

FRIEDRICH VON SCHILLER

THE POEMS OF SCHILLER
— THIRD PERIOD

Friedrich Schiller
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— Third period

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POEMS OF THE THIRD PERIOD

THE MEETING

I see her still — by her fair train surrounded,
The fairest of them all, she took her place;
Afar I stood, by her bright charms confounded,
For, oh! they dazzled with their heavenly grace.
With awe my soul was filled — with bliss unbounded,
While gazing on her softly radiant face;
But soon, as if up-borne on wings of fire,
My fingers 'gan to sweep the sounding lyre.

The thoughts that rushed across me in that hour,
The words I sang, I'd fain once more invoke;
Within, I felt a new-awakened power,
That each emotion of my bosom spoke.

My soul, long time enchained in sloth's dull bower,
Through all its fetters now triumphant broke,
And brought to light unknown, harmonious numbers,
Which in its deepest depths, had lived in slumbers.

And when the chords had ceased their gentle sighing,
And when my soul rejoined its mortal frame,
I looked upon her face and saw love vieing,
In every feature, with her maiden shame.
And soon my ravished heart seemed heavenward flying,
When her soft whisper o'er my senses came.
The blissful seraphs' choral strains alone
Can glad mine ear again with that sweet tone,

Of that fond heart, which, pining silently,
Ne'er ventures to express its feelings lowly,
The real and modest worth is known to me —
'Gainst cruel fate I'll guard its cause so holy.
Most blest of all, the meek one's lot shall be —
Love's flowers by love's own hand are gathered solely —
The fairest prize to that fond heart is due,
That feels it, and that beats responsive, too!

THE SECRET

She sought to breathe one word, but vainly;
Too many listeners were nigh;
And yet my timid glance read plainly
The language of her speaking eye.
Thy silent glades my footstep presses,
Thou fair and leaf-embosomed grove!
Conceal within thy green recesses
From mortal eye our sacred love!

Afar with strange discordant noises,
The busy day is echoing;
And 'mid the hollow hum of voices,
I hear the heavy hammer ring.
'Tis thus that man, with toil ne'er ending
Extorts from heaven his daily bread;
Yet oft unseen the Gods are sending
The gifts of fortune on his head!

Oh, let mankind discover never
How true love fills with bliss our hearts
They would but crush our joy forever,
For joy to them no glow imparts.
Thou ne'er wilt from the world obtain it —

'Tis never captured save as prey;
Thou needs must strain each nerve to gain it,
E'er envy dark asserts her sway.

The hours of night and stillness loving,
It comes upon us silently —
Away with hasty footstep moving
Soon as it sees a treacherous eye.
Thou gentle stream, soft circlets weaving,
A watery barrier cast around,
And, with thy waves in anger heaving,
Guard from each foe this holy ground!

THE ASSIGNATION. ¹

Hear I the creaking gate unclose?
The gleaming latch uplifted?
No — 'twas the wind that, whirring, rose,
Amidst the poplars drifted!
Adorn thyself, thou green leaf-bowering roof,
Destined the bright one's presence to receive,
For her, a shadowy palace-hall aloof
With holy night, thy boughs familiar weave.
And ye sweet flatteries of the delicate air,
Awake and sport her rosy cheek around,
When their light weight the tender feet shall bear,
When beauty comes to passion's trysting-ground.

Hush! what amidst the cospes crept —
So swiftly by me now?
No-'twas the startled bird that swept
The light leaves of the bough!
Day, quench thy torch! come, ghostlike, from on high,
With thy loved silence, come, thou haunting Eve,

¹ In Schiller the eight long lines that conclude each stanza of this charming love-poem, instead of rhyming alternately as in the translation, chime somewhat to the tune of Byron's Don Juan — six lines rhyming with each other, and the two last forming a separate couplet. In other respects the translation, it is hoped, is sufficiently close and literal.

Broaden below thy web of purple dye,
Which lulled boughs mysterious round us weave.
For love's delight, enduring listeners none,
The froward witness of the light will flee;
Hesper alone, the rosy silent one,
Down-glancing may our sweet familiar be!

What murmur in the distance spoke,
And like a whisper died?

No — 'twas the swan that gently broke
In rings the silver tide!

Soft to my ear there comes a music-flow;
In gleesome murmur glides the waterfall;
To zephyr's kiss the flowers are bending low;
Through life goes joy, exchanging joy with all.

Tempt to the touch the grapes — the blushing fruit,²
Voluptuous swelling from the leaves that bide;
And, drinking fever from my cheek, the mute
Air sleeps all liquid in the odor-tide!

Hark! through the alley hear I now
A footfall? Comes the maiden?

No, — 'twas the fruit slid from the bough,
With its own richness laden!

² The peach.

Day's lustrous eyes grow heavy in sweet death,
And pale and paler wane his jocund hues,
The flowers too gentle for his glowing breath,
Ope their frank beauty to the twilight dews.
The bright face of the moon is still and lone,
Melts in vast masses the world silently;
Slides from each charm the slowly-loosening zone;
And round all beauty, veiless, roves the eye.

What yonder seems to glimmer?
Her white robe's glancing hues?
No, — 'twas the column's shimmer
Athwart the darksome yews!

O, longing heart, no more delight-upbuoyed
Let the sweet airy image thee befool!
The arms that would embrace her clasp the void
This feverish breast no phantom-bliss can cool,
O, waft her here, the true, the living one!
Let but my hand her hand, the tender, feel —
The very shadow of her robe alone! —
So into life the idle dream shall steal!

As glide from heaven, when least we ween,
The rosy hours of bliss,
All gently came the maid, unseen: —

He waked beneath her kiss!

LONGING

Could I from this valley drear,
Where the mist hangs heavily,
Soar to some more blissful sphere,
Ah! how happy should I be!
Distant hills enchant my sight,
Ever young and ever fair;
To those hills I'd take my flight
Had I wings to scale the air.

