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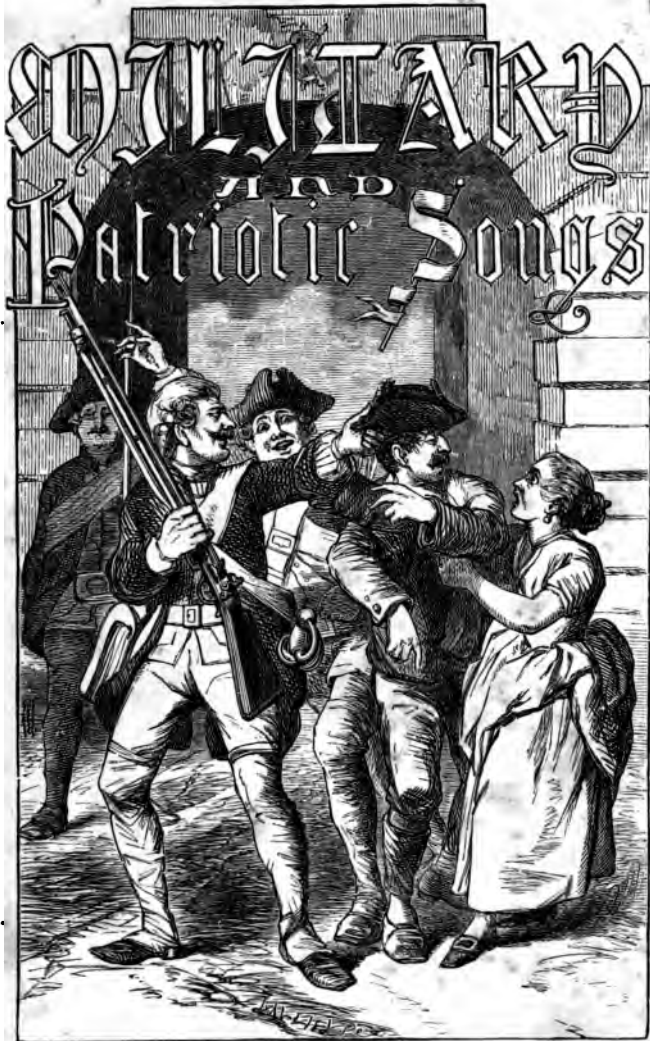
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Frontispiece.—Military and Patriotic Songs.

The
Book of German Songs :

from

The Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century.



TRANSLATED AND EDITED

BY

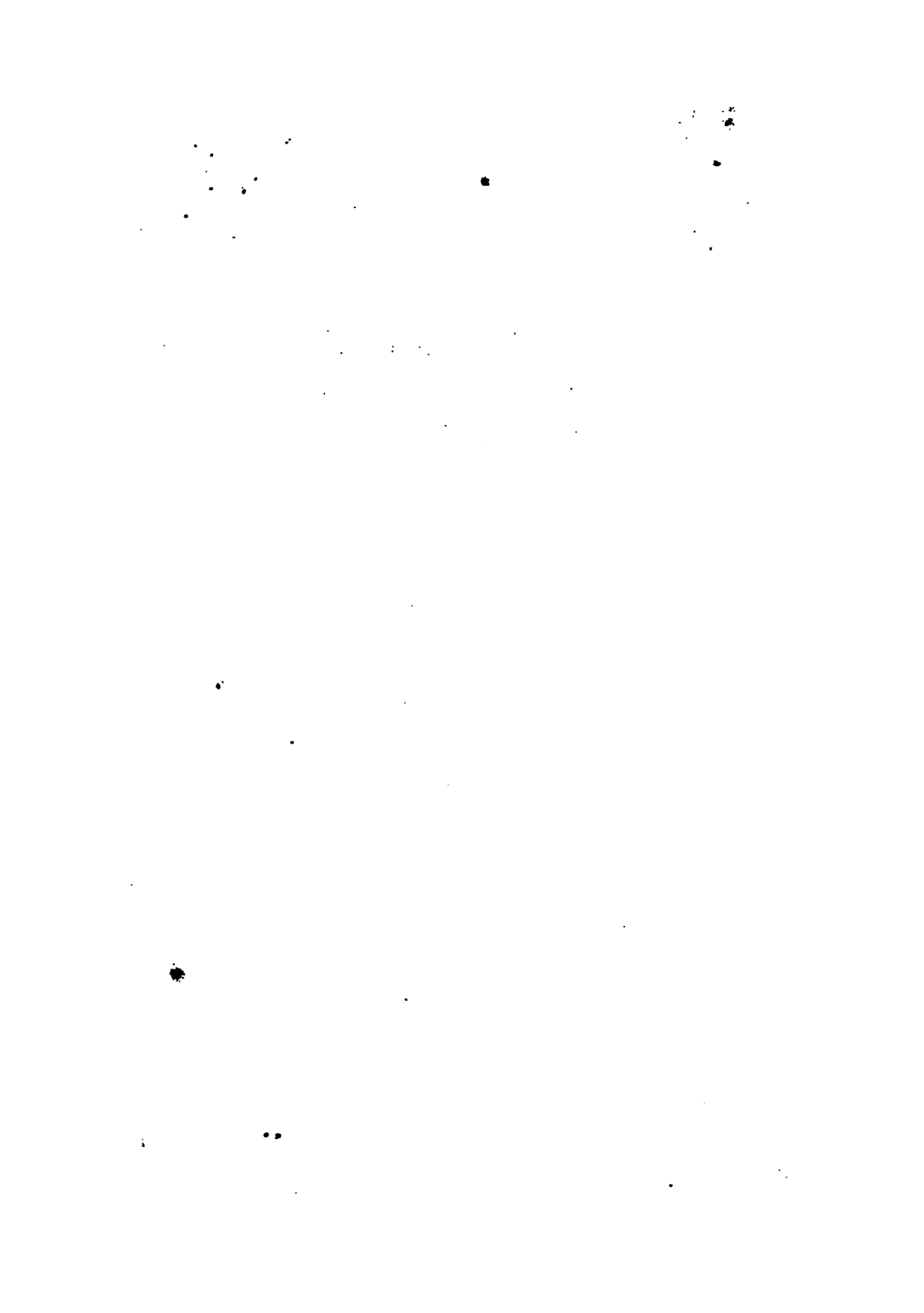
H. W. DULCKEN.

