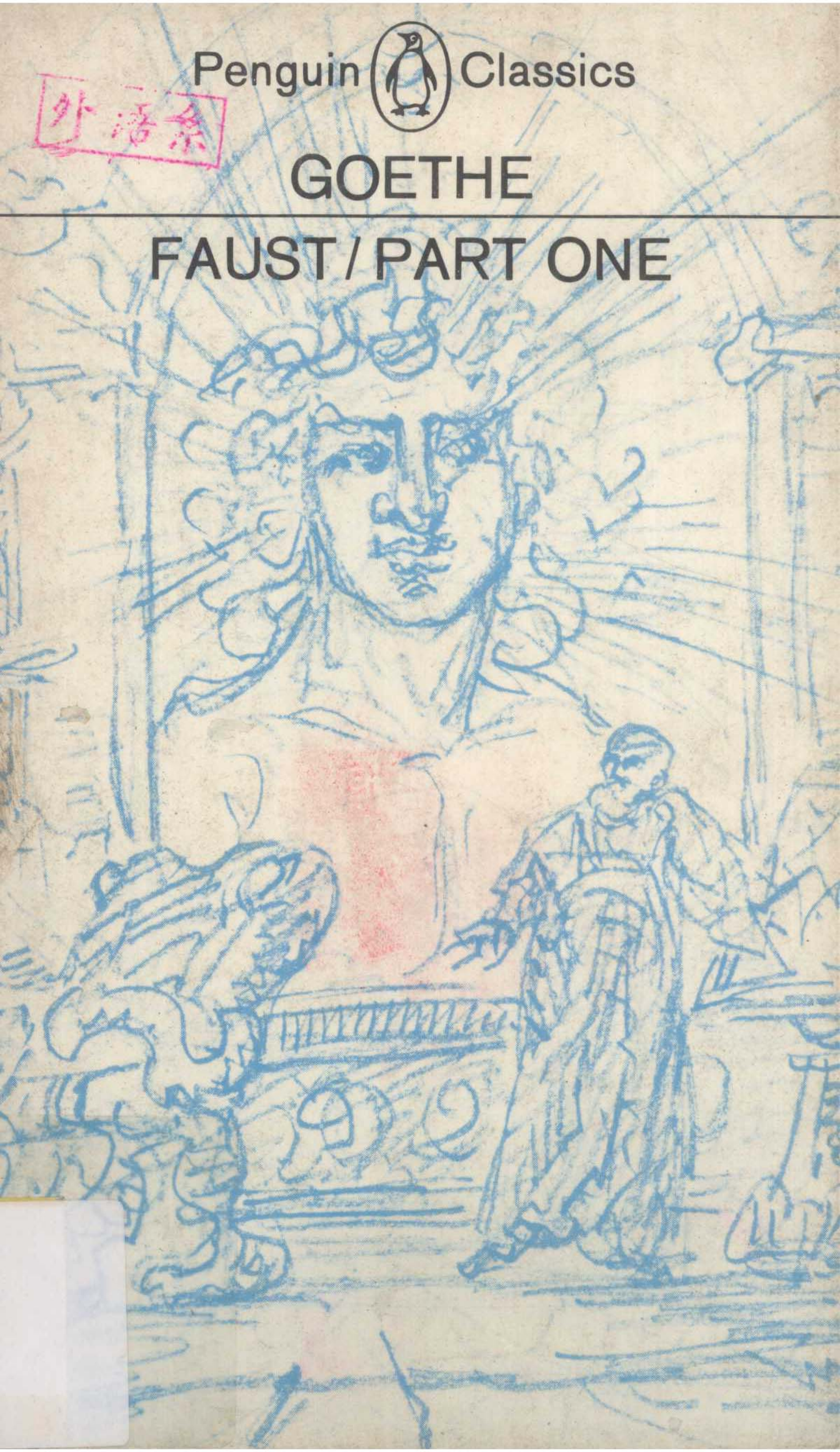
Penguin Classics

GOETHE

FAUST / PART ONE



THE PENGUIN CLASSICS

FOUNDER EDITOR (1944–64): E. V. RIEU

JOHANN WOLFGANG GOETHE was born in Frankfurt-on-Main in 1749. He studied at Leipzig, where he showed interest in the occult, and at Strassburg, where Herder introduced him to Shakespeare's works and to folk poetry. He produced some essays and lyrical verse, and at twenty-four wrote *Goetz von Berlichingen*, a play which brought him national fame and established him in the current *Sturm und Drang* movement. *Werther*, a tragic romance, was an even greater success.

Goethe began work on *Faust*, and *Egmont*, another tragedy, before being invited to join the government of Weimar. His interest in the classical world led him to leave suddenly for Italy in 1768, and the *Italian Journey* recounts his travels there. *Iphigenie auf Tauris and Torquato Tasso*, classical dramas, were begun at this time.

Returning to Weimar, Goethe started the second part of *Faust*, encouraged by Schiller. During this late period he finished his series of *Wilhelm Meister* books and wrote many other works, including *The Oriental Divan*. He also directed the State Theatre and worked on scientific theories in evolutionary botany, anatomy, and colour.

Goethe was married in 1806. He finished *Faust* before he died in 1832.

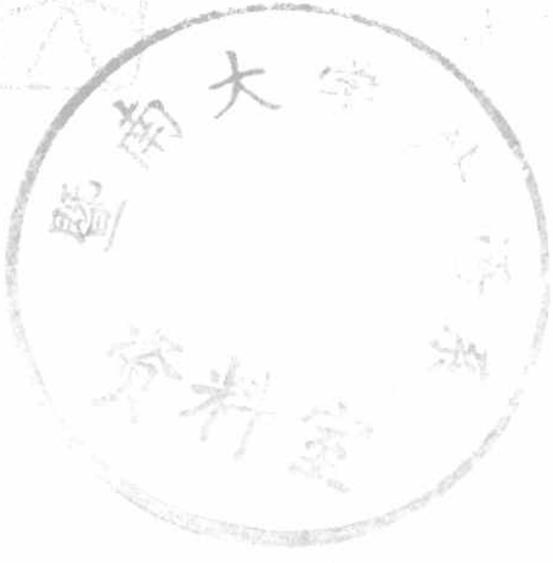
PHILIP WAYNE was, until his retirement in 1954, Headmaster of St Marylebone Grammar School. He translated the complete *Faust* in two volumes, for the Penguin Classics, and prepared a three-volume edition of the works of Wordsworth.

GOETHE

FAUST

PART ONE

TRANSLATED
BY PHILIP WAYNE



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CONTENTS

WITH SUMMARY OF SCENES

FAUST · PART ONE

Note. The scenes between the two marks * above were added by Goethe many years after his original version; which accounts for the kinder companionship with Wagner and the tone mellowed by experience: in this, and in his wager with Mephisto, Faust's fate is developing in accordance with the wager in the Prologue, between Satan and the Lord God. The beautiful, retrospective 'Dedication' was also added later, as were the 'Prelude' and the 'Prologue' – see Introduction, p. 19.

JOHANN WOLFGANG GOETHE

Born on 28th August 1749
at Frankfort-on-Main

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

In an old burgher-house, full of books and antiquities, Goethe had his first education from his father, a severe lawyer. His vivacious young mother supplied the fun. The boy came under French influence, through quartered officers and theatre, and later at Leipzig, where, at sixteen, he went to study Law. He led there a gay life, studied art, fell in love and, in 1768, returned ill, having written some lively lyrics and two small plays.

