HISTORIC SURVEY

OF

GERMAN POETRY.

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HISTORIC SURVEY

OF

German Poetry,

INTERSPERSED WITH VARIOUS TRANSLATIONS.

BY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS.

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§ 1.

Introduction—Recapitulation of the preceding volume—Some deficiencies lamented—Some omissions supplied—Lavater—Salis—Claudius—Distinction between national and European poetry—Cosmopolite art the superior achievement.

THE history of poetry much includes that of public opinion. Like the vane glittering on the pinnacle of the temple, song, in all its movements and variations, marks the drift of popular impression. Whether it portrays sights or sentiments, whether it describes individuals or events, and whether it dwells on minute or mighty interests, it must still aim at sympathy, and give expression not to a solitary but to a social feeling. Some poets may learn of their ordinary surrounders, and only show the shallow currents of the scud, while others reach a superior atmosphere, and proclaim the less fickle tides of the rack; but all obey some impulse of their age, and all reveal the spirit of its continual course.

In the first three sections of the former volume it was observed, that the tribes employing the German tongue had migrated from the mouth toward the source

of the Donau, or Danube, and that the earliest traces of German verse are to be found in an elegy of Ovid, written at Tomi on the Euxine. These firstlings of the Teutonic Muse were composed by a native of Italy, in a metre imitated from the Latin; they were probably transmitted by Ovid to Rome, as his friend Cotta, to whom the elegy is addressed, had resided among the Goths, but they have unluckily not been preserved either in their original or in a translated form.

The earliest remains of German poetry (§ 4, 5, and 6,) are those sagas composed in an Anglo-saxon dialect, which constitute the principal portions of the Edda. According to Eginhardt, the pagan poems preserved among the Saxons were assembled by order of Charlemagne, when he compelled them to abjure heathenism. This collection has indeed not yet been discovered in any French library; but as the followers of Wittikind, who refused to undergo baptism, withdrew with their leader into Norway, and thence at a later period colonized Iceland, it is evident that the Icelandic remains must consist nearly of the same documents, which the converted Saxons had given up. A comprehensive edition of these rhythmical reliques, learnedly translated and critically commented, may still be a desideratum; but Schlötzer's *Isländische Litteratur und Geschichte* (Göttingen, 1773) furnishes excellent preparations for the undertaking.

Concerning the Lombard period (§ 7) more perhaps might be ascertained than any documents within my reach have enabled me to record, or authorized me to infer. In addition to those enumerated at p. 97, should have been cited the *Historia Laurini, Nanorum Regis, et Theodorici Veronensis* published in P. F. Suhm's

Symbolæ ad Literaturam Teutonicam Antiquiorem, (Havniæ, 1787). It is a narrative poem full of fancy, which the learned editor ascribes to the Swabian minstrel (p. xvii), Henry of Ofterdingen, and which may be thought to have laid the train for the original personification of Oberon.

Indeed if all those Swabian metrical romances, in which Theodoric of Verona and his champions are the central heroes, were separately edited, and analyzed critically, it is not impossible that specious evidence could be adduced in favor of the supposition, that these epic poems are mere Swabian refashionments (*rifacimento* is the Italian word which I attempt to recoin in the legal die of domestic analogy) of pre-existing Lombard story-books. In this case the metrical romance may have originated in Lombardy; for the reign of Theodoric is prior to the earliest rimed tales of Normandy; and the state of Italian culture might well suggest to the barbarians of the north the first composition of versified chronicles.

From an epistle of Cassiodorus (lib. i, epist. 41), it appears that Theodoric patronized minstrelsy, and deputed in 497 to Louis, or Clovis, king of the Franks, a harper who accompanied his instrument with song, and who was empowered to negociate for the release of some prisoners. This minstrel, having been sent to a Frankish king, must evidently have employed a German dialect.

In Alfred's translation of Boethius, the first chapter, which mentions the royal family of Lombardy, favours the suspicion that Alfred had before him, and was assisted by, a Lombard version of Boethius, which is likely to have contained metrical passages, as do the better copies of Alfred's version. See Rawlinson's

edition of Boethius in Anglo-saxon, (Oxoniæ, 1698). If, indeed, the translation of Boethius, imported by Alfred, be any thing more than a Lombard document; for the Lombards were originally Anglo-saxons from between the Elbe and the Oder.

Anastasius, in his Life of Pope Leo III, mentions that there was already in the year 800 a *schola Saxonum* at Rome; where missionaries were educated to be distributed over the gothic north. As the Lombards were conversant with the Italian language, and of all the Germans were the most contiguous to the papal see, it is natural they should have furnished the first teachers; and through them, no doubt the Anglo-saxon became the missionary language.

The Anglo-saxon alphabet is plainly derived from the Italian; and, in like manner, pronounces the letter *c* as *ch* before the vowels *e* and *i*. Thus the words *witch* and *chide* are spelled in Anglo-saxon, *wice* and *cidan*. Now, it is in this missionary language, this Lombard Saxon, that all the Anglo-saxon remains exist; for no English province retains vernacular traces of the inflections adopted in its grammar.

With the ensuing sections (8, 9, 10, and 11,) I feel less dissatisfied, having had authorities more copious to consult, and specimens more various to adduce; yet perhaps the sacrifices made to compression may have left in places a something to desiderate.

The twelvth section has incurred much animadversion: both in correspondence and in print I have been assailed with conflicting hostilities, without their impairing however my private sense of its equity: the English people have too long been accustomed to view the history of the Reformation through the coloured spectacles of a clergy whom it has enriched, not through those of a citizenry whom it has oppressed.

In the thirteenth section might have been added to the Swiss groop of poets the names of Lavater and Salis: they flourished later than Bodmer, Haller, and Gesner; yet they attained a degree of popularity which entitles them to distinct notice: and they both were victims to a patriotism called into action by the French revolution.

Lavater indeed was rather a prose-writer than a poet; but there are metrical productions of his which justify mentioning him in this Survey. He was born at Zurich in 1741 on the 15th of November, baptized by the names John Caspar, educated in the schools of his native city for the office of protestant minister, and, after attaining deacon's orders, was sent in 1763 to Berlin for the purpose of residing some time under the roof of a pastor named Spalding, whose moral worth, tolerant moderation, and evangelical piety, it was wished to press on the imitation of the pupil. The parents of Lavater had connections in the corporation of Zurich; but it was not until 1769 that any adapted vacancy occurred in the city-preferment, when Lavater first became permanently attached to the church of Saint Peter, and finally ascended therein to the office of chief pastor.

During his probationary years Lavater published several poetic works; (1) Patriotic Songs of the Swiss; (2) Sacred Hymns; (3) The new Messiad, a gospel in verse, a metrical diatessaron, which affects a close adherence to scriptural phraseology and authority; (4) Joseph of Arimathea, a spiritual metrical romance; (5) The Human Heart, a didactic poem. All these publications acquired circulation in the religious, not in the fashionable world; they tend to assuade a benevolent sensibility, theopathetic affections, and

evangelical doctrines; but they exhibit a leaning to credulity and to contemplative piety. The patriotic songs breathe a warm love of liberty. There is poetry of imagination also in his "Prospects into Eternity," although this visionary future state is painted in humble prose.

A more conspicuous portion of Lavater's works are his *Physiognomic Fragments* in four volumes quarto, which made the tour of Europe. He also wrote many professional books. During the French occupation of Switzerland in 1798, Lavater addressed a spirited remonstrance to Rewbell in behalf of the independent liberty of his country. This publication gave offence to the Parisian director, and Lavater was forcibly removed to Basle. After the termination of his exile, he drew up and published an account of it; but when the French in 1799 reoccupied Zurich, a french soldier fired at him and wounded him in the abdomen: he never recovered from the effects of this injury, although he lived in impaired comfort full fifteen months after its infliction. The life of Lavater was written by George Gesner his son-in-law, and appeared at Zurich in 3 vols. 8vo. 1802.

