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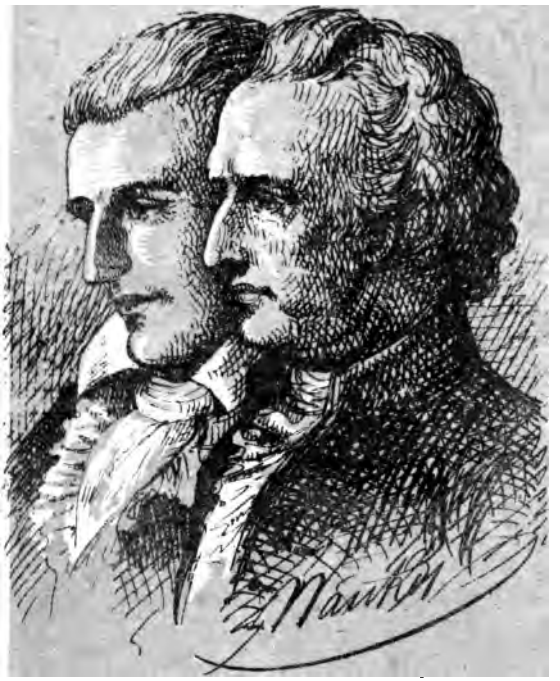

Yours Truly

MASTERPIECES

OF

GERMAN POETRY.

TRANSLATED

IN THE MEASURE OF THE ORIGINALS

BY

F. H. HEDLEY.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY LOUIS WAGNER.

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TO

OTTOMAR HAUPT, Esq.,

This Volume

IS DEDICATED AS A TOKEN OF

A FRIEND'S AFFECTION,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

INDEX.

APPENDIX.

Lenore.

G. A. BÜRGER.

LENORE rose up at morning red
From heavy dreams of anguish:
"Art faithless, William, or art dead?
How long wilt let me languish?"
He with King Frederick's warlike might
At Prague had march'd into the fight,
And had no tidings given
Of how his luck had thriven.

The empress and her royal foe
In fury now relented,
And, tired of warfare and of woe,
To peace at length consented.
And both the hosts with song and cheer,
With clash and clang in glad career,
Adorned with sprigs and flowers,
Returned to homes and bowers.

And everywhere, o'er hill and dale,
By road and stile and turning,
Did young and old exulting hail
The shouts of the returning.
"Thank Heaven!" wives and children cried,
And "Welcome!" many a happy bride;
Alas! for poor Lenore
Nor kiss nor bliss was more.

She ran along with fear distraught,
Ask'd each in swift succession;
Alas, not one could tell her aught
In all that long procession.
And when at last the train had pass'd
Upon the ground herself she cast,
Her raven tresses tearing,
Desponding and despairing.

Her mother cried in fond dismay:
"Lord! Mercy on my daughter!
My child, how is it with thee? Say!"
And in her arms she caught her.
"Oh, mother, what is gone is gone!
Farewell to world and all anon!
God has no pity for me,
Woe, woe alone hangs o'er me!"

"Help, Heaven, help! look mildly down!
Child, pray a pater-noster!
What God does is benignly done,
Thee God will kindly foster!"
"Oh, mother, all is vanity!
God has not acted well by me!
What need vain prayers to falter?
My grief they cannot alter."

"Help, Heaven, help! Who trusts the Lord
From Him will comfort borrow;
Soon will God's sacrament afford
Thee solace in thy sorrow."
"Oh, mother, mother, my heart's sore
Nor saint nor sacrament heals more!
No unction will recover
From death to life my lover."

"Hark, child! What if the faithless man
In foreign lands should tarry,
And, false to thee, had vowed again
Another fair to marry?
Forget, my child, his perjured love!
It will his own damnation prove!
When life and soul forsake him,
God's vengeance will o'ertake him."

"Oh, mother, what is gone is gone!
What's lost is lost for ever!
Death, death alone is mine anon!
Oh, hadst thou born me never!
Out, out my light to darksome night!
Die out, die out in dread and fright!
God has no pity for me,
Woe, only woe hangs o'er me."

