, nobly, on sunlit pillows,
A godlike female form, though it's immense!
An image of Juno, Leda, or Helen herself,
Royally lovely, floating before my eyes.
Ah! It's already melting! Formlessly huge
And towering it hangs in far icy eastern hills,
Reflecting deep meaning from fine fleeting days.
Yet a soft, delicate band of mist still clings

To head and body, coolly caressing: and cheers me.

Now it lifts lightly, soars higher and higher, there,

Condensing. Does its enticing shape deceive me,

Like some long-forgotten joy of earliest youth?

The first riches of the heart's depths flow again:

I'd liken it to Aurora's Love, light-winged:

The first, swiftly felt, scarcely understood glance,

That outshines every treasure when it's held fast.

The lovely form rises, now, like spiritual beauty,

Not melting further, but lifting through the air,

And carries, far-off, the best of what I am.

*(A seven-league boot strides forward: another follows immediately.
Mephistopheles steps out of them. The boots stride off quickly.)*

Now *that* I call real onward striding!

But tell me why you're all alone,

Climbing here among the horrors,

In these horrendous gulfs of stone?

I know them well, but with another face,

In truth, the floor of Hell's a similar place.

Faust

You're never short of a foolish fantasy:

You've dusted that one off again I see.

Mephistopheles (*Seriously*)

When the Lord God – and I know why as well –
 Banished us from the air to deepest deeps,
 There, where round and round the glow of Hell,
 An eternal inward self-fuelled fire leaps,
 We found we were too brightly illuminated,
 Quite crowded, and uncomfortably situated.
 All the devils fell to fits of coughing,
 The vents above them and beneath them puffing,
 Hell swollen with the sulphur's stench and acid,
 Gave out its gas! The bubble was so massive,
 That soon the level surface of the earth,
 Thick as it was, was forced to crack and burst.
 So we all gained another mountain from it,
 And what was ground, before, now is summit.
 From this they deduced the truest law,
 Turn lowest into highest, to be sure,
 Since we escaped from fiery prison there,
 To excessive power in the freer air:
 An open mystery, yet well concealed,
 And only lately publicly revealed. (*Ephesians 6:12*)

Faust

To me the mountain masses are nobly dumb,
I don't ask why they are, or where they're from.
When Nature in herself was grounded
The ball of Earth she neatly rounded,
Delighting in the mountains and the deep,
Setting rock on rock, and peak on peak,
Sloping the hills conveniently downward,
Softening them to vales, gently bounded.
They grow green, and joyfully she ranges,
Without the need for any violent changes.

Mephistopheles

Yes, so you say! It's clear as day to you:
But he knows otherwise who saw it too.
I was there, while the void seethed below,
Enduring all that swollen, fiery tide:
When Moloch's hammer forged cliffs, at a blow,
And flung the ruined mountains, far and wide.
Those foreign boulders scattered through the land:
Who knows what forces left them high and dry?
Philosophers all have failed to understand,
The rocks are there, and we must let them stand,
We've damaged them, already, where they lie.

Only the true believers, the people, know,
 And nothing will shake their fond opinion,
 They, since their wisdom ripened long ago,
 Say it's due to Satan's wonderful dominion.
 The traveller climbs, with faith's crutch, over ridges,
 Across the Devil's rocks, and Devil's bridges.

Faust

Yet it's still worth noting, since every feature,
 Reveals what it is the Devil sees in Nature.

Mephistopheles

What's that to me! Let Nature be what she is!
 The Devil was there: that's what I'd have you notice!
 We're the folk, you see, who achieve great things:
 The signs are tumult, force, and what nonsense brings! –
 But shall I make myself understood at last: it's best:
 Did nothing at all of ours please you in the slightest?
 You've looked down, from immeasurable heights,
 On the riches of the world, and its splendid sights. (*Matthew 4*)
 Yet, hard as you may be to fire,
 Didn't you feel some deep desire?

Faust

I did! I saw a mighty plan.

Guess!

Mephistopheles

Oh, that's easily done.

I'd find myself some capital city,

It's core the citizens' greedy plenty,

Crooked alleys and pointed gables,

Cabbage, turnips, onions, market tables:

Butcher's stalls where flies all cluster:

Round the fattened joints, pass muster:

Wherever you move, there you'll find

Stench and activity, intertwined.

Then wide streets, and wider squares,

Measured, elegant thoroughfares:

And, at their end, no gates to bar you:

Just boundless far-flung suburbs too.

There I love to see all the carriages go by,

The noisy rushing about from side to side,

The endless running to and fro,

Of scattered ants in ceaseless flow.

And when I walk, and when I ride,

I'd be the central point implied,
A hundred thousand honouring me.

Faust

That could never content me though.
A swelling crowd is fine to see,
All well-fed in their way, agreed,
Well-bred, well-taught, all the three –
Yet you've only made more rebels grow.

Mephistopheles

For myself, I'd deliberately create
A pleasure house in a pleasant place.
Woods, hills, fields, meadows, open ground,
With splendid gardens all around.
Between green walls of velvet leaves,
Straight walks, where artful shadows please,
Waterfalls, spanning the rocks, in pairs,
And all those kinds of water-jet affairs:
Rising nobly, while all round the dish,
A thousand little fountains hiss and piss.
Then I'd have a hut, snug and convenient,
Where beautiful women might be content:

And pass the boundless time away
In the sweetest solitude, and play.
Women, I say: since, one and all,
I think of their loveliness in the plural.

Faust

Sardanapalus! Modern and rural!

Mephistopheles

Then might one ask to know your yearning?
It's something daring: I've no doubt.
Since the moon was near you in your journeying,
Might it be moon-madness you're about?

Faust

Not at all! This earthly round
Grants space for some mighty thing.
We'll attempt what's astonishing,
New strength for daring work I've found.

Mephistopheles

And shall you earn more glory by it too?
One sees the heroines have been with you.

Faust

I'll win power, and property!

The deed is all, and not the glory.

Mephistopheles

Yet future poets' verse will stress

The splendour of your bright success,

And inspire fools to foolishness.

Faust

All that's far from you, indeed.

What do you know of what Men need?

Your contrary being, bitter, dire,

What does it know of Man's desire?

Mephistopheles

Let it all be as you wish it then!

Trust fancy's flight to me again.

Faust

My eyes were drawn towards the deepest ocean:

It swelled, and heaped itself, upon itself,

Then ebb'd, and shook its waves again in motion,
 Storming towards the wide shore's level shelf.
 And that annoyed me: as the exuberance
 Of a free spirit, that values all its rights,
 Will transmit uneasy feelings to the dance
 Of the passionate blood that it excites.
 I thought it chance: I gazed more intensely:
 The waves paused, rolled away from me,
 Far from what they'd reached in their pride:
 Time passes, and then once more comes the tide.

Mephistopheles (*To the audience.*)

There's nothing new in that to greet my ears,
 I've known it for a hundred thousand years.

Faust (*Continuing passionately.*)

It sweeps along, to whatever thousand ends:
 Fruitless itself, it fruitlessly extends:
 It swells and rolls and breaks and overwhelms
 The empty stretches of its barren realms.
 There wave rules power-inspired wave, again
 Draws back – and yet still there's nothing gained.

If anything makes me despair, of my intent,
 It's the aimless force of that wild element!
 Then my spirit dared to soar high above:
 Here I must fight, and this I must remove.
 And it's possible! – However tides may flow,
 At last they nestle round the hills below:
 So they are tamed in their exuberance,
 A modest height tops their proud advance,
 A modest depth draws them forcefully on.
 Quick, through my mind, leapt plan after plan:
 Let rich enjoyment be mine for evermore,
 To keep the noble ocean from the shore,
 To channel all the wide and watery waste,
 And urge it backwards to its own deep place.
 Step by step I know how to design it:
 That's my desire, so be brave and promote it!

(On the right, from the distance, behind the audience, the sound of drums and military music.)

Mephistopheles

That's trivial! Can you hear the distant drums?

Faust

War again! The wise man hates it when it comes.

Mephistopheles

War or peace, it's wise to seize the chance,
And gain advantage from the circumstance.
One waits, one notes each favourable moment.
Opportunity's about, so Faust, be ardent!

Faust

Spare me all your riddles, if you please!
Once and for all, say, what am I to seize?

Mephistopheles

Nothing was hidden from me on my journey:
The noble Emperor's consumed by worry.
You know him. While we both supplied him,
Those illusory riches in his hand, beside him,
The whole world then was open to him.
Young, the throne was granted to him,
And it pleased him to assume, wrongly,
That he could easily combine the two,
Enjoy the essential and the lovely too:
Both government and pleasure, jointly.

Faust

A fatal error! He who wishes to command
 Must make command his joy, and though
 His mind is full of all the noblest plans,
 What he intends, must let no other know.
 What he whispers then in some faithful ear,
 Is done, and the world will be amazed to hear.
 So he'll remain supreme, above them all,
 And noblest: pleasure comes before a fall.

Mephistopheles

That's not the man! He enjoyed himself, and how!
 Meanwhile anarchy brought the empire down,
 While great fought little, and orders crossed,
 And brothers fought with brothers, and were lost,
 Castle with castle, city against city,
 The guilds at war with the nobility:
 The bishops with their congregation:
 No friends, and only a hostile nation.
 In churches death and slaughter: through the gate
 Every merchant and trader swift to his fate.
 Now, everywhere, man's audacity shows:
 The word is 'defend your life'. And so it goes.

Faust

So it goes – it stumbles, falls, and stands again,
Then tumbles headlong, and lies there in pain.

Mephistopheles

None dared to criticise the situation,
Each could, and would improve his station.
Even the smallest wished to be great enough.
But for the best it proved a step too much.
The capable declared, with energy:
'He who brings peace can have the mastery.
The Emperor can't, and will not – let us choose
A new Emperor, who'll inspire the realm anew.
While each man achieves security,
In a world that's re-created freshly,
Let peace and justice there be wedded, too.'

Faust

That smacks of priesthood.

Mephistopheles

The priests were there, yes,

Defending their well-fed stomachs with the rest,
 And they were more involved than all the others.
 The rebels swarmed: and were blessed as brothers:
 Then the Emperor, whom we had made happy,
 Advanced, for his last battle, that's as maybe.

