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LENORE  
AND OTHER POEMS:

ORIGINAL AND TRANSLATED.



BY EDWARD S. GREGORY.



LYNCHBURG, VA.:  
J. P. BELL & COMPANY.  
1883.

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*DEDICATION.*

*To her whose dear and sacred name entwines,  
Like twisted sprays of ivy, all my lines;  
Whose sweet and gracious influence interweaves  
Among them, like the holly's beads and leaves;  
To her whose haloed head above my dreams  
Shines still as star-light over glamoured streams;  
Whose word, whose worth, whose wisdom, e'er have made  
The lights of home dispel each threatened shade,  
And who has woven, with subtler skill than art's,  
Bright broideries in the halls of all its hearts;—  
With grateful pride I dedicate this verse,  
Wherein whatever seems of best, is hers.*

*Why need I name my loyal love, and life?  
What use I add the mystic words, My Wife?*



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On page 24, Taupenhain occurs for Taubenhain ; on page 50, wierd for weird ; on page 55, Cypian for Cyprian ; on page 64, peoples' for people's ; on page 82, Whateley for Whately ; on page 120, time for times.

LENORE.



## THE LORE OF LENORE.

The English reader who has even the least tincture of general letters, but who may never have heard of the ballad of *Lenore* nor the name of the German Bürger, will own his attention to be arrested by the fact that Sir Walter Scott's first literary effort was the translation or transfusion of this ballad, by this poet, into English verse. The work may be found in the complete edition of Sir Walter's poems under the altered title of *William and Helen*; not the worst of the changes made by the then crude genius of the translator from the spirit and beauty of the original. *Lenore* had already been done into English by Mr. Taylor of Norwich, as Sir Walter

mentions; and was soon after rendered into verse of marked vigor by the Honorable William Robert Spencer, the author of *Beth Gelert*. In fact, not the cliffs of Killarney nor the tomb of Metella in the Roman campagna ever possessed greater powers in the art of echo than *Lenore* has displayed, in the reproduction of itself through the metres of many languages. It is certain that no modern poem has ever been transformed so often nor by so famous hands into English dress. An inspiration which has kindled so many imaginations must have been of no ordinary depth and splendor in its original exercise; and we are not unprepared for the discovery of romantic and remarkable environments that attach to the history alike of the bard and the ballad. It is equally true and sad that the fate of *Lenore* and her lover was hardly less tragic than the misfortunes and misdeeds which involved a bright mind in premature shadows, and led into obloquy and early death, steps which might have stood securely on the heavenward summits of success and fame.

The argument of the poem is simple enough to be left to its own disclosure. A word may be said in passing as to the impression left by the legend on general English literature and thought. Instances of allusion to it,—as in Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* where the flight of *Joseph Sedley* from Brussels is described; and in Washington Irving's ghost story of *Katzenellenbogen*,—are too frequent and too familiar to be more than generally referred to, as affording proof of the range and popularity of its adoption. It may even be suggested that the ballad of Buerger has given to the uses of current domestic speech the very name of *Lenore*, which is German and not English; its equivalent in our language being *Lenora*, *Leonora*, or *Eleanora*. But the name of the loved and lost mistress of memory and affection who dwells in the dreams of the *Raven's* unhappy bard, has almost superceded that other noble and laurelled name that lies shining in so many of Tasso's impassioned sonnets. Nor do we fail to remember that among the last wandering utterances of *Colonel Thomas Newcomb* on the bed of his

death in the Charter House, was the name of the object of his youthful devotion, the Countess de Florac—*his* “lost Lenore.”

Such a vignette of tender and graceful associations will win for the first *Lenore* and for the genius which gave her creation, an interest too intense to be forfeited by the wild and wierd life of the poet. The mantle of kindly patience and silence which leaves under cover the infirmities of many crowned sons of song, must be claimed for the character of the unhappy man who, in *Lenore*, in the *Pastor's Daughter* and on many another page, has proved his knowledge of the eternal law which makes misery the shadowing comrade of transgression. Notwithstanding the great audit of his errors, for which he did such grievous penance, perhaps the plea of Tennyson may justly be urged for him :

“ He gave the people of his best :  
His worst he kept ; his best he gave.  
My Shakspeare's curse on clown and knave  
Who will not let his ashes rest ! ”

It is not pretended that the following sketch of Buer-

ger's brilliant but tortuous and tortured life, was drawn from any recondite sources. Yet the material it includes has been gathered not without faithful and pains-taking labor in more than one great library; and the embodiment of these researches is my own.

