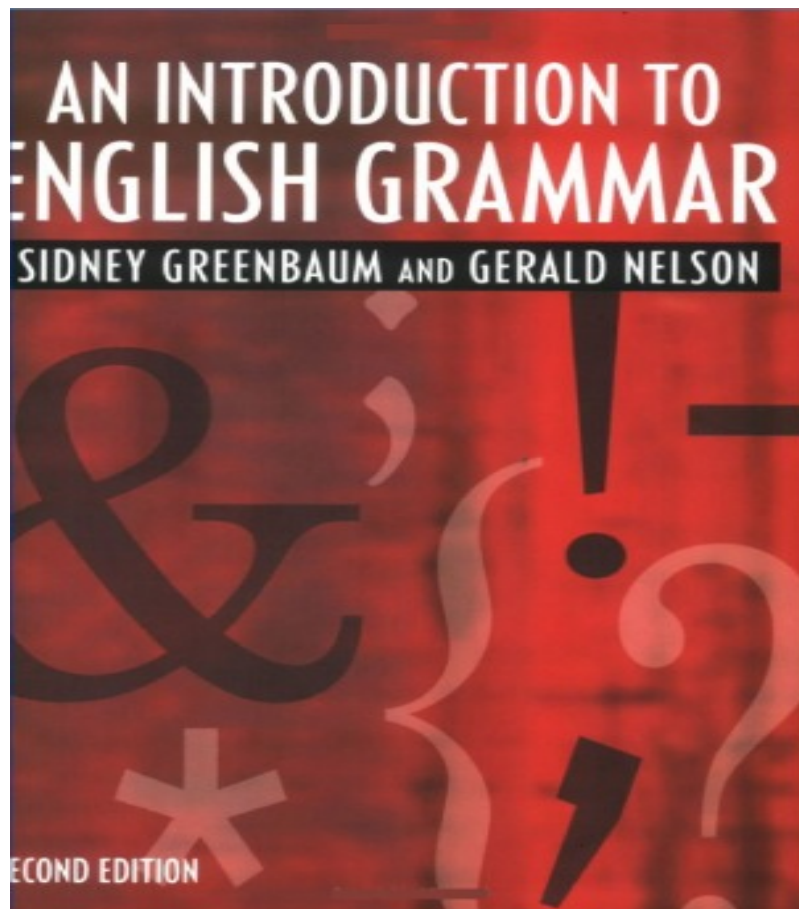
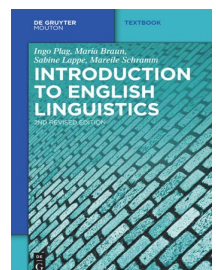


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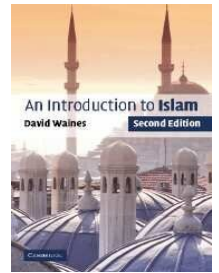


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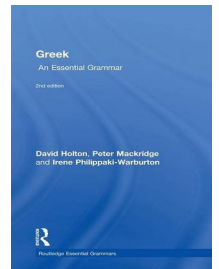
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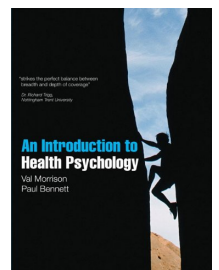
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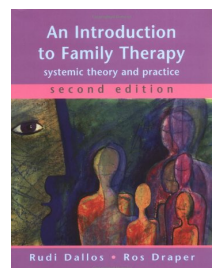
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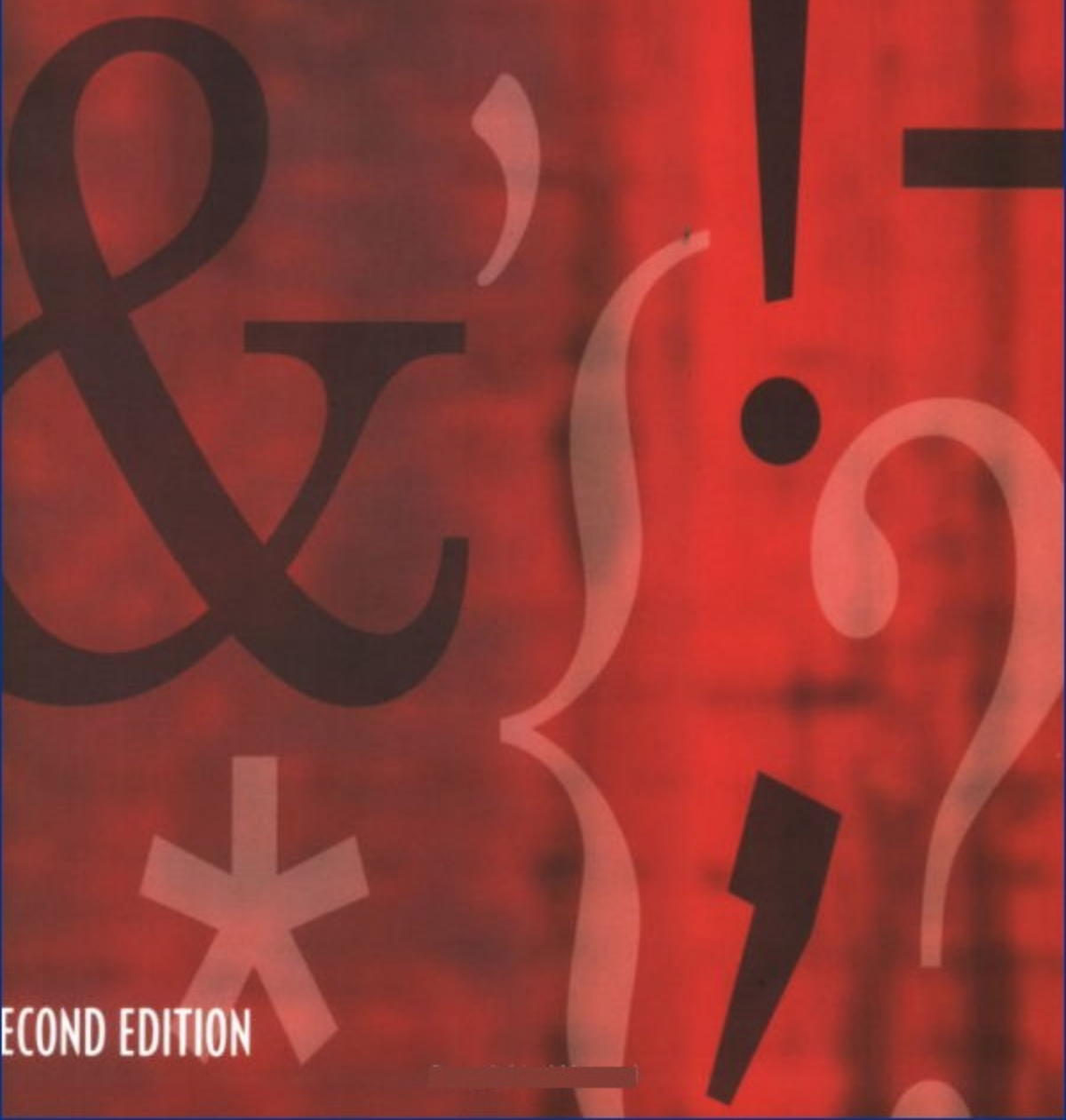
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AN INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH GRAMMAR

