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THE LIFE AND SONGS OF BÜRGER.

No. I.

It is long, gentle reader, since we last invited you to come with us and listen to the singers of other times and lands. The interval has been one full of tumult and anxiety—a season in which the calm spirit of poetry is fain to retire for a while, even as the choristers hide and are hushed when the wind is abroad in the woods. You have been busied with cares and contests—either as one actually striving with the torrent on which many interests seemed in imminent danger of shipwreck, or watching its turbulent course as an eager spectator: and who will hear the echoes of far-off music amidst the roar and rush of so many waters? Few, indeed, will now turn aside to hearken to the murmurs of the past, be they melodious as the tones which the sun drew from Memnon's lyre. The quiet worshipper of song, who, in his seclusion in the company of a departed race, is tempted to forget the doings of the world without, on venturing forth to repeat to others the words he has joyfully gathered, finds himself amidst a crowd of busy actors, pre-occupied with various affairs of moment, and "caring for none of these things." It is, therefore, with no assured voice, that he repeats to all within his reach the invitation to rest awhile from their labours, and listen. Yet surely there are not a few in whom the hot atmosphere of toil and strife has but increased the longing for such refreshment as wells from the perennial sources of poetry. There are surely some who, in their eagerness for the future, still reverence the treasures of the past; and who, in watching the destinies of nations, have not lost the nearer interest claimed by individual man. We trust also that there are many who acknowledge that, beyond the space engrossed by the daily necessities of acquisition, and attack, and defence, there remains in the heart and mind a place which craves the presence of more lovely and enduring impressions. There are also—and we thank Heaven for it—many willing and devout followers of poesy in that gentle sex, exempted by its calmer fortunes from the strife which too often crushes out or perverts the flow of masculine sensibilities: it is, indeed, natural that the mind of woman, more loving, and prone to reve-

rence, and unselfish than ours, should reply with a readier welcome to those emotions awakened by the history and music of the past. To all and several of these we have now enumerated—an audience assuredly "fit," and, we trust, not "few"—we would address the following notices of the life and songs of the lyricist, Gottfried August Bürger.

As one of Germany's first lyrical poets—as the author of "Leonora," and of two or three other wild and impressive ballads, which have found their way into our literature through translations and paraphrases—Bürger is perhaps better known to the lovers of poetry in England, by name at least, than many of his contemporaries. But this, we imagine, is all that is popularly-known here of this remarkable man. The great majority of his productions have but rarely been noticed. He is renowned with us as a master of the supernatural or tragic, in a certain homely guise; and so far is the general character just; but, to complete it, we should be shewn some features of his lighter muse—some indications of his gay, cordial, or passionate lyrics, of which few outlines have been given. And if our notices of the poet have been scanty, still less has been told of the man. How he lived, and toiled, and died—what he owed to others, and what he won for himself—what was the nature of a heart from whence flowed such fresh, original, and thoroughly popular strains—what was the temperament of one whose songs have awakened the emotions of awe, joy, and passion, in a thousand bosoms:—of these things—of his loves, and sorrows, and struggles—forming in themselves a theme for no common interest and sympathy—the great majority of readers remain to be informed. Yet in these, we think, will be found matter for excitement as rich as fiction can offer, enhanced in its effect by the reflection that the history is no fable, and that its hero was no common being.

Gottfried August Bürger, familiarly styled by his countrymen, *Der Deutsche Volkedichter*—the poet of the people of Germany—was the son of a Lutheran minister, the pastor of Wulmerswerde, a hamlet near the old Saxon city of

Halberstadt. He was born in 1748, on New Year's Day—in that first hour of the year which, according to the custom of the land, is welcomed with carols from the belfries of the churches, and hymns in the streets: so that the future poet was ushered into life amidst songs.

He was destined to add another to the many instances of genius developed at a later age, in contradiction to the apparent promise of childhood. The good pastor could make little of him: mind and body seemed to be alike tardy in their growth; and as he did nothing like other children, the household decided that Gottfried was doomed to be an utter blockhead. His teachers, as he grew older, had small joy in their pupil: in spite of birch and remonstrance, the boy's attention would wander from his task; and, out of school, he could never be persuaded to read any book from beginning to end. Yet this, considering the uninviting and dry mode of tuition practised in those days, should hardly have been deemed conclusive evidence against his capacity.

What he liked he learned readily, and as if by instinct; such, indeed, appears to have been the habit of his mind throughout life: he is said to have asserted, in after years, that none of his many acquisitions, excepting only the Latin language, which cost him painful study, had been won by a regular method, or was remembered to have given him the least trouble. And yet so rich and various were the stores that he ultimately gathered together in this desultory manner, that he was wont, on reviewing, late in life, the manifold treasures he had accumulated, to express his wonder how all the strange furniture had found its way into his brain.

At the age of ten, he had learned nothing beyond reading and writing; but these were implements which he had already begun to use in his own way. Those great books, the "Psalm Book," and Luther's German Bible, had revealed their wonders to the boy: the Prophets and the Revelations enraptured his imagination; and the vigorous household speech of Luther's text, and the strong melody of his spiritual songs, furnished a nurture as sound and vigorous as young poet could have desired. There can be no doubt that he was mainly indebted to these noble models of language for the foundation of his own racy and picturesque style. Other indications of his natural bias, beyond the delight with which he devoured these books, were not wanting. He loved to ramble alone amongst the green hills that surrounded the village; and sought excitement in the awe which twilight and forest glooms, and the pale glances of the moon, already awakened within him. Moreover, he began to write verses; prompted solely by the impulse within; with no instructor, save his natural ear for rhythm, and with such model only as the "Psalm Book" supplied. In the meanwhile, his father, who knew nothing of these exercises, tied him to the Latin grammar, and duly inculcated the Accidence with stripes; but here, although he worked hard, he made no progress, and could not decline *meas* out of his thumbed *Donatus*, after two years

labour; while, at the same time, he could have repeated the whole Hymn Book by heart from beginning to end. The pastor at length gave up his pupil in despair, and Gottfried was handed over to another teacher, who succeeded no better. All Bürger's fellow-students were far advanced beyond him; and, while labouring at the rudiments of grammar, he was distracted by the fragments he overheard of their translations from Virgil and Ovid. The consequence of this was, that his declensions remained unlearned, and he was set down as an incorrigible dunce.

In 1760, when twelve years old, he was sent to the house of his maternal grandfather, the Herr Jacob Philipp Bauer, at Ascherleben, in order that he might attend the school of that town. Here he managed to pick up a little Latin. His chief occupation, however, was making verses; and his attempts of this nature led to consequences of a most unpleasant character, which had, indeed, nearly proved serious. In those days it was the custom to decorate the German youngsters (the same practice then existed also in England, as may be seen by the urchins in Hogarth's prints) with wigs and other edifices of hair. It happened, unfortunately, that young Bürger's sense of the beautiful, offended by an enormous bag worn by one of the head boys, vented its annoyance in an epigram; the party lampooned retaliated with blows; and a serious fight ensued. The rector of the school, one Auerbach, on learning the cause of the disturbances, chastised Bürger, as the *author reus*, with such severity as nearly to disable his victim; and his relative, justly incensed, made this conduct the subject of complaint to the government—removing Bürger, at the same time, from the school, to the gymnasium at Halle. Here, for the first time, the youth enjoyed the benefits of a more comprehensive and liberal system of education, embracing the literature of his own language, as well as the classics; and his progress in several branches of study was rapid and emulous. Here it was, also, that Bürger first became acquainted with Gœckingk, a youth (in spite of his most ungraceful name) destined, like himself, to attain eminence as a poet. The stimulus given by the society of a companion already devoted to the muses, added new ardour to Bürger's efforts at composition: the acquaintances soon became intimate, and continued friends throughout life.

In 1764, Bürger's grandfather, who, on the decease of his son-in-law, had taken charge of the education of his orphan, caused him to enter the University of Halle as a student of theology. The vocation was one decidedly repugnant to his inclinations; but the old gentleman had resolved that his ward should become a divine, and Bürger was not in a situation to oppose any effectual resistance. The associates with whom the young student—left to himself amidst the temptations of a new scene, acting on a temperament singularly excitable and impatient of control—soon became unfortunately connected, were little likely to encourage or confirm him in the career thus pointed out.

Of these companions the most influential was the well-known Klotz,* a man considerably his senior, and endowed with such attainments and genius as rendered his example and intercourse still more fatally seductive. The advantage of being introduced by so elegant a scholar to the appreciation of classical elegance, was but a slight compensation for the injury resulting from pursuits of a less reputable nature, in which he was at the same time initiated. With such a guide, it is not surprising that a mere youth, naturally joyous and passionate, should have fallen into sad excesses. His irregularities soon reached his guardian's ears; and the old man, in high displeasure, recalled him from the university. During this rustication, however, Bürger not only succeeded in allaying his grandfather's anger, but actually prevailed so far as to obtain permission to exchange the study of theology for that of jurisprudence at Göttingen, whither he was sent in the spring of 1768.

He now addressed himself with energy to the Roman law; but the pernicious influence of his seducer, Klotz, followed him in his new career. He had, unfortunately, taken up his residence at the house of a relative of the Professor's, and thus was again led to mingle in society, and to form connexions injurious alike to his studies and to his morals. In a short time he was notoriously plunged in low dissipation; and Herr Bauer might well be excused, on hearing the reports he was constantly receiving from Göttingen, for regarding young Bürger as an irreclaimable scapegrace. The patience of the guardian was now exhausted; he renounced all further care for his ward's support; and the unfortunate student found himself abandoned to his own resources. At no period of his life did his character appear so far sunk, or his prospects so hopeless as now. Even the few friends who still adhered to him, found that it required all his amiable qualities and cheerful conversation to reconcile them to the society of one apparently so far degraded. How he continued to maintain himself at this time, remains a mystery: partly, it is supposed, by borrowing, partly by assisting students less advanced than himself, and, in part, by the sums he could obtain for his verses, which now began to find their way into the periodical journals.