## BUERGER AND LENORE.

Gottfried August Buerger was born on the 1st of January, 1748, at Wolmerswende, in the principality of Halberstadt, Prussian Saxony, where his father was a Lutheran minister. From the beginning he showed little inclination for regular study, but even as a child found great fascination in the Bible, and his first verses were attempts to render the Psalms into rhyme. Other evidences of precocity and of a susceptible and poetical endowment were not lacking. The boy Gottfried was fond of solitude, and indulged such romantic sentiments as are inspired by the companionship of woods and wastes. It is part of the mystery of a misguided and wrecked career that neither from Inspiration nor from



the oracles of Nature, to both of which he was so early and so passionately addicted, did the boy-bard acquire the code of moral principles nor the keys of conduct that would have saved him from unhappiness and shame.

The young Buerger was first sent to the school at Aschersleben, where his maternal grandfather, Herr Bauer, resided. For composing an offensive epigram, he was severely chastised at this institution; whereupon and at once he left it. His second experience of the muses was had at the school in Halle. His attendance here, as at Aschersleben, resulted in a creditable progress in poetry and prosody, to which he directed his time and thoughts. It is recorded that this was his only gain during these years.

It having been determined, unwisely as the event proved, that Buerger should enter the ranks of the reverend clergy, he now began to attend the course of theological lectures in the University of Halle. It may easily be believed that he evinced for these studies an early and quite congruous aversion. In other direc-

tions, however, the culture of his mind made rapid progress, and the early sparkles of his genius won for it an instant recognition. He was taken under the patronage of Klotz, a learned scholar, who admitted him into the society of certain accomplished young men whose genius was fostered at the expense of their morals. Under this influence, Buerger readily gave up his course of preparation for the ministry; and, having offended his grandfather (1768), experienced some difficulty in procuring from him permission to study law at the University of Göttingen, and assistance in its prosecution. So far was this apostacy from any ways improving him, that his manner of life became yet more profligate; his grandfather disowned him, and the debts he had contracted would have crushed him, except for the grace of friends. At this time the celebrated *Hain-bund* was organized, including among its first patrons many of the future critics, philosophers and poets of Germany. They studied Shakspeare with a special *devoir*; but they made themselves no less easily and delightedly familiar with the

imaginative literature of many languages and with the ancient classical models. The publication of Bishop Percy's *Reliques of English Poetry* about this period, gave an additional zest to Buerger's studies, and imparted to them the particular direction of ballad-composition, in which field his subsequent fame was principally won. To the influence of Boie, a fellow-student, Buerger was wont to attribute that polish and perfection of prosody which characterize even those compositions which are most nearly dithyrambic in theme and treatment, and which associate severe metres with the recurrence of uncouth and puerile onomatopœias. These literary friends at Göttingen were not neglectful of other more practical necessities of the homeless poet. There was procured for him—as for Burns, his counterpart in only too many other respects of infirmity and misfortune—a petty collectorship or *baily*, at Altengleichen, in the principality of Calenburg. Behold a new Pegasus in harness; a situation likely to chafe into new excesses a sensitive, erratic and aspiring spirit.

The next winter after this appointment, some fragments of a ghost story in rhyme which he heard a peasant-girl singing by moonlight in the village of Gelliehausen, suggested to his fertile and moody imagination the ballad of *Lenore*. This was published in the *Göttinger Musenalmanach für 1774*, and at once rendered him famous, without, however, bringing any more substantial reward from the horn of fortune. With fame and an official position begins as well the catalogue of Buerger's graver misfortunes, and alas, more serious defaults. In 1775 he had married Dorette Leonhardt, a Hanoverian lady;—the union proving, principally through the poet's own exceptional depravity, the source of great bitterness and attendant and deserved disgrace. Hardly was he married before a connection sprang up between him and a younger sister of his wife—the *Auguste* or *Molly*, as he fondly endeared her, who bore so large a part in all his subsequent inspirations. We refrain from unveiling all the shameful particulars of this lawless love, which hastened the decline and death