SIDNEY GREENBAUM AND GERALD NELSON



SECOND EDITION

An Introduction to English Grammar

Second Edition

AN INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH GRAMMAR

Second Edition

SIDNEY GREENBAUM
GERALD NELSON



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Preface to the Second Edition

Sidney Greenbaum's *An Introduction to English Grammar* was first published in 1991, and has been consistently popular ever since.

In preparing this second edition, I have preserved the overall organization of the original book. Part I provides an outline description of English grammar. Part II applies the grammatical information from Part I, giving students guidance on solving problems of usage, improving their writing style, and on punctuation.

Apart from making some minor revisions, and updating the citations, I have preserved almost all the material that appeared in the first edition. I have added a new chapter entitled English in Use, which deals with the grammatical features of a range of linguistic registers, including conversations, sports commentaries, and emails. Most of these extracts are taken from the British component of the International Corpus of English (ICE-GB), which was compiled at the Survey of English Usage, University College London. The section called Literary Analysis, which appeared in the first edition, has been incorporated without change into the new chapter, under the heading The Language of Literature. In the Appendix on spelling, I have disambiguated some of the most common and troublesome homophones.

The number of exercises has been increased, and the exercises now appear at the end of the relevant chapter, rather than in a section of their own. The exercises are intended to help students understand the text and give them practice in applying the grammar. Some of the exercises introduce topics that are not dealt with explicitly in the text. These are generally essay-style exercises, in which students are encouraged to explore linguistic topics on their own, using the new Further Reading section as a starting point. Many of the exercises were compiled by Professor Charles F. Meyer (University of Massachusetts-Boston).

GERALD NELSON
Hong Kong, 2001

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To Sholem and Wendy
Jonathan, David, and Sima
with affection

Rules and Variation

1.1 What is grammar?

I will be using the word **grammar** in this book to refer to the set of rules that allow us to combine words in our language into larger units. Another term for grammar in this sense is **syntax**.

Some combinations of words are possible in English and others are not. As a speaker of English, you can judge that *Home computers are now much cheaper* is a possible English sentence whereas *Home computers now much are cheaper* is not, because you know that *much* is wrongly positioned in the second example. Your ability to recognize such distinctions is evidence that in some sense you know the rules of grammar even if you have never studied any grammar. Similarly, you operate the rules whenever you speak or write (you can put words in the right order) and whenever you interpret what others say (you know that *Susan likes Tom* means something quite different from *Tom likes Susan*). But knowing the rules in evaluative and operational senses does not mean that you can say what the rules are.

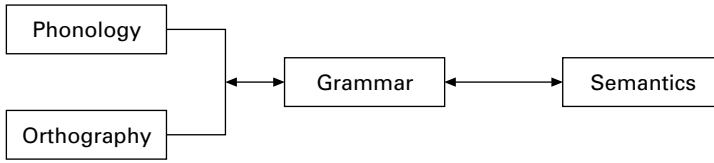
You acquire a working knowledge of your native language simply through being exposed to it from early childhood: nobody taught you, for example, where to position *much*. You study grammar, however, if you want to be able to analyse your language. The analytic grammar makes explicit the knowledge of the rules with which you operate when you use the language. There is a clear difference between the operational grammar and the analytic grammar. After all, many languages have never been analysed and some have been analysed only relatively recently. People were speaking and writing English long before the first English grammars appeared at the end of the sixteenth century.

1.2 Grammar and other aspects of language

Linguistic communications are channelled mainly through our senses of sound and sight. Grammar is the central component of language. It mediates between the system of sounds or of written symbols, on the one hand, and the system of meaning, on the other. **Phonology** is the usual term for the sound system in the language: the distinctive sound units and the ways which they may be combined. **Orthography** parallels phonology in that it deals with the writing system in

2 An Introduction to English Grammar

the language: the distinctive written symbols and their possible combinations. **Semantics** is concerned with the system of meanings in the language: the meanings of words and the combinatory meanings of larger units.



Three other aspects of language description are often distinguished: phonetics, morphology, and pragmatics. **Phonetics** deals with the physical characteristics of the sounds in the language and how the sounds are produced. Sounds and letters combine to form words or parts of words. **Morphology** refers to the set of rules that describe the structure of words. The word *computer*, for example, consists of two parts: the base *compute* (used separately as a verb) and the suffix *-er* (found in other nouns derived from verbs, e.g. *blender*). **Pragmatics** is concerned with the use of particular utterances within particular situations. For example, *Will you join our group?* is a question that, depending on the speaker's intention, is either a request for information or a request for action.