"Help, Heaven, help! No judgment pass
Against my poor frail daughter!
She knows not what she speaks, alas,
Her sorrow has distraught her!
Oh, child, forget thy heart's distress,
And turn to God and blessedness!
Then for thy soul the lover
Thou surely wilt recover."

"Oh, mother, what is blessedness?
And what is hell, oh, mother?
With William only there is bliss,
And hell without him, mother!
Out, out my light to darksome night!
Die out, die out in dread and fright!
Nor earth nor Heaven can cheer me
Where William is not near me."

Thus raged despair and grief intense
Within this hapless maiden;
She raved against God's providence
With frenzy sorely laden;
She wrung her hands and beat her breast,
Until the sun sank down to rest,
Until in azure regions
Forth beamed the starry legions.

And clatter, clatter, hark so late,
The hoofs of courser sounded;
Then clanking at the postern gate
A horseman lightly bounded;
And hark! and hark! a gentle rap!
Quite slightly, lightly, tap, tap, tap!
Then through the door came faintly
In accents uttered gently:

"My darling! love, come ope the door!
Art waking, love, or sleeping?
Art faithful ever as of yore?
Art laughing, love, or weeping?"
"Ah, William, thou! so late by night?
I 've waked and wept since morning light;
Ah, who can tell my yearning!
Say, whence art thou returning?"

"We saddle but at dead of night;
Late from Bohemia hieing
I hither spurred, and ere the light
With thee I must be flying."
"Oh, William, first quick come in-doors!
The wind through hawthorn-bushes roars;
Come in, my love, and near thee
These arms shall warm and cheer thee!"

"Let winds through hawthorns rush and roar,
Child, let them howl and hurry!
Wild snorts my steed, clear rings the spur,
I dare no longer tarry.
Busk, spring and swing thee up with speed
Behind me on my swarthy steed!
A hundred miles we measure
To-night to bridal pleasure."

"Alack! a hundred miles wilt scour
To-night thy pleasure claiming?
And hark! the bell still booms the hour,
Eleven just proclaiming."
"See here, see there! The moon shines bright,
We and the dead ride fast by night.
Ere morn I will convey thee;
To bridal bed I'll lay thee."

"But say, where is thy bridal hall?
Where, how the bridal bed, dear?"
"Far, far from here! still, cool and small!
Within six boards 'tis laid, dear!"
"Has't room for me?"—"For thee and me!
Come busk and spring, and up with thee!
The wedding guests will meet us,
And at the bower greet us."

The fair one busk'd, and sprang and swung,
Upon the steed she bounded;
To the beloved one fondly clung,
His form her arms surrounded.
And hurry, hurry, clatter, clack!
Away they galloped, crack, crack, crack!
Forward they dashed and darted,
While sparks from pebbles started.

To right away, to left away,
The objects past them flashing,
They scoured o'er mountain, moor and lea,
O'er bridges madly dashing.
"Does darling fear? The moon shines bright!
We and the dead ride fast by night!
Art fearful, love, of spectres?"
"Ah, no! but leave the spectres!"

What yonder sung, what yonder rung?
Lo! how the ravens fluttered!
Hark, death bell clang! hark, funeral song!
"We hide the dead!" was muttered.
And nearer came a dismal throng,
That bier and coffin bore along;
The dirge was like the droning
Of toads in marshes moaning.

"At dead of night the body hide,
With clang and song and sorrow!
I homeward ride with my young bride,
Come, come, we feast ere morrow!
Come, sexton, here! come with thy train,
And mumble out the bridal strain!
Come, priest, pronounce the blessing,
As homeward we are pressing!"

Ceased clang and song. Sank bier and pall,
Obedient to his bidding,
Came hurry, hurry! train and all,
Behind his courser speeding.
And forward, forward, clatter, clack!
With wild halloo, and crack, crack, crack!
Headlong they dashed and darted,
While sparks from pebbles started.