of the poet's wife, after ten years of heart-break (1784). Though other misfortunes had followed in rapid succession and with heavy impression the fatal folly of this marriage, Buerger hastened to espouse the sister-in-law who was already bound to him by every tie but the law's; and for whom his passion, however guilty, appears to have been most fervid and profound. The disasters which accompanied these tragic home changes were the waste of a sum of money presented to him by grandfather Bauer; the renting of a farm which he did not know how to manage, and by which he incurred severe losses; and finally his dismissal from office in 1784 on a suspicion of deficiencies in his accounts, now believed to have been unwarranted. Buerger's only means of living, in the midst of these hurrying calamities, was the income derived from the editorship of the *Almanac of the Muses*, which he had conducted from 1779, and which was no bonanza. Meantime he removed to Göttingen, with the view of giving lessons there as a *privat-docent*, and of ultimately obtaining a professor's chair in the

Belles-Lettres department. This boon, with the title Ph. D., he received after five years' assiduous toil: but the honor was all, as no pay was attached to the position. This is said to have been the only public recognition won by Buerger during his whole incessantly active literary life. The student is reminded of the disparagement by Danish critics which pursued Hans Christian Andersen almost to the end of life; and of the ridicule with which the classical propagandists sought to overwhelm the first triumphs of Victor Hugo. After all, Buerger's crowning affliction appears to have been not the betrayal of his pecuniary schemes nor the doom of hard and ill-requited drudgery, nor even the shadow of disgrace that settled across his life; so much as the death of the woman whom he loved with all the wild fervor of an unrestrained nature, and to whom, probably, he was drawn all the more dearly by the bond of a common outlawry. This bereavement occurred in 1786, and from that day the genius of the poet seemed extinguished. His last production, entitled *The Song of*

*Songs*, celebrated this second marriage. The elements of artistic unreality and extravagance were fitly mingled in this expression of a passion the very intensity of which was due in part to its daring and indecorous defiance of all human and higher canons.

But the tragedy of Buerger's moral declension and material miscarriages had not yet reached its culmination. Again, his irregular and romantic affections led him into equal misery and dishonor. While he was delivering lectures on the Kantian philosophy and on æsthetics at Göttingen to large classes of applauding students; and while he was awakened for a time from his now habitual depression by the success of his two cantatas, composed in 1787, in honor of the fifty years jubilee of the University; another Lorelei sang a song for the poet's capture, and sang not in vain. A letter received by him from a lady writing at Stuttgart, apparently displaying much refinement and sensibility, and expressing delicate appreciation of the beauties of Buerger's verse, made offer in conclusion of the heart

and hand of the writer. This was ample glamour for an imagination already abandoned to every license, and wanted to no exercise of self-restraint. Buerger at once went to Struttgart; made satisfactory inquisition concerning his correspondent, and derived from an inspection of the syren herself an adequately favorable impression of her charms. He brought back to Göttingen as his wife Christine Elise Hahn, "the Swabian girl," as he called her, who poisoned from the first the ill-regulated career in which she had made herself comrade. The story of their wretchedness and wreck is too painful for recital. In less than three years the Swabian wife deserted her poor home and her poet-lord; and Buerger, though his standard of ethics was none of the most ideal, found it necessary to seek refuge from her infamy in a legal divorce. [February, 1792]. Then his health broke, utterly and finally: and the concluding days of his life were of real want. The Hanoverian Government had the grace to relieve the necessities of the dying poet, while he, "confined to a small chamber,



wasted the remainder of his strength in translations for foreign book-sellers." Death dropped the curtain over this mournful scene. The end came on June 8th, 1794. The poet was forty-seven years of age.

His death was hastened by an unfavorable review of himself and his poetry made by Schiller in the *Allgemeine Literaturzeitung*, from which I give extracts below. Buerger's published works, prose and verse, fill many volumes, of which many editions have appeared. His most famous compositions are the four ballads, *Lenore*, *The Lay of the Brave Man*, *The Pastor's Daughter of Taupenhain*, and *The Wild Huntsman*. Three of these—the first named—have been illustrated with well-matched genius by the wierd and bold pencil of Moritz Retzsch. The ballads have been rendered into many languages.

Among the laurels of Buerger's indefatigable literary activity, was the rendition of *Macbeth* into German; and the rendition of portions of the *Iliad* and of the *Æneid* into German hexameters.