For descriptive purposes, it is convenient to deal with the components of language separately, but because of the central place of grammar in the language system, it is sometimes necessary to refer to the other components when we discuss the grammar.

1.3 Grammars of English

There are many grammars of English, that is to say books describing English grammar. They differ in how much of the grammar they cover and in how they set out the rules. There are also some differences in the categorization and terminology they use. Nevertheless, most categories and terms are widely shared, deriving from a long tradition of grammatical description.

The grammatical analysis in this book follows the approach found in *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* by Randolph Quirk, Sidney Greenbaum, Geoffrey Leech, and Jan Svartvik. First published in 1985, that is a reference work on contemporary English grammar that contains nearly 1800 pages. Future reference works of this scope are likely to be even longer. Despite the immense amount of research on contemporary English in the last few decades, many grammatical phenomena have yet to be discovered and described.

1.4 National varieties

English is the first language of over 300 million people. Most of them live in the United States of America, which has about 230 million native speakers of English,

and the United Kingdom, with about 54 million. Other countries with large numbers of English native speakers that also constitute the majority of the population are Canada (about 16 million), Australia (about 19 million), the Irish Republic (about 3.8 million), and New Zealand (about 3.9 million). Some countries have concentrations of English native speakers, though they do not constitute the majority of the population; for example, South Africa has about 1.6 million native English speakers apart from about 8.5 million bilingual speakers of English. While recognizing that these people all speak English, we can distinguish the national varieties they use as American English, British English, Canadian English, and so on.

English is a second language for over 300 million people who speak another language as their native tongue but also use English in communicating with their compatriots. For example, the first language for about 30 per cent of Canadians is French and for millions of Americans it is Spanish. English is also the second language in countries where only a small minority speak it as their tongue but where it is the official language or joint official language for government business. Among these countries is India, where it is estimated that about 21 million people speak English fluently as their second language (though these constitute only about 3 per cent of India's vast population). Other countries where English is the official or joint official language include Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, the Philippines, Puerto Rico (where about 1.3 million inhabitants are bilingual in Spanish and English), Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Since the English in each of these countries has certain distinctive features, it is reasonable to refer to such national varieties as, for example, Indian English or Nigerian English.

Finally, English is studied as the primary foreign language in most other countries. One estimate is that over 150 million children are currently studying English as a foreign language in primary or secondary schools. Its popularity lies in its value as an international language. A knowledge of English is perceived in most parts of the world as essential for international communication in commerce and tourism, in economic and military aid, and in scientific and technological literature.

1.5 Standard and non-standard English

In addition to differences between national varieties of English, there are differences within each national variety. Each has a number of **dialects**. In countries where the majority speak English as their first language one dialect is used nationally for official purposes. It is called **Standard English**.

Standard English is the national dialect that generally appears in print. It is taught in schools, and students are expected to use it in their essays. It is the norm for dictionaries and grammars. We expect to find it in official printed communications, such as letters from government officials, solicitors, and accountants. We expect to hear it in national news broadcasts and documentary programmes on radio or television.

Within each national variety the standard dialect is relatively homogeneous in grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation. Pronunciation is a different matter, since there is no equivalent standard accent (type of pronunciation). For each national variety there are regional accents, related to a geographical area, and social accents, related to the educational, socio-economic, and ethnic backgrounds of the speakers. In British English, Received Pronunciation (RP) is a non-regional social accent associated with public school education but it is not regarded as a standard accent to be learned in schools throughout the country. It is spoken by about 3 per cent of the population in Britain.

Standard English has prestige because people connect it with education and with higher-income groups. It is not intrinsically better than other dialects, though many believe it is. One of its major advantages is that it has developed a range of styles to suit different kinds of uses of the language, particularly in writing.

Non-standard dialects tend to be restricted to people from a particular region or from a particular social group or to social groups within a region. Many people speak more than one dialect, perhaps using different dialects at home and at work.

1.6 Variation according to use

Language also varies according to context and communicative purpose. For example, newspapers, cookery books, scientific papers, emails, poetry, and fiction all have distinctive language features. Newspapers have a distinctive layout, headlines are often highly compressed (*Banks warned on student loans*), cookery books tend to use many imperatives (*Mix the ingredients*), scientific papers use many passive constructions (*A colourless gas is produced*). These varieties are known as **registers**, that is, varieties of language associated with specific uses and communicative purposes.

Some variation depends on the medium, that is, the channel of communication. There is a major distinction between spoken and written language. Conversation, the most common type of speech, involves immediate interchange between the participants, who convey their reactions either in words or through facial expressions and bodily movements. There is more spontaneity in conversation than in writing; self-correction occurs in the flow of conversation, whereas it is eliminated through editing in writing. Writing needs to be more explicit, since obscurities and misunderstandings cannot be removed immediately. People feel more committed to what they write because of the potential permanence of the written communication. The differences in the nature of the media is reflected in the greater concision that is possible in writing and in the greater care that writers take over their choice of words.

Language also varies according to the attitude of the speaker or writer towards the listener or reader, towards the topic, and towards the purpose of communication. We can select from features that range from the most formal to the most informal. For instance, *comprehend* and *strive* are more formal than their respective

equivalents, *understand* and *try*. Similarly, *This is the student to whom I gave the message* is more formal than *This is the student I gave the message to*.

Grammatical variation across spoken and written registers is a central theme of the *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* by Douglas Biber *et al.* (1999). In Chapter 10 we examine the grammatical features of a range of English registers, including conversations, sports commentaries, emails, and literary texts.

1.7 Descriptive rules and prescriptive rules

At the beginning of this chapter I said that the rules of grammar state which combinations of words are possible in the language and which are not. My example of an impossible sentence in English was *Home computers now much are cheaper*. The rule that disallows that sentence is a **descriptive** rule, a rule that describes how people use their language. The validity of this descriptive rule depends on whether it is true that *Home computers are now much cheaper* is a possible English sentence and *Home computers now much are cheaper* is an impossible English sentence. The evidence to validate this rule is drawn from the knowledge that speakers of English have of their language as well as from samples of their actual use of the language. Of course the descriptive rule must be accurately formulated to make the valid distinctions.

