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POEMS

CHIEFLY TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

BY

JOHN SHAPLAND STOCK

LONDON

LONGMAN, GREEN, LONGMAN, AND ROBERTS

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PREFACE

THE translator of verse into verse has no small difficulty to struggle with in giving, as he is bound to do, the sense of the original exactly and perfectly. He ought to render line for line,—nay, so far as possible, word for word; at any rate to add nothing to, and subtract nothing from, the meaning. This alone, to a translator restrained and fettered by the trammels of rhyme and rhythm, demands an amount of pain and toil which very few even of the most patient and industrious of translators are willing to bestow.

Supposing this difficulty successfully overcome, such a translation is very likely to be harsh and stiff, deficient both in style and idiom, whereas

every translation, to deserve the name of a good one, ought to have such smoothness, ease, and flow, that the reader, uninformed to the contrary, should have no cause to suspect that it was other than an original composition. To achieve this further merit requires, however great the ability of the translator, a further amount of labour that no one, who has not essayed it, can perhaps appreciate.

But the translator of lyric verse has yet another duty to perform. He ought to preserve accurately the *metre* of the original poem. For a great lyric poet as certainly discerns and selects the metre most suited to his subject as he does the thoughts and words; and if rendered in any other form a great portion of the spirit of the original is sure to evaporate. For example, two of the most remarkable poems in this volume, *The Bride of Corinth* and *The Bayadere*, would each of them lose a good half of its wondrous power and beauty if the measure of the verse

were not maintained. It may be observed, however, that where the metre of the original is wholly irregular, a translator is justified in contenting himself with giving to his version an irregularity of a similar nature without trying to give foot for foot, or rhyme for rhyme.

In translating from the German there are two principal obstacles to faithfully preserving the original metre,—first, the prevalence of double rhymes, so common and easy in German, so rare and difficult in English, from the scarcity of vowel terminations; and secondly, the frequent use of the trochaic measure, to which the rhythm of the German tongue is so perfectly adapted, and that of the English so unsuited.

How far I have myself complied with the principles laid down, I have given to the reader the best means I could for judging, by printing in every case the original side by side with the translation.

In respect of fidelity to the meaning of the ori-

ginal, I may venture to say that the instances of my deviating from it will be found very rare indeed.

In respect of fidelity to the metre of the original, I have failed in one serious instance only, *The Harper's Song*, where I found the difficulty of preserving the double rhymes insuperable. In *The German Muse*, which is rather didactic than lyric, the same fault is of trifling importance.

The two poems from the Italian which conclude the volume are abridgments rather than translations. In endeavouring to condense the fervour and distil the essence of Manzoni's finest work, I have (the metre of the original being impossible in English) thought it best to adopt that of Byron's famous ode, in which he treats the same subject, Napoleon, in a precisely opposite manner.

J. S. STOCK.

7 UPPER BROOK STREET :

March 1862.

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Leonore



Leonore fuhr um's Morgenroth
Empor aus schweren Träumen:
„Bist untreu, Wilhelm, oder todt?
Wie lange willst du säumen?“ —
Er war mit König Friedrich's Macht
Gezogen in die Prager Schlacht,
Und hatte nicht geschrieben,
Ob er gesund geblieben.

Der König und die Kaiserinn,
Des langen Habers müde,
Erweichten ihren harten Sinn,
Und machten endlich Friede;

LENORA

(BURGER)



LENORA, as the dawn grew red,
Arose from dreams dismaying:
“ Oh, Wilhelm ! art thou false or dead ?
How long is thy delaying ! ”
For he with royal Frederick's might
At Prague had shared the fatal fight,
Yet of his safe abiding
There came not any tiding.

The king and empress-queen at last
Grow weary of long fighting,
Their hostile arms away they cast,
In peace new friendship plighting.

Und jedes Heer, mit Sing und Sang,
Mit Paukenschlag und Kling und Klang,
Geschmückt mit grünen Reifern,
Zog heim zu seinen Häusern.