## THE LEGEND OF LENORE.

It has been said of the myth of the phantom horseman that it is a fiction not less remarkable for its geographical dissemination than for its bold imaginative character. But the legend, in the form which Buerger has embodied, had a definite local origin, of which the following account is given in the letter-press attached to Retzsch's *Outlines* of the ballad (Roberts Brothers, Boston, 1873), and prepared by an unknown scholar :

“‘*Lenore*’ was the culmination of Buerger’s poetic glory. It was long doubted that *Lenore* was original, as was afterwards proved: Schlegel remarks that Buerger, in writing it, could have no memory but that of an old song, one verse of which, as he often related, he had heard a girl singing :

‘The moon shines bright o’erhead,  
And swiftly onward ride the dead,  
Dost shudder, dear, to ride with me?’

He never heard the rest of the song; but this fragment possessed a singular charm for him, and it was the origin of *Lenore*. Buerger also seems, according to Schlegel, to have taken a hint from an old German song, in the verse where Wilhelm appears at his loved one’s door. When Buerger was working on the poem of *Lenore*, he wrote to Bole: ‘‘Tis now my pet child. I will send you one verse as sample. [Here follows the second verse of the poem]. You will thus get an idea of the tone of it, which I flatter myself grows more familiar and ballad-like as it draws to a close. The subject is taken from an old spinning song. I’ve taken great pains in poetizing it. My greatest reward would be to have it set

to music in a simple ballad-like way, and again used at the spinning wheel. Would I could set the melody in my soul to the words.' \* \* In an enthusiastic letter about Goethe's 'Götz von Berlichingen,' he writes: 'This Götz inspired three stanzas of Lenore. They are as great in their way as Götz is in his. How the critics will growl at it! Free, free! subject to naught but nature!'

\* \* \* "The imps, ghosts and fairies, who play so important a part in Buerger's poems, lack no trait that might increase their verisimilitude. The poet's subjects, in truth, were full of this mythical element; still, he himself had a decided taste for the fantastic, and his heart longed for the unhallowed realms of dream-world. \* \* Lenore was a glorious subject for this pen-painting. It is by far the best, the jewel, of Buerger's poems,—the costly ring, in Schlegel's words, with which he wedded folk-song, as the Doge of Venice does the sea. Its appearance in German was hailed with universal applause. The novelty of subject and style exercised a powerful charm, and the poem in itself was a great success. A story, as Schlegel says, which depicts the deluded hopes and vain revolt of a human heart, and all the horror of a desperate death, in a few sharp lines and living pictures, is told with strict truth in the simplest words, by constantly changing voices, while we seem to see the figures move and gesticulate before us. \* \* Buerger had good reason for dating his story at so recent a day as the close of the Seven Years' War; and undoubtedly much of its popularity and charm proceed from this fact."

#### BUERGER'S CRITICS.

The writer from whom I have quoted above says elsewhere of Buerger:

"If his talent never ripened to perfect maturity, the cause was clearly in the many conscious and unconscious errors, whose consequences saddened and darkened his whole life. 'The contemplation of this life,' says Schlegel, 'is the more painful when we consider that not only his

early illness, which rendered it almost impossible for him to live as others did, not only his unhappy love and the domestic troubles of his latter years, but also his very affection for poetry and poetic labors, prevented him from materially increasing his worldly wealth, embittered and indeed shortened his life. Few have bought their laurels so dearly.' Buerger's last days were spent in solitude. Schiller's bitter criticism, which he now first saw, affected him more powerfully than almost any other thing in his life; and when we consider his slender purse, his sorrows and illness, his many necessary but disagreeable tasks, his total lack of cheerful society, the constant aching of his wounded self-esteem, we gain a not inadequate idea of the dark reality of the talented poet's life."

Schiller's criticism, which may be found entire in the xii volume of his works, pp. 273-286, is not so bitter as might be inferred from the above characterization and from its effects on Buerger. As matter of interest, I append some passages of this famous critique:

"If we"—says Schiller—"have only referred to the most faulty side of these poems, of which infinitely much that is good may be said, it is, if you will, an injustice of which we could only be guilty towards a poet of Mr. B.'s talent and fame. It is worth while to take the part of art only against a poet for whom so many imitatory pens lie in waiting: moreover, only great poetical genius is in position to remind the friend of the Beautiful of the highest demands of art, which he of mediocre talent either willingly stifles, or else is in danger of entirely forgetting. We willingly confess that we regard the whole army of our contemporary poets, who strive with Mr. B. for the lyric laurel crown, as ranking as far below him as he himself, in our opinion, has remained below the highest beauty. We also very readily perceive that much of that which

we have found blame-worthy in his productions may be laid to the account of outer circumstances which limited his genial strength in its most beautiful activity, and of which even his poems give so many pathetic proofs. Only the serene quiet soul produces the perfect. Struggle with outer circumstances and with hypochondria, which especially cripples the strength of genius, should least of all clog the spirit of the poet, who ought to disentangle himself from the present, and soar on high—free and bold—in the world of the ideal. However it storms in his bosom, yet must the clearness of the sun surround his brow.