Sometimes people speaking the same dialect disagree in their evaluation of particular sentences. For example, some speakers of standard British English find acceptable *I demand that she gives her reasons*; others prefer or require a different form of the verb in the *that*-clause, either *that she give her reasons* or *that she should give her reasons*.

A number of differences in the use of standard British English have acquired social importance. Some speakers of the standard dialect consider that certain usages mark their user as uneducated. Rules that specify which usages should be adopted or avoided are called **prescriptive** rules. Examples of prescriptive rules are:

- Don't use *like* as a conjunction, as in *He speaks like his father does*.
- Don't use *between you and I*.
- Don't split an infinitive, as in *to actually feel*.
- Don't end a sentence with a preposition.

Speakers of the standard dialect tend to pay greater attention to prescriptive rules when they are on their best behaviour, in particular when they are writing in a formal style.

1.8 Why study grammar?

The study of language is a part of general knowledge. We study the complex working of the human body to understand ourselves; the same reason should attract us to studying the marvellous complexity of human language.

Everybody has attitudes towards the English language and its varieties, and has opinions on specific features. These attitudes and opinions affect relationships

Other documents randomly have
different content

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Come, quaff it boldly, without thinking!
The draught will make thy heart to burn with love.
Art with the Devil hand and glove,
And from a fire-spurt would'st be shrinking?

[*The WITCH looses the circle. FAUST steps out.*]

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Come quickly out; you must not rest.

THE WITCH.

I hope the swig will wonders work on thee!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

And you, if you have aught to beg of me,
Upon Walpurgis' night make your request.

THE WITCH.

Here is a song! at times sung, you will find
It hath a wondrous working on your mind.

MEPHISTOPHELES. [*to FAUST*]

Come, yield thee now to my desire;
Be meek for once, and own the bridle.
You must keep quiet, and let yourself perspire,
That through your inmost frame the potent juice may pierce.
When we have time to spare, I will rehearse
Some lessons on the art of being nobly idle;
And soon thy heart with ecstasy shall know,
How Cupid 'gins to stir, and boundeth to and fro.

FAUST. [*Turning again towards the mirror*]

Indulge me with one glance!—one moment spare!
It was a virgin-form surpassing fair!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

No! No! with my good aid thou soon shalt see
The paragon of women bodily.
[*Aside.*] Anon, if this good potion does its duty,
He'll see in every wench the Trojan beauty.

Scene IV.

A Street.

FAUST. MARGARET *passes over.*

FAUST.

My fair young lady, may I dare
To offer you my escort home?

MARGARET.

Nor lady I, good sir, nor fair,
And need no guide to show me home. [*Exit.*

FAUST.

By heaven, this child is passing fair!
A fairer never crossed my view;
Of such a modest gentle air,
Yet with a dash of pertness too,
And girlish innocent conceit;
Her lips so red, her cheeks so bright,
Forget I could not, if I might.
How she casts down her lovely eyes
Deep graven in my heart it lies,
And how so smartly she replied,
And with a sharp turn stepped aside,
It was most ravishingly sweet!

Enter MEPHISTOPHELES.

FAUST.

Hark! you must get the girl for me!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Which one?

FAUST.

She's just gone by.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

What! she?

She's only now come from confession,
Where she received a full remission.
I slinked close by the box, and heard
The simple damsel's every word;
'Tis a most guileless thing, that goes
For very nothing to the priest.
My power does not extend to those.

FAUST.

Yet she is fourteen years of age at least.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

You speak like Jack the debauchee,
Who thinks each sweet flow'r grows for me;
As if his wish sufficed alone
To make each priceless pearl his own:
But 'tis not so; and cannot be.

FAUST.

My good Sir Knight of pedantry,
Lay not thou down the law to me!
And this, for good and all, be told,
Unless, this very night, I hold
The sweet young maid in my embrace,
'Tis the last time that you shall see my face.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Bethink thee!—what with here, and what with there,
The thing requires no little care.
Full fourteen days must first be spent,

To come upon the proper scent.

FAUST.

Had I but seven good hours of rest,
The devil's aid I'd ne'er request,
To mould this fair young creature to my bent.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

You speak as if you were a Frenchman born;
But though the end be good, we must not scorn
The means; what boots the mere gratification?
It is the best half of the recreation,
When, up and down, and to and fro,
The pretty doll, through every kind
Of fiddle-faddle sweet flirtation,
You knead out first, and dress up to your mind—
As many an Italian tale can show.

FAUST.

I need no tricks to whet my zest.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I tell thee plainly without jest,
As things stand here, we cannot win
The fort by hotly rushing in;
To gain fair lady's favour, you
Must boldly scheme, and gently do.

FAUST.

Fetch me something that breathed her air!
Her home, her chamber, plant me there!
A kerchief of her chaste attire!
A garter of my heart's desire!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

That you may see how I would fain
Do all I can to ease your pain,

We shall not lose a single minute;
I know her room—thou shalt enjoy thee in it.

FAUST.

And I shall see her?—have her?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

No!

She'll be with a neighbour—better so.
Meanwhile, unhindered thou may'st go,
And on the hope of joys that wait thee,
Within her atmosphere may'st sate thee.

FAUST.

Can we go now?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

No; we must wait till night.

FAUST.

Go fetch a present for my heart's delight. [*Exit.*

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Presents already! good!—a lover should not loiter!
I know some dainty spots of ground,
Where hidden treasures can be found;
I will go straight and reconnoitre. [*Exit.*

Scene V.

A small neat Chamber.