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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

COMPARED with the bulky collections of "Alte und Neue Lieder," which have appeared from time to time in Germany, this little volume must necessarily seem a crude and fragmentary representative of German Song Literature. It does not, indeed, aspire to completeness. The subject is far too ample to be exhausted within the compass of a few hundred pages; for there is scarcely a department of German song writing, whether it be that of popular songs (*Volkslieder*), sacred and moral songs (*Geistliche Lieder*), or students' songs (*Studenten- und Burschenlieder*), which would not present sufficient material for a book of goodly size;—and however carefully a volume like the present one may be prepared, much that is essential must necessarily be omitted from mere lack of space.

With this preliminary apology to all who honour these English versions of German songs with a perusal,

the translator has still a word of explanation for those of his readers who may be surprised at the omission of lyrics of first-rate merit, while manifestly inferior productions have been given. The purpose for which this book has been compiled is to give, in an English garb, songs characteristic of the nation and period from which they emanated, rather than to point out the individual excellencies of particular authors. A song, worthless in itself, may become important from the associations connected with it, or the circumstances to which it owed its origin, and may, as *representative* of a particular school of writing, possess a value to which, individually considered, it could lay no claim. Few readers, for instance, would be inclined to attribute any high literary merit to the Jacobite song of "Johnnie Cope;" and fewer still would consider "La Carmagnole" as anything but a sanguinary outburst of revolutionary licentiousness. Yet no series of Scottish songs would be complete without the one, and no judicious collection of French lyrics would be justified in omitting the other. This is the reason why, in the course of the present volume, such songs as "*Fredericus Rex*," "*Gallant Schill*," Gleim's "*Song of Victory*," and others of the same stamp, have usurped the places of the finished productions of more gifted authors. Their popu-

larity in Germany was considered in itself a sufficient warrant for their translation into English.

It has been in every case the translator's endeavour to give a correct rendering of the meaning and spirit of the original songs, even to the sacrificing of the doubtful advantage of literal accuracy. The metre of the German song has, however, in almost every instance been retained, and the original, in many cases, appended to the English version, as the student may desire to compare the translation offered to him, with the song as written by the German author.

In conclusion, the translator begs to assure his readers that in one respect, at least, this collection is not open to censure. No song has been admitted if it contained a word or a sentiment which would render the book ineligible for admission into the drawing-room or the school.

H. W. D.



CONTENTS.

	PAGE
A Battle Prayer	<i>Th. Körner</i> 58
A Curious History	<i>Reinick</i> 115
After the Harvest	<i>Weisse</i> 250
A Lover's Song . . . . .	. . . . . 128
A Tragical Story	<i>Chamisso</i> 293
A Wish . . . . .	. . . . . 184
Ballad	<i>Heine</i> 177
Ballad	<i>E. M. Arndt</i> 157
Barbarossa	<i>F. Rückert</i> 154
Before the Doors	<i>F. Rückert</i> 282
Beware of the Rhine	<i>Simrock</i> 170
Blucher	<i>E. M. Arndt</i> 66
Christmas Carol for Children	<i>M. Luther</i> 264
Comfort at Parting	<i>Kotzebue</i> 216
Consolation	<i>Eichendorff</i> 283
Consolation, Song of	<i>Neumark</i> 274
Count Eberhard the Weeper, of Wur- } temberg	<i>Schiller</i> 39
Cradle Song . . . . .	. . . . . 118
Dame Nightingale . . . . .	. . . . . 129
Drinking Song	<i>E. W. C. Starke</i> 206
Drinking Song in May	<i>Hölty</i> 298
Drinking Song	<i>G. A. v. Halem</i> 180
Emperor Kläs . . . . .	. . . . . 310
Entertainment	<i>L. Uhland</i> 242
Ergo Bibamus . . . . .	. . . . . 186
Eternity . . . . .	. . . . . 285
Evening in Spring . . . . .	. . . . . 252
Evening Song	<i>F. Rückert</i> 149

	PAGE
Faith	270
False Blue <i>Reinick</i>	172
Farewell Song of a Journeyman	94
Farewell to the Old Year <i>Osiander</i>	175
Fiducit	199
Fredericus Rex <i>Willibald Alexis</i>	49
Gallant Schill <i>Arndt</i>	82
Gaudeamus	196
German Drink and German Truth	210
Grave Song <i>Mahlmann</i>	271
Have-I and Had-I <i>A. F. E. Langbein</i>	112
Hope <i>Schiller</i>	278
How canst thou sleep in quiet? <i>H. Heine</i>	164
Hunter's Song	230
Hussar's Song	48
Hymn <i>M. Luther</i>	260
If they knew it, little Flowerets <i>H. Heine</i>	171
It is all one	116
Life still enjoy, Friends <i>Usteri</i>	119
Lore-Ley <i>H. Heine</i>	163
Men and Knaves <i>F. Körner</i>	68
Morning Song in Spring <i>W. G. Becker</i>	237
My True-love is pretty	97
Nature and Man <i>G. A. Kinkel</i>	255
Npr Luck nor Star	124
Not only for this Nether World <i>C. L. G. Meister</i>	279
Old Bacchus <i>Bürger</i>	187
Parting	110
Patriotic Song <i>E. M. Arndt</i>	70
Patriotic Song <i>Hinckel</i>	74
Prophecy.	221
Punch Song <i>Schiller</i>	214