“If meanwhile any of our poets should endeavor to perfect himself in order to produce something perfect, it is Mr. Buerger. This fullness of poetic painting; this glowing, energetic language of the heart; this now magnificently heaving, now lovely flute-like stream of poetry which so eminently characterizes his productions;—finally, this upright heart which, we might say, speaks from every line,—are worthy to unite themselves with ever equal æsthetic and moral grace, with manly worth, with intrinsic excellence of thought, with serene greatness, and thus win the highest crown of art.”

The whole critique of Schiller is of admirable justice, penetration and power. Its truth doubtless helped it to hurt Buerger; for the above extracts prove it was not of any unfriendly spirit. Among the defects condemned by Schiller are the strange onomatopœias, which frequently occur in *Lenore*, as in other poems of Buerger. Mr. Spencer, in his preface, agrees that in any English version, these ought to be written out. I have kept the same rule. But some of the translators have attempted

to follow them, of which curiosities I shall give a few specimens.

## OTHER TRANSLATIONS OF LENORE.

The rendition of Lenore which this preface introduces is, I believe, the twelfth that exists in English verse. I give a list of these below, and extracts from such of them as I have seen. They are of very various grades of fidelity and poetic merit. The translation made by the Hon. Wm. R. Spencer remains the most spirited among them.

1. The translation made by Mr. Taylor of Norwich from which Sir Walter borrowed the refrain :

“ Tramp ! tramp ! across the land they speede,  
    Splash ! splash, across the sea ;  
Hurrah ! The dead can ride apace !  
    Dost fear to ride with me ? ”

2. *William and Helen* : the first literary effort of Sir Walter Scott, and confessedly a mere imitation of the original. .Written in 1795 ; published with *The Chase* in 1796. Though the text by no means follows the

German, the spirit of the original is preserved with great fidelity in many striking passages. The first stanzas are :

“ From heavy dreams fair Helen rose,  
 And eyed the dawning red :  
 ‘ Alas, my love, thou tarryest long !  
 O, art thou false or dead ? ’—

“ With gallant Fred'ric's princely power  
 He sought the bold Crusade ;  
 But not a word from Judah's wars  
 Told Helen how he sped.”

3. The translation of Hon. Wm. Robert Spencer was published in 1796, with a preface on the poet and the ballad, and illustrations by Lady Diana Beauclerc. The German text appeared on the opposite pages of the volume. Below are specimen verses :

## I.

“ From visions of disastrous love  
 Leonora starts at dawn of day ;  
 ‘ How long, my Wilhelm, wilt thou rove ?  
 Does death or falsehood cause thy stay ? ’  
 Since he with God-like Frederick's powers  
 At Prague had foremost dar'd the foe,  
 No tidings cheer'd her lonely hours,  
 No rumor told his weal or woe.”

Some of the later stanzas are full of fire :

## XXV.

“ See where fresh blood-gouts mat the green,  
 Yon wheel its reeking points advance ;  
 There by the moon’s wan light half seen,  
 Grim ghosts of tombless murderers dance.  
 ‘ Come spectres of the guilty dead :  
 With us your goblin morris ply ;  
 Come all in festive dance to tread  
 Ere on the bridal couch we lie.’

## XXVI.

“ Forward the obedient phantoms push,  
 Their trackless footsteps rustle near,  
 In sounds like autumn winds that rush  
 Through withering oak or beech-wood sere.  
 With lightning’s force the courser flies ;  
 Earth shakes his thundering hoofs beneath ;  
 Dust, stones and sparks in whirl-wind rise,  
 And horse and horseman pant for breath.