Johann Gaudenz von Salis was born in December 1762, at Seewis in the Grisons, and placed by his noble relations in military service. At the beginning of the French revolution he was a captain in the Swiss guard at Versailles; but served as a private in the lines under the command of General Montesquiou, during the conquest of Savoy. He afterwards, in 1799 it is said, became Inspector-general of the militia in Switzerland, which office compelled a somewhat versatile residence; but he finally settled at Malans, in his native province, where he died a few years after.

Lyric and elegiac poetry was the walk in which he delighted to stray; and his style has sensibly been influenced by the manner of his friend and editor Matthison. A pleasing ode to Spring of his writing has been translated in the Specimens of German Lyric Poets, printed for Boosey in 1823. His *Hymn to the month of March*, his *Infancy*, and his *Sighs for Evening*, are the most remembered of his productions.

In the four concluding sections (14, 15, 16, and 17) I have not yet discovered any important omission; still, in the Hamburg groop of poets, it might have been well to allot a few words to Matthew Claudius, who was born in 1743, at Rienfeld, not far from Lubeck. He resided eventually at Wandsbeck, near Hamburg, and was, it is said, the proprietor of a carrier's waggon; in allusion to which apparently, on the title-page to his publications, he calls himself *Asmus, omnia secum portans, the Wandsbeck messenger.*

This miscellany consists of several volumes containing prose and verse, and, in a peculiar and truly German vein of humor, satirizes the vices and follies of his countrymen, or inculcates lessons of justice, charity, patriotism, and religion. Among the songs of Claudius, one of the best is entitled Phidile, or Fidele, and, as it has been happily versified by an anonymous poet, I take the liberty of transcribing it.

PHIDILE.

PART THE FIRST.

Scarse sixteen summers had I seen
  Among my native bowers,
Nor stray'd my thoughts beyond the green,
  The garden, and the flowers.

Till once a stranger-youth appear'd,
I neither wish'd nor sought him;
He came, but whence I never heard,
And spoke what love had taught him.

His hair in graceful ringlets play'd,
As wanton Zephyrs blew them,
And o'er his comely shoulders stray'd;
I was quite charm'd to view them.

His speaking eyes of azure hue
Seem'd ever softly suing;
And such an eye, so clear and blue,
Ne'er shone for maid's undoing.

His face was fair, his cheek was red
With blushes ever burning;
And all he spoke was nicely said,
Tho' far beyond my learning.

Where'er I stray'd, the youth was nigh,
His looks soft sorrows speaking;
Sweet maid! he 'd say, and gaze and sigh
As if his heart were breaking.

And once, as low his head he hung,
I kindly askt his meaning;
When round my neck his arms he flung,
Soft tears his grief explaining.

Such freedom ne'er was ta'en till now,
And now 't was unoffending;
Shame spread my cheek with ruddy glow,
My eyes kept downward bending.

Nor aught I spoke: my looks he read
As if in anger burning.
No not one word: away he sped—
Ah would he were returning!

PHIDILE.

PART THE SECOND.

Written immediately after the marriage ceremony.

God's blessing light upon your head,
That you have given him to me so:
O reverend sir, my heart's blood sped
Never so throbbingly as now.

And William's heart was beating too,
When you enquir'd, in tone severe,
If he would faithful live and true,
Till death shall part our union here.

His glistening eye-balls seem'd to speak
As would he clasp me to his heart,
The color mantled on his cheek,
And the bright tear began to start.

I too, my William, felt yet more,
Nor will I e'er forsake thy side,
If well or sick, if rich or poor,
Let better or let worse betide.

I 'll always be about thy home,
And shun not want or woe with thee;
My trusty William, thou alone
Shalt be my soul's delight and glee.

Thou only shalt be all to me,
God is the witness to my vow;
If death take sooner me or thee,
We 'll meet above as erst below.

A singular and characteristic poem of Claudius, is the *Morning-hymn of a countryman*, at the beginning of the second volume; in which the Sun is addressed

in a most natural and even trivial manner, but in the notes to which recondite Greek authorities are adduced for every epithet and half line, with a happy persiflage of pedantry. Claudius has been aptly appretiated by the translator, from whom the first of these specimens is borrowed: " his thoughts are generally just, and his invention happy; but his plan has seldom depth, and his execution is frequently defective: he is singular rather than original; sometimes extravagant, when he would be thought humorous, and affected when he means to be witty."

There is about the poetry of Claudius, as about that of Gleim and Klopstock, a certain locality of taste, a raciness, a flavor of the soil, a native Germanity of manner, which adapts it the more for national, and the less for European, approbation. Ramler, on the contrary, Lessing, and especially Wieland, have adopted a more cosmopolite manner: their writings will better bear translation, and win an easier way to foreign admiration. They attend to general not to peculiar nature, both in choice of topic, and in method of delineation.

Among ourselves, Shakspeare, among the Scottish, Burns, have perhaps worshipped too much the genius of the place, and have had long to wait for continental applause. Pope, on the other hand, and Macpherson (or Ossian) have chosen less conventional forms of art, and became immediately popular in other countries, as Lord Byron has done since. And surely the preference must be awarded to those writers, who shake off the prejudices of their birth-place, instead of clinging to them; who, not content with being distinguished burgesses of a close corporation, aspire to become eminent citizens of the world. Theirs is the

higher stage of merit, who, far from flattering the moral, religious, or patriotic, bigotries of their neighbours, appeal to the instinctive morality of man, bow to the genius of universal nature, and promulgate the dictates of an intelligent and comprehensive philanthropy.

§ 2.

Göttingen groop of poets—Kästner—Zachariä—Bürger—his life—his ballads—The Wild Hunter—The Parson's Daughter—Ellenore—Minor Poems.

From Berlin let us travel to Göttingen; for such was announced, at the beginning of the thirteenth section, as the probable order of the ensuing sketches.

Abraham Gotthelf Kästner was born at Leipzig in 1719. His father, a professor of jurisprudence, gave him a solicitous education, and, already in his thirteenth year, encouraged him to attend the university-lectures. Mathematics was his favourite study, and he was so early a respectable proficient, that at fifteen he practised as a notary public. At nineteen he became master of arts. Not only had he acquired the classical but the principal modern languages, and was skilled in French, Italian, Spanish, Low-dutch, Swedish, and English. For several years he edited a miscellany entitled, "Amusements of Literature," to which he contributed many original and many translated articles. But having been promoted in 1746 to the mathematical professorship at Leipzig, he deserted these juvenile pursuits for the severer science, which he had now to teach, and in which he acquired a high and European reputation. In 1756 he was invited to Göttingen, there also to fill the chair of mathematical professor, which was more liberally endowed than that

of Leipzig; and he continued to lecture in this department with increasing celebrity until his death, in 1800.

Some didactic poems of Kästner exist in rimed alexandrines, some lyric effusions in metres more various, and some fables which have considerable merit; but his epigrams constitute his strongest claim to poetic celebrity, both for their causticity and condensation: they are however so occasional and so local in their application, that they can be thoroughly enjoyed only by the native German and the Göttingen resident.

Frederic William Zachariä is said to have been of jewish descent, and born at Frankenhausen, in 1726: he was sent however to study at Leipzig; and, like Kästner, acquired his early bent among the writers of the Saxon school. Eventually he became a tutor, and then a professor in the Carolinian college at Braunschweig, where he died in 1777: but his contiguity to Göttingen threw him often into the literary society of that place. His works were collected, and edited by his friend Eschenburg. They contain a flat translation into German hexameters of Milton's *Paradise Lost;* (2) The Creation of Hell in the manner of Klopstock; (3) a rimed translation of Pope's *Rape of the Lock;* this was more successful, and tempted the poet to imitate his model in three vapidly galant comic epopæas entitled, The Handkerchief, The Dandy, and The Phaeton; (4) an imitation of Thomson's *Seasons* in hexameter; (5) Fables, in the manner of Burkard Wallis, which are perhaps the most easy and pleasing of his compositions; and (6) Cortez, an epic poem, in iambic blank verse, on the conquest of Mexico; but this work the author did not live to complete; nor do the portions, which have appeared, although they

include picturesque descriptions, excite any strong regret at his want of rapidity or perseverance.

Let us pass on to a real genius.

LIFE OF GODFRED-AUGUSTUS BÜRGER.

