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Specimens
OF THE
GERMAN LYRIC POETS:

CONSISTING OF
TRANSLATIONS IN VERSE,
FROM THE WORKS OF
BÜRGER, GOETHE, KLOPSTOCK, SCHILLER, &c.

=====
INTERSPERSED WITH
BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES,
And Ornamented with Engravings on Wood,
BY THE FIRST ARTISTS.



London:
BOOSEY AND SONS, 4, BROAD STREET; AND RODWELL
AND MARTIN, NEW BOND STREET.
1822.
KWP.



ADVERTISEMENT.

THE chief portion of the following Translations was published at Berlin, about twenty years ago, in a Musical Work, comprising some of the best German Melodies. The words to those Melodies were from the pen of an English gentleman of the name of Beresford, who was long resident in Germany: they met with so favourable a reception, that the same Publisher was afterwards induced to print them without the music, in two Vols. 12mo. accompanied by the original text in opposite columns. To that Edition, the Lines addressed to the Queen of Prussia on her Birthday, which are stated to be an original composition by the author of the Translations, were subjoined. The great popularity which these Translations obtained abroad, their scarcity, and the unquestionable merit they possess, are the motives which gave rise to the present reprint of them, without the German context, an unnecessary appendage to a Publication designed for English readers. A few more Poems, translated from the same language, by Mr. Mellish, late British Consul at Hamburg, have likewise been added. To render this little Volume complete, the

Publishers prevailed upon a gentleman, a German by birth, of great taste and knowledge of his native literature, to furnish Biographical Sketches of most of the eminent Writers from whose Works the Selection was made. These Sketches are partly original, partly derived from sources of difficult access, and from the information of persons of the highest authority on such subjects. The Publishers flatter themselves that the Embellishments and the general appearance of the Work are such as do no discredit to its contents.

Broad Street,
October, 1821.

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Specimens
OF THE
GERMAN LYRIC POETS.

BÜRGER.

THE success which the justly celebrated ballad of *Leonora* has obtained in England, renders it remarkable that public attention should not have been more awakened to other works by the same author, and that so little curiosity should have been manifested to ascertain the peculiarities of his character, and to learn the particulars of his history. Hitherto, however, most of his beautiful romances, some of which Bürger himself held in higher estimation than *Leonora*, are almost entirely unknown in this country, and their author is known but by name. It is therefore hoped, that this biographical outline, together with the interesting specimens which follow, will not be unwelcome to the English reader.

Gottfried Augustus Bürger was born the 1st of January, 1748, at Walmerswemle, in the principality

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of Halberstadt; and died in the year 1794, at Gottingen, where he filled the chair of Professor of Philosophy. His father was a clergyman in the principality above named.

Bürger, who, when arrived at the age of manhood was all spirit and gaiety, was, when a child, remarkable for excessive dulness and stupidity. It required two years to teach him the inflection of *mensa*, which, although the severest punishments were inflicted on him, he could not be brought to comprehend sooner; and he entered his tenth year with no other acquirements than reading and writing. The first indication of any thing like talent which he displayed, was a great fondness for poetry. He delighted in solitude, and cherished those sombre feelings which are inspired by midnight meditation, and by rambling through dark forests and unfrequented spots. After having been removed, with little advantage, from one school to another, he entered, in 1768, at the university of Gottingen. Here his imprudence and irregularity of conduct laid the foundation of those many sufferings which he had to combat in after-life. Instead of providing, by study, for the means of future subsistence, he wasted, by imprudent association, all that was most valuable to him—time, money, and reputation. His grandfather, incensed at his conduct, withdrew from him his assistance and protection.

Bürger's ruin would now have been inevitable, had he not had the good fortune to form an intimacy with Sprengel, Holtz, Voss, and Count Stolberg. Those

celebrated men were all at this time young students in the University, and had established a literary society for mutual improvement. Encouraged by their example, he now began to study with ardour the best ancient and modern classics, but his favourite author was Shakspeare. Percy's Relics, which had afterwards so powerful an influence on his mind, became his constant pocket companion; and about this time his poems began to attract notice. In 1772, he at last obtained, by the aid of his friends, a permanent situation, which not only was the means of reconciling him with his grandfather, but, moreover, induced the worthy old man to pay his debts, and even to be answerable for him to a considerable amount. The money was unfortunately deposited with one of Bürger's friends, who applied it to his own use. The event was one of the most important in our Poet's life, as in it originated that embarrassment of his finances which continued to the last moment of his existence, and which so materially influenced his poetical character.