CONTENTS.

xi

	PAGE
Sir Olof	136
Soldiers' Morning Song <i>Max v. Schenkendorf</i>	75
Song, Love, and Wine <i>Th. Körner</i>	202
Song <i>Herder's Volkslieder</i>	168
Song of Victory after the Battle of Leipzig <i>Herklots</i>	80
Song of Victory after the Battle of Prague <i>Glein</i>	53
Song—"A young man loves a maiden" <i>H. Heine</i>	153
Song—"A star is falling" <i>Heine</i>	156
Song, Double <i>Reinick</i>	158
Spring <i>M. Hartmann</i>	241
Tailors' Heroism <i>A. Chamisso</i>	290
Taking up Quarters	82
The Artist and the Public <i>F. Rückert</i>	317
The Battle of Prague	56
The Broken Ring <i>J. v. Eichendorff</i>	132
The Chapel <i>Uhland</i>	284
The Coming of Spring <i>Müller</i>	247
The Course of my Life	189
The Daisy <i>G. W. Fink</i>	243
The Diver <i>Schiller</i>	318
The Fishermalden <i>H. Heine</i>	144
The Fox-Ride	219
The German the Dearest <i>Schreiber</i>	212
The German Rhine <i>Becker</i>	85
The Grenadiers <i>H. Heine</i>	86
The Hammer-Stroke <i>Eberhard</i>	281
The Hostess's Daughter <i>L. Uhland</i>	165
The Huntsman's Joy	234
The Hussites before Naumburg	296
The Jolly Brother	100
The King of Thulé <i>Goethe</i>	211
The Krähwinkel Guardsmen	308
The Lad of the Mountain <i>L. Uhland</i>	78
The Locksmith's Man <i>Grübel</i>	106
The Man in the Cellar	181
The March <i>A. Methfessel</i>	76
The Months and the Men	304
The Moon Dial <i>Reinick</i>	143
The Nibelunger's Treasure <i>Simrock</i>	174

	PAGE
The Old Soldier to his Cloak	48
The Old Love Songs <i>Ambrosius Metzger</i>	131
The Peasant's Rule <i>Uhland</i>	135
The Pilgrimage to Keevlar <i>Heine</i>	145
The Retreat	315
The Richest Prince <i>J. Kerner</i>	45
The Serenade <i>L. Uhland</i>	165
The Song of Wine <i>F. Rochlitz</i>	205
The Stages of Life <i>A. F. E. Langbein</i>	104
The Sunken Crown <i>Uhland</i>	161
The Table-Song of Truth	182
The Tailor's Fright. <i>Goethe</i>	114
The Three Tailors <i>C. Herlossohn</i>	102
The Toper's Dilemma	113
The Tree in the Odenwald	108
The Two Coffins <i>J. Kerner</i>	159
The Water it Rushes <i>Goethe</i>	141
The Watchman's Song	97
The White Hart <i>Uhland</i>	235
The Wooer	292
The World a Beer-Bottle	295
Thou say'st my Songs are Poisoned <i>H. Heine</i>	142
To Him <i>Mahlmann</i>	277
To Spring <i>Schiller</i>	240
To the Winehouse <i>H. v. Fallersleben</i>	204
Trooper's Song <i>Schiller</i>	35
Under the Dark Linden Trees <i>Reinick</i>	173
Urian's Voyage round the World <i>Matthias Claudius</i>	298
Wanderer's Song <i>Goethe</i>	254
Wanderer's Song	121
Wanderer's Song <i>J. Kerner</i>	227
Wandering Song <i>Müller</i>	140
War-Song for the Chasseur Volunteers, } 1813 <i>De la Motte Fouqué</i>	91
What is the Best Thing? <i>Kopisch</i>	226
What is the German's Fatherland? <i>Arndt</i>	61
90 x 9 x 99	305

Index to First Lines.

	PAGE
ALLAH gibt Licht in Nächten	<i>Mahlmann</i> 277
Als die Preussen marschirten vor Prag . . . . .	. . . . . 57
Am Fenster stand die Mutter	<i>H. Heine</i> 145
A'n Schlosser hot a'n G'sellen g'hot	<i>Grübel</i> 106
An den Rhein, an den Rhein, zieh nicht an den Rhein	<i>Simrock</i> 170
Bei einem Wirthe wundermild	<i>Uhland</i> 242
Bekränzet die Tonnen	<i>L. H. C. Hölz</i> 238
Büder-hier steht Bier statt Wein . . . . .	. . . . . 210
Da droben auf dem Hügel	<i>Uhland</i> 161
Das Leben gleicht der Blume	<i>Von Halem</i> 180
Das Lied vom Wein	<i>F. Rochlitz</i> 205
Das Volk steht auf, der Sturm bricht los	<i>Körner</i> 68
Das Wandern ist des Müllers Lust	<i>W. Müller</i> 140
Der alte Barbarossa	<i>F. Rückert</i> 154
Der bleiche, herbstliche Halbmond	<i>H. Heine</i> 121
Der Gott, der Eisen wachsen liess	<i>Arndt</i> 72
Der Jäger geht zu Fest und Schmauss	<i>Reinick</i> 143
Der Mai ist gekommen, die Bäume schlagen aus	. . . . . 121
Der Stumme sprach zum Blinden	<i>Rückert</i> 317
Der süsse Schlaf der alle sonst erquickt . . . . .	. . . . . 128
Die Hussiten zogen vor Naumburg . . . . .	. . . . . 296
Die Felder sind nun alle leer	<i>Weisse</i> 250
Die Fenster auf! die Herzen auf!	<i>W. Müller</i> 247
Die Welt gleicht einer Bierbouteille . . . . .	. . . . . 295
Droben stehet die Kapelle	<i>Uhland</i> 284
Du schönes Fischermädchen	<i>H. Heine</i> 144
Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott	<i>M. Luther.</i> 260
Ein Heller und ein Batzen . . . . .	. . . . . 100