The poet, says Bürger, in one of his prefaces, lays no claim, in the scale of being, to the rank of a sun; he is content with the humbler, harmless, welcome offices of Zephyr. Though he neither move the mills of manufacture, nor the ships of commerce, he may unfold the petals of the sweetest flowers, and incarnadine the flush of ripeness on the most delicious fruits; he may fan the brow of weary toil, or lap in elysian airs the strolling enthusiast of nature. Well may he expect then at his tomb the sigh of regret, the cypress-wreath of elegy, and the biographic memorial of posthumous admiration.

Godfred-Augustus was the second child and only son of the Lutheran minister John-Godfred Bürger, by his wife Gertrude-Elizabeth, whose maiden name was Bauer. He was born in 1748, on new year's day, at Wolmerswende, in the German principality of Halberstadt, and inherited with the indolence of his father the talents of his mother. His early progress was inconsiderable. At ten years of age he could barely read and write. But he had a good memory: he learned by heart, and repeated with ease, many of Luther's hymns, and other pious fragments. He read the bible with delight: the historical books, the prophets, the psalms, and especially the apocalypse, were turned over by him daily with renewed pleasure.

To these hymns of Luther he ascribed, in after-life, the hint of that impressive popularity which charac-

terized his ballads. He had always an ear for rhythm, and, while a boy, would indicate and blame the lines which had a half-foot too much, or which were so constructed as to throw on distinct syllables the ictus of the scanner and the emphasis of the reader. By a kind of instinct he knew already what interfered with effect.

He loved to stray alone about a wild uninclosed heath near his father's home. He was ordered to carry a Latin grammar in his pocket, and to learn his declensions. The first rudiments his mother attempted to teach him. He was next intrusted to the care of a neighbouring preacher; but so averse was he to this kind of application, that after two years he did not know his grammar, and was forced to withdraw as a dunce incapable of literary culture.

In 1760 his grandfather put him to a boarding-school at Aschersleben, under the rector Auerbach. Here young Bürger learned something, and exerted his talent for versification in a poem on the fire that happened in the spring of 1764 at Aschersleben, which advantageously displays both his metrical and pious turn of mind. An epigram on the usher's bag-wig, which the poet's school-fellows repeated with troublesome and seditious complacency, soon after occasioned his expulsion, as a ringleader in this petty insurrection against authority.

He was now sent to the university of Halle, to study theology. This was not the profession of his choice, but his choice of this profession was the condition of his grandfather's bounty. He accordingly went through the routine of instruction, and once preached in a village near Halle. But his acquaintance while at this college with a counsellor Klotze, a

man of literary attainments and free manners, brought on Bürger a reputation for libertinism, which, in the then state of Protestant Germany, was supposed incompatible with the pastoral office. Even his grandfather thought it necessary he should relinquish the holy profession for the study of the law, and accordingly consented to his removal, for that purpose, to Göttingen in the Easter term of 1768. To jurisprudence he applied with assiduity, and became well versed in the Pandects; but experience had taught him no discretion with respect to personal conduct. The lodgings which Klotze recommended he took at Göttingen, and again made a noise by his dissoluteness, which provoked his grandfather to withdraw all further patronage. Poor, and a rake, it was difficult not to incur a style of living repulsive to mere acquaintance, and disgusting even to the tolerance of friendship. Biester, Sprengel, and Boie, were among those friends who valued in Bürger the good qualities which still remained to him, and who conferred on his adversity what it admitted of consolation. For Biester he was conceived to feel; to Boie he was thought to owe predilection. A humorous poetical epistle to Sprengel, requiring back a great-coat left at his rooms, and the drinking song *Herr Bacchus ist ein braver Mann*, were then considered as indicating the natural line of pursuit for his literary talents. Pecuniary distress had made him sensible of the necessity of exertion; for the fear of want is a stronger stimulus than the hope of remote advancement.

It was now that he first read with ardor the ancient classics, and that he applied to the modern languages with assiduity. English, French, Italian, Spanish, all yielded to his efforts. With Bürger and his companions

Shakspeare became so favourite an author, that they agreed, one April night, to have a frolic in honor of his birth-day, at which all the conversation should be conducted in quotations from the English dramatist. Baron Kielmansegge was their host, and so glibly would his guests repeat with Sir Toby, "Art any thing but a steward? Dost thou think there shall be no more cakes and ale?" that by the hour of separation their turbulence drew the attention of the police, and they had to "rub their chain with crumbs." [Dass sie ihren Rausch auf dem Carcer ausschlafen müssten.] Bürger delighted also in Spanish literature, and composed in that language an original story, which Boie still possesses.

Gotter, a young man, formed by the study of French models to a love of correct and polished versification, came to Göttingen in 1769, and associated with Bürger and his friends. He had brought a Parisian Almanac of the Muses, and took pleasure in exhibiting those pencilled geraniums, with which the Gressets, the Dorats, and the Pezais, had stocked this annual anthology. To Gotter, Bürger attached himself greatly, and in his society certainly acquired considerable taste: in short, his natural tendency to the exorbitant, the extravagant, the eccentric, was somewhat pruned away. They planned in concert a German Almanac of the Muses. Kästner, the epigrammatist, promised them his assistance. Boie was alert in soliciting contributions, and obtained, in a trip to Berlin, the avowed patronage of the German Horace, Ramler, a friend the more important, as he had influence with the directories of periodical criticism. Under such auspices the Almanac of the Muses was not only likely to merit, but to obtain, speedy popularity. It accordingly suc-

ceeded to admiration, and continued from 1770 to 1775, under the same management, with yearly increasing repute. A translation of the *Hameau* of Bernard, and another more masterly of the *Pervigilium Veneris*, were among the exercitations which Bürger chronicled in the Muses' Almanac. The comic ballad Europa is also his, although the loose turn of the story occasioned him to suppress his usual signature.

Bürger envied, as he says in some of his letters, the correctness and ease of his friend Gotter's versification. To him all he produced was carried for criticism. It was at first sturdily defended against objections; but much was always altered eventually in deference to the judgment of the censor. Flushed with the glow of composition, Bürger would often present his verses with the comic entreaty, for this once not to find any fault; yet he was best pleased with a captious commentary, which put every epithet to the torture. Thus he gradually accomplished himself in the fine art *de faire difficilement des vers*.

Throughout life he maintained that his reputation as a poet was far less a result of any unusual talent in him, than of the perpetual use of the file; meaning by that, the extraordinary pains he bestowed on all his compositions: his best poems, he said, were precisely those which had cost him most labor. He would alter not merely words and lines, but left scarsely one vestige of his first composition.

In Germany it is not uncommon for polished families to bespeak a birth-day ode, an epithalamium, or an elegy, on those occasions which form a sort of epocha in the history of their existence. To the poet a pecuniary recompence is sent, and a splendid edition of his work is distributed among the friends of the

house. The notice which Bürger began to obtain occasioned many applications of this kind: and to him it was convenient, by means like these, to repair his shattered finances. Several heirs of fortune, several happy mothers, have now the pleasure of boasting, my birth-day was sung, or, my wedding was celebrated, by Bürger.

In 1771 Hölty, the elegiac, and Voss, the bucolic poet, Miller, author of Siegwart and Mariamne, a writer of great sensibility, and the two counts Stolberg, of whom Frederic Leopold is most known by poems, travels, and a republican romance called The Iland, came to Göttingen, as yet "youths unknown to fame." They were soon attracted, by the natural magnetism of genius, within the circle which had assembled round Bürger; and after his removal from Göttingen, in the following year, they continued to visit his rustic retreat.

The influence of Boie obtained for Bürger, in 1772, a stewardship of the manor of Alten-Gleichen, under the noble family of Uslar. The acceptance of the place occasioned a reconciliation between the poet and his grandfather, who was willing to encourage this symptom of economic care and returning prudence, by paying off the debts incurred at Göttingen by his grandson. Boie was absent. A less faithful friend undertook the liquidation; nearly seven hundred dollars of this advance passed into the hands, not of Bürger's creditors, but of a spendthrift associate. The student could not refund; the grandfather was inexorable; and Bürger migrated to his new residence, still encumbered with college-debts, which for years disturbed his repose, but which his sloth could never summons the means of discharging.

