

The Poems of Schiller

Friedrich von Schiller

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The Poems of Schiller

HECTOR AND ANDROMACHE.

[This and the following poem are, with some alterations, introduced in the Play of "The Robbers."]

ANDROMACHE.

Will Hector leave me for the fatal plain,
Where, fierce with vengeance for Patroclus slain,
 Stalks Peleus' ruthless son?
Who, when thou glid'st amid the dark abodes,
To hurl the spear and to revere the gods,
 Shall teach thine orphan one?

HECTOR.

Woman and wife beloved—cease thy tears;
My soul is nerved—the war-clang in my ears!
 Be mine in life to stand
Troy's bulwark!—fighting for our hearths, to go
In death, exulting to the streams below,
 Slain for my fatherland!

ANDROMACHE.

No more I hear thy martial footsteps fall—
Thine arms shall hang, dull trophies, on the wall—
 Fallen the stem of Troy!
Thou goest where slow Cocytus wanders—where
Love sinks in Lethe, and the sunless air
 Is dark to light and joy!

HECTOR.

Longing and thought—yes, all I feel and think
May in the silent sloth of Lethe sink,
 But my love not!
Hark, the wild swarm is at the walls!—I hear!
Gird on my sword—Beloved one, dry the tear—
 Lethe for love is not!

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AMALIA.

Angel-fair, Walhalla's charms displaying,
Fairer than all mortal youths was he;
Mild his look, as May-day sunbeams straying
Gently o'er the blue and glassy sea.

And his kisses! — what ecstatic feeling!
Like two flames that lovingly entwine,
Like the harp's soft tones together stealing
Into one sweet harmony divine, —

Soul and soul embraced, commingled, blended,
Lips and cheeks with trembling passion burned,
Heaven and earth, in pristine chaos ended,
Round the blissful lovers madly turn'd.

He is gone — and, ah! with bitter anguish
Vainly now I breathe my mournful sighs;
He is gone — in hopeless grief I languish
Earthly joys I ne'er again can prize!

A FUNERAL FANTASIE.

Pale, at its ghastly noon,
Pauses above the death-still wood — the moon;
The night-sprite, sighing, through the dim air stirs;
The clouds descend in rain;
Mourning, the wan stars wane,
Flickering like dying lamps in sepulchres!
Haggard as spectres — vision-like and dumb,
Dark with the pomp of death, and moving slow,
Towards that sad lair the pale procession come
Where the grave closes on the night below.

With dim, deep-sunken eye,
Crutched on his staff, who trembles tottering by?

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As wrung from out the shattered heart, one groan
Breaks the deep hush alone!
Crushed by the iron fate, he seems to gather
All life's last strength to stagger to the bier,
And hearken—Do these cold lips murmur "Father?"
The sharp rain, drizzling through that place of fear,
Pierces the bones gnawed fleshless by despair,
And the heart's horror stirs the silver hair.

Fresh bleed the fiery wounds
Through all that agonizing heart undone—
Still on the voiceless lips "my Father" sounds,
And still the childless Father murmurs "Son!"
Ice-cold—ice-cold, in that white shroud he lies—
Thy sweet and golden dreams all vanished there—
The sweet and golden name of "Father" dies
Into thy curse,—ice-cold—ice-cold—he lies!
Dead, what thy life's delight and Eden were!

Mild, as when, fresh from the arms of Aurora,
While the air like Elysium is smiling above,
Steeped in rose-breathing odors, the darling of Flora
Wantons over the blooms on his winglets of love.
So gay, o'er the meads, went his footsteps in bliss,
The silver wave mirrored the smile of his face;
Delight, like a flame, kindled up at his kiss,
And the heart of the maid was the prey of his chase.

Boldly he sprang to the strife of the world,
As a deer to the mountain-top carelessly springs;
As an eagle whose plumes to the sun are unfurled,
Swept his hope round the heaven on its limitless wings.
Proud as a war-horse that chafes at the rein,
That, kingly, exults in the storm of the brave;
That throws to the wind the wild stream of its mane,
Strode he forth by the prince and the slave!

Life like a spring day, serene and divine,

The Poems of Schiller

In the star of the morning went by as a trance;
His murmurs he drowned in the gold of the wine,
And his sorrows were borne on the wave of the dance.

Worlds lay concealed in the hopes of his youth! —
When once he shall ripen to manhood and fame!
Fond father exult! — In the germs of his youth
What harvests are destined for manhood and fame!

Not to be was that manhood! — The death-bell is knelling,
The hinge of the death-vault creaks harsh on the ears —
How dismal, O Death, is the place of thy dwelling!
Not to be was that manhood! — Flow on, bitter tears!
Go, beloved, thy path to the sun,
Rise, world upon world, with the perfect to rest;
Go — quaff the delight which thy spirit has won,
And escape from our grief in the Halls of the Blest.

Again (in that thought what a healing is found!)
To meet in the Eden to which thou art fled! —
Hark, the coffin sinks down with a dull, sullen sound,
And the ropes rattle over the sleep of the dead.
And we cling to each other! — O Grave, he is thine!
The eye tells the woe that is mute to the ears —
And we dare to resent what we grudge to resign,
Till the heart's sinful murmur is choked in its tears.
Pale at its ghastly noon,
Pauses above the death-still wood — the moon!
The night-sprite, sighing, through the dim air stirs:
The clouds descend in rain;
Mourning, the wan stars wane,
Flickering like dying lamps in sepulchres.
The dull clods swell into the sullen mound;
Earth, one look yet upon the prey we gave!
The grave locks up the treasure it has found;
Higher and higher swells the sullen mound —
Never gives back the grave!

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FANTASIE—TO LAURA.

Name, my Laura, name the whirl-compelling
Bodies to unite in one blest whole—
Name, my Laura, name the wondrous magic
By which soul rejoins its kindred soul!

See! it teaches yonder roving planets
Round the sun to fly in endless race;
And as children play around their mother,
Checkered circles round the orb to trace.

Every rolling star, by thirst tormented,
Drinks with joy its bright and golden rain—
Drinks refreshment from its fiery chalice,
As the limbs are nourished by the brain.

'Tis through Love that atom pairs with atom,
In a harmony eternal, sure;
And 'tis Love that links the spheres together—
Through her only, systems can endure.

Were she but effaced from Nature's clockwork,
Into dust would fly the mighty world;
O'er thy systems thou wouldst weep, great Newton,
When with giant force to chaos hurled!

Blot the goddess from the spirit order,
It would sink in death, and ne'er arise.
Were love absent, spring would glad us never;
Were love absent, none their God would prize!

What is that, which, when my Laura kisses,
Dyes my cheek with flames of purple hue,
Bids my bosom bound with swifter motion,
Like a fever wild my veins runs through?

Every nerve from out its barriers rises,

The Poems of Schiller

O'er its banks, the blood begins to flow;
Body seeks to join itself to body,
Spirits kindle in one blissful glow.

Powerful as in the dead creations
That eternal impulses obey,
O'er the web Arachne-like of Nature,—
Living Nature,—Love exerts her sway.

Laura, see how joyousness embraces
E'en the overflow of sorrows wild!
How e'en rigid desperation kindles
On the loving breast of Hope so mild.

Sisterly and blissful rapture softens
Gloomy Melancholy's fearful night,
And, deliver'd of its golden children,
Lo, the eye pours forth its radiance bright!

Does not awful Sympathy rule over
E'en the realms that Evil calls its own?
For 'tis Hell our crimes are ever wooing,
While they bear a grudge 'gainst Heaven alone!

Shame, Repentance, pair Eumenides-like,
Weave round sin their fearful serpent-coils:
While around the eagle-wings of Greatness
Treach'rous danger winds its dreaded toils.

Ruin oft with Pride is wont to trifle,
Envy upon Fortune loves to cling;
On her brother, Death, with arms extended,
Lust, his sister, oft is wont to spring.

On the wings of Love the future hastens
In the arms of ages past to lie;
And Saturnus, as he onward speeds him,
Long hath sought his bride—Eternity!

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Soon Saturnus will his bride discover,—
So the mighty oracle hath said;
Blazing worlds will turn to marriage torches
When Eternity with Time shall wed!

Then a fairer, far more beauteous morning,
Laura, on our love shall also shine,
Long as their blest bridal-night enduring:—
So rejoice thee, Laura—Laura mine!

TO LAURA AT THE HARPSICORD.

When o'er the chords thy fingers stray,
My spirit leaves its mortal clay,
A statue there I stand;
Thy spell controls e'en life and death,
As when the nerves a living breath
Receive by Love's command! 1

More gently zephyr sighs along
To listen to thy magic song;
The systems formed by heavenly love
To sing forever as they move,
Pause in their endless-whirling round
To catch the rapture-teeming sound;
'Tis for thy strains they worship thee,—
Thy look, enchantress, fetters me!

From yonder chords fast-thronging come
Soul-breathing notes with rapturous speed,
As when from out their heavenly home
The new-born seraphim proceed;
The strains pour forth their magic might,
As glittering suns burst through the night,
When, by Creation's storm awoke,
From chaos' giant-arm they broke.
Now sweet, as when the silv'ry wave

The Poems of Schiller

Delights the pebbly beach to lave;
And now majestic as the sound
Of rolling thunder gathering round;
Now pealing more loudly, as when from yon height
Descends the mad mountain-stream, foaming and bright;
Now in a song of love
Dying away,
As through the aspen grove
Soft zephyrs play:
Now heavier and more mournful seems the strain,
As when across the desert, death-like plain,
Whence whispers dread and yells despairing rise,
Cocytus' sluggish, wailing current sighs.

Maiden fair, oh, answer me!
Are not spirits leagued with thee?
Speak they in the realms of bliss
Other language e'er than this?

GROUP FROM TARTARUS.

Hark! like the sea in wrath the heavens assailing,
Or like a brook through rocky basin wailing,
Comes from below, in groaning agony,
A heavy, vacant torment-breathing sigh!
Their faces marks of bitter torture wear,
While from their lips burst curses of despair;
Their eyes are hollow, and full of woe,
And their looks with heartfelt anguish
Seek Cocytus' stream that runs wailing below,
For the bridge o'er its waters they languish.

And they say to each other in accents of fear,
"Oh, when will the time of fulfilment appear?"
High over them boundless eternity quivers,
And the scythe of Saturnus all-ruthlessly, shivers!

The Poems of Schiller

RAPTURE—TO LAURA.

From earth I seem to wing my flight,
And sun myself in Heaven's pure light,
When thy sweet gaze meets mine
I dream I quaff ethereal dew,
When my own form I mirrored view
In those blue eyes divine!

