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LENORE.

BY GOTTFRIED A. BÜRGER.

(Translated by Elizabeth Craigmyle.)

[GOTTFRIED AUGUST BÜRGER, a noted German lyric poet, was born in Mollerswende, in Prussian Saxony, in 1748, and studied theology at Halle, and law at Göttingen. In the latter place he led a life of dissipation, and would have remained unknown if his intimacy with Voss, the two Stolbergs, and other poets, had not inspired him with an earnest ambition to excel. In 1773 appeared his poem "Lenore," imitated by Scott as "William and Helen," which virtually created the school of German ballad poetry; and the ballads "The Song of the Brave Man," "The Emperor and the Abbot," and "The Wild Huntsman" (translated by Scott) were also well received. Bürger was thrice unhappily married, and died in poverty at Göttingen, June 8, 1794.]

LENORE she woke at morning red,
 (O, but her dreams were eerie!)
 "Love William, art thou untrue or dead?
 For thy coming I grow weary."
 He was with old King Frederick's powers
 Through the fight at Prague in its bloody hours,
 No message came to tell
 What chance to him befell.

The Empress and the King at last
 Decree the strife surcease.
 Their warlike thoughts away they cast,
 And made the longed-for peace.

And either army did homeward come
 With clang of trumpet and kettledrum,
 With joyful sound of singing,
 And green boughs round them clinging.

And far and wide, and wide and far,
 Through every path and street,
 Folk came to hail them from the war,
 With shouts of joy to greet.
 "Thank God!" the wives and children cried,
 "Welcome!" from many a maiden bride.
 Only Lenore did miss
 Her lover's clasp and kiss.

In every face her love she sought,
 Vain was her anxious tasking,
 For there was none could tell her aught,
 Useless was all her asking.
 The soldiers passed and left her there,
 And then she tore her raven hair,
 Cast herself on the ground,
 In passionate sorrow drowned.

The mother ran to clasp her child :—
 "God shield us all from harms!
 Dear one, what is this grief so wild?"
 And clasped her in her arms.
 "O mother! mother! unending woe!
 This world and the next to rack may go.
 The mercy of God is dead!
 Woe, woe is me!" she said.

"Help, God, our Lord! Look down on us!
 Child, say 'Thy will be done.'
 His will is best, though it be thus,—
 Pity us, Holy Son!"
 "O mother, mother! Words and wind!
 God robbed me. He is cruel and blind.
 What use of all my praying?
 Now,—no more need of saying."

"Have pity, Lord! Thy children know
 Thy help in their distress;
 The blessed Sacrament shall grow
 A thing to heal and bless."

“O mother, I feel this grief of mine
 Past help of blessèd bread and wine.
 No sacrament will give
 Dead men the power to live.”

“My child, it may be thy false true love
 In a far-off distant land,
 Has cast off his faith like an easy glove,
 And given another his hand.
 Whistle him lightly down the wind,
 His fault will he rue, his loss will he find.
 The coward will regret his lie,
 In the hour when he comes to die.”

“O mother, mother, ‘Lost’ is ‘lost.’
 ‘Forlorn’ is e’en ‘forlorn.’
 I have bought Death at a mighty cost,
 O, had I ne’er been born!
 The light of life is quenched, I know,
 Like a torch blown out it is even so,
 And God in heaven is dead.
 Woe, woe upon my head.”

“Enter not into judgment, Lord,
 Her heart and brain are dazed,
 Heavy on her is laid thy sword,
 Through sorrow she is crazed.
 Forget thine earthly love’s distress;
 Think upon Heaven’s blessedness,
 So that thou shalt not miss
 The Heavenly Bridegroom’s kiss.”

“O mother! what is dreary heaven?
 O mother, what is hell?
 With him, with him is all my heaven,
 Without him, *that* is hell.
 To lights of heaven and earth am I blind;
 They are quenched like torches in the wind.
 Blessed? — Without my love,
 Not here, nor in heaven above.”

So raged the madness of despair,
 Like fire in heart and brain.
 At God’s cruel will she hurled in air
 Wild curses half-insane.