Here it was that Bürger first met with Herder's dissertation on the songs of rude nations, which drew his attention to the ballads of England, and with Percy's Reliques, which immediately became his manual. These books decided for ever the character of his excellence. From a free translation of "The Friar of Orders Gray" *(Bruder Graurock)*, and "The Child of Elle" *(Die Entführung)*, and from an imitation of Dryden's Guiscardo and Sigismunda *(Lenardo und Blandine)*, he rapidly passed on to the production of "The Wild Hunter," "The Parson's Daughter," and "Lenore." The two latter are probably the finest ballads extant. No other minstrel communicates to the reader an equal degree of interest and agitation; it is difficult to peruse them in the closet without breaking loose into pantomime. Nor is he less master of the more difficultly arousable, rapid, and impetuous movements of the soul, than of the tenderer feelings of the heart. His extraordinary powers of language are founded on a rejection of the conventional phraseology of regular poetry, in favor 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, rime, are always with him an echo to the sense. The hurrying vigor of his diction is unrivalled; yet is so natural, even in its sublimity, that his poetry is singularly fitted to become national popular song. The Lenore was first communicated to Boie, who eagerly induced several of the Göttingen party to ride with him to Alten Gleichen, and hear it. The effect was peculiarly great on the younger count Stolberg. During the stanza,

" Anon an iron-grated door
" Fast biggens on their view:
" He crack'd his whip—the locks, the bolts,
" Cling clang! asunder flew"—

Frederic Leopold started from his seat in an agony of rapturous terror.

Near two years were passed lonesomely by Bürger in his rural station, but they were the two years of his life the most valuable to the public. He married, in September 1774, a farmer's daughter of the neighbourhood, by name Niedeck, whose devoted, whose heroic attachment to him was never more conspicuous than in moments of the most untoward adversity. In the village Wollmershausen he hired the snug cottage to which he conducted his bride. An old schoolfellow, Goekingk, went to visit him there on his marriage, and renewed an intimacy which suffered no subsequent interruption.

Financial difficulties were probably the cause which, in 1776, aroused Bürger to publish in the German Museum, then a magazine of some celebrity, proposals for an Iambic version of the Iliad. The annexed specimens were distinguished for a more than Homeric rapidity of diction, and for an absence of stateliness, less unfaithful than the euphemism of Pope, and more attaching than the solemnity of Cowper. But as the younger count Stolberg had also made some progress in the same enterprise; as his specimens, more dexterously chosen, divided at least the suffrages of critics, and possessed the advantage of copying the hexametrical lines of the original; as his industry speedily outstripped the short fits of Bürger's application, and soon completed the publication of the Iliad; this

enterprise was abandoned without advantage to his fortune or his fame, after having extended beyond six books. The Epistle of Defiance, addressed on the occasion to Stolberg, is one of the most spirited of Bürger's smaller poems.

His next literary undertaking was a translation of Macbeth, brought out at Hamburg for the benefit of Schröder, an artist-actor who excelled in personating the heroes of Shakspeare. This translation, although too much abridged, and in the witch-scenes too low, is in some respects superior to the original. The character of Banquo has acquired more consequence, by the introduction of a good soliloquy at the beginning of the second act. Of the third act the third scene was omitted; the murder of Banquo is known from the narration of the assassin. In like manner the second scene of the fourth act is curtailed; the disgusting butchery of Macduff's child being far more pathetically stated by Rosse afterwards. The fourth scene of the fifth act is also with propriety omitted; as the removal of Birnam wood becomes sufficiently explained by the scout.

The father-in-law of Bürger died in 1777. In consequence of this event, an intricate and inconvenient executorship devolved on the poet. A law-suit, which it obliged him to conduct, displayed, indeed, his professional qualifications, but absorbed his leisure in vexatious frivolities. The inheritance, to which he acceded, did not much improve his circumstances; which an increasing family rendered daily more insufficient.

In 1778 he undertook the exclusive compilation of the Göttingen Almanac of the Muses (while Goekingk and Voss established a new one at Hamburg), and as-

sisted also in other periodical publications. The wages of authorship no where formed at that time an adequate resource, if a liberal maintenance was the object. There is, however, a pleasure in composition, there is a pleasure in praise, there is a pleasure, even when unknown, in contributing to tincture the general flow of opinion; these constituted the chief rewards, for, as a necessary division of human labor, it was certainly underpaid. Bürger found it so; and, in 1780, forsook the Muses for Pan, and applied to the Rural Gods for a maintenance refused him by the Nine. The farm he hired was situate in Appenrode. An additional motive for this determination was, perhaps, that the accounts of his stewardship had been negligently managed; and that something, very like a formal charge of peculation, was made against him to the lords of Uslar. This accusation, indeed, Bürger repelled; but his carelessness made his resignation a duty, and it was accepted with readiness.

In 1784 his wife died. His farm appeared unproductive, probably because it was abandoned to the management of servants; and he once more removed, with his children, to Göttingen, where he subsisted partly by writing, and partly by private tuition. He read lectures there on German style and the theory of taste; and after five years residence obtained a professorship.

As soon, or, perhaps, rather sooner than his circumstances properly permitted, he became united to his former wife's younger sister, the so often celebrated "Molly" of his love-songs. During her short stay with him she was the darling of his affections; but she died in child-bed of her first daughter, the very year in which she married. His children, after

this catastrophe, were dispersed among different kinsfolks.

Bürger undertook, in 1787, to lecture on the critical philosophy of Kant, and his course was much attended. In this year the jubilee of the foundation of the Göttingen university was celebrated: two poems were dedicated by him to the occasion, and the grateful college conferred, in return, a doctor's degree. In November 1789 he became professor of philosophy.

About this time an anonymous poem arrived from Stutgard, in which the authoress professed to have attached herself to Bürger, from the perusal of his heart-felt poems; and with a liberal zeal, by way of recompence, offered him her hand in marriage. The verses were well turned, and highly complimentary; and there was an interesting singularity in their heroic cast of sentiment. Bürger drew up a very galant reply, and printed both the poems in the Almanac of the Muses. Intimations now came in whispers, that the lines were intended for the individual, not for the public. Bürger set off for Stutgard. The syren pleased not only when she sang; and Bürger married her immediately.

It is melancholy to relate, that this truly poetical union afforded no lasting happiness to the husband; and that, in 1792, after little more than three years cohabitation, a separation was accomplished by application to a court of justice. During this unfortunate connexion Bürger was assailed with a deep hoarseness, which he never overcame, and which unfitted him for lecturing. This reduced him once more to dependence on the booksellers for subsistence. A pulmonary disease was, in the mean time, making a rapid progress; it affected his spirits less than his

health; but it snatched him, on the 8th of June 1794, from a country which he had illustrated, at the age of forty-six years and five months.

His physician Dr. Jäger, and his friend the benevolent Reinhard, the attendants of his last moments, accepted the care of his four surviving children. His property was found insufficient for the payment of his debts. A marble monument has been erected to his memory, by voluntary subscription, in a garden at Göttingen where he commonly walked. It is the work of the brothers Heyd of Cassel, and represents a Germania in tears crowning the poet's urn. The figure measures five feet, the pedestal two and a half.

His works consist of

Anthia and Abrokomas, translated from Xenophon of Ephesus.

Poems. Vol. I, 1778. Vol. II, 1789.

Macbeth, altered from Shakspeare.

Münchausen's Travels.

Miscellaneous Works, two volumes, containing the six first books of the Iliad, some prose versions from Ossian, and the papers inserted in various magazines, of which the philological (Hübnerus redivivus), and the political (Die Republic England), are calculated to excite some curiosity.

THE WILD HUNTER.

I.

His bugle horn the margrave sounds.
  Halloo-loo-loo! to horse, to horse.
Neighs the brisk steed, and forward bounds;
  The pack uncoupled join his course.
With bark and yelp, they brush and rush,
Thro' corn and thorn, thro' wood and bush.

II.

The Sunday morning's early ray
Had clad the lofty spire in gold;
And deep and shrill, with dong and ding,
The bells their matin chiming toll'd;
While from afar resounds the lay
Of pious people come to pray.

