

# POEMS OF PLACES

EDITED BY

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW

It is the Soul that sees; the outward eyes Present the object, but the Mind descries.

CRABBE.

## GERMANY.

VOL. II.



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## Weinsberg.

THE WIVES OF WEINSBERG.

WHICH way to Weinsberg? neighbor, say!
"T is, sure, a famous city:
It must have cradled, in its day,
Full many a maid of noble clay,
And matrons, wise and witty;
And if ever marriage should happen to me,
A Weinsberg dame my wife shall be.

King Conrad once, historians say,
Fell out with this good city;
So down he came, one luckless day,—
Horse, foot, dragoons,—in stern array,—
And cannon,—more 's the pity!

Around the walls the artillery roared, And bursting bombs their fury poured.

But naught the little town could scare;
Then, red with indignation,
He bade the herald straight repair
Up to the gates, and thunder there
The following proclamation:
"Rascals! when I your town do take,
No living thing shall save its neck!"

Now, when the herald's trumpet sent
These tidings through the city,
To every house a death-knell went;
Such murder-cries the hot air rent
Might move the stones to pity.
Then bread grew dear, but good advice
Could not be had for any price.

Then, "Woe is me!" "O misery!"
What shrieks of lamentation!
And "Kyrie Eleison!" cried
The pastors, and the flock replied,
"Lord, save us from starvation!"
"O, woe is me, poor Corydon!
My neck,—my neck! I'm gone,—I'm gone!"

Yet oft, when counsel, deed, and prayer
Had all proved unavailing,
When hope hung trembling on a hair,
How oft has woman's wit been there!

A refuge never failing;

For woman's wit and Papal fraud, Of olden time, were famed abroad.

A youthful dame, — praised be her name!

Last night had seen her plighted, —

Whether in waking hour or dream,

Conceived a rare and novel scheme,

Which all the town delighted;

Which you, if you think otherwise,

Have leave to laugh at and despise.

At midnight hour, when culverin
And gun and bomb were sleeping,
Before the camp, with mournful mien,
The loveliest embassy were seen
All kneeling low and weeping.
So sweetly, plaintively they prayed,
But no reply save this was made:—

"The women have free leave to go,
Each with her choicest treasure;
But let the knaves, their husbands, know
That unto them the king will show
The weight of his displeasure."
With these sad terms the lovely train
Stole weeping from the camp again.

But, when the morning gilt the sky, What happened? Give attention. The city gates wide open fly, And all the wives come trudging by, Each bearing—need I mention?— Her own dear husband on her back, All snugly seated in a sack!

Full many a sprig of court, the joke
Not relishing, protested,
And urged the king; but Conrad spoke:
"A monarch's word must not be broke!"
And there the matter rested.
"Bravo!" he cried. "Ha, ha! Bravo!
Our lady guessed it would be so."

He pardoned all, and gave a ball,
That night, at royal quarters.
The fiddles squeaked, the trumpets blew,
And up and down the dancers flew,
Court sprigs with city daughters.
The mayor's wife — O rarest sight! —
Danced with the shoemaker that night!

Ah, where is Weinsberg, sir, I pray?

'T is, sure, a famous city:

It must have cradled, in its day,

Full many a maid of noble clay,

And matrons, wise and witty;

And if ever marriage should happen to me,

A Weinsberg dame my wife shall be.

Gottfried August Bürger. Tr. C. T. Brooks.

## LENORA.

FROM heavy dreams Lenora rose
With morning's first, faint ray:
"O William, art thou false, — or dead?
How long wilt thou delay?"
He, with King Frederick's knightly train,
Had hied to distant battle-plain,
And not a line had come to tell
If yet he were alive and well.

And now were king and queen full fain
The weary strife to ccase,
Subdued at length their mutual wrath,
And joined their hands in peace;
Then rose the song and clash and clang,
And kettle-drums and trumpets rang,
As, decked with garlands green and gay,
Each host pursued its homeward way.