She beat her bosom, she wrung her hands,
Till the sunshine shone on other lands,
Till in the evening sky
Gold stars shone silently.

And hark! a sound of horse's feet
The eerie night wind bore.
The rider sprang from saddle seat
With spur clash at her door.
Hark, at the gate doth the stranger ring;
And the bell it clashes its kling-ling-ling.
Softly he called her name,
These were the words that came:—

“Rise up, rise up, mine own sweetheart!
Are you sleeping, my child, or waking?
Is it laughter or weeping that is thy part,
Is it holding or forsaking?”
“Thou, Wilhelm,—thou,—and night so late?
To wake and weep hath been my fate,
Such sorrow was betiding:
Whence com'st thou hither riding?”

“We saddled our horses at midnight deep,
From Böhmen rode I hither,
I come for my bride when the world's asleep,
But I shall be riding with her.”
“Nay, Wilhelm, come within the house;
The wind in the hawthorn holds carouse,
The clasp of my snow-white arm
Shall keep my beloved warm.”

“Let the wind set the hawthorn boughs aswing,
And the storm sprites rave and harry!
The stallion stamps, spur irons ring,
I may not longer tarry.
Come, kilt thy kirtle, behind me spring,
A hundred miles brook no faltering,
For far away is spread
My sweetheart's bridal bed.”

“Is there a hundred miles between
Us and our bridal bed?
Eleven has struck on the clock, I ween,
And dawn will soon shine red.”

“Nay, look, my love, at the full moon’s face:
 We and the dead folk ride apace,
 Ere day with darkness meets
 You shall press your bridal sheets.”

“Now where, dear love, is the bride chambère,
 And when may we hope to win it?”
 “Six planks and two small boards are there,
 It is cool and still within it.”
 “Is there room for me?” “Of a suretie.
 Come, kilt thy kirtle and ride with me,
 For we the guests are wronging,
 And the bride bed faints with longing.”

She kilted her kirtle and sprang behind
 On the steed as black as night,
 And round the rider’s waist she twined
 Her arms so soft and white.
 Into the night away they go
 Like a bolt that’s launched from a steel crossbow.
 At every horse hoof’s dint
 Fire flashes from the flint.

They ride — they ride — on either hand
 Too fast to see or know them,
 Fly hedges, wastes, and pasture land,
 The bridges thunder below them.
 “Dost fear, my love? The moon shines bright.
 Hurrah! the Dead ride fast by night. —
 Dost fear, my love, the Dead?”
 “Nay, yet let be the Dead!”

The black, black ravens are croaking there,
 The mass they sing and say,
 The dirge swells out on the midnight air,
 “Let us carry the corpse to the clay.”
 The funeral chant the riders hear,
 There are mourners bearing coffin and bier.
 The dirge the echoes woke
 Like the frogs in dreary croak.

“Ye may bury the corpse at midnight drear,
 With dirge and sound of weeping:
 I ride through the dark with my sweetheart dear
 To a night of happy sleeping.

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Come hither, O sexton, O choir, come near
 And sing the bride song sweet to hear,
 Come priest, and speak the blessing
 Ere we our couch are pressing."

The phantom show it melts like snows ;
 As if to grant his praying,
 An eldritch sound of laughter rose,
 But their course knew no delaying.
 He never checks his horse's rein,
 And through the night they ride amain ;
 The flashing fire flaught flies,
 The sparks from the horse hoofs rise.

How flew to right, how flew to left,
 The hills, the trees, the sedges !
 How flew to left, to right, to left,
 Townlets and towns and hedges !
 "Dost fear, my love ? The moon shines bright.
 Hurrah ! the Dead ride fast by night. —
 Dost fear, my love, the Dead ?"
 "Ah, let them rest, the Dead."

See there, see there, on the scaffold's height,
 Around the ax and wheel,
 A ghostly crew in the moon's gray light
 Are dancing a ghastly reel.
 "Ha, ha, ye foot it lustily,
 Come hither, old friends, and follow me.
 To-dance shall be your lot
 While I loose her girdle knot."