III.

Yolohee! dash athwart the train,
With trampling haste the margrave rides;
When lo! two horsemen speed amain,
To join the chase from different sides;
One from the right on milk-white steed,
The left bestrode a swarthy breed.

IV.

And who were then the stranger-pair?
I guess indeed, but may not say:
The right-hand horseman, young and fair,
Look'd blooming as the dawn of May;
The other's eyes with fury glow,
And tempests loured on his brow.

V.

"Be welcome, sirs, I 'm starting now;
You hit the nick of time and place;
Not earth or heaven can bestow
A princelier pleasure than the chase."
Giving his side a hearty slap;
He wav'd aloof his hunter's cap.

VI.

"Ill suits the bugle's boisterous noise
With sabbath-chime, and hymned prayer,
(Quoth the fair youth in gentle voice,)
To-day thy purpos'd sport forbear:
Let thy good angel warn thee now,
Nor to thy evil genius bow."

VII.

"Hunt on, my noble fellow, on,"
The dingy horseman briskly cries,
"Their psalms let lazy cowards con,
For us a gayer sun shall rise:
What best beseems a prince I teach,
Unheeded let yon stripling preach."

VIII.

"His ghostly counsels I shall scorn,"
The margrave said, and spurr'd his steed,
"Who fears to follow hound and horn,
Let him the paternoster heed.
If this, Sir Gentle, vexes you,
Pray join at church the saintly crew."

IX.

With sixteen antlers on his head
A milk-white stag before them strode.
Soho! hurrah! at once they sped
O'er hill and wood, o'er field and flood.
Aleft, aright, beside the knight,
Rode both the strangers black and white.

X.

Louder their bugle-horns they wind,
The horses swifter spurn the ground;
And now before, and now behind,
Crush'd, gasping, howls some trampled hound.
"There let him burst, and rot to hell,
Our princely sport this must not quell."

XI.

The quarry seeks a field of corn,
And hopes to find a shelter there.
See the poor husbandman forlorn
With clasped hands is drawing near.
"Have pity, noble Sir, forbear,
My little only harvest spare."

XII.

The right-hand stranger calls aside;
The other cheers him to the prey.
The margrave bawls with angry chide:
"Vile scoundrel, take thyself away."
Then cracks the lifted whip on high,
And cuts him cross the ear and eye.

XIII.

So said and done, o'er ditch and bank
The margrave gallops at a bound;
And with him pours in rear and flank
The train of man and horse and hound.
Horse, hound, and man, the corn-field scour,
Its dust and chaff the winds devour.

XIV.

Affrighted at the growing din
The timid stag resumes his flight,
Runs up and down, and out and in,
Until a meadow caught his sight,
Where, couch'd among the fleecy breed,
He slily hopes to hide his head.

XV.

But up and down, and out and in,
The hounds his tainted track pursue;
Again he hears the growing din,
Again the hunters cross his view.
The shepherd, for his charge afraid,
Before the margrave, kneeling, said:

XVI.

"In mercy, noble lord, keep back;
This is the common of the poor;
Unless you whistle off the pack,
We shall be starv'd for want of store.
These sheep our little cotters owe,
Here grazes many a widow's cow."

XVII.

The right-hand stranger calls aside;
The other cheers him to proceed.
Again the knight, with angry chide,
Repels the peasant's humble plead:
"Wert thou within thy cattle's skin,
I would not call a bloodhound in."

XVIII.

He sounds the bugle loo-loo-loo!
The dogs come yelping at the sound;
With fury fierce the eager crew
Pounce on whatever stood around.
The shepherd, mangled, blood-besmear'd,
Falls; and, beside him, all the herd.

XIX.

Rous'd by the murderous whoop so near
The stag once more his covert breaks;
Panting, in foam, with gushing tear,
The darkness of the wood he seeks,
And, where a lonely hermit dwells,
Takes refuge in the hallow'd cells.

XX.

With crack of whip, and blore of horn,
Yolohee! on! hurrah! soho!
Rash rush the throng thro' bush and thorn,
And thither still pursue the foe.
Before the door, in gentle guise,
His prayer the holy hermit tries.

XXI.

"Break off thy course, my voice attend,
Nor God's asylum dare profane;
To Heaven not in vain ascend
The groans of suffering beast or man.
For the last time be warn'd, and bow,
Else punishment shall seize thee now."

XXII.

The right-hand stranger pleads again,
With anxious mildness to forbear;
The left-hand horseman shouts amain,
And cheers the margrave still to dare.
In spite of the good angel's call,
He lets the evil one enthral.

XXIII.

" Perdition here, perdition there,"
He bellows, " I as nothing reck;
If God's own footstool were its lair,
The gates of Heaven should not check.
On, comrades, on!" he rode before,
And burst athwart the oriel door.

XXIV.

At once has vanisht all the rout,
Hermit, and hut, and stag, and hound;
Nor whip, nor horn, nor bark, nor shout,
Amid the dun abyss resound.
Dim chilly mists his sight appal;
A deadly stillness swallows all.

XXV.

The knight, affrighted, stares around;
He bawls, but tries in vain to hear;
He blows his horn, it yields no sound,
Cuts with his lash the silent air,
And spurs his steed on either side,
But from the spot he cannot ride.

XXVI.

Darker and darker grow the skies,
As were he shrouded in a grave:
And from afar below arise
Sounds as of ocean's restless wave:
While from on high, thro' clouds and gloom,
A voice of thunder speaks his doom:

XXVII.

" Thou fiend beneath a human shape,
Scorner of beast, of man—of God,
Know that no creature's groans escape
His ear, or his avenging rod.
Fly, and that princes long may heed,
Shall Hell and Devil dog thy speed."

XXVIII.

Cold shudders thrill through flesh and bone;
The voice his soul of hope bereaves;
A flash of tawny lightning shone
Upon the forest's rustling leaves;
And chilly winds begin to roar,
And showery tempests drift and pour.

XXIX.

Louder and louder howls the storm,
And from the ground, bow wow! soho!
A thousand hell-hounds, ghaunt of form,
Burst open-mouth'd—at him they go—
And there 's a ghastly hunter too,
Horsed on the steed of dingy hue—

XXX.

The margrave scuds o'er field and wood,
And shrieks to them in vain to spare;
Hell follows still through fire or flood,
By night, by day, in earth, in air.—
This is the chase the hunter sees,
With midnight horror, thro' the trees.

The spectre-hunt in Dryden's *Theodore and Honoria* has evidently suggested some of the imagery in this spirited ballad. Critics have objected, that the church-bells, and the congregation singing psalms as they approach (stanza II), and the religious scruple to a

hunting party on the sabbath-day (stanza VI), tend to place the scene in a protestant province; whereas the hermitage (stanza XIX) removes it to a catholic country. Sir Walter Scott, in his fine imitation of the poem, has wisely veiled an imperfection, which, as an historian, I have thought fit to retain.

THE PARSON'S DAUGHTER.

I.

Beside the parson's bower of yew,
  Why strays a troubled spright,
That peaks and pines, and dimly shines
  Through curtains of the night?

II.

Why steals along the pond of toads
  A gliding fire so blue,
That lights a spot, where grows no grass,
  Where falls no rain, nor dew?

III.

The parson's daughter once was good,
  And gentle as the dove,
And young, and fair—and many came
  To win the damsel's love.

IV.

High o'er the hamlet, from the hill,
  Beyond the winding stream,
The windows of a stately house,
  In sheen of evening gleam.

V.

There dwelt in riot, rout, and roar,
A lord so frank and free;
That oft, with inward joy of heart,
The maid beheld his glee:

VI.

Whether he met the dawning day
In hunting trim so fine;
Or tapers, sparkling from his hall,
Beshone the midnight wine.

VII.

He sent the maid his portrait, girt
With diamond, pearl, and gold;
And silken paper, sweet with musk,
This gentle message told:

VIII.

"Let go thy sweethearts one and all;
Shalt thou be basely wooed,
That worthy art to gain the heart
Of youths of noble blood?

IX.