During the period of his worst excesses, however, Bürger did not cease to exercise the poeti-

* Professor Christian Adolf Klotz, who was then, by Frederick the Second's appointment, Professor of Eloquence at Halle, was an eccentric and ingenious scholar, celebrated for his classical learning, the purity of his Latin compositions, and afterwards as the literary antagonist of Lessing and Burmann, from whom he experienced a most humiliating defeat. He was a voluptuary of hot blood and caustic humour, engaging in his manners, and loose to the last degree in his principles and conduct. His death is said to have been hastened by the consequences of his irregularities. The injury which the connexion with Klotz caused to Bürger's moral character at the outset of life, and at an age when the passions are awake and the reason still slumbers, cannot be over-estimated. The stream was never afterwards cleansed from the soil that tainted its sources.

cal gift which was now growing strong within him. His faculties were too suddenly, perhaps, for the attainment of highest excellence, called into full development, by the exchange of uncontrolled freedom for juvenile constraint, and by the excitement of mature passions at an age hardly beyond boyhood. The character, indeed, of his poetical career may be considered as having been formed at this period: subsequent culture gave strength, and skill, and smoothness; but his latest works bear the impression thus early given, which is of an age when sensation predominates over thought. The young student now began to find some amendment in his conduct expedient. Circumstances, aided no doubt by the monitor Want, conspired to free him from some of his most pernicious connexions; and he resumed, with assiduity, his neglected studies; addressing himself, at the same time, to English, French, and Italian literature, with which he shortly acquired a competent familiarity. It was, moreover, Bürger's good fortune to obtain, during his residence at Göttingen, the acquaintance, and afterwards the intimacy, of several distinguished men, who gradually began to form in that University a party destined to contribute largely to the diffusion of the light now dawning over Germany. Amongst these may be named Boie, Sprengel, Hölty, Voss, and the two Stolbergs; to whom were afterwards joined Cramer, Miller, Hahn, and others. In this circle he was now accustomed to read his poetical compositions: the applause which he received was an encouragement to new efforts, while he derived great benefit from the censure of a friendly criticism, more learned and cultivated than his own. So early as 1771, he had begun to publish; and, what speaks more strongly on behalf of the merit of his productions, had received payment from the booksellers for his verses. He was now regarded as a young poet of high promise, and no unworthy member of a literary community towards which the eyes of Germany were attentively turned.

It was in this circle that Bürger's eyes were opened to a new world of poetical creations, by the study of the older English authors, and particularly of Shakspeare, whose works were now beginning to exercise an important influence upon the awakened mind of Germany. It would be an unpardonable omission, when adverting to this influence, were we to leave unnoticed the revolution which at this period agitated the commonwealth of letters in that country. The subject is, indeed, too considerable to be fully embraced here; but a hasty glance at its chief features will be sufficient for our immediate purpose.

Before the latter half of the 18th century, Germany possessed nothing deserving the name of a national literature. The troubles and exhaustion occasioned by the Thirty Years' War blighted the promise of native production, to which the impulse of the Reformation had at first given a healthy and genial aspect. On the return of a mere tranquil season, the national mind, languid and uncertain, found it easier to imitate than to

invent; a general sense of imperfection prevailed; and, in this conviction, the Germans, to use the words of a great authority,* "went to school to the French for manners, to the Latins for diction," instead of betaking themselves to their own resources. Thus, foreign, and chiefly French models were erected on the ground that had so long lain vacant; and whatever poetical spirit remained in the land, was expended in the attempt to clothe itself in forms uncongenial to its nature. The result was such as might have been expected—a bastard sort of literature, properly neither classical, French, nor High Dutch, but frigid, clumsy, and superficial. But this was not a food to which a nation, in the main heart-sound and robust, could long reconcile itself. There needed a period of rest for the acquisition of the necessary strength; and then arose on all hands a race of strong men, eager to win from their own soil the nurture hitherto begged from others. In contradistinction to the ordinary course of literary history, the critics first prepared the field, which the poets were afterwards to till. Winckelman and Lessing, occupying a wider ground than had been taken by the Swiss labourers, Bodmer and Breitinger, appeared as the teachers of a new theory of art and poetry. Haller and Ramler enforced their several poetical creeds by precept and example. Philosophy began to assume a tone of more profound and independent inquiry, impatient of the narrow systems that had hitherto been accepted. Kant and Jacobi appeared as teachers of a larger philosophy of mind. Michaelis and Ernesti breathed life into the dry bones of scholastic theology; and, in the fitting moment, Klopstock† arose, to claim for his country a sublime poetry of her own, with a peculiar dignity imparted by the patriarchal purity of his personal character; while Herder and others, by calling attention to the works of Shakspeare, and to the utterances of early song in all lands, awakened the sense of a higher order of beauty, and pointed to the true sources of genial creation. It is a subject of just exultation to the English reader to perceive how greatly the study of our poets aided the impulse thus given. A new era of unexampled brilliancy arose in Germany. In a few memorable years, the nation, hitherto voiceless and undistinguished, could boast of an array of poets and teachers truly her own, and worthy of fellowship with the greatest and noblest of all countries and ages. This was the triumph of one generation; and it was the happy fortune of our author, Bürger, to witness the dawn of this day of splendour, to participate in its invigorating influences, and to contribute to the great enterprise by which it was distinguished—the foundation of a truly national literature.

Bürger was, by nature, destined to be a lyric

* See *Dichtung u Wahrheit*, Book 6, p. 72.

† Although chargeable with many defects and shortcomings, this great man is worthy of eminent praise as the first adventurer in the noble enterprise of founding a national literature. He taught the Germans to reverence their own muse.

poet, and was led by his first studies and sympathies to prefer the more vigorous and simple forms of composition; yet it may be presumed that the acquaintance he now made with Percy's Ballads—a collection which he perused with extreme avidity—contributed to strengthen his preference for the peculiar department in which he afterwards excelled. During the latter part of his residence in Göttingen, he devoted himself assiduously to the culture of his poetical powers; and acquired that full command of strong vernacular language; that happiness of metrical arrangements, and combination of vigour, conciseness, and melody, which eminently characterize his style. His vocation was now decided, and his peculiar manner, although further developed in maturer years, had formed itself in the mould which it was to assume. We may now proceed with his personal history. And at this point we gladly take occasion to contradict a scandalous story respecting our author, which, although utterly false, is still current in Germany, and has been more than once repeated in English publications. While Bürger was a resident at Göttingen, as the tale runs, there arose between him, Leopold von Stolberg, and Voss, a competition as to which of the three should produce the most obscene composition on a given subject—"My future Mistress:" and the result, it is said, was the production of three infamous pieces—Stolberg's being declared the victor. That such pieces, by whomsoever written, exist, is undoubted; but we have the authority, not only of several who were intimate with all the parties named, but also of Bürger himself, (as contained in a MS. note found among his papers,) for asserting that the anecdote is false in every particular; and that Bürger, so far from contributing to, actually never even saw the verses in question. We have thought it necessary to give this contradiction to the current libel, because we hold it of great importance to vindicate the memory of a poet from an imputation so odious. The tone of many of Bürger's poems, like the tenor of his life, too often assumed a license that cannot be excused; but of a degradation such as this anecdote would imply, we cannot believe that he was at any time capable.

In 1772, through the interest of his friend Boie, Bürger obtained the situation of Justiciar in the district of Alt-Gleichen, the signory of which belonged to the noble family, Von Utzlar. Although the emoluments of the office were scanty, and its duties ill-suited to his peculiar character, it afforded, at least, a certain subsistence, with leisure to continue his literary pursuits. It was also the means of reconciling him with Herr Bauer, who relented towards his prodigal grandson, on seeing him established in a respectable station—from other motives, it is to be hoped, than those pertinently ascribed to worldly men by Sir Giles Overreach in his address to Wellborn. At all events, he paid Bürger's Göttingen debts, and advanced the sum required as security on his taking possession of the office. The depository, Herr Hofrath Liste, a professed friend of the poet, and his predecessor in the place, after-

wards proved unworthy of the trust; and the considerable loss occasioned by his faithlessness, laid the foundation of the pecuniary embarrassments which troubled all the subsequent course of Bürger's life.

Freed from his worst anxieties, and with leisure for the employment of his now developed powers, he betook himself eagerly to composition; and the period of his residence at Alt-Gleichen, between the years 1773 and 1778, was distinguished by the production of his most genial and characteristic works. In 1773, he composed the "Leonora," the origin of which is worth recording. On a moonlight evening, he overheard a peasant girl singing these lines—the fragment, doubtless, of some old traditional lay:—

Der mond dar scheint so hell,
Die Todten reiten so schnelle,
Feins Liebchen, graut dir nicht?

The words strongly excited his imagination; and, in a few days, on this slight thread, he had woven the wonderful ballad shortly afterwards published under the above-named title. It was thrown off, as it were, at a single heat; and, unlike most of his other great works, was never retouched. On its first appearance, indeed, it became so universally popular, that any subsequent alteration would have been received with impatience. Its reception was such as no work of the kind had hitherto met with in Germany. This, indeed, was one of the few instances of a reputation at once established by a single song. Nor was the fame it procured the author unduly awarded: it was then, and still remains to be, the first work of its kind that had appeared in the language; and its reception in foreign* lauds confirmed the enthusiasm with which it was applauded by the poet's own countrymen.

