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LEONORA. Translated by Julia M. Cameron.
With illustrations by D. MacLise, R.A. En-
graved by John Thompson. London: Longman
and Co.

Few of the many poems which have been adopted among our current literature from the rich stores of Germany have become so generally familiar as Burger's ballad of Leonora. It is one of those powerful productions which fascinate by their very horror, and which make us at once admire and tremble. Not that the emotion of horror is the ultimate idea, for in this case the poem would be unworthy of its high popularity; it is merely used with terrible effect as an instrument in working out a higher end. The author, by the true inspiration of genius, raises a pure and beautiful, and even a soothing moral, out of materials which, when they are as daringly employed by meaner hands, are apt to excite only disgust and repulsion.

Never had a poetic gem a more brilliant setting than has Leonora in the edition before us. It is an admirable specimen of the rich but tasteful style of book-decoration which is rising up among us, and which is one of the many evidences of our increasing love of refinement and elegant luxury. The binding is a rich arabesque pattern in black and crimson and gold, blending and intertwining, and producing a fine effect of subdued splendour. The poem is excellently printed in old English letter, with ornamental borders, and illustrations on wood from designs by MacLise. The illustrations are six in number, and are as beautiful and terrible as the ballad they adorn. Mr MacLise's pencil is cold and remorseless as destiny itself, and he hurries us on with unrelenting force from the couch where Leonora wakes from an anxious love-dream to the dreadful bridal-bed to which she was carried by her phantom-lover. All the illustrations are thoroughly imbued with the moral of the poem. Thus, in that which represents the turning point of the story—when Leonora madly rejects the consolations suggested by her mother, the anxious yet calm and trustful face of the mother, is finely contrasted with the grief-abandoned air and tearful countenance of her distracted daughter. Of their artistic excellence it is superfluous to speak.

In the matter of translation, Miss Cameron, in a modest and sensible preface, tells us that "the sole merit of her version (if it have any) must consist in accurately and vividly representing the German poem." She has not attempted to give an Anglicised version, but "endeavoured not only to exhibit the spirit, but to follow, where it was possible, the very words of Burger; and, in consequence of the common origin of the two languages, this can be frequently done." She refers to the celebrated versions of the ballad by Taylor and Scott, as being rather paraphrases than translations. "Masters of their own art, they could not be tied down to copy a portrait which another master had painted—they could not strike their lyres to sing without variation the song of a brother bard." The task of a simple copyist is that which Miss Cameron has imposed upon herself, and the result is, we think, highly creditable and satisfactory. The ballad loses none of its impressiveness or power by the clearness and simplicity of the English in which it has been clothed.

As a specimen of the style of translation, we extract the account of the mysterious night arrival of the dreadful bridegroom:—

The sun hath set with golden light,
The stars illumine the skies;
All Nature's sunk in sweet repose,
Leonora only sighs.

For her there is no blessed rest,
She cannot "kiss the rod;"
But wrings her hands, and beats her breast,
And raves against her God.

When hark! a sound, a tramp, tramp, tramp,
A sound from horse's hoof;
A knight dismounts, with jingling spur,
And stands beneath the roof.

Now, kling, kling, kling, the door bells ring;
She, anxious, bends to hear
The well-loved voice—yes, that it is
Which sounds upon her ear.

"Holla, my love! Leonora, rise!
Art watching, or art sleeping?
Art loving me with constant soul?
Art glad, my love, or weeping?"

"My William, thou! and riding too!
From whence so late by night!
Since dawn I've watched, and weiled, and wept;
My poor heart's broken quite."

"From far Bohemia's land I come,
I only ride by night;
And with thee thither must return
Ere dawn of morning light."

"Oh! William, first come in; come close:
Round thee my arms I'll fold;
Through hawthorn here the whistling wind
Come close, heart's love, thou'rt cold."

"Heed not the whistling wind; my steed
Doth paw, his mane doth bristle:
I must not here delay, my child;
Let whistle wind, let whistle."

Up, up, dress, spring behind me, mount,
Our course be quickly sped;
Ere morn a hundred miles we ride,
To reach the bridal bed."

"Oh! William, say not so; just hark!
The clock now chimes eleven;
A hundred miles we cannot go,
So cold, so dark the heaven."

"See here! see here! the moon shines clear,
We and the dead ride fast;
I promise thee to bridal bed
To bring ere night hath past."

"Say on; the bridal bed where is't?
And where thy nuptial hall?"
"Six boards and two short planks our bed,
Far, far, still, cool, and small."

"Hast room for me?" "For thee and me;
Come, dress, and mount, and ride;
The nuptial guests impatient wait,
The door stands open wide."

The loving Leonora starts,
She springs upon his steed,
Close round him clasps her lily hands,
And forward on they speed.