Harmonies mine ear assail,
Tunes that breathe a heavenly calm;
And the gently-sighing gale
Greets me with its fragrant balm.
Peeping through the shady bowers,
Golden fruits their charms display.
And those sweetly-blooming flowers
Ne'er become cold winter's prey.

In you endless sunshine bright,
Oh! what bliss 'twould be to dwell!
How the breeze on yonder height
Must the heart with rapture swell!
Yet the stream that hems my path

Checks me with its angry frown,
While its waves, in rising wrath,
Weigh my weary spirit down.

See — a bark is drawing near,
But, alas, the pilot fails!
Enter boldly — wherefore fear?
Inspiration fills its sails,
Faith and courage make thine own, —
Gods ne'er lend a helping-hand;
'Tis by magic power alone
Thou canst reach the magic land!

EVENING.

(AFTER A PICTURE.)

Oh! thou bright-beaming god, the plains are thirsting,
Thirsting for freshening dew, and man is pining;
 Wearily move on thy horses —
 Let, then, thy chariot descend!

Seest thou her who, from ocean's crystal billows,
Lovingly nods and smiles? — Thy heart must know her!
 Joyously speed on thy horses, —
 Tethys, the goddess, 'tis nods!

Swiftly from out his flaming chariot leaping,
Into her arms he springs, — the reins takes Cupid, —
 Quietly stand the horses,
 Drinking the cooling flood.

Now from the heavens with gentle step descending,
Balmy night appears, by sweet love followed;
 Mortals, rest ye, and love ye, —
 Phoebus, the loving one, rests!

THE PILGRIM

Youth's gay springtime scarcely knowing
Went I forth the world to roam —
And the dance of youth, the glowing,
Left I in my father's home,
Of my birthright, glad-believing,
Of my world-gear took I none,
Careless as an infant, cleaving
To my pilgrim staff alone.
For I placed my mighty hope in
Dim and holy words of faith,
"Wander forth — the way is open,
Ever on the upward path —
Till thou gain the golden portal,
Till its gates unclose to thee.
There the earthly and the mortal,
Deathless and divine shall be!"
Night on morning stole, on stealth,
Never, never stand I still,
And the future yet concealeth,
What I seek, and what I will!
Mount on mount arose before me,
Torrents hemmed me every side,
But I built a bridge that bore me
O'er the roaring tempest-tide.
Towards the east I reached a river,

On its shores I did not rest;
Faith from danger can deliver,
And I trusted to its breast.
Drifted in the whirling motion,
Seas themselves around me roll —
Wide and wider spreads the ocean,
Far and farther flies the goal.
While I live is never given
Bridge or wave the goal to near —
Earth will never meet the heaven,
Never can the there be here!

THE IDEALS

And wilt thou, faithless one, then, leave me,
With all thy magic phantasy, —
With all the thoughts that joy or grieve me,
Wilt thou with all forever fly?
Can naught delay thine onward motion,
Thou golden time of life's young dream?
In vain! eternity's wide ocean
Ceaselessly drowns thy rolling stream.

The glorious suns my youth enchanting
Have set in never-ending night;
Those blest ideals now are wanting
That swelled my heart with mad delight.
The offspring of my dream hath perished,
My faith in being passed away;
The godlike hopes that once I cherish
Are now reality's sad prey.

As once Pygmalion, fondly yearning,
Embraced the statue formed by him,
Till the cold marble's cheeks were burning,
And life diffused through every limb,
So I, with youthful passion fired,

My longing arms round Nature threw,
Till, clinging to my breast inspired,
She 'gan to breathe, to kindle too.

And all my fiery ardor proving,
Though mute, her tale she soon could tell,
Returned each kiss I gave her loving,
The throbbings of my heart read well.
Then living seemed each tree, each flower,
Then sweetly sang the waterfall,
And e'en the soulless in that hour
Shared in the heavenly bliss of all.

For then a circling world was bursting
My bosom's narrow prison-cell,
To enter into being thirsting,
In deed, word, shape, and sound as well.
This world, how wondrous great I deemed it,
Ere yet its blossoms could unfold!
When open, oh, how little seemed it!
That little, oh, how mean and cold!

How happy, winged by courage daring,
The youth life's mazy path first pressed —
No care his manly strength impairing,
And in his dream's sweet vision blest!

The dimmest star in air's dominion
Seemed not too distant for his flight;
His young and ever-eager pinion
Soared far beyond all mortal sight.

Thus joyously toward heaven ascending,
Was aught for his bright hopes too far?
The airy guides his steps attending,
How danced they round life's radiant car!
Soft love was there, her guerdon bearing,
And fortune, with her crown of gold,
And fame, her starry chaplet wearing,
And truth, in majesty untold.

But while the goal was yet before them,
The faithless guides began to stray;
Impatience of their task came o'er them,
Then one by one they dropped away.
Light-footed Fortune first retreating,
Then Wisdom's thirst remained unstilled,
While heavy storms of doubt were beating
Upon the path truth's radiance filled.

I saw Fame's sacred wreath adorning
The brows of an unworthy crew;
And, ah! how soon Love's happy morning,

When spring had vanished, vanished too!
More silent yet, and yet more weary,
Became the desert path I trod;
And even hope a glimmer dreary
Scarce cast upon the gloomy road.

Of all that train, so bright with gladness,
Oh, who is faithful to the end?
Who now will seek to cheer my sadness,
And to the grave my steps attend?
Thou, Friendship, of all guides the fairest,
Who gently healest every wound;
Who all life's heavy burdens sharest,
Thou, whom I early sought and found!

Employment too, thy loving neighbor,
Who quells the bosom's rising storms;
Who ne'er grows weary of her labor,
And ne'er destroys, though slow she forms;
Who, though but grains of sand she places
To swell eternity sublime,
Yet minutes, days, ay! years effaces
From the dread reckoning kept by Time!