Faust

I'm sorry for him: He was so frank and open.

Mephistopheles

We'll watch! While there's life there's hope again.
 Let's set him free, from this narrow valley!
 He's a thousand times saved, if they would rally.
 Who knows how the dice might fall, if so:
 Good luck, and he'll have treasures to bestow.
*(They cross over the middle range of hills, and view the army in the valley.
 Drums and military music sound from below.)*
 The position they've taken, there, looks fine:
 We'll join them: victory – in the nick of time.

Faust

And what should I expect to see?
 A hollow show! Blind magic! Trickery!

Mephistopheles

Strategy, and how to win a battle!
Think hard, and be on your mettle,
Keep dreaming of your mighty aim.
If we return the Emperor his land,
You can kneel, and make a claim,
In payment, for the boundless strand.

Faust

You've managed all the other things,
So win the battle, and what it brings!

Mephistopheles

No, you'll win it! There, beneath,
You'll be their commander-in-chief.

Faust

That's a somewhat glorified position:
Knowing nothing, to command the mission!

Mephistopheles

Leave it to the General Staff to care,
And see a Field-Marshal newborn there.

I know all about Un-Councils of War
Form your War Council, quickly, therefore,
From ancient hills' ancient human power:
Bless those who can pile peaks in a tower.

Faust

What do I see, what warriors approach?
Have you truly roused the mountain folk?

Mephistopheles

No! But like Shakespeare's Peter Quince,
I've picked the very best of what there is.

(The Three Mighty Warriors appear.)

Here are my lads arriving now!

You see they're all of different ages,

And clothes and armour too: allow

That you'll be fine when battle rages.

(To the audience.)

Every child today loves to see

Knights in armour take the floor:

Allegorical though they may be,

They'll delight them all the more.

Bullyboy (*Young, lightly armed, plainly clothed.*)

If someone meets me face to face,
I'll shake a fist right there in his ugly mug,
And when the yellow-belly runs away,
I'll grasp his hair, and give a nasty tug.

Grab-quick (*Mature, well-armed, richly dressed.*)

Such idle brawling's foolishness,
That's how to ruin the day:
Don't be slow first to possess,
Then afterwards you'll get your way.

Hold-tight (*Older, heavily armed, without a cloak.*)

But that's the path where little's won!
Great possession's quickly gone,
Vanishing in the stream of life.
It's fine to take, but best to hold:
Let grey hairs command the bold,
And you'll lose nothing in the strife.

Scene II: On the Headland

(Drums and military music from below. The Emperor's tent is pitched.)

(The Emperor, Commander-in-Chief, Guardsmen.)

The Commander-in-Chief

It still seems the most likely strategy,
To have made our whole army wait,
Here below, in this convenient valley:
I hope the choice is truly fortunate.

The Emperor

Whatever will happen now, we'll soon see:
But I don't like this half-retreat, it's weak.

The Commander-in-Chief

Look here, my Prince, on our right flank!
This terrain is one that Generals like to thank:
The hills aren't steep, but there's no ready access,
So it protects us, while denying them success:
We're half-concealed, on undulating ground:
Their cavalry won't dare to circle round.

The Emperor

There's nothing left for me to do, but praise:
Here strength and bravery may have their day.

The Commander-in-Chief

There, in the centre of the level space,
See the phalanx, eagerly in place.
The lances shine and glitter in the air,
Through the sunlit mist of morning, there.
And all the mighty square is swaying darkly!
Thousands inspired to fierce activity.
There you can see our power *en masse*,
I trust it to split the enemy in half.

The Emperor

This is the first time I've ever gazed on such a sight.
Forces like these are worth double when they fight.

The Commander-in-Chief

I've nothing to report about our left,
Valiant heroes hold the rocky cleft,
Weapons gleam across the rocky dale,
A vital pass protects the narrow vale.
Here the enemy power, I think, will shatter,
Taken unawares in this bloody matter.

The Emperor

There they advance, my faithless kith and kin,
Even as they call me brother, uncle, cousin,
Ever more widely, allowing men's respect
For throne and sceptre to fall into neglect:
Ruining the empire with their fighting,
And now, against me, rebelliously uniting.
The mob is swayed, uncertain in its mind,
Then, wherever the stream flows, flows behind.

The Commander-in-Chief

A faithful soldier hastens towards us, look,
One sent for news, perhaps he's had some luck!

First Scout

Luckily we met success,
Brave and cunning in our skill,
Probing, out to east and west,
Yet bring you bad news, still.
Many swear their loyalty,
Many a faithful company:
Yet all idly apologetic:
Quailing inwardly, apathetic.

The Emperor

From selfishness they learn self-preservation,
Not honour, affection, gratitude, dedication.
No one thinks that when time brings the reckoning,
The neighbour's house ignites theirs while it's burning.

The Commander-in-Chief

The second scout's approaching, slowly,
On stumbling legs: a man full weary.

Second Scout

At first we easily detected
The nature of their wild plan:
Then, suddenly, and unexpected,
A second Emperor was at hand.
And in a calm, and orderly manner
Withdrew the army from the deep:
Unfurling his deceitful banner:
They all followed him, like sheep!

The Emperor

A second Emperor's fortunate for me:

Since I'm the Emperor, plain as plain can be.

Now as a soldier I'll dress myself, again,

In armour, dedicated to this higher aim.

My entertainments, fine as they all were,

Lacking in nothing, never brought me danger.

While you suggested something innocent,

My heart longed to fight the tournament:

And had you not dissuaded me from war,

I'd have shone in glorious deeds before.

But when I was mirrored in that realm of fire,

I felt my heart was mine, and made entire:

The fierce element entered in my fate,

Only a dream, and yet the dream was great.

I've thought confusedly of fame and glory:

Yet all was my own neglect, an evil story.

(The heralds are sent to challenge the rival Emperor to single combat.)

(Faust enters, in armour, with half-closed visor. The Three Mighty Warriors appear armed and dressed as previously described.)

Faust

We're here, and hope our presence is accepted:

Though needless, caution's often well respected.

You know how hill-folk consider and explore:

They study nature and the mountains' lore.

The spirits drawn from out the level valley,
Are happier than ever in the wide hill-country.
They still work the labyrinthine masses,
Among metallic fumes of noble gases.
Intent on separating, proving, blending,
Their only aim some innovative finding.
With gentle touch and spiritual power,
They build transparent forms, by the hour:
Then in eternal silence, in the crystal,
They watch the destiny of all things mortal.

The Emperor

I've heard it said: and I believe it's true:
But, gallant soldier, what's all that to you?

Faust

Your true and honourable servant there,
Is that Sabine, the Norcian Necromancer.
What fearful fate once hung above his head!
Crackling wood, the stinging fire ahead:
Dry timber packed already round his feet,
With rolls of pitch and brimstone all complete:
No warrior, god, or devil to the rescue,

The Emperor saved his life: and that was you,
In Rome: he was obliged, and none the less
Anxiously, he contemplates your progress.
Wholly forgotten: every hour, just for you,
He studies the stars and the abyss too.
He sent us on, by the swiftest path,
To help you. Great is the mountain craft:
There Nature works omnipotent, and free,
Though foolish clerics call it wizardry.

The Emperor

On joyful days, when we greet our guests,
Who gather pleasantly, with happy jests,
It gives us pleasure, when they pull and push,
And fill the halls and chambers with their crush.
Yet the brave man meets with noblest welcome,
When in fierce support he deigns to come,
At the dawning of some perilous day,
When fate's balance holds us in its sway.
Yet while some time this moment can afford,
Hold back your strong hand from the eager sword,
Honour the instant, when thousands march,
For or against me, taking up the torch.

Self's the Man! Who claims the crown and throne,
Must be worthy of the honour, on his own.
May the phantom now that stands against me,
Who calls himself the Emperor of my country,
The army's leader, and the lords' crowned head,
Be hurled by my own fist among the dead.

Faust

Whatever the need to finish what you've started,
It would go ill if you and your head were parted.
Isn't your helmet decked with plume and crest?
It shields the head that fills our hearts with zest.
Without a head what can the members do?
If it should sleep, they sink in silence too:
If it's injured, they're all hurt alike,
And if it's healed they quickly stir to life.
Swiftly the arm will assert its right:
And shield the head then from the fight:
The sword at once perceives its duty,
Strikes again, and parries strongly:
The brave foot, owning its luck again,
Plants itself on the necks of the slain.

The Emperor

Such is my wrath, that's how I'd use the fool,
And set his head in front of me, for a stool.

Heralds (*Returning.*)

Our advances they reject,
With little honour, or respect.
Our strong, and noble ultimatum,
They treated as an empty statement:
'Your Emperor is wholly lost,
An echo of some ancient rhyme:
When we think about the past,
His tale will be: Once upon a time.'

Faust

It's come to pass as the best of men demand,
Those firm and true, at your right hand:
There is the foe: your men stand by us:
Order the advance, the time's propitious.

The Emperor

I hereby relinquish the command.
(*To the Commander-In-Chief*)

Prince, I entrust the duty to your hand.

The Commander-in-Chief

Then let the right wing start its assault!

The enemy left's ascending, even now,

And in a moment will be forced to halt.

To our young faithfals they will have to bow.

Faust

Let this brave hero, straight away,

Join your ranks, without delay,

So that in your ranks he might,

Make a brave show in the fight.

(He points to the Mighty Warrior on the right.)

BullyBoy (Coming forward.)

He who shows his face to me, won't turn

Before his front and back teeth shatter:

He who shows his back to me will earn

A blow to make his head much flatter.

And if your soldiers then advance

With sword and mace, together,

Man after man, the foe will dance,

And in their own blood quickly smother.

(He exits.)

The Commander-in-Chief

Let the central phalanx follow slowly,
Engage the enemy with force and cunning:
There on the right they're almost ready
To surrender, you can see them running.

Faust (*Pointing to the central Warrior*)

Let this man follow at your command!
He's quick, and grabs with either hand.

Grab-quick (*Comes forward.*)

The thirst for plunder now will greet
The Emperor's troops' advancing feet,
And all will gather, with intent,
At the rival Emperor's tent.
He won't linger on his throne:
I'll lead the phalanx on my own.