	PAGE
Ein Jüngling liebt ein Mädchen	<i>H. Heine</i> 153
Ein Schlosser hat'nen G'sellen g'habt	<i>Grübel</i> 106
Erhebt euch von der Erde, ihr Schläfer aus der Ruh	<i>Max v. Schenkendorf.</i> 75
Es blinken drei freundliche Sterne	<i>Körner</i> 202
Es fällt ein Stern herunter	<i>H. Heine</i> 156
Es fiel ein Reif in der Frühlingsnacht . . . . .	. . . . . 124
Es, es, es, und es. . . . .	. . . . . 95
Es giebt Nichts lustigers in der Welt . . . . .	. . . . . 49
Es giebt zwei Vogel sie sind bekannt	<i>Langbein</i> 112
Es gingen drei Jäger wohl auf die Birsch	<i>Uhland</i> 235
Es haben viel Dichter gesungen	<i>Eichendorff</i> 283
Es haben viel Dichter die lange verblichen.	<i>Langbein</i> 104
Es hatten drei Gesellen . . . . .	. . . . . 199
Es hatten wilde Mörder	<i>Kinkel</i> 255
Es ist ein Schuss gefallen	<i>Goethe</i> 114
Es ist Nichts lustger in der Welt . . . . .	. . . . .
Es kamen drei Schneider wohl an der Rhein . . . . .	. . . . .
Es kann ja nicht immer so bleiben	<i>Kotzebue</i> 216
Es lebe was auf Erden . . . . .	. . . . . 281
Es reden und träumen die Menschen viel	<i>Schiller</i> 278
Es rauschet das Wasser	<i>Goethe</i> 141
Es schwebt ein Geist ob der Frühlings pracht	<i>Hartmann.</i> 241
Es steht ein Baum im Odenwald . . . . .	. . . . . 108
Es war ein König in Thulé	<i>Goethe</i> 211
Es war einmal ein König	<i>Simrock</i> 174
Es waren einmal die Schneider	<i>(Fliegendes Blatt)</i> 305
Es zog aus Berlin ein tapferer Held	<i>Arndt</i> 82
Es zogen drei Bursche wohl über den Rhein	<i>Uhland</i> 116
Frau Nachtigall mach' dich bereit . . . . .	. . . . . 129
Fredericus Rex, unser König und Herr	<i>Willibald Alexis</i> 49
Freut euch des Lebens	<i>Usteri</i> 119
Grad' aus dem Wirthshaus nun komm' ich heraus	<i>Mühler</i> 118
Gaudeamus igitur . . . . .	. . . . . 196
Gieb blanker Bruder, gieb mir Wein . . . . .	. . . . . 221
Herr Bacchus ist ein braver Mann	<i>Bürger</i> 187
Herr Olof reitet spät und weit . . . . .	. . . . . 136
Herz voll Muth	<i>Hinkel</i> 74
Hinaus in die Ferne, mit lautem Hörnerklang	<i>A. Methfessel</i> 76
Hört ihr Lente und lasst euch sagen . . . . .	. . . . . 95
Hört mal Lüd' en Bitgen still . . . . .	. . . . . 310

	PAGE
Ich bin einmal etwas hinaus spatzirt	<i>Reinick</i> 115
Ich bin vom Berg der Hirtenknab'	<i>Uhland</i> 78
Ich hab' geklopft an des Reichthums Haus	<i>Rückert</i> 282
Ich hab' in das blaue Meer geschaut	<i>Reinick</i> 172
Ich hab mein Sach' auf Nichts gestellt	<i>Goethe</i> 191
Ich liebte dich und du wusstest's nicht	<i>Reinick</i> 134
Ich stand auf Berges Halde	<i>F. Rückert</i> 149
Ich weiss nicht was soll es bedeuten	<i>H. Heine</i> 168
Ihr, ihr, dort draussen in der Welt	<i>Schiller</i> 89
Im Fliederbusch ein Vöglein sass	<i>Reinick</i> 158
Im Januar führen die Männer uns . . . . .	. . . . . 104
Im kühlen Keller sitz ich hier . . . . .	. . . . . 181
Im Weine wie das Sprichwort sagt . . . . .	. . . . . 182
Immer langsam voran, immer langsam voran . . . . .	. . . . . 308
In einem kühlen Grunde	<i>Eichendorff</i> 182
In's Weinhaus treibt mich dies und das	<i>H. v. Fallersleben</i> 204
Leb' wohl, du liebes altes Jahr	<i>Osiander</i> 175
Lustig ihr Leute, Soldaten sind da . . . . .	. . . . . 32
Mein Lebenslauf ist Lieb und Lust . . . . .	. . . . . 189
Mein Schätzerl ist hübsch, aber reich ist es nit . . . . .	. . . . .
Muss i' denn, muss i' denn, zum Städele 'naus . . . . .	. . . . . 110
Nach Frankreich zogen zwei Grenadier'	<i>H. Heine</i> 89
Nicht blos für diese Unterwelt	<i>C. Meister</i> 279
O Ewigkeit, o Ewigkeit! . . . . .	. . . . . 285
Preisend mit viel schönen Reden	<i>J. Kerner</i> 116
Schlaf, Herzensöhnchen, mein Liebling bist du . . . . .	. . . . . 118
Schier dreissig Jahre bist du alt	<i>C. V. Hölder</i> 43
Selig die Todten! sie ruhen und rasten	<i>Mahlmann</i> 271
Schon haben viel Dichter die Lange verblichen	<i>A. Langbein</i> 104
'S ist mir alles eins . . . . .	. . . . . 116
Sie sollen ihn nicht haben	<i>Nic. Becker</i> 85
Spatzieren wollt' ich reiten . . . . .	. . . . . 181
Such dir im Sommer einen Schatz	<i>Uhland</i> 135
S'war einer dem's zu Herzen ging	<i>Chamisso</i> 298
Triumph! das Schwert in tapfrer Hand	<i>Max v. Schenkendorf</i> 80