And here and there, and everywhere,
Along each road and route,
To meet them came both young and old,
With song and merry shout.
"Thank God!" both child and mother cried,
And "Welcome!" many a happy bride.
But, ah! one heart shared not the bliss
Of fond embrace and thrilling kiss.

From rank to rank Lenora flew;
She called each knight by name,
And asked for William; but, alas!
No answering tidings came.
Then, when that host had all gone by,
She beat her breast in agony,
And madly tore her raven hair,
And prostrate fell in wild despair.

The mother hastened to her child:

"Ah, God have mercy now!

My darling child, what aileth thee?"

And kissed her marble brow.

"O mother, mother, all is o'er;
No peace, no hope forevermore;
No pity dwells with God on high;
Woe's me, woe's me; O misery!"

"Help, God of grace, look down and help!
Child, breathe a fervent prayer;
What God has done must work for good;
God hears, and God will spare."
"O mother, mother, — idle thought!
No good for me God's will hath wrought;
Vain have been all my prayers, — all vain;
I dare not look to Heaven again!"

"Help, God of grace! No child shall seek
The Father's face in vain;
Come, and the blessed sacrament
Shall surely soothe thy pain."
"O mother, mother, pangs like these
No sacrament hath power to ease;
No sacrament can pierce death's gloom,
And wake the tenant of the tomb!"

"Child, hear me; say, the false one now,
In far Hungarian land,
Abjures his holy faith, and plights
Some Paynim maid his hand?
Well, let it go, child, let it go,
"T will profit him no more below;
And O, when soul and body part,
What flames shall burn his perjured heart!"

"O mother, mother, lost is lost,
And gone, forever gone;
Death, death, is now my only gain;
O, had I ne'er been born!
Be quenched, forever quenched, my light!
Die, die in horror's gloomiest night!
No pity dwells with God on high;
Woe's me, woe's me; O misery!"

"Help, God of grace! O, enter not
In judgment with thy child!
Alas! she knows not what she says;
Forgive whom woe makes wild.
Ah, child, forget thine earthly woes,
And think on God and heaven's repose;
Then shall thy soul, life's sorrows passed,
The bridegroom meet in bliss at last.

"O mother, mother, what is bliss?
O mother, what is hell?
With him, with him alone, is bliss;
Without my William, hell.
Be quenched, forever quenched, my light!
Die, die in horror's gloomiest night!
While he is not, no peace below;
Without him, heaven is endless woe!"

Thus raged the madness of despair,
And smote and scorehed her brain.
She ceased not still God's providence
And justice to arraign;

She wrung her hands and beat her breast, Until the sun had gone to rest, Till all the stars came out on high, And twinkled in the vaulted sky.

When, hark! a distant trap, trap, trap,
Like horse's hoofs, did sound;
And soon an iron-mailed knight
Sprang elattering to the ground.
And hark! and hark! a gentle ring
Came swiftly, softly,—kling, ling, ling;
Then through the door, in accents clear,
These words did greet Lenora's ear:—

"Holla! holla! love, ope to me;
Dost wake, my child, or sleep?
And what are now thy thoughts of me?
And dost thou smile or weep?"

"Ah, William, thou?—so late at night?—
I've wept and watched through gloom and light;
And, ah, what depths of woe I've known!
Whence com'st thou now thus late and lone?"

"At midnight hour alone we ride;
From Hungary I come.

I saddled late, and now, my bride,
Will bear thee to thy home."

"Ah, William, first come in, till morn;
The wild wind whistles through the thorn.
Come quickly in, my love; these arms
Shall fold thee safe from midnight harms."

"Let the wind whistle through the thorn;
Child, what have I to fear?
Loud snorts the steed; the spur rings shrill;
I may not tarry here.
Come, robe thyself, and mount with speed
Behind me on my coal-black steed;
And when a hundred miles are past,
We reach the bridal-bed at last."

"Ah, must I ride a hundred miles
To bridal-bed this day?
And, hark! e'en now the booming clock,—
Eleven!—night wears away."
"See here! see here! the moon shines bright;
We and the dead ride swift by night:
Thou, an thou mount without delay,
Shalt see thy marriage-bed to-day!"

