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For the Monthly Magazine.

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE POEMS OF
G. A. BÜRGER.

[*By the Translator of Goethe's Iphigenia
in Tauris.*]

GODFRED Augustus Bürger was born in 1748, at Ascherleben, and is employed as receiver of the land-tax at Wölmershausen. In 1779, was made the first Collection of his Poems, which had severally appeared in periodical miscellanies; and in 1789, that which lies before me. They consist partly of songs, sonnets, elegies, fables, and other short pieces, comic and serious; and partly of ballads, many of which are translated, with improvements, from English originals. Dryden's Guiscardo and Sigismunda, the Child of Elle, and the

the Friar of Orders Gray, from Percy's Collection, are among them: the scene of adventure has uniformly been transferred to Germany. Of his mere translations, the *Pervigilium Veneris* is the most distinguished: it is more animated than that of Parnell. His specimens toward a version of the *Iliad*, in rhymeless iambic, are not comprehended in these two volumes of Poems, and will probably remain incomplete. Now that *Voss* has so perfectly naturalized Homer, in German hexameter. Bürger is every where distinguished for manly sentiment and force of style. His extraordinary powers of language are founded on a rejection of the conventional phraseology of regular poetry, in favour of popular forms of expression, caught by the listening artist from the voice of agitated nature. Imitative harmony he pursues almost to excess: the onomatopœia is his prevailing figure; the interjection, his favourite part of speech: arrangement, rhythm, sound, rhyme, are always with him, an echo to the sense. The hurrying vigour of his impetuous diction is unrivalled; yet it is so natural, even in its sublimity, that his poetry is singularly fitted to become national popular song.

A few of his shorter poems, and two of his wholly original ballads, may give some idea of his peculiarity to the English readers. (*For these, our readers are referred to our poetical department of this and the following months.*)

ORIGINAL POETRY.

 LENORA.

A BALLAD, FROM BÜRGER.

[The following translation (made some years since) of a celebrated piece, of which other versions have appeared, and are now on the point of appearing, possess so much peculiar and intrinsic merit, that we are truly happy in being permitted to present it to our Readers.]

AT break of day, with frightful dreams
 Lenora struggled fore :
 My William, art thou slain, say'd she,
 Or dost thou love no more ?

He went abroad with Richard's host,
 The Paynim foes to quell ;
 But he no word to her had writt,
 An he were sick or well.

With fowne of trump and beat of drum,
 His fellow soldiery come ;
 Their helmes bydeckt with oaken boughs,
 They seeke their long'd-for home.

And ev'ry roade, and ev'ry lane,
 Was full of old and young,
 To gaze at the rejoicing band,
 To hail with gladfome tounge.

" Thank God !" their wives and children saide,
 " Welcome !" the brides did saye :
 But greet or kiss Lenora gave
 To none upon that daye.

She aske of all the passing traine,
 For him she wisht to see ;
 But none of all the passing traine
 Could tell if lived hee.

And

And when the soldyers all were bye,
She tore her raven haire,
And cast herself upon the gowne
In furious despaire.

Her mother ran and lyfte her up,
And clasped in her arme,
" My child, my child, what dost thou ail?
God shield thy life from harm!"

" O mother, mother! William's gone!
What's all besyde to me?
There is no mercye, sure, above!
All, all were spar'd but hee!"

" Kneel downe, thy paternoster saye,
'Twill calme thy troubled spright:
The Lord is wyse, the Lord is good;
What hee hath done is right."

" O mother, mother! say not so;
Most cruel is my fate:
I prayde, and prayde; but watte away'd?
'Tis now, alas! too late."

" Our Heavenly Father, if we praye,
Will help a suff'ring childe:
Go take the holy sacrament;
So shall thy grief grow milde."

" O mother, what I feel within,
No sacrament can staye;
No sacrament can teche the dead
To bear the sight of daye."

" May be, among the heathen folk
Thy William false doth prove,
And puts away his faith and troth,
And takes another love.

Then wherefore sorrow for his los?
Thy moans are all in vain:
And when his soul and body parte,
His falschode brings him paine."

" O mother, mother! gone is gone;
My hope is all forlorne;
The grave mie on'y fastuarde is—
O, had I ne'er been borne!

Go out, go out, my lampe of life;
In gristle darknes die:
There is no mercye, sure, above!
For ever let me lie."

" Almighty God! O do not judge
My poor unhappy childe;
She knows not what her lips pronounce,
Her anguish makes her wilde.

My girl, forget thine earthly woe,
And think on God and blis;
For so, at least, shall not thy soule
Its heavenly bridegroom mis."

" O mother, mother! what is blisse,
And what the fiend is celle?
With him 'tis heaven any where,
Without my William, helle.

" Go out, go out, my lamp of life;
In endless darknes die:
Without him I must loathe the earth,
Without him him scorne the skye."

And so despaire did rave and rage
Athwarte her boiling veins;
Against the Providence of God
She hurle her impious strains.

She bet her breaſte, and wrung her hands,
And rollede her tearlesse eye,
From rise of morne, till the pale stars
Again did freecke the skye.

When harke! abroad she hearde the trampe
Of nimble-hoofed steed;
She hearde a knighte with clank alighte,
And climb the staire in speede.

And soon she herde a tinkling hande,
That twirled at the pin;
And thro' her door, that open'd not,
These words were breath'd in.

" What! what ho! thy dore undoe;
Art watching or asleepe?
My love, dost yet remember mee,
And dost thou laugh or weep?"