THE YOUTH BY THE BROOK. ³

Beside the brook the boy reclined
And wove his flowery wreath,
And to the waves the wreath consigned —
The waves that danced beneath.
"So fleet mine hours," he sighed, "away
Like waves that restless flow:
And so my flowers of youth decay
Like those that float below."

"Ask not why I, alone on earth,
Am sad in life's young time;
To all the rest are hope and mirth
When spring renews its prime.
Alas! the music Nature makes,
In thousand songs of gladness —
While charming all around me, wakes
My heavy heart to sadness."

"Ah! vain to me the joys that break
From spring, voluptuous are;

³ Sung in "The Parasite," a comedy which Schiller translated from Picard — much the best comedy, by the way, that Picard ever wrote.

For only one 't is mine to seek —
The near, yet ever far!
I stretch my arms, that shadow-shape
In fond embrace to hold;
Still doth the shade the clasp escape —
The heart is unconsoled!"

"Come forth, fair friend, come forth below,
And leave thy lofty hall,
The fairest flowers the spring can know
In thy dear lap shall fall!
Clear glides the brook in silver rolled,
Sweet carols fill the air;
The meanest hut hath space to hold
A happy loving pair!"

TO EMMA

Far away, where darkness reigneth,
All my dreams of bliss are flown;
Yet with love my gaze remaineth
Fixed on one fair star alone.
But, alas! that star so bright
Sheds no lustre save by night.

If in slumbers ending never,
Gloomy death had sealed thine eyes,
Thou hadst lived in memory ever —
Thou hadst lived still in my sighs;
But, alas! in light thou livest —
To my love no answer givest!

Can the sweet hopes love once cherished
Emma, can they transient prove?
What has passed away and perished —
Emma, say, can that be love?
That bright flame of heavenly birth —
Can it die like things of earth?

THE FAVOR OF THE MOMENT

Once more, then, we meet
In the circles of yore;
Let our song be as sweet
In its wreaths as before,
Who claims the first place
In the tribute of song?
The God to whose grace
All our pleasures belong.
Though Ceres may spread
All her gifts on the shrine,
Though the glass may be red
With the blush of the vine,
What boots — if the while
Fall no spark on the hearth;
If the heart do not smile
With the instinct of mirth? —
From the clouds, from God's breast
Must our happiness fall,
'Mid the blessed, most blest
Is the moment of all!
Since creation began
All that mortals have wrought,
All that's godlike in man
Comes — the flash of a thought!
For ages the stone

In the quarry may lurk,
An instant alone
Can suffice to the work;
An impulse give birth
To the child of the soul,
A glance stamp the worth
And the fame of the whole. ⁴

On the arch that she buildeth
From sunbeams on high,
As Iris just gildeth,
And fleets from the sky,
So shineth, so gloometh
Each gift that is ours;
The lightning illumeth —
The darkness devours! ⁵

⁴ The idea diffused by the translator through this and the preceding stanza is more forcibly condensed by Schiller in four lines.

⁵ "And ere a man hath power to say, 'behold, 'The jaws of Darkness do devour it up, So quick bright things come to confusion.'" —SHAKESPEARE. The three following ballads, in which Switzerland is the scene, betray their origin in Schiller's studies for the drama of William Tell.

THE LAY OF THE MOUNTAIN

[The scenery of Gotthardt is here personified.]

To the solemn abyss leads the terrible path,
The life and death winding dizzy between;
In thy desolate way, grim with menace and wrath,
To daunt thee the spectres of giants are seen;
That thou wake not the wild one ⁶, all silently tread —
Let thy lip breathe no breath in the pathway of dread!

High over the marge of the horrible deep
Hangs and hovers a bridge with its phantom-like span, ⁷
Not by man was it built, o'er the vastness to sweep;
Such thought never came to the daring of man!
The stream roars beneath — late and early it raves —
But the bridge, which it threatens, is safe from the waves.

⁶ The avalanche — the equivoque of the original, turning on the Swiss word Lawine, it is impossible to render intelligible to the English reader. The giants in the preceding line are the rocks that overhang the pass which winds now to the right, now to the left, of a roaring stream.

⁷ The Devil's Bridge. The Land of Delight (called in Tell "a serene valley of joy") to which the dreary portal (in Tell the black rock gate) leads, is the Urse Vale. The four rivers, in the next stanza, are the Reus, the Rhine, the Tessin, and the Rhone.

Black-yawning a portal, thy soul to affright,
Like the gate to the kingdom, the fiend for the king —
Yet beyond it there smiles but a land of delight,
Where the autumn in marriage is met with the spring.
From a lot which the care and the trouble assail,
Could I fly to the bliss of that balm-breathing vale!

Through that field, from a fount ever hidden their birth,
Four rivers in tumult rush roaringly forth;
They fly to the fourfold divisions of earth —
The sunrise, the sunset, the south, and the north.
And, true to the mystical mother that bore,
Forth they rush to their goal, and are lost evermore.

High over the races of men in the blue
Of the ether, the mount in twin summits is riven;
There, veiled in the gold-woven webs of the dew,
Moves the dance of the clouds — the pale daughters of
heaven!
There, in solitude, circles their mystical maze,
Where no witness can hearken, no earthborn surveys.

August on a throne which no ages can move,
Sits a queen, in her beauty serene and sublime,⁸
The diadem blazing with diamonds above

⁸ The everlasting glacier. See William Tell, act v, scene 2.

The glory of brows, never darkened by time,
His arrows of light on that form shoots the sun —
And he gilds them with all, but he warms them with none!

THE ALPINE HUNTER

Wilt thou not the lambkins guard?
Oh, how soft and meek they look,
Feeding on the grassy sward,
Sporting round the silvery brook!
"Mother, mother, let me go
On yon heights to chase the roe!"

Wilt thou not the flock compel
With the horn's inspiring notes?
Sweet the echo of yon bell,
As across the wood it floats!
"Mother, mother, let me go
On yon heights to hunt the roe!"