And the gallows' crew they rushed behind
 On the black steed's fiery traces,
 As the leaves that whirl in the eddying wind,
 Or dust the hurricane chases.
 He never checks his horse's rein,
 And through the night they ride amain ;
 The flashing fire flaught flies,
 The sparks from the horse hoofs rise.

On, on, they race by the moon's pale light,
 All things seem flying fast,
 The heaven, the stars, the earth, the night,
 In one wild dream flash past.

“Dost fear, my love? The moon shines bright.
Hurrah! The Dead ride fast by night. —
Dost fear, my love, the Dead?”
“Alas, let be the Dead.”

“Soon will the cock’s shrill trumpet blare,
The sand will soon be run;
O steed! I scent the morning air;
Press on, brave steed, press on.
We have won to our goal through rain and mire,
The bride bed shivers with sweet desire,
And dead folk ride apace. —
We have reached the trysting place.”

To a portal latticed with iron grate
He galloped with loosened rein,
And lightly he struck on that grewsome gate —
Burst bolt and bar in twain!
Its iron jaws are split in sunder,
Over the graves the horse hoofs thunder,
And shadowy gravestones loom
I’ the moonlit churchyard gloom.

In a second’s space came a wonder strange,
A hideous thing to tell.
The rider’s face knew a ghastly change,
The flesh from the white bones fell.
A featureless skull glares out on her,
No hair to wave, and no lips to stir,
She is clasped by a skeleton!
Still the weird ride goes on.

The coal-black stallion snorts and rears,
Its hoofs dash sparks of fire,
Beneath the riders it disappears,
They have won to their desire.
Wild shrieks on the night wind come and go,
Wild laughs rise up from the graves below.
The maiden’s heart at strife,
Struggled ’twixt death and life.

Ill spirits ring them in crazy dance,
And the dance grows ever dafter;
They point at her in the moon’s gray glance,
And howl with eldritch laughter: —

THE WILD HUNTSMAN.

“Though thy heart be broken beneath his rod,
 Rebel not. God in heaven is God.
 Thou art ours for eternity. —
 His grace with thy poor soul be!”



THE WILD HUNTSMAN.

IMITATED FROM BÜRGER BY SIR WALTER SCOTT.

[For biographical sketch, see page 107.]

THE Wildgrave winds his bugle horn,
 To horse, to horse! halloo, halloo!
 His fiery courser snuffs the morn,
 And thronging serfs their lord pursue.

The eager pack, from couples freed,
 Dash through the brush, the brier, the brake:
 While answering hound, and horn, and steed,
 The mountain echoes startling wake.

The beams of God's own hallowed day
 Had painted yonder spire with gold,
 And, calling sinful man to pray,
 Loud, long, and deep the bell had tolled:

But still the Wildgrave onward rides;
Halloo, halloo! and, hark again!
 When spurring from opposing sides,
 Two Stranger Horsemen join the train.

Who was each Stranger, left and right,
 Well may I guess, but dare not tell;
 The right-hand sceed was silver white,
 The left, the swarthy hue of hell.

The right-hand Horseman young and fair,
 His smile was like the morn of May:
 The left, from eye of tawny glare,
 Shot midnight lightning's lurid ray.

Wild Huntsman
Photogravure from an old etching



He waved his huntsman's cap on high,
 Cried - Welcome, welcome, noble lord!
 What sport can earth, or sea, or sky,
 To match the princely chase, afford?"

- Cease thy loud bugle's clanging knell,"
 Cried the fair youth, with silver voice;
 - And for devotion's choral swell
 Exchange the rude unhallowed noise.

- To-day the ill-omened chase forbear,
 You'll feel yet summons to the fane;
 To-day the Warning Spirit hear,
 To-morrow thou mayst mourn in vain." —

- Away, and sweep the glades along!"
 The Sable Hunter hoarse replied;
 - To murmuring monks leave matin song,
 And bells, and books, and mysteries."

The Willgrave spurred his ardent steed,
 And leaping forward with a bound,
 - Was for thy dewy priest-like rede,
 Would leave the *joya* horn and hound?

