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THE DUBLIN
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THE DUBLIN
UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE.

No. CLXVIII. DECEMBER, 1846. VOL. XXVIII.

POEMS FROM THE NORTH AND THE EAST.

[Of the three following poems, I have merely to remark, that the first exhibits my second attempt at a translation of BUERGER's world-celebrated ballad (and as I have, on the present occasion, rendered this exactly in the metre, and with the double rhymes of the original, I may, perhaps, with the more confidence, venture to hope that

its faults of composition will not be too severely condemned by the Critical);* that the next is an *adaptation* from the Servian; and that the third is—as will, doubtless, be apparent from its defects—altogether my own, though I confess that I am indebted for the idea that it embodies to a certain anecdote by an Oriental writer.—J. C. M.]

I.

Leonora.

I.

Leonora rose at break of day,
From dreams of gloomiest omen.
“ How long, oh, Wilhelm, wilt thou stay ?
Art false, or slain by the foemen ? ”
He had gone to aid, on Prague’s red plains,
King Frederick in his war-campaigns,
And none had learned or listed
News if he still existed.

* Those who feel sufficiently interested in the matter will find the former in the DUBLIN UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE, for October, 1834. (No. XXIII.)

II.

The King, at length, grown weary of war,
 Withdrew his hosts from Russia,
 And once again the blessed star
 Of Peace shone over Prussia ;
 And the regiments all, in gallant array,
 With drums and flutes, and standards gay,
 And wearing wreaths and blossoms,
 Marched home with joyous bosoms.

III.

Green alley and valley, and hill and plain,
 Were thronged for this glad meeting ;
 The blithe blue air, as passed each train,
 Rang far with rapturous greeting ;
 Then many a mother, and wife, and son,
 Bade welcome home the wandering one ;
 But ah ! none gave or bore a
 Kind word to Leonora !

IV.

She roamed about, and called aloud
 For Wilhelm over and over,
 But none in that gay glittering crowd
 Wist aught anent her lover.
 So, finding all her quest in vain,
 She writhed and grovelled on the plain,
 And rent her hair and vesture,
 With many a frantic gesture.

V.

There, as she lay in agony,
 Her anxious mother sought her.—
 “ Oh ! Gon in Heaven look down on thee !
 God comfort thee, my daughter !”—
 “ Oh, mother, mother, Gone is Gone !
 Farewell the world and all thereon !”
 Talk not of God in Heaven
 He leaveth me bereaven !”

VI.

“ No, dearest child !—whate'er befall,
 Thy Gon is ever near thee.
 He pitith all, He loveth all.
 Pray, pray, and He will hear thee !”
 “ Oh, mother, hollow, hollow pleal
 God loveth not nor pitith me—
 He recks not of mine anguish,
 But lets me groan and languish.”—

* “ *O, Mutter, Mutter ! Hin ist Hin !
 Nun fahre welt und alles hin !*”

The peculiarly magnificent and dreary character of this couplet can scarcely be appreciated except by a very philosophical student of the original. Its repetition, also, in the ninth stanza, where Leonora, in the excess of her despair, takes no notice of the half-maddening suggestion of her mother, and can dwell only on the one miserable predominant idea, is a remarkable poetical beauty, and strikingly true to nature.

VII.

“ My dear, dear child, Heaven hath a cure
 For every ill and dolor ;
 The Holy Sacrament, be sure,
 Will prove thy best consoler !”
 “ Vah, mother, the asp that gnaws my heart—
 No Sacrament can bid depart !
 No Sacrament can quicken
 Anew the once Death-stricken !”—

VIII.

“ My child, I fear thou art betrayed !
 Thy lover may have plighted
 His troth to some Hungarian maid,
 And thus thy hopes are blighted.
 What then ? Grieve not, but let him go !
 His perfidy will work him woe,
 And, ere his bad life ceases,
 Will rend his heart in pieces !”—

IX.