After convalescence, with deeply religious thought and some study of the occult, he went to Strasburg, where in two years he took his degree in Laws, was attracted to Medicine, and turned from lighter arts to the Germanic, to Shakespeare and to Folksong, influenced by Gothic splendour and by the young critic Herder. With his historic play, *Goetz*, and a tragic romance, *Werther*, Goethe was now hailed as leader of the Germans in their Romantic Revolt. Fiction in *Werther* was near enough to an actual love-triangle to start undying biographical curiosity. Goethe's lyric poetry was now of the greatest.

In 1775, Goethe was invited to Weimar, where Karl August soon made him Minister (Finance; Agriculture; Mines), and where love of Frau von Stein was to prove a main influence for the next twelve years.

In 1786 Goethe broke away to Italy, for nearly two years; and he realized so fully his longing for the calm strength of antiquity that his whole life was changed. Germany seemed to him still in 'Revolt' and immature. He now (1788) lived in semi-retirement

with Christiane Vulpius (m. 1806), taking less part in public administration, except for the State Theatre, which he directed for over twenty years. He devoted himself to classical plays (e.g. *Iphigenie*, 1787; *Tasso*, 1790), to his *Faust* and to scientific work in Evolutionary Botany, Anatomy and Theory of Colour.

The death of Schiller (1805) ended nine inspiring years of friendship, the time of Goethe's great Ballads, of *Herman and Dorothea*, and of the finishing of his masterpiece, *Faust, Part One.*

The rest is quiet, strong work, the later *Wilhelm Meister*, *The Divan*, *Autobiography*, *Conversations* (Eckermann) and *Part Two* of *Faust*, finished in the poet's last years.

Goethe died on 22nd March 1832.

INTRODUCTION

I

GOETHE lived to the age of eighty-two, and we know that the figure of Faust persisted in his thoughts for a period of sixty years, practically the whole of his working life. The *First Part* of his *Faust* is his masterpiece. It was begun when Goethe was in his early twenties, and finished, except for a few lines, in 1801, when he was fifty-one. *Part Two*, with which we are not here concerned, did not receive its finishing touches until the poet's eighty-third year; it is a complex work of idealism, removed from the human conflict of conscience and love that the poet gives us in *Part One*, with an ardour and a vivacity of temperament for which he has been idolized, in his own country and elsewhere. It is the union of passion and wisdom in *Faust, Part One* that places Goethe among the master-poets of the world.

Idolatry is a disservice to any great writer, especially when the incense-burners, as in Goethe's case, have familiar access to his personal affairs. After all, their smoke is not his work. The few giants whom Goethe, across the centuries, has undoubtedly joined – Homer, Dante, Shakespeare – are free from such personal disquisitions; but Goethe's amazing activities as a poet, minister of state, theatre director, critic and man of science stand in a searching light of records and conversations hardly equalled in all literature. Even his intimate life is open; for, as Thomas Mann remarks, schoolboys learn his love-affairs by heart, like Jove's.

That man seems the more formidable who can step from so much table-talk into the small incomparable group of the immortals. Towards the end of his life Goethe did indeed assume something of an Olympian aloofness, to protect himself from busybodies; but in a modern perspective the great man can be seen as

kindly-affectioned and even shy; and nothing could please him more than the world-wide acceptance of his *Faust* in men's hearts. In his youth as in his age, Goethe looked on life with strong ironic scrutiny; but he kept his warmth of heart as well, and in his modesty he offered his great work to his fellow-men as would a loving comrade. Faust, in his first scene with Wagner, insists on the value of sincerity, without which cleverness is nothing; and when, in the vision dedicatory to his poems, Goethe makes the Goddess rebuke him for any tendency to set himself apart as a super-man, he submits the question sincerely,

Why have I sought my path with fervent care,
If not in hope to bring my brothers there?