Swift-plunder (*A camp follower, fawning on him.*)

Although he and I aren't wed,

He's my sweetheart. Here instead
 Autumn ripens for the bold!
 Woman's fierce when she takes hold,
 Merciless, in a plundering crowd,
 Forward to victory! All's allowed.
(They exit together.)

The Commander-in-Chief

As I anticipated on our left flank,
 They hurl their right, in force, at last.
 We'll resist their furious ranks,
 And keep them from the narrow pass.

Faust (*Beckoning to the Warrior on the left.*)

Prince, take note of this man too:
 No shame if the strong are stronger than you.

Hold-tight (*Coming forward.*)

Let the flanks forget their fear!
 I seize the ground where I appear:
 In me are born the powers of old,
 No lightning splits what I shall hold.

Mephistopheles (*Descending from above.*)

Now see how from the hinterland
Of this rocky jagged land,
An armed host bursts forth
On narrow pathways from the north,
With sword and helmet, shield and spear,
Forming a rampart in our rear:
They wait for the signal to charge on.

(Aside, to the knowing ones.)

You mustn't ask me where they're from.
I've gathered them from everywhere,
The armouries all around are bare:
They stood on foot, and sat astride,
Like lords of earth on every side:
They were emperors, knights, and kings,
Now they're the empty shells of things:
I've dressed so many spirits for the strife,
It's like the Middle Ages come to life.
Whichever little devils are inside,
They'll have enough effect to turn the tide.

(Aloud.)

Listen how they show their anger,
Jostling, in metallic clangour!

The ragged banners flutter free,
That waited restless for the breeze.
Think: here's an ancient race that's ready
To mingle in our new dispute, and gladly.

(A tremendous peal of trumpets from above: a perceptible tremor in the hostile army.)

Faust

The far horizon darkens swiftly,
Yet, here and there, and meaningfully,
There's an incipient crimson glow,
Already the battlefield gleams there,
The rocks, the woods, the atmosphere,
The very heavens join the show.

Mephistopheles

The right flank holds in strength:
There's Bullyboy the nimble giant,
Towering over all, defiant,
And charging them at length.

The Emperor

First I saw an arm uplifted,
Then at least a dozen shifted:

The thing's unnatural.

Faust

Don't you know the bands of mist
That drift round the Sicilian cliffs?
There, in the daylight, clear,
In mid-air, hovering about
Mirrored in peculiar cloud,
Marvellous images appear.
Cities wander to and fro,
Gardens rise above, below,
As form on form fills the air.

The Emperor

Yet it's suspicious! All about
The tips of spears are shining out:
On our phalanx' gleaming lances,
I see a crowd of flame-lets dances.
It looks quite ghostly there, to me.

Faust

Forgive me, Lord, those are the traces
Of natural spirits, vanished races,

A glimmer of the Dioscouri,
 Sailors invoke in tempest's fury:
 They show their last strength there.

The Emperor

But tell me: who then might command
 Nature's assistance for our land,
 This gathering of the rare?

Mephistopheles

Who else than that noble Master,
 Who takes your destiny to heart?
 The thought of military disaster
 Moves him deeply, stirs his art.
 In gratitude, he wants to save you,
 Though he himself should suffer too.

The Emperor

They cheered me, when I was invested:
 So I was keen to see my power tested:
 I found it useful, without much thought, as ruler,
 To send that wise man where the air was cooler.
 I robbed the clergy of a fond desire,

And hardly won their favour from the fire.

Now that so many years have gone

Is this the reward of what I'd done?

Faust

Good deeds from the heart reap riches:

Let your glance stray upwards now!

I think he'll send a sign, a show,

Attend: straight away it's as he wishes.

The Emperor

An eagle soars in the upper air,

A Gryphon attacks him there.

Faust

Attend: It's an auspicious feature.

The Gryphon's a fabulous creature:

How could he forget who's regal,

And tangle with a real eagle?

The Emperor

And now, they fly in wider gyres,

They wheel together: swiftly now

Then dash against each other's bow,
So neck and chest are ripped entire.

Faust

Now note the miserable Gryphon,
Ripped and rumpled, hurt quite badly,
Now, with his lion's tail all torn,
He falls, and vanishes in a tree.

The Emperor

As it's prophesied, so let it be!
This whole thing's astounding me.

Mephistopheles (*Towards the right.*)

Driven by blows, ten times repeated,
The enemy force has retreated,
And in the uncertain fight
Drifts away towards the right,
So defusing all the force
Of their army's sinister course.
Our phalanx with its spears tightening
Moves to the right, and like lightening
Strikes them in the weakest place:

Now like the storm-driven waves
 They roar, with opposing force,
 Wildly on their dual course:
 Gloriously all sound dies away,
 And victory is ours, I'd say!

The Emperor (*On the left, to Faust.*)

See! Something looks suspicious,
 Our position's inauspicious,
 Not a stone's hurled in the air,
 The cliffs below are taken there,
 Bare the narrows, to the pass.
 Now! The enemy *en masse*
 Are ever nearer to the sun,
 Perhaps we're already overrun:
 An end to this unholy strife!
 Your arts won't save my life.
 (*Pause.*)

Mephistopheles

See, my two ravens come winging,
 What news might they be bringing?
 I fear we're in trouble here.

The Emperor

What do they mean these wretched birds?

Their black wings turn hitherwards,

Out of the heat of battle they steer.

Mephistopheles (*To the ravens.*)

Both of you sit by my ear,

None are lost if you are near,

Your council's always good to hear.

Faust (*To the Emperor.*)

You'll know about homing pigeons

Ones that return from distant regions,

To their nest, and food, and young.

Here's a slightly different kind:

Pigeon post in peace is fine,

Raven posts to war belong.

Mephistopheles

The birds announce a dreadful fate:

Beware the enemy at the gate,

Near our heroes' rocky wall!

They've attained the narrow height,

If they gain the pass, and fight,
Our position's critical.

The Emperor

So I'm betrayed at last!
Into your net I'll be cast:
I shudder as it entangles me.

Mephistopheles

Courage, now! Not yet, their victory.
Patience and skill unties the knot!
It's often fiercest at the end.
The pair of messengers, we've got:
Command me, I'll command them!

The Commander-In-Chief (*Who has arrived, meanwhile.*)

You've united with this pair,
Tormenting me while I was there,
No luck comes from wizardry.
I can't fathom now how to win
Those should finish, that begin:
Take this baton away from me.

The Emperor

Keep it for another day, one better

And blessed with better fortune.

I shudder at this messenger,

And his company of ravens.

(To Mephistopheles.)

I'll not grant the baton to you,

You're not the proper man:

Give commands: free us too!

Do whatever it is you can.

(He exits into his tent with the Commander-In-Chief.)

Mephistopheles

Let that blunt stick protect the man!

It's of small use in anyone's hand:

It has a cross, too, painted on.

Faust

What can we do?

Mephistopheles

It's already done!

Now dark Cousins, hurry from the scene,

To the mountain lake! Greet the Undines,
And beg from them their gleaming flood.
Their female arts, those difficult of knowing,
Can divorce appearances from being,
And all still swear it's being that they're seeing.
(Pause)

Faust

With flattery our pair of ravens
Have so charmed those water maidens
That trickling flows at once begin.
And many a bald, dry ridge of mountain
Becomes a swollen, rushing fountain:
The enemy can no longer win.

Mephistopheles

It's not a greeting to which they're used.
The bravest climbers appear confused.

Faust

Now, powerfully, streams pour on streams,
Sweeping from gorges with redoubled gleams,
A river now throws up an arching veil:

Pours over the rocky level in a tide,
Runs foaming down, on every side,
And, stepwise, hurls itself into the dale.
What use their fine, heroic resistance?
The vast wave roars, and fills the distance.
I shudder myself at this wild waterfall.

Mephistopheles

I can see nothing of these watery lies,
They only serve for fooling human eyes,
I delight instead in wonders that befall.
In companies, their men plunge down,
The fools imagine that they'll drown,
While free to breathe, on solid ground,
With swimming strokes, they run around.
It's bewildering them all.

(The Ravens return.)

I'll praise you to the noble Master: but see,
If you'd like to display your own mastery,
Hurry to the glowing smithy,
Where the dwarf folk never weary,
Hammering sparks from steel and stone.
Ask for, once you've chattered first,

A fire to shine: sparkle, and burst,
 The finest that man's ever known.
 It's true that far off lightning flashes,
 And stars that fall in sudden dashes,
 Can happen any summer's night:
 But lightning in the tangled bushes,
 And stars that fizzle in the rushes,
 They're not such a common sight.
 Don't trouble about my command,
 Ask first, then afterwards demand.
(The Ravens fly off. All takes place as ordered.)
 Darkness cloaks the enemy!
 Their footsteps meet uncertainty!
 Everywhere are wandering flares,
 And those sudden blinding glares!
 It's all beautiful indeed,
 Now some noise is what we need.

Faust

The empty armour from each vaulted room,
 Feels itself stiffen in the airy gloom:
 There it rattles, clatters all around,
 A marvellous, and deceptive sound.

Mephistopheles

That's it! They no longer feel constrained:

Already their blows fall unrestrained,

As in the nobility of their former life.

Breastplates and helmets gleam,

As Guelph and Ghibelline,

They quickly renew eternal strife.

Locked in hereditary bile,

They prove themselves, un-reconciled:

Far and wide the noise is rife.

In the end, by all the Devils, yes!

Partisan hatred's still the best,

Till final ruin ends the tale:

Here rise the sounds of utter panic,

And others bitter and Satanic,

Terrify, along the vale.

(Warlike tumult from the orchestra, finally changing to a lively martial air.)

Scene III: The Rival Emperor's Tent

(A throne amongst rich trappings. Grab-quick and Swift-plunder.)

Swift-plunder

We're the first ones here, I see!

Grab-quick

No Raven flies as fast as me.

Swift-plunder

O! Look at the treasure there on top!

What will I grab? How shall I stop?

Grab-quick

The whole place is still full of loot,

I don't know where to start, in truth!

Swift-plunder

This fur-rug, this'll go far,

Often my bed's far too hard.

Grab-quick

Here's a morning star in steel,

I've always longed for one, I feel.