Hardly had Bürger obtained this brilliant success, when he took a step, the consequences of which were fatal to his future happiness. In less than a year after his establishment at Alt-Gleichen, he had the imprudence—to use no harsher term—to marry, under circumstances equally singular and unfortunate. Having fallen in love with a daughter of the Hanoverian administrator, Leonhart, resident at the neighbouring town of Niedeck, he made her his wife in 1774. But while only betrothed to this lady, he had already conceived a violent passion for her younger sister, Augusta Marie, then a girl hardly fifteen years of age. Under these circumstances, when duty, no less than prudence, would have required him to pause, if not to break off his engagement to the elder sister, the unhappy marriage was com-

* When the "Leonora" was first translated into English, it was said by some critic here to have been taken from one of our own early ballads, entitled "The Suffolk Miracle,"—the subject of which is, in the main, similar. But it is ascertained that this, which is a rare specimen, had never been seen by Bürger. He endeavoured, but in vain, to recover the strain to which the German fragment, above cited, belonged. It is possible that a tradition, common to both countries, may have existed, and furnished the subject of this as well as of the English ballad; but Bürger's was clearly the birth of his own imagination, strongly impressed by the wild fragment he had accidentally over-

pleted; and the preference for the younger, whom it was new criminal to love, instead of yielding, only seemed to gather new force from the new relation in which she stood. The progress of this affair may be best described in Bürger's own words, with such apology as he could urge, on reviewing the history of his marriage at a later period:—"In a singular manner," he says, "too tedious here to relate, I married the first of these two sisters; and yet I loved her not. Ay, even when standing with her at the altar, I bore in my heart the fire of a most ardent passion for the second.

I was fully conscious of this; but, owing to a certain want of self-knowledge, I regarded it, although unable to deny it altogether, as a passing fever, which would soon subside. Could I have cast but half a glance into the terrible future, it had been my duty to have gone back, at the very altar, before our hands were joined. The fever did not pass away; but, during a series of nearly ten years, it continued to grow more fierce and incurable." The sequel to this confession may as well be given in the penitent's own account. The object of his passion became herself the victim of a passion equally strong: on both sides, there appear to have been the utmost efforts to control the reciprocal attachment, for a while, at least. "Had the wife intrusted to my charge," proceeds Bürger, "been a woman of ordinary cast—had she been less reasonable and generous, (wherein, however, she was assisted by a certain personal indifference towards me,) I should certainly have been destroyed. But that which the prejudice of worldly laws would have forbidden, these three persons believed themselves justified in adopting for their reciprocal protection from ruin. My spouse resolved to bear the name and appearance of wife only before the world—the other became so in reality, but in secret. This gave some tranquillity to all our hearts, but it also gave rise to other most painful embarrassments."

There can be but one opinion as to the morality of the singular arrangement thus described: it displays, in the clearest light, the irresistible passions and the laxity of principle fostered by Bürger's early habits. Some deduction must be made for the difference of national feeling, in a country where the facility of divorce has loosened the straitness of the marriage tie; some extenuation may be claimed for the error of two beings so passionately attached to each other, as these undoubtedly were; yet, with all such abatements, the connexion—which might have furnished the subject matter of a dramatic "Double Arrangement," so little does it accord with the history of common life—must be described with strong reprehension, even while the actors are regarded with pity. There is something, however, in the sacrifice made by the unfortunate wife, although inconsistent with our notions of feminine dignity, or even delicacy, which is little short of the highest heroism; and her position, during years of worse than widowhood, calls for the strongest feelings of compassion. The sequel will show that her tears and solitude were fully avenged by that

Nemesis which visits wrong with no lingering foot—*raro deseruit scelestum pede claudo*. But this was the burden of a later period.

The reputation which Bürger had won as a poet, produced little save the honour it gave; his circumstances were narrow, and full of anxiety. His relation, Herr Bauer, who had often befriended him, died in 1778; and the decease of his father-in-law, Leonhart, in 1777, involved him in the troubles of a disputed inheritance. The increasing claims of a young family added to his household cares; and he sought, but without success, to exchange his place at Alt-Gleichen for some more gainful employment. In 1778, he undertook the editorship of the Göttingen *Musen Almanach*—its previous conductors, his friends Voss and Götting, having established a similar publication in Hamburg. In this year, also, appeared the first collection of his hitherto scattered poems; but the work brought more fame than profit. In these uncertain and narrow circumstances, he ventured to petition Frederick the Great for an appointment under his government. The king, although a contemner of his native language, appears to have been really willing to provide for the poet; and the High Chancellor, who was intrusted with the business, wrote courteously to Bürger, promising him the first suitable place that should become vacant. But the vacancy was never found; perhaps because no further attempt was made to recall the minister's attention to the subject.

In the hope of bettering his fortunes, Bürger now turned farmer—an attempt which only increased his difficulties, and which was abandoned with loss, after a three years' trial. At the same time, a more serious injury assailed not only his means of subsistence, but his character. At the instance of some malevolent persons, Major-General Von Utalar, under whom he held the post of Justice, accused him before the supreme government of neglect, maladministration, and dishonesty in the discharge of his office. A certain remissness was all that could justly have been laid to his charge; from all the other points of accusation, Bürger effectually exculpated himself; but this he did solely for his reputation's sake. No sooner was the vexatious injustice of the complaint established, than he resigned his office. Nearly at the same time with this event, which left him without home or support, there occurred another, of still greater importance to Bürger's happiness—the decease, namely, of his unfortunate and noble-minded wife, which took place in 1784. There might have seemed to be some prophetic significance in this death—which removed the sole obstacle to the fulfilment of his dearest wish—being reserved for a period when all his prospects were menacing and overclouded.

Literary labours were now the sole means to be looked to for the support of himself and his family; and he, therefore, removed to Göttingen, where he could at the same time conduct the *Musen Almanach*, and betake himself to private lectures and tuition amongst the students.

Many of his friends at this time would fain have induced him to settle in other parts of Germany; but their invitations conveyed no prospect that could be depended upon. In Göttingen, he had at least immediate maintenance, with a hope of obtaining one day some appointment in the University. A professorship was, indeed, granted him five years afterwards: but the chair was only honorary—the promised salary he never lived to enjoy.

In 1785, as soon after the death of his first wife as custom would permit, Bürger had fulfilled the chief wish of his heart by leading to the altar Augusta Marie Leonhart, for whose sake he had erred and endured so much. The only palliation of which his previous conduct in this connexion admits, would be found in the extreme attachment existing on both sides—a passion which overcame all other considerations, and which seemed to gain strength and ardour from time. Under such circumstances, we must at least pity, while we lament the weakness that yielded to a temptation the most searching, perhaps, that human firmness has to encounter. For a few months, in spite of all difficulties, present and in prospect, Bürger enjoyed almost perfect happiness; and the warmth of these golden days lives in the productions which he composed during this period. But joy is less exigent of utterance than grief; the past anxieties of restless and troubled passion were more fertile in subjects for song, which, like Bürger's, was too exclusively the expression of individual feeling, than were the brief moments of his elysium. Brief, indeed, were they, and bitter was the change which ensued: if his errors had been great, his chastisement was severe. In January 1786, less than a year after his marriage, this second and tenderly beloved wife died; and the heart-broken man stood desolate and alone. His whole soul had been bound up, too utterly bound up, in one adored object; its loss stunned and enfeebled him beyond recovery. We wish we had space to insert here some of his letters, portraying the utterness of his destitution, full of unappeased longings, and breathing a sorrow that may not be comforted: a more affecting picture has rarely fallen under our notice. Broken health, languor of mind, and indifference to his worldly circumstances, were the effects of this blow; and, although time brought some relief to his keenest sufferings, Bürger was never the same man again. The object of so much love and regret is described, not in the poet's glowing language only, but by colder spectators also, as one formed to be passionately loved, and inconceivably lamented;—exceedingly beautiful in person—in disposition faultlessly sweet—lively and quick in spirit—and loving as fondly as she was beloved. The undisturbed influence of such a companion on the poet's life and labours, might have done much to give them higher aims and a more dignified beauty—perhaps might have redeemed the early error which sullied the connexion. *Dis aliter visum*.

On recovering from the first prostration of sor-

row, Bürger devoted all his powers to the composition of a monody on his deceased wife. It was his favourite occupation; he retouched and added to it, with more than his usual care; and did not finally complete it until 1787. It is a beautiful, but unequal work, betraying all the unrivalled command of style and melody which practice had given, and, in many parts, forcible and pathetic beyond description; but the expressions of grief are sometimes disfigured by violence, and the tone of the whole is lowered by passages either homely or overstrained. The chords of Bürger's lyre had received a jar that no mastery could repair. His subsequent compositions were few and inferior. From henceforth he was the victim of continual illness; but the necessities of life spare neither sickness nor sorrow, and he was compelled to resume his labours. In the winter of 1787, he gave lectures on the critical philosophy, to which his reputation attracted numerous hearers. In the same year, at the instance of Michaelis, he was admitted of the Faculty of Philosophy in his native university; and, in 1789, as above mentioned, was appointed extraordinary Professor in that department. His second collection of poems, also, was published in 1789.