"The tale I would to thee bewray,
In secret must be said;
At midnight hour I 'll seek thy bower;
Fair lass, be not afraid.

X.

"And when the amorous nightingale
Sings sweetly to his mate,
I 'll pipe my quail-call from the field;
Be kind, nor make me wait."

XI.

In cap and mantle clad he came,
At night, with lonely tread,
Unseen, and silent as a mist;
And hush'd the dogs with bread.

XII.

And when the amorous nightingale
Sang sweetly to his mate,
She heard his quail-call in the field;
And ah! ne'er made him wait.

XIII.

The words he whisper'd were so soft
They won her ear and heart;
How soon will she who loves believe:
How deep a lover's art!

XIV.

No lure, no soothing guise, he spar'd,
To banish virtuous shame;
He call'd on holy God above,
As witness to his flame:

XV.

He clasp'd her to his breast, and swore
To be for ever true;
"O yield thee to my wishful arms,
Thy choice thou shalt not rue."

XVI.

And while she strove, he drew her on,
And led her to the bower,
So still, so dim—and round about
Sweet smelt the beans in flower.

XVII.

There beat her heart, and heav'd her breast,
And pleaded every sense;
And there the glowing breath of lust
Extinguish'd innocence.

XVIII.

But when the fragrant beans began
Their fallow blooms to shed,
Her sparkling eyes their lustre lost,
Her cheek, its roses fled.

XIX.

And when she saw the pods increase,
The ruddier cherries stain,
She felt her silken robe grow tight,
Her waist new weight sustain.

XX.

And when the mowers went afield,
The yellow corn to ted,
She felt her burden stir within,
And shook with tender dread.

XXI.

And when the winds of autumn hist
Along the stubble-field,
Then could the damsel's piteous plight
No longer be conceal'd.

XXII.

Her sire, a harsh and angry man,
With furious voice revil'd;
" Hence from my sight! I 'll none of thee—
I harbour not thy child."

XXIII.

And fast, amid her fluttering hair,
With clenched fist he gripes,
And seiz'd a leathern thong, and lash'd
Her side with sounding stripes.

XXIV.

Her lily skin, so soft and white,
He ribb'd with bloody wales;
And thrust her out, though black the night,
Though sleet and storm assails.

XXV.

Up the harsh rock, on flinty paths,
The maiden had to roam;
On tottering feet she grop'd her way,
And sought her lover's home.

XXVI.

"A mother thou hast made of me,
Before thou mad'st a wife,
For this, upon my tender breast,
These livid stripes are rife:

XXVII.

"Behold!"—And then, with bitter sobs,
She sank upon the floor—
"Make good the evil thou hast wrought;
My injur'd name restore."

XXVIII.

"Poor soul! I 'll have thee hous'd and nurs'd,
Thy terrors I lament.
Stay here; we 'll have some further talk—
The old one shall repent—"

XXIX.

" I have no time to rest and wait;
That saves not my good name:
If thou with honest soul hast sworn,
O leave me not to shame.

XXX.

" But at the holy altar be
Our union sanctified;
Before the people, and the priest,
Receive me for thy bride."

XXXI.

" Unequal unions may not blot
The honors of my line:
Art thou of wealth, or rank, for me
To harbour thee as mine?

XXXII.

" What 's fit and fair I 'll do for thee;
Shalt yet remain my love—
Shalt wed my huntsman—and we 'll then
Our former transports prove."

XXXIII.

" Thy wicked soul, hard-hearted man,
May pangs in hell await!
Sure, if not suited for thy bride,
I was not for thy mate.

XXXIV.

" Go, seek a spouse of nobler blood,
Nor God's just judgments dread:
So shall, ere long, some base-born wretch
Defile thy marriage-bed.

XXXV.

" Then, traitor, feel how wretched they
In hopeless shame immerst;
Then smite thy forehead on the wall,
While horrid curses burst.

XXXVI.

" Roll thy dry eyes in wild despair—
Unsooth'd thy grinning woe:
Through thy pale temples fire the ball,
And sink to fiends below."

XXXVII.

Collected then, she started up,
And, through the hissing sleet,
Through thorn and briar, through flood and mire,
She fled with bloody feet.

XXXVIII.

" Where now," she cried, " my gracious God,
What refuge have I left?"
And reach'd the garden of her home,
Of hope in man bereft.

XXXIX.

On hand and foot she feebly crawl'd
Beneath the bower unblest;
Where withering leaves, and gathering snow,
Prepar'd her only rest.

XL.

There rending pains, and darting throes,
Assail'd her shuddering frame;
And, from her womb, a lovely boy
With wail and weeping came.

XLI.

Forth from her hair a silver pin
With hasty hand she drew,
And prest against its tender heart,
And the sweet babe she slew.

XLII.

Erst when the act of blood was done,
Her soul its guilt abhorr'd:
" My Jesus! what has been my deed!
Have mercy on me, Lord!"

XLIII.

With bleeding nails, beside the pond,
Its shallow grave she tore:
" There rest in God; there shame and want
Thou canst not suffer more.

XLIV.

" Me vengeance waits. My poor, poor child,
Thy wound shall bleed afresh,
When ravens from the gallows tear
Thy mother's mouldering flesh."

XLV.

Hard by the bower her gibbet stands:
Her skull is still to shew;
It seems to eye the barren grave,
Three spans in length below.

XLVI.

That is the spot, where grows no grass,
Where falls no rain, nor dew;
Whence steals along the pond of toads
A hovering fire so blue.

XLVII.

And nightly, when the ravens come,
Her ghost is seen to glide,
Pursues, and tries to quench, the flame,
And pines the pool beside.

This truly pathetic ballad is said to have been suggested by a fact, which happened in the neighbourhood of Göttingen, and which inspired universal compassion. At that time child-murder was punished with death: a more lenient legislation is now content to pity the agonies of shame, and to notice merely the concealment of pregnancy. No doubt this poem has contributed to soften the ancient severity of the law; for the poet diffuses and perpetuates the feelings he excites, and thus guarantees the duration of the public opinion he insinuates.

ELLENORE.

I.

At break of day from frightful dreams
Upstarted Ellenore:
My William, art thou slayn, she sayde,
Or dost thou love no more?

II.

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

III.

With blore of trump and thump of drum
His fellow-soldyers come,
Their helms bedeckt with oaken boughs,
They seeke their long'd-for home.

IV.

And evry road and evry lane
Was full of old and young
To gaze at the rejoycing band,
To haile with gladsom toung.

V.

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

VI.

And when the soldyers all were bye,
She tore her raven hair,
And cast herself upon the growne,
In furious despair.

VII.

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

VIII.

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

IX.

"Kneele downe, thy paternoster saye,
'T will calm thy troubled spright:
The Lord is wise, the Lord is good;
What He hath done is right."

X.

'O mother, mother! saye not so;
Most cruel is my fate:
I prayde, and prayde; but watte avaylde?
'T is now, alas! too late.'

XI.

"Our Heavenly Father, if we praye,
Will help a suffring child:
Go take the holy sacrament;
So shal thy grief grow mild."

XII.

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

XIII.

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

XIV.

"Then wherefor sorrowe for his loss?
Thy moans are all in vain:
But when his soul and body parte,
His falsehode brings him pain."

XV.

'O mother, mother! gone is gone:
My hope is all forlorn;
The grave my only safeguard is—
O, had I ne'er been born!

XVI.

'Go out, go out, my lamp of life;
In grizely darkness die:
There is no mercie, sure, above!
For ever let me lie.'

XVII.

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

XVIII.

"My girl, forget thine earthly woe,
And think on God and bliss;
For so, at least, shal not thy soul
Its heavenly bridegroom miss."

XIX.

'O mother, mother! what is bliss,
And what the fiendis cell?
With him 't is heaven any where,
Without my William, hell.

XX.

'Go out, go out, my lamp of life,
In endless darkness die:
Without him I must loathe the earth,
Without him scorne the skie.'

XXI.

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

XXII.

She bet her breast, and wrung her hands,
And rollde her tearless eye,
From rise of morn, til the pale stars
Again orespred the skye.

XXIII.