Swift-plunder

This red mantle, trimmed with gold,

Is like the one my dream foretold.

Grab-quick (*Taking a weapon.*)

With this the deed is swiftly done,
 You strike him dead and then move on.
 You've already packed somuch stuff,
 And yet you've nothing good enough.
 Leave your plunder in its place,
 And put a casket in the space!
 The army's pay is what they hold,
 In their fat bellies, purest gold.

Swift-plunder

What a murderous weight it is!
 I can't lift: I can't carry it.

Grab-quick

Bend down: quick! You'll have to bow!
 I'll strap it to your back for now.

Swift-plunder

Oh! Ah! Now it's in front, too!
 The weight's broken my cross in two.
 (*The chest falls and bursts open.*)

Grab-quick

There's the red gold in a heap –
Quickly now, take and keep!

Swift-plunder (*Crouching.*)

Quickly then, just fill my lap!
There'll still be enough perhaps.

Grab-quick

That's enough! Now off you go!
(*Swift-plunder rises.*)
Oh! Your apron has a hole!
Wherever you walk or stand,
You're sowing gold on every hand.

Guardsmen of the True Emperor

What are you doing here, at leisure,
Rummaging in the Imperial treasure?

Grab-quick

We risked our bodies in the ranks,
And take away our share of thanks.

That's the rule, in enemy tents,
And we're soldiers too, my friends.

The Guardsmen

That won't wash in our army:
You can't be soldier and thief equally:
Whoever serves our Emperor,
Is an honest soldier, and no more.

Grab-quick

That honesty, we know it, son,
It's called: a contribution.
You're all the same: it's a crime,
'Give!' is the password every time,
(To Swift-plunder.)
Take what you've got: and leave the rest,
Here one's hardly a welcome guest.
(They both exit.)

A Guardsman

Tell me why you didn't land
That churl with a good right hand.

A Second Guardsman

I don't know, my strength was gone,
They were a pair of ghostly ones.

A Third Guardsman

There was something nasty in my eye,
I couldn't see: they flickered by.

A Fourth Guardsman

I don't know what to say:
It was sweltering hot today,
So sultry, so close as well,
One man stood, another fell:
You staggered around and struck, in one,
At every blow you killed someone,
There was a mist in front of your eyes,
Then a buzz, and rustle, and hiss went by:
So it went on, and here we are, now,
I don't know what happened, anyhow.

(The Emperor enters, accompanied by Four Princes. The Guardsmen exit.)

Now, let him do as he may! The battle here is done,
The host is scattered in flight, across the field new won.
Here is the traitor's treasure, and his empty throne,

Where tapestries hang round, closed in a narrow zone.

Protected by our guard of honour, we'll wait

Imperially, for the people's delegate.

Messengers of joy arrive from every side:

The Empire's calm, and we're mutually reconciled.

Though some wizardry was involved in our fight,

In the end we fought with only our own true might.

There were of course a few lucky accidents:

Stones from the sky, a shower of blood on their tents,

Strange and mighty sounds from the rocky caves,

That lifted our hearts, and terrified their braves.

The conquered fell, beneath our relentless scorn,

Praising the kind god, our ranks cheer once more.

And all, without coercion, shout together as one:

'God be praised!' from a million throats is wrung.

Yet in highest praise I turn my own pious glance

As I seldom do, towards my own circumstance.

A young man may well squander his early days,

But age teaches him all the error of his ways.

Therefore at once without delay I bind you to me,

You noble four, to my House, Court and country.

(To the First.)

Prince, yours was the army's ordering, wisely planned,

Then, at the height of the battle, its bold command:
 Now act, in time of peace, as the hour requires you to,
 I name you High-Marshall, and confer the sword on you.

The High-Marshall

Your loyal army, deployed, on my orders,
 Internally, will now defend your borders,
 Let us, too, prepare the table on feast days,
 In your spacious castle's ancestral ways.
 Always to be your High Majesty's defence,
 Standing beside you, or marching in advance.

The Emperor (*To the Second.*)

You, who show yourself as gracious as you're brave,
 Be our High-Chamberlain: the office is grave.
 You become the overseer of all our attendants,
 Great evil comes from strife among dependants:
 So let your example honourably recall
 How they may please their prince, the court and all.

The High-Chamberlain

Be gracious, that the Lords may further your great aim:
 Assist the best and cause no injury to the lame,

Be open without cunning: be calm without deceit!
If you know me, Sire, my ambition is complete.
But on the feast may I now deploy my imagination?
When you're at table, I shall bear the golden basin,
I'll hold your rings, that on those joyful days
Your hands may be refreshed, as I am by your gaze.

The Emperor

I feel too serious for ready celebration,
But, be it so, as a joyful inauguration!
(To the Third.)
I make you High-Steward! Oversee the chase,
The poultry yard, and such, around the place:
Give me the finest dishes, choice and rare,
In their right month, and carefully prepared.

The High-Steward

Strict fast will be my pleasant punishment,
Till I can serve the tastiest refreshment.
Your kitchen staff will join with me to bring
The distant near, and make the year take wing.
Yet early and rare won't stimulate your fires,
Simple and strong, is what your taste desires.

The Emperor (*To the Fourth.*)

Since planning feasts is unavoidable here,
 Young hero, I'll give you my cup to bear.
 High-Cupbearer, take care those cellars of mine
 Are richly filled with casks of vintage wine.
 Be temperate yourself: don't lose your reason
 In the wild delight of momentary temptation!

The High-Cupbearer

The young, if you trust in them, my Prince,
 Grow to manhood, almost before you'd notice.
 I'll take my place too at your noble feast:
 And load the imperial table with all that's best,
 With every kind of vessel, in silver and gold,
 But the handsomest of all for you I'll hold:
 A clear Venetian glass, where joy is waiting,
 That strengthens the taste, without intoxicating.
 One often trusts too much in such a treasure:
 But your restraint, Lord, will protect your pleasure.

The Emperor

What I bestow on you at this grave moment,

You hear, in confidence, has my true intent.

The Emperor's word is great, his gift is sure,

But to be enacted it needs his signature,

His noble mark. Here's the right man I see

True to his time, to complete the formality.

(The Archbishop and High-Chancellor enters.)

If the arch can trust the keystone's part,

Then it's raised securely, with lasting art.

You see four Princes here! And I've explained

How my House and Court must be sustained.

Now, what the empire holds within its bounds

Is placed, with weight and power, in your hands.

You'll outshine all others in your estates:

So I've extended your walls and gates,

With the lost possessions of our enemy.

I award you fine lands, for your loyalty.

Together with the right, in due course,

To buy, exchange, or add to them by force:

Then, be it known, I grant you unhindered use –

Of what belongs to you, the landlord's dues.

When you as judges speak your final thought,

No appeal shall be heard by a higher court.

Then taxes, levies, rents, and tolls and fees,

Are yours: of mines, mints, salt the royalties.

And to display my gratitude completely,

I've raised you all to highest majesty.

The Archbishop

On behalf of us all I give our deepest thanks to you!

You make us strong and sure: increasing your power too.

The Emperor

To you five, still higher favours will I give.

I live for my empire, and I still wish to live:

Yet ancient, noble ties draw the careful thinker

From present things to those that follow after.

I too, in time, must leave all I still hold dear,

It's your duty then to name a new ruler, here.

At our holy altar, crown and raise him high:

What war begins ends peacefully, by and by.

The High-Chancellor

With pride at heart, yet humble in gesture, too,

We, the Earth's noblest princes bow to you.

So long as blood fills our loyal veins, then still

Are we the body that obeys your every will.

The Emperor

Now, to conclude, let everything we've enacted
 Be set down for the future, as we've contracted.
 As Lords you hold your possessions, free in fact,
 With this condition, that they remain intact.
 And what you have from us, whatever else is won,
 Shall descend in due measure to the eldest son.

The High-Chancellor

I'll entrust it to parchment straight away,
 This weightiest statute to bless us, and the state:
 The Chancery will provide fair copy, and reveal
 You as confirmed, my Lords, by sign and seal.

The Emperor

And so I dismiss you that you may deliberate
 Together, concerning this great day for our state.
 (*The Secular Princes exit.*)

The Archbishop

The Chancellor leaves, the Bishop remains here,
 With this grave warning to offer in your ear.

His paternal heart, anxiously, fears for you.

The Emperor

Speak, in this happy hour, what care's on view?

The Archbishop

With what bitter pain I find that even at this hour,
Your hallowed head still toys with Satan's power!
True, you've secured the throne now, yet it seems,
Sadly, scorning God, and the Pope's great schemes.
When he learns of it, swift punishment he'll bring,
And destroy your sinful realm with holy lightning.
He's not forgotten how, at that earlier time,
Of coronation, you freed the wizard: in crime.
With your diadem, you injured Christianity,
Striking a cursed head with the first act of mercy.
Now beat your breast and from your guilty measure,
Give back to the holy shrine a little treasure:
You, taught humility, devote to pious use, and good,
The spacious stretch of hills where your tent stood.
Where evil spirits gathered for your protection,
And the Prince of Liars secured your attention:
Grant mount and forest deep, as far as they extend,

And heights, the green slopes adorn, without end.
 Clear lakes rich in fish, countless streams that flow,
 Winding swiftly, that rush to the valleys below:
 Then the broad vale itself, meadow, lawn and hollow:
 Show your remorse: gain the mercy that must follow.

The Emperor

I'm deeply fearful of this, my heavy sin:
 Yourself, mark out the borders of the scheme.

The Archbishop

First then the place profaned by such sinfulness,
 Dedicate that to the service of heavenliness.
 Thick walls rise quickly, at the mind's desire,
 Already the sun's dawn glance lights the choir,
 The growing building takes the cross's structure,
 The nave long and high, a delight to each believer:
 Already as they press eagerly through the doors,
 A first peal rings through hills, down valley floors,
 From the high tower, that's striving towards heaven,
 The penitent comes, to whom new life is given.
 That day of consecration – may it be soon! –
 When your presence grants the greatest boon.

The Emperor

Let the pious mind proclaim so great an action,
In praising the Lord, I'll achieve my expiation.
Enough! I already feel my mind's exaltation.