## XXVII.

“ Swift rolls the moon-light scenes away—  
 Hills chasing hills successive fly ;  
 E’en stars that pave th’ eternal way  
 Seem shooting to a backward sky.  
 ‘ Fearest thou, my love? The moon shines clear :  
 Hurrah, how swiftly ride the dead !  
 The dead does Leonora fear ?’—  
 ‘ O God, oh leave, oh leave the dead !’ ”

\* \* \*



## XXX.

"Lo, while the night's dread glooms increase  
 All changed the wondrous horseman stood :  
 His crumbling flesh fell piece by piece  
 Like ashes from consuming wood.  
 Shrunk to a skull his pale head glares,  
 High-ridged his eye-less sockets stand ;  
 All bone his lengthening form appears,  
 A dart gleams deadly in his hand.

## XXXI.

"The fiend-horse starts, blue fiery flakes  
 Collected roll his nostril round ;  
 High reared, his bristling mane he shakes  
 And sinks beneath the rending ground.  
 Demons the thundering clouds bestride,  
 Ghosts yell the yawning tombs beneath,  
 Lenora's heart, its life-blood dried,  
 Hangs quivering on the dart of death ! "

These stanzas belong to a poem of distinct and strong beauty; but it is a very loose paraphrase of Buerger's.

4. Again, in 1796, *Lenore* was translated by Mr. Stanley.

5. And in 1847 by Miss Julia Cameron.

6. There is a translation in Mangum's poems.

7. And another in C. T. Brooks' "Ballads of Germany."

8. There is a very queer version in "The German Lyrist," a collection of translations from the German published at Cambridge, England, in 1856, by W. N.; initials which, a note in the copy in the library of Harvard states, stand for William Nind. Here are two verses:

## I.

"Lenora rose at morning red,  
 And chased sad dreams away;  
 'My William, art thou false or dead,—  
 How long wilt thou delay?'  
 For he with Frederick's host had gone  
 To where by Prague the fight was won,  
 And never since had written  
 If he escaped unsmitten.

## XXVI.

"And all that rabble, rush, rush, rush,  
 Came bustling on behind,  
 As dry leaves, in the hazel-bush,  
 Rustle before the wind:  
 And onward, onward, hop, hop, hop,  
 They galloped without slack or stop,  
 While horse and man breathed quick,  
 And flints and sparks flew thick."

10. There is a translation of Lenore in the Harvard Library made by — Lowell, (not J. R., of course).

11. And finally, there is a version of some merit attached to the letter-press of Moritz Retzsch's *Outlines of Buerger's Ballads*: prepared by I know not what hands. It has some onomatopœias too, thus:

## XXIX.

.. Ha, see! ha, see! Whoo! Whoo! what tongue  
 Can such dread wonder tell!  
 The rider's collar, piece by piece,  
 Like shrivelled tinder fell.  
 His head a sightless skull became,  
 A ghastly skeleton his frame,  
 In his right hand a scythe he swung  
 And in his left an hour-glass hung."

If a dozen Father Prouts could be found to render these various versions back into German independently, and if the results could be compared with Buerger, the medley would be somewhat surprising.

Without further introduction I present the twelfth effort to echo *Lenore* in English.

# THE BALLAD OF LENORE.

FROM THE GERMAN OF G. A. BUEBGER.



## LENORE.

### I.

Lenore from dark and dreary dreams,  
Awakes as morn is burning;  
“Love, hast thou died, or changed,” she cried,—  
“So long thou art returning?”  
He was, with royal Frederick’s arms,  
Engaged in bloody Prague’s alarms,  
Yet had no word nor token  
The soldier’s safety spoken.

## II.

The King and Empress, of their strife,  
At length a-weary growing,  
Swore both to sacred truce for life,  
A bitter feud foregoing.  
Adorned with branches gay and green,  
The troops all marching home are seen,  
With festal shouts and singing,  
And drums and trumpets ringing.

## III.

From far and wide the country side  
Both young and aged rally,  
To greet with pride the bristling tide,  
By every bridge and valley.  
“God bless you!” boys and maidens cried,  
And “welcome!” purred each happy bride;  
Ah, that Lenore is missing  
*Her* share of clasp and kissing!

## IV.

She scanned the army fierce and fast,  
And then each man undaunted,  
But none there was of all that passed,  
To give the word she wanted:  
And as the host before her bore  
Her raven locks she turned and tore,  
And, all for life uncaring,  
Fell, furious and despairing.