The most singular incident in Bürger's life remains to be told. His wish to enjoy the society of his infant children could not be fulfilled without the aid of some one to supply the place of their mother: and this consideration, now that his professorship gave reason to hope for a permanent income, seemed to his friends to point out the expediency of a third marriage. While wavering and undecided in his intentions on this point, he received from a remote corner of Germany an invitation alike unexpected and romantic. A Swabian young lady, of education and talents, (for the offer was conveyed in a poem of some merit,) moved, it would seem, by the poet's tuneful regrets, first to pity, and then to love, declared herself ready to replace the loss of his Marie, with the gift of her own heart and hand. At first, Bürger regarded the proposal as a mere poetical extravagance, and replied to it in a sportive tone; but the answer thereupon received evinced that the lady was serious in her intentions; and report drew so engaging a picture of the enamoured and generous poetess, that the proposal excited curiosity, if not interest. The frankness of the step seemed to bespeak a mind superior to common prejudices; the tender expressions to indicate deep feeling; the tribute to his poetical gift that had enslaved a heart by its own powers alone, was flattering. A correspondence ensued; in which, to do Bürger justice, he made no reserve of the details of his history and circumstances, and expressed his unabated attachment to the memory of his second wife; describing himself, at the same time, in no very flattering colours. If, under these circumstances, the offer were renewed, (he concluded,) he promised to repay with grateful and continual kindness the generous sacrifice which she meditated. The answer was affectionate and encouraging; the communications became fond and frequent:

in short, in the October of 1790, Bürger brought home his Swabian mistress, Marie Christine Elizabeth Hahn, as his third wife, to Göttingen. *Mala duxit avi domum*;—he soon had cause to repent of his romantic and imprudent proceeding. The connexion produced nothing but mortification and domestic trouble;—the character and temper of his new wife cast the last drop of gall on the dregs of a life already enough troubled and embittered. After an uneasy cohabitation of only two years, the ill-assorted pair separated; and Bürger was a widower for the third time.

In illness, care, and privation, passed the remaining few months of his life. In consequence of a neglected cold which impaired his voice, he was forced to discontinue his lectures. His means of support thus cut off, his small exchequer quite exhausted, he was fain to earn his daily bread by working as a bookseller's translator. "To so low an ebb," observes one of his friends, "was the favourite poet of Germany reduced!" And now the several disorders that had assailed him, settled into a decided consumption; he could no longer toil at his daily task—soon he was confined wholly to bed. When in this pitiable state, with absolute famine staring him in the face, he was cheered and relieved by the unsolicited grant of a sum of money from the Hanoverian government. This donation also led him to entertain hopes of the pension to which he had long looked forward: but it had now been too late to serve one whose days were numbered. On the 8th of June 1794, Bürger quietly expired—as one exhausted and weary, and not unwilling to be released—in the 47th year of his age.

To this hasty sketch of the poet's life, may be added a few words as to his personal character. His disposition was frank, eager, and loving; in intercourse with others, he was rather hearty than polished, retaining throughout life traces of the student-manner (*Burschenmanier*) learned in his wilder years. A joyous temperament, and a flow of natural gaiety which all his misfortunes could not wholly check, endeared him to all who sought his society; to women especially his manner was peculiarly winning, and to this characteristic, as well as to the open devotion with which he sung their praises, he owed the greatest fortune to which a professed worshipper of their sweet sex can aspire:—it is said that, often as he sued, he never sued in vain. In different actions of his life, he behaved with a noble generosity to persons who had sorely injured him; in giving he was open-handed, even to extravagance. Although proud of his own desert as a poet, he was patient of criticism; and the minute care with which he retouched his works shewed that he was his own severest judge. A proneness to passionate impulses, a carelessness as to the opinion of others in points of moral conduct, and an eagerness for self-gratification, which formed the chief blemishes of his character, may be partly ascribed to the want of sufficient restraint in early life, acting upon a temperament and senses unusually keen. Mental discipline he appears to have never known; and his errors, as well as

the strong and generous impulses of his mind, were the spontaneous growth of a soil, the very richness of which is proved by the vigorous weeds to which it gives birth. This character is true both of his poetical and of his personal history. Had the genius and noble nature born with him been duly guided and trained, he might, indeed, have stood amongst the first of poets and of men.

Here for the present we must conclude. The next number will be devoted to an examination of Bürger's works, which cannot be fairly judged without the comment afforded by his personal history. This must in the main be true of all real poets; for in these what are action and song but varied utterances of a common principle?
V.

THE LIFE AND SONGS OF BÜRGER.

No. II.

Continued from our last Number.

IN our last number, we pursued the personal career of the poet Bürger, from childhood, through a turbulent youth and the vicissitudes of man's troubled estate, to an early grave. The notices which we then gave of the direction of Bürger's poetical labours, of the progress of his education and self-culture, and of his personal disposition and tendencies, anticipate most of the observations applicable to an author whose works, in general, strongly reflect his individual feelings and propensities. We have described Bürger as directed, by nature and circumstances, to the cultivation of popular song. In this vocation, two different kinds of success may be gained. The first is the achievement of that supreme genius, animated by the highest purpose, which

commands an universal interest, by clothing elevated subjects with clear simplicity of utterance; and penetrates into the inmost sources of human nature with a language speaking to all hearts, employing its power to popularize, without degrading the most exquisite forms of truth and beauty. By such a power are the many unconsciously raised above their common range of belief and thought; while the perceptions of the gifted few are awakened and gratified. Thus to vindicate the universal rule of poetry—to diffuse its influence, by winning all to lovely contemplations, rather than by appealing to vulgar tendencies—to communicate, but not to debase its spirit and its charm;—this is, indeed, the highest gift of genius, and its most noble exercise. Many exquisite endowments are required for the other less arduous kind of success. This is the reward of the poet who, either from temperament or from choice, adopts the character and embodies the ordinary feelings of the many, with such happiness in manner and in selection of subject as his art can supply. His aim must be to represent in vivid colours the ideas and emotions that lie in the daily track of existence, with such enhancement as the spirit of poetry confers upon all subjects whatsoever. But here its alchemy can only sublime the matter on which it works, in so far as relates to the form and colour of the subject. The difference between these two classes of popular poetry is essential and striking: here, the poet uses the common properties of human nature as a key wherewith he opens all hearts to the reception of the lovely and the divine—there, he deals with the ordinary sensations and daily experience as the objects to be expressed and beautified. In the one case, the poet imparts to the ideal a visible and impressive form; in the other, he arrays the real with such graceful ornaments as his feeling and invention can devise. In this latter department, the qualities required are, clearness of perception; address in seizing upon the most gracious aspect of common feelings; a cordial earnestness of tone, attesting the poet's unfeigned sympathy with his fellow-men; bold and apposite imagery; and language, vigorous, unaffected, and musical. Such are the qualities which the songs of Bürger display: it is unnecessary to state more expressively to which of the two classes of popular poetry above described they belong. The spirit which possessed our lyrist did, indeed, at times carry him to the verge of a higher sphere; but his wonted muse was less ambitious in her flight, and loved to hover over the flowers or rest in the shadows of daily household life.

The songs before us may be divided into two classes—personal and descriptive. The first are eminently the offspring of sensation, (the sensation, indeed, of a nature generous, sensitive, and ardent,) and represent the loves and sorrows of the poet with an earnestness which needed not the evidence of his history to attest their reality. Their tone is lively, passionate, or desponding, according to the mood or the incident

of the moment; and their almost unrivalled charm consists, not merely in a theme which will never lose its magic so long as love and life exist, but still more in their cordial fervour of language and the faultless beauty of their versification. Knowing, as we do, how much of these subtle graces must evaporate in translation, we should have declined the task, were it not that Bürger's *personal* lyrics are almost unknown to English readers, and, therefore, especially demand our notice. We hope that, even in the following imperfect version, some trace may yet be found of the affectionate and graceful simplicity of the exquisite original.

LOVE'S WITCHERY.

Turn and face me, maiden shy;
Soft—no winking, roguish eye!
Wilful maiden, mark me duly,
Answer to my question truly—
Ha! look upwards, maiden shy;
Wink you shall not, wicked eye!

So! no fright art thou, 'tis true,
With those eyes so clear and blue;
Brow and nose no fault defaces,
Mouth and cheek deserve their praises:
Thou art charming, love, in sooth—
Charming quite, in very truth.

Yet, though charming, form and mien,
Still thou art not quite a queen;
Not an empress;—'midst the fairest,
Who will crown thee as the rarest?
Charming feature, charming mien,
Need so much to make the queen!

Hundred beauties, well 'tis known,
Tens of hundreds, might be shewn,
Proud and fain to challenge places
Passing thine in choice of graces;
Hundred beauties I can see,
Hundreds far surpassing thee.

Yet a sovereign's power thou hast
O'er thy loyal servant cast;
With imperial law o'erbearing,
Now enchanting, now despairing:
Life and death, as kings decree,
Holds thy trusty slave from thee.

Hundreds are no trifling sum—
Yet, dear girl, did hundreds come—
Ay, ten thousand, did they bring thee,
Down from throne and realm to fling thee—
Tens of thousands—what a sum!
All would fail, were all to come!

Roguish eyelets, roguish mouth,
Face me straight, and tell me truth—
Say, what made thee mine thus solely,
None but thou, and thou so wholly?
Wicked eyelets, wicked mouth,
Face me fairly, tell me truth!

Puzzling still, I can't divine
What so wholly made me thine:
Ha! with nought to wake this passion
Ne'er was done in Christian fashion—
Sorceress girl, all charm and spell,
Where's thy wand of magic? Tell!

All men, in some golden moment of their lives, have been in love. This is the one gracious condition of being, which, for a time at least, makes the rudest of vulgar natures deni-

zens of an existence which asserts its divine origin in all bosoms. And how clearly does the supremacy of this sweet impulse declare this by its victory over all other objects of earthly desire! Not long does the visitant linger with many; but who has not acknowledged, during the delicious season of its presence, that there is no ambition, or triumph, or desire, equal in worth to the supreme happiness of entire and favoured love? The expression of such a mood is the burden of the beautiful song we shall now attempt to translate. In the original, the poet avails himself, with great felicity, of the old Troubadour word, *minnesold*, or "the reward of love," for which we have no corresponding term of equal conciseness and antique grace. The days of old romance, alas! have bequeathed few such memorials to our present language.

LOVERS'-MEED.