When harke! abroade she herde the tramp
Of nimble-hoofed steed;
She herde a knight with clank alighte,
And climbe the stair in speed.

XXIV.

And soon she herde a tinkling hand,
That twirled at the pin;
And thro her door, that opend not,
These words were breathed in.

XXV.

"What ho! what ho! thy door undo;
Art watching or asleepe?
My love, dost yet remember me,
And dost thou laugh or weepe?"

XXVI.

'Ah! William here so late at night!
Oh! I have wachte and wak'd:
Whense art thou come? For thy return
My heart has sorely ak'd.'

XXVII.

"At midnight only we may ride;
I come ore land and see:
I mounted late, but soone I go;
Aryse, and come with mee."

XXVIII.

'O William, enter first my bowre,
And give me one embrace:
The blasts athwarte the hawthorn hiss;
Awayte a little space.'

XXIX.

"Tho blasts athwarte the hawthorn hiss,
I may not harbour here;
My spurs are sett, my courser pawes,
My hour of flight is nere.

XXX.

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

XXXI.

'How, ride to night a thousand miles?
Thy love thou dost bemock:
Eleven is the stroke that still
Rings on within the clock.'

XXXII.

"Looke up; the moon is bright, and we
Outstride the earthly men:
I'le take thee to the bridal bed,
And night shal end but then."

XXXIII.

'And where is then thy house, and home,
And bridal bed so meet?'
"T is narrow, silent, chilly, low,
Six planks, one shrouding sheet."

XXXIV.

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

XXXV.

"All as thou lyest upon thy couch,
Aryse, no longer stop;
The wedding-guests thy coming wayte,
The chamber-door is ope."

XXXVI.

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

XXXVII.

And hurry-skurry off they go,
Unheeding wet or dry;
And horse and rider snort and blow,
And sparkling pebbles fly.

XXXVIII.

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

XXXIX.

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

XL.

" The moon is bright, and blue the night;
Dost quake the blast to stem?
Dost shudder, mayd, to seeke the dead?"
' No, no, but what of them?'

XLI.

How glumly sownes yon dirgy song!
Night-ravens flappe the wing.
What knell doth slowly tolle ding dong?
The psalms of death who sing?

XLII.

Forth creepes a swarthy funeral train,
A corse is on the biere;
Like croke of todes from lonely moores,
The chauntings meete the eere.

XLIII.

"Go, beare her corse when midnight 's past,
With song, and tear, and wail;
I 've gott my wife, I take her home,
My hour of wedlock hail!

XLIV.

" Leade forth, o clark, the chaunting quire,
To swelle our spousal-song:
Come, preest, and reade the blessing soone;
For our dark bed we long."

XLV.

The bier is gon, the dirges hush;
His bidding all obaye,
And headlong rush thro briar and bush,
Beside his speedy waye.

XLVI.

Halloo! halloo! how swift they go,
Unheeding wet or dry;
And horse and rider snort and blow,
And sparkling pebbles fly.

XLVII.

How swift the hill, how swift the dale,
Aright, aleft, are gon!
By hedge and tree, by thorp and town,
They gallop, gallop on.

XLVIII.

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

XLIX.

"Look up, look up, an airy crew
In roundel daunces reele:
The moon is bright, and blue the night,
Mayst dimly see them wheele.

L.

"Come to, come to, ye ghostly crew,
Come to, and follow me,
And daunce for us the wedding daunce,
When we in bed shal be."

LI.

And brush, brush, brush, the ghostly crew
Came wheeling ore their heads,
All rustling like the witherd leaves
That wide the whirlwind spreads.

LII.

Halloo! halloo! away they go,
Unheeding wet or dry;
And horse and rider snort and blow,
And sparkling pebbles fly.

LIII.

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

LIV.

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

LV.

I weene the cock prepares to crowe;
The sand will soone be run:
I snuffe the early morning air;
Downe, downe! our work is done.

LVI.

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

LVII.

And lo! an yron-grated gate
Soon biggens to their view:
He crackde his whyppe; the locks, the bolts,
Cling, clang! assunder flew.

LVIII.

They passe, and 't was on graves they trodde;
"'T is hither we are bound:"
And many a tombstone ghastly white
Lay in the moonshyne round.

LIX.

And when he from his steed alytte,
His armure, black as cinder,
Did moulder moulder all awaye,
As were it made of tinder.

LX.

His head became a naked scull;
Nor hair nor eyne had he:
His body grew a skeleton,
Whilome so blithe of ble.

LXI.

And at his dry and boney heel
No spur was left to bee;
And in his witherd hand you might
The scythe and hour-glass see.

LXII.

And lo! his steed did thin to smoke,
And charnel-fires outbreathe;
And pal'd, and bleachde, then vanishde quite
The mayd from underneathe.

LXIII.

And hollow howlings hung in air,
And shrekes from vaults arose:
Then knewe the mayd she might no more
Her living eyes unclose.

LXIV.

But onward to the judgment-seat,
Thro' mist and moonlight dreare,
The ghostly crew their flight persewe,
And hollowe in her eare:

LXV.

"Be patient; tho thyne herte should breke,
Arrayne not Heaven's decree;
Thou nowe art of thy bodie reft,
Thy soul forgiven bee!"

NOTES TO ELLENORE.

STANZA I. No German poem has been so repeatedly translated into English as Ellenore: eight different versions are lying on my table, and I have read others. It becomes not me to appretiate them: suffice it to observe that this was the earliest of them all, having been communicated to my friends in the year 1790, and mentioned in the preface to Dr. Aikin's poems, which appeared in 1791. It was first printed in the second number of the Monthly Magazine for 1796. The German title is Lenore, which is the vernacular form of Eleonora, a name here represented by Ellenore.

STANZA II. In the original the emperor and empress have made peace, which places the scene in southern Germany; and the army is returning home triumphant. By shifting the scene to England, and making William a soldier of Richard Lionheart, it became necessary, that the ghost of Ellenore, whom Death, in the form of her lover, conveys to William's grave, should cross the sea. Hence the splash! splash! of the XXXIX and other stanzas, of which there is no trace in the original; of the tramp! tramp! there is. I could not prevail on myself to efface these words, which have been gotten by heart, and which are quoted even in Don Juan; but I am aware that the translation is in some respects too free for a history of poetry; and it is too trailing, *(schleppend)* said one of my German correspondents, for the rapid character of the prototype.

STANZA V. The word *bride* in German signifies not only a newly-married woman, but any betrothed woman; and in this sense it is here employed.

STANZA XXIII. Here begins a marked resemblance to an obscure English ballad called the Suffolk miracle, which it may be curious to exhibit in comparison. A Collection of Old Ballads, corrected from the best and most ancient copies extant (the third edition), London, 1727, published by J. Roberts, Warwick-lane; 287 pages—is quoted more than once in Percy's Reliques. It contains 44 poems: among them occurs, p. 226, the following tale, which, it is thought, bears a considerable resemblance to Lenore, and must have suggested the first hint of the fable.

THE SUFFOLK MIRACLE:

Or a relation of a young man, who, a month after his death, appeared to his sweetheart, and carried her on horseback behind him for forty miles in two hours, and was never seen after but in his grave.