	PAGE
Und als die Schneider revoltirt'	<i>Chamisso</i> 291
Und die Sonne machte den weiten Ritt	<i>E. M. Arndt</i> 157
Und wüßten's die Blumen die Kleinen	<i>H. Heine</i> 171
Vater, ich rufe Dich	<i>Körner</i> 58
Vaterlandlied	<i>Hinkel</i> 74
Vergiftet sind meine Leider	<i>H. Heine</i> 142
Victoria! mit uns ist Gott'	<i>Gleim</i> 53
Vier Elemente	<i>Schiller</i> 214
Von allen Ländern in der Welt	<i>Schmidt</i> 212
Vom Himmel hoch da komm ich her	<i>M. Luther</i> 264
Von dem Berge zu den Hügeln	<i>Goethe</i> 254
Wandern! es ist des Müllers Lust	<i>W. Müller</i> 140
Was blasen die Trompeten? Husaren heraus	<i>Arndt</i> 66
Was hat das Gänseblüm' gethan?	<i>G. W. Fink</i> 244
Was ist des Deutschen Vaterland?	<i>Arndt</i> 61
Was ist doch auf dieser Welt . . . . .	. . . . . 234
Was kann schöner seyn?	<i>F. Rückert</i> 152
Was kommt dort von der Höh'? . . . . .	. . . . . 219
Was schweigen die Sänger, die sonst wohl gesungen	<i>Ehrhard</i> 281
Was wecken aus dem Schlummer mich	<i>Uhland</i>
Wenn Jemand eine Reise thut	<i>Matthias Claudius</i> 298
Wenn wir beim Wein sind, was is da das beste?	<i>Kopisch</i> 226
Wer so aus Russland wandern mus . . . . .	. . . . . 315
Wer nun den lieben Gott läßt walten	<i>G. Neumark</i> 274
Wer wagt es, Rittersmann oder Knapp	<i>Schiller</i> 319
Wie ist doch die Erde so schön? . . . . .	. . . . . 168
Wie reizend, wie wonnig ist alles umher	<i>N. G. Becker</i> 237
Wie kannst du ruhig schlafen	<i>H. Heine</i> 164
Willkommen schöner Jüngling	<i>Schiller</i> 240
Wir sind die Könige der Welt	<i>G. v. Starke</i> 206
Wohlauf! Kameraden, auf's Pferd, auf's Pferd!	<i>Schiller</i> 35
Wohlauf! noch getrunken den funkelnden Wein	<i>J. Kerner</i> 227
Wohlauf zum freudigen Jagen	<i>De la Motte Fouqué</i> 91
Zwei Särge einsam stehen	<i>J. Kerner</i> 159



Introduction.

THE practice of celebrating the deeds and perpetuating the memory of heroes in tragic and mirthful song, seems to have been common among the German races in the most ancient times. The records of the earliest battles, in which

the rude barbarians of the north strove to make head against the powers and resources of Rome, tell us how the Cimbri and Teutones advanced *singing* to the contest. The songs in praise of the god Thuisco are mentioned by Tacitus ; and a few scattered fragments of old heroic lays, which have been preserved through the devastation, turmoil, and conflict amid which the Queen of the World sank down, still remain to indicate to the modern German the character of these first glimmerings of his country's literature. With the conversion of the German tribes to Christianity came the substitution of Christian traditions for pagan ditties ; and though Charlemagne made a collection of Teutonic ballads, the old legends were almost forgotten, till the time when a poet of the twelfth century incorporated a number of them to form the incidents in the plot of the Song of the Nibelungers (*Das Nibelungen Lied*).*

The institution of the laws and customs of chivalry brought with it a peculiar literature. Germany—the southern portion, Austria, and Thuringia in particular—had its Minstrels and Minnesingers, who became as popular at the German courts as were the troubadours and Provençaux in the bowers of France and England. The legends of Prince Arthur and the “Holy Gral” date from this period. The catalogue of the minnesingers includes many noble and even some royal names. Versification became a fashion, and

* The opening lines of this magnificent song sufficiently explain its purport. They run thus :—

“ Uns ist in alten Mæren, Wunders vil geseit,
 Von Helden lobebæren, von grozer Kuonheit ;
 Von Vrœuden, Hœchgeziten, von Weinen und von Klagen,
 Von Kuener Recken striten muget ir nu Wunder hoeren sagen.”

the poet was sure of entertainment and patronage at the court of the German prince.

The lyrical poetry of this period is trivial in form, and of small literary value ; it possesses, however, in a high degree, the element which gave its elevation to chivalry, and which operated as a check to the irresponsible power of the great in the middle ages—respect and devotion to the weaker sex. Walter von der Vogelweide, 1170-1226—Heinrich Frauenlob (the woman-praiser), 1250-1318—Wolfram von Eschenbach, and many other minstrels, come under this category. Satirical poetry, first bursting forth in little rills against the aristocracy, and at length rolling in a powerful stream against churchmen and church abuses, now begins to gain the ascendant ; chivalry, with its songs, falls into disrepute, and becomes an object of caricature ; a deep religious contest engrosses the minds of the populace, and one great man arises to exert an influence equally conspicuous in the religious and in the literary history of his age. A new era of national writing may be dated from the 31st October, 1517, when Martin Luther publicly upheld the ninety-five theses he had nailed to the door of the castle church at Wittenberg.

