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GLEANINGS

FROM THE

GERMAN AND FRENCH POETS.

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BY

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THE
AMERICAN

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LENORE.

LENORE arose at ruddy morn,
From troubled dreams awaking.
“ Art dead, dear William, or forsworn ?
Why such long stay art making ? ”
He'd gone with Frederick's armèd might
To take a part in Prague's fierce fight,
And had not sent to say,
If he'd escaped that day.

The monarch and the proud Empress,
With their long feud disgusted,
Their enmity now growing less,
A peace at last adjusted.

And either host hurrahed and sang,
With kettle-drum, and clash and clang,
And decked with green boughs gay,
Marched on their homeward way.

And everywhere, and everywhere,
In street, on bridge, abounding,
Both old and young, they all appear,
The shouting host surrounding.
“Thank God !” the wives and children cried,
And “Welcome !” many a happy bride.
But ah ! for poor Lenore
No kiss or greeting more.

Then up and down the ranks she flew,
The names of all there searching,
But none of them could give a clue,
As onward went they marching.
When all had passed, in sheer despair
Her raven locks she 'gan to tear,
And threw herself to ground,
In woe and grief profound.

Her mother hastened to her side :
“In mercy, God, behold her !
What, darling child, may this betide ?”—
Then in her arms to fold her.

“ O mother, mother ! dead is he !
What now is all the world to me ?
Will God no mercy show ?
O woe is me, O woe ! ”

“ O help !—God ! help, compassion show !
Child, say a paternoster ;
God doeth all things well, we know :
O God, have mercy on her ! ”
“ O mother, vain is all you say,
God is not merciful to-day ;
Of what avail to pray ?
All, all is ta'en away ! ”

“ Help, God ! Who God the Father know,
Know He deserts them never ;
His sacraments have power thy woe
To mitigate for ever.”

“ O mother, griefs within me rage
No sacraments can e'er assuage ;
To bring to life again
No sacraments attain.”

“ Hear, child ! What if the faithless youth,
In Hungary detained,
Has broke for thee his plighted troth,
In fetters new enchained ?

Grieve not, then, if his heart be gone,—
'Twill bring to him no benison ;
When soul and body part,
His crime will prick his heart ! ”

“ O mother, mother ! all is vain ;
He's lost to me for ever.
Death is my only hope,—’twere gain
Had I existed never !
Go out, go out for ever, light !
Die, die away in woe and night !
Will God no mercy show ?
O woe is me, O woe ! ”

“ Help, God ! Upon this wretched child
Be not Thy vengeance wreaking !
Remember not her words so wild,—
She knows not what she's speaking.
Think, child, of earthly sorrows less,
And more of God and holiness ;
Then thy poor soul to save,
The Bridegroom thou wilt have.”

“ O mother ! what is holiness ?
And what is hell, O mother ?
With him, with him is holiness,
And hell without him, mother !

Go out, go out for ever, light !
Die, die away in woe and night !
Without him here on earth,
Or there, joy has no worth ! ”

Within her brain, thro’ every sense
There raged such desperation,
She railed against God’s providence
In bitter execration.
She wrung her hands and beat her breast
Until the sun sank in the west,
Until o’er Heaven’s arch
The golden stars ’gan march.

But hark ! without, trot, trot, trot heard,
As of a charger’s gallop ;
The clank as of a knight that spurred,
And at the postern drew up.
And hark ! and hark ! that portal’s ring,
Then soft and gentle, ting, ting, ting,
There came in at the gate
These sounds articulate.

“ What ho ! what ho ! throw wide the door :
Art waking, love, or sleeping ?
Feel’st thou to me as heretofore ?
Art laughing, or art weeping ? ”

“What, William ! you, at night so late !
So long to weep, so long to wait ;
My woe how hard to bear !
How cam'st thou riding here ? ”—

“We saddle only at midnight,
From far Bohemia making,
’Twas late ere I began my flight,
So thee behind me taking.”—

“O William, quick, quick, come to me !
The wind sighs thro’ the hawthorn tree,
Come, warm thee, dearest, best ;
In my embraces rest.”—

“Oh let it sigh the hawthorn round,
Child, let the wind keep sighing ;
My black steed neighs and paws the ground :
Far hence we must be flying.
Come, truss thy dress,—mount, mount, I say,
Behind me on my horse : away !
A hundred miles we ride,
Ere thou canst be my bride ! ”—

“Must we, ere I can be thy bride,
A hundred miles be flying ?
But hark ! the clock strikes far and wide,—
Eleven o’clock ’tis crying.”