II

THE paths of Goethe's inner being, of his wit and of his passion, are vivid in his *Faust*; and it was one of the world's most fortunate inspirations that drew his genius to the old legend. He had already pondered on it when, at the age of twenty-four, a chronicle drama in prose, *Goetz von Berlichingen*, brought him at once into national fame (1773). For him it could have been a wrong turning. Though he was hailed as a leader for his stirring drama of freedom, he knew that it was not his true way to adopt historical themes, as it were, from the outside: Goethe always depended on original impulses from his own intimate experience, which his poetic conception was then to body forth again in universal terms. In common with the greatest of poets, his imagination is not shy of concrete things: images of real life leap forward at his call, so bearing his feelings that they 'readily come home to men's bosoms'. The outline for *Hamlet* Shakespeare might borrow, but the touching images,

Or ere those shoes were old
With which she followed my poor father's body,

came from his own burning love of simple things; and so it is with Goethe. 'Grasshopper', 'dust-bin', 'plank', and even 'pie-frills' serve the strong heart of his poetry. To quote again the penetrative novelist-critic Thomas Mann, 'Goethe himself is a wonderful instance of the fact that the purest naiveté and the most mighty understanding can go hand in hand' – a good recipe for a classic, but the product is rare. The astonishing thing is that, with all the tenderness and fire of youth, Goethe developed so early a superb clarity of judgment. His ripeness for his greatest theme was fourfold. He had already the finest command of lyrical expression that Germany has known; early encounter with the romance of sex had brought him face to face with the far-reaching ethical responsibilities of love; he had perceived the arrogance of human learning; and lastly, he had committed himself devotedly to a poet's life-long challenge of the mystery of existence. We know that Goethe weighed in his mind several stories as possible vehicles of his longings and beliefs; but the Faust legend took increasingly powerful form in his imagination, and the strength of his young genius is seen in the resolution with which he remoulded the story.

III

THE first Faust-Book was a good printer's thriller, published in 1587. It mingled fact and fiction. The old shadowy Faust, who lost his life in a demonstration of flying, seems to hark back in tradition to the sorcerer Simon, of *Acts*, Chapter viii; the name of Faust was assumed a second time, however, by a practising magician who worked sensational wonders and died, more scandalously, in 1537, and he is the hero of the German Faust-Book, published fifty years after his death. Goethe did not see this book of 1587, but Marlowe did, very quickly, and adopted it perhaps before it was translated. Here the story takes on special interest for English readers. The chief purveyors of drama in Germany, in the early

seventeenth century, were the English Players, and they took over with them Marlowe's *Faust*. In the course of years the play became a receptacle for pantomime; but the marionette theatre took it up, and it was this puppet Faust that first kindled the imagination of Goethe, when a boy, in Frankfort.

Goethe, it seems, worked upon a later version of the popular Faust-Book, and much has been written concerning the motifs existing in the legend and those identical or additional in Goethe's mind. The chief threads are clear enough. In ages of scepticism, like our own, men disowning religion have been impatient with all barriers of convention, and have sought to satisfy their vague hunger by grasping at occult powers that seemed to lie beyond the ken of pedant authority. This was an impulse that Goethe, always assailed by a sense of unfulfilled longing, could feel in the sceptical 'Age of Enlightenment', as the known Faust had in the ferment of the Renaissance.

At twenty years of age, Goethe had to return home ill and dispirited from his studies at Leipzig, and it was now that he gave some attention to alchemy and black magic (the curious terms on p. 65 refer to certain substances and vessels of alchemy, of which he then read in Paracelsus). At the same time, however, the religious influence of a family friend, Fräulein von Klettenberg, convinced him of the inevitability of evil in life's pilgrimage; and he no doubt began then to invest the fate of Faust with spiritual values quite beyond the old crudities of devilry and punishment. His wisdom ripened swiftly; while his quick sense of irony remained, and was to remain, through his long life. Thus, a strong-minded undergraduate may well gird at the professors, as Goethe does in Faust's first soliloquy, and still more in the discourse of Dr Mephistopheles to the Freshman; but the marvel is that the very young Goethe unmasked pedantry with such lasting deep wisdom. Youth's challenging disrespect of the world speaks in the irony of Goethe's devil. In Faust himself the sceptical spirit is grave and