Wilt thou not the flow'rets bind,
Smiling gently in their bed?
For no garden thou wilt find
On yon heights so wild and dread.
"Leave the flow'rets, — let them blow!
Mother, mother, let me go!"

And the youth then sought the chase,

Onward pressed with headlong speed
To the mountain's gloomiest place, —
Naught his progress could impede;
And before him, like the wind,
Swiftly flies the trembling hind!

Up the naked precipice
Clambers she, with footsteps light,
O'er the chasm's dark abyss
Leaps with spring of daring might;
But behind, unweariedly,
With his death-bow follows he.

Now upon the rugged top
Stands she, — on the loftiest height,
Where the cliffs abruptly stop,
And the path is lost to sight.
There she views the steeps below, —
Close behind, her mortal foe.

She, with silent, woeful gaze,
Seeks the cruel boy to move;
But, alas! in vain she prays —
To the string he fits the groove.
When from out the clefts, behold!
Steps the Mountain Genius old.

With his hand the Deity
Shields the beast that trembling sighs;
"Must thou, even up to me,
Death and anguish send?" he cries, —
Earth has room for all to dwell, —
"Why pursue my loved gazelle?"

DITHYRAMB. ⁹

Believe me, together
The bright gods come ever,
Still as of old;
Scarce see I Bacchus, the giver of joy,
Than comes up fair Eros, the laugh-loving boy,
And Phoebus, the stately, behold!

They come near and nearer,
The heavenly ones all —
The gods with their presence
Fill earth as their hall!

Say, how shall I welcome,
Human and earthborn,
Sons of the sky?
Pour out to me — pour the full life that ye live!
What to ye, O ye gods! can the mortal one give?

The joys can dwell only
In Jupiter's palace —

⁹ This has been paraphrased by Coleridge.

Brimmed bright with your nectar,
Oh, reach me the chalice!

"Hebe, the chalice
Fill full to the brim!
Steep his eyes — steep his eyes in the bath of the dew,
Let him dream, while the Styx is concealed from his view,
That the life of the gods is for him!"

It murmurs, it sparkles,
The fount of delight;
The bosom grows tranquil —
The eye becomes bright.

THE FOUR AGES OF THE WORLD

The goblet is sparkling with purpled-tinged wine,
Bright glistens the eye of each guest,
When into the hall comes the Minstrel divine,
To the good he now brings what is best;
For when from Elysium is absent the lyre,
No joy can the banquet of nectar inspire.

He is blessed by the gods, with an intellect clear,
That mirrors the world as it glides;
He has seen all that ever has taken place here,
And all that the future still hides.
He sat in the god's secret councils of old
And heard the command for each thing to unfold.

He opens in splendor, with gladness and mirth,
That life which was hid from our eyes;
Adorns as a temple the dwelling of earth,
That the Muse has bestowed as his prize,
No roof is so humble, no hut is so low,
But he with divinities bids it o'erflow.

And as the inventive descendant of Zeus,

On the unadorned round of the shield,
With knowledge divine could, reflected, produce
Earth, sea, and the star's shining field, —
So he, on the moments, as onward they roll,
The image can stamp of the infinite whole.

From the earliest age of the world he has come,
When nations rejoiced in their prime;
A wanderer glad, he has still found a home
With every race through all time.
Four ages of man in his lifetime have died,
And the place they once held by the fifth is supplied.

Saturnus first governed, with fatherly smile,
Each day then resembled the last;
Then flourished the shepherds, a race without guile
Their bliss by no care was o'ercast,
They loved, — and no other employment they had,
And earth gave her treasures with willingness glad.

Then labor came next, and the conflict began
With monsters and beasts famed in song;
And heroes upstarted, as rulers of man,
And the weak sought the aid of the strong.
And strife o'er the field of Scamander now reigned,
But beauty the god of the world still remained.

At length from the conflict bright victory sprang,
And gentleness blossomed from might;
In heavenly chorus the Muses then sang,
And figures divine saw the light; —
The age that acknowledged sweet phantasy's sway
Can never return, it has fled away.

The gods from their seats in the heavens were hurled,
And their pillars of glory o'erthrown;
And the Son of the Virgin appeared in the world
For the sins of mankind to atone.
The fugitive lusts of the sense were suppressed,
And man now first grappled with thought in his breast.

Each vain and voluptuous charm vanished now,
Wherein the young world took delight;
The monk and the nun made of penance a vow,
And the tourney was sought by the knight.
Though the aspect of life was now dreary and wild,
Yet love remained ever both lovely and mild.

An altar of holiness, free from all stain,
The Muses in silence upreared;
And all that was noble and worthy, again

In woman's chaste bosom appeared;
The bright flame of song was soon kindled anew
By the minstrel's soft lays, and his love pure and true.

And so, in a gentle and ne'er-changing band,
Let woman and minstrel unite;
They weave and they fashion, with hand joined to hand,
The girdle of beauty and right.
When love blends with music, in unison sweet,
The lustre of life's youthful days ne'er can fleet.

THE MAIDEN'S LAMENT

The clouds fast gather,
The forest-oaks roar —
A maiden is sitting
Beside the green shore, —
The billows are breaking with might, with might,
And she sighs aloud in the darkling night,
Her eyelid heavy with weeping.

"My heart's dead within me,
The world is a void;
To the wish it gives nothing,
Each hope is destroyed.
I have tasted the fulness of bliss below
I have lived, I have loved, — Thy child, oh take now,
Thou Holy One, into Thy keeping!"

"In vain is thy sorrow,
In vain thy tears fall,
For the dead from their slumbers
They ne'er can recall;
Yet if aught can pour comfort and balm in thy heart,
Now that love its sweet pleasures no more can impart,
Speak thy wish, and thou granted shalt find it!"

"Though in vain is my sorrow,
Though in vain my tears fall, —
Though the dead from their slumbers
They ne'er can recall,
Yet no balm is so sweet to the desolate heart,
When love its soft pleasures no more can impart,
As the torments that love leaves behind it!"