The Archbishop

As Chancellor I require a formal proclamation.

The Emperor

A formal document: lay that before me,
I'll be pleased to sign whatever the Church agrees.

The Archbishop (*Has taken leave, but turns back at the door.*)

At the same time devote the total income of the land,
As it arises, tithes, taxes, levies, to the work on hand,
Forever. It needs to be maintained, fairly,
And its careful upkeep will cost us dearly.

From all that plunder, grant us a measure of gold,
To build it quickly there, in that desert fold.
Moreover we'll need, I can't help mentioning,
Timber from far off, lime, slate, and such things.

Exhorted from the pulpit, the folk will haul it,
The Church will bless the man who learns to serve it.
(*He exits.*)

The Emperor

The sin with which my soul is heavy, is full sore:
Wretched Sorcerers have wounded me, once more.

The Archbishop (*Returning, yet again, and bowing deeply.*)

Pardon, my Lord! The Imperial shore was given
To that disreputable man, I'll excommunicate him,
Unless you in penitence grant the Church, there, too,
Its tithes, and gifts, and taxes: the whole of its revenue.

The Emperor (*In a bad humour.*)

That land doesn't exist, it lies there under the sea.

The Archbishop

Who's patient, and is right, his time is yet to be.
For us, your word must wait on one man's desire.
(*He exits.*)

The Emperor (*Alone.*)

I might as well sign away the whole wide empire.

ACT 5

Scene I: Open Country

The Wanderer

Yes! Here are the dusky lindens,
Standing round, in mighty age.
And here am I, returning to them,
After so long a pilgrimage!
It still appears the same old place:
Here's the hut that sheltered me,
When the storm-uplifted wave,
Hurled me shore-wards from the sea!
My hosts are those I would bless,
A brave, a hospitable pair,
Who if I meet them, I confess,
Must already be white haired.
Ah! They were pious people!
Shall I call, or knock? – Greetings,
If, as open-hearted, you still
Enjoy good luck, in meetings!

Baucis (*A little woman, very aged.*)

Gentle stranger! Quietly, quietly!
Peace! Let my husband rest!

Long sleep lends the elderly,
Little time to work, at best.

The Wanderer

Tell me, Mother: are you that wife
To whom thanks should be given:
Who brought a young man back to life,
When wife and husband worked as one?
Are you that Baucis who tirelessly
Restored my almost-vanished breath?

(Her husband appears.)

Are you that Philemon, who bravely
Saved my wealth from watery death?
Your swiftly burning fire,
Your silvery sounding bell,
In chance, dread and dire,
Was the outcome that befell.

And now let me walk about,
And view the boundless ocean:
Let me kneel, and be devout:
Mind troubled with emotion.

(He walks on, over the downs.)

Philemon (To Baucis.)

Hurry now, and lay the table,
Underneath the garden trees.

Let him go: as in the fable,
He'll not credit what he sees.

(He follows, and stands beside the Wanderer.)

Where wave on wave, foaming wildly,
Savagely mistreated you,
See a garden planted, widely,
See the Paradisial view.

I was too old to seize the day,
Unfit to work as long ago:

And while my powers ebbed away,
The tide extended its wide flow.

Clever Lords set their bold servants
Digging ditches, building dikes,
To gain the mastery of ocean,
Diminishing its natural rights.

See green meadow bordering meadow,
Field and garden, wood and town. –

But it's time to eat, so follow,
Sunset is approaching now.

See the sails, far away there,

Seeking port before the night.

The birds fly homeward through the air:

Their harbour too heaves in sight.

So gaze then, at the whole horizon,

Where the blue sea used to flow,

Right and left there, to your vision,

Densely peopled space below.

Scene II: In the Little Garden

(The three of them at table.)

Baucis *(To the stranger.)*

Are you dumb? And will you lift

Not a morsel to your mouth?

Philemon

He wants to comprehend the gift:

Tell him, freely then: speak out.

Baucis

Well! It was a marvel, really!

It troubles me to this day:

Then its whole nature, surely,

Was peculiar, in its way.

Philemon

Is the Emperor, then, at fault,
Who granted him the land?
Didn't a herald make his halt,
Crying out what was planned?
Not far away there, on the dunes,
The first bold step was made,
Tents, huts! – And on the downs,
A palace, quickly raised.

Baucis

For days, work rumbled on in vain,
Pick and shovel, blow on blow:
Where the night's fires flamed,
Next day a dam would follow.
Human blood was forced to flow,
At night, rose the sound of pain:
The seaward floating fiery glow
Was a canal, come dawn again.
He's a godless man: he'd steal
Our hut, and our few acres:

But like subjects we must kneel,
When we boast such neighbours.

Philemon

Yet he's offered us another
Holding, on his new-won land!

Baucis

Never trust what's built on water,
On the heights maintain your stand.

Philemon

Let's make our way to the chapel,
To watch the last glow of light,
Kneel, pray, and sound the bell,
And trust in God's ancient might!

Scene III: The Palace

(Spacious pleasure-gardens: a broad straight canal. Faust in extreme old age, walking about, thoughtfully.)

Lynceus, the Warder (Through a speaking trumpet.)

The sun is fading, the last boats
Sail swiftly to the harbour here.

One large vessel gently floats,
 Down the canal: and draws near.
 The bright flags flutter merrily,
 The masts are trimmed, in time:
 The boatmen all praise you gladly,
 Fortune celebrates your prime.
(The little bell on the dunes rings out.)

Faust (*Startled.*)

Accursed ringing! Wounding me
 With shame: a treacherous blow:
 My realm's laid out there, endlessly,
 But, at my back, this vexes so,
 Proclaiming, with its jealous sound:
 My great estate is less than fine,
 The old hut, all the trees around,
 The crumbling chapel, are not mine.
 And even if I wished to rest there,
 A strange shadow makes me shudder,
 It's a thorn in my eye, and deeper:
 Oh! Would I were somewhere other!

The Warder (*From above.*)

The boat is sailing, brightly dressed,
Towards us, on the evening breeze!
Heaped, with boxes, sacks and chests,
From its journey on the seas!

(A splendid boat, richly and brightly loaded with foreign goods.)

(Mephistopheles. The Three Mighty Warriors.)

Chorus

Here we land,
Already, here.
Hail to our Lord,
Our patron dear!

(They disembark: the goods are unloaded.)

Mephistopheles

We've proven ourselves in every way,
Pleased, if we win our patron's praise.
We took two ships when we sailed before
With twenty ships we dock, once more.
What we've achieved, each fine thing,
You'll see from the cargo that we bring.
The ocean's freedom frees the mind
There all thought is left behind!

You only need a handy grip,
 You catch a fish, or take a ship,
 And once you're lord of all three,
 The fourth one's tackled easily:
 The fifth one's in an evil plight,
 You have the might, and so the right.
 You wonder what, and never how.
 I know a little of navigation:
 War, trade, and piracy, allow,
 As three in one, no separation.

The Three Mighty Warriors

No thanks for us!
 No thanks at all!
 As if we've brought
 A stench, that's all.
 He pulls a
 Nasty face again:
 These royal goods
 Don't please him then.

Mephistopheles

Don't expect more

Pay for it!

What you've had

Is what you get.

The Warriors

That was only

To pass the time:

We want an equal

Share in crime.

Mephistopheles

Then first set out in

Hall on hall,

The costly treasures,

One and all!

And coming to

The splendid show,

He'll think it all the

More, you know,

He won't be mean,

With you, at least,

He'll give the fleet,

Feast on feast.

Tomorrow motley birds attend,
I want to take good care of them.

(The cargo is removed.)

(To Faust.)

This splendid fortune you embrace
With wrinkled brow, and gloomy face!
Your noble wisdom has been crowned,
Sea's reconciled with solid ground:
From the shore, on swifter track,
The sea wills out the ship, and back:
So speak, that here, from your spire,
Your arms might grip the world entire.
From this place the trench was cut,
Here stood the first wooden hut:
A little ditch was traced from here,
Where now vessels' wakes appear.
Your servants' toil, your thought so wise,
Have won the Earth and Ocean's prize.
From here on –

Faust

– that accursed *here!*

That always brings me wretched fear,

To you who are so clever, I say it,
It gives my heart sting on sting,
It's impossible for me to bear it.
I'm ashamed to even speak the thing.
The old ones up there should yield,
I want the limes as my retreat,
The least tree in another's field,
Detracts from my whole estate.
There, to stand and look around,
I'll build a frame from bough to bough,
My gaze revealing, under the sun,
A view of everything I've done,
Overseeing, as the eye falls on it,
A masterpiece of the human spirit,
Forging with intelligence,
A wider human residence.
That's the worst suffering can bring,
Being rich, to feel we lack something.
The bell's chime, the lindens' breeze,
Like tombs in churchyards stifle me.
The exercise of my all-conquering will
Is shattered in the sand, here, and lies still.
How can I drive it from my nature!

The bell peals, and I'm an angry creature.

Mephistopheles

It's natural! Intense frustration
Drives a man to desperation.
Who doubts it! That clang I fear
Falls cruelly on a noble ear.
And that wretched *bing-bang-bong*,
Through the clear evening sky, that gong,
Is joined to every chance event,
From first bath to last interment.
As if between its *bing* and *bong*
Life's a dream, and then is gone.

Faust

Such obstinacy and opposition
Diminishes the noblest position,
Until in endless pain, one must
Grow deeply weary of being just.

Mephistopheles

Why bother yourself so much about them?
Shouldn't you long ago have colonised them?

Faust

Then go and push them aside for me! –
 You know the land, with my approval,
 Set aside for the old folks removal.

Mephistopheles

We'll take them up, and set them down,
 They'll stand, once more: I'll be bound:
 When they've survived a little force,
 They'll be reconciled to it, of course.

(He whistles shrilly.)

Come: perform your Lord's command!
 And tomorrow let the feast be planned.

The Three Warriors

This old Lord received us badly,
 A feast now is our right: believe me.

Mephistopheles (To the audience.)