Who in lady-love hath favour,
Oh, how richly he is crown'd!
Dearer boon hath service never
From the highest Kaiser found—
He, with crown and throne to speed,
Serves, himself, for Lovers'-meed,
What is gold, or jewels' splendour?
What the pearls a Sophi shews?
Lady-love's the only lender
That the *heart* with wealth endowa.
Not with pearls or diamonds fee'd,
Would I barter Lovers'-meed.
Place and state, ambition's prizes,
Knightly calling, golden spurs,
All, for this, the heart despises,
All the monarch's gift confers.
Honour's charms less strongly plead
Than the bliss of Lovers'-meed.
Nought besides on earth inherits
Joy or rapture matching this;
Sweeter none but blessed spirits
Taste in Paradise of bliss.
Honeyed stores are sweet indeed—
Sweeter far is Lovers'-meed.
Love's reward is sap and essence,
Source and life of all our joys;
Love's reward relieves and lessens
Every pang that peace destroys;
Plants that balsam-juices bleed
Cannot heal like Lovers'-meed.
Toils and risks, with free devotion,
Love's sweet promise bids us meet;
Fire and battle, storm and ocean—
Teaches death itself to greet.
Life prevails o'er fame or need,
Yet I'd die for Lovers'-meed.
All the wealth of store and coffer,
Heart's blood shed from every vein,
Were a beggar's paltry offer
For true lover's bliss and gain.
Every loss of blood or gold
Lovers'-meed pays hundredfold.
Ever, then, with trust unceasing,
Will I seek this dearest boon;
In December's midnight freezing,
Parched in summer's fervid noon.
For all service well is fee'd
By the bliss of true Love's-meed!

The more passionate of Bürger's amatory lyrics, besides their being, in general, too long

for insertion here, are not great favourites with us. In order to sympathize with such fervid utterances of feeling, we require something in the poet beyond the language of sensation, however eloquent and melodious. We like him best in such effusions as the following, where a gracious and untroubled tenderness busies itself, in true lover's fashion, with dwelling on every charm and feature of the beloved object. And to us the occasional homeliness of expression, which we have not attempted to disguise, invests the strain with a certain affectionate attraction that phrases more curiously refined could not impart. It must not, however, be supposed that they are the result of carelessness in the poet; every syllable has been chosen and arranged with the nicest design; and the effect, whatever it be, is such as Bürger advisedly intended to produce. The title of this song, which describes the poet's own mistress, is—

THE SWEET ONE WHOM I MEAN.

How proud, in love's unnumber'd wiles,
The sweet one of my fancy smiles!
Declare, my grateful lips, declare,
Whose hand betrays this wonder rare?
That thus, in pride of lovely wiles,
The sweet one of my fancy smiles.

Who lit the sweet one's azure eyes,
That shine like spheres of Paradise?
The same who bade o'er sea and land
The radiant arch of heaven expand:—
'Twas He who lit the sweet one's eyes
That beam like spheres of Paradise.

Who thus with skilful care o'erspread
The sweet one's cheek with white and red?
He who a tender beauty showers
O'er the young almond's opening flowers:—
He with such cunning art o'erspread
The sweet one's cheek with white and red.

Who made the sweet one's ruddy mouth
So spicy fragrant, kind, and smooth?
He who to purple cherries lent
Their swelling ripeness, juice, and scent:—
He made the sweet one's ruddy mouth
So spicy fragrant, soft, and smooth.

Who bade the silken ringlets flow
Adown the sweet one's neck of snow?
He who the golden harvests bade
Wave, by His gentle zephyr sway'd:—
He bade the silken ringlets flow
Adown the sweet one's neck of snow.

Who gave the sweet one voice and tongue
So heavenly sweet in speech and song?
He that with flute-notes softly trilled
The lark and nightingale hath filled:—
He gave the sweet one voice and tongue
So soft, for love's discourse and song.

Who, for the throne of full delight,
Hath arched the sweet one's bosom white?
Even He who made, its type express,
The swan with downy swell of breast:—
He, for a throne of full delight,
Hath arched the sweet one's bosom white.

What artist framed in form and limb
The sweet one's shape so soft and slim?
His hand, that is, and was of yore
All beauty's artist evermore:—
His highest hand in form and limb
Hath framed her shape so soft and slim.

Who breathed through life and soul her mind,
So angel-gentle, pure, and kind ?
Who else than He, whose high commands
Have peopled Heaven with angel bands ?
He breathed with life a soul and mind
So angel-gentle, pure, and kind.

Praise for thy work, great Artist, praise !
And high thanksgiving for the grace
That made thine image charm my sight
With all that makes creation bright :—
Praise for thy work, great Artist, praise !
And high thanksgiving for thy grace !

Yet say for whom, with loving wiles,
In state of charms, this sweet one smiles ?
O Heaven ! by thy bright sun 'tis sworn,
Fain had I rather been unborn,
Unless for me, with loving wiles,
In sovereign charms, the sweet one smiles !

We cannot stay to gather more of the flowers which Bürger has woven into garlands, some to decorate the triumphs, some to strew the ashes of his love. They are all coloured with the true lyric warmth of tone ; and breathe a devotion for the sex, whose smiles are the dearest reward of the poet, which, if not of high ideal elevation, is at least so fervent and unaffected as to justify the favour he universally enjoyed. Before we proceed to the second or descriptive class of Bürger's productions, we will give one specimen of a mode of composition rarely attempted by him, but always with eminent success. The vigorous brevity of his style, and a certain frank boldness of thought, and generous warmth, which form some of his most amiable characteristics, qualified him admirably to render justice to a theme like the following. There is a tone of independence in the strain, which we infinitely prize ; and, as an instance of sententious compression, we know few pieces that can be placed in competition with it.

THE GREAT MAN.

There stirs my wrath one thing I meet—
When fawning praise and fool's conceit
The vulgar mean as greatness treat.
Thou, Soul of every Truth, proclaim
Who justly bears the great man's name ?
Hence with all rashly squandered fame !
Whom God endows with sense to prize
The great, in bearing, worth, and guise ;
And shews all being's strength and size.
Whose reason, in its wide command,
Even as a ball the hollow hand,
The earthly whole embracing, scanned ;
And all things great, that here and there
Befell, in ages far or near,
Who knows—and when, and how, and where ;
Who, drawing Nature's veil aside,
Even as the bridegroom sees his bride,
Views her in naked beauty's pride ;
And ever, on her glowing breast,
By her emboldened, raised, possessed,
Inhaling love and life, doth rest.
Who hath the power, with will combined,
For all that human hand or mind
E'er did or doth, to serve mankind ;
Who, gifted thus, in time and place
As fate ordains, in act displays
The standard art attempts to raise :—
This were a man—a great man's worth :
Such, from the womb of human birth,
Scarce one in ages straggles forth.

We now come to the second or descriptive

portion of Bürger's lyrical poems. These chiefly consist of genuine popular ballads, in the strictest sense of the term ; and here we approach a class of composition, in which, of all modern writers, our author has been the most eminently successful. To revive, amidst the fastidiousness of pampered taste, the bold and simple narrative style of earlier days ; preserving the energetic plainness of a time when poetry lived in the voices of the people, while calling in the resources of art to heighten the manner, without impairing the spirit : this is a task requiring no common genius. Independently of his natural gifts, Bürger was greatly aided by the circumstances of his education and life, in the achievement of success in this department. Born amongst the people, familiar with their speech and mood, self-trained, after the manner of the older singers, and armed with thorough command of a strong vernacular language, he fell without effort into the style and expression of the true popular ballad. The charm and excellence of his productions lie in the perfect sincerity of spirit thus given ; his art is evinced in the accuracy of expression, and in the melody of his numbers only : in the treatment of his subject, he is what most modern ballad writers only affect to be—resolutely in earnest ; uttering in song what he has seen or heard, with all the rapidity of strongly-excited feeling. Thus, without forethought, he throws himself upon his subject with all the dramatic fervour, the bold apostrophes, the rapid flight from incident to incident, which belong to the genuine utterances of popular narrative poetry. There is no delay, no ornament ; every trait starts forth with the vividness of eager life ; and, in listening to the strain, we become actual spectators of the event, and are hurried on to the close, with an interest that admits of no pause or question. This is the true secret of the charm concealed in Bürger's ballads. It is difficult to select from so tempting a series. In choosing the following, we have been mainly guided by a reference to the space afforded us : most of those we could have wished to translate are too long for our limits. We need not, however, make any apology for introducing to our readers so noble a strain as—

THE SONG OF THE BRAVE MAN.*

The brave man's song aloud I raise,
Like pealing bell and organ's roll.
Who talks of gold ? 'Tis song repays
The man that boasts a dauntless soul.
Thank God ! that I can sing and praise,
To laud the brave in sounding lays !
A thaw-wind from the South-Sea passed ;
All damp and dark, it northward rolled ;
The clouds were chased by the snoring blast,
As when the lean wolf scares the fold ;
The fields it scoured, the woods it brake,
The ground-ice burst in stream and lake.
Along the Jura melts the snow ;
Hark ! how a thousand cataracts sound !
The Wiesenthal lies whelmed below ;
The land's main stream o'erflows its bound ;
High on their track its wild waves curled,
And ice in rolling masses whirled.

* See conclusion of this article.

Of ashler built, from base to ridge,
O'er heavy piers and arches, lay,
Across the waxing stream, a bridge ;
And a small toll-house stood midway :—
There dwelt the Bridgeward, with child and wife :
O, Bridgeward ! Bridgeward ! fly for life !

Now, near and nearer it groaned and jarred ;
It raved and weltered the walls about ;
Sprang to the roof the pale Bridgeward,
And saw the wrack and storm without.
"Have mercy on me, dear Heaven !" he prayed ;
"All lost, all lost ! Who brings me aid ?"