TO MY FRIENDS

Yes, my friends! — that happier times have been
Than the present, none can contravene;
That a race once lived of nobler worth;
And if ancient chronicles were dumb,
Countless stones in witness forth would come
From the deepest entrails of the earth.
But this highly-favored race has gone,
Gone forever to the realms of night.
We, we live! The moments are our own,
And the living judge the right.

Brighter zones, my friends, no doubt excel
This, the land wherein we're doomed to dwell,
As the hardy travellers proclaim;
But if Nature has denied us much,
Art is yet responsive to our touch,
And our hearts can kindle at her flame.
If the laurel will not flourish here —
If the myrtle is cold winter's prey,
Yet the vine, to crown us, year by year,
Still puts forth its foliage gay.

Of a busier life 'tis well to speak,

Where four worlds their wealth to barter seek,
On the world's great market, Thames' broad stream;
Ships in thousands go there and depart —
There are seen the costliest works of art,
And the earth-god, Mammon, reigns supreme
But the sun his image only graves
On the silent streamlet's level plain,
Not upon the torrent's muddy waves,
Swollen by the heavy rain.

Far more blessed than we, in northern states
Dwells the beggar at the angel-gates,
For he sees the peerless city — Rome!
Beauty's glorious charms around him lie,
And, a second heaven, up toward the sky
Mounts St. Peter's proud and wondrous dome.
But, with all the charms that splendor grants,
Rome is but the tomb of ages past;
Life but smiles upon the blooming plants
That the seasons round her cast.

Greater actions elsewhere may be rife
Than with us, in our contracted life —
But beneath the sun there's naught that's new;
Yet we see the great of every age
Pass before us on the world's wide stage
Thoughtfully and calmly in review

All. in life repeats itself forever,
Young for ay is phantasy alone;
What has happened nowhere, — happened never, —
That has never older grown!

PUNCH SONG

Four elements, joined in
Harmonious strife,
Shadow the world forth,
And typify life.

Into the goblet
The lemon's juice pour;
Acid is ever
Life's innermost core.

Now, with the sugar's
All-softening juice,
The strength of the acid
So burning reduce.

The bright sparkling water
Now pour in the bowl;
Water all-gently
Encircles the whole.

Let drops of the spirit

To join them now flow;
Life to the living
Naught else can bestow.

Drain it off quickly
Before it exhales;
Save when 'tis glowing,
The draught naught avails.

NADOWESSIAN DEATH-LAMENT

See, he sitteth on his mat
Sitteth there upright,
With the grace with which he sat
While he saw the light.

Where is now the sturdy gripe, —
Where the breath sedate,
That so lately whiffed the pipe
Toward the Spirit great?

Where the bright and falcon eye,
That the reindeer's tread
On the waving grass could spy,
Thick with dewdrops spread?

Where the limbs that used to dart
Swifter through the snow
Than the twenty-membered hart,
Than the mountain roe?

Where the arm that sturdily

Bent the deadly bow?
See, its life hath fled by, —
See, it hangeth low!

Happy he! — He now has gone
Where no snow is found:
Where with maize the fields are sown,
Self-sprung from the ground;

Where with birds each bush is filled,
Where with game the wood;
Where the fish, with joy unstilled,
Wanton in the flood.

With the spirits blest he feeds, —
Leaves us here in gloom;
We can only praise his deeds,
And his corpse entomb.

Farewell-gifts, then, hither bring,
Sound the death-note sad!
Bury with him everything
That can make him glad!

'Neath his head the hatchet hide
That he boldly swung;
And the bear's fat haunch beside,
For the road is long;

And the knife, well sharpened,
That, with slashes three,
Scalp and skin from foeman's head
Tore off skilfully.

And to paint his body, place
Dyes within his hand;
Let him shine with ruddy grace
In the Spirit-land!

THE FEAST OF VICTORY

Priam's castle-walls had sunk,
Troy in dust and ashes lay,
And each Greek, with triumph drunk,
Richly laden with his prey,
Sat upon his ship's high prow,
On the Hellespontic strand,
Starting on his journey now,
Bound for Greece, his own fair land.
Raise the glad exulting shout!
Toward the land that gave them birth
Turn they now the ships about,
As they seek their native earth.

And in rows, all mournfully,
Sat the Trojan women there, —
Beat their breasts in agony,
Pallid, with dishevelled hair.
In the feast of joy so glad
Mingled they the song of woe,
Weeping o'er their fortunes sad,
In their country's overthrow.
"Land beloved, oh, fare thee well!
By our foreign masters led,
Far from home we're doomed to dwell, —

Ah, how happy are the dead!"

Soon the blood by Calchas spilt
On the altar heavenward smokes;
Pallas, by whom towns are built
And destroyed, the priest invokes;
Neptune, too, who all the earth
With his billowy girdle laves, —
Zeus, who gives to terror birth,
Who the dreaded Aegis waves.
Now the weary fight is done,
Ne'er again to be renewed;
Time's wide circuit now is run,
And the mighty town subdued!

Atreus' son, the army's head,
Told the people's numbers o'er,
Whom he, as their captain, led
To Scamander's vale of yore.
Sorrow's black and heavy clouds
Passed across the monarch's brow:
Of those vast and valiant crowds,
Oh, how few were left him now!
Joyful songs let each one raise,
Who will see his home again,
In whose veins the life-blood plays,
For, alas! not all remain!

"All who homeward wend their way,
Will not there find peace of mind;
On their household altars, they
Murder foul perchance may find.
Many fall by false friend's stroke,
Who in fight immortal proved: " —
So Ulysses warning spoke,
By Athene's spirit moved.
Happy he, whose faithful spouse
Guards his home with honor true!
Woman ofttimes breaks her vows,
Ever loves she what is new.