"Where is thy chamber, say, my love?

And where thy marriage-bed?"

"Far, far from here!—still, small, and cool,—
Six planks, with foot and head."

"Hast room for me?" "For thee and me;
Come, robe thee, mount, and soon thou'lt see;
The guests stand waiting for the bride;
The chamber door stands open wide."

Up rose the maid, and donned her robes, And on the courser sprung, And round the darling rider's form Her lily arms she flung. And hurry ho! o'er hill and plain,
Hop, hop, the gallop swept amain,
Till steed and rider, panting, blew,
And dust-clouds, sparks, and pebbles flew.

And on the right and on the left
How fast the landscape fled!
How all the thundering bridges shook
Beneath the courser's tread!
"Dost quake, my love? The moon shines bright!
Hurrah! the dead ride swift by night!
Dost fear the dead, my love, my own?"
"Ah no! yet leave the dead alone."

What clang was that, and doleful song,
And rush of raven's wing?

Hark! hark! the knell of funeral bell!

The bending mourners sing,

"Bear home the dead!" and soon appear

The shrouded corpse and sable bier;

Like croak of frogs in marshy plain,

Swelled on the breeze that dismal strain.

"When midnight's passed, bear home the dead,
With sad, sepulchral strain;
I'm bearing home my youthful bride;
Haste,—join the bridal train!
Come, sexton, bring thy choir along,
And croak for me the bridal song;
Come, priest, and be thy blessing said,
Or cre we seek the marriage-bed!"

Ceased clang and song, swift fled the bier,
Obedient to his call,
Hard at the horse's heels that throng
Came hurrying one and all;
And onward, on, o'er hill and plain,
Hop, hop, the gallop swept amain,
Till horse and rider panting blew,
And dust-clouds, sparks, and pebbles flew.

On either hand, — right, left, — how swift
Trees, hedges, mountains, fled!
How vanished cities, towns, and farms,
As onward still they sped!
"Dost quake, my love? The moon shines bright!
Hurrah! the dead ride swift by night!
Dost fear the dead, my love, my own?"
"Ah, leave the dead to rest, alone!"

See! see! beneath yon gallows-tree,
Along the moonlit ground,
Half brought to view, an airy crew
Go dancing round and round.
"Ha, merry crew! come, haste along,
And follow in the marriage throng!
I take my bride ere morn, and ye
Shall dance the wedding dance for me."

And hurry, skurry, close behind That pack came brustling fast; So rattles through the hazel-bush November's fitful blast. And onward still, o'er hill and plain,
Hop, hop, the gallop dashed amain,
Till horse and rider panting blew,
And dust-clouds, sparks, and pebbles flew.

How fast the land on either hand
Beneath the moon swept by!
How swiftly fled, high overhead,
The stars along the sky!
"Dost quake, my love? The moon shines bright!
Hurrah! the dead ride swift by night!
Dost fear the dead, my love, my own?"
"Ah, leave the dead to rest, alone!

"Speed, speed, my steed! Methinks c'en now The early cock doth crow. Speed on! I scent the morning air; Speed, speed! the sand runs low! 'T is done, 't is done, — our journey's passed; The bridal-bed appears at last. Hurrah! how swiftly ride the dead! It is, it is, the bridal-bed!"

And, lo! an iron-grated gate
Full in their pathway frowned;
He snapped his switch, and lock and bolt
Sprang back with thunder-sound.
The clanking gates, wide-opening, led,
O'er crowded dwellings of the dead,
Where tombstones, thickly scattered round,
Gleamed pale along the moonlit ground.

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.

High pranced the steed, and snorted wild,
And, snorting, flamed outright;
And, whee! the solid ground beneath
Fled from the maiden's sight.
Howls, howls were heard through upper air;
Below, deep moanings of despair:
Her quaking heart, 'twixt death and life,
Seemed wrestling in an awful strife.