And, crash on crash, from shore to shore,
The ice-blocks rolled, now there, now here ;
From either bank the torrent tore
The landward arch, the landward pier :—
With wife and child the Bridgeward stood,
And howled yet louder than wind or flood.

And hither and thither, stroke on stroke,
The ice-blocks rolled from side to side ;
As, crushed and shattered with the shock,
Pier after pier shot down the tide :
The middle arch will soon be riven—
Oh ! mercy, mercy, gracious Heaven !

A crowd of gazers, great and small,
Stood on the distant bank on high ;
And wrung their hands, and shouted all—
But none the rescue dared to try :
The trembling Bridgeward, with wife and child—
Their shrieks were heard o'er the tempest wild.

Song of the brave ! when wilt thou swell
Like chime or organ pealing strong ?
Awake ! O tell his daring, tell !
What stays thee yet, my gallant song ?
The wreck it threatens the middle pier—
Brave man, O hasten ! brave man, appear !

The earl rode hurrying to the strand—
A noble earl, on his charger bold :
What held the earl in his lifted hand ?
A purse, a weighty purse of gold :—
"Five hundred crowns the man shall have
That dares yon wretches' lives to save !"

Which was the brave ? The earl, forsooth ?
Say on, brave song—bright song, declare !
By Heaven, a gallant earl, in truth,
Yet know I one more gallant far !
Stand forth, brave man ! brave man, appear,—
The wreck it threatens—the ruin 's near !

And ever higher the flood 'gan swell ;
And ever wilder screamed the blast ;
And ever lower the courage fell ;—
O rescuer, rescuer, come in haste !—
Pier after pier was crushed and rent,
Loud crashing, after, the torn arch went.

"Ho ! none to venture for the stake ?"
On high the earl he held the prize :
They hear ; but all stand still and quake—
Of all those thousands none replies :
In vain the Bridgeward, with child and wife,
Outshrieked for succour the tempest's strife.

Lo ! with his staff, in homely guise,
A plain, poor peasant man drew nigh ;
His coat was of the rugged frieze,
But port and look were bold and high :
He came and heard what the earl had said ;
And looked upon that scene of dread ;

And boldly sprung, with God to guide,
On the next skiff, and o'er the flood,
In spite of surge, and storm, and tide,
The rescuer made his passage good ;
But the frail boat was far too small
In one adventure to succour all.

And thrice his arm the boat must urge
Through storm and stream ; and thrice he braved,
And thrice he crossed the roaring surge,
Ere all the periled lives were saved.
Scarce on firm land the last one stood,
When the last wreck rolled down the flood.

Which was the brave man ? Rise, and tell ;
Say on, my gallant song, say on !
The life that peasant risked so well,
He staked, perchance, for gold alone ?
For, had the earl his largess spared,
Nor risk, nor wreck yon boor had dared.

"Here," cried the earl—"the prize is won !
Come, take thy meed, my gallant fere !"
Say, was not this right bravely done ?
By Heaven, 'twas spoken like a peer !
Yet nobler spirit filled the breast
That throbb'd beneath yon peasant's vest.

"I bear no life that's bought and sold,
Poor though I be, I lack not food :—
Give to yon houseless wretch your gold,
Whose all was swallowed by the flood !"
This said, with stont and cordial tone—
He turned, and went his way alone.

Far sounds the brave man's song of praise,
Like chiming peal and organ's roll ;
No gold rewards—'tis song repays
The man that boasts a dauntless soul.
Thank God, that gave me song and praise
To laud the brave in deathless lays !

This is assuredly a brave song, and worthy of the noble deed which it records. The inborn dignity of our poet's nature appears nowhere more excellent than in the heartiness with which he asserts the claim of genuine worth, independent of all factitious circumstances of distinction. We love him for this cordial tribute to peasant virtue. Had his lyre been oftener attuned to such stirring themes, how proudly might we have placed him beside his greater brethren, Burns and Béranger ! But he was led astray by the seductions of the moment, and was busied too often with fancies which left no room for the presence of this more generous mood. When it visited him unsought, he proved what he might have done, had he freely wooed its influence.

Before we proceed to consider his "Leonore," we shall subjoin a specimen of the humorous, yet half-earnest way in which he loves at times to handle a pleasant incident. We wish to give some idea of his different styles ; and, although the subjoined verses are of a kind which must inevitably lose much of their character in a new idiom, still the subject, we should think, will make amends to our readers, of both sexes, for all shortcomings. And, indeed, we could not, without self-blame, have omitted the opportunity here afforded us of extending the fame of the gallant

WOMEN OF WEINBERG.

I prythee, say where Weinsberg lies ;
Brave town it is, they tell,
That store of wives and maids supplies,
Right sagely trained and well.
If e'er I seek to wive or woo,
I'll court some day in Weinsberg too.

Our Kaiser Conrad, ye shall hear,
Waxed wroth against the town ;
And, with his men-at-arms, drew near,
And sate in leagner down ;
With horse and foot, and shot and shout,
He pressed and vexed it round about.

Now, as the town held out so fast,
For all he urged it nigh,
In hot despite, with trumpet blast
He made his herald cry—
“When I get in, ye knaves, take note,
Each one shall hang that wears a coat.”

When, as they heard the trumpet bray,
And marked the Kaiser's threat,
Up rose a wail and well-a-day,
In house, and square, and street.
Their bread grew scant and dear in price,
Yet scarcer now was sage advice.

“Alas, for Colin! wo befall
So dark a day!”—the swains
Cried “Miserere! one and all
Must perish for our pains!
Alas, for Colin!—while I speak,
Methinks I feel the halter tweak!”

Yet oft, when Jack seems lost, in spite
Of counsel, toil, or prayer,
Some Gill's invention leads him right
From peril and despair :
For churchman's craft, and woman's wile,
Ye know, surpass all other guile.

A fresh young dame, demure and nice,
(But yesternight a bride,)
When all were quailed, with sage advice
The listeners edified :—
And ye, likewise, if pleased to wait,
Shall laugh and clap your hands thereat.

There went a troop of ladies fair,
When midnight dark was down,
To Conrad's camp, to make their prayer
For mercy on the town :
They begged so soft, they begged so sweet—
But more than this could nought entreat :—

“I grant the women exit free,
With their best treasures all ;
But such as still remain shall be
Hewn down to mince-meat small.”
With these hard terms, distreat and dumb,
The troubled fair slunk sadly home.

But, lo! at earliest peep of dawn—
What means yon burdened troop?
The nearest barrier is withdrawn,
And see, the women stoop
With man on shoulder—sewn in sack,
In faith!—and riding pick-a-back!

Now, as the clerks in camp oppose
The sleight so barely dressed,
Quoth Conrad, “Comment, quip, nor glose,
The Emperor's word shall wrest :—
Bravo!” he cried, “'tis bravely thus!
Would that our wife so deemed of Us!”

Free pardon and a feast he gave,
In honour of the fair ;
And mirth, and dance, and toast, and stave,
Graced the glad revel there :
The beggar's housewife danced amain,
Beside the Mayoress with her train.

Now, shew me, pray, where Weinsberg lies :
Brave town! it bears the bell
For maids and matrons true and wise,
Right sagely trained, and well!

By Heaven, if e'er I wive or woo,
I'll seek a wife in Weinsberg, too!

We have purposely reserved to the last our notice of those great works, (amongst which the chief are, “Lenardo and Blandine,” “The Parson's Daughter of Taubenhain,” the “Wildegrave,” and “Leonore,”) wherein Bürger has elevated the popular ballad to the sphere of the highest tragic emotions, without departing from its native simplicity. In these remarkable compositions, pity, wonder, terror, and supernatural awe are woven into the tissue of lyrical narrative, with a mastery of hand that no other poet has shewn. Coleridge's “Ancient Mariner,” unrivalled in its way, belongs to a different class: it is a creation of the ideal world. Bürger's is the tale of positive life; it fastens upon our closest sympathies and fears, with a seizure which allows of no escape for the imagination. Even while dealing with the supernatural, there is a terrible homely reality in his creations, which compels us to believe and tremble. Everything is plain, express, and in earnest; the unreal assumes a distinct and bodily form; the tragic becomes a spectacle acted beneath our very eyes; and, in his wonderful numbers we hear, with appalling distinctness, the wail of the heart-broken, the eldrich laugh of the maniac, the resounding tramp of the spectre steed. It is in this power of clothing with the most vivid reality all forms of the pathetic and supernatural; in the stern, nay, homely plainness with which his subject is impressed upon our perceptions; in the strong and yet most musical flow of numbers that seem poured from the very sources of natural song;—in these eminent characteristics, we believe Bürger's great ballads to be unequalled. We have selected the “Leonore,” as it is the work on which his European reputation is founded: although disposed to assign the palm to others in the series above named, we shall not presume to question the justice of so universal a decision. Apology for the manifold imperfections of translation, it were of no use to offer; we have done our best to give some outline of an original which abler hands than ours have failed to present, with all its beauty and strength, in a foreign dress. The scene of the incident (and this, it will be observed, is characteristic of Bürger's genius, which preferred the immediate to the remote, even in his treatment of the supernatural,) is laid in his own times, at the close of the terrible war between Frederick the Great and the Empress Maria Theresa. We are in Saxony, in the first days of the peace which succeeded the terrible battle of Prague; and all who had friends or lovers in the Prussian army are anxiously awaiting their return.

LEONORE.

From nightmare dreams, at day-break red,
Rose Leonore, and sighed :—
“O William! art thou false, or dead?
How long wilt thou abide?”
For he had gone with Frederick's might,
Beneath the walls of Prague to fight;
And never a word had sent to tell,
If he were wounded there, or well.