And Atrides glories there
In the prize he won in fight,
And around her body fair
Twines his arms with fond delight.
Evil works must punished be.
Vengeance follows after crime,
For Kronion's just decree
Rules the heavenly courts sublime.
Evil must in evil end;
Zeus will on the impious band
Woe for broken guest-rights send,
Weighing with impartial hand.

"It may well the glad befit,"
Cried Olleus' valiant son,¹⁰
"To extol the Gods who sit
On Olympus' lofty throne!
Fortune all her gifts supplies,
Blindly, and no justice knows,
For Patroclus buried lies,
And Thersites homeward goes!
Since she blindly throws away
Each lot in her wheel contained,
Let him shout with joy to-day
Who the prize of life has gained."

"Ay, the wars the best devour!
Brother, we will think of thee,
In the fight a very tower,
When we join in revelry!
When the Grecian ships were fired,
By thine arm was safety brought;
Yet the man by craft inspired¹¹
Won the spoils thy valor sought.
Peace be to thine ashes blest!
Thou wert vanquished not in fight:
Anger 'tis destroys the best, —
Ajax fell by Ajax' might!"

¹⁰ Ajax the Less.

¹¹ Ulysses.

Neoptolemus poured then,
To his sire renowned ¹² the wine —
"Mongst the lots of earthly men,
Mighty father, prize I thine!
Of the goods that life supplies,
Greatest far of all is fame;
Though to dust the body flies,
Yet still lives a noble name.
Valiant one, thy glory's ray
Will immortal be in song;
For, though life may pass away,
To all time the dead belong!"

"Since the voice of minstrelsy
Speaks not of the vanquished man,
I will Hector's witness be," —
Tydeus' noble son ¹³ began:
"Fighting bravely in defence
Of his household-gods he fell.
Great the victor's glory thence,
He in purpose did excel!
Battling for his altars dear,
Sank that rock, no more to rise;
E'en the foemen will revere

¹² Achilles.

¹³ Diomed.

One whose honored name ne'er dies."

Nestor, joyous reveller old,
Who three generations saw,
Now the leaf-crowned cup of gold
Gave to weeping Hecuba.
"Drain the goblet's draught so cool,
And forget each painful smart!
Bacchus' gifts are wonderful, —
Balsam for a broken heart.
Drain the goblet's draught so cool,
And forget each painful smart!
Bacchus' gifts are wonderful, —
Balsam for a broken heart.

"E'en to Niobe, whom Heaven
Loved in wrath to persecute,
Respite from her pangs was given,
Tasting of the corn's ripe fruit.
Whilst the thirsty lip we lave
In the foaming, living spring,
Buried deep in Lethe's wave
Lies all grief, all sorrowing!
Whilst the thirsty lip we lave
In the foaming, living spring,
Swallowed up in Lethe's wave
Is all grief, all sorrowing!"

And the Prophetess ¹⁴ inspired
By her God, upstarted now, —
Toward the smoke of homesteads fired,
Looking from the lofty prow.
"Smoke is each thing here below;
Every worldly greatness dies,
As the vapory columns go, —
None are fixed but Deities!
Cares behind the horseman sit —
Round about the vessel play;
Lest the morrow hinder it,
Let us, therefore, live to-day."

¹⁴ Cassandra.

**PUNCH SONG.
(TO BE SUNG IN
NORTHERN COUNTRIES.)**

On the mountain's breezy summit,
Where the southern sunbeams shine,
Aided by their warming vigor,
Nature yields the golden wine.

How the wondrous mother formeth,
None have ever read aright;
Hid forever is her working,
And inscrutable her might.

Sparkling as a son of Phoebus,
As the fiery source of light,
From the vat it bubbling springeth,
Purple, and as crystal bright;

And rejoiceth all the senses,
And in every sorrowing breast
Poureth hope's refreshing balsam,

And on life bestows new zest.

But their slanting rays all feebly
On our zone the sunbeams shoot;
They can only tinge the foliage,
But they ripen ne'er the fruit.

Yet the north insists on living,
And what lives will merry be;
So, although the grape is wanting,
We invent wine cleverly.

Pale the drink we now are offering
On the household altar here;
But what living Nature maketh,
Sparkling is and ever clear.

Let us from the brimming goblet,
Drain the troubled flood with mirth;
Art is but a gift of heaven,
Borrowed from the glow of earth.

Even strength's dominions boundless
'Neath her rule obedient lie;

From the old the new she fashions
With creative energy.

She the elements' close union
Severs with her sovereign nod;
With the flame upon the altar,
Emulates the great sun-god.

For the distant, happy islands
Now the vessel sallies forth,
And the southern fruits, all-golden,
Pours upon the eager north.

As a type, then, — as an image,
Be to us this fiery juice,
Of the wonders that frail mortals
Can with steadfast will produce!

THE COMPLAINT OF CERES. ¹⁵

Does pleasant spring return once more?
Does earth her happy youth regain?
Sweet suns green hills are shining o'er;
Soft brooklets burst their icy chain:
Upon the blue translucent river
Laughs down an all-unclouded day,
The winged west winds gently quiver,

¹⁵ It may be scarcely necessary to treat, however briefly, of the mythological legend on which this exquisite elegy is founded; yet we venture to do so rather than that the forgetfulness of the reader should militate against his enjoyment of the poem. Proserpine, according to the Homeride (for the story is not without variations), when gathering flowers with the Ocean-Nymphs, is carried off by Aidoneus, or Pluto. Her mother, Ceres, wanders over the earth for her in vain, and refuses to return to heaven till her daughter is restored to her. Finally, Jupiter commissions Hermes to persuade Pluto to render up his bride, who rejoins Ceres at Eleusis. Unfortunately she has swallowed a pomegranate seed in the Shades below, and is thus mysteriously doomed to spend one-third of the year with her husband in Hades, though for the remainder of the year she is permitted to dwell with Ceres and the gods. This is one of the very few mythological fables of Greece which can be safely interpreted into an allegory. Proserpine denotes the seed-corn one-third of the year below the earth; two-thirds (that is, dating from the appearance of the ear) above it. Schiller has treated this story with admirable and artistic beauty; and, by an alteration in its symbolical character has preserved the pathos of the external narrative, and heightened the beauty of the interior meaning — associating the productive principle of the earth with the immortality of the soul. Proserpine here is not the symbol of the buried seed, but the buried seed is the symbol of her — that is, of the dead. The exquisite feeling of this poem consoled Schiller's friend, Sophia La Roche, in her grief for her son's death.