Now round and round, o'er moonlit ground,
The ghastly spectre-train
Full well did dance their fetter-dance,
And howled this solemn strain,—
"Forbear! forbear! Though heart be riven,
Contend not with the God of heaven!
Thou hast laid down this earthly clod;
Now may the soul find peace with God!"
Gottfried August Bürger. Tr. C. T. Brooks.

#### THE WILD HUNTSMAN.

THE wildgrave winds his bugle-horn, To horse, to horse! halloo, halloo! His fiery courser snuffs the morn, And thronging serfs their lord pursue.

The eager pack, from couples freed,
Dash through the bush, the brier, the brake;
While answering hound and horn and steed
The mountain echoes startling wake.

The beams of God's own hallowed day
Had painted yonder spire with gold,
And, calling sinful man to pray,
Loud, long, and deep the bell had tolled:

But still the wildgrave onward rides; Halloo, halloo! and hark again! When, spurring from opposing sides, Two stranger horsemen join the train.

Who was each stranger, left and right, Well may I guess, but dare not tell: The right-hand steed was silver white, The left, the swarthy hue of hell.

The right-hand horseman, young and fair,
His smile was like the morn of May;
The left, from eye of tawny glare,
Shot midnight lightning's lurid ray.

He waved his huntsman's cap on high, Cried, "Welcome, welcome, noble lord! What sport can earth or sea or sky, To match the princely chase, afford?"

"Cease thy loud bugle's clauging knell,"
Cried the fair youth, with silver voice;
"And for devotion's choral swell
Exchange the rude unhallowed noise.

"To-day the ill-omened chase forbear,
You bell yet summons to the fane;
To-day the warning spirit hear,
To-morrow thou mayst mourn in vain."

"Away, and sweep the glades along!"
The sable hunter hoarse replies;

"To muttering monks leave matin song, And bells and books and mysteries."

The wildgrave spurred his ardent steed,
And, launching forward with a bound,
"Who, for thy drowsy priest-like rede,
Would leave the jovial horn and hound?

"Hence, if our manly sport offend!
With pious fools go chant and pray:
Well hast thou spoke, my dark-browed friend;
Halloo, halloo! and, hark away!"

The wildgrave spurred his courser light, O'er moss and moor, o'er holt and hill; And on the left and on the right Each stranger horseman followed still.

Up springs, from yonder tangled thorn,
A stag more white than mountain snow;
And louder rung the wildgrave's horn,
"Hark forward, forward! holla, ho!"

A heedless wretch has crossed the way;

He gasps, the thundering hoofs below;

But, live who can, or die who may,

Still, "Forward, forward!" on they go.

See, where you simple fences meet,

A field with autumn's blessings crowned;
See, prostrate at the wildgrave's feet,

A husbandman, with toil embrowned:

"O mercy, mercy, noble lord!

Spare the poor's pittance," was his cry,

"Earned by the sweat these brows have poured,
In scorching hour of fierce July."

Earnest the right-hand stranger pleads,
The left still cheering to the prey,
The impetuous carl no warning heeds,
But furious holds the onward way.

"Away, thou hound! so basely born,
Or dread the scourge's echoing blow!"
Then loudly rung his bugle-horn,
"Hark forward, forward! holla, ho!"

So said, so done: a single bound Clears the poor laborer's humble pale; Wild follows man and horse and hound, Like dark December's stormy gale.

And man and horse and hound and horn
Destructive sweep the field along;
While joying o'er the wasted corn,
Fell Famine marks the maddening throng.

Again uproused, the timorous prey
Scours moss and moor and holt and hill;
Hard run, he feels his strength decay,
And trusts for life his simple skill.

Too dangerous solitude appeared;
He seeks the shelter of the crowd;

Amid the flock's domestic herd His harmless head he hopes to shroud.

O'er moss and moor and holt and hill His track the steady bloodhounds trace; O'er moss and moor, unwearied still, The furious earl pursues the chase.