And here we see, as long ago
 Naboth's vineyard still on show. (*Kings I:21*)

Scene IV: Dead of Night

Lynceus, the Warder (*Singing on the watch-tower of the palace.*)

For seeing, I'm born,
For watching, employed,
To the tower, I'm sworn,
While the world, I enjoy.
I gaze at the far,
I stare at the near,
The moon and the star,
The forest and deer:
The eternally lovely
Adornment, I view,
And as it delights me
I delight myself too.
You, fortunate eyes,
All you've seen, there,
Let it be as it may,
Yet it was so fair!

(*Pause.*)

I'm not positioned here, on high,
Just for my own enjoyment:
What horror, meant to terrify,

Threatens from the firmament!
I see sparks of fire gushing
Through the lindens' double night,
Fanned by the wind's rushing,
Ever stronger grows the light.
Ah! Within, the hut is burning,
Damp and mossy though it stand:
Swift help, in this direction turning,
Is needed, yet no aid's to hand.
Ah! The pious old couple,
So careful ever of the fire,
Made a prey to smoke, to stifle,
On this dreadful pyre!
The flame burns on: glowing red,
It's now a blackened mossy pile:
If only those good folk are rescued,
From those fires of hell, run wild!
A bright tongue of lightning heaves,
Through the branches, through the leaves:
Breaking, snapping, catching swiftly,
Withered branches flicker, glow.
Why have I such powers to see!
Why are mine the eyes that know!

The little chapel now collapses,
 With the falling branches' weight.
 Already with bright snakelike flashes,
 The treetops, gripped, meet their fate.
 Glowing crimson, to their hollow
 Roots, the trunks now burn with ease. –

(A long pause. Chant.)

What used to please my eyes, below,
 Has vanished with the centuries.

Faust (*On the balcony, towards the downs.*)

What whining song is that, above?
 Too late its word and tone reach me.
 The watchman wails: yes, I'm moved:
 Annoyed by this impatient deed.
 But let the lime-trees be erased,
 A horror now of half-burnt timber,
 A watchtower can soon be raised,
 To gaze around at boundless splendour.
 From there I'll see my new creation,
 One set aside for that old pair: at least,
 They'll feel benign consideration,

Enjoying their last days in peace.

Mephistopheles and the Three Warriors (*Below.*)

Here we come, and at the double:

Pardon us! We've caused you trouble.

We knocked, and knocked on the door,

But it seemed locked for evermore:

We rattled it, and shook it too,

Until the planks broke in two:

We called aloud, and threatened, then,

But there was no reply, again.

And as happens in such cases,

They heard nothing, hid their faces:

But we commenced without delay

To drive the stubborn folk away.

That pair knew scant anxiety,

They died of terror, peacefully.

A stranger, who was hiding there,

And wished to fight, we tried to scare.

But in the fast and furious bout,

From the coals that lay about,

The straw took fire. Now all three,

In that one pyre, burn merrily.

Faust

Were you deaf to what I said?

I wanted them moved, not dead.

This mindless, and savage blow,

Earns my curse: share it, and go!

Chorus

The ancient proverb says of course:

Yield willingly to a greater force!

While if you're bold and opt for strife,

You'll stake your house, and home – and life.

(They exit.)

Faust (*On the balcony.*)

Stars hide their faces, and their glow,

The fire sinks, and flickers low:

A moist breeze fans the dying ember,

Bringing smoke and vapour closer.

Quickly said, too quickly done, I fear! –

Now, what hovers like a shadow, here?

Scene V: Midnight

(Four Grey Women enter.)

The First

I am called Want.

The Second

I am called Guilt.

The Third

I am called Care.

The Fourth

Necessity, I.

Three Together (*Want, Guilt and Necessity*)

The door is shut tight, and we cannot get in:

The owner is rich: he won't have us within.

Want

I shrink to a shadow.

Guilt

To emptiest space.

Need

The wealthy from me turn their pampered face.

Care

Sisters, you can't enter, daren't enter there.

But, through the keyhole now, always slips, Care.

(Care disappears.)

Want

You, my Grey Sisters, take your flight too.

Guilt

Close by your side, I come following you.

Necessity

Close at your heels is Necessity's breath.

The Three

The clouds there are moving, and cover the stars!

Behind us, behind us! From far, oh, from far,

He's coming, our Brother, he's coming, he's – Death.

Faust (*In the Palace.*)

I saw four: but only three went away:
I caught no meaning from the words they say.
It sounded as if I heard – ‘Necessity’s breath’,
And then a gloomy rhyming word, like – ‘Death’.
It rang hollow, ghostly, subdued, to me.
Even now I’ve not won my liberty.
If I could banish Sorcery from my track,
Unlearn the magic-spells that draw me back,
And stand before you, Nature, as mere Man,
It would be worth the pain of being Human.
So was I, a seeker in the darkness,
Cursing both self and world, in wickedness.
Now the air is filled with phantom shapes,
It’s hard to see how anyone escapes.
Though day may smile on us with rational gleams,
The night entwines us in a web of dreams:
We come happily from the fields of youth,
A bird croaks: what? Misfortune: is our truth.
Cloaked with superstitions, soon and late:
It’s wedded to us, warns us: shows our fate.
And so, alone, intimidated, we stand.
The door creaks, yet no one is at hand.

(Anxiously.)

Is anyone there?

Care

The answer must be, yes!

Faust

And you, who then are you?

Care

I am your guest.

Faust

Be gone!

Care

I am here, in my proper place.

Faust (*First angered, then composed, addressing himself.*)

Take care: of magic spells show not a trace.

Care

Though the ear choose not to hear,

In the heart I echo, clear:
 Savage power I exercise,
 Transformed I am, to mortal eyes.
 On the land, and on the ocean,
 Evermore the dread companion,
 Always found, and never sought,
 Praised, as well as cursed, in thought. –
 Have you yourself not known Care?

Faust

I sped through the World that's there:
 Gripped by the hair every appetite,
 And let go those that failed to delight,
 Let those fly that quite escaped me.
 I've desired, achieved my course,
 Desired again, and so, with force,
 Stormed through life: first powerfully,
 But wisely now: and thoughtfully.
 Earth's sphere's familiar enough to me,
 The view beyond is barred eternally:
 The fool who sets his sights up there,
 Creates his own likeness in the air!
 Let him stand, and look around him well:

This world means something to the capable.

Why does he need to roam eternity!

Let him grasp what is firm reality.

So let him wander down his earthly day:

And if ghosts haunt him, go on his way,

Find joy and suffering in striding on,

Dissatisfied with every hour that's gone.

Care

When of man I take possession,

Then his whole world is lessened:

Endless gloom meets his eyes,

No more suns will set or rise,

Though intact, to outer sense,

He lives in the dark, intense,

Never knowing how to measure

Any portion of his treasure.

Good and ill are merely chance,

He starves, food in his hands:

Be it joy or be it sorrow

He delays it till tomorrow,

Waiting for the future, ever,

Finding his fulfilment, never.

Faust

Be gone! And don't come near me!
Such nonsense I'll not understand.
Away, with your evil litany,
Sent to confuse the cleverest man!

Care

Shall he come, or shall he go?
All decision is denied him:
In the middle of the road,
He staggers, feeling round him.
He's ever more deeply lost,
Seeing everything star-crossed,
Wearies himself and all the rest,
Stifles as he holds his breath:
Lifeless, but not yet gone under,
Resists despair or surrender.
So, with an incessant rolling,
A painful end, and hard going,
Now free, and now constrained,
In half sleep, poorly entertained,
Confine him in a little space:

Prepare him for Hell's other place.

Faust

Unholy spectre! So you hand our race
 To the ravages of a thousand devils:
 Even transform our worthless days
 To a wretched knot of entangling evils.
 It's hard I know to free oneself from Demons,
 The strong spirit-bonds are not lightly broken:
 And yet, Care, I'll not recognise you, nor even,
 That creeping power of yours, by any token.

Care

Feel it now, as on the wind,
 I, and my curse, depart, again.
 Lifelong, all you men are blind,
 Now, Faust, be so to the end!
(She breathes in his face, and departs.)

Faust (Now *blind*.)

The night seems deeper all around me,
 Only within me is there gleaming light:
 I must finish what I've done, and hurry,

The master's word alone declares what's right.

Up from your beds, you slaves! Man on man!

Reveal the daring of my favoured plan.

Seize the tools: on with pick and spade!

Let the end-result be now displayed.

Strict order, and swift industry

Then the finest prize we'll see:

And so the greatest work may stand,

One mind equal to a thousand hands.

Scene VI: The Great Outer Court of the Palace

(Torches.)

Mephistopheles (*In advance, as Overseer.*)

Come on! Come on! In here, in here!

Quivering spirits of the dead,

All you patchwork semi-natures,

Sinew, bone, and tendon wed.

The Spirits of the Dead (*Lemures, in Chorus.*)

Swiftly now we are on hand

With half an impression,

That it concerns a tract of land,

Of which we'll gain possession.
 Pointed stakes with us appear,
 Chains to measure ground on:
 But why you've called us here
 Is something we've forgotten.

Mephistopheles

Artistic effort's not the prize:
 Carry it out in your own manner!
 Lay the longest one of you lengthwise,
 Then pile the turf on him, you others.
 Do as they once did for our fathers there,
 Dig out a somewhat lengthened square!
 Gone from a palace to a narrow place:
 It's still as stupid an end for man to face.

The Spirits of the Dead (*Digging with mocking gestures.*)

When I was young and lived and loved,
 I thought it was very sweet:
 To happy sounds, and cheerful steps,
 I lifted up my feet.
 Now treacherous old age has clawed
 Me with his crutch, since when

I stumble at the grave's wide door,
Why do they leave it open!

Faust (*Comes from the Palace, groping his way past the doorposts.*)

How the clattering of shovels cheers me!
It's the crews still labouring on,
Till earth is reconciled to man,
The waves accept their boundaries,
And ocean's bound with iron bands.

Mephistopheles (*Aside.*)

And yet with all your walls and dams
You're merely dancing to our tune:
Since you prepare for our Neptune,
The Water-demon, one vast feast.
You'll be lost in every way –
The elements are ours, today,
And ruin comes on running feet.

Faust

Overseer!

Mephistopheles

Here!

Faust

Any way you can
 Bring crowds of labourers together,
 Spurred by force or hope of pleasure,
 By pay, enticement or press-gang!
 Report to me on progress every day,
 The depth of earth and gravel dug away.