His marriage, in 1774, became a source of still greater misfortunes, which he has himself described in language truly affecting. Cabal and intrigue compelled him to resign his office in Alten Gleichen, and from this time he resided at Gottingen—at first as a private teacher, and subsequently as a professor of philosophy, deriving, however, no emolument from his office. Abandoned by his wife, without the aid of powerful friends, almost without the means of subsistence, his whole frame shaken by the repeated and

painful sufferings, poor Bürger lived a life of wretchedness, and finally experienced the fate of so many men of genius, dying, in 1794, a victim to grief and misery. If we follow the unhappy poet through this long labyrinth of misfortunes, we are at a loss to account for the extent and variety of his writings. He has composed Odes, Elegies, Ballads, and Epigrams. In no one style of poetical composition does he maintain an inferior rank; and in some, the unanimous voice of his countrymen has assigned to him the first place. Schiller's famous judgment on his poems, was always remembered by Bürger with pain. The critique of A. W. Schlegel is more just, and from that we may fairly quote, to conclude this slight memoir. "Bürger," he observes, "is a poet of an imagination more original than comprehensive; of feelings more honest and candid, than tender and delicate: he is more successful in the execution, than in the invention of his plan; more at home in romance, than in the lofty regions of the Lyric Muse."



THE MAID I MEAN.

How in the charms of countless loves
The Maid I mean divinely moves!
And when she speaks, and I the while
Am wrapt, whence comes her magic smile?
To her, as special boons of Heav'n,
Grace, eloquence, and smiles are giv'n.

Who gave her eyes their fire and hue,
So piercing bright, so mildly blue?
He 'twas, the great Omnipotent,
Who fram'd the Stars and Firmament,
He gave her eyes their fire and hue
So piercing bright, so mildly blue.

Who o'er the Maiden's dimpled cheek
Diffused the blush so chaste and meek?
He who the Ev'ning's placid sky
With the departing light can dye,
He o'er the Maiden's dimpled cheek
Diffus'd the blush so chaste and meek.

Who on her lips such virtue shed
Than roses sweeter and more red?
He who enamels Enna's vale,
Who gives perfume to Enna's gale,
He on her lips such virtue shed
Than roses sweeter and more red.

Who fashion'd for the matchless fair
The golden ringlets of her hair?
He who the curling clouds displays,
And tinges with the solar rays,
He fashion'd for the matchless fair
The golden ringlets of her hair.

Who fram'd those white and even rows
Of teeth, her op'ning lips disclose?

Who drops of dew to pearls congeal'd,
And then in coral beds conceal'd?
He fram'd those white and even rows
Of teeth, her op'ning lips disclose.

Who gave to this celestial fair
Such witching breathings of sweet air?
'Twas he, the great, the mighty Lord,
Who tunes the spheres sublime accord,
He gave to this celestial fair
Such witching breathings of sweet air.—

And who, to make complete the whole,
Breath'd into clay this Angel-Soul?
To whom the glory, but to him
Whose breath's the Soul of Seraphim:
'Twas he, to make complete the whole,
Breath'd into clay this Angel-Soul.

Great Artist, hail! whose touch divine
Could thus Creation's choice combine—
And yet, if all this world of charms
Were destin'd for another's arms,
I would I never had been born,
Nor seen the Maid, her loss to mourn.



LOVE'S WITCHCRAFT.

MAIDEN, look me in the face ;
Stedfast, serious—no grimace !
Maiden, mark me, now I task thee,
Answer, quickly, what I ask thee ;
Steadfast, look me in the face ;
Little vixen—no grimace !

Frightful, art thou not ; 'tis true,
Eyes thou hast of lovely blue ;
Lips and cheeks, the rose defying,
Bosom, snow in whiteness vying.
Charms thou hast ;—ah, sure 'tis true ;
Killing eyes of azure hue !

Be thou lovely ;—yet, I ween,
Fair thou art, but not a queen :
Not the queen of all that's charming ;
Not alone all hearts alarming.

Fair and bright ;—but still, I ween,
Bright and fair ; but not a queen !