Throughout all the song literature of the sixteenth century the religious element predominates. With the Emperor Maximilian, “the last of the knights,” as historians call him, the age of chivalric poetry passed away ; and *Theuerdank*, the famous allegorical poem, wherein is represented the Kaiser’s marriage with Mary of Burgundy, forms the last link in the series of knightly romaunts. The great religious struggle of the century began, and the literary ability of the time was enlisted on either side of the contest.

Thus the satirist, Thomas Murner, after graphically exposing the abuses of the Romish church, plied his pen with much acrimony against Luther, and was invited by Henry VIII. to England, on the strength of this literary activity. But, on the side of the Protestants, song was a powerful vehicle for the representation of doctrines and dogmas. The Reformers, who had justly raised their voices against the subject-matter of the ballads then in vogue among the people, borrowed the shape and structure of the popular songs of the day for the erection of a purer and higher lyrical standard. Some of the more rigid teachers of Protestantism seem to have objected to songs generally, and to have countenanced the writing of hymns principally as a means of getting rid of a great evil; and this intolerance was not confined to songs of an objectionable character, but was extended to every lyrical production of a political or humorous tendency. That the great leader of the Reformation cannot have entertained these extreme views is indicated by his having written a poetical eulogy of music generally, under the title "Frau Musica," and a distich of a still more explicit kind, which runs—

"Wer nicht liebt Weib, Wein, and Gesang,
Bleibt ein Narr sein Lebelang." *

Among the inestimable services rendered by Luther to Germany, his having been the founder of a new school of sacred songwriting is, perhaps, not the least. Through his own efforts, and the effect of his example on his friends, collections of noble hymns were called into being, which have,

* Who loveth not wife, wine, and song
Remaineth a fool his whole life long.

in spite of all changes of poetical taste and feeling, maintained their high position in every congregational collection of hymns throughout Protestant Germany. It is scarcely necessary to point to the grandeur of the lyric, "Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott," or to the sweet simplicity of the "Christmas Carol for Children," and of the "Vater unser." Alberus, Dachstein, Justus Jonas, Hegenwaldt, Spengler, and many others, had a share in the authorship of Luther's hymn-books. The best collection of the religious songs of Germany, from the time of Luther to that of A. Blaurer, is the excellent and laborious one compiled by K. E. P. Wackernagel.

The religious movement which had agitated Germany now manifested itself in the production of dramas on sacred subjects, interspersed with efforts of a humourous character. As a tragic poet, Rebhuhn stands pre-eminent; in the lighter department, Hans Sachs, "the cobbler bard." This prolific author produced, in the space of about half a century, the almost incredible number of six thousand two hundred and sixty pieces, comprising merry comedies, mournful tragedies, farces (schwänke), dialogues, and an infinity of songs, serious and gay. The tragic productions of Hans Sachs are far inferior in merit to his poems on lighter subjects; the latter are written with true poetic feeling. Some of his hymns, also, are pre-eminent among the sacred songs of the age. Johann Fischart, the author of "Till Eulenspiegel," is the only contemporary writer whose works can bear comparison with those of Hans Sachs.

The seventeenth century brought with it the memorable struggle known as the "Thirty Years' War." It is natural

to suppose that, while the eyes of all men were turned upon the leaders of the contest, and while every ear was strained to catch the first sound of each new event, the song literature of the period should choose as its chief subject the chances and changes of the battle field. This has been the case; and every important turn in the fortune of the war—the repulse of Wallenstein from Stralsund—the frightful devastation of Magdeburg—the battle of Lützen—the death of Gustavus Adolphus—each memorable action, advance, or retreat, has been recorded in song, till an almost inexhaustible budget has accumulated. Some pieces are written in a serious, the majority, however, in a satirical vein. The favourite hero of these war songs is the gallant Swedish king, Gustavus Adolphus. Among the whimsical effusions called into being by the events of the time, is a song with the strange title, “Tilly-Schwedisches Concert und Contrapunct, von groben schweren Nothen darvon die Köpffe bluten, und zum Final ein hartes Schwedisches Obendrauf oder Zugab”—(*Tilly-Swedish Concerto and Counterpoint, of rude heavy notes which make the heads bleed; and for the finale a hard Swedish conclusion or supplement.*) This was an outburst of triumph on the occasion of the Swedish king’s victory over Tilly, at Leipsic. Its date is 1632.

The troopers’ songs of the Thirty Years’ War are not devoid of a certain broad humour, and here and there exhibit even gleams of pathos. But the remaining portion of the period’s literature is inferior to that of the preceding century. The form of the German tongue was changing. A weak, tasteless style, encumbered by the introduction of French and Latin words, was gradually usurping the place

of the vigorous, healthy language into which Luther had translated the Scriptures. The boundless misery entailed upon the German empire by the presence of the mercenaries of Wallenstein, and of the marauding troops of Saxony, who fed upon the land like locusts, could not have any but an unfavourable influence upon the men who lived during this period of anarchy and distress. All things considered, the wonder is, not that there should be a dearth of poetry during the Thirty Years' War, but that the character of the literature it has to offer is not more gloomy and despairing.