## V.

Quick to her sped the mother mild;  
"God's mercy on thee, daughter!  
What is thy sorrow, dearest child?"—  
And in fond arms she caught her.  
"Ah, mother, sure the dead is dead;  
For me, let earth and all be sped,  
For God hath pity never,  
And woe is mine forever!"



## VI.

“ Child, haste to pray thy childhood's prayer . . . .

O God, Thy help hold o'er us!

Lord, ever keep us in Thy care—

Thou dost the best thing for us.”

“ O mother, 'tis an idle thought—

God hath not fairly by me wrought;

What use in my appealing

To Heaven with needless kneeling?”

## VII.

“ Who knows the Father, through the Christ,

Knows all His father-fashion:

Poor child, the blesséd Eucharist

Would ease thy pain and passion.” . . . .

“ O mother, Eucharist or no

Can reach the pang that pains me so;

Did Holy Eucharist ever

The dead from death deliver?”

## VIII.

“ Think, child,—beneath far Hungary’s sun,  
Thy William, dead to duty,  
May break the vows he made *thee*, won  
By some fresh face of beauty.  
Let the false heart indulge its sin—  
There is nor good nor gain therein ;  
His guerdon will be anguish  
When soul and body languish.”

## IX.

“ O mother, sure the past is past ;  
Forsaken is forsaken !  
Death, thou my only portion hast,—  
Ah, why did life e’er waken !  
My light, be now extinguished quite,  
And die in darkening grief and night ;  
For God hath pity never,  
And woe is mine forever !”

## X.

“ Dear God, for this, Thy stricken child,  
    Forbear Thy wrath to cherish;  
She raves in passion blind and wild—  
    Oh, let the mad words perish!  
O child, thy worldly grief forget,  
And think on God and Heaven yet,  
Lest thou thy soul should'st sever  
From thy soul's Spouse forever!”

## XI.

“ O mother, mother, what is hell;  
    And, mother, what is Heaven?  
Without my William all is hell,  
    And with him, all my Heaven!  
My light, be now extinguished quite,  
And die in darkening grief and night;—  
Except my love be near me,  
Can earth or Heaven cheer me?”

## XII.

And so through brain and vein there raged  
Her passion's wrath and rudeness,  
And e'en a reckless war she waged  
On Heavenly grace and goodness.  
She wrung her hands and beat her breast  
Until the sunset crowned the West,  
And in heaven's vault of splendor  
The golden stars shone tender.

## XIII.

Then, hark! *tramp, tramp*, there loudly sounds,  
Like hoofs of horses ringing,  
As up the stairs' ascending rounds  
A trooper's tread is springing ;  
And—hark and hear!—the postern bell  
Now loose, now low, begins to swell,  
And through the door-way drifted  
The cheery call he lifted :

## XIV.

" Ho! ho! my darling, open! stir!  
     Art thou awake or sleeping?—  
 Doth any thought of *me* occur—  
     Art laughing, love, or weeping?"

" My William, is it *thou*, so late?  
 My lot hath been to weep and wait—  
 Ah, weariest load to carry!  
 Where did'st thou turn and tarry?"

## XV.

" From far Bohemia have I fared—  
     We course at mid-night, mind me!  
 Though late I ride, I come, my bride,  
     To bear thee off behind me." . . . . .

" O William, rest and enter here;  
 The wind blows through the hawthorn drear;  
 Herein true love will charm thee,  
 And kindly woo and warm thee!"

## XVI.

“ Let the wind blow, an suits it so!

My black steed pants a-tingling;

I may not stay; as if to go,

My very spurs are jingling.

Come, dress and jump, in speedy plight,

Behind me on my steed of night;

A hundred miles I carry

My bride before I marry!”

## XVII.

“ Why haste so far ere love fulfill

The promise of its Heaven?

List, dear! The clock is yet a-thrill

But now that struck eleven.” . . . .

“ Yes, yes, but look—the moon shines bright;

The dead and we ride fast and light!

I'll pledge thee, in an hour,

To reach thy bridal bower!”

## XVIII.

“Where is thy bridal bower and bed?”

“Love, 'tis a dizzy distance!

Still, cool and small—six planks make all,

With two short planks' assistance.”

“Hast room for me?”

“For me and thee—

Haste, sweet-heart; dress and ride with me;

The wedding guests await us;

The bower is decked to mate us.”

## XIX.

The fair girl dresses swift, and springs

On the black horse behind him,

And as she sits, she fondly clings

With lily hands that wind him.