- Hence, if our manly sport offend!
 With prose thou'lt go chant and pray: -
 Well hast thou spoken, my dark-browed friend;
 Hurra, hurra! and hark away!"

The Willgrave spurred his courser light,
 O'er moss and mead, o'er bolt and hill;
 And on the left and on the right
 Each stranger Huntsman followed still.

Up a steep, from yonder valley, then,
 A easy way to the mountain snow
 And round they took the Willgrave's horn,
 - Hurra, forward, forward! hurra, hurra!"

A *hedge* with a low fence the way;
 He gave the *hedge* a hearty below
 In a voice that was in the wind,
 Hurra, "Forward, forward!" on the way



He waved his huntsman's cap on high,
 Cried, "Welcome, welcome, noble lord!
 What sport can earth, or sea, or sky,
 To match the princely chase, afford?"

"Cease thy loud bugle's clanging knell,"
 Cried the fair youth, with silver voice;
 "And for devotion's choral swell
 Exchange the rude unhallowed noise.

"To-day the ill-omened chase forbear,
 Yon bell yet summons to the fane;
 To-day the Warning Spirit hear,
 To-morrow thou mayst mourn in vain." —

"Away, and sweep the glades along!"
 The Sable Hunter hoarse replies;
 "To muttering monks leave matin song,
 And bells, and books, and mysteries."

The Wildgrave spurred his ardent steed,
 And, launching forward with a bound,
 "Who for thy drowsy priestlike rede,
 Would leave the jovial horn and hound?"

"Hence, if our manly sport offend!
 With pious fools go chant and pray: —
 Well hast thou spoke, my dark-browed friend;
Halloo, halloo! and hark away!"

The Wildgrave spurred his courser light,
 O'er moss and moor, o'er holt and hill;
 And on the left and on the right
 Each Stranger Horseman followed still.

Upsprings, from yonder tangled thorn,
 A stag more white than mountain snow
 And louder rung the Wildgrave's horn,
 "*Hark forward, forward! holla, ho!*"

A heedless wretch has crossed the way;
 He gasps the thundering hoofs below:
 But, live who can, or die who may,
 Still, "*Forward, forward!*" on they go.

See, where yon simple fences meet,
 A field with Autumn's blessings crowned;
 See, prostrate at the Wildgrave's feet,
 A husbandman with toil embrowned:

"O mercy, mercy, noble lord!
 Spare the poor's pittance," was his cry,
 "Earned by the sweat these brows have poured,
 In scorching hour of fierce July." —

Earnest the right-hand Stranger pleads,
 The left still cheering to the prey;
 The impetuous Earl no warning heeds,
 But furious holds the onward way.

"Away, thou hound! so basely born,
 Or dread the scourge's echoing blow!" —
 Then loudly rung his bugle horn,
 "*Hark forward, forward, holla, ho!*"

So said, so done: — A single bound
 Clears the poor laborer's humble pale;
 Wild follows man, and horse, and hound,
 Like dark December's stormy gale.

And man and horse, and hound and horn,
 Destructive sweep the field along;
 While, joying o'er the wasted corn,
 Fell Famine marks the maddening throng.

Again uproused, the timorous prey
 Scours moss and moor, and holt and hill;
 Hard run, he feels his strength decay,
 And trusts for life his simple skill.

Too dangerous solitude appeared;
 He seeks the shelter of the crowd;
 Amid the flock's domestic herd
 His harmless head he hopes to shroud.

O'er moss and moor, and holt and hill,
 His track the steady bloodhounds trace;
 O'er moss and moor, unwearied still,
 The furious Earl pursues the chase.



Full lowly did the herdsman fall ; —
 “ O spare, thou noble Baron, spare
 These herds, a widow’s little all ;
 These flocks, an orphan’s fleecy care ! ” —

Earnest the right-hand Stranger pleads,
 The left still cheering to the prey ;
 The Earl nor prayer nor pity heeds,
 But furious keeps the onward way.