Mephistopheles (*Half-aloud.*)

Reporting it to me the word they gave,
 Was not quite gravel, it was more like – grave.

Faust

A swamp lies there below the hill,
 Infecting everything I've done:
 My last and greatest act of will
 Succeeds when that foul pool is gone.
 Let me make room for many a million,
 Not wholly secure, but free to work on.
 Green fertile fields, where men and herds
 May gain swift comfort from the new-made earth.

Quickly settled in those hills' embrace,
 Piled high by a brave, industrious race.
 And in the centre here, a Paradise,
 Whose boundaries hold back the raging tide,
 And though it gnaws to enter in by force,
 The common urge unites to halt its course.
 Yes, I've surrendered to this thought's insistence,
 The last word Wisdom ever has to say:
 He only earns his Freedom and Existence,
 Who's forced to win them freshly every day.
 Childhood, manhood, age's vigorous years,
 Surrounded by dangers, they'll spend here.
 I wish to gaze again on such a land,
 Free earth: where a free race, in freedom, stand.
 Then, to the Moment I'd dare say:
 'Stay a while! You are so lovely!'
 Through aeons, then, never to fade away
 This path of mine through all that's earthly. –
 Anticipating, here, its deep enjoyment,
 Now I savour it, that highest moment.
 (*Faust sinks back, the spirits of the dead take him and lay him on the ground.*)

Mephistopheles

No bliss satisfied him, no enjoyment,
And so he tried to catch at shifting forms:
The last, the worst, the emptiest of moments,
He wished to hold at last in his arms.
Though against me he tried to stand,
Time is master: age lies on the sand.
The clock stands still –

Chorus

Stands still! As midnight: silent.
The hand moves.

Mephistopheles

It falls, and all is spent.

Chorus

It's past.

Mephistopheles

Past! A stupid word.
Then, why?
Past, and pure nothing, complete monotony!
What use is this eternal creation!

Creating, to achieve annihilation!

‘There, it’s past!’ What’s to read in it?

It’s just the same as if it never lived,

Yet chases round in circles, as if it did.

I’d prefer to have the everlasting void.

Burial

A Spirit of the Dead (Solo.)

Who’s built the house so badly,

With shovel and with spade?

Spirits of the Dead (Chorus.)

For you dull guest, in hempen dress,

It was all too carefully made.

A Spirit of the Dead (Solo.)

Who’s decked the hall so badly?

Where now the table and chairs?

Spirits of the Dead (Chorus.)

Borrowed for a little while:

There are many creditors.

Mephistopheles

The body's here: if the spirit tries to fly,
I'll show it my blood-signed title swiftly:
Yet men have found so many methods, sadly,
To cheat the Devil of their souls, or try.
We carry on the same old way,
New ones aren't recommended:
I used to work alone: today
I have to use the help extended.
And everything goes badly too!
Ancient right, traditional use,
One can't rely on those much longer.
At the last breath, once, the soul was out,
I slipped by, and like the swiftest mouse,
Caught her! Held her fast, my claws were stronger.
Now she lingers, won't leave the gloomy place,
The foul corpse's hideous house, until
The elements force her, in hatred still,
And drive her out at last, in disgrace.
And though the hour and minute plague me,
'When', 'how' and 'where', still the tiresome query:
Old Death has lost his ancient power,

‘Whether’ is doubtful, never mind the hour:

Often, with lust, I saw the rigid frame

It was a sham: it stirred, and rose again.

(He makes fantastic, whirling conjuring gestures.)

Now quick! Redouble your paces, too,

You gentlemen, straight or twisted-horned,

The old Devil’s grain and kernel born,

And bring Hell’s jaws along with you.

True Hell has many jaws! Yes, many!

To swallow according to standing and worth:

However in this last game of all we’re ready

To be a little less considerate, henceforth.

(The fearful jaws of Hell open on the left.)

The tusks yawn wide: the jaws of the abyss,

Flow with raging flames, in fury,

And in the boiling background hiss,

I see the eternal glow of the fiery city.

The crimson tide breaks against the teeth,

The damned in hope of help swim through:

But the vast hyena mangles them beneath,

And sends them to new anguish in the brew.

There are many corners to discover,

So many horrors in such little room!

You've done quite well at frightening sinners,
But still they think it dream, deceit, untrue.

(To the fat devils with short straight horns.)

Now, you fat-bellied rascals with fiery cheeks!
You've grown that way eating hellish sulphur:
Stumpy, short, with thick immoveable necks!

Watch below, for any glow of phosphor:

That's the soul, Psyche with the wings,

Pluck them off and she's a nasty worm:

I'll stamp her with my signature, first thing,

Then off with her to the whirling fiery storm!

Pass on towards the nether regions,

You barrels, since all that's your duty:

Whether she lives there, that's the notion,

None know with any accuracy.

She'll gladly lodge in the navel –

Lest she slip away from there, be careful.

(To the lean devils with long crooked horns.)

You, clowns, you giant flying creatures,

Grasp at the air: grant yourselves no rest!

Your strong arms and sharp-clawed features,

Are sure to hold the fluttering fugitive fast.

She's stuck there inside her ancient house,

And Spirit will always look for a way out.

(Glory from above, on the right.)

The Heavenly Host

Messengers follow

Heavenly kin, oh,

In leisurely flight:

Sin they forgive,

Dust they make live:

The friendship they show

To Nature below,

Floating they'll give,

As they slowly alight!

Mephistopheles

I hear discords, all that nasty jingling,

Coming from up there, with unwelcome day:

It's always that childish, girlish bungling,

That pious taste loves to hear and play.

You know how we in despicable moments,

Considered the ruin of the human race:

But the most shameful of compliments,

Is that their prayers are a worse disgrace.

These dandies come, the hypocrites:
 They've snatched a heap of souls away,
 Use our own weapons too to do it:
 They're Devils in disguise, I'd say.
 To lose this one is everlasting shame:
 On to the grave, and renew your claim!

The Choir of Angels (*Scattering roses*)

Roses, you dazzling ones,
 Balsam you're sending us,
 Floating and trembling,
 Secretly quickening,
 Branches inspiring us,
 Buds sweetly firing us,
 Hasten to bloom!
 Crimson and green, here
 Springtime assume!
 Carry the sleeper
 To Paradise' room.

Mephistopheles (*To the devils.*)

Why duck and dive? Is that Hell's custom?
 Stand still, and let them do their scattering.

Every gawk in place, and face them!
 They think with such a flowery smattering,
 To cool the heat of devils' chattering:
 At your breath it melts and shrinks, again.
 Now blow, you blowers! – Enough, enough!
 Your bubbling's faded all that stuff. –
 Not so fiercely! Close your mouths and noses!
 Ah, now you've been too violent with the roses,
 Where's the moderation you should have learnt?
 They're not just shrivelling: they're burning, burnt!
 They float about in flames, poisonous, bright:
 Avoid them: close together, huddle tight! –
 Your power's waning! And your courage too!
 The devils sniff the strange, seductive brew.

The Choir of Angels

Blossoms, of joyfulness,
 Flames, of true happiness,
 Love, they radiate,
 Bliss, they now create,
 As the heart may.
 Words that are truest,
 Air of the clearest,

Gathering round us

Eternal day!

Mephistopheles

O, curses! O shower of shame that's shed!

Each Satan's standing on his head,

The Fatties spin like tops, in curves,

And plunge arse-upwards into Hell.

Go find the hot baths you deserve!

While at my post I'll stand here still. –

(He beats at the hovering roses.)

Will-o'-the wisps, be gone! Though you burn bright,

Snatched at, in the end, you're disgusting shite.

Why'd you keep fluttering here? Buzz off! –

They stick like tar and sulphur: filthy stuff.

The Choir of Angels

What is not part of you,

You need not share it:

What inwardly troubles you,

You need not bear it.

Should it close in, with force,

We will deflect its course.

Only the loving, Love

Guides to its source!

Mephistopheles

My head and heart are burnt: my liver's burnt,

By a devilish element!

Sharper than the fires of Hell! –

That's what makes you cry, so, as well,

You, the unlucky in love! Disdained,

Heads turned to the beloved, strained.

Mine, too! What's twisted it to one side?

Are they and I not sworn to eternal strife?

I, once fiercely hostile to their very sight.

Has an alien force pierced me through and through?

I gladly gaze at them, loveliest of youths:

What holds me back from cursing at the light? –

And if I let myself be seduced,

Who'll play the fool in future?

These airy fellows that I hate, too,

How lovely to me now they all appear! –

You sweet children, tell me then:

Aren't you part of Lucifer's race?

You're so nice I'd like to kiss you, and again,

It feels as if this is your proper place.
 It feels as comfortable, as natural to me,
 As if we'd met a thousand times before:
 So surreptitiously catlike, so lustfully:
 The loveliness with each glance quickens more.
 Oh, come nearer: Oh, only glance at me!

The Angels

We're here already, why so cautiously?
 We are close, and, if you can, then stay!
 (*The Angels come forward and occupy the whole space.*)

Mephistopheles (*Crowded into the proscenium.*)

You scorn us, the spirits of the damned,
 Yet you're of the true Sorcerers' brand:
 You lead both man and wife astray. –
 What wretched luck, and dire!
 Is this Love's own element?
 My whole body's bathed in fire,
 I scarcely feel, my head's so burnt. –
 You float to and fro, sink down a while,
 Move your sweet limbs with earthly guile:
 True, a grave expression suits you well,

But I'd still like to see you smile a little!
 That would be an eternal delight to me.
 Like the lovers' mutual glance, you see:
 A simper round the mouth, is how it's done,
 You, the tall lad, you could make me love you,
 The priest's pose doesn't really suit you,
 So show a little lust, and look hereon!
 You could be more modestly naked too,
 That robe's long hem, so demure in its rising –
 They turn away – and seen from the rear view –
 Those rascals now are really appetising!

The Choir of Angels

You, loving fires,
 Brighter, now, fanned,
 Heal the damned,
 With Truth, the higher!
 Let them be freed
 From evil indeed,
 Blissfully grace,
 The eternal embrace.

