

Printed and Published by John Browne Bell 2 Livery St.
Strand London.

NEW WEEKLY

THE BELL'S



MESSENGER.

VOL. 1. No. 14.

SUNDAY,

APRIL 1, 1832.

PRICE { **NEWSPAPER** 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. } 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.
 { **TAX**..... 4d. }

FRASER'S MAGAZINE, FOR APRIL.

[The late period in the week at which the Magazines for April have been published, affords us but little leisure for comment upon their contents. Our friend *Fraser* is more lumbering this month than he is wont to be; but still powerful—still spiritual. The Reverend Edward's insane ravings are here at length brought to a conclusion, doubtless much to the satisfaction of Mr. Fraser's readers. From an able article on German Poetry, we extract the following account of the final sorrows and

death of poor Bürger, whose fate sends forth a voice to heaven against the humanity of Germany, loud and piteous as that which is uttered thitherward against England and Scotland, by the destinies of Chatterton, Burns, and Keats.]

BÜRGER—THE GERMAN WORDSWORTH.

"* * *—Under these disadvantages, however, Bürger cultivated his talents—produced his celebrated ballad (Lenore)—and married. His wife was calculated to make him happy; but the man's genius was perverse. During their courtship he became enamoured of her youngest sister, scarcely fourteen or fifteen years old—an amiable girl, who was not altogether indifferent to his attentions. Years strengthened their attachment, an attachment which served to set off the generosity of the married sister, who demonstrated a noble compassion for the weakness of the two lovers, according to the approved laws of German sentiment in such cases made and provided. It is said that this attachment caused much misery to the parties themselves: however this may be, it gave rise to many sweet love-songs, in which she is celebrated under the name of Molly. Here is (a stanza of) one of them:—

"Only the Lord of Heaven
My precious life may end;
Yet if to me 'twere given
Like gear and gold to spend,
Change it I would, I swear,
For any day that she
Were mine, in all the year,
Mine wholly, perfectly!"

"To improve his circumstances, Bürger hired, in 1780, a farm at Appenrode. From want of inclination, skill, or experience, neither he nor his wife succeeded in turning their land to a profitable account. Bad debts, also, to the amount of some thousand dollars (part of the sum he had staked in the concern, and which sum was the inheritance that fell to him on the death of his father-in-law) made it ultimately necessary for him to surrender the occupation. Add to this, he had the mortification of being accused, by that same false friend who misappropriated his grandfather's money, to the Hanoverian government, of irregularity and inexactness in the administration of his stewardship. He defended himself successfully, but willingly resigned his office. About the same time, he lost his wife.

"He now addressed himself to his favourite studies, returned to Göttingen, and superintended personally the publication of his *Musen-Almanach*, which had annually proceeded since 1778. He subsisted as a private teacher, and read lectures on taste and German composition. In the following year, 1785, he married the younger sister of his deceased wife—that sister whom he had so long adored. Scarcely had he, however, time to feel his happiness, before the object of his affection was rent away from him by inexorable death, in her first and only childbed of a daughter. Bürger now lost all courage, all strength of mind and body. After some months he recovered;—affliction had made him stern—he became an iron man; he set about his severe duties with alacrity, resumed his academic labours, and studied the philosophy of Kant, whereon he began to read lectures, which were greatly frequented.

"All this was, so far, well—so far sweet were the uses of adversity—these were the precious jewels which she bore in her head; but still—still she had been the ugly and venomous toad, and her venom began soon to work. Bürger had to contend with sickness; his health had been shaken, terribly shaken, by his misfortunes; he recovered, however, and his hours were more serene. Honours, also, were showered upon him. In 1787 the Göttingen University, upon occasion of its jubilee, which he celebrated in two poems, conferred on him a doctor's degree, and named him, in 1789, extraordinary professor, but without a salary. The possession of a public office, and hope of future provision, requickered him for a while, and he wished to take home his three children, who had been distributed among different kinsfolk, to attend to their education himself. For this purpose, he entertained the idea of marrying a third time—when lo! a poem was sent to him from Stuttgart, wherein an apparently noble-minded lady professed to have been so intensely impressed by his poetry as to offer him her heart and hand. Bürger treated the affair, at first, as a jest; but favourable accounts arriving of his *naïve* poetess, he began to believe, with many of his friends, that the matter merited some consideration. He returned her a poetical answer, and she became his wife.

"He was only a few weeks happy with her: in 1792, she was, by legal process, separated from him, and the grief of which she was the cause, contributed to his early death.

"Shattered in soul and body, exhausted almost in power and ability, he secluded himself in his little study, locking himself up for the whole day, or only opening it to a few chosen friends. What his occupation? Translating for the booksellers, his only means of subsistence. Under such extreme destitution suffered the darling poet of the nation!

"Thrown by sickness on his bed, he could labour no more. The government took pity on his distress, and sent him an unsolicited gift. This gladdened and cheered him, more from the hope which it presented of future support, than the present assistance which it afforded. He, however, needed no such future support. The peril of death hovered over him, but terrified him not. He died very gently and quietly, in his forty-sixth year, of a pulmonary complaint, the 8th of January, 1794.

"The defects of Bürger's moral character were the results of his genial excellencies. It is said, he was indolent; say rather, he was a man of genius. He was slow to outward impressions, and was not easily excited, because he loved to converse with his own mind *ab origine*. He had no idea of understanding what he was in himself by the representation of others; but his imagination brooded over its own stores within him, and in due time his spirit became pregnant,—the chaos of his soul was agitated, and light and order broke in upon a new creation. This habit of mind continued in his later

life. What the world calls industry, is an assiduous solicitude for external acquisitions. Thes-Bürger wanted not; his indolence was that of the brood-hen on her nest: she sits calmly and quietly her appointed time, seeming to do nothing, yet she does her work. So it is with men of genius: your men of talent may bustle about in the places of public resort,—men of genius must sit still, at home.

"A monument is erected to his memory in the garden of Ulrich, at Göttingen, where he was accustomed to meditate in the early hours of morning. He asked for bread, and they gave him a stone!"