“ Unmannered dog ! To stop my sport,
 Vain were thy cant and beggar whine,
 Though human spirits, of thy sort,
 Were tenants of these carrion kine ! ”

Again he winds his bugle horn,
 “ *Hark forward, forward, holla, ho !* ” —
 And through the herd in ruthless scorn,
 He cheers his furious hounds to go.

In heaps the throttled victims fall ;
 Down sinks their mangled herdsman near :
 The murderous cries the stag appall, —
 Again he starts, new-nerved by fear.

With blood besmeared, and white with foam,
 While big the tears of anguish pour,
 He seeks, amid the forest’s gloom,
 The humble hermit’s hallowed bower.

But man and horse, and horn and hound,
 Fast rattling on his traces go ;
 The sacred chapel rung around
 With, “ *Hark away ! and holla, ho !* ”

All mild, amid the rout profane,
 The holy hermit poured his prayer :
 “ Forbear with blood God’s house to stain ;
 Revere His altar, and forbear ! ”

“ The meanest brute has rights to plead,
 Which, wronged by cruelty, or pride,
 Draw vengeance on the ruthless head : —
 Be warned at length, and turn aside. ”

Still the Fair Horseman anxious pleads;
 The Black, wild whooping, points the prey: —
 Alas! the Earl no warning heeds,
 But frantic keeps the forward way.

“Holy or not, or right or wrong,
 Thy altar, and its rites, I spurn;
 Not sainted martyrs’ sacred song,
 Nor God Himself, shall make me turn!”

He spurs his horse, he winds his horn,
 “*Hark forward, forward, holla, ho!*” —
 But off, on whirlwind’s pinions borne,
 The stag, the hut, the hermit, go.

And horse and man, and horn and hound,
 And clamor of the chase, was gone;
 For hoofs, and howls, and bugle sound,
 A deadly silence reigned alone.

Wild gazed the affrighted Earl around;
 He strove in vain to wake his horn,
 In vain to call; for not a sound
 Could from his anxious lips be borne.

He listens for his trusty hounds;
 No distant baying reached his ears:
 His courser, rooted to the ground,
 The quickening spur unmindful bears.

Still dark and darker frown the shades,
 Dark as the darkness of the grave;
 And not a sound the still invades,
 Save what a distant torrent gave.

High o’er the sinner’s humbled head
 At length the solemn silence broke;
 And, from a cloud of swarthy red,
 The awful voice of thunder spoke: —

“Oppressor of creation fair!
 Apostate Spirits’ hardened tool!
 Scorner of God! Scourge of the poor!
 The measure of thy cup is full.

“Be chased forever through the wood ;
Forever roam the affrighted wild ;
And let thy fate instruct the proud,
God’s meanest creature is His child.”

’Twas hushed. — One flash of somber glare
With yellow tinged the forests brown ;
Uprose the Wildgrave’s bristling hair,
And horror chilled each nerve and bone.

Cold poured the sweat in freezing rill ;
A rising wind began to sing ;
And louder, louder, louder still,
Brought storm and tempest on its wing.

Earth heard the call ; — her entrails rend ;
From yawning rifts, with many a yell,
Mixed with sulphureous flames, ascend
The misbegotten dogs of hell.

What ghastly Huntsman next arose,
Well may I guess, but dare not tell ;
His eye like midnight lightning glows,
His steed the swarthy hue of hell.

The Wildgrave flies o’er bush and thorn,
With many a shriek of helpless woe ;
Behind him hound, and horse, and horn,
And, “*Hark away, and holla, ho !*”

With wild despair’s reverted eye,
Close, close behind he marks the throng,
With bloody fangs and eager cry ;
In frantic fear he scours along. —

Still, still shall last the dreadful chase,
Till time itself shall have an end ;
By day they scour earth’s caverned space,
At midnight’s witching hour, ascend.

This is the horn, and hound, and horse,
That oft the ’lated peasant hears ;
Appalled, he signs the frequent cross,
When the wild din invades his ears.

BOB ACRES' DUEL.

The wakeful priest oft drops a tear
For human pride, for human woe,
When at his midnight mass he hears
The infernal cry of "*Holla, ho!*"



BOB ACRES' DUEL.