And hurry, hurry, tramp and trot,

With rushing speed they forward shot;

Snort horse and horseman darkling,

While hoof and flint are sparkling!

## XX.

Now on the right hand and the left,

Before her eyes of wonder,

How fields and meads and heaths are reft!

How loud the bridges thunder!

“ Love, dost thou fear? The moon shines bright;—

Huzza, the dead ride fast and light.

Love, did they fright thee never? ”

“ No, let them rest forever ! ”

## XXI.

What sound of song was borne anear?—

Why did the ravens flutter?

“ BURY THE CORPSE ! ”

The words come clear,

That knell and requiem utter!

As near the dim procession fares,

A coffin and a bier it bears.

The hymn, a croaking chorus,

Floats, like the frogs' note, o'er us.



## XXII.

“ Let earth at midnight wrap the dead,  
    To music slow and dreary ;  
Haste to the feast, for I have led  
    My bride there, bright and cheery.  
Sir sexton, hasten ! I desire  
A marriage chorus from the choir :  
Sir priest, thy blessing leave us  
Ere bridal bower receive us ! ”

## XXIII.

Knell, bell and bier have disappeared,  
    And all the throng environ,  
Obedient to the horseman's word,  
    The black steed's hoofs of iron.  
And ever farther, tramp and trot,  
With racing speed they forward shot—  
Snort horse and horseman darkling,  
While hoof and flint are sparkling !

## XXIV.

By right and left how swiftly flowed  
Mountains and fields and hedges,  
And towers and hamlets on the road,  
Along its spinning edges!  
“ Love, dost thou fear? The moon shines bright;  
Hurrah! The dead ride swift and light!  
Love, did they fright *thee* never?”  
“ Ah, let them rest forever!”

## XXV.

But yonder, see, upon the way,  
The cruel wheel and gallows,  
And dimly, by the moon's wet ray,  
A crowd of merry fellows!  
“ Merry-men, come—my merry-men all,  
Come and follow your leaders' call,  
And dance in festal chorus,  
With bridal joy before us!”

## XXVI.

The merry-men all with sudden rush  
Come 'round the black steed swarming;  
So scud the leaves from withered bush,  
What time the wind is storming:  
And farther, farther, tramp and trot,  
With rushing speed they onward shot;—  
Snort horse and horseman darkling,  
While hoof and flint are sparkling!

## XXVII.

The round moon shone and flowed afar—  
A wierd, a fearsome rover!  
How flowed the heaven with many a star—  
How flowed the whole host over!  
“ Love, dost thou fear? The moon shines bright—  
Hurrah! The dead ride fast and light;  
Love, did they plague *thee* never?”  
“ Woe, let them rest forever !”

## XXVIII.

“ Black steed, did'st hear far chanticleer? . . . .

    Soon will the sand be wasted!

Black steed, I snuff the morning air—

    Hence be thy hoof-steps hasted!

Now is our mission done and past—

The bridal bower is open cast;

The dead ride swift and steady,

AND, LO! THE PLACE ALREADY!”

## XXIX.

Quick to an iron trellis-gate

    They sweep with loosened leather;

Touched by a slender branch's weight

    Ope lock and bar together.

The creaking leaves are fluttered wide,

And over mouldering graves they ride,

While in the moonlight chilly

The tombs gleam stark and stilly.

## XXX.

But see, before a moment sped,  
    Betid a grisly wonder!  
The trooper's mantle, shred by shred,  
    Like tinder, dropped asunder!  
His head became a skull so bare,  
Behind, before, it had no hair,  
While through his stripped bones plainly  
Gleamed glass and scythe ungainly!

## XXXI.

The black horse reared with many a snort,—  
    With sparks his eyes were winking,  
And, all in strange and sudden sort,  
    He seemed a-shrunk and sinking!  
With howls the upper air was stirred,  
And groans from sunken graves were heard;  
Lenore's heart, terror-tingling,  
Felt death with life commingling!

## XXXII.

Then, dancing in the pale moonlight,

As in a ring they wound her,

The grisly spirits, wierd and white,

Shrieked these wild words around her:

“PATIENCE! AND WHEN THE HEART IS CRUSHED,

AGAINST HIGH HEAVEN BE MURMURS HUSHED!

THY SOUL, MAY GOD ATTEND IT,

AS DOOM AND RUIN REND IT!”