MARGARET. [*Plaiting and putting up her hair.*]

I wonder who the gentleman could be,
That on the street accosted me to-day!
He looked a gallant cavalier and gay,
And must be of a noble family;
That I could read upon his brow—
Else had he never been so free. [*Exit.*]

Enter FAUST and MEPHISTOPHELES.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Come in—but softly—we are landed now!

FAUST. [*after a pause*]

Leave me alone a minute, I entreat!

MEPHISTOPHELES. [*looking round about*]

Not every maiden keeps her room so neat. [*Exit.*]

FAUST. [*looking round*]

Be greeted, thou sweet twilight-shine!
Through this chaste sanctuary shed!
Oh seize my heart, sweet pains of love divine,
That on the languid dew of hope are fed!
What sacred stillness holds the air!
What order, what contentment rare!
[*He throws himself on the old leathern armchair beside the bed.*]
Receive thou me! thou, who, in ages gone,
In joy and grief hast welcomed sire and son.
How often round this old paternal throne,

A clambering host of playful children hung!
Belike that here my loved one too hath clung
To her hoar grandsire's neck, with childish joy
Thankful received the yearly Christmas toy,
And with the full red cheeks of childhood pressed
Upon his withered hand a pious kiss.
I feel, sweet maid, mine inmost soul possessed
By thy calm spirit of order and of bliss,
That motherly doth teach thee day by day:
That bids thee deck the table clean and neat,
And crisps the very sand strewn at thy feet.
Sweet hand! sweet, lovely hand! where thou dost sway,
The meanest hut is decked in heaven's array.
And here! [*He lifts up the bed-curtain.*]
O Heaven, what strange o'ermastering might
Thrills every sense with fine delight!
Here might I gaze unwearied day and night.
Nature! in airy dreams here didst thou build
The mortal hull of the angelic child;
Here she reposed! her tender bosom teeming
With warmest life, in buoyant fulness streaming,
And here, with pulse of gently gracious power,
The heaven-born bud was nursed into a flower!

And thou! what brought thee here? why now backshrinks
Thy courage from the prize it sought before?
What wouldst thou have? Thy heart within thee sinks;
Poor wretched Faust! thou know'st thyself no more.

Do I then breathe a magic atmosphere?
I sought immediate enjoyment here,
And into viewless dreams my passion flows!
Are we the sport of every breath that blows?
If now she came, and found me gazing here,
How for this boldfaced presence must I pay!
The mighty man, how small would he appear,

And at her feet, a suppliant, sink away!

MEPHISTOPHELES. [*coming back*]

Quick! quick! I see her—she'll be here anon.

FAUST.

Yes, let's be gone! for once and all be gone!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Here is a casket, of a goodly weight;
Its former lord, I ween, bewails its fate.
Come, put it in the press. I swear
She'll lose her senses when she sees it there.
The trinkets that I stowed within it
Were bait meant for a nobler prey:
But child is child, and play is play!

FAUST.

I know not—shall I?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Can you doubt a minute?

Would you then keep the dainty pelf,
Like an old miser, to yourself?
If so, I would advise you, sir,
To spare your squire the bitter toil,
And with some choicer sport the hour beguile
Than looking lustfully at her.
I scratch my head and rub my hands that you—
[*He puts the casket into the cupboard, and locks the door again.*]
Come, let's away!—
With this sweet piece of womanhood may do,
As will may sway;
And you stand there,
And gape and stare,
As if you looked into a lecture-room,

And there with awe
The twin grey spectres bodily saw,
Physics and Metaphysics! Come!

[Exeunt.]

Enter MARGARET, with a lamp.

MARGARET.

It is so sultry here, so hot! *[She opens the window.]*
And yet so warm without 'tis not.
I feel—I know not how—oppressed;
Would to God that my mother came!
A shivering cold runs o'er my frame—
I'm but a silly timid girl at best!
[While taking off her clothes, she sings.]

There was a king in Thule,
True-hearted to his grave:
To him his dying lady
A golden goblet gave.

He prized it more than rubies;
At every drinking-bout
His eyes they swam in glory,
When he would drain it out.

On his death-bed he counted
His cities one by one;
Unto his heirs he left them;
The bowl he gave to none.

He sat amid his barons,
And feasted merrily,
Within his father's castle,
That beetles o'er the sea.

There stood the old carouser,
And drank his life's last glow;
Then flung the goblet over
Into the sea below.

He saw it fall, and gurgling
Sink deep into the sea;
His eyes they sank in darkness;
No bumper more drank he.

[She opens the cupboard to put in her clothes, and sees the casket.]

How came the pretty casket here? no doubt
I locked the press when I went out.
'Tis really strange!—Belike that it was sent
A pledge for money that my mother lent.
Here hangs the key; sure there can be no sin
In only looking what may be within.
What have we here? good heavens! see!
What a display of finery!
Here is a dress in which a queen
Might on a gala-day be seen.
I wonder how the necklace would suit me!
Who may the lord of all this splendour be?

[She puts on the necklace, and looks at herself in the glass.]

Were but the ear-rings mine to wear!
It gives one such a different air.
What boots the beauty of the poor?
'Tis very beautiful to be sure,
But without riches little weighs;
They praise you, but half pity while they praise.
Gold is the pole,
To which all point: the whole
Big world hangs on gold. Alas we poor!

Scene VI.

A Walk.

FAUST *going up and down thoughtfully; then enter*

MEPHISTOPHELES.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

By all the keen pangs of love! by all the hot blasts of hell!
By all the fellest of curses, if curse there be any more fell!

FAUST.

How now, Mephisto? what the devil's wrong?
I ne'er beheld a face one half so long!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

But that I am a devil myself, I'd sell
Both soul and body on the spot to hell!

FAUST.