When I turn me here and there,
Scores of lovely maids appear ;
Scores of maids, in beauty blooming,
Claims, as fair as thine, assuming :—
Scores of maidens, here and there,
Smile as sweet, and look as fair !

Yet hast thou imperial sway ;—
I, thy willing slave, obey !
Sway imperial, now to tease me,
Now to soothe, and now to please me.
Life and death attend thy sway ;
See thy willing slave obey !

Scores of maidens !—what a train !
Scores and scores !—yet all were vain,
Should ev'n thousands strive to chace thee
From the throne where Love doth place thee ;
Tens of thousands !—what a train !
All their fondest arts were vain !

Look me, charmer, in the face ;
Little vixen, no grimace !
Tell me, why for thee I'm sighing,
Thee alone, and others flying ?
Little charmer, no grimace !
Speak, and look me in the face !

Long the cause I've vainly scann'd,
 Why to thee alone I bend!—
 Tortur'd thus, nor know the reason!
 Martyr still to am'rous treason!
 Fair enchantress! 'fore me stand:
 Speak—and shew thy magic wand!

WINTER SONG.

Now Winter strips, with ruthless haste,
 The poplar's leafy pride;
 Deforms the vale with chilling blast,
 And checks the crystal tide:
 While each fair flow'r of brightest glow,
 Lies deep entomb'd in ice and snow.

Yet, luckless blossoms, cease to claim
 The sympathetic lay,
 In Fanny's face your colours beam,
 And sweeter hues display;
 Bright azure shines in either eye,
 Her lips the rose's tints defy.

Nor more let Philomela wail,
 And let the lark be still,
 While Fanny's dearer notes prevail,
 And softer warblings trill;
 Her lips exhale the breath of Spring,
 Fresh winnow'd by the zephyr's wing.

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And when the melting kiss I snatch,
 And hold her to my heart,
 The cherry and the juicy peach
 Not half such sweets impart.
 What then for May have I to care,
 While Spring and Summer bloom in her !

FANNY'S WORTH.

COULD Fanny's charms be barter'd
 For gold and jewels rare ;—
 And had I countless treasures,
 I'd give them all for her !
 Let him whom wealth enamours,
 Still wear its sordid chain ;
 Alas ! without dear Fanny,
 To me all wealth were vain !

If Europe's ample regions
 My potent sway should own ;
 And could I Fanny purchase,
 I'd gladly yield my crown :
 For city, throne, and palace,
 And wide-extended mead,
 I'd take my blooming Fanny,
 Were all I own'd a shed.

Tho' fate alone determines,
 How long we loiter here;
 Yet could I wing the minutes,
 And speed their swift career;
 Whole years, I swear, should vanish,
 For hours, were she my own;—
 For hours, and dearest Fanny,
 But mine, and mine alone!

MUTUAL LOVE.

COULD I fancy, that for me,
 Thou a transient thought could'st spare;
 Or, of what I feel for thee,
 E'en a thousandth part could'st share;—

When I greet thee, would'st thou deign
 One kind look to bid me live;—
 Or, one kiss return again;
 Sweet return, for those I give;—

All dissolv'd in tender joy,
 High my raptur'd heart would beat;
 Fondly at thy feet I'd sigh;
 Fondly call my bondage sweet!

Dear the change of mutual vows;
 Love return'd, new love shall claim:—
 And the spark, that faintly glows,
 Soon shall blaze an ardent flame!



LEONORA,

A BALLAD.

FROM sickly dream, sad Leonor'
Upstarts at morning's ray:
"Art faithless, William?—or no more?
How long wilt bide away?"
He march'd in Fred'rick's warlike train,
And fought on Prague's ensanguin'd plain;
Yet no kind tidings tell,
If William speeds him well.

The king, and fair Hungaria's queen,
At length bid discord cease;
Each other eye with milder mien,
And hail the grateful peace.

And now the troops, a joyous throng,
 With drum and uproar, shout and song,
 All deck'd in garlands fair,
 To welcome home repair.

On ev'ry road, on ev'ry way,
 As now the crowd appears,
 See young and old their path belay,
 And greet with friendly tears.
 "Praise God!" each child and matron cry'd,
 And, "Welcome!" many a happy bride:
 But, ah! for Leonor'
 No kiss remains in store!