A wonder stranger ne'er was known,
Than what I now shall treat upon;
In Suffolk there did lately dwell
A farmer rich, and known full well;
He had a daughter, fair and bright,
On whom he plac'd his whole delight;
Her beauty was beyond compare,
She was both virtuous and fair.
There was a young man living by,
Who was so charmed with her eye,
That he could never be at rest,
He was by love so much possest;
He made address to her, and she
Did grant him love immediately.
But, when her father came to hear,
He parted her and her poor dear;
Forty miles distant was she sent,
Unto his brother, with intent
That she should there so long remain,
Till she should change her mind again.
Hereat this young man sadly griev'd,
But knew not how to be reliev'd;
He sigh'd and sobb'd continually,
That his true love he could not see,
She by no means cou'd to him send,
Who was her heart's espoused friend.
He sigh'd, he griev'd, but all in vain,
For she confin'd must still remain;
He mourn'd so much that doctor's art
Could give no ease unto his heart,
And was so strangely terrify'd,
That in short time for love he dy'd.
She that from him was sent away,
Knew nothing of his dying day,
But constant still she did remain,
And lov'd the dead, although in vain.
After he had in grave been laid
A month or more, unto the maid
He came in middle of the night,
Who gazed to see her heart's delight.
Her father's horse, which well she knew,
Her mother's hood and safeguard too,
He brought with him, to testify
Her parents order he came by;
Which, when her uncle understood,
He hop'd it would be for her good,
And gave consent to her straitway,
That with him she should come away.
When she was got her love behind,
They pass'd as swift as any wind,
That in two hours, or little more,
He brought her to her father's door:
But, as they did this great haste make,
He did complain his head did ake,
Her handkerchief she then took out,
And ty'd the same his head about:
And unto him she then did say,
Thou art as cold as any clay;
When we come home a fire we 'll have,
But little dream'd he went to grave.
Soon were they at her father's door,
And after she ne'er saw him more.
I 'll set the horse up, then he said,
And there he left the harmless maid.
She knock'd, and strait a man he cry'd,
Who 's there? 'T is I, she then reply'd;
Who wonder'd much her voice to hear,
And was possest with dread and fear.
Her father he did list, and then
He star'd like an affrighted man;
Down stairs he ran, and, when he see her,
Cry'd out, My child, how cam'st thou here?
Pray, sir, did you not send for me,
By such a messenger? cry'd she.
Which made his hair stand on his head,
As knowing well that he was dead.
Where is he then? to her he said.
He 's in the stable, quoth the maid.
Go in, said he, and go to bed,
We 'll see the horse well littered.
He star'd about, and there could he
No shape of any mankind see,
But found his horse all in a sweat,
Which made him in a dreadful fret;
His daughter he said nothing to,
Nor none else, tho' full well he knew,
That he was dead a month before,
For fear of grieving her full sore.
Her father to the father went
Of the deceas'd, with full intent
To tell him what his daughter said:
So both came back unto the maid.
They askt her, and she still did say,
'T was he that thus brought her away.
Which when they heard they were amaz'd,
And on each other strangely gaz'd.
A handkerchief, she said, she ty'd
About his head, and when they try'd,
The sexton they did speak unto,
That he the grave would then undo.
Affrighted then they did behold
His body turning into mould,
And, tho' he had a month been dead,
The kerchief was about his head;
This thing unto her then they told,
And the whole truth they did unfold.
She was thereat so terrify'd,
And grieved, that she quickly dy'd.

Part not true love, you rich men then,
But, if they be right honest men
Your daughters love, give them their way,
Nor force ofttimes their life's decay.

STANZA XXIV. The line, "That twirled at the pin;" is taken from Percy, not from Bürger: in the original, Death pulls the ringlet of a bell-string, and at the clinglingling! Ellenore awakes. This is better; but I could not render it to my satisfaction.

The minor poems of Bürger consist partly of love-and-wine songs, of epistles, and of elegiac and occasional sonnets and stanzas, many of which have been excellently translated into English by the Rev. M. Beresford, and printed in an anthology, which he published at Berlin; (2) partly of translations, among which the *Pervigilium Veneris* is much distinguished for grace and elegance; and (3) partly of original explosions of personal and peculiar feeling concerning passing events or books. Two or three of the last class follow.

PRO PATRIA MORI.

For virtue, freedom, human rights, to fall,
  Beseems the brave: it is a Saviour's death.
Of heroes only the most pure of all
  Thus with their heart's blood tinge the battle-heath.

And this proud death is seemliest in the man
  Who for a kindred race, a country bleeds:
Three hundred Spartans form the shining van
  Of those, whom fame in this high triumph leads.

Great is the death for a good prince incurr'd;
  Who wields the sceptre with benignant hand:
Well may for him the noble bare his sword,
  Falling he earns the blessings of a land.

Death for a parent, friend, or her we love,
If not so great, is beauteous to behold:
This the fine tumults of the heart approve;
It is the walk to death unbought of gold.

But for mere majesty to meet a wound—
Who holds that great or glorious, he mistakes:
That is the fury of the pamper'd hound,
Which envy, anger, or the whip, awakes.

And for a tyrant's sake to seek a jaunt
To hell—'s a death which only hell enjoys:
Where such a hero falls—a gibbet plant,
The murderer's trophy, and the plunderer's prize.

PROMETHEUS.

Scarse had Prometheus to the dark cold earth
Convey'd the source of light, and warmth, and life,
Olympian fire—when many an idle boy,
For warnings had been fruitless, burnt his fingers.
Lord! what an uproar the fond parents make,
Join'd by fat fools, and many a pious nurse!
Like frighten'd geese, priests hiss, and the police
Gobbles and struts, as a scar'd turkey-cock.
And shall we let them quench thee, heavenly light
Of free inquiry?—No. Blaze up aloft
And penetrate e'en into things of heaven.

THE MENAGERIE OF THE GODS.

Our lap-dogs and monkeys, our squirrels and cats,
Our parrots, canaries, and larks,
Have furnisht amusement to many old maids,
And once in a while to young sparks.

In heaven, where time passes heavily too,
When the gods have no subject to talk on,
Jove calls for an eagle, he keeps in a mew,
As an old English baron his falcon.

He lets it jump on to his sofa and chair,
And dip its crookt beak in his cup;
And laughs when it pinches young Ganymed's ear,
Or eats his ambrosia up.

Queen Juno, who fears from rough play a mishap,
Keeps peacocks with rainbowy tails;
And when she 's dispos'd to grudge Saturn his nap,
Their screaming or screeching ne'er fails.

Fair Venus most willingly coaxes the doves,
That coo, woo, and wed, on her wrist;
The sparrow, her chambermaid Aglae loves,
As often is fondled and kist.

Minerva, too proud to seem pleas'd with a trifle,
Professes to keep her old owl,
The crannies and chinks of Olympus to rifle;
For rats, mice, and vermin, to prowl.

Apollo, above stairs, a first-rate young blood,
Has a stud of four galloway ponies;
To gallop them bounding on heaven's high road,
A principal part of his fun is.

'T is fabled or known, he instructed a swan,
One spring, to outwhistle a blackbird,
Which sings the Castalian streamlet upon,
Like any Napolitan lack-beard.

Lyæus in India purchas'd a pair
Of tygers, delightfully pyball'd,
And drives them about at the speed of a hare,
With self-satisfaction unrivall'd.

At Pluto's black gate, in a kennel at rest,
A mastiff so grim has his station,
That fearful of reaching the fields of the blest,
Some ghosts have made choice of damnation.

But among all the animals, little and great,
That are foster'd and pamper'd above,
The ass, old Silenus selects for his mate,
Is that which most fondly I love.

So quiet, so steady, so guarded, and slow,
He bears no ill-will in his mind;
And nothing indecent, as far as I know,
Escapes him before or behind.

So fully content with himself and his lord,
He is us'd with good humor to take
Whatever the whims of the moment afford,
Be it drubbing, or raisins and cake.

He knows of himself ev'ry step of the way,
Both down to the cellar and back;
A qualification, I venture to say,
No butler of mine is to lack.

So largo his rump, so piano his pace,
'T is needless the rider to gird on;
Tho' fuddled the god, tho' uneven the ways,
He never gets rid of his burden.

An ass such as this all my wishes would fill;
O grant me, Silenus, one pray'r,
When thou art a-dying, and planning thy will,
Good father, do make me thy heir!

There must be in genius a something contagious; not that innate talent can be transferable; but there is a productive skill which may be communicated as

a knack; and there is an art of selecting the moral point of view best adapted for effect, the picturesque station of vision whence to survey the object under delineation, which can also be taught by the artist to those who have the opportunity of observing him; there is moreover in unrecognized superiority a tendency to provoke competitory exertion, and these combats of the mind, if they gradually settle the relative rank of the athlets, have at least occasioned effusions, many of which retain an enduring vitality. How else can it be explained that so many individuals as remain to be enumerated in this groop should all have caught so high a degree of impressive power as still to live in the literature of their country; and yet all were inoculated from the strong arm of Bürger? It is time to pass on to his companions.