Efforts were made to counteract the destructive tendencies of the times by the formation of literary societies (*Sprachgesellschaften*). Foremost among these stands the *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft* (Fruit-bearing Society), formed in 1617 by two princes of Anhalt, several Saxon princes, and a number of notabilities;—its object being to revive the purity of the German language. Various similar fraternities were founded in succession; among others the *Gesellschaft der Pegnitzschäfer* (*Pegnitz shepherds*), and the *Elbschwanenorden* (order of Elbe-swans). None of these societies would seem to have achieved very important results. The “fruit-bearing society” yielded but scanty literary crops, and the only advantage secured by the whole movement appears to be that it kept alive, among the higher classes at any rate, the embers of an interest for poetry. Becker, a teacher at the Leipsic Thomasschule, was the author of various hymns of more than ordinary merit. But the man who at this time deserved better than any other poet of the period at the hands of his countrymen, and who is looked upon, to a great

extent, as the father of modern German poetry, was Martin Opitz. This writer strove manfully, and successfully, to raise the poetry of his nation to the Lutheran standard. The reproach of having, in his writings, paid too exclusive a court to the princes of his time, has been frequently cast at Opitz; but he can scarcely be blamed for having endeavoured to diffuse an interest for literature among the only class who could advance its cause. Unconsciously, however, he became the founder of a species of court poetry, which does not occupy an honourable position in the literary annals of his country.

A more important fraternity of poets than had yet appeared arose at Königsberg, in or about the year 1646. The originator of the society was Heinrich Albert, organist at Königsberg. The meetings of the club were at first held in the garden of the founder, who composed music for many of the songs which were there read. Robert Roberthin, born at Königsberg in 1600, was the most influential member of the club, though the name of Simon Dach, the author of "Annie of Tharaw," is the one most intimately identified with the Königsberg society.

Some clever satires of J. Riemer, who wrote under the name of Reinhold, are worthy of mention. They are directed against the prevailing rage for introducing foreign words into German writings—a custom reprehended by many German poets of the period, who seem to have overlooked the fact that the introduction of a foreign form and spirit into their poetry was doing far greater injury to its national character than the use of foreign terms. A satirical "Song à-la-mode," in which this confusion of terms is ridiculed,

has a most comic effect. The song (the foreign words of which are printed in italics) reads as follows:—

Reverirte Dame,
Phenix meiner *Ame,*
 Gebt mir *audiencz.*
 Euer *Gunst meriten,*
 Machen zu *falliten*
 Meine *patienz.*

Ach ich *admirire*
 Und *considerire*
 Eure *violencz ;*
 Wie die *Liebesflamme*
 Mich brennt sonder *blasme,*
 Gleich der *Pestilentz.*

Ihr seid sehr *capable,*
 Ich bin *peu valable*
 In der *Eloquentz ;*
 Aber mein *serviren*
 Pfl egt zu *dependiren*
 Von der *Infyuentz.*

Meine *Larmes* müssen
 Von den *jouen* *Flüssen*
 Nach der *Sing cadencz ;*
 Wie der *Rhein couliret*
 Und sich *degorgiret*
 Nächst bei *Cobelencz.*

Solche *Amartume*
 Macht *Neptuno Ruhme*
 In *Oceans* *Grentz, —*
 Komt ihr *Flussnajaden*
 Und ihr *Meertriaden*
 Schaut die *Consequencz.*

Belle, werd ihr lieben
 Und nicht mehr betrüben
 Eure *Consciencz ;*
 Werdt ihr *rejouiren*
 Die im *Meer versiren*
 Nach der *Aparentz.*

Die *Coquilles* tragen
 Werden *tandem* fragen
 Nach der *Excellencz,*
 So die *talitaten*
Adulciret hätten
 Durch die *Abstinencz.*

Abstinencz von *Haasen*
 Und sich lieben lassen
 Sonder *Insolencz,*
 Kann das *Meer verstüssen,*
 Bis zu euren *Füssen*
 Macht Euch *Reverencz.*
Confusius von Ollapodrida.

At the close of the seventeenth and the commencement of the eighteenth century, German poetry appears in a more hopeless condition than during the convulsions of the Thirty Years' War. The coarseness which abounded in the songs of the troopers had given place to a wide-spread depravity, badly concealed beneath a thin cloak of so-called gallantry. Founded on foreign models, badly followed and clumsily imitated, the songs of the beginning of the seventeenth century were not more likely to gain a permanent hold on

the affections of the people than were the ditties of the Corydon and Phyllis school in England. Some clever students' songs certainly occur; but the general literary aspect of the first half of this century is barren, immoral, and licentious.

The first symptoms of a healthier tone are to be found in the writings of Haller and Hageorn, who endeavoured to elevate the taste of their readers by giving them vivid and faithful representations of nature, in contradiction to the literary dictator of the time, Gottsched, whose artificial style, "correctly dull and regularly low," was only too universally lauded and emulated. The "*Bremer Beyträge*" (*Bremen Contributions*), a periodical with which most of the literary celebrities of the time were connected, appeared from the year 1745 to 1759. The poems in this collection are not of a high order, and the publication itself degenerated at length into licence and frivolity; miserable effusions in the style of Grecourt and of the "*Contes*" of La Fontaine being freely admitted. It is remarkable that the fourth volume of the periodical contains the three first cantos of Klopstock's "Messiah;" and the fact that this glorious poem was not admitted without hesitation, forms a sufficient commentary on the discernment of Klopstock's contemporaries. The latter portion of the work is full of adulation of Frederick the Great.

The Seven Years' War naturally gave employment to the pens of song writers. Gleim, Ramler, E. von Kleist, Schubarth, Cronengk, Willamov, and many others, sang the praises of the Prussian hero Frederick, while Rautenbach, with a small band of supporters, took up the cause of Maria

Theresa. The nameless poets of the bivouac were for their part not silent; and the anonymous songs, "Fridericus Rex" and "Als die Preussen marschirten vor Prag," enjoyed a popularity which never fell to the share of the effusions from the pens of the accredited poets. The songs of Gleim may be taken as specimens of this school of writing. Goethe says, in reference to them, "The war-songs of Gleim have held so high a position among German poems from the fact that they arose with the events they record, and, moreover, because they possess the happy appearance of having been written by one of the combatants in the highest moment of excitement; which makes us feel their entire weight. The Prussians, and with them the Protestant part of Germany, thus obtained for their literature a treasure which the opposite party lacked, and the want of which no exertion afterwards enabled them to supply."

The great names of Klopstock and Lessing now appeared on the scene of German literature, and the reign of the Gottsched school was at an end. Klopstock threw into his poem the "Messiah," the whole power of his grand genius; and the effect he produced on German literature was deep and permanent. Lessing began to write when Gottsched's throne was tottering; and the restless life which animated all his writings was the very element still wanting to procure the fall of pedantry and affectation. The Göttinger Dichterbund (Göttingen Poetical Society), formed in 1772, is interesting from the association of its members with the "*Musen Almanache*" (Almanacks of the Muses), which appeared at intervals throughout a series of years; one

series being edited for a long period by Bürger, the celebrated author of "Lenore." The founders of this society were a number of young Göttingen students. Foremost among them stood Voss, Boie, Hölty, Miller, Ewald, Hahn, and Bürger. Admiration of Klopstock and Lessing was the bond which first united these young spirits, and one of their earliest meetings was devoted to a celebration of the great poet's birthday. Detestation of Wieland, the corrupter of morals, as they called him, was almost as powerful with them as the other feeling, and at the banquet in question a copy of the obnoxious poet's works was publicly torn, and the leaves, whimsically enough, used for pipelights. The merry meetings of the Göttingen Society were soon interrupted by the more serious avocations of life. The young poets were quickly obliged to give up their golden dreams of song under the pressure of impending necessity. Poverty was the lot of the majority of them; and even Bürger was for a long time subjected to the pressure of want. Some of the most gifted members of the fraternity died young; the rest were scattered here and there by fortune; and the Göttingen Society quickly fell to pieces. It was not, however, without its beneficial influence on the literature of Germany. The "Musen Almanache" increased in number and variety, and one of them was edited by Schiller himself.

The works of Schiller and Goethe, the two greatest geniuses of Germany, revolutionised every department of literature. The influence of Goethe begins with his first work, "Götz von Berlichingen;" that of Schiller with the publication of "The Robbers." Throughout the works

both of Goethe and Schiller a number of songs are scattered, which are too well known and appreciated to need comment.

The writings of the romantic school of poets, who flourished at the commencement of the present century, contain a number of good songs. The war of liberation in Germany called forth a number of patriotic lays, most of them formed more or less on the model of Körner's admirable lyrics. Schenkendorff, Arnim, Eichendorff, Kleist, and more than all, Moritz Arndt, are representatives of this school of song writers. When the contest against the power of Napoleon had ended with the downfall of the French emperor, the fiery enthusiasm which had vented itself in songs of defiance and hate towards the foreign invader unfortunately sought an outlet in the production of songs of an inflammatory and revolutionary tendency. These songs are in general blatant and weak, magniloquent indeed in expression, but lacking that earnestness and depth which gave force to Körner's lyrics. They were, however, considered sufficiently dangerous to ensure the expatriation of several young poets, and the suspension from his office even of such a man as Arndt. Political songs are now forbidden in the vocal associations of Germany—a circumstance to be regretted in many respects. The songs written during the war with Napoleon are far superior to any produced during the Gleim period. They bear the stamp of reality, are less burdened with bombast than were their predecessors, and have evidently been called forth by real enthusiasm. As specimens may be cited Körner's "Battle Prayer," Arndt's song "Der Gott der

Eisen wachsen liess," and Schenkendorff's "Erhebt euch von der Erde."

It is among the poets of the last forty years, however, that we must look for the best song writers. Uhland, G. Schwab, Mayer, Rückert, J. Kerner, Platen, Geibel, Herwegh, Heine, have contributed plentifully to the fund of German song in all its departments. One writer whose songs deserve greater attention in England than has yet been awarded to them, is worthy of especial mention. This is Robert Reinick, the painter and poet, who died in 1850. No man has been so happy as Reinick in portraying the emotions of trusting and innocent affection. His songs are redolent, moreover, of the corn-field and the green-wood; and the "Lieder und Bilder," enriched by illustrations contributed by some of the first artists in Düsseldorf, are well worthy the perusal of the student.





Student Songs.

OLD BACCHUS.

(Herr Bacchus.)

BÜRGER.

OLD Bacchus is a gallant man ;
 I tell you so once more, friends.
 He's greater than that harping-man,
 With all his books of score, friends.

The gilded harp Apollo owns
 Forms all his wealth extensive ;
 Therefore, you know, he boasts and drones,
 And makes himself expensive.

Yet on his instrument, I doubt,
 Who'd lend a single heller,
 For better music ringeth out
 From Father Evan's cellar.

Apollo, wheresoe'er he can,
 His boastful theme rehearses ;
 But yet friend Bacchus is a man
 Who understands his verses.

Apollo's tenor may have moved
 Parnassus ;—who can know, sirs ?
 But Bacchus' bass is more approved
 'Mong mortals here below, sirs.

To fill for us Apollo's chair,
 Arise, friends, let us crave him ;
 For our grandees, I'm well aware,
 Are mighty glad to have him.

Apollo walks 'mid princes grand
In deep humiliation ;
They take old Bacchus by the hand,
Like one of equal station.

We'll drag, then, ere aught else be done,
Upon Parnassus glowing,
Of Heidelberg the mighty tun
With Nierensteiner flowing.

Instead of laurel, all the ground
With grape-vines will we plant, aye,
And 'mid full barrels dance around,
Like any mad Bacchanté.

We've been, from custom, I opine,
Too sober and too wary,
And this is why the Muses nine
Have been of late so chary.

Oh, had their draughts been only lent
From Bacchus' nectar-tuns, sirs,
Their holding-back they'd soon have sent
To convents and to nuns, sirs.

No need were, then, of coaxing word
To charm them all to face us ;
Uncall'd, and of their own accord,
They'd forward, and embrace us.