From rank to rank, now see her rove,
 O'er all the swarming field;
 And ask for tidings of her love,
 But none could tidings yield.
 And when the bootless task was o'er,
 Her beauteous raven-locks she tore;
 And low on earth she lay,
 And rav'd in wild dismay.

With eager speed the mother flies:
 "God shield us all from harms!
 What ails my darling child?" she cries,
 And snatch'd her to her arms.
 "Ah, mother, see a wretch undone!
 What hope for me beneath the sun!
 Sure Heav'n no pity knows!
 Ah, me! what cureless woes!"

“Celestial pow’rs, look gracious on!
 Haste, daughter, haste to pray’r.
 What Heav’n ordains is wisely done,
 And kind its parent care.”

“Ah, mother, mother, idle tales!
 Sure Heav’n to me no kindness deals.
 O, unavailing vows!
 What more have I to lose?”

“O, trust in God!—Who feels aright,
 Must own his fost’ring care;
 And holy sacramental rite
 Shall calm thy wild despair.”

“Alas! the pangs my soul invade,
 What pow’r of holy rite can aid?
 What sacrament retrieve
 The dead, and bid them live?”

“Perchance, dear child, he loves no more;
 And, wand’ring far and wide,
 Has chang’d his faith on foreign shore,
 And weds a foreign bride.
 And let him rove and prove untrue!
 Ere long his gainless crimes he’ll rue:
 When soul and body part,
 What pangs shall wring his heart?”

“Ah, mother, mother, gone is gone!
 The past shall ne’er return!
 Sure death were now a welcome boon:
 O had I ne’er been born!

No more I'll bear the hateful light;
Sink, sink, my soul, in endless night!
Sure Heav'n no pity knows:
Ah, me! what endless woes!"

"Help, Heav'n, nor look with eye severe,
On this deluded maid;
My erring child in pity spare,
She knows not what she said:
Ah, child! all earthly cares resign,
And think of God and joys divine.
A spouse celestial, see:—
In heav'n he waits for thee."

"O, mother, what are joys divine?
What hell, dear mother, say?
'Twere heav'n, were dearest William mine;
'Tis hell, now he's away.
No more I'll bear the hateful light:
Sink, sink, my soul, in endless night!
All bliss with William flies;
Nor earth, nor heav'n I prize!"

Thus rav'd the maid, and mad despair
Shook all her tender frame;
She wail'd at providential care,
And tax'd the heav'ns with blame.
She wrung her hands, and beat her breast,
Till parting daylight streak'd the West;
Till brightest starlight shone
Around night's darksome throne.

Now hark! a courser's clatt'ring tread
 Alarms the lone retreat—
 And straight a horseman slacks his speed,
 And lights before the gate:
 Soft rings the bell—the startled maid,
 Now lists, and lifts her languid head;
 When, lo! distinct and clear,
 These accents reach her ear:—

“What, ho! what, ho! ope wide the door!
 Speak, love;—dost wake or sleep?
 Think'st on me still?—or think'st no more?
 Dost laugh, dear maid, or weep?”
 “Ah! William's voice! so late art here?
 I've wept and watch'd with sleepless care,
 And wail'd in bitter woe!
 Whence com'st thou mounted so?”

“We start at midnight's solemn gloom;
 I come, sweet maid, from far—
 In haste and late I left my home;
 And now I'll take thee there.”
 “O, bide one moment first, my love,
 Chill blows the wind athwart the grove;
 And here, secure from harm,
 These arms my love shall warm!”

“Let blow the wind and chill the grove;
 Nor wind, nor cold I fear—
 Wild stamps my steed; come, haste, my love:—
 I dare not linger here.

Haste, tuck thy coats, make no delay;
 Mount quick behind, for e'en to-day,
 Must ten-score leagues be sped
 To reach our bridal bed!"

"What! ten-score leagues! can'st speed so far,
 Ere morn the day restore?
 Hark! hark! the village clock I hear—
 How late it tells the hour!"

"See there, the moon is bright and high;
 Swift ride the dead!—we'll bound, we'll fly!
 I'll wager, love, we'll come,
 Ere morn, to bridal home."

"Say, where is deck'd the bridal hall?
 How laid the bridal bed?"

"Far, far from hence, still, cool and small;
 Six planks my wants bestead."

"Hast room for me?"—"For me and thee!
 Come, mount behind, and haste and see:—
 E'en now the bride-mates wait,
 And open stands the gate."