Und überall all überall,
Auf Wegen und auf Stegen,
Zog Alt und Jung dem Jubelschall
Der Kommenden entgegen.
„Gottlob!“ rief Kind und Gattinn laut,
„Willkommen!“ manche frohe Braut.
Ach! aber für Leonore'n
War Gruß und Kuß verloren.

Sie frug den Zug wohl auf und ab,
Und frug nach allen Namen;
Doch keiner war, der Kundschaft gab,
Von Allen, so da kamen.
Als nun das Heer vorüber war,
Zerraupte sie ihr Rabenhaar,
Und warf sich hin zur Erde,
Mit wüthiger Geberde.

The soldiers all, with shout and song,
And cymbals, clashing loud and long,
Bedecked with oaken garlands,
March home from foreign far lands.

And everywhere, where way might be,
On highways, and on by-ways,
Both old and young in jubilee
Full many a joyous cry raise.
“Praise God!” loud clamoured wife and child;
“Welcome!” betrothed maidens smiled.
Woe for Lenora only
Amid these greetings lonely.

She questioned all from first to last,
And many a name inquired;
But ah! not one of all who past
Could tell what she desired.
And when the bands came by no more,
Her raven hair she wildly tore,
And with a maniac's bearing
Cast her on earth despairing.

Die Mutter lief wohl hin zu ihr: —

„Ach, daß sich Gott erbarme!

Du trautes Kind, was ist mit dir?“ —

Und schloß sie in die Arme.

„O Mutter, Mutter! hin ist hin!

Nun fahre Welt und Alles hin!

Bei Gott ist kein Erbarmen.

O weh, o weh mir Armen!“ —

„Hilf Gott, hilf! Sieh uns gnädig an!

Kind, bet' ein Vaterunser!

Was Gott thut, das ist wohl gethan.

Gott, Gott erbarmt sich unser!“ —

„O Mutter, Mutter! Eitler Wahn!

Gott hat an mir nicht wohl gethan!

Was half, was half mein Beten?

Nun ist's nicht mehr vonnöthen.“ —

„Hilf Gott, hilf! Wer den Vater kennt,

Der weiß, er hilft den Kindern.

Das hochgelobte Sacrament

Wird deinen Jammer lindern.“ —

Her mother hastened to her side,
And in her arms she caught her :
“ What ails thee, then ? ” she fondly cried ;
“ God’s mercy on thee, daughter ! ”
“ Oh, mother, mother ! Gone is gone,
Then why should earth or aught go on ?
God’s mercy ! ’tis but fable ;
Woe’s me, most miserable ! ”

“ Help, Lord ! unto us gracious be :
Turn to Him, child, in prayer ;
Whate’er God doth, that well doth He,
His mercy all may share.”
“ Mother ! an idle tale you tell,
For God to me hath not done well ;
How hath my prayer succeeded ?
Now is it no more needed.”

“ Help, Lord ! Who knows the Father, knows
He lets not the child languish ;
His blessed Sacrament bestows,
A cure for all thy anguish.”

„O Mutter, Mutter! was mich brennt,
 Das lindert mir kein Sakrament!
 Kein Sakrament mag Leben
 Den Todten wiedergeben.“ —

„Hör', Kind! wie, wenn der falsche Mann,
 Im fernen Ungerlande,
 Sich seines Glaubens abgethan,
 Zum neuen Ehebande?
 Laß fahren, Kind, sein Herz dahin!
 Er hat es nimmermehr Gewinn!
 Wann Seel' und Leib sich trennen,
 Wird ihn sein Meineid brennen.“ —

„O Mutter, Mutter! Hin ist hin!
 Verloren ist verloren!
 Der Tod, der Tod ist mein Gewinn!
 O wär ich nie geboren!
 Eisch auß, mein Licht, auf ewig auß!
 Stirb hin, stirb hin in Nacht und Graus!
 Bei Gott ist kein Erbarmen.
 O weh, o weh mir Armen!“ —

“ Oh, mother! there's no Sacrament
Can make these burning pangs relent ;
No Sacrament can waken
To life, what death hath taken.”