The Monarch and the Empress, spent
 With conflict fierce and vain,
 They let their haughty mood relent,
 And peace returned again :
 And every host, with song and shout,
 And drum and trumpet ringing out,
 With greenwood branches gaily crowned,
 All on their homeward march are bound.

And there and here, from far and near,
 By road and mountain track,
 Came old and young, to swell the cheer,
 And meet the comers back.
 "Thank God!" full many a matron cried ;
 "Glad welcome!" many a plighted bride :
 But Leonora, wo the while,
 She met no greeting, or kiss, or smile.

On every hand, at every name,
 In every troop she sought ;
 But, first or last, of all that came,
 Was none that tidings brought.
 When all had passed, and hope was o'er,
 Her raven hair she wildly tore ;
 With frantic gestures, all forlorn,
 She cast her down on the earth to mourn.

Straight to her side the mother hid :
 "God help the sore distrest !
 What ails thee, child of love?" she cried,
 And strained her to her breast.
 "O mother, mother! gone is gone—
 Sink earth, sink all—for hope is none!
 There is no pity in God on high,
 Wo, wo for my utter misery!"

"Look down, O God! and help our need!
 Oh, breathe, my child, a prayer!
 What God ordains is well decreed—
 He pities our despair!"
 —"O mother, mother! vain belief:
 God hath not justly dealt this grief;
 My ceaseless prayers, what speed had they?
 And now—'tis now too late to pray!"

"Help, Jesu, help! Who seek the Lord
 Know that he aids his own.
 The Holy Sacrament adored,
 Shall still thy grievous moan."
 —"O mother! to this burning grief,
 No rite of Church can bring relief;
 No sacramental wine and bread
 Can give back life to the silent dead!"

"Now, say, if faithless to his vows,
 In distant Hungary,
 Thy love forgets his creed and spouse,
 In some new marriage tie?
 Renounce, my child, a heart so vain;
 Short be his triumph, scant his gain!
 In the hour when body and spirit part,
 This treachery shall consume his heart."

"O mother, mother!—gone is gone;
 Lost, lost—foulorn, foulorn:
 Death, death is all my love hath won—
 Oh, had I ne'er been born!
 Die out, for ever die, my light!
 Be quenched in horror, sink in night!
 There is no pity in God on high—
 Wo, wo for my utter misery!"

"Help, Jesu, help! God, judge not thou
 Thy poor distracted child!
 The sin she speaks, she knows not now—
 Hear not her ravings wild!
 Forget, my child, this earthly grief,
 And think on Heaven with firm belief;
 So shall a Bridegroom yet appear,
 To calm thy spirit, and bring thee cheer."

"O mother, where doth heavenly bliss,
 And where do torments dwell?
 'Tis heaven, 'tis heaven, where William is—
 Where he is not, 'tis hell!
 Die out, for ever die, my light!
 Be quenched in horror, sink in night!
 Blest were to me no earthly lot,
 Blest were no heaven, where he is not!"

Thus wild her desperate passion flowed
 Through every sense and vein;
 And, daring still the wrath of God,
 His justice did arraign.
 She tore her hair and smote her breast,
 Till the red sunset dyed the west;
 And, glittering through the heavenly arch,
 The golden stars began their march.

And hark!—trap, trap—a charger's heel
 Jarred on the court-yard stone.
 Straight by the porch, with ringing steel,
 A horseman vaulted down.
 And hark! and hark! the portal's ring
 Stirs lightly, loosely—ting-ling-ling;
 Then, through the wicket, clearly heard,
 Came, short and shrill, each whispered word.

"Hist, hist, my girl! unbar the door—
 Dost wake, my love, or sleep?
 Still am I loved, or loved no more?
 And dost thou smile or weep?"
 —"Ah! William, thou? So late, mine own?
 Long have I wept, and watched alone,
 In bitter sorrow and deadly fear—
 Whence comest thou riding to seek me here?"

"We mount but at the dead of night—
 From Prague afar I come;
 Late have I risen to claim thy plight,
 And now will bear thee home."
 —"Ah, first come in, to rest till morn—
 Loud howls the blast through the pale hawthorn—
 Come in, beloved, and let me fold
 My arms around thee, to chase the cold!"

"Let the wind in the hawthorn howl and whirr—
 Let the wind howl on, my dear;
 The wild horse stamps—shrill rings the spur—
 I may not tarry here!
 Come, don thy kirtle, girl, with speed,
 And spring behind me on the steed;
 We've yet a hundred miles to tread
 Ere we may reach the marriage bed."

"Ah, ride we yet a hundred mile
 To reach our bridal bed?
 The bell that chimed eleven, erewhile—
 Hark, still it booms o'erhead."
 —"Look up, look on, the moon shines bright;
 We and the dead ride fast by night.
 I'll pledge me yet, ere the midnight hour,
 To bring thee, love, to the bridal bower!"

"Say, where is the chamber drest so late?
 Say, where is the marriage bed?"
 —"Far, far from hence—still, cool, and strait,
 With boards at foot and head."
 —"Hast room for me?"—"For me and thee—
 Come, haste, and busk thee, and ride with me;
 There's waiting many a wedding guest,
 The chamber is open, the couch is drest."

His true-love busked her, and all in haste
 To horse she lightly sprung;
 And fondly round the horseman's waist
 Her lily arms she flung.
 And hurry! hurry! with clattering tread,
 In rushing gallop, away they sped,
 While horse and rider snorted and blew,
 And the stones they smoked, and the fire-sparks flew.

To right and left, ere dazzled eye
 Could snatch a hasty look,
 How field, and wood, and moor shot by,
 And thundering bridges shook !
 "Dost shiver, true-love ? The moon shines bright—
 Hurrah ! the dead ride fast by night !
 Dost fear them, true-love—dost creep with dread ?"
 —" Ah, no ! yet wherefore speak of the dead ?"

What sounds are those of chant and knell ?
 Why shriek the ravens hoarse ?
 Hark ! passing bell—hark ! requiem's swell—
 " Lay we in earth the corse !"
 And, lo ! a funeral train drew near,
 With coffin, and trailing pall, and hier.
 The wail for the dead was dull and harsh,
 Like the bullfrog's croak in a sleepy marsh.

" Till midnight's past the dead may bide
 For knell and wail and song ;
 Now bear I home my fair young bride—
 Come, join the marriage throng !
 Come, sacrist, lead the choral train,
 And groan us out a bridal strain ;
 'Come, priest, by thee be the blessing said
 Ere we lie down in the marriage bed."

Down sank the bier—ceased chant and peal,
 The mourners, at his call,
 Came hurrying hard at the charger's heel,
 Came hurrying one and all.
 And on, still on, with clattering tread,
 In rushing gallop, forth they sped,
 While horse and rider snorted and blew,
 And the stones they smoked, and the fire-sparks flew.

How, left and right, before their sight,
 Swept hill, and tree, and down !
 How vanished, right, and left, and right,
 Hall, hamlet, tower, and town !
 "Dost shiver, true-love ? The moon shines bright—
 Hurrah ! the dead ride fast by night !
 Dost fear them, true-love—dost creep with dread ?"
 —" Ah, let them rest ! why speak of the dead ?"

Lo, there ! lo, there ! on the gibbet's beam,
 A ghostly company,
 Half seen beneath the moony gleam,
 Dance on the gallows-tree !
 " Sa sa, my mates, come hither—pace,
 Come down, my mates, and follow the race ;
 The marriage-dance ye'll featly tread,
 When I and the bride are put to bed."

Hiss, hiss, the spectre crew behind
 Came on with whistling rush,
 As when 'midst withered leaves, the wind
 Whirrs through the hazel bush ;
 And on, still on, with clattering tread,
 In furious gallop, forth they sped,
 While horse and rider snorted and blew,
 And the stones they smoked and the fire-sparks flew.

Around the moonlit plains they fled—
 Flew past them fast and far ;
 How swam the flying clouds o'erhead !
 How glanced each passing star !
 "Dost shiver, true-love ? The moon shines bright,
 Hurrah ! the dead ride fast by night !
 Dost fear them, true-love—dost creep with dread ?"
 —" Wo's me ! Disturb not the awful dead !"

" Ho ! ho ! methinks the cock 'gan crow—
 The sand is near its end ;
 Methinks I smuff the dawn—ho ! ho !
 Quick, quick, my girl, descend !
 Our course is over, our race is done,
 The marriage doors are open thrown :
 The dead ride on through the night space—
 'Tis done—we've reached our resting place."

Right at a portal's iron grate
 They dashed, with hanging rein—
 The horseman waved his rod, and straight
 Sprang lock and bolt in twain :
 Wide yawned the doors with jarring sound,
 And over the echoing graves they bound ;
 All round, the tomb-stones grey and white,
 Lay glimmering in the cold moonlight.

Look there ! look there !—at once befell
 A sudden change, and grim :—
 The horseman's garb like tinder fell
 In shreds from trunk and limb ;
 And, lo ! his head—nor flesh, nor hair
 Clings to that skull so ghastly bare !
 A yellow skeleton he stands,
 With scythe and glass in his bony hands !

The steed neighed wild, high reared the steed,
 And fire-sparks snorted forth ;
 And, ha ! it gapes—with lightning speed
 All vanished in the earth !
 With howlings shook the welkin pale,
 The gulf below with shriek and wail ;
 While Leonore, with choking breath,
 Shook on the verge of life and death.

And round and round, in the moony glance,
 In whirling circles rise
 A troop of ghosts, in linked dance,
 And howled with hollow cries :
 " Endure, endure ! though grief hath riven
 The heart, arraign not God in Heaven !
 Thy forfeit body, sentenced, leave—
 May God in mercy thy soul receive !"