How flew to right, how flew to left,
Trees, hills and rocky ridges!
How flew to left, and right, and left,
Towns, villages and bridges!—
"Does darling fear? The moon shines bright!
Hurrah! the dead ride fast by night!
Art fearful, love, of spectres?"—
"Ah! let them rest, those spectres."—

What yonder hung, what yonder swung?
Around the gibbet prancing,
Half seen the fitful rays among
An airy rabble dancing.—
"Holla! ye rabble, here, come here!
Come, follow me, ye rabble queer!
The bridal dance be skipping,
When we to bed are tripping!"

And helter and skelter, swift behind,
The rabble huddling rattled,
As in the hazel-bush the wind
Through dry leaves whirling battled.
And ever onward, clatter, clack,
They spurred and galloped, crack, crack, crack!
Wildly they dashed and darted,
While sparks from pebbles started.

How fled the earth in moonlight dim,
Beneath their feet receding!
How high above and over them
The sky and stars were speeding!
"Does darling fear? The moon shines bright!
Hurrah! the dead ride fast by night!
Art fearful, love, of spectres?"
"Alack! rouse not those spectres!"

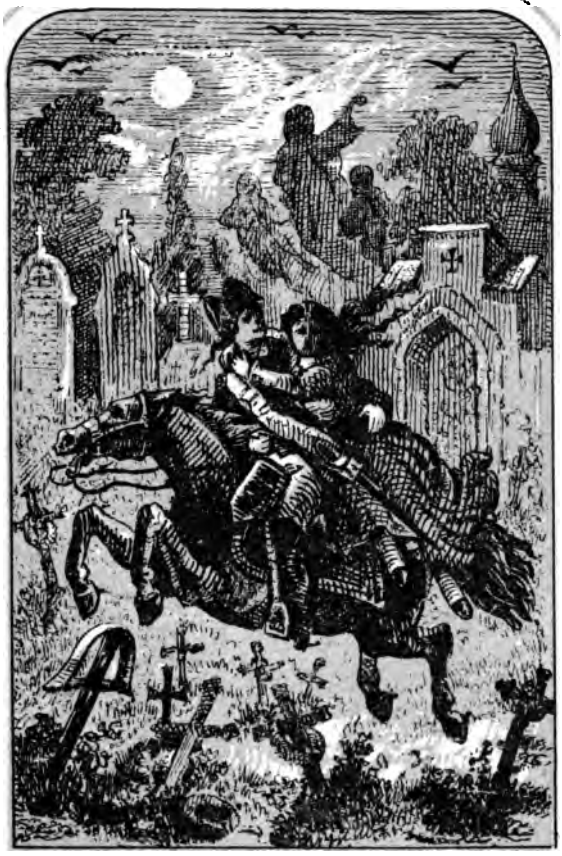
"Steed, steed! The bird of morn I hear,
The sand will soon be wasted—
Steed, steed! I scent the morning air—
Steed! be thy course now hasted!
'T is done, 't is done! our race is run!
The bridal bed receives its own!
Swift do the spectres scour!
We 've reached the bridal bower."

They dashed up to an iron gate,
With slacken'd reins they clattered;
With slender staff a blow thereat,
And bar and bolt were shattered.
The yielding gates check not their speed,
And over graves flew man and steed;
Tombstones were faintly gleaming,
As in the moonlight dreaming.

Ha see, ha see! swift as a thought,
Hoo-hoo! a hideous wonder!
The rider's jerkin round about
Like cinders fell asunder.
His head was reft of crest and cue,
A scalpless skull of ghastly hue;
The bones, of flesh divested,
On scythe and hour-glass rested.

High reared and snorted wild the horse,
With flashing eyes distorted;
And in a trice, its swarthy corse,
Was vanish'd and transported.
Shrieks, shrieks and wailings fill the gloom,
And yells and groans from cavern'd tomb;
Lenore's poor heart contending,
'Twixt death and life was pending.

And now within the flick'ring glance,
In ghastly circle prowling.
The spectres held a fetter-dance,
This frightful burden howling:
"Endure! endure! though heart be sore,
'Gainst God in Heaven wage no war!
Thy corse to earth be given,
God take thy soul to Heaven!"



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