“ Hark, child! In Hungary's far land,
What if this absent rover
Hath sought some other maiden's hand,
To thee a perjured lover ?
Resigned, my child! his heart restore,—
It ne'er shall beat in comfort more,
And keen shall be its smarting,
At soul's and body's parting.”

“ Oh, mother, mother! gone is gone,
And lost is lost for ever ;
Death, death is now my gain alone, —
Life! would I'd known thee never.
Then out, for ever out, my light!
Sink down, sink down, in gloom and night.
God's mercy! 'tis but fable ;
Woe's me, most miserable !”

Hilf, Gott, hilf! Geh' nicht in's Gericht
 Mit deinem armen Kinde!
 Sie weiß nicht, was die Zunge spricht.
 Behalt' ihr nicht die Sünde!
 Ach, Kind, vergiß dein irdisch Leid,
 Und denk' an Gott und Seligkeit!
 So wird doch deiner Seelen
 Der Bräutigam nicht fehlen.“—

„O Mutter! was ist Seligkeit?
 O Mutter! Was ist Hölle?
 Bei ihm, bei ihm ist Seligkeit,
 Und ohne Wilhelm Hölle! —
 Risch aus, mein Licht, auf ewig aus!
 Stirb hin, stirb hin in Nacht und Graus!
 Dhn' ihn mag ich auf Erden,
 Mag dort nicht selig werden.“—

So wüthete Verzweiflung
 Ihr in Gehirn und Adern.
 Sie fuhr mit Gottes Vorsehung
 Vermessen fort zu hadern;

“ Help, Lord ! now help ! On this poor child
A speedy doom impose not ;
Lay not this sin to her, so wild,
That what she says, she knows not.
Oh, child ! forget thy mortal woes,
And think on God and heaven’s repose ;
So shall thy ransomed spirit
A heavenly spouse inherit.”

“ Oh, mother, mother ! what is hell ?
Oh, mother ! what is heaven ?
Where Wilhelm is not, all is hell ;
Where Wilhelm is, all heaven.
Then out, for ever out, my light !
Sink down, sink down in gloom and night !
Without him there is given
No joy in earth or heaven.”

Thus maddened were her heart and brain,
In desperate phrensy reeling,
Thus impious dared she to arraign
God’s providential dealing ;

Zerschlug den Busen, und zerrang
 Die Hand, bis Sonnenuntergang,
 Bis auf am Himmelsbogen
 Die goldnen Sterne zogen.

Und außen, horch! ging's trap trap trap,
 Als wie von Rosseshufen;
 Und klirrend stieg ein Ritter ab,
 An des Geländers Stufen;
 Und horch, und horch, den Pfortenring
 Ganz lose, leise, klinglingling!
 Dann kamen durch die Pforte
 Vernehmlich diese Worte:

„Holla, Holla! Thu' auf, mein Kind!
 Schläfst, Liebchen, oder wachst du?
 Wie bist noch gegen mich gesinnt?
 Und weinst oder lachst du?“
 „Ach, Wilhelm, du? . . . So spät bei Nacht? . . .
 Geweinet hab' ich und gewacht;
 Ach, großes Leid erlitten!
 Wo kommst du her geritten?“ —

She rang her hands, she beat her breast,
Till the bright sun went down to rest,
And golden stars were shedding
Light o'er heaven's vault far spreading.

And hark ! outside, tramp, tramp, they go,
A horse's hoofs loud clatt'ring ;
A rider at the steps below
Dismounts with armour rattling.
And hark ! the bell doth softly ring
Its tinkle, tingle, ting, ting, ting,
And through the doorway hollow
These whispers gently follow :

“ Hist, hist ! Come, open, darling mine ; —
Art waking, child, or sleeping ?
How feels it still, that heart of thine, —
Art laughing, or art weeping ? ”
“ Ah ! Wilhelm, thou ! So late dost ride ?
Oh ! I have waked, and wept beside,
Till grief this heart did wither :
But say, whence cam'st thou hither ? ”

„Wir satteln nur um Mitternacht.

Weit ritt ich her von Böhmen.

Ich habe spät mich aufgemacht,

Und will dich mit mir nehmen.“—

„Ach, Wilhelm, erst herein geschwind!