The buds are bursting from the spray;
While birds are blithe on every tree;
The Oread from the mountain-shore
Sighs, "Lo! thy flowers come back to thee —
Thy child, sad mother, comes no more!"

Alas! how long an age it seems
Since all the earth I wandered over,
And vainly, Titan, tasked thy beams
The loved — the lost one — to discover!
Though all may seek — yet none can call
Her tender presence back to me
The sun, with eyes detecting all,
Is blind one vanished form to see.
Hast thou, O Zeus! hast thou away
From these sad arms my daughter torn?
Has Pluto, from the realms of day,
Enamored — to dark rivers borne?

Who to the dismal phantom-strand
The herald of my grief will venture?
The boat forever leaves the land,
But only shadows there may enter. —
Veiled from each holier eye repose
The realms where midnight wraps the dead,
And, while the Stygian river flows,
No living footstep there may tread!

A thousand pathways wind the drear
Descent; — none upward lead to-day; —
No witness to the mother's ear
The daughter's sorrows can betray.

Mothers of happy human clay
Can share at least their children's doom;
And when the loved ones pass away,
Can track — can join them — in the tomb!
The race alone of heavenly birth
Are banished from the darksome portals;
The Fates have mercy on the earth,
And death is only kind to mortals! ¹⁶
Oh, plunge me in the night of nights,
From heaven's ambrosial halls exiled!
Oh, let the goddess lose the rights
That shut the mother from the child!

Where sits the dark king's joyless bride,
Where midst the dead her home is made;
Oh that my noiseless steps might glide,
Amidst the shades, myself a shade!
I see her eyes, that search through tears,
In vain the golden light to greet;
That yearn for yonder distant spheres,
That pine the mother's face to meet!

¹⁶ What a beautiful vindication of the shortness of human life!

Till some bright moment shall renew
The severed hearts' familiar ties;
And softened pity steal in dew,
From Pluto's slow-relentng eyes!

Ah, vain the wish, the sorrows are!
Calm in the changeless paths above
Rolls on the day-god's golden car —
Fast are the fixed decrees of Jove!
Far from the ever-gloomy plain,
He turns his blissful looks away.
Alas! night never gives again
What once it seizes as its prey!
Till over Lethe's sullen swell,
Aurora's rosy hues shall glow;
And arching through the midmost hell
Shine forth the lovely Iris-bow!

And is there naught of her; no token —
No pledge from that beloved hand?
To tell how love remains unbroken,
How far soever be the land?
Has love no link, no lightest thread,
The mother to the child to bind?
Between the living and the dead,
Can hope no holy compact find?
No! every bond is not yet riven;

We are not yet divided wholly;
To us the eternal powers have given
A symbol language, sweet and holy.

When Spring's fair children pass away,
When, in the north wind's icy air,
The leaf and flower alike decay,
And leave the rivelled branches bare,
Then from Vertumnus' lavish horn
I take life's seeds to strew below —
And bid the gold that germs the corn
An offering to the Styx to go!
Sad in the earth the seeds I lay —
Laid at thy heart, my child — to be
The mournful tokens which convey
My sorrow and my love to thee!

But, when the hours, in measured dance,
The happy smile of spring restore,
Rife in the sun-god's golden glance
The buried dead revive once more!
The germs that perished to thine eyes,
Within the cold breast of the earth,
Spring up to bloom in gentler skies,
The brighter for the second birth!
The stem its blossom rears above —
Its roots in night's dark womb repose —

The plant but by the equal love
Of light and darkness fostered — grows!

If half with death the germs may sleep,
Yet half with life they share the beams;
My heralds from the dreary deep,
Soft voices from the solemn streams, —
Like her, so them, awhile entombs,
Stern Orcus, in his dismal reign,
Yet spring sends forth their tender blooms
With such sweet messages again,
To tell, — how far from light above,
Where only mournful shadows meet,
Memory is still alive to love,
And still the faithful heart can beat!

Joy to ye children of the field!
Whose life each coming year renews,
To your sweet cups the heaven shall yield
The purest of its nectar-dews!
Steeped in the light's resplendent streams,
The hues that streak the Iris-bow
Shall trim your blooms as with the beams
The looks of young Aurora know.
The budding life of happy spring,
The yellow autumn's faded leaf,
Alike to gentle hearts shall bring

The symbols of my joy and grief.

THE ELEUSINIAN FESTIVAL

Wreathe in a garland the corn's golden ear!
With it, the Cyane ¹⁷ blue intertwine
Rapture must render each glance bright and clear,
For the great queen is approaching her shrine, —
She who compels lawless passions to cease,
Who to link man with his fellow has come,
And into firm habitations of peace
Changed the rude tents' ever-wandering home.

Shyly in the mountain-cleft
Was the Troglodyte concealed;
And the roving Nomad left,
Desert lying, each broad field.
With the javelin, with the bow,
Strode the hunter through the land;
To the hapless stranger woe,
Billow-cast on that wild strand!

When, in her sad wanderings lost,
Seeking traces of her child,
Ceres hailed the dreary coast,

¹⁷ The corn-flower.

Ah, no verdant plain then smiled!
That she here with trust may stay,
None vouchsafes a sheltering roof;
Not a temple's columns gay
Give of godlike worship proof.