I verily believe you've got a craze!
Beseems it you with such outrageous phrase,
To rage like any bedlamite?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Only conceive! the box of rare gewgaws
For Margaret got, is in a parson's claws!
The thing came to the mother's sight,
Who soon suspected all was not right:
The woman has got a most delicate nose,
That snuffling through the prayer-book goes,
And seldom scents a thing in vain,
If it be holy or profane.
Your jewels, she was not long in guessing,

Were not like to bring a blessing.
"My child," quoth she, "ill-gotten gear
Ensnares the soul, consumes the blood;
We'll give it to Mary-mother dear,
And she will feed us with heavenly food!"
Margaret looked blank—" 'tis hard," thought she,
"To put a gift-horse away from me;
And surely godless was he never
Who lodged it here, a gracious giver."
The mother then brought in the priest;
He quickly understood the jest,
And his eyes watered at the sight.
"Good dame," quoth he, "you have done right!
He conquers all the world who wins
A victory o'er his darling sins.
The Church is a most sharp-set lady,
And her stomach holds good store,
Has swallowed lands on lands already,
And, still unglutted, craves for more;
The Church alone, my ladies dear,
Can digest ill-gotten gear."

FAUST.

That is a general fashion—Jew,
And King, and Kaiser have it too.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Then ring and ear-ring, and necklace, and casket,
Like a bundle of toad-stools away he bore;
Thanked her no less, and thanked her no more,
Than had it been so many nuts in a basket;
On heavenly treasures then held an oration,
Much, of course, to their edification.

FAUST.

And Margaret?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Sits now in restless mood,
Knows neither what she would, nor what she should;
Broods o'er the trinkets night and day,
And on him who sent them, more.

FAUST.

Sweet love! her grief doth vex me sore.
Mephisto, mark well what I say!
Get her another set straightway!
The first were not so very fine.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

O yes! with you all things are mere child's play.

FAUST.

Quick hence! and match your will with mine!
Throw thee oft in her neighbour's way.
Be not a devil of milk and water,
And for another gift go cater.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Yes, gracious sir! most humbly I obey.

[*Exit* FAUST.]

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Such love-sick fools as these would blow
Sun, moon, and stars, like vilest stuff,
To nothing with a single puff,
To make their lady-love a show!

Scene VII.

MARTHA'S *House.*

MARTHA. [*alone*]

In honest truth, it was not nobly done,
In my good spouse to leave me here alone!
May God forgive him! while he roams at large,
O'er the wide world, I live at my own charge.
Sure he could have no reason to complain!
So good a wife he'll not find soon again. [*She weeps.*]
He may be dead!—Ah me!—could I but know,
By a certificate, that 'tis really so!

Enter MARGARET.

MARGARET.

Martha!

MARTHA.

What wouldst thou, dear?

MARGARET.

My knees can scarcely bear me!—only hear!
I found a second box to-day
Of ebon-wood, just where the first one lay,
Brimful of jewels passing rare,
Much finer than the others.

MARTHA.

Have a care
You keep this well masqued from your mother—
'Twould fare no better than the other.

MARGARET.

Only come near, and see! look here!

MARTHA. [*decking her with the jewels*]

Thou art a lucky little dear!

MARGARET.

And yet I dare not thus be seen
In church, or on the public green.

MARTHA.

Just come across when you've an hour to spare,
And put the gauds on here with none to see!
Then promenade a while before the mirror there;
'Twill be a joy alike to thee and me.
Then on a Sunday, or a holiday,
Our riches by degrees we can display.
A necklace first, the drops then in your ear;
Your mother sees it not; and should she hear,
'Tis easy to invent some fair pretence or other.

MARGARET.

But whence the pretty caskets came? I fear
There's something in it not right altogether. [*Knocking.*]
Good God!—I hear a step—is it my mother?

MARTHA. [*looking through the casement*]

'Tis a strange gentleman. Come in!

Enter MEPHISTOPHELES.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I hope the ladies will not think me rude,
That uninvited thus I here intrude.
[*Observing MARGARET, he draws back respectfully.*]
I have commands for Mistress Martha Schwerdtlein.

MARTHA.

For me? what has the gentleman to say?

MEPHISTOPHELES. [*softly to her*]

Excuse my freedom. I perceive that you
Have visitors of rank to-day;
For this time I shall bid adieu,
And after dinner do myself the pleasure
To wait upon you, when you're more at leisure.

MARTHA. [*aloud*]

Think, child! of all things in the world the last!
My Gretchen for a lady should have passed!

MARGARET.

The gentleman is far too good;
I'm a poor girl—boast neither wealth nor blood.
This dress, these jewels, are not mine.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

'Tis not the dress alone that I admire;
She has a mien, a gait, a look so fine,
That speak the lady more than costliest attire.

MARTHA.

And now your business, sir? I much desire——

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Would God I had a better tale to tell!
Small thanks I should receive, I knew it well.
Your husband's dead—his last fond words I bear.

MARTHA.

Is dead! the good fond soul! O woe!
My man is dead! flow, sorrow, flow!

MARGARET.

Beseech thee, dearest Martha, don't despair.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Now hear my mournful story to the end.

MARGARET.

I would not love a man on earth, to rend
Me thus with grief, when he might hap to die.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Joy hath its sorrow, sorrow hath its joy;
Twin sisters are they, as the proverb saith.

MARTHA.

Now let me hear the manner of his death.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Where Padua's sacred turrets rise,
Above the grave of holy Antony,
On consecrated ground thy husband lies,
And slumbers for eternity.

MARTHA.

No further message? is this all?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Yes! one request, and that not small.
For his soul's peace, your good man wanted
Three hundred masses to be chanted.
This is the whole of my commission.

MARTHA.

What! not a jewel? not a coin?
No journeyman, however poor,
However wild, could make such an omission,
But in the bottom of his pouch is sure
To keep some small memorial for his wife,

And rather beg, and rather pine
Away the remnant of his life——

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Madam! for your hard case I greatly grieve,
But your good husband had no gold to leave.
His sins and follies he lamented sore—
Yes! and bewailed his own mishap much more.

MARGARET.

Alas for all the miseries of mankind!
He shall not want my oft-repeated prayer.