Den Hagedorn durchsaust der Wind,

Herein, in meinen Armen,

Herzliebster, zu erwärmen!“—

„Laß sausen durch den Hagedorn,

Laß sausen, Kind, laß sausen!

Der Rappe scharrt; es klirrt der Sporn,

Ich darf allhier nicht hausen.

Komm, schürze, spring' und schwinge dich

Auf meinen Rappen hinter mich!

Muß heut noch hundert Meilen

Mit dir in's Brautbett eilen.“—

„Ach! wollest hundert Meilen noch

Mich heut in's Brautbett tragen?

Und horch! es brummt die Glocke noch,

Die elf schon angeschlagen.“—

“ We saddle but at night’s high tide :
From Prague’s a long way hither ;
’Twas late ere I set forth to ride,
And we must back together.”

“ Ah, Wilhelm ! first within repose ;
The shrill wind through the hawthorn blows :
Come in these arms, fond lover,
Warm thee, till night pass over.”

“ Why, let the wind blow on, dear child !
Blow on, blow on, we care not ;
My spurs ring loud, my horse paws wild,
And linger here I dare not.
Come with a bound, come with a swing,
Upon my horse behind me spring,
For we, ere we may slumber,
A hundred miles must number.”

“ A hundred miles ! — so far wouldst thou,
Me to thy bridal bearing ?
And hark ! with solemn tone e’en now
The clock eleven declaring.”

•

„Sieh hin, sieh her! der Mond scheint hell.
Wir und die Todten reiten schnell.
Ich bringe dich, zur Wette,
Noch heut in's Hochzeitbette.“

„Sag' an, wo ist dein Kämmerlein?
Wo? wie dein Hochzeitbettchen?“ —
„Weit, weit von hier! . . Still, kühl und klein! . .
Sechs Bretter und zwei Brettchen!“ —
„Hat's Raum für mich?“ — „Für dich und mich!
Komm, schürze, spring' und schwinde dich!
Die Hochzeitgäste hoffen;
Die Kammer steht uns offen.“ —