Fruit of no propitious ear
Bids her to the pure feast fly;
On the ghastly altars here
Human bones alone e'er dry.
Far as she might onward rove,
Misery found she still in all,
And within her soul of love,
Sorrowed she o'er man's deep fall.

"Is it thus I find the man
To whom we our image lend,
Whose fair limbs of noble span
Upward towards the heavens ascend?
Laid we not before his feet
Earth's unbounded godlike womb?
Yet upon his kingly seat
Wanders he without a home?"

"Does no god compassion feel?
Will none of the blissful race,

With an arm of miracle,
Raise him from his deep disgrace?
In the heights where rapture reigns
Pangs of others ne'er can move;
Yet man's anguish and man's pains
My tormented heart must prove."

"So that a man a man may be,
Let him make an endless bond
With the kind earth trustingly,
Who is ever good and fond
To revere the law of time,
And the moon's melodious song
Who, with silent step sublime,
Move their sacred course along."

And she softly parts the cloud
That conceals her from the sight;
Sudden, in the savage crowd,
Stands she, as a goddess bright.
There she finds the concourse rude
In their glad feast revelling,
And the chalice filled with blood
As a sacrifice they bring.

But she turns her face away,

Horror-struck, and speaks the while
"Bloody tiger-feasts ne'er may
Of a god the lips defile,
He needs victims free from stain,
Fruits matured by autumn's sun;
With the pure gifts of the plain
Honored is the Holy One!"

And she takes the heavy shaft
From the hunter's cruel hand;
With the murderous weapon's haft
Furrowing the light-strown sand, —
Takes from out her garland's crown,
Filled with life, one single grain,
Sinks it in the furrow down,
And the germ soon swells amain.

And the green stalks gracefully
Shoot, ere long, the ground above,
And, as far as eye can see,
Waves it like a golden grove.
With her smile the earth she cheers,
Binds the earliest sheaves so fair,
As her hearth the landmark rears, —
And the goddess breathes this prayer:

"Father Zeus, who reign'st o'er all
That in ether's mansions dwell,
Let a sign from thee now fall
That thou lov'st this offering well!
And from the unhappy crowd
That, as yet, has ne'er known thee,
Take away the eye's dark cloud,
Showing them their deity!"

Zeus, upon his lofty throne,
Harkens to his sister's prayer;
From the blue heights thundering down,
Hurls his forked lightning there,
Crackling, it begins to blaze,
From the altar whirling bounds, —
And his swift-winged eagle plays
High above in circling rounds.

Soon at the feet of their mistress are kneeling,
Filled with emotion, the rapturous throng;
Into humanity's earliest feeling
Melt their rude spirits, untutored and strong.
Each bloody weapon behind them they leave,
Rays on their senses beclouded soon shine,
And from the mouth of the queen they receive,
Gladly and meekly, instruction divine.

All the deities advance
Downward from their heavenly seats;
Themis' self 'tis leads the dance,
And, with staff of justice, metes
Unto every one his rights, —
Landmarks, too, 'tis hers to fix;
And in witness she invites
All the hidden powers of Styx.

And the forge-god, too, is there,
The inventive son of Zeus;
Fashioner of vessels fair
Skilled in clay and brass's use.
'Tis from him the art man knows
Tongs and bellows how to wield;
'Neath his hammer's heavy blows
Was the ploughshare first revealed.

With projecting, weighty spear,
Front of all, Minerva stands,
Lifts her voice so strong and clear,
And the godlike host commands.
Steadfast walls 'tis hers to found,
Shield and screen for every one,
That the scattered world around
Bind in loving unison.

The immortals' steps she guides
O'er the trackless plains so vast,
And where'er her foot abides
Is the boundary god held fast;
And her measuring chain is led
Round the mountain's border green, —
E'en the raging torrent's bed
In the holy ring is seen.

All the Nymphs and Oreads too
Who, the mountain pathways o'er,
Swift-foot Artemis pursue,
All to swell the concourse, pour,
Brandishing the hunting-spear, —
Set to work, — glad shouts arise, —
'Neath their axes' blows so clear
Crashing down the pine-wood flies.

E'en the sedge-crowned God ascends
From his verdant spring to light,
And his raft's direction bends
At the goddess' word of might, —
While the hours, all gently bound,
Nimbly to their duty fly;
Rugged trunks are fashioned round

By her skilled hand gracefully.

E'en the sea-god thither fares; —
Sudden, with his trident's blow,
He the granite columns tears
From earth's entrails far below; —
In his mighty hands, on high,
Waves he them, like some light ball,
And with nimble Hermes by,
Raises up the rampart-wall.

But from out the golden strings
Lures Apollo harmony,
Measured time's sweet murmurings,
And the might of melody.
The Camoenæ swell the strain
With their song of ninefold tone:
Captive bound in music's chain,
Softly stone unites to stone.

Cybele, with skilful hand,
Open throws the wide-winged door;
Locks and bolts by her are planned,
Sure to last forevermore.
Soon complete the wondrous halls
By the gods' own hands are made,

And the temple's glowing walls
Stand in festal pomp arrayed.

With a crown of myrtle twined,
Now the goddess queen comes there,
And she leads the fairest hind
To the shepherdess most fair.
Venus, with her beauteous boy,
That first pair herself attires;
All the gods bring gifts of joy,
Blessing their love's sacred fires.

Guided by the deities,
Soon the new-born townsmen pour,
Ushered in with harmonies,
Through the friendly open door.
Holding now the rites divine,
Ceres at Zeus' altar stands, —
Blessing those around the shrine,
Thus she speaks, with folded hands: —

"Freedom's love the beast inflames,
And the god rules free in air,
While the law of Nature tames
Each wild lust that lingers there.
Yet, when thus together thrown,

Man with man must fain unite;
And by his own worth alone
Can he freedom gain, and might."

Wreath in a garland the corn's golden ear!
With it, the Cyane blue intertwine!
Rapture must render each glance bright and clear,
For the great queen is approaching her shrine, —
She who our homesteads so blissful has given,

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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