With graceful ease the maiden sprung
 Upon the coal-black steed,
 And round the youth her arms she flung,
 And held with fearful heed.
 And now they start and speed amain,
 Tear up the ground, and fire the plain;
 And o'er the boundless waste,
 Urge on with breathless haste.

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Now on the right, now on the left,
 As o'er the waste they bound,
 How flies the heath ! the lake ! the clift !
 How shakes the hollow ground !
 " Art frightened, love ? the moon rides high :
 What, ho ! the dead can nimbly fly !
 Dost fear the dead, dear maid ?"
 " Ah ! no—why heed the dead !"

Now knell and dirges strike the ear,
 Now flaps the raven's wing,
 And now a sable train appear ;—
 Hark ! " Dust to dust," they sing.
 In solemn march, the sable train
 With bier and coffin cross the plain:
 Harsh float their accents round ;
 Like night's sad bird the sound.

" At midnight's hour, the corpse be laid
 In soft and silent rest !
 Now home I take my plighted maid,
 To grace the wedding feast !
 And, sexton, come with all thy train,
 And tune for me the bridal strain:
 Come, priest, the pray'r bestow,
 Ere we to bride-bed go !"

The dirges cease—the coffin flies,
 And mocks the cheated view ;
 Now rattling dins around him rise,
 And hard behind pursue.

And on he darts with quicken'd speed ;
 How pants the man !—How pants the steed !
 O'er hill, o'er dale they bound :
 How sparks the flinty ground !

On right, on left, how swift the flight
 Of mountains, woods, and downs !
 How fly on left, how fly on right,
 The hamlets, spires and towns !
 “ Art frighted, love?—the moon rides high:
 What, ho ! the dead can nimbly fly !
 Dost fear the dead, dear maid ? ”
 “ Ah ! leave—ah ! leave the dead ! ”

Lo, where the gibbet scars the sight,
 See, round the gory wheel,
 A shadowy mob, by moon's pale light,
 Disport with lightsome heel.
 “ Ho ! hither, rabble ! hither come ;
 And haste with me to bridal home !
 There dance in grisly row,
 When we to bride-bed go ! ”

He spoke, and o'er the cheerless waste,
 The rustling rabble move :
 So sounds the whirlwind's driving blast,
 Athwart the wither'd grove.
 And on he drives with fiercer speed ;
 How pants the man !—How pants the steed !
 O'er hill and dale they bound :
 How sparks the flinty ground !

And all the landscape, far and wide,
 That 'neath the moon appears ;
 How swift it flies, as on they glide !
 How fly the heav'ns, the stars !
 " Art, frighted, love ?—the moon rides high :
 What, ho ! the dead can nimbly fly !
 Dost fear the dead, dear maid ?"
 " O heavens !—Ah ! leave the dead !"

" The early cock, methinks, I hear :
 My fated hour is come !
 Methinks I scent the morning air :
 Come, steed, come haste thee home !
 Now ends our toil, now cease our cares ;—
 And, see, the bridal house appears:
 How nimbly glide the dead !
 See, here, our course is sped !"

Two folding grates the road belay,
 And check his eager speed ;
 He knocks, the pond'rous bars give way,
 The loosen'd bolts recede.
 The grates unfold with jarring sound ;
 See, new-made graves bestrew the ground,
 And tomb-stones faintly gleam,
 By moon-light's pallid beam.

And now, O frightful prodigy !
 (As swift as lightning's glare)
 The rider's vestments piecemeal fly,
 And melt to empty air !

His poll a ghastly death's head shews,
A skeleton his body grows ;
 His hideous length unfolds,
 And scythe and glass he holds !

High rear'd the steed, and sparks of fire
 From forth his nostrils flew ;
He paw'd the ground in frantic ire,
 And vanish'd from the view.
Sad howlings fill the regions round ;
With groans the hollow caves resound ;
 And Death's cold damps invade
 The shudd'ring, hapless maid !

And lo ! by moon-light's glimm'ring ray,
 In circling measures hie
The nimble sprites, and as they stray,
 In hollow accents cry :
" Though breaks the heart, be mortals still ;
Nor rail at Heav'n's resistless will :
 And thou, in dying pray'r,
 Call Heav'n thy soul to spare ! "

