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L E N D R A

A BALLAD,

by

B U R G E R.

translated by

ALBERT SMITH.

For Private Circulation.

1846.

41-

Alfred Crowley.
from his friend Albert Smith.

L E N D R A,

1847.

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1846.

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W. Watts, Printer, Crown Court, Temple Bar.



1590

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P r e f a c e.

—o—

There have been so many excellent Translations done of this powerful Ballad, that some little Apology should be made for offering the present one to the Reader. But the Metre of the original has not been strictly preserved in any I have seen ; and, in consequence, the Poem loses much of its Impressiveness. In the following attempt I have carefully kept to the Metre ; and in some Lines the Words are in the exact Order of the original : indeed, I have sacrificed every thing to make it as close and literal as possible. But for this Intention, many of the Verses might have been considerably improved.

Chertsey, Surrey,
May, 1846.

L E N O R A.

Lenora, at the Blush of Day,
From heavy Slumbers started,
“ Art dead, or faithless, Wilhelm, say,
How long must we be parted ? ”
He was with Frederick’s armed Might,
At Prague, and there engaged in Fight,
Had sent no Word or Token,
To prove his health unbroken.

The Empress and the Prussian King,
Wearied of constant striving,
Their stubborn Natures softening,
Saw Peace at last arriving.
And all the Troops rejoiced and sang,
With Kettle-drums’ and martial Clang,
Their Arms with green Boughs twining,
Towards their Homes inclining.

And everywhere—all, all around,
From Roads and Pathways meeting,
Both Old and Young, with joyous Sound,
Went forth to give their greeting.
“Thank God!” the Child and Wife outcried,
And “Welcome!” many a happy Bride :
Lenora, only, misses
The warm Embrace and Kisses.

And up and down, amidst the Brave,
She flew, each Name repeating ;
But none the Information gave
Of all that warlike Meeting.
And when the Train had passed elsewhere,
She tore her Locks of Raven-hair.
To earth her fair Form flinging,
Her Hands in Frenzy wringing.

Her Mother ran to her, and cried,
“With Mercy, Heaven, invest her,
What ill can my dear child betide?”
And in her fond Arms pressed her.
“O, Mother—gone is gone for aye,
The World and all may pass away ;
God has no Kindness done me,
Oh woe ! oh woe ! upon me !”

" Help, God ! help ! Leave us not unblest :
 Pray to him to befriend us.
 What is His Will, is for the best,
 God ! God ! some Comfort send us !"

" Oh, Mother, Mother ! foolish Plea !
 God has done nothing well for me !
 My Prayer 's unhelp'd, unheeded,
 Shall never more be needed !"

" Help, God ! the true Believers know
 Their Gloom his Aid can brighten :
 The hallowed sacramental Bow,
 Thy Misery shall lighten."

" Oh, Mother, this consuming Rage,
 No Sacrament can e'er assuage ;
 No Sacrament e'er taken,
 Has Power the Dead to waken."

" List, Childe. Perchance thy Lover now,
 In distant Lands united,
 In falsehood has renounced his Bow,
 To some new Marriage plighted.
 So let him go. His Love thus o'er,
 His Heart shall never profit more ;
 When Soul and Body sever,
 His pangs shall last for ever."

“ Oh, Mother—Mother ! Gone is gone !
 The past, the past is ended !
 Death—Death is now my Gain alone,
 Why was I born unfriended ?
 Be quench’d my Light—be quench’d for aye,
 In Night and Horror die away.
 God has no Kindness done me.
 Oh woe ! oh woe upon me !”

“ Help, God ! nor into Judgment go,
 On this poor Child’s Expressions ;
 What her Tongue says, she does not know :
 Record not her Transgressions.
 Forget all earthly Woe, like this,
 Think but on God and Heavenly Bliss ;
 Then to thy Spirits panting,
 No Bridegroom shall be wanting.”

“ Oh, Mother ! what is Hell—or Bliss—
 That thus you speak about it ;
 I knew but Heav’n in Wilhelm’s Kiss,
 And all is Hell without it.
 Be quench’d my Light—be quench’d for aye,
 In Night and Horror die away ;
 On earth, without my Lover,
 All Happiness is over.”

Thus her Despair o'er every Sense
And through each Vein was raging,
And war against God's Providence
Most rashly she was waging.

She wrung her Hands and beat her Breast,
Until the Sun went down to Rest,
And up in Heav'n's Arch beaming,
The golden Stars were gleaming.

Hush ! listen ! listen ! tramp—tramp—tramp !

A Courser's Steps she counted,
The Rider next, with clattering Stamp,
Before the Porch dismounted.

And listen ! at the Gate, a Ring,
Sounds faintly—softly—fling-ling-ling !
And then came, through the Portal,
These Words, distinctly mortal,

“ Holla ! open the Door my Pet ;
Watches thou, Love ? or sleepest ?
How art thou mooded tow'rds me yet ?
And laughest thou, or weepest ?”

“ Ah, Wilhelm ! thou ! So late at Night !
I've watch'd for thee in sorrowing Plight,
And undergone much Chiding.
Whence com'st thou now, thus riding ?”

"We only saddle at midnight ;
 From far Bohemia, hither,
 I rous'd myself late for the flight,
 And now will bear thee, thither."

"Stay, Wilhelm, stay ! The Wind doth rush
 Loud whistling through the Hawthorn-bush.
 Here—Heart's love—let me hold thee,
 My warm Arms shall enfold thee."

"Let the Wind whistle through the Haws,
 Child—let it whistle stronger,
 Now clinks my Spur ; the Black-horse paws ;
 I dare not tarry longer.