Blest notes from Paradise afar,
Or strains from some benignant star
Enchant my ravished ear:
My Muse feels then the shepherd's hour
When silvery tones of magic power
Escape those lips so dear!

Young Loves around thee fan their wings—
Behind, the maddened fir-tree springs,
As when by Orpheus fired:
The poles whirl round with swifter motion,
When in the dance, like waves o'er Ocean,
Thy footsteps float untired!

Thy look, if it but beam with love,
Could make the lifeless marble move,
And hearts in rocks enshrine:
My visions to reality
Will turn, if, Laura, in thine eye
I read—that thou art mine!

TO LAURA. (THE MYSTERY OF REMINISCENCE.) 2

Who and what gave to me the wish to woo thee—
Still, lip to lip, to cling for aye unto thee?
Who made thy glances to my soul the link—
Who bade me burn thy very breath to drink—
My life in thine to sink?

The Poems of Schiller

As from the conqueror's unresisted glaive,
Flies, without strife subdued, the ready slave—
So, when to life's unguarded fort, I see
Thy gaze draw near and near triumphantly—
 Yields not my soul to thee?
Why from its lord doth thus my soul depart?—
Is it because its native home thou art?
Or were they brothers in the days of yore,
Twin-bound both souls, and in the link they bore
 Sigh to be bound once more?
Were once our beings blent and intertwining,
And therefore still my heart for thine is pining?
Knew we the light of some extinguished sun—
The joys remote of some bright realm undone,
 Where once our souls were ONE?
Yes, it is so!—And thou wert bound to me
In the long-vanish'd Eld eternally!
In the dark troubled tablets which enroll
The Past—my Muse beheld this blessed scroll—
 "One with thy love my soul!"
Oh yes, I learned in awe, when gazing there,
How once one bright inseparate life we were,
How once, one glorious essence as a God,
Unmeasured space our chainless footsteps trod—
 All Nature our abode!
Round us, in waters of delight, forever
Voluptuous flowed the heavenly Nectar river;
We were the master of the seal of things,
And where the sunshine bathed Truth's mountain-springs
 Quivered our glancing wings.
Weep for the godlike life we lost afar—
Weep!—thou and I its scattered fragments are;
And still the unconquered yearning we retain—
Sigh to restore the rapture and the reign,
 And grow divine again.
And therefore came to me the wish to woo thee—
Still, lip to lip, to cling for aye unto thee;
This made thy glances to my soul the link—

The Poems of Schiller

This made me burn thy very breath to drink—
My life in thine to sink;
And therefore, as before the conqueror's glaive,
Flies, without strife subdued, the ready slave,
So, when to life's unguarded fort, I see
Thy gaze draw near and near triumphantly—
Yieldeth my soul to thee!
Therefore my soul doth from its lord depart,
Because, beloved, its native home thou art;
Because the twins recall the links they bore,
And soul with soul, in the sweet kiss of yore,
Meets and unites once more!
Thou, too— Ah, there thy gaze upon me dwells,
And thy young blush the tender answer tells;
Yes! with the dear relation still we thrill,
Both lives— though exiles from the homeward hill—
One life— all glowing still!

MELANCHOLY— TO LAURA.

Laura! a sunrise seems to break
Where'er thy happy looks may glow.
Joy sheds its roses o'er thy cheek,
Thy tears themselves do but bespeak
The rapture whence they flow;
Blest youth to whom those tears are given—
The tears that change his earth to heaven;
His best reward those melting eyes—
For him new suns are in the skies!

Thy soul—a crystal river passing,
Silver-clear, and sunbeam-glassing,
Mays into bloom sad Autumn by thee;
Night and desert, if they spy thee,
To gardens laugh—with daylight shine,
Lit by those happy smiles of thine!
Dark with cloud the future far

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Goldens itself beneath thy star.
Smilest thou to see the harmony
Of charm the laws of Nature keep?
Alas! to me the harmony
Brings only cause to weep!

Holds not Hades its domain
Underneath this earth of ours?
Under palace, under fame,
Underneath the cloud-capped towers?
Stately cities soar and spread
O'er your mouldering bones, ye dead!
From corruption, from decay,
Springs yon clove-pink's fragrant bloom;
Yon gay waters wind their way
From the hollows of a tomb.

From the planets thou mayest know
All the change that shifts below,
Fled—beneath that zone of rays,
Fled to night a thousand Mays;
Thrones a thousand—rising—sinking,
Earth from thousand slaughters drinking
Blood profusely poured as water;—
Of the sceptre—of the slaughter—
Wouldst thou know what trace remaineth?
Seek them where the dark king reigneth!

Scarce thine eye can ope and close
Ere life's dying sunset glows;
Sinking sudden from its pride
Into death—the Lethe tide.
Ask'st thou whence thy beauties rise?
Boastest thou those radiant eyes?—
Or that cheek in roses dyed?
All their beauty (thought of sorrow!)
From the brittle mould they borrow.
Heavy interest in the tomb

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For the brief loan of the bloom,
For the beauty of the day,
Death the usurer, thou must pay,
In the long to-morrow!

Maiden!—Death's too strong for scorn;
In the cheek the fairest, He
But the fairest throne doth see
Though the roses of the morn
Weave the veil by beauty worn—
Aye, beneath that broidered curtain,
Stands the Archer stern and certain!
Maid—thy Visionary hear—
Trust the wild one as the sear,
When he tells thee that thine eye,
While it beckons to the wooer,
Only lureth yet more nigh
Death, the dark undoer!

Every ray shed from thy beauty
Wastes the life-lamp while it beams,
And the pulse's playful duty,
And the blue veins' merry streams,
Sport and run into the pall—
Creatures of the Tyrant, all!
As the wind the rainbow shatters,
Death thy bright smiles rends and scatters,
Smile and rainbow leave no traces;—
From the spring-time's laughing graces,
From all life, as from its germ,
Grows the revel of the worm!

Woe, I see the wild wind wreak
Its wrath upon thy rosy bloom,
Winter plough thy rounded cheek,
Cloud and darkness close in gloom;
Blackening over, and forever,
Youth's serene and silver river!

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Love alike and beauty o'er,
Lovely and beloved no more!
Maiden, an oak that soars on high,
And scorns the whirlwind's breath
Behold thy Poet's youth defy
The blunted dart of Death!
His gaze as ardent as the light
That shoots athwart the heaven,
His soul yet fiercer than the light
In the eternal heaven,
Of Him, in whom as in an ocean-surge
Creation ebbs and flows—and worlds arise and merge!
Through Nature steers the poet's thought to find
No fear but this—one barrier to the mind?

And dost thou glory so to think?
And heaves thy bosom?—Woe!
This cup, which lures him to the brink,
As if divinity to drink—
Has poison in its flow!
Wretched, oh, wretched, they who trust
To strike the God-spark from the dust!
The mightiest tone the music knows,
But breaks the harp-string with the sound;
And genius, still the more it glows,
But wastes the lamp whose life bestows
The light it sheds around.
Soon from existence dragged away,
The watchful jailer grasps his prey:
Vowed on the altar of the abused fire,
The spirits I raised against myself conspire!
Let—yes, I feel it two short springs away
Pass on their rapid flight;
And life's faint spark shall, fleeting from the clay,
Merge in the Fount of Light!

And weep'st thou, Laura?—be thy tears forbid;
Would'st thou my lot, life's dreariest years amid,

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Protract and doom?—No: sinner, dry thy tears:
Would'st thou, whose eyes beheld the eagle wing
Of my bold youth through air's dominion spring,
Mark my sad age (life's tale of glory done)—
Crawl on the sod and tremble in the sun?
Hear the dull frozen heart condemn the flame
That as from heaven to youth's blithe bosom came;
And see the blind eyes loathing turn from all
The lovely sins age curses to recall?
Let me die young!—sweet sinner, dry thy tears!
Yes, let the flower be gathered in its bloom!
And thou, young genius, with the brows of gloom,
Quench thou life's torch, while yet the flame is strong!
Even as the curtain falls; while still the scene
Most thrills the hearts which have its audience been;
As fleet the shadows from the stage—and long
When all is o'er, lingers the breathless throng!

THE INFANTICIDE.

Hark where the bells toll, chiming, dull and steady,
The clock's slow hand hath reached the appointed time.
Well, be it so—prepare, my soul is ready,
Companions of the grave—the rest for crime!
Now take, O world! my last farewell—receiving
My parting kisses—in these tears they dwell!
Sweet are thy poisons while we taste believing,
Now we are quits—heart-poisoner, fare-thee-well!

Farewell, ye suns that once to joy invited,
Changed for the mould beneath the funeral shade;
Farewell, farewell, thou rosy time delighted,
Luring to soft desire the careless maid,
Pale gossamers of gold, farewell, sweet dreaming
Fancies—the children that an Eden bore!
Blossoms that died while dawn itself was gleaming,
Opening in happy sunlight never more.

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Swanlike the robe which innocence bestowing,
Decked with the virgin favors, rosy fair,
In the gay time when many a young rose glowing,
Blushed through the loose train of the amber hair.
Woe, woe! as white the robe that decks me now —
The shroud-like robe hell's destined victim wears;
Still shall the fillet bind this burning brow —
That sable braid the Doomsman's hand prepares!

Weep ye, who never fell-for whom, unerring,
The soul's white lilies keep their virgin hue,
Ye who when thoughts so danger-sweet are stirring,
Take the stern strength that Nature gives the few!
Woe, for too human was this fond heart's feeling —
Feeling! — my sin's avenger 3 doomed to be;
Woe — for the false man's arm around me stealing,
Stole the lulled virtue, charmed to sleep, from me.

Ah, he perhaps shall, round another sighing
(Forgot the serpents stinging at my breast),
Gayly, when I in the dumb grave am lying,
Pour the warm wish or speed the wanton jest,
Or play, perchance, with his new maiden's tresses,
Answer the kiss her lip enamored brings,
When the dread block the head he cradled presses,
And high the blood his kiss once fevered springs.

Thee, Francis, Francis 4, league on league, shall follow
The death-dirge of the Lucy once so dear;
From yonder steeple dismal, dull, and hollow,
Shall knell the warning horror on thy ear.
On thy fresh leman's lips when love is dawning,
And the lisped music glides from that sweet well —
Lo, in that breast a red wound shall be yawning,
And, in the midst of rapture, warn of hell!

Betrayer, what! thy soul relentless closing
To grief — the woman-shame no art can heal —

The Poems of Schiller

To that small life beneath my heart reposing!
Man, man, the wild beast for its young can feel!
Proud flew the sails—receding from the land,
I watched them waning from the wistful eye,
Round the gay maids on Seine's voluptuous strand,
Breathes the false incense of his fatal sigh.

And there the babe! there, on the mother's bosom,
Lulled in its sweet and golden rest it lay,
Fresh in life's morning as a rosy blossom,
It smiled, poor harmless one, my tears away.
Deathlike yet lovely, every feature speaking
In such dear calm and beauty to my sadness,
And cradled still the mother's heart, in breaking,
The softening love and the despairing madness.

"Woman, where is my father?" freezing through me,
Lisp'd the mute innocence with thunder-sound;
"Woman, where is thy husband?"—called unto me,
In every look, word, whisper, busying round!
Alas, for thee, there is no father's kiss;—
He fondleth other children on his knee.
How thou wilt curse our momentary bliss,
When bastard on thy name shall branded be!

Thy mother—oh, a hell her heart concealeth,
Lone-sitting, lone in social nature's all!
Thirsting for that glad fount thy love revealeth,
While still thy look the glad fount turns to gall.
In every infant cry my soul is hearkening,
The haunting happiness forever o'er,
And all the bitterness of death is darkening
The heavenly looks that smiled mine eyes before.

Hell, if my sight those looks a moment misses—
Hell, when my sight upon those looks is turned—
The avenging furies madden in thy kisses,
That slept in his what time my lips they burned.

The Poems of Schiller

Out from their graves his oaths spoke back in thunder!
The perjury stalked like murder in the sun—
Forever—God!—sense, reason, soul, sunk under—
The deed was done!

Francis, O Francis! league on league shall chase thee
The shadows hurrying grimly on thy flight—
Still with their icy arms they shall embrace thee,
And mutter thunder in thy dream's delight!

Down from the soft stars, in their tranquil glory,
Shall look thy dead child with a ghastly stare;
That shape shall haunt thee in its cerements gory,
And scourge thee back from heaven—its home is there!

Lifeless—how lifeless!—see, oh see, before me
It lies cold—stiff—O God!—and with that blood
I feel, as swoops the dizzy darkness o'er me
Mine own life mingled—ebbing in the flood—

Hark, at the door they knock—more loud within me—
More awful still—its sound the dread heart gave!
Gladly I welcome the cold arms that win me—
Fire, quench thy tortures in the icy grave!

Francis—a God that pardons dwells in heaven—
Francis, the sinner—yes—she pardons thee—
So let my wrongs unto the earth be given
Flame seize the wood!—it burns—it kindles—see!
There—there his letters cast—behold are ashes—
His vows—the conquering fire consumes them here
His kisses—see—see—all are only ashes—
All, all—the all that once on earth were dear!

Trust not the roses which your youth enjoyeth,
Sisters, to man's faith, changeful as the moon!
Beauty to me brought guilt—its bloom destroyeth
Lo, in the judgment court I curse the boon

The Poems of Schiller

Tears in the headsman's gaze — what tears? — 'tis spoken!
Quick, bind mine eyes — all soon shall be forgot —
Doomsman — the lily hast thou never broken?
Pale Doomsman — tremble not!

THE GREATNESS OF THE WORLD.

Through the world which the Spirit creative and kind
First formed out of chaos, I fly like the wind,
 Until on the strand
 Of its billows I land,
My anchor cast forth where the breeze blows no more,
And Creation's last boundary stands on the shore.
I saw infant stars into being arise,
For thousands of years to roll on through the skies;
 I saw them in play
 Seek their goal far away, —
For a moment my fugitive gaze wandered on, —
I looked round me, and lo! — all those bright stars had flown!

Madly yearning to reach the dark kingdom of night.
I boldly steer on with the speed of the light;
 All misty and drear
 The dim heavens appear,
While embryo systems and seas at their source
Are whirling around the sun-wanderer's course.

When sudden a pilgrim I see drawing near
Along the lone path, — "Stay! What seekest thou here?"
 "My bark, tempest-tossed,
I sail toward the land where the breeze blows no more,
And Creation's last boundary stands on the shore."

"Stay, thou sailest in vain! 'Tis INFINITY yonder!" —
"'Tis INFINITY, too, where thou, pilgrim, wouldst wander!
 Eagle-thoughts that aspire,
 Let your proud pinions tire!

The Poems of Schiller

For 'tis here that sweet phantasy, bold to the last,
Her anchor in hopeless dejection must cast!"

FORTUNE AND WISDOM.

Enraged against a quondam friend,
To Wisdom once proud Fortune said
"I'll give thee treasures without end,
If thou wilt be my friend instead."

"My choicest gifts to him I gave,
And ever blest him with my smile;
And yet he ceases not to crave,
And calls me niggard all the while."

"Come, sister, let us friendship vow!
So take the money, nothing loth;
Why always labor at the plough?
Here is enough I'm sure for both!"

Sage wisdom laughed, — the prudent elf! —
And wiped her brow, with moisture hot:
"There runs thy friend to hang himself, —
Be reconciled — I need thee not!"

ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF A YOUNG MAN. 5

Mournful groans, as when a tempest lowers,
Echo from the dreary house of woe;
Death-notes rise from yonder minster's towers!
Bearing out a youth, they slowly go;
Yes! a youth — unripe yet for the bier,
Gathered in the spring-time of his days,
Thrilling yet with pulses strong and clear,
With the flame that in his bright eye plays —
Yes, a son — the idol of his mother,

The Poems of Schiller

(Oh, her mournful sigh shows that too well!)
Yes! my bosom-friend, — alas my brother! —
Up! each man the sad procession swell!

Do ye boast, ye pines, so gray and old,
Storms to brave, with thunderbolts to sport?
And, ye hills, that ye the heavens uphold?
And, ye heavens, that ye the suns support!
Boasts the graybeard, who on haughty deeds
As on billows, seeks perfection's height?
Boasts the hero, whom his prowess leads
Up to future glory's temple bright!
If the gnawing worms the floweret blast,
Who can madly think he'll ne'er decay?
Who above, below, can hope to last,
If the young man's life thus fleets away?

Joyously his days of youth so glad
Danced along, in rosy garb beclad,
And the world, the world was then so sweet!
And how kindly, how enchantingly
Smiled the future, — with what golden eye
Did life's paradise his moments greet!
While the tear his mother's eye escaped,
Under him the realm of shadows gaped
And the fates his thread began to sever, —
Earth and Heaven then vanished from his sight.
From the grave-thought shrank he in affright —
Sweet the world is to the dying ever!

Dumb and deaf 'tis in that narrow place,
Deep the slumbers of the buried one!
Brother! Ah, in ever-slackening race
All thy hopes their circuit cease to run!
Sunbeams oft thy native hill still lave,
But their glow thou never more canst feel;
O'er its flowers the zephyr's pinions wave,
O'er thine ear its murmur ne'er can steal;

The Poems of Schiller

Love will never tinge thine eye with gold,
Never wilt thou embrace thy blooming bride,
Not e'en though our tears in torrents rolled—
Death must now thine eye forever hide!

Yet 'tis well!—for precious is the rest,
In that narrow house the sleep is calm;
There, with rapture sorrow leaves the breast,—
Man's afflictions there no longer harm.
Slander now may wildly rave o'er thee,
And temptation vomit poison fell,
O'er the wrangle on the Pharisee,
Murderous bigots banish thee to hell!
Rogues beneath apostle-masks may leer,
And the bastard child of justice play,
As it were with dice, with mankind here,
And so on, until the judgment day!

O'er thee fortune still may juggle on,
For her minions blindly look around,—
Man now totter on his staggering throne,
And in dreary puddles now be found!
Blest art thou, within thy narrow cell!
To this stir of tragi-comedy,
To these fortune-waves that madly swell,
To this vain and childish lottery,
To this busy crowd effecting naught,
To this rest with labor teeming o'er,
Brother!—to this heaven with devils—fraught,
Now thine eyes have closed forevermore.

Fare thee well, oh, thou to memory dear,
By our blessings lulled to slumbers sweet!
Sleep on calmly in thy prison drear,—
Sleep on calmly till again we meet!
Till the loud Almighty trumpet sounds,
Echoing through these corpse-encumbered hills,
Till God's storm-wind, bursting through the bounds

The Poems of Schiller

Placed by death, with life those corpses fills—
Till, impregnate with Jehovah's blast,
Graves bring forth, and at His menace dread,
In the smoke of planets melting fast,
Once again the tombs give up their dead!

Not in worlds, as dreamed of by the wise,
Not in heavens, as sung in poet's song,
Not in e'en the people's paradise—
Yet we shall o'ertake thee, and ere long.
Is that true which cheered the pilgrim's gloom?
Is it true that thoughts can yonder be
True, that virtue guides us o'er the tomb?
That 'tis more than empty phantasy?
All these riddles are to thee unveiled!
Truth thy soul ecstatic now drinks up,
Truth in radiance thousandfold exhaled
From the mighty Father's blissful cup.

Dark and silent bearers draw, then, nigh!
To the slayer serve the feast the while!
Cease, ye mourners, cease your wailing cry!
Dust on dust upon the body pile!
Where's the man who God to tempt presumes?
Where the eye that through the gulf can see?
Holy, holy, holy art thou, God of tombs!
We, with awful trembling, worship Thee!
Dust may back to native dust be ground,
From its crumbling house the spirit fly,
And the storm its ashes strew around,—
But its love, its love shall never die!

The Poems of Schiller



The Poems of Schiller

THE BATTLE.

Heavy and solemn,
A cloudy column,
Through the green plain they marching came!
Measure less spread, like a table dread,
For the wild grim dice of the iron game.
The looks are bent on the shaking ground,
And the heart beats loud with a knelling sound;
Swift by the breasts that must bear the brunt,
Gallops the major along the front—

“Halt!”

And fettered they stand at the stark command,
And the warriors, silent, halt!

Proud in the blush of morning glowing,
What on the hill-top shines in flowing,
“See you the foeman’s banners waving?”
“We see the foeman’s banners waving!”
“God be with ye—children and wife!”
Hark to the music—the trump and the fife,
How they ring through the ranks which they rouse to the strife!
Thrilling they sound with their glorious tone,
Thrilling they go through the marrow and bone!
Brothers, God grant when this life is o’er,
In the life to come that we meet once more!

See the smoke how the lightning is cleaving asunder!
Hark the guns, peal on peal, how they boom in their thunder!
From host to host, with kindling sound,
The shouting signal circles round,
Ay, shout it forth to life or death—
Freer already breathes the breath!
The war is waging, slaughter raging,
And heavy through the reeking pall,
The iron death-dice fall!
Nearer they close—foes upon foes
“Ready!”—From square to square it goes,

The Poems of Schiller

Down on the knee they sank,
And fire comes sharp from the foremost rank.
Many a man to the earth it sent,
Many a gap by the balls is rent —
O'er the corpse before springs the hinder man,
That the line may not fail to the fearless van,
To the right, to the left, and around and around,
Death whirls in its dance on the bloody ground.
God's sunlight is quenched in the fiery fight,
Over the hosts falls a brooding night!
Brothers, God grant when this life is o'er
In the life to come that we meet once more!

The dead men lie bathed in the weltering blood
And the living are blent in the slippery flood,
And the feet, as they reeling and sliding go,
Stumble still on the corpses that sleep below.
"What, Francis!" "Give Charlotte my last farewell."
As the dying man murmurs, the thunders swell —
"I'll give — Oh God! are their guns so near?
Ho! comrades! — yon volley! — look sharp to the rear! —
I'll give thy Charlotte thy last farewell,
Sleep soft! where death thickest descendeth in rain,
The friend thou forsakest thy side shall regain!"
Hitherward — thitherward reels the fight,
Dark and more darkly day glooms into night —
Brothers, God grant when this life is o'er
In the life to come that we meet once more!

Hark to the hoofs that galloping go!
The adjutant flying, —
The horsemen press hard on the panting foe,
Their thunder booms in dying —
 Victory!
The terror has seized on the dastards all,
And their colors fall!
 Victory!
Closed is the brunt of the glorious fight

The Poems of Schiller

And the day, like a conqueror, bursts on the night,
Trumpet and fife swelling choral along,
The triumph already sweeps marching in song.
Farewell, fallen brothers, though this life be o'er,
There's another, in which we shall meet you once more!

ROUSSEAU.

Monument of our own age's shame,
On thy country casting endless blame,
Rousseau's grave, how dear thou art to me
Calm repose be to thy ashes blest!
In thy life thou vainly sought'st for rest,
But at length 'twas here obtained by thee!

When will ancient wounds be covered o'er?
Wise men died in heathen days of yore;
Now 'tis lighter—yet they die again.
Socrates was killed by sophists vile,
Rousseau meets his death through Christians' wile,—
Rousseau—who would fain make Christians men!

FRIENDSHIP.

[From "Letters of Julius to Raphael," an unpublished Novel.]

Friend!—the Great Ruler, easily content,
Needs not the laws it has laborious been
The task of small professors to invent;
A single wheel impels the whole machine
Matter and spirit;—yea, that simple law,
Pervading nature, which our Newton saw.

This taught the spheres, slaves to one golden rein,
Their radiant labyrinths to weave around
Creation's mighty hearts: this made the chain,

The Poems of Schiller

Which into interwoven systems bound
All spirits streaming to the spiritual sun
As brooks that ever into ocean run!

Did not the same strong mainspring urge and guide
Our hearts to meet in love's eternal bond?
Linked to thine arm, O Raphael, by thy side
Might I aspire to reach to souls beyond
Our earth, and bid the bright ambition go
To that perfection which the angels know!

Happy, O happy—I have found thee—I
Have out of millions found thee, and embraced;
Thou, out of millions, mine!—Let earth and sky
Return to darkness, and the antique waste—
To chaos shocked, let warring atoms be,
Still shall each heart unto the other flee!

Do I not find within thy radiant eyes
Fairer reflections of all joys most fair?
In thee I marvel at myself—the dyes
Of lovely earth seem lovelier painted there,
And in the bright looks of the friend is given
A heavenlier mirror even of the heaven!

Sadness casts off its load, and gayly goes
From the intolerant storm to rest awhile,
In love's true heart, sure haven of repose;
Does not pain's veriest transports learn to smile
From that bright eloquence affection gave
To friendly looks?—there, finds not pain a grave?

In all creation did I stand alone,
Still to the rocks my dreams a soul should find,
Mine arms should wreath themselves around the stone,
My griefs should feel a listener in the wind;
My joy—its echo in the caves should be!
Fool, if ye will—Fool, for sweet sympathy!

The Poems of Schiller

We are dead groups of matter when we hate;
But when we love we are as gods!—Unto
The gentle fetters yearning, through each state
And shade of being multiform, and through
All countless spirits (save of all the sire)—
Moves, breathes, and blends, the one divine desire.

Lo! arm in arm, through every upward grade,
From the rude mongrel to the starry Greek,
Who the fine link between the mortal made,
And heaven's last seraph—everywhere we seek
Union and bond—till in one sea sublime
Of love be merged all measure and all time!

Friendless ruled God His solitary sky;
He felt the want, and therefore souls were made,
The blessed mirrors of his bliss!—His eye
No equal in His loftiest works surveyed;
And from the source whence souls are quickened, He
Called His companion forth—ETERNITY!

ELYSIUM.

Past the despairing wail—
And the bright banquets of the Elysian vale
Melt every care away!
Delight, that breathes and moves forever,
Glides through sweet fields like some sweet river!
Elysian life survey!
There, fresh with youth, o'er jocund meads,
His merry west-winds blithely leads
The ever-blooming May!
Through gold-woven dreams goes the dance of the hours,
In space without bounds swell the soul and its powers,
And truth, with no veil, gives her face to the day.
And joy to-day and joy to-morrow,
But wafts the airy soul aloft;

The Poems of Schiller

The very name is lost to sorrow,
And pain is rapture tuned more exquisitely soft.

Here the pilgrim reposes the world-weary limb,
And forgets in the shadow, cool-breathing and dim,
The load he shall bear never more;
Here the mower, his sickle at rest, by the streams,
Lulled with harp-strings, reviews, in the calm of his dreams,
The fields, when the harvest is o'er.
Here, he, whose ears drank in the battle roar,
Whose banners streamed upon the startled wind
A thunder-storm, — before whose thunder tread
The mountains trembled, — in soft sleep reclined,
By the sweet brook that o'er its pebbly bed
In silver plays, and murmurs to the shore,
Hears the stern clangor of wild spears no more!
Here the true spouse the lost-beloved regains,
And on the enamelled couch of summer-plains
Mingles sweet kisses with the zephyr's breath.
Here, crowned at last, love never knows decay,
Living through ages its one bridal day,
Safe from the stroke of death!

THE FUGITIVE.

The air is perfumed with the morning's fresh breeze,
From the bush peer the sunbeams all purple and bright,
While they gleam through the clefts of the dark-waving trees,
And the cloud-crested mountains are golden with light.

With joyful, melodious, ravishing, strain,
The lark, as he wakens, salutes the glad sun,
Who glows in the arms of Aurora again,
And blissfully smiling, his race 'gins to run.

All hail, light of day!
Thy sweet gushing ray

The Poems of Schiller

Pours down its soft warmth over pasture and field;
With hues silver-tinged
The meadows are fringed,
And numberless suns in the dewdrop revealed.

Young Nature invades
The whispering shades,
Displaying each ravishing charm;
The soft zephyr blows,
And kisses the rose,
The plain is sweet-scented with balm.

How high from yon city the smoke-clouds ascend!
Their neighing, and snorting, and bellowing blend
The horses and cattle;
The chariot-wheels rattle,
As down to the valley they take their mad way;
And even the forest where life seems to move,
The eagle, and falcon, and hawk soar above,
And flutter their pinions, in heaven's bright ray.

In search of repose
From my heart-rending woes,
Oh, where shall my sad spirit flee?
The earth's smiling face,
With its sweet youthful grace,
A tomb must, alas, be for me!

Arise, then, thou sunlight of morning, and fling
O'er plain and o'er forest thy purple-dyed beams!
Thou twilight of evening, all noiselessly sing
In melody soft to the world as it dreams!

Ah, sunlight of morning, to me thou but flingest
Thy purple-dyed beams o'er the grave of the past!
Ah, twilight of evening, thy strains thou but singest
To one whose deep slumbers forever must last!

The Poems of Schiller

TO MINNA.

Do I dream? can I trust to my eye?
My sight sure some vapor must cover?
Or, there, did my Minna pass by—
My Minna—and knew not her lover?
On the arm of the coxcomb she crossed,
Well the fan might its zephyr bestow;
Herself in her vanity lost,
That wanton my Minna?—Ah, no!

In the gifts of my love she was dressed,
My plumes o'er her summer hat quiver;
The ribbons that flaunt in her breast
Might bid her—remember the giver!
And still do they bloom on thy bosom,
The flowerets I gathered for thee!
Still as fresh is the leaf of each blossom,
'Tis the heart that has faded from me!

Go and take, then, the incense they tender;
Go, the one that adored thee forget!
Go, thy charms to the feigner surrender,
In my scorn is my comforter yet!
Go, for thee with what trust and belief
There beat not ignobly a heart
That has strength yet to strive with the grief
To have worshipped the trifler thou art!

Thy beauty thy heart hath betrayed—
Thy beauty—shame, Minna, to thee!
To-morrow its glory will fade,
And its roses all withered will be!
The swallows that swarm in the sun
Will fly when the north winds awaken,
The false ones thine autumn will shun,
For whom thou the true hast forsaken!

The Poems of Schiller

'Mid the wrecks of the charms in December,
I see thee alone in decay,
And each spring shall but bid thee remember
How brief for thyself was the May!
Then they who so wantonly flock
To the rapture thy kiss can impart,
Shall scoff at thy winter, and mock
Thy beauty as wrecked as thy heart!

Thy beauty thy heart hath betrayed—
Thy beauty—shame, Minna, to thee
To-morrow its glory will fade—
And its roses all withered will be!
O, what scorn for thy desolate years
Shall I feel!—God forbid it in me!
How bitter will then be the tears
Shed, Minna, O Minna, for thee!

THE FLOWERS.

Ye offspring of the morning sun,
Ye flowers that deck the smiling plain,
Your lives, in joy and bliss begun,
In Nature's love unchanged remain.
With hues of bright and godlike splendor
Sweet Flora graced your forms so tender,
And clothed ye in a garb of light;
Spring's lovely children weep forever,
For living souls she gave ye never,
And ye must dwell in endless night?

The nightingale and lark still sing
In your tranced ears the bliss of love;
The toying sylphs, on airy wing,
Around your fragrant bosoms rove,
Of yore, Dione's daughter & twining
In garlands sweet your cup-so shining,

The Poems of Schiller

A pillow formed where love might rest!
Spring's gentle children, mourn forever,
The joys of love she gave ye never,
Ne'er let ye know that feeling blest!

But when ye're gathered by my hand,
A token of my love to be,
Now that her mother's harsh command
From Nanny's sight has banished me—
E'en from that passing touch ye borrow
Those heralds mute of pleasing sorrow,
Life, language, hearts and souls divine;
And to your silent leaves 'tis given,
By Him who mightiest is in heaven,
His glorious Godhead to enshrine.

THE TRIUMPH OF LOVE.

A HYMN.

By love are blest the gods on high,
Frail man becomes a deity
When love to him is given;
'Tis love that makes the heavens shine
With hues more radiant, more divine,
And turns dull earth to heaven!

In Pyrrha's rear (so poets sang
In ages past and gone),
The world from rocky fragments sprang—
Mankind from lifeless stone.

Their soul was but a thing of night,
Like stone and rock their heart;
The flaming torch of heaven so bright
Its glow could ne'er impart.

The Poems of Schiller

Young loves, all gently hovering round,
Their souls as yet had never bound
In soft and rosy chains;
No feeling muse had sought to raise
Their bosoms with ennobling lays,
Or sweet, harmonious strains.

Around each other lovingly
No garlands then entwined;
The sorrowing springs fled toward the sky,
And left the earth behind.

From out the sea Aurora rose
With none to hail her then;
The sun unhailed, at daylight's close,
In ocean sank again.

In forests wild, man went astray,
Misled by Luna's cloudy ray—
He bore an iron yoke;
He pined not for the stars on high,
With yearning for a deity
No tears in torrents broke.

.

But see! from out the deep-blue ocean
Fair Venus springs with gentle motion
The graceful Naiad's smiling band
Conveys her to the gladdened strand,

A May-like, youthful, magic power
Entwines, like morning's twilight hour,
Around that form of godlike birth,
The charms of air, sea, heaven, and earth.

The day's sweet eye begins to bloom
Across the forest's midnight gloom;

The Poems of Schiller

Narcissuses, their balm distilling,
The path her footstep treads are filling.

A song of love, sweet Philomel,
Soon carolled through the grove;
The streamlet, as it murmuring fell,
Discoursed of naught but love,

Pygmalion! Happy one! Behold!
Life's glow pervades thy marble cold!
Oh, LOVE, thou conqueror all-divine,
Embrace each happy child of thine!

.

By love are blest the gods on high,—
Frail man becomes a deity
When love to him is given;
'Tis love that makes the heavens shine
With hues more radiant, more divine,
And turns dull earth to heaven!

.

The gods their days forever spend
In banquets bright that have no end,
In one voluptuous morning-dream,
And quaff the nectar's golden stream.

Enthroned in awful majesty
Kronion wields the bolt on high:
In abject fear Olympus rocks
When wrathfully he shakes his locks.

To other gods he leaves his throne,
And fills, disguised as earth's frail son,
The grove with mournful numbers;
The thunders rest beneath his feet,

The Poems of Schiller

And lulled by Leda's kisses sweet,
The Giant-Slayer slumbers.

Through the boundless realms of light
Phoebus' golden reins, so bright,
Guide his horses white as snow,
While his darts lay nations low.
But when love and harmony
Fill his breast, how willingly
Ceases Phoebus then to heed
Rattling dart and snow-white steed!

See! Before Kronion's spouse
Every great immortal bows;
Proudly soar the peacock pair
As her chariot throne they bear,
While she decks with crown of might
Her ambrosial tresses bright,

Beauteous princess, ah! with fear
Quakes before thy splendor, love,
Seeking, as he ventures near,
With his power thy breast to move!
Soon from her immortal throne
Heaven's great queen must fain descend,
And in prayer for beauty's zone,
To the heart-enchainer bend!

.

By love are blest the gods on high,
Frail man becomes a deity
When love to him is given;
'Tis love that makes the heavens shine
With hues more radiant, more divine,
And turns dull earth to heaven!

.

The Poems of Schiller

'Tis love illumines the realms of night,
For Orcus dark obeys his might,
And bows before his magic spell
All-kindly looks the king of hell
At Ceres' daughter's smile so bright, —
Yes—love illumines the realms of night!

In hell were heard, with heavenly sound,
Holding in chains its warder bound,
Thy lays, O Thracian one!
A gentler doom dread Minos passed,
While down his cheeks the tears coursed fast
And e'en around Megaera's face
The serpents twined in fond embrace,
The lashes' work seemed done.

Driven by Orpheus' lyre away,
The vulture left his giant-prey 8;
With gentler motion rolled along
Dark Lethe and Cocytus' river,
Enraptured Thracian, by thy song, —
And love its burden was forever!

By love are blest the gods on high,
Frail man becomes a deity
When love to him is given;
'Tis love that makes the heavens shine
With hues more radiant, more divine,
And turns dull earth to heaven!

.

Wherever Nature's sway extends,
The fragrant balm of love descends,
His golden pinions quiver;
If 'twere not Venus' eye that gleams
Upon me in the moon's soft beams,
In sunlit hill or river, —

The Poems of Schiller

If 'twere not Venus smiles on me
From yonder bright and starry sea,

Not stars, not sun, not moonbeams sweet,
Could make my heart with rapture beat.
'Tis love alone that smilingly
Peers forth from Nature's blissful eye,
As from a mirror ever!

Love bids the silvery streamlet roll
More gently as it sighs along,
And breathes a living, feeling soul
In Philomel's sweet plaintive song;
'Tis love alone that fills the air
With streams from Nature's lute so fair.

Thou wisdom with the glance of fire,
Thou mighty goddess, now retire,
Love's power thou now must feel!
To victor proud, to monarch high,
Thou ne'er hast knelt in slavery, —
To love thou now must kneel!

Who taught thee boldly how to climb
The steep, but starry path sublime,
And reach the seats immortal?
Who rent the mystic veil in twain,
And showed thee the Elysian plain
Beyond death's gloomy portal?
If love had beckoned not from high,
Had we gained immortality?
If love had not inflamed each thought,
Had we the master spirit sought?
'Tis love that guides the soul along
To Nature's Father's heavenly throne

By love are blest the gods on high,
Frail man becomes a deity

The Poems of Schiller

When love to him is given;
'Tis love that makes the heavens shine
With hues more radiant, more divine,
And turns dull earth to heaven!

TO A MORALIST.

Are the sports of our youth so displeasing?
Is love but the folly you say?
Benumbed with the winter, and freezing,
You scold at the revels of May.

For you once a nymph had her charms,
And Oh! when the waltz you were wreathing,
All Olympus embraced in your arms—
All its nectar in Julia's breathing.

If Jove at that moment had hurled
The earth in some other rotation,
Along with your Julia whirled,
You had felt not the shock of creation.

Learn this— that philosophy beats
Sure time with the pulse,— quick or slow
As the blood from the heyday retreats,—
But it cannot make gods of us—No!

It is well icy reason should thaw
In the warm blood of mirth now and then,
The gods for themselves have a law
Which they never intended for men.

The spirit is bound by the ties
Of its gaoler, the flesh;—if I can
Not reach as an angel the skies,
Let me feel on the earth as a man!

The Poems of Schiller

COUNT EBERHARD, THE GROANER OF WURTEMBERG.

A WAR SONG.

Now hearken, ye who take delight
In boasting of your worth!
To many a man, to many a knight,
Beloved in peace and brave in fight,
The Swabian land gives birth.

Of Charles and Edward, Louis, Guy,
And Frederick, ye may boast;
Charles, Edward, Louis, Frederick, Guy—
None with Sir Eberhard can vie—
Himself a mighty host!

And then young Ulerick, his son,
Ha! how he loved the fray!
Young Ulerick, the Count's bold son,
When once the battle had begun,
No foot's-breadth e'er gave way.

The Reutlingers, with gnashing teeth,
Saw our bright ranks revealed
And, panting for the victor's wreath,
They drew the sword from out the sheath,
And sought the battle-field.

He charged the foe,—but fruitlessly,—
Then, mail-clad, homeward sped;
Stern anger filled his father's eye,
And made the youthful warrior fly,
And tears of anguish shed.

Now, rascals, quake!—This grieved him sore,
And rankled in his brain;
And by his father's beard he swore,
With many a craven townsman's gore

The Poems of Schiller

To wash out this foul stain.

Ere long the feud raged fierce and loud,—
Then hastened steed and man
To Doeffingen in thronging crowd,
While joy inspired the youngster proud,—
And soon the strife began.

Our army's signal-word that day
Was the disastrous fight;
It spurred us on like lightning's ray,
And plunged us deep in bloody fray,
And in the spears' black night.

The youthful Count his ponderous mace
With lion's rage swung round;
Destruction stalked before his face,
While groans and howlings filled the place
And hundreds bit the ground.

Woe! Woe! A heavy sabre-stroke
Upon his neck descended;
The sight each warrior's pity woke—
In vain! In vain! No word he spoke—
His course on earth was ended.

Loud wept both friend and foeman then,
Checked was the victor's glow;
The count cheered thus his knights again—
"My son is like all other men,—
March, children, 'gainst the foe!"

With greater fury whizzed each lance,
Revenge inflamed the blood;
O'er corpses moved the fearful dance
The townsmen fled in random chance
O'er mountain, vale, and flood.

The Poems of Schiller

Then back to camp, with trumpet's bray,
We hied in joyful haste;
And wife and child, with roundelay,
With clanging cup and waltzes gay,
Our glorious triumph graced.

And our old Count, — what now does he?
His son lies dead before him;
Within his tent all woefully
He sits alone in agony,
And drops one hot tear o'er him.

And so, with true affection warm,
The Count our lord we love;
Himself a mighty hero-swarm —
The thunders rest within his arm —
He shines like star above!

Farewell, then, ye who take delight
In boasting of your worth!
To many a man, to many a knight,
Beloved in peace, and brave in fight,
The Swabian land gives birth!

TO THE SPRING.

Welcome, gentle Stripling,
Nature's darling thou!
With thy basket full of blossoms,
A happy welcome now!
Aha! — and thou returnest,
Heartily we greet thee —
The loving and the fair one,
Merrily we meet thee!
Think'st thou of my maiden
In thy heart of glee?

The Poems of Schiller

I love her yet, the maiden—
And the maiden yet loves me!
For the maiden, many a blossom
I begged—and not in vain!
I came again a-begging,
And thou—thou givest again:
Welcome, gentle Stripling,
Nature's darling thou—
With thy basket full of blossoms,
A happy welcome now!

SEMELE:

IN TWO SCENES.

Dramatis Personae.

JUNO.

SEMELE, Princess of Thebes.

JUPITER.

MERCURY.

SCENE—The Palace of Cadmus at Thebes.

SCENE I.

JUNO. (Descending from her chariot, enveloped in a cloud.)

Away, ye peacocks, with my winged car!
Upon Cithaeron's cloud-capped summit wait!

[The chariot and cloud vanish.

Hail, hail, thou house of my undying anger!
A fearful hail to thee, thou hostile roof,
Ye hated walls!—This, this, then, is the place
Where Jupiter pollutes his marriage-bed
Even before the face of modest day!
'Tis here, then, that a woman, a frail mortal,

The Poems of Schiller

A dust-created being, dares to lure
The mighty Thunderer from out mine arms,
And hold him prisoner against her lips!

Juno! Juno! thought of madness!
Thou all lonely and in sadness,
Standest now on heaven's bright throne!
Though the votive smoke ascendeth,
Though each knee in homage bendeth,
What are they when love has flown?

To humble, alas, each too-haughty emotion
That swelled my proud breast, from the foam of the ocean
Fair Venus arose, to enchant gods and men!
And the Fates my still deeper abasement decreeing,
Her offspring Hermione brought into being,
And the bliss once mine own can ne'er glad me again!

Amongst the gods do I not reign the queen?
Am I not sister of the Thunderer?
Am I not wife of Zeus, the lord of all?
Groans not the mighty axis of the heavens
At my command? Gleams not Olympus' crown
Upon my head? Ha! now I feel myself!
In my immortal veins is Kronos' blood,
Right royally now swells my godlike heart.
Revenge! revenge!
Shall she unpunished ridicule my might?
Unpunished, discord roll amongst the gods,
Inviting Eris to invade the courts,
The joyous courts of heaven? Vain, thoughtless one!
Perish, and learn upon the Stygian stream
The difference 'twixt divine and earthly dust!
The giant-armor, may it weigh thee down—
Thy passion for a god to atoms crush thee!
Armed with revenge, as with a coat of mail,
I have descended from Olympus' heights,
Devising sweet, ensnaring, flattering words;

The Poems of Schiller

But in those words, death and destruction lurk.
Hark! 'tis her footstep! she approaches now —
Approaches ruin and a certain death!
Veil thyself, goddess, in a mortal form! [Exit.

SEMELE. (Calling behind the scenes.)
The sun is fast declining! Maidens, haste,
Scatter ambrosial fragrance through the hall,
Strew roses and narcissus flowers around,
Forgetting not the gold-embroidered pillow.
He comes not yet — the sun is fast declining —

JUNO. (hastily entering in the form of an old woman.)
Praised be the deities, my dearest daughter!

SEMELE.
Ha! Do I dream? Am I awake? Gods! Beroe!

JUNO.
Is't possible that Semele can e'er
Forget her nurse?

SEMELE. 'Tis Beroe! By Zeus!
Oh, let thy daughter clasp thee to her heart!
Thou livest still? What can have brought thee here
From Epidaurus? Tell me all thy tale!
Thou art my mother as of old?

JUNO. Thy mother!
Time was thou call'dst me so.

SEMELE. Thou art so still,
And wilt remain so, till I drink full deep
Of Lethe's maddening draught.

JUNO. Soon Beroe
Will drink oblivion from the waves of Lethe;
But Cadmus' daughter ne'er will taste that draught.

The Poems of Schiller

SEMELE.

How, my good nurse? Thy language ne'er was wont
To be mysterious or of hidden meaning;
The spirit of gray hairs 'tis speaks in thee;
Thou sayest I ne'er shall taste of Lethe's draught?

JUNO.

I said so, yes! But wherefore ridicule
Gray hairs? 'Tis true that they, unlike fair tresses,
Have ne'er been able to ensnare a god!

SEMELE.

Pardon poor thoughtless me! What cause have I
To ridicule gray hairs? Can I suppose
That mine forever fair will grace my neck?
But what was that I heard thee muttering
Between thy teeth? A god?

JUNO. Said I a god?

The deities in truth dwell everywhere!
'Tis good for earth's frail children to implore them.
The gods are found where thou art—Semele!
What wouldst thou ask?

SEMELE. Malicious heart! But say
What brings thee to this spot from Epidaurus?
'Tis not because the gods delight to dwell
near Semele?

JUNO. By Jupiter, naught else!—

What fire was that which mounted to thy cheeks
When I pronounced the name of Jupiter?
Naught else, my daughter! Fearfully the plague
At Epidaurus rages; every blast
Is deadly poison, every breath destroys;
The son his mother burns, his bride the bridegroom;
The funeral piles rear up their flaming heads,
Converting even midnight to bright day,

The Poems of Schiller

While howls of anguish ceaseless rend the air;
Full to overflowing is the cup of woe! —
In anger, Zeus looks down on our poor nation;
In vain the victim's blood is shed, in vain
Before the altar bows the priest his knee;
Deaf is his ear to all our supplications —
Therefore my sorrow-stricken country now
Has sent me here to Cadmus' regal daughter,
In hopes that I may move her to avert
His anger from us — "Beroe, the nurse,
Has influence," thus they said, "with Semele,
And Semele with Zeus" — I know no more,
And understand still less what means the saying,
That Semele such influence has with Zeus.

SEMELE. (Eagerly and thoughtlessly.)
The plague shall cease to-morrow! Tell them so
Zeus loves me! Say so! It shall cease to-day!

JUNO. (Starting up in astonishment.)
Ha! Is it true what fame with thousand tongues
Has spread abroad from Ida to Mount Haemus?
Zeus loves thee? Zeus salutes thee in the glory
Wherein the denizens of heaven regard him,
When in Saturnia's arms he sinks to rest?
Let, O ye gods, my gray hairs now descend
To Orcus' shades, for I have lived enough!
In godlike splendor Kronos' mighty son
Comes down to her, — to her, who on this breast
Once suckled — yes! to her —

SEMELE. Oh, Beroe!
In youthful form he came, in lovelier guise
Than they who from Aurora's lap arise;
Fairer than Hesper, breathing incense dim, —
In floods of ether steeped appeared each limb;
He moved with graceful and majestic motion,
Like silvery billows heaving o'er the ocean,

The Poems of Schiller

Or as Hyperion, whose bright shoulders ever
His bow and arrow bear, and clanging quiver;
His robe of light behind him gracefully
Danced in the breeze, his voice breathed melody,
Like crystal streams with silvery murmur falling,
More ravishing than Orpheus' strains enthralling.

JUNO.

My daughter! Inspiration spurs thee on,
Raising thy heart to flights of Helicon!
If thus in strains of Delphic ecstasy
Ascends the short-lived blissful memory
Of his bright charms,—Oh, how divine must be
His own sweet voice,—his look how heavenly!
But why of that great attribute
Kronion joys in most, be mute,—
The majesty that hurls the thunder,
And tears the fleeting clouds asunder?
Wilt thou say naught of that alone?
Prometheus and Deucalion
May lend the fairest charms of love,
But none can wield the bolt save Jove!
The thunderbolt it is alone
Which he before thy feet laid down
That proves thy right to beauty's crown.

SEMELE.

What sayest thou? What are thunder-bolts to me?

JUNO. (Smiling.)

Ah, Semele! A jest becomes thee well!

SEMELE.

Deucalion has no offspring so divine
As is my Zeus—of thunder naught I know.

JUNO.

Mere envy! Fie!

The Poems of Schiller

SEMELE. No, Beroe! By Zeus!

JUNO.
Thou swearest?

SEMELE. By Zeus! by mine own Zeus!

JUNO. (Shrieking.) Thou swearest?
Unhappy one!

SEMELE. (In alarm.) What meanest thou, Beroe?

JUNO.
Repeat the word that dooms thee to become
the wretchedest of all on earth's wide face!—
Alas, lost creature! 'Twas not Zeus!

SEMELE. Not Zeus?
Oh, fearful thought!

JUNO. A cunning traitor 'twas
From Attica, who 'neath a godlike form,
Robbed thee of honor, shame, and innocence!—
[SEMELE sinks to the ground.
Well mayest thou fall! Ne'er mayest thou rise again!
May endless night enshroud thine eyes in darkness,
May endless silence round thine ears encamp!
Remain forever here a lifeless mass!
Oh, infamy! Enough to hurl chaste day
Back into Hecate's gloomy arms once more!
Ye gods! And is it thus that Beroe
Finds Cadmus' daughter, after sixteen years
Of bitter separation! Full of joy
I came from Epidaurus; but with shame
To Epidaurus must retrace my steps.—
Despair I take with me. Alas, my people!
E'en to the second Deluge now the plague
May rage at will, may pile mount Oeta high

The Poems of Schiller

With corpses upon corpses, and may turn
All Greece into one mighty charnel-house,
Ere Semele can bend the angry gods.
I, thou, and Greece, and all, have been betrayed!

SEMELE. (Trembling as she rises, and extending an arm towards
her.)
Oh, Beroe!

JUNO. Take courage, my dear heart!
Perchance 'tis Zeus! although it scarce can be!
Perchance 'tis really Zeus! This we must learn!
He must disclose himself to thee, or thou
Must fly his sight forever, and devote
The monster to the death-revenge of Thebes.
Look up, dear daughter—look upon the face
Of thine own Beroe, who looks on thee
With sympathizing eyes—my Semele,
Were it not well to try him?

SEMELE. No, by heaven!
I should not find him then—

JUNO. What! Wilt thou be
Perchance less wretched, if thou pinest on
In mournful doubt?—and if 'tis really he,—

SEMELE. (Hiding her face in Juno's lap.)
Ah! 'tis not he!

JUNO. And if he came to thee
Arrayed in all the majesty wherein
Olympus sees him? Semele! What then?
Wouldst thou repent thee then of having tried him?

SEMELE. (Springing up.)
Ha! be it so! He must unveil himself!

The Poems of Schiller

JUNO. (Hastily.)

Thou must not let him sink into thine arms.
Till he unveils himself—so hearken, child,
To what thy faithful nurse now counsels thee,—
To what affection whispers in mine ear,
And will accomplish!—Say! will he soon come?

SEMELE.

Before Hyperion sinks in Thetis' bed,
He promised to appear.

JUNO. (Forgetting herself hastily.) Is't so, indeed?

He promised? Ha! To-day? (Recovering herself.) Let him approach,
And when he would attempt, inflamed with love,
To clasp his arms around thee, then do thou,—
Observe me well,—as if by lightning struck,
Start back in haste. Ha! picture his surprise!
Leave him not long in wonderment, my child;
Continue to repulse him with a look
As cold as ice—more wildly, with more ardor
He'll press thee then—the coyness of the fair
Is but a dam, that for awhile keeps back
The torrent, only to increase the flood
With greater fury. Then begin to weep
'Gainst giants he might stand,—look calmly on
When Typhoeus, hundred-armed, in fury hurled
Mount Ossa and Olympus 'gainst his throne:
But Zeus is soon subdued by beauty's tears.
Thou smilest?—Be it so! Is, then, the scholar
Wiser, perchance, than she who teaches her?—
Then thou must pray the god one little, little
Most innocent request to grant to thee—
One that may seal his love and godhead too.
He'll swear by Styx. The Styx he must obey!
That oath he dares not break! Then speak these words:
"Thou shalt not touch this body, till thou comest
To Cadmus' daughter clothed in all the might
Wherein thou art embraced by Kronos' daughter!"

The Poems of Schiller

Be not thou terrified, my Semele,
If he, in order to escape thy wish,
As bugbears paints the horrors of his presence—
Describes the flames that round about him roar,
The thunder round him rolling when he comes:
These, Semele, are naught but empty fears—
The gods dislike to show to us frail mortals
These the most glorious of their attributes;
Be thou but obstinate in thy request,
And Juno's self will gaze on thee with envy.

SEMELE.

The frightful ox-eyed one! How often he
Complains, in the blest moments of our love,
Of her tormenting him with her black gall—

JUNO. (Aside, furiously, but with embarrassment.)
Ha! creature! Thou shalt die for this contempt!

SEMELE.

My Beroe! What art thou murmuring there?

JUNO. (In confusion.)

Nothing, my Semele! Black gall torments
Me also— Yes! a sharp, reproachful look
With lovers often passes as black gall—
Yet ox-eyes, after all, are not so ugly.

SEMELE.

Oh, Beroe, for shame! they're quite the worst
That any head can possibly contain!
And then her cheeks of green and yellow hues,
The obvious penalty of poisonous envy—
Zeus oft complains to me that that same shrew
Each night torments him with her nauseous love,
And with her jealous whims,—enough, I'm sure,
Into Ixion's wheel to turn all heaven.

The Poems of Schiller

JUNO. (Raving up and down in extreme confusion.)
No more of this!

SEMELE. What, Beroe! So angry?
Have I said more than what is true? Said more
Than what is wise?

JUNO. Thou hast said more, young woman,
Than what is true—said more than what is wise!
Deem thyself truly blest, if thy blue eyes
Smile thee not into Charon's bark too soon!
Saturnia has her altars and her temples,
And wanders amongst mortals—that great goddess
Avenes naught so bitterly as scorn

SEMELE.
Here let her wander, and give birth to scorn!
What is't to me?—My Jupiter protects
My every hair,—what harm can Juno do?
But now, enough of this, my Beroe!
Zeus must appear to-day in all his glory;
And if Saturnia should on that account
Find out the path to Orcus—

JUNO. (Aside.) That same path
Another probably will find before her,
If but Kronion's lightning hits the mark!—
(To Semele.)
Yes, Semele, she well may burst with envy
When Cadmus' daughter, in the sight of Greece,
Ascends in triumph to Olympus' heights!—

SEMELE. (Smiling gently.)
Thinkest thou they'll hear in Greece of Cadmus' daughter?

JUNO. From Sidon to Athens the trumpet of fame
Shall ring with no other but Semele's name!
The gods from the heavens shall even descend,

The Poems of Schiller

And before thee their knees in deep homage shall bend,
While mortals in silent submission abide
The will of the giant-destroyer's loved bride;
And when distant years shall see
Thy last hour—

SEMELE. (Springing up, and falling on her neck.)
Oh, Beroe!

JUNO. Then a tablet white shall bear
This inscription graven there:
Here is worshipped Semele!
Who on earth so fair as she?
She who from Olympus' throne
Lured the thunder-hurler down!
She who, with her kisses sweet,
Laid him prostrate at her feet!
And when fame on her thousand wings bears it around,
The echo from valley and hill shall resound.

SEMELE. (Beside herself.)
Pythia! Apollo! Hear!
When, oh when will he appear?

JUNO. And on smoking altars they
Rites divine to thee shall pay—

SEMELE. (Inspired.)
I will harken to their prayer,
And will drive away their care,—
Quench with my tears the lightning of great Jove,
His breast to pity with entreaty move!

JUNO. (Aside.)
Poor thing! that wilt thou ne'er have power to do. (Meditating.)
Ere long will melt . . . yet—yet—she called me ugly!—
No pity only when in Tartarus!
(To Semele.)

The Poems of Schiller

Fly now, my love! Make haste to leave this spot,
That Zeus may not observe thee— Let him wait
Long for thy coming, that he with more fire
May languish for thee—

SEMELE. Beroe! The heavens
Have chosen thee their mouthpiece! Happy I!
The gods from Olympus shall even descend,
And before me their knees in deep homage shall bend,
While mortals in silent submission abide—
But hold!—'tis time for me to haste away!
 [Exit hurriedly.]

JUNO. (Looking after her with exultation.)
Weak, proud, and easily-deluded woman!
His tender looks shall be consuming fire—
His kiss, annihilation—his embrace,
A raging tempest to thee! Human frames
Are powerless to endure the dreaded presence
Of him who wields the thunderbolt on high!
 (With raving ecstasy.)

Ha! when her waxen mortal body melts
Within the arms of him, the fire-distilling,
As melts the fleecy snow before the heat
Of the bright sun—and when the perjured one
In place of his soft tender bride, embraces
A form of terror—with what ecstasy
Shall I gaze downwards from Cithaeron's height,
Exclaiming, so that in his hand the bolt
Shall quake: "For shame, Saturnius! Fie, for shame!
What need is there for thee to clasp so roughly?"

 [Exit hastily.]
(A Symphony.)

The Poems of Schiller

SCENE II.

The Hall as before.—Sudden brightness.
ZEUS in the shape of a youth.—MERCURY in the distance.

ZEUS.

Thou son of Maia!

MERCURY. (Kneeling, with his head bowed reverentially.)

Zeus!

ZEUS. Up! Hasten! Turn
Thy pinions' flight toward far Scamander's bank!
A shepherd there is weeping o'er the grave
Of his loved shepherdess. No one shall weep
When Zeus is loving: Call the dead to life!

MERCURY. (Rising.)

Let but thy head a nod almighty give,
And in an instant I am there,—am back
In the same instant—

ZEUS. Stay! As I o'er Argos
Was flying, from my temples curling rose
The sacrificial smoke: it gave me joy
That thus the people worship me—so fly
To Ceres, to my sister,—thus speaks Zeus:
"Ten-thousandfold for fifty years to come
Let her reward the Argive husbandmen!"—

MERCURY.

With trembling haste I execute thy wrath,—
With joyous speed thy messages of grace,
Father of all! For to the deities
'Tis bliss to make man happy; to destroy him
Is anguish to the gods. Thy will be done!
Where shall I pour into thine ears their thanks,—
Below in dust, or at thy throne on high?

The Poems of Schiller

ZEUS.

Here at my throne on earth—within the palace,
Of Semele! Away! [Exit Mercury.

Does she not come,
As is her wont, Olympus' mighty king
To clasp against her rapture-swelling breast?
Why hastens not my Semele to meet me?
A vacant, deathlike, fearful silence reigns
On every side around the lonely palace,
So wont to ring with wild bacchantic shouts—
No breath is stirring—on Cithaeron's height
Exulting Juno stands. Will Semele
Never again make haste to meet her Zeus?

(A pause, after which he continues.)

Ha! Can yon impious one perchance have dared
To set her foot in my love's sanctuary?—
Saturnia—Mount Cithaeron—her rejoicings
Fearful foreboding!—Semele—yet peace!—
Take courage!—I'm thy Zeus! the scattered heavens
Shall learn, my Semele, that I'm thy Zeus!
Where is the breath of air that dares presume
Roughly to blow on her whom Zeus calls His?
I scoff at all her malice.—Where art thou,
O Semele? I long have pined to rest
My world-tormented head upon thy breast,—
To lull my wearied senses to repose
From the wild storm of earthly joys and woes,—
To dream away the emblems of my might,
My reins, my tiller, and my chariot bright,
And live for naught beyond the joys of love!
Oh heavenly inspiration, that can move
Even the Gods divine! What is the blood
Of mighty Uranus—what all the flood
Of nectar and ambrosia—what the throne
Of high Olympus—what the power I own,
The golden sceptre of the starry skies—
What the omnipotence that never dies,
What might eternal, immortality—

The Poems of Schiller

What e'en a god, oh love, if reft of thee?
The shepherd who, beside the murmuring brooks,
Leans on his true love's breast, nor cares to look
After his straying lambs, in that sweet hour
Envies me not my thunderbolt of power!
She comes—she hastens nigh! Pearl of my works,
Woman! the artist who created thee
Should be adored. 'Twas I—myself I worship
Zeus worships Zeus, for Zeus created thee.
Ha! Who will now, in all the being-realm,
Condemn me? How unseen, yes, how despised
Dwindle away my worlds, my constellations
So ray-diffusing, all my dancing systems,
What wise men call the music of my spheres!—
How dead are all when weighed against a soul!
 (Semele approaches, without looking up.)
My pride! my throne on earth! Oh Semele!
 (He rushes towards her; she seeks to fly.)
Thou flyest?—art mute?—Ha! Semele! thou flyest?

SEMELE. (Repulsing him.)
Away!

ZEUS. (After a pause of astonishment.)
Is Jupiter asleep? Will Nature
Rush to her fall?—Can Semele speak thus?
What, not an answer? Eagerly mine arms
Toward thee are stretched—my bosom never throbbed
Responsive to Agenor's daughter,—never
Throbbed against Leda's breast,—my lips ne'er burned
For the sweet kiss of prisoned Danae,
As now—

SEMELE. Peace, traitor! Peace!

ZEUS. (With displeasure, but tenderly.) My Semele!

The Poems of Schiller

SEMELE.

Out of my sight!

ZEUS. (Looking at her with majesty.)

Know, I am Zeus!

SEMELE. Thou Zeus?

Tremble, Salmoneus, for he fearfully

Will soon demand again the stolen charms

That thou hast robbed him of — thou art not Zeus!

ZEUS. (With dignity.)

The mighty universe around me whirls,

And calls me so —

SEMELE. Ha! Fearful blasphemy!

ZEUS. (More gently.)

How, my divine one? Wherefore such a tone?

What reptile dares to steal thine heart from me?

SEMELE.

My heart was vowed to him whose ape thou art!

Men oft times come beneath a godlike form

To snare a woman. Hence! thou art not Zeus!

ZEUS.

Thou doubtest? What! Can Semele still doubt

My godhead?

SEMELE. (Mournfully.)

Would that thou wert Zeus! No son

Of morrow-nothingness shall touch this mouth;

This heart is vowed to Zeus! Would thou wert he!

ZEUS. Thou weapest? Zeus is here, — weeps Semele?

(Falling down before her.)

Speak! But command! and then shall slavish nature

The Poems of Schiller

Lie trembling at the feet of Cadmus' daughter!
Command! and streams shall instantly make halt—
And Helicon, and Caucasus, and Cynthus,
And Athos, Mycale, and Rhodope, and Pindus,
Shall burst their bonds when I order it so,
And kiss the valleys and plains below,
And dance in the breeze like flakes of snow.
Command! and the winds from the east and the north,
And the fierce tornado shall sally forth,
While Poseidon's trident their power shall own,
When they shake to its base his watery throne;
The billows in angry fury shall rise,
And every sea-mark and dam despise;
The lightning shall gleam through the firmament black
While the poles of earth and of heaven shall crack,
The ocean the heights of Olympus explore,
From thousandfold jaws with wild deafening roar
The thunder shall howl, while with mad jubilee
The hurricane fierce sings in triumph to thee.
Command—

SEMELE, I'm but a woman, a frail woman
How can the potter bend before his pot?
How can the artist kneel before his statue?

ZEUS.

Pygmalion bowed before his masterpiece—
And Zeus now worships his own Semele!

SEMELE. (Weeping bitterly.)

Arise—arise! Alas for us poor maidens!
Zeus has my heart, gods only can I love,
The gods deride me, Zeus despises me!

ZEUS. Zeus who is now before thy feet—

SEMELE. Arise!
Zeus reigns on high, above the thunderbolts,

The Poems of Schiller

And, clasped in Juno's arms, a reptile scorns.

ZEUS. (Hastily.)

Ha! Semele and Juno! — which the reptile!

SEMELE.

How blessed beyond all utterance would be
Cadmus' daughter — wert thou Zeus! Alas!
Thou art not Zeus!

ZEUS. (Arises.) I am!

(He extends his hand, and a rainbow fills the hall; music
accompanies its appearance.)

Knowest thou me now?

SEMELE.

Strong is that mortal's arm whom gods protect, —
Saturnius loves thee — none can I e'er love
But deities —

ZEUS. What! art thou doubting still
Whether my might is lent me by the gods
And not god-born? The gods, my Semele,
In charity oft lend their strength to man;
Ne'er do the deities their terrors lend —
Death and destruction is the godhead's seal —
Bearer of death to thee were Zeus unveiled!
(He extends his hand. Thunder, fire, smoke, and earthquake.
Music accompanies the spell here and subsequently.)

SEMELE.

Withdraw, withdraw thy hand! — Oh, mercy, mercy,
For the poor nation! Yes, thou art the child
Of great Saturnius —

ZEUS. Ha! thou thoughtless one!
Shall Zeus, to please a woman's stubbornness,
Bid planets whirl, and bid the suns stand still?

The Poems of Schiller

Zeus will do so!—oft has a god's descendant
Ripped up the fire-impregnate womb of rocks,
And yet his might's confined to Tellus' bounds
Zeus only can do this!
(He extends his hand—the sun vanishes, and it becomes
suddenly night.)

SEMELE. (Falling down before him.)
Almighty one!
Couldst thou but love! [Day reappears.

ZEUS. Ha! Cadmus' daughter asks
Kronion if Kronion e'er can love!
One word and he throws off divinity—
Is flesh and blood, and dies, and is beloved!

SEMELE.
Would Zeus do that?
ZEUS. Speak, Semele! What more?
Apollo's self confesses that 'tis bliss
To be a man 'mongst men—a sign from thee,
And I'm a man!

SEMELE. (Falling on his neck.)
Oh Jupiter, the Epidaurus women
Thy Semele a foolish maiden call,
Because, though by the Thunderer beloved,
She can obtain naught from him—

ZEUS. (Eagerly.) They shall blush,
Those Epidaurus women! Ask!—but ask!
And by the dreaded Styx—whose boundless might
Binds e'en the gods like slaves—if Zeus deny thee,
Then shall the gods, e'en in that self-same moment,
Hurl me despairing to annihilation!

SEMELE. (Springing up joyfully.)
By this I know that thou'rt my Jupiter!

The Poems of Schiller

Thou swearest—and the Styx has heard thine oath!
Let me embrace thee, then, in the same guise
In which—

ZEUS. (Shrieking with alarm.)
Unhappy one! Oh stay! oh stay!

SEMELE. Saturnia—

ZEUS. (Attempting to stop her mouth.)
Be thou dumb!

SEMELE. Embraces thee.

ZEUS. (Pale, and turning away.)
Too late! The sound escaped!—The Styx!—'Tis death
Thou, Semele, hast gained!

SEMELE. Ha! Loves Zeus thus?

ZEUS.
All heaven I would have given, had I only
Loved thee but less! (Gazing at her with cold
horror.) Thou'rt lost—

SEMELE. Oh, Jupiter!

ZEUS. (Speaking furiously to himself,)
Ah! Now I mark thine exultation, Juno!
Accursed jealousy! This rose must die!
Too fair—alas! too sweet for Acheron!

SEMELE.
Methinks thou'rt niggard of thy majesty!

ZEUS.
Accursed be my majesty, that now
Has blinded thee! Accursed be my greatness,

The Poems of Schiller

That must destroy thee! Cursed be I myself
For having built my bliss on crumbling dust!

SEMELE.

These are but empty terrors, Zeus! In truth
I do not dread thy threats!

ZEUS. Deluded child!

Go! take a last farewell forever more
Of all thy friends beloved—naught, naught has power
To save thee, Semele! I am thy Zeus!
Yet that no more—Go—

SEMELE. Jealous one! the Styx!—
Think not that thou'lt be able to escape me. [Exit.

ZEUS.

No! Juno shall not triumph.—She shall tremble—
Aye, and by virtue of the deadly might
That makes the earth and makes the heavens my footstool,
Upon the sharpest rock in Thracia's land
With adamantine chains I'll bind her fast.
But, oh, this oath—

[Mercury appears in the distance.
What means thy hasty flight?

MERCURY.

I bring the fiery, winged, and weeping thanks
Of those whom thou hast blessed—

ZEUS. Again destroy them!

MERCURY. (In amazement.)
Zeus!

ZEUS. None shall now be blessed! She dies—

[The curtain falls.

The Poems of Schiller

HYMN TO JOY.

Joy, thou goddess, fair, immortal,
Offspring of Elysium,
Mad with rapture, to the portal
Of thy holy fame we come!
Fashion's laws, indeed, may sever,
But thy magic joins again;
All mankind are brethren ever
'Neath thy mild and gentle reign.

CHORUS.

Welcome, all ye myriad creatures!
Brethren, take the kiss of love!
Yes, the starry realms above
Hide a Father's smiling features!

He, that noble prize possessing—
He that boasts a friend that's true,
He whom woman's love is blessing,
Let him join the chorus too!
Aye, and he who but one spirit
On this earth can call his own!
He who no such bliss can merit,
Let him mourn his fate alone!

CHORUS.

All who Nature's tribes are swelling
Homage pay to sympathy;
For she guides us up on high,
Where the unknown has his dwelling.

From the breasts of kindly Nature
All of joy imbibe the dew;
Good and bad alike, each creature
Would her roseate path pursue.
'Tis through her the wine-cup maddens,
Love and friends to man she gives!

The Poems of Schiller

Bliss the meanest reptile gladdens,—
Near God's throne the cherub lives!

CHORUS.

Bow before him, all creation!
Mortals, own the God of love!
Seek him high the stars above,—
Yonder is his habitation!

Joy, in Nature's wide dominion,
Mightiest cause of all is found;
And 'tis joy that moves the pinion,
When the wheel of time goes round;
From the bud she lures the flower—
Suns from out their orbs of light;
Distant spheres obey her power,
Far beyond all mortal sight.

CHORUS.

As through heaven's expanse so glorious
In their orbits suns roll on,
Brethren, thus your proud race run,
Glad as warriors all-victorious!

Joy from truth's own glass of fire
Sweetly on the searcher smiles;
Lest on virtue's steeps he tire,
Joy the tedious path beguiles.
High on faith's bright hill before us,
See her banner proudly wave!
Joy, too, swells the angels' chorus,—
Bursts the bondage of the grave!

CHORUS.

Mortals, meekly wait for heaven
Suffer on in patient love!
In the starry realms above,
Bright rewards by God are given.

The Poems of Schiller

To the Gods we ne'er can render
Praise for every good they grant;
Let us, with devotion tender,
Minister to grief and want.
Quenched be hate and wrath forever,
Pardoned be our mortal foe—
May our tears upbraid him never,
No repentance bring him low!

CHORUS.

Sense of wrongs forget to treasure—
Brethren, live in perfect love!
In the starry realms above,
God will mete as we may measure.

Joy within the goblet flushes,
For the golden nectar, wine,
Every fierce emotion hushes,—
Fills the breast with fire divine.
Brethren, thus in rapture meeting,
Send ye round the brimming cup,—
Yonder kindly spirit greeting,
While the foam to heaven mounts up!

CHORUS.

He whom seraphs worship ever;
Whom the stars praise as they roll,
Yes to him now drain the bowl
Mortal eye can see him never!

Courage, ne'er by sorrow broken!
Aid where tears of virtue flow;
Faith to keep each promise spoken!
Truth alike to friend and foe!
'Neath kings' frowns a manly spirit!—
Brethren, noble is the prize—
Honor due to every merit!
Death to all the brood of lies!

The Poems of Schiller

CHORUS.

Draw the sacred circle closer!
By this bright wine plight your troth
To be faithful to your oath!
Swear it by the Star-Disposer!

Safety from the tyrant's power! 9
Mercy e'en to traitors base!
Hope in death's last solemn hour!
Pardon when before His face!
Lo, the dead shall rise to heaven!
Brethren hail the blest decree;
Every sin shall be forgiven,
Hell forever cease to be!

CHORUS.

When the golden bowl is broken,
Gentle sleep within the tomb!
Brethren, may a gracious doom
By the Judge of man be spoken!

THE INVINCIBLE ARMADA.

She comes, she comes — the burden of the deeps!
Beneath her wails the universal sea!
With clanking chains and a new god, she sweeps,
And with a thousand thunders, unto thee!
The ocean-castles and the floating hosts —
Ne'er on their like looked the wild water! — Well
May man the monster name "Invincible."
O'er shuddering waves she gathers to thy coasts!
The horror that she spreads can claim
Just title to her haughty name.
The trembling Neptune quails
Under the silent and majestic forms;
The doom of worlds in those dark sails; —
Near and more near they sweep! and slumber all the storms!

The Poems of Schiller

Before thee, the array,
Blest island, empress of the sea!
The sea-born squadrons threaten thee,
And thy great heart, Britannia!
Woe to thy people, of their freedom proud—
She rests, a thunder heavy in its cloud!
Who, to thy hand the orb and sceptre gave,
That thou should'st be the sovereign of the nations?
To tyrant kings thou wert thyself the slave,
Till freedom dug from law its deep foundations;
The mighty Chart the citizens made kings,
And kings to citizens sublimely bowed!
And thou thyself, upon thy realm of water,