Schön Liebchen schürzte, sprang und schwang
Sich auf das Roß behende;
Wohl um den trauten Reiter schlang
Sie ihre Lillenhände;
Und hurre, hurre, hop hop hop!
Ging's fort in lausendem Galopp,
Daß Roß und Reiter schnoben,
Und Kies und Funken stoben.

~~~~~  
“ See there, see here ! The moon shines bright ;  
We and the dead ride fast by night :  
To-night — ’tis truth I’ve told thee —  
Our marriage bed shall hold thee.”

“ But what thy marriage bed, and where  
Thy chamber ? — first discover.”

“ Still, small, and cold — far, far from here,  
Six boards, and two laid over.”

“ Hast room for me ? ” “ For thee and me !  
With swing and spring, then, up with thee :  
The chamber’s open standing,  
The wedding guests attending.”

Then up with swing and spring behind,  
The fair maid mounted lightly,  
And round her dear-loved rider twined  
Her lily hands full tightly ;  
And onward, onward, onward, ho !  
In sounding gallop fast they go,  
Till horse and man pant quickly,  
And stones and sparks fly thickly.



Zur rechten und zur linken Hand,  
 Vorbei vor ihren Blicken,  
 Wie flogen Anger, Heid' und Land!  
 Wie donnerten die Brücken!—  
 „Graut Liebchen auch? . . Der Mond scheint hell!  
 Hurrah! die Todten reiten schnell!  
 Graut Liebchen auch vor Todten!“—  
 „Ach nein! . . Doch laß die Todten!“—

Was Klang dort für Gesang und Klang?  
 Was flatterten die Raben? . .  
 Horch Glockenklang! horch Todtensang:  
 „Laßt uns den Leib begraben!“  
 Und näher zog ein Leichenzug,  
 Der Sarg und Todtenbahre trug.  
 Das Lied war zu vergleichen  
 Dem Unferuf in Leichen.

„Nach Mitternacht begrabt den Leib,  
 Mit Klang und Sang und Klage!  
 Jetzt führ' ich heim mein junges Weib.  
 Mit, mit zum Brautgelage!

How swift! how swift! right hand, left hand,  
Before her glance of wonder,  
Fly field, and hedge, and open land;  
How loud the bridges thunder!  
“And fear'st thou, love? The moon shines bright!  
Hurrah! the dead ride fast by night!  
The dead, love! dost thou fear them?”  
“Ah no! But yet forbear them.”

What clanging sound and song comes near?  
What makes yon ravens merry?  
Hark! the death-bell. The death-song hear!  
“Let us the body bury.”  
And now, with coffin and with bier,  
A mournful funeral train appear,  
Croaking a dirge sonorous  
Like frogs in marshy chorus.

“Bury your dead when midnight's past,  
Wailing, and weeping, and singing;  
But now away to our wedding feast! —  
My young bride home I'm bringing.

Komm, Küster, hier! Komm mit dem Chor,  
 Und gurgle mir das Brautlied vor!  
 Komm, Pfaff', und sprich den Segen,  
 Eh' wir zu Bett uns legen! —

Still Klang und Sang . . Die Bahre schwand . .  
 Gehorsam seinem Rufen,  
 Kam's, hurra hurra! nachgerannt,  
 Hart hinter's Rappen Hufen.  
 Und immer weiter, hop hop hop!  
 Ging's fort in tausendem Galopp,  
 Daß Roß und Reiter schnoben,  
 Und Kies und Funken stoben.

Wie flogen rechts, wie flogen links  
 Gebirge, Baum' und Hecken!  
 Wie flogen links, und rechts, und links  
 Die Dörfer, Städt' und Flecken! —  
 „Graut Liebchen auch? . . Der Mond scheint hell!  
 Hurrah! die Todten reiten schnell!  
 Graut Liebchen auch vor Todten?“ —  
 „Ach! Laß sie ruhn, die Todten.“ —

Come, sexton, with thy choral throng,  
And gurgle forth the wedding song!  
Come, priest, and say the blessing  
Before the bride's undressing."

Ceased sound and song,— the bier was gone, —  
At his command they follow,  
Behind the swift hoofs hurrying on  
With shouts of hillo! hollo!  
And onward, onward, onward, ho!  
In sounding gallop fast they go,  
Till horse and man pant quickly,  
And stones and sparks fly thickly.

Away they fly, right hand, left hand,  
Hills, hedges, forests darkling;  
Away they fly, right hand, left hand,  
Towns, hamlets, cities sparkling.  
"And fear'st thou love? The moon shines bright!  
Hurrah! The dead ride fast by night!  
The dead, love! dost thou fear them?"  
"Alas! to vex forbear them."

Steh da! sieh da! Am Hochgericht  
 Tanz' um des Rades Spindel,  
 Halb sichtbarlich bei Mondenlicht,  
 Ein lustiges Gefindel. —

„Sasa! Gefindel, hier! Komm hier!  
 Gefindel, komm und folge mir!  
 Tanz' uns den Hochzeitreigen,  
 Wann wir zu Bette steigen!“ —

Und das Gefindel, husch husch husch!  
 Kam hinten nachgeprasselt,  
 Wie Wirbelwind am Haselbusch  
 Durch dürre Blätter rasselt.  
 Und weiter, weiter, hop hop hop!  
 Sing's fort in sausen dem Galopp,  
 Daß Roß und Reiter schnoben,  
 Und Kies und Funken stoben.

Wie flog, was rund der Mond beschien,  
 Wie flog es in die Ferne!  
 Wie flogen oben über hin  
 Der Himmel und die Sterne! —

See! see! Beneath yon gibbet's height  
Around the wheel are dancing,  
Scarce visible by pale moonlight,  
A goblin troop dim glancing.  
"Sasa! ye goblins, hither come!  
Come, follow, goblins! follow home!  
Come with us to the bedding,  
And dance our dance of wedding!"

Whirr! whirr! Behind them whistlingly  
The phantom morrice rushes,—  
So rustles, when the leaves are dry,  
A whirlwind through the bushes.  
And onward, onward, onward, ho!  
In sounding gallop fast they go,  
Till horse and man pant quickly,  
And stones and sparks fly thickly.

The moonlight scenes how fast they fly,  
To backward distance driven!  
How swiftly course away on high  
The very stars of heaven!

„Graut Liebchen auch? . . Der Mond scheint hell!  
 Hurrah! die Todten reiten schnell!  
 Graut Liebchen auch vor Todten!“ —  
 „O weh! Laß ruhn die Todten!“ —

„Kapp! Kapp! Mich dünkt, der Hahn schon ruft. . .  
 Bald wird der Sand verrinnen . .  
 Kapp! Kapp! Ich wittre Morgenluft . .  
 Kapp! Tummle dich von himmen! —  
 Vollbracht, vollbracht ist unser Lauf!  
 Das Hochzeitbette thut sich auf.  
 Die Todten reiten schnelle!  
 Wir sind, wir sind zur Stelle.“ —

Rasch auf ein eisern Gitterthor  
 Ging's mit verhängtem Zügel.  
 Mit schwanker Gert' ein Schlag davor  
 Bersprengte Schloß und Riegel.  
 Die Flügel flogen klirrend auf,  
 Und über Gräber ging der Lauf.  
 Es blinkten Leichensteine  
 Rund um im Mondenscheine.