“ Oh, mother, mother, Gone is Gone !
 Departed is Departed !
 Woe, woe is me !—Alone, alone,
 Alone and broken-hearted !
 Die out, die out, my life’s lost light !
 Down, down in everlasting Night !
 God spareth not nor careth,
 Woe ! woe ! my soul despareth !”—

X.

“ Oh, God of goodness, let not this
 Provoke thy malediction !—
 She doth but rave up from the abyss
 Of her profound affliction !
 Ah, child ! forget thine earthly love,
 And lift thy heart to Heaven above.
 The Spouse of Souls will take thee,
 And He will ne’er forsake thee !”—

XI.

“ Oh, mother, what are Heaven and Hell ?
 Where, where is Wilhelm, mother ?
 With him is Heaven, without him Hell ;
 I want, I know, no other !
 Die out, die out, my soul’s lost light !
 Down, down in everlasting Night !
 No Heaven for me without him !
 No Heaven if I must doubt him !”

XII.

Thus dared this maiden, with a brain
 Made mad by tortured feelings,
 In reckless impiousness arraign
 The All-Just God’s wise dealings !
 And smote her breast, and groaned and cried,
 And wrung her hands till, at eventide,
 The pale-bright stars in millions,
 Bespangled Heaven’s pavilions.

xiii.

Then—hark! a horse's hoofs!—*Hopp, hopp!*
 They sound first farther, hoarser,
 Then clearer, nearer;—then they stop,
 And a rider vaults from his courser,
 With clank of spurs and ringing knoll;
 Then—hark!—the portal bell—*Toll! Toll!*
 Then stillness; then follow
 These words in accents hollow:—

xiv.

“ Ho-là, my love! I am here anew!
 Tell me what tides thou keepest;—
 Art sad or gay? Art false or true?
 And wakest thou or sleepest?”—
 “ What, Wilhelm! Is it really thou?
 Oh, I have watched and wept till now!
 But this drear midnight visit—
 What may it mean? Whence is it?”

xv.

“ I started from Bohemia late.
 We ride by midnight only.
 Up! come with me, my faithful mate!
 Too long thou mournest lonely!”
 “ Ah, Wilhelm, here is somewhat wrong!
 Hark! the wind bloweth strange and strong;
 Come in and warm thee, dearest,
 And here let thee and me rest!”

xvi.

“ So may the wind blow strange and strong,
 Blow stranger and blow stronger!
 I must along! Thou must along!
 We linger here no longer!
 Rise! Don thy attire and come with me,
 My black barb snorts impatiently.
 We must leave leagues behind us
 Before the priest can bind us!”

xvii.

“ —Oh, Wilhelm, this but bodeth dole,
 Oh, tarry here till daylight!
 Just now I heard ‘ Eleven’ toll,
 And Heaven hath such a gray light!”
 “ —Look hither! Look thither! The moon shines bright,
 The Dead and We ride fast by night!
 Ere Morning’s red rays clamber
 The skies we’ll reach our chamber.”

xviii.

“ —And where, say, is the young bride’s room,
 Wherein her maids undress her?”—
 —“ Far hence!—cold, lone, and buried in gloom—
 Six large planks, and two lesser!”
 —“ But is there space?”—“ Ay, space for both!
 Come! no delay! Shake off thy sloth
 Lest Night perchance belate us.
 —The wedding-guests await us.”

XIX.

And Leonora, garbed and out,
 Sprang up behind the rider,
 And flung her lily arms about
 Her lover and her guider.
 Then, ho, ho!—hurry!—*hopp, hopp, hopp!*
 Rode off the pair with never a stop;
 Until both gasped together,
 And flints and fire flashed nether!

XX.

Aright, aleft, reeled, reft and cleft,
 Earth's globe around and under;
 The sky swept by as a storm-blown west;
 The bridges volleyed in thunder.
 “Glance up! Queen Moon rides high and blue—
 Hurrah! the Dead ride royally too!
 Dost fear the Dead, my best love?”
 —“Ah, leave the Dead at rest, love!”

XXI.