Mephistopheles (*Collecting himself.*)

What's happening to me! – Like Job, in fact
 All boils, so I scare myself, and yet I've won
 As well, since now my inspection's done,
 And my trust in self and tribe's well placed:
 The Devil's noble bits appear intact,
 This love-bewitchment's only on the surface:
 The wretched flames already smother,
 And, as is right, I curse you all together!

The Choir of Angels

Pure incandescence!
 Whom its flames bless,
 Blissful with goodness,
 Is their existence.
 Gathered together,
 Rise now, and praise!
 Spirit can breathe here,
 In purer waves!
 (*They rise, carrying away the immortal part of Faust.*)

Mephistopheles (*Looking round him.*)

How then? – Where did they vanish to?
 You took me by surprise, you adolescents.

Now with what they've salvaged from the tomb,
 As their own prize, they've flown off to heaven:
 They've stolen a great, a unique treasure:
 That noble soul, mortgaged to my pleasure,
 They've snatched it away, with cunning even.
 But whom could I complain to, anyway?
 Who'd grant me my well-earned right?
 You've been swindled in your old age,
 You've deserved it, this wretched slight.
 At great expense, shameful! And it's gone:
 I've mishandled it all disgracefully,
 A common lust, an absurd passion,
 Swayed the hardened devil foolishly.
 And if Experience was in a mess,
 With all these childish, stupid things,
 It was, in truth, no trivial Foolishness,
 That took possession of him in the end.

Scene VII: Mountain Gorges, Forest, Rock, Desert

(Holy Hermits, divided in ascending planes, posted among the ravines.)

Chorus and Echo

Forests, they wave around,

Over them, cliffs bear down,
Roots cling to rocky ground,
Trunk upon trunk is bound,
Wave after wave sprays up,
Deep caves protecting us.
Lions prowl silently,
Round us, still friendly,
Honouring sacred space,
Love's holy hiding place.
Pater Ecstaticus (*Hovering up and down.*)
Eternal, fire of bliss,
Glow of love's bond this is,
Pain in the heart, seething,
Rapture divine, foaming.
Arrows, come, piercing me,
Spears, compelling me,
Clubs, you may shatter me,
Lightning may flash through me!
So passes the nullity
Of all unreality,
And from the lasting star
Shines Love's eternal core.

Pater Profundis (At a lower level.)

As this rocky abyss at my feet,
Rests on a deeper abyss,
As a thousand glittering streams meet
In the foaming flood's downward hiss,
As with its own strong impulse, above,
The tree lifts skywards in the air:
Even so all-powerful love,
Creates all things, in its care.
Around me there's a savage roar,
As if the rocks and forests sway,
Yet full of love the waters pour,
Rushing bountifully away,
Sent to irrigate the valley here:
The lightning that flashed down,
Must purify the atmosphere,
With poisonous vapours bound –
They are love's messengers, they tell
Of what creates eternally around us.
May it inflame me inwardly, as well,
Since my spirit, cold and confounded,
Torments itself, bound in the dull senses,
As sharp-toothed fetters' agonising art.

Oh, God! Calm my thoughts, pacify us,
And bring light to my needy heart!

Pater Seraphicus (*In the middle regions.*)

What a mist of morning hovers
Through the pine-trees' swaying hair!
Can I guess what it might cover?
A crowd of spirits live there.

Choir of Sacred Young Boys

Tell us, Father, where we wander,
Tell us, Kind One, who we are?
We are happy: Being's tender
To all who are, all who are.

Pater Seraphicus

Young boys! Born at midnight's hour,
Mind and spirit half-unveiled,
For your parents, a lost dower,
For the angels, profit gained.
You can feel that one who loves
Is near to you, so come to me:
Yet of earthly ways and moves,

You bear no traces, happily.
 Rise into my eyes, those known
 Organs of the earthly life,
 You can use them as your own,
 Gaze at all the spaces wide!
(He absorbs them into himself.)
 Those are trees: those are cliffs,
 A stream of water, rushing round,
 With gigantic leaps it lifts,
 Shortening its journey down.

The Young Boys (*From within him.*)

That's indeed a mighty vision,
 But it's gloomy here, you know,
 With fear and dread we're all shaken.
 Father, Kind one, let us go!

Pater Seraphicus

Rise upwards to the highest sphere,
 Grow unnoticed there forever,
 While in pure eternal manner,
 God's presence makes you stronger.
 Such is the spirit's libation,

Blending with the freest air:

Love's eternal revelation,

Bliss is unfolded there.

The Choir of Young Boys (*Circling round the highest summit.*)

Hands now entwining,

Joyfully circling round,

Soaring and singing

With sacred feeling's sound!

In the divinely taught,

Now you should trust:

He whom your worship sought

You'll see at last.

The Angels (*Soaring in the highest atmosphere, carrying the immortal part of Faust.*)

He's escaped, this noble member

Of the spirit world, from evil,

Whoever strives, in his endeavour,

We can rescue from the devil.

And if he has Love within,

Granted from above,

The sacred crowd will meet him,

With welcome, and with love.

The Younger Angels

Every rose from the hands
Of those penitents, loving, holy,
Helped us win the victory,
The highest work, completed, stands,
The treasure of this soul we've won.
Evil bowed to petals thrown,
Devils fled the blows we threw.
Instead of Hell's hurts anew,
They felt spirits' loving pain:
Pierced with agony again
The old devil-master too was gone.
Shout with joy! All is done.

The More Perfect Angels

Carrying earthly remains
Is hard to endure,
Though they survive the flames,
They are still the impure.
Once a great spirit's strength
So tightly fits
All the four elements,

No angel splits
That double nature wed,
The inwardly binding:
To Eternal Love instead
Is left the unwinding.

The Younger Angels

Misted on rocky heights
Now we are feeling,
Nearing our clearer sight
Spiritual Being.
These clouds are vanishing
A crowd I see, moving,
Of sacred young men,
Freed from their earthly gloom,
Circling together,
Delighting again,
In the spring's brighter bloom,
In higher air.
Let them together then,
Lead him on: risen,
Perfect, and there!

The Young Boys

Joyfully we receive

Him as a chrysalis:

So that we now achieve

A pledge of our bliss.

Let all the threads be lost

That now surround him!

He is already blessed,

Divine Love has found him.

Doctor Marianus (*The transformed Faust: in the highest purest cell.*)

Here is the freest view,

Of spirit borne skywards.

There women moving too

Drifting on upwards.

The splendour I see within

Garlands of stars,

There, all the Heavens' Queen

Shines from afar.

(Enraptured.)

Highest Queen of all the world!

Let me, in the blue,

With all heaven's web unfurled,

Know your mystery too.
Approve the tender, serious,
Stir of the human heart,
And in love's sacred bliss,
Raise it higher, through your art.
Our courage is unconquerable
When you command on high:
But our glow is gentler, still,
When you are satisfied.
Virgin, pure, of loveliest mind,
Mother, in all nobility,
Peer to everything divine,
Queen of our reality.
Such light cloud fragments
Wind all around her,
They are the penitents,
Women so tender,
All around her knees,
Breathing the air, free,
Desiring her mercy.
You are the Virginal Mother,
It's not surprising
Those seduced by another

Towards you are rising.
 Taken in weakness now,
 They are all harder to save:
 Who can resist the power
 Of desires that enslave?
 How quickly the feet may slip
 On smooth, sloping ground!
 Who's un-tempted by glance and lip,
 Or by flattering sounds?
 (*The Mater Gloriosa soars into space.*)

Choir of Female Penitents

You soar, on high, now,
 Towards the eternal realm,
 Hear our pleading, though,
 You, the peerless one,
 Oh, merciful one!

Magna Peccatrix (*The sinful woman who anointed Christ's feet, See Luke vii:36*)

By the love that at the feet there
 Of your son, divine, transfigured,
 Let the tears like balsam flow there,
 Despite the Pharisees' derision:

By the vessel, that so richly
 Spread its fragrance on the ground,
 By the locks of hair that softly
 Dried the holy feet, shed round –

The Woman of Samaria (*The woman at the well, See John iv*)

By the well, where once before
 Abraham's flocks were driven,
 By the jar, that cooled the Saviour,
 That to sacred lips was given:
 By the pure and flowing fountain,
 That poured out its clear water,
 Overflowing, bright and certain,
 Through all the worlds, forever.

Mary of Egypt (*Acta Sanctorum*)

By the consecrated place
 Where the Lord's body lay:
 By the warning arm, against my face,
 That thrust me far from the doorway:
 By my forty years' repentance,
 Faithful, in that desert land:
 By the blissful final sentence

That I wrote there on the sand –

All Three

Since you offer your presence

To the worst sinner,

The prize of penitence

Soars upwards forever,

Begrudge not this true soul,

Who, this once, transgressed,

Not knowing she might fall,

Commensurate forgiveness!

A Penitent, Formerly Named Gretchen (*Stealing closer.*)

Oh, bow down,

You peerless one,

You radiant one,

Your face, in mercy, towards my bane!

My true beloved,

No longer clouded,

Returns to me again.

The Sacred Young Boys (*Nearing, hovering in circles.*)

With mighty limbs, already

He is beyond us there,
 Returning to us, so richly,
 The rewards of our care.
 We were taken early
 Out of life's chorus:
 Yet he's learned, so he
 Will gently teach us.

The Penitent, Formerly Named Gretchen

Changed to himself, he's scarce aware
 Of the spirits' noble choir all around,
 He hardly knows his new life, there,
 Already he's so like the sacred crowd.
 See, how he's thrown off every bond
 Of his old earthbound integument,
 And his first youth now's re-found,
 It shines through his ethereal garment.
 Allow me to teach him, here,
 The new light still blinds him so.

The Mater Gloriosa

Come! Rise towards the higher spheres!
 Gaining awareness of you, he will follow.

Doctor Marianus (*Bowing, in adoration.*)

Gaze towards that saving gaze,
All you, the penitent and tender,
To all those blissful ways,
Give thanks, and follow after.
Let every finer sense, unseen,
Be offered to her service,
Virgin, Mother now, and Queen,
Goddess, grant your mercies!

The Mystic Choir

All of the transient,
Is parable, only:
The insufficient,
Here, grows to reality:
The indescribable,
Here, is done:
Woman, eternal,
Beckons us on.