~~~~~

“ And fear'st thou, love? The moon shines bright!
“ Hurrah! The dead ride fast by night!
The dead, love! dost thou fear them?”
“ Woe's me! The dead! Forbear them.”

“ Horse! horse! The sand is well nigh run;
I hear the cock's shrill warning.
Horse! horse! Speed on till all be done!
I scent the air of morning.
'Tis well! 'tis well! our course is sped,
And open lies the marriage bed:
The dead ride fast by night, love!
'Tis here that we alight, love.”

Furious against an iron door
With loosened rein he dashes,
And down his swinging scourge before
Bolt, bar, and lintel crashes.
The gates fly open creaking hoarse,
And o'er the graves goes on their course,
While in the moonbeams' shimmer
Around the tombstones glimmer.

Ha sieh! Ha sieh! im Augenblick,
 Huhu! ein gräßlich Wunder!
 Des Reiters Koller, Stück für Stück,
 Fiel ab, wie mürber Zunder,
 Zum Schädel, ohne Topf und Schopf,
 Zum nackten Schädel ward sein Kopf;
 Sein Körper zum Gerippe,
 Mit Stundenglas und Hippe.

Hoch bäumte sich, wild schnob der Rapp',
 Und sprühte Feuerfunken;
 Und hui! war's unter ihr hinab
 Verschwunden und versunken.
 Geheul! Geheul aus hoher Luft,
 Gewinsel kam aus tiefer Gruft.
 Leonore's Herz, mit Beben,
 Rang zwischen Tod und Leben.

Nun tanzten wohl bei Mondenglanz,
 Rund um herum im Kreise,
 Die Geister einen Rattentanz,
 Und heulten diese Weise:

See! see! In twinkling of an eye,
Ugh! Marvel most appalling!
The rider's flesh, all loose and dry,
Like tinder piecemeal falling!
A skull devoid of skin or hair,
A naked skull, behold him rear!
A skeleton appearing,
His scythe and sand-glass bearing.

The horse spits flakes of fire around,
Fierce snorting, wildly rearing;
Then lo! beneath the yawning ground
Sinks, sudden disappearing.
Yells, dreadful yells, pervade the skies,
Strange moanings from the tombs arise;
Lenora's heart cold shivering
'Twixt death and life lies quivering.

Around the ghosts, by moonlight clear,
A linked morrice forming,
Dance hand in hand, whilst in her ear
They howl these words of warning:

„Geduld! Geduld! Wenn's Herz auch bricht!
Mit Gott im Himmel hadre nicht!
Des Leibes bist du ledig;
Gott sey der Seele gnädig!“

“ Though break thy heart, yet patient be,
And quarrel not with God's decree :
Thy body — thou must leave it ;
Thy soul — may God receive it ! ”