" Ah! William here so late at night!
Oh! I have watchte and walk'd:
Whence dost thou come? For thy return
My herte has forely ak'd."

" At midnight only we may ride;
I come o'er land and sea:
I mounted late, but loone I go;
Aryse, and come with me."

" O William, enter first my bowte,
And give me one embrace:
The blaits athwarte the hawthorne hifs;
Awyte a little space."

" Tho' blaits athwarte the hawthorne hifs,
I may not harbour here;
My spurre is sharpe, my courser pawes,
My houre of flighte is nere.

All as thou lycst upon thy couch,
Aryse, and mount behinde;
To-night we'll ride a thousand miles,
The bridal bed to finde."

" How, ride to-night a thousand miles?
Thy love thou dost bemocke:
Eleven is the stroke that still
Rings on within the clocke."

" Looke up; the moone is bright, and we
Outstride the earthlie men:
I'll take thee to the bridal bed,
And night shall end but then."

" And where is, then, thy house and home;
And where thy bridal bed?"
" 'Tis narrow, silent, chilly, dark;
Far hence I rest my head."

" And is there any room for mee,
Wherein that I may creepe?"
" There's room enough for thee and mee,
Wherein that we may sleepe.

All as thou ly'st upon thy couch,
Aryse, no longer stop;
The wedding guests thy coming waite,
The chamber dore is ope."

All in her sarke, as there she lay,
Upon his horse she sprung;
And with her lilly hands so pale
About her William clung.

And hurry-skurry forth they goe,
Unheeding wet or drye;
And horse and rider snort and blowe,
And sparkling pebbles flye.

How swift the flood, the mead, the wood,
Aright, aleft, are gone!
The bridges thunder as they pass,
But earthlie fowne is none.

Tramp, tramp, across the land they speed;
Splash, splash, across the see:
"Hurrah! the dead can ride apace;
Dost feare to ride with mee?"

The moone is bryghte, and blue the nyghte;
Dost quake the blast to stem?
Dost fludder, mayde, to seeke the dead?"
"No, no, but what of them?"

How glumlie fownes yon dirgye song!
Night-ravens flappe the wing.
What knell doth slowlie toll ding dong?
The psalmes of death who sing?

It creeps, the swarthie funeral traine,
The corse is onn the beere;
Like croke of todes from lonely moores,
The chaunt doth meet the cere."

"Go, bear her corse when midnight's past,
With song, and tear, and wayle;
I've gott my wife, I take her home,
My howre of wedlocke hayl.

Lead forth, O clarke, the chaunting quire,
To swell our nuptial song:
Come, preafte, and reade the blessing soone;
For bed, for bed we long."

They heede is calle, and husht the fowne;
The biere was seene no more:
And followde him ore feeld and flood
Yet faster than before.

Halloo! halloo! away they goe,
Unheeding wet or drye;
And horse and rider snort and blowe,
And sparkling pebbles flye.

How swifte the hill, how swifte the dale,
Aright, aleft, are gone!
By hedge and tree, by thorpe and towne,
They gallop, gallop on.

Tramp, tramp, across the land they speede;
Splash, splash, across the see:
"Hurrah! the dead can ride apace;
Dost feare to ride with me?"

Look up, look up, an airy crewe
In roundel daunces reele:
The moone is bryghte, and blue the nyghte,
Mayst dimlie see them wheele.

Come to, come to, ye gossie crew,
Come to, and follow mee,
And daunce for us the wedding daunce,
When we in bed shall be."

And brush, brush, brush, the gossie crew
Come wheeling ore their heads,
All rustling like the wither'd leaves
That wyde the wirlwind spreads.

Halloo! halloo! away they goe,
Unheeding wet or drye;
And horse and rider snort and blowe,
And sparkling pebbles flye.

And all that in the moonshyne lay,
Behynde them fled afar;
And backward scudded overhead
The skye and every star.

Tramp, tramp, across the land they speede;
Splash, splash, across the see:
"Hurrah! the dead can ride apace;
Dost feare to ride with me?"

I weene the cock prepares to crowe;
The sand will soon be runne:
I snuff the early morning aire;
Downe, downe! our work is done.

The dead, the dead can ryde apace;
Oure wed-bed here is fit:
Our race is ridde, our journey ore,
Our endless union knit."

And lo! an yren-grated grate
Soon biggens to their view:
He crackte his whyppe; the claugynge boltes,
The doores asunder flew.

They pass, and 'twas on graves they trode;
" 'Tis hither we are bounde:"
And many a tombstone gossie white
Lay inn the moonshyne round.

And when hee from his feede alytte,
His armour, black as cinder,
Did moulder, moulder all awaye,
As were it made of tinder.

His head became a naked skull;
Nor haire nor eyne had hee;
His body grew a skeleton,
Whilome so blythe of blee.

And att his dry and boney heele
No spur was left to be;
And inn his witherde haad you might
The scythe and hour-glasse see.

And lo! his feede did thin to smoke,
And charnel fires outbreathe;
And pal'd, and bleach'd, then vanish'd quite
The mayde from underneathe.

And hollow howlings hung in aire,
And shrekes from vaults arose.
Then knew the mayde the mighte no more
Her living eyes unclose.

But onward to the judgment seat,
Thro' myste and moonlight dreare,
The gossie crewe, their flyghte persewe,
And hollowe inn her ear:—

"Be patient, tho' thyne herte should breake,
Arrayne not Heven's decree;
Thou nowe art of this bodie reste,
This soule forgiven bee!"

For a particular account of Bürger, see p. 117.
T
A COR.