MEPHISTOPHELES. [*to MARGARET*]

Thou, gentle heart, dost well deserve to find
A husband worthy of a bride so fair.

MARGARET.

Ah no!—for that, it is too soon.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

A lover, then, might in the mean time do.
'Tis bounteous Heaven's choicest boon
To fondle in one's arms so sweet a thing as you.

MARGARET.

Such things are never done with us.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Done or not done!—it may be managed thus:—

MARTHA.

Now let me hear!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

By his death-bed I stood.
It was a little better than of dung,

Of mouldy straw; there, as a Christian should,
With many a sin repented on his tongue,
He died.—“Oh! how must I,” he said,
“Myself detest so to throw up my trade,
And my dear wife abandon so!
It kills me with the simple memory, oh!
Might she but now forgive me, ere I die!”

MARTHA. [*weeping*]

Good soul! I have forgiven him long ago.

MEPHISTOPHELES. [*continuing his interrupted narrative*]

And yet was she, God knows, much more to blame than I.

MARTHA.

What! did he lie? on the grave's brink to lie!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

He fabled to the last, be sure,
If I am half a connoisseur.
“In sooth, I had no time to gape,” he said,
“First to get children, then to get them bread,
To clothe them, and to put them to a trade,
From toil and labour I had no release,
And could not even eat my own thin slice in peace.”

MARTHA.

Can it then be? has he forgotten quite
My fag and drudgery, by day and night?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Not quite! attend the sequel of my tale.
“When last we sailed from Malta”—so he said,
“For wife and children fervently I prayed,
And Heaven then blew a favourable gale.
We came across a Turkish ship that bore
Home bullion to increase the Sultan's store,

And soon, by valour's right, were masters
Of all the Infidel piastres;
The precious spoil was shared among the crew,
And I received the part that was my due."

MARTHA.

But where and how?—has he then buried it?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Who knows where the four winds have hurried it!
A lady took him under her protection
At Naples, as he wandered to and fro;
She left him many a mark of her affection,
As to his life's end he had cause to know.

MARTHA.

The knave, to treat his helpless orphans so!
To all our misery and all our need,
Amid his reckless life, he gave no heed!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

And for that cause he's dead. If I were you,
Now mark me well, I tell you what I'd do;
I'd mourn him decently for one chaste year,
Then look about me for another dear.

MARTHA.

Alas! God knows it would be hard to find
Another so completely to my mind.
A better-hearted fool you never knew,
A love of roving was his only vice;
And foreign wine, and foreign women too,
And the accursèd gambling dice.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Such marriage-articles were most convenient,
Had he to you been only half so lenient.

On terms like these myself had no objection
To change with you the ring of conjugal affection.

MARTHA.

You jest, mein Herr!

MEPHISTOPHELES. [*aside*]

A serious jest for me!

I'd better go; for, if I tarry here,
She'll take the devil at his word, I fear.

[*To MARGARET.*] How stands it with your heart then?—is it free?

MARGARET.

I scarce know what you mean.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Sweet guileless heart!

Ladies, farewell!

MARGARET.

Farewell!

MARTHA.

One word before we part!

I fain would have it solemnly averred,
How my dear husband died, and where he was interred.
Order was aye my special virtue; and
'Tis right both where and when he died should stand
In the newspapers.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Yes, when two attest,
As Scripture saith, the truth is manifest.
I have a friend, who, at your requisition,
Before the judge will make a deposition.
I'll bring him here.

MARTHA.

Yes, bring him with you, do!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

And we shall meet your fair young lady too?

[*To MARGARET.*] A gallant youth!—has been abroad, and seen
The world—a perfect cavalier, I trow.

MARGARET.

'Twould make me blush, should he bestow
A single look on one so mean.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

You have no cause to be ashamed before
The proudest king that ever sceptre bore.

MARTHA.

This evening, in the garden then, behind
The house, you'll find warm hearts and welcome kind!

Scene VIII.

A Street.

FAUST.

How now? what news? how speed your labours?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Bravo! 'tis well you are on fire;
Soon shall you have your heart's desire.
This evening you shall meet her at her neighbour's;
A dame 'tis to a nicety made
For the bawd and gipsy trade.

FAUST.

'Tis well.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

But you must lend a hand, and so must I.

FAUST.

One good turn deserves another.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

We must appear before a judge together,
And solemnly there testify
That stiff and stark her worthy spouse doth lie,
Beside the shrine of holy Antony.

FAUST.

Most wise! we must first make a goodly travel!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Sancta simplicitas! what stuff you drive!

We may make oath, and not know much about it.

FAUST.

If that's your best, your best is bad. I scout it.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

O holy man that would outwit the devil!
Is it the first time in your life that you
Have sworn to what you knew could not be true?
Of God, the world, and all that it contains,
Of man, and all that circles in his veins,
Or dwells within the compass of his brains,
Have you not pompous definitions given,
With swelling breast and dogmatising brow,
As if you were an oracle from heaven?
And yet, if the plain truth you will avow,
You knew as much of all these things, in faith,
As now you know of Master Schwerdtlein's death!

FAUST.

Thou art, and wert, a sophist and a liar.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Yes, unless one could mount a little higher.
To-morrow I shall hear you pour
False vows that silly girl before,
Swear to do everything to serve her,
And love her with a quenchless fervour.

FAUST.

And from my heart too.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Oh! of course, of course!
Then will you speak, till you are hoarse,
Of love, and constancy, and truth,
And feelings of eternal youth—

Will that too be the simple sooth?

FAUST.

It will! it will!—for, when I feel,
And for the feeling, the confusion
Of feelings, that absorbs my mind,
Seek for names, and none can find,
Sweep through the universe's girth
For every highest word to give it birth;
And then this soul-pervading flame,
Infinite, endless, endless name,
Call you this nought but devilish delusion?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Still I am right!

FAUST.

Hold! mark me, you
Are right indeed! for this is true,
Who *will* be right, and only has a tongue,
Is never wrong.
Come, I confess thee master in debating,
That I may be delivered from thy prating.