In this version, the wonderful force and flow of the song, its expressive traits, its simplicity and fire, are, in a great measure, lost : yet even here the English reader will admire the skilful introduction of the subject ; the rapidity of the narrative ; the picture of unhallowed repining which awakens the expectation of some uncommon punishment ; the startling and appropriate form in which it appears ; the wild energy of the midnight career, enveloped in gathering horrors until its fearful close—where, however, a ray of hope, breaking through the utter darkness, heightens the true impressiveness of the tale. These are properties independent of verbal or metrical beauties ; in these, however arrayed, the genius of the author makes itself known. *Invenius etiam disjecti membra poetæ.*

Thus have we, in some measure, completed an outline of the Life and Songs of Bürger—a man surely noticeable as well for the gifts which he employed and perfected, as for those which he less wisely regarded. The tale of his life, interesting were it only a romance, has yet a greater value, as exhibiting the influences which coloured his writings, and as illustrative of the truth, which cannot be too often insisted upon—that, for sustained and high achievements in poetry, the rarest natural endowments, the most perfect command of its materials, will not suffice. A spirit of dedication ; a consciousness of the worth and purpose of his calling ; a clearness derived from the true insight which leads to genial exertion :—these are indispensable to the poet who would perfectly accomplish his appointed task. Or, as it was nobly said by one—himself a poet,

and a bright example of the truth he uttered :*—
 “The strife with outward circumstances and morbid feelings, which, in all instances, impairs the vigour of the soul, ought, least of all, to be permitted to burden the spirit of the poet, whose part is to disentangle himself from the present, and rise with free courage to the world of the ideal. However wild be the tempests that agitate his bosom, a clearness as of the sunbeams must lighten around his brow.” V.

Recent German publications have, we believe, turned the attention of the admirers of German poetry to Bürger. Several contributors have thus simultaneously sent us specimens of the verses of Bürger. One other translation of the noble poem of the BRAVE MAN, and a few minor pieces, we are tempted to insert here, devoutly wishing that the popular and diversified nature of this periodical allowed greater scope for a German anthology.

THE SONG OF THE BRAVE MAN.

Hark ! how the songs for the brave man roll,
 Like organ tone and clashing bell !
 He who can boast a lofty soul—
 No gold, but song his praise shall tell.
 Oh, thanks to God, that I can raise,
 To the BRAVE MAN, a song of praise !
 The thaw-wind from the Levant came ;
 Moist over Italy it blew ;
 Like frightened sheep before the wolf,
 Before its breath the storm-clouds flew.
 It swept o'er the field, it crashed through the wood ;
 The ice broke up, down poured the flood.
 The snows dissolved in lofty hills,
 The din of thousand waters rose ;
 Wild o'er the meadows sweep the rills,
 And the great river swells and flows ;
 The waves rose high, and fierce, and strong,
 Hurrying great rocks of ice along.
 High raised on pillared arches stood,
 From massy blocks of stone upraised,
 A bridge that proudly spanned the flood ;
 And in the midst a hut was placed :
 There dwelt the tollman, with child and wife—
 O tollman, tollman, fly for thy life !
 Hark ! wild and high the tumult rings ;
 Around that house the waters rave ;—
 Quickly upon the roof he springs,
 One look into the waste he gave.
 “O merciful heaven, have mercy on me !
 I am lost, ever lost, without succour from thee !”
 The massy fabric falls pell-mell,
 At one end and the other ;
 The pillars, crashing, bursting, fell,
 First one and then another.
 “Oh, horror, the centre is almost riven !
 Mercy ! have mercy, most merciful heaven !”
 High on the distant bank there stands
 A crowd of gazers, great and small,
 And each one weeps and wrings his hands ;
 But no one to save among them all.
 The trembling tollman, his wife and child—
 They cry for help through the storm-wind wild.
 Soundest thou, O thou song of the brave,
 Like organ peal and clashing bell ?
 Then warn the bold one who can save.
 Say on, my song—O tell ! O tell !
 Now near the hut rises the raving river ;
 Oh, come now, thou brave one—come now or never !

A Graf* in haste comes galloping by—
 A noble Graf on stately steed.
 What holds he in his hand so high ?
 A purse—a noble meed.
 “Two hundred pistoles I promise to him
 Who saves these poor souls from the waters so grim.”

Was it the Graf who thus could save ?
 Say on, my noble song—say on !
 By the highest God, the Graf was brave !
 But yet I know a braver One.
 O brave man, brave man, where art thou ?
 The danger is most fearful now.

And ever higher rose the flood,
 And ever louder howled the gale,
 And ever deeper sunk their mood—
 O saviour, saviour, wilt thou fail ?
 The pillars are broken and ruined all,
 And now the arches begin to fall.

Hallo ! hallo ! come quickly, come !
 The noble held the purse on high ;
 And each one heard, but all were dumb—
 Though thousands heard, no one came nigh.
 The tollman, in vain, with his wife and child—
 They call for help through the storm-wind wild.

A simple peasant, see, appears,
 And on his travelling staff draws nigh ;
 Although his dress is mean and poor,
 His form is dignified and high.
 He heard the Graf, and his promises too ;
 One look on the ravening flood he threw ;

And boldly, in God's name, he sprung
 Into the nearest fisher's bark,
 And gallantly, through wave and storm,
 The saviour reached his mark ;—
 But, alas ! the boat was all too small
 To be the preserver of them all.

Three times, through storm and eddying waves,
 He urged that fragile bark so small,
 And three times came he safely back—
 And he has saved them all !
 And scarce had he safely reached the shore,
 When the last fragment fell with a sullen roar.

Who is, who is this valiant man ?
 Onward, my song, atill onward flow.
 The peasant ventured his life, 'tis true,
 But was it for gold he ventured it so ?
 If the Graf had not offered that purse so good,
 The peasant perhaps had not risked his blood.

“Here,” said the Graf, “my valiant friend,
 Thou hast earned thy meed—thou hast reached
 the goal !”

Now, say, was that not bravely meant ?
 By Heaven, the Graf had a lofty soul !
 But higher and holier beat, I ween,
 The heart 'neath that peasant's cloak so mean.

“My life for lucre may not be sold ;
 I have little, 'tis true, yet enough of food ;
 Give to the poor tollman your gold,
 For he has lost all earthly good.”
 These words he said in a serious tone,
 Then quietly went on his way alone.

High let the song of the Brave Man roll,
 Like organ peal and clashing bell !
 He who can boast such a noble soul—
 No gold, but song, his praise shall tell.
 Thanks, thanks to God, that I can raise
 To the Brave Man my song of praise !

In a moment of quiet, all-sufficing joy, Bürger seems to have written the following song, so manifest an outpouring of an exuberantly happy heart. It was probably written in a fine day of

* Schiller. *Kleine Schriften.*

* A title of nobility—earl or count.

summer ; and the poet, rejoicing in the present beauty of nature, turned, with a wayward luxury, to a scene of the very opposite kind.

A WINTER SONG.

Cold winter's hand now strips the trees,
The bare boughs tremble in the breeze ;
And from the meads hath ta'en away
Their verdant garniture of May ;
And flowrets red, and white, and blue,
Are buried under ice and snow.

And yet, fair flowers, ye need not hope
For a song of death from me—
I know a face so beautiful,
That's fairer far than ye :
Her eyes are of the heaven's own blue,
Her brow so bright,
As marble white,
And, oh ! her lips are rosy too !

The thrush may warble in the vale,
And in the wood the nightingale,
If I my Mary's voice may hear,
So pure, so soft, so silvery clear !
Her breath is like those airs of spring
That hyacinthine odours bring.

And, when I touch her ruby lips,
Oh, what ecstatic bliss !
No cherry, nor no strawberry,
Is sweeter than her kiss.
O May, why long I so for thee ?—
The spring-time lives in her for me.

The subjoined lines were composed soon after the death of his second wife—that Mary, so long and so fatally beloved, whose history was given in our last number.

WHAT I HAVE LOST.

O blest reward, for which I long have striven,
With constancy, through years' revolving flight ;
In sun and storm, nor resting day or night,
Even as the pilot struggles toward the haven !

O golden jewel, what delights ye gave !
O bowl of bliss, all fit for lips divine,
Pilled to o'erflowing with celestial wine—
Alas ! how soon thou'st vanished in the grave !

O nectar cup, thou wast enough to me,
To sweeten a whole life of wo,
Although through endless ages it should flow !
But, since thou went'st away—ah, wo is me !—
Each passing day brings bitterness to me—
No joy but in the hour of death for me.

There are some men to whom genius, perverted in its uses, becomes a curse rather than a blessing—and Bürger was one of those. What a deep feeling of hopelessness and friendlessness is breathed through the following poem !

SIGHS OF AN UNLOVED ONE.

Love is each living creature's lot—
The inheritance they have from Thee ;
O Nature, why am I forgot ?
Mother, thou hast neglected me !

Lives there a creature on the land,
In air, or in the deep, deep sea,
Shut out from love's most holy band ?
No—all are loved but me.

Even in the field, the mead, and grove,
The bush is sheltered by the tree ;
The very weeds and moss, they love :—
There is no love for me.

We might multiply such specimens without end. This is chosen rather as an indication of the state of feeling in which the darling poet of the people of Germany closed his disastrous pilgrimage, than for any distinguishing poetical quality that it possesses.

TO MY HEART.

Long, long, in howling wind and driving storm,
My feet have wandered through this world below ;
But now my pilgrimage must soon be o'er,
And with the weary I will rest from wo.

Hollow the cheeks which once were bright and strong ;
And all the flowers of life are pale and sere :
Heart, I must ask, What is't retains thee here,
In all thy strength and fulness, yet so long ?

In spite of Time's compelling despot power,
Thou beatest yet as in the days of spring,
Yet striving with the nightingale to sing ;
But, ah ! Aurora listens sad and cold,
To all the lips of Tithon now can say—
I would, my heart, that thou too wert grown old !