But hark!—that dreary choral swell!
 Those night-birds' croak funereal!
 Hark! knell of bell, and dirge as well—
 “Now, brethren, for the burial!”
 And lo! a group who bear a bier,
 A mourning group draw slowly near,
 With chant like some deep dismal
 Ghost-wail from realms abysmal.

XXII.

“Halt, croakers, there! The corpse may bide
 Its funeral rites till dawning;
 To-night I espouse my fair young bride,
 Lay down, then, bier and awning!
 Come, sexton, come!—thy choir and thou
 Shall troll us nuptial-songs enow!
 Come, priest, and bless the wedding!
 Then, ho for the feast and bedding!”

XXIII.

Down went the bier; the dirge was hushed;
 And, light-limbed and unladen,
Tripp, tripp, trapp, trapp, the buriers rushed
 Behind the youth and maiden;
 And, ho, ho!—hurry!—*hopp, hopp, hopp!*
 Dashed forward all with never a stop,
 Until all gasped together,
 And flints and fire flashed nether!

XXIV.

How twirled, how whirled, before, behind,
 The floods, the woods, the mountains!
 Before, behind, like wind, like Mind,
 How flew dells, fells, and fountains!
 “Glance up! The moon rides high and blue—
 Hurrah! the Dead ride bravely too!
 Dost fear the Dead and Gone, love?”
 —“Ah! let the Dead sleep on, love!”

xxv.

But look ! Where yon high gibbet-wheels
 Wind-shaken, creak and wabble,
 The moonlight suddenly reveals
 A dancing phantom-rabble !
 “ Ho, there, gay neighbours !—down to me !
 We'll all ride home so merrily, we !

And you shall dance before us,
 While these here lilt in chorus !”

xxvi.

And down they came in eddying whirls,
 With whirr as when, the while Eve's
 Clouds gather black, the night-blast swirls
 Through Autumn's birks of dry leaves.
 And, ho, ho !—hurry !—*hopp, hopp, hopp !*
 Away trooped all with never a stop,
 Till all gasped hard together,
 And flints and fire flashed nether !

xxvii.

How sped, how fled, the sky, the stars,
 Like young steeds loosed from harness !
 How danced the stars ! how glanced their cars !
 How flew they through the Farness !
 “ Look up ! The moon rides high and blue—
 Hurrah ! the Dead ride nobly too !
 Dost fear the Dead, my best love ?”
 —“ Ah, no !—but let them rest, love !”

xxviii.

“ Enough ! I scent the morning gale ;
 My sands, I mark, are failing.
 Right well have we ridden o'er hill and dale.
 Behold yon grated railing
 That shimmereth dusky ! Inside
 Its bars I hail thee as my bride !
 There shall we slumber sweetly.
 Hurrah ! the Dead ride feately !”

xxix.

Anon they halt. The chancelled gate
 Swings o'er to the grey wall's border,
 And that strange group, as urged by Fate,
 March through in solemn order.
 The steed's reins trail along the ground,
 While wild lamentings all around,
 Sad as the Trump of Doom's tones,
 Rise up from graves and tombstones !

xxx.

But now, O, Horror !—see ! As clay
 From some worn wall that moulders,
 The horseman's garments fall away,
 Fall piecemeal from his shoulders !
 With scythe and sand-glass high upraised,
 And grinning skull, now all ecarased
 Of hair and flesh and feature,
 He stands,—DEATH,—or His Creature !

XXXI.

High rears the steed, with mane upcurled,
The earth yawns, rent asunder,
And down the hapless girl is hurled
 Into the dark pit under;
And, while drear howlings fill the air,
And cries of terror and despair,
 Behold her there, a-lying,
 Half living and half dying !

XXXII.

And now the grisly spectre-band,
As Night gives place to Morning,
Dance round their victim hand-in-hand,
 And sing and shriek this warning—
“ *Bear,—though thy proud heart break with pain,*
Heaven’s wrath is not invoked in vain!
 Thy body and thou must sever ;
 God spare thy soul for ever !”