Full lowly did the herdsman fall:

"O, spare, thou noble baron, spare
These herds, a widow's little all;
These flocks, an orphan's fleecy care."

Earnest the right-hand stranger pleads,
The left still cheering to the prey;
The earl nor prayer nor pity heeds,
But furious keeps the onward way.

"Unmannered dog! To stop my sport
Vain were thy cant and beggar whine,
Though human spirits, of thy sort,
Were tenants of these carrion kine!"

Again he winds his bugle-horn,
"Hark forward, forward, holla, ho!"
And through the herd, in ruthless scorn,
He cheers his furious hounds to go.

In heaps the throttled victims fall;

Down sinks their mangled herdsman near;

The murderous cries the stag appall,

Again he starts, new nerved by fear.

With blood besmeared, and white with foam,
While big the tears of anguish pour,
He seeks, amid the forest's gloom,
The humble hermit's hallowed bower.

But man and horse and horn and hound Fast rattling on his traces go; The sacred chapel rung around With, "Hark away! and holla, ho!"

All mild, amid the rout profane,

The holy hermit poured his prayer:

"Forbear with blood God's house to stain;

Revere his altar, and forbear!

"The meanest brute has rights to plead, Which, wronged by cruelty or pride, Draw vengeance on the ruthless head: Be warned at length, and turn aside."

Still the fair horseman anxious pleads;
The black, wild whooping, points the prey:
Alas! the earl no warning heeds,
But frantic keeps the forward way.

"Holy or not, or right or wrong,
Thy altar, and its rites, I spurn;
Not sainted martyrs' sacred song,
Not God himself, shall make me turn!"

He spurs his horse, he winds his horn, "Hark, forward, forward, holla, ho!

But off, on whirlwind's pinions borne, The stag, the hut, the hermit, go.

And horse and man and horn and hound And clamor of the chase was gone; For hoofs and howls and bugle sound, A deadly silence reigned alone.

Wild gazed the affrighted earl around;
He strove in vain to wake his horn;
In vain to call, for not a sound
Could from his anxious lips be borne;

He listens for his trusty hounds;
No distant baying reached his ears:
His courser, rooted to the ground,
The quickening spur unmindful bears.

Still dark and darker frown the shades, Dark as the darkness of the grave; And not a sound the still invades, Save what a distant torrent gave.

High o'er the sinner's humbled head At length the solemn silence broke; And from a cloud of swarthy red The awful voice of thunder spoke:

"Oppressor of creation fair!
Apostate spirit's hardened tool!
Scorner of God! scourge of the poor!
The measure of thy cup is full.

"Be chased forever through the wood;
Forever roam the affrighted wild;
And let thy fate instruct the proud,
God's meanest creature is his child."

'T was hushed; one flash, of sombre glare,
With yellow tinged the forests brown;
Up rose the wildgrave's bristling hair,
And horror chilled each nerve and bone.

Cold poured the sweat in freezing rill;
A rising wind began to sing;
And louder, louder, louder still,
Brought storm and tempest on its wing.

Earth heard the call! her entrails rend; From yawning rifts, with many a yell, Mixed with sulphurcous flames, ascend The misbegotten dogs of hell.

What ghastly huntsman next arose, Well may I guess, but dare not tell; His eye like midnight lightning glows, His steed the swarthy hue of hell.

The wildgrave flies o'er bush and thorn, With many a shriek of helpless woe; Behind him hound and horse and horn, And, "Hark away! and holla, ho!"

With wild despair's reverted eye, Close, close behind, he marks the throng, With bloody fangs, and eager cry, In frantic fear he scours along.

Still, still shall last the dreadful chase,
Till time itself shall have an end.
By day, they scour earth's caverned space,
At midnight's witching hour, ascend.

This is the horn and hound and horse
That oft the 'lated peasant hears;
Appalled he signs the frequent cross,
When the wild din invades his ears.

'The wakeful priest oft drops a tear For human pride, for human woe, When, at his midnight mass, he hears The infernal cry of "Holla, ho!"

Sir Walter Scott.