Come—come : truss up thy Dress, and spring
 On my Black-horse, behind me swing,
 To reach our Couch to-day, Love,
 One hundred Miles away, Love."

"And must I ride one hundred Miles
 To our Bride-bed to day, Love ?
 And hark ! the Church Clock tolls meanwhiles,
 Eleven ! doth it say, Love ?"

"See here !—see there !—the moon is high ;
 We and the Dead can swiftly fly.
 'Tis for a Bet we're flying,
 To where the Couch is lying."

" Yet say—where is thy bridal Hall,
 Thy nuptial bed—where lies it?"
 " Far—far from hence!—still, cool, and small,
 Eight slender Planks comprise it."
 " Hast room for me?" " For me and thee!
 Come, gird thy dress; quick, mount with me.
 The Guests are there to meet thee;
 The Doors wide open greet thee."

The fair Girl quickly dressed, and sprung
 Upon the Horse behind him;
 And round the trusty Rider flung,
 Her lily Arms entwined him.
 And hurra! off! away! the Steed
 Flies like the Wind, with whistling Speed;
 The Horse and Rider quivering,
 And Sparks and Pebbles shivering.

And right and left—on either hand
 Before their Eyes quick sunder'd,
 How flew the Lawns, and Heaths, and Land!
 And how the Bridges thundered!
 " Dearest, dost fear? The Moon is high!
 Hurra! the Dead can swiftly fly!
 Dost fear the Dead, my own Love?"
 " Nay—leave the Dead alone, Lore."

What sound is that af Clang and Knell ?
 Why do the Ravens flutter ?
 Hark ! the death-song : and tolls the Bell ! .
 " Bury the corpse " they utter !
 A funeral Train was coming near ;
 They bore the Coffin and the Bier :
 The Hymn, the Croak resembled
 Of Frogs in Ponds assembled.

" After midnight inter the Dead,
 With Knell and Lamentation :
 Now, my young Wife I homeward lead
 With bridal Celebration.
 Come, Sexton, with thy choral Throng
 And drawl us out thy bridal Song !
 Come, gabble Priest, thy Blessing,
 E'er tow'rds the Couch we're pressing."

The Clang was still'd ; vanish'd the Bier,
 Obedient to his calling :
 And all beside—less and less near
 Behind his Horse was falling.
 And further—faster still—the Steed
 Flies like the Wind with whistling Speed ;
 The Horse and Rider quivering,
 And Sparks and Pebbles shivering.

And left, and right, how swift in flight
 Pass'd Hedges, Trees, and Mountains :
 How flew on right, and left, and right,
 Towns, Villages, and Fountains.

“Dearest ! dost fear ? The moon is high !
 Hurra ! the Dead can swiftly fly !
 Dost fear the Dead, my own Love ?”
 “ Ah, leave the Dead alone, Love !”

See there ! about the Gallows' Height
 Round the Wheel's Axe prancing,
 Seen dimly in the pale Moonlight,
 A shadowy Mob is dancing.

“ Halloo—there ! Rabble ! Ho ! come here !
 Come, Mob, with me—and follow near !
 Our Wedding-dance be skipping
 When we to Bed are tripping.”

And quickly on the Mob did rush
 Behind them, noisy-clattering,
 As Whirlwinds through the Hazel-bush
 Send down the dry Leaves patterning :
 And further—faster still—the Steed
 Flies like the Wind, with whistling Speed ;
 The Horse and Rider quivering,
 And Sparks and Pebbles shivering.

How flew they in the Moon's wide Light,
 Soon into Distance speeding !
 And overhead, how quick in flight
 Were Heavens and Stars receding !
 " Dearest ! dost fear ? The Moon is high !
 Hurra ! the Dead can swiftly fly !
 Dost fear the Dead, my own Love ?"
 " Oh, leave the Dead alone, Love !"

" My Steed ! methinks the Cock doth crow ;
 The Sand is just expended ;
 My Steed ! the Morning Air I know,
 Quick, hence ! our Course is ended :
 Achiev'd, achiev'd now is our Ride !
 The nuptial Chamber opens wide !
 The Dead ride swiftly striving !
 The Goal, the Goal's arriving !"

And swiftly tow'rds an iron Grate
 With tearing Speed they thunder'd :
 With a slight Switch he strikes the Gate,
 And Lock and Bolt is funder'd.
 The Doors unfolded, creaking wide,
 And over Graves still on they ride,
 With Tomb-stones round them gleaming,
 On which the Moon is beaming.

Look ! in the Twinkling of an Eye,
 Ho ! ho !—a ghastly wonder !
 Piecemeal the Rider's Garments lie,
 Like Tinder shred asunder.
 A Skull, of Tuft and Queue bereft,
 A naked Skull alone is left !
 A Skeleton, before her
 Holds Scythe and Sand-glass o'er her !

The Black-horse wildly snorts and rears,
 And breathes forth Sparks ; and shrinking
 From underneath them, disappears,
 Quick vanishing and sinking.
 Wild Howling fills the Welkin round,
 And Groans from the deep Grave resound.
 Lenora's Heart, just shivering,
 'Twixt Life and Death is quivering.

And now beneath the Moon's pale Glance,
 Round in a Circle scowling,
 Link'd hand in hand, the Spectres dance,
 And to this Tune are howling :
 " Forbear ! forbear ! though breaks the Heart,
 'Gainst God in Heaven take no Part.
 Now from thy Body sever,—
 God save thy Soul for ever ! "