END OF ACT THIRD.

ACT IV.

Scene I.

MARTHA'S *Garden.*

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

MARGARET.

I feel it well, 'tis from pure condescension
You pay to one like me so much attention.
With travellers 'tis a thing of course,
To be contented with the best they find;
For sure a man of cultivated mind
Can have small pleasure in my poor discourse.

FAUST.

One look from thee, one word, delights me more
Than all the world's high-vaunted lore.

[He kisses her hand.]

MARGARET.

O trouble not yourself! how could you kiss it so?
It is so coarse, so rough! for I must go
Through all the work above stairs and below,
Mother will have it so.

[They pass on.]

MARTHA.

And you, sir, will it still
Be your delight from place to place to roam?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

In this our duty guides us, not our will.
With what sad hearts from many a place we go,
Where we had almost learned to be at home!

MARTHA.

When one is young it seems a harmless gambol,
Thus round and round through the wide world to ramble:
But soon the evil day comes on,
And as a stiff old bachelor to die
Has never yet done good to any one.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

I see ahead, and fear such wretched fate.

MARTHA.

Then, sir, take warning ere it be too late!

[They pass on.]

MARGARET.

Yes, out of sight, and out of mind!
You see me now, and are so kind:
But you have friends at home of station high,
With far more wit and far more sense than I.

FAUST.

Their sense, dear girl, is often nothing more
Than vain conceit of vain short-sighted lore.

MARGARET.

How mean you that?

FAUST.

Oh that the innocent heart
And sweet simplicity, unspoiled by art,
So seldom knows its own rare quality!
That fair humility, the comeliest grace
Which bounteous Nature sheds on blooming face——

MARGARET.

Do thou bestow a moment's thought on me,
I shall have time enough to think of thee.

FAUST.

You are then much alone?

MARGARET.

Our household is but small, I own,
And yet must be attended to.
We keep no maid; I have the whole to do,
Must wash and brush, and sew and knit,
And cook, and early run and late;
And then my mother is, in every whit,
So accurate!
Not that she needs to pinch her household; we
Might do much more than many others do:
My father left a goodly sum, quite free
From debt, with a neat house and garden too,
Close by the town, just as you pass the gate;
But we have lived retired enough of late.
My brother is a soldier: he
Is at the wars: my little sister's dead:
Poor thing! it caused me many an hour of pain
To see it pine, and droop its little head,
But gladly would I suffer all again,
So much I loved the child!

FAUST.

An angel, if like thee!

MARGARET.

I nursed it, and it loved me heartily.
My father died before it saw the light,
My mother was despaired of quite,
So miserably weak she lay.
Yet she recovered slowly, day by day;
And as she had not strength herself
To suckle the poor helpless elf,
She gave't in charge to me, and I
With milk and water nursed it carefully.
Thus in my arm, and on my lap, it grew,
And smiled and crowed, and flung its legs about,
And called me mother too.

FAUST.

To thy pure heart the purest joy, no doubt.

MARGARET.

Ay! but full many an hour
Heavy with sorrow, and with labour sour.
The infant's cradle stood beside
My bed, and when it stirred or cried,
I must awake;
Sometimes to give it drink, sometimes to take
It with me to my bed, and fondle it:
And when all this its fretting might not stay,
I rose, and danced about, and dandled it;
And after that I must away
To wash the clothes by break of day.
I make the markets too, and keep house for my mother,
One weary day just like another;
Thus drudging on, the day might lack delights,
But food went lightly down, and sleep was sweet o' nights.

[They pass on.

MARTHA.

A woman's case is not much to be vaunted;
A hardened bachelor is hard to mend.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

A few apostles such as you were wanted,
From evil ways their vagrant steps to bend.

MARTHA.

Speak plainly, sir, have you found nothing yet?
Are you quite disentangled from the net?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

A house and hearth, we have been often told,
With a good wife, is worth its weight in gold.

MARTHA.

I mean, sir, have you never felt the want?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

A good reception I have always found.

MARTHA.

I mean to say, did your heart never pant?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

For ladies my respect is too profound
To jest on such a serious theme as this.

MARTHA.

My meaning still you strangely miss!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Alas, that I should be so blind!
One thing I plainly see, that you are very kind!

[They pass on.

FAUST.

You knew me, then, you little angel! straight,
When you beheld me at the garden-gate?

MARGARET.

Marked you it not?—You saw my downward look.

FAUST.

And you forgive the liberty I took,
When from the minster you came out that day,
And I, with forward boldness more than meet,
Then ventured to address you on the street?

MARGARET.

I was surprised, I knew not what to say;
No one could speak an evil word of me.
Did he, perchance, in my comportment see
Aught careless or improper on that day,
That he should take me for a worthless girl,
Whom round his little finger he might twirl?
Not yet the favourable thoughts I knew,
That even then were rising *here* for you;
One thing I know, myself I sharply chid,
That I could treat you then no harshlier than I did.

FAUST.

Sweet love!

MARGARET.

Let go!

[She plucks a star-flower, and pulls the petals off one after another.

FAUST.

What's that? a nosegay? let me see!

MARGARET.

'Tis but a game.

FAUST.

How so?

MARGARET.

Go! you would laugh at me.

[She continues pulling the petals, and murmuring to herself.]

FAUST.

What are you murmuring now, so sweetly low?

MARGARET. *[half loud]*

He loves me, yes!—he loves me, no!

FAUST.

Thou sweet angelic face!

MARGARET. *[murmuring as before]*

He loves me, yes!—he loves me, no!

[Pulling out the last petal with manifest delight.]

He loves me, yes!

FAUST.

Yes, child! the fair flower-star hath answered YEs!

In this the judgment of the gods approves thee;

He loves thee! know'st thou what it means?—He loves thee!

[He seizes her by both hands.]

MARGARET.

I scarce can speak for joy!

FAUST.

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