“See here, see there, the moon’s bright face,
We and the dead must ride apace ;
To-day, sweet, thou shalt share
My nuptial couch, I swear.”—

“Say, where’s thy little chamber, dear ?
Thy nuptial couch, where is it ?”
“Still, cool, and small, not far from here,
Eight boards in all are in it.”
“Hast room for me ?”—“For thee and me :
Come, truss thy dress, spring up to me :
The guests await the bride,
The chamber door stands wide.”

His sweetheart trussed her dress and sprung,
Herself behind him swinging,
Then round the faithful rider hung,
With lily hands fast clinging.
Then hurry, hurry, trot, trot, trot,
Off they went at a rattling gallop,
Steed, rider snorted, high
The sparks and pebbles fly !

To right and left, on either hand,
Before their eyes confounded,
How past them flew mead, heath, and land !
The bridges thunderous sounded.

“Dost fear, love? See, the moon’s bright face.
Hurrah! the dead must ride apace!
Dost fear, sweetheart, the dead?—
Ah, no,—but leave the dead!”

“What clanging notes out yonder surge?
Why are the ravens hovering?
Hark! tolling bells, hark! funeral dirge;—
Let us the corpse be covering.”—
Behold, a funeral train drew near,
Who bore a coffin and a bier;
Their song as when from bog
Croaks the ill-boding frog.

“The tomb at midnight open wide,
With wail and dirge and knelling,
I carry home my youthful bride
Unto her nuptial dwelling.
Come, sexton; come, O choir, with him,
And gurgle out the nuptial hymn;
Come, priest, and bless us, ere
We to our couch repair.”

Then came a rabble, rush, rush, rush!
Behind, with din and bustle,
As whirlwinds thro’ the hazel bush,
Thro’ dying leaves wild rustle.

And further, further, hop, hop, hop,
They sped in rattling gallop,
 Steed, rider snorted, high
 The sparks and pebbles fly !

How flew all in the distance was,
 All 'neath the pale moon's shimmer,
How flew all overhead that was,
 The heaven and stars that glimmer.
“Dost fear, love ? See, the moon's bright face.
Hurrah ! the dead men ride apace !
 Dost fear, sweetheart, the dead ?—
 “Ah, let them rest,—the dead.”—

“Steed, steed ! methinks the cock doth crow,
 How quick the sands are wasting !
Steed, steed ! I scent morn's breezes blow,
 Far hence we must be hasting.
An end, an end, has reached our ride,
The nuptial chamber opens wide ;
 The dead men ride apace,
 We're at, we're at the place !”

Quick to an iron gate below
 They rushed, with rein loose flowing ;
With slender switch he gave a blow,
 Bolts, bars, and locks undoing.

The folding-doors clanked, opened wide,
And o'er the graves the rabble ride ;
In the pale moon's shimmer
See, the tombstones glimmer !

But see, see there ! how in a trice—
Ho ! ho ! a ghastly wonder—
The rider's jacket, piece by piece,
Like tinder falls asunder !
Without one lock or tuft of hair,
His head shows like a skull that's bare :
A skeleton, alas !
With scythe and hour-glass.

The steed pranced high and wildly neighed,
Sparks from his nostrils sending.
Oh horror ! underneath the maid
He vanished, quick descending,
And howl on howl was heard on high,
And from the grave a shrieking cry ;
The heart of poor Lenore
'Twixt life and death strove sore.

Now wildly circling round and round,
Beneath the moonbeams glancing,
The phantom crew sped o'er the ground,
And howled this out whilst dancing,

“ Beware, tho’ hearts be rent in twain,
To join with God in quarrel vain !
Free of thy body’s dole,
May God assoil thy soul ! ”

BURGER.
