

GERMAN CLASSICS  
FOR AMERICAN STUDENTS.

Goethes Prosa.

EDITED BY  
JAM. MORGAN HART.

GERMAN  
CLASSICS

Goethe  
FAUST

Part I

PT1970  
.A2  
H3

770



1020024236

MS  
100



CENTRO CULTURAL ALEMAN, A. C.  
TEL. 48-46-04  
HIDALGO 2052 PTE.  
COL. OBISPADO  
MONTERREY, N. L.  
773

18 ABR. 1979

GERMAN CLASSICS

FOR

AMERICAN STUDENTS

---

VOLUME III.

Goethe's Prosa.



Goethe:

## Ausgewählte Prosa

EDITED, WITH NOTES,

BY

JAMES MORGAN HART

---

Vom Vater hab' ich die Statur,  
Des Lebens ernstes Führen,  
Von Mütterchen die Frohnatur  
Und Lust zu fabulieren.  
Uraherr war der Schönsten hold,  
Das spukt so hin und wieder,  
Urahfrau liebte Schmutz und Gold,  
Das juckt wohl durch die Glieder.

---

DEUTSCHES KULTURZENTRUM

Monterrey, N. L., México

NEW YORK

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

1880

H 126

ü 40



PT 1970

.A2

H3

COPYRIGHT,  
G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS.  
1876.



Press of  
G. P. Putnam's Sons  
New York

ACERVO DE LITERATURA

153806

## PREFACE.

---

THE following choice of extracts from Goethe's prose calls for a few words of explanation, if not of justification.

In the first place, every teacher of German has suffered to a greater or less extent from the want of good reading-books of *prose*. Nearly all the longer pieces read in our colleges and schools are taken from the poetical literature of the language, and especially from the drama. It would be superfluous to dwell upon the grave inconveniences arising from such one-sidedness. The difference between poetry and prose is marked in any language, and in none more so than in German. When the student passes from easy lyrics and dramas to the grave and subtle style of history or criticism, he finds himself in a new world, as it were. He is confronted with tangled constructions, abstruse reasonings, and a terminology and mode of thought for which he is wholly unprepared. The reading-books in common use will not be of much avail. The prose extracts which they contain are either far too easy and simple, or they are too fragmentary. They exhaust nothing, neither the style, the subject, nor the author.



The present volume, it is hoped, will help in a measure to remedy the evil. All the pieces here offered are models of style, and as such have met the unquestioning approval of generations of readers and critics. Each section opens a new vein of thought and follows it to something like a well-rounded conclusion. The several subjects, although touching at times upon certain of the gravest problems that have occupied mankind, are treated in a way that they cease to deter the youthful mind, and the collection, taken in its entirety, may give the reader a definite and reasonably comprehensive idea of the author's wonderful resources, his power, his fertility of invention, his insight into human character, his ability to enter into every phase of human life.

In expressing this hope, I have been led into anticipating somewhat the second word of explanation. Namely, it has been my object throughout, not merely to make a selection of the best German prose, but to give a picture of Goethe himself in his own words. The ignorance which prevails in America concerning the greatest of German writers and thinkers is, speaking within bounds, deplorable. The present is, of course, no place for indulging in controversy in behalf of Goethe. The issue has been fought out already in Germany, and will not be long in reaching us and reversing the premature judgments of some among us. Suffice it to say that I have endeavored to make the following extracts illustrative, so far as the narrow limits of the volume would permit, of the successive stages in Goethe's life and mental growth. Each piece, therefore, has a decidedly autobiographical charac-

ter, and the order of arrangement is chronological. It will only be necessary to observe that the passages from *Wahrheit und Dichtung* are placed first because of the subjects which they discuss, and not because of their priority in style. The youthful style of Goethe begins with *Werther*. The diction of the Autobiography is that of a man far advanced in life, who reverts to the scenes and struggles of his youth and gives an account of them for the benefit of posterity. First impressions and recollections are already dim, diaries and letters are often not at hand to refreshen the memory, and the writer is in general apt to confound early views with subsequent experience. A notable instance occurs p. 26, where Goethe invests Wieland, in 1766, with the halo of later years, and overlooks the circumstance that he himself wrote in 1773 a sharp satire of Wieland's French proclivities. Yet *Wahrheit und Dichtung*, despite its errors and defects, will ever remain a monument of autobiographical composition, and a thorough knowledge of it indispensable to whoever seeks to understand Germany in the eighteenth century.

The selections from *Wilhelm Meister*, it will be observed, contain no delineation of character. This was unavoidable. No one of the personages of the romance could have been given in fulness without swelling the volume beyond its proper limits, and without introducing many passages unsuited to a text-book. Goethe's power of delineation, moreover, can easily be learned from *Egmont* or some other of his dramatical works, not to speak of the present selections from *Werther* and the idyl of



*Sesenheim.* On the other hand, it seemed to me especially desirable to make the reader acquainted with Goethe's talent as a critic. Those who read only his lyrical and dramatical productions, and ignore his critical acumen, fail to detect the main-spring of his influence upon European thought. The selections from the *Meister*, although not comprising all the remarks upon Hamlet, give the gist of the author's views. They will require, on the part of the student, the most careful collateral reading of the English play. And if conscientiously mastered, they will prove themselves to be the best possible introduction to the modern school of criticism, which, in fact, dates its existence from the *Meister*.

J. M. H.

NEW YORK, August, 1876.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS.

---

I. Aus meinem Leben: Wahrheit und Dichtung.	
1. Erstes Semester in Leipzig.....	11
2. Sesenheim.....	27
II. Die Leiden des jungen Werthers .....	49
III. Ein Brief aus der Schweiz .....	71
IV. Italienische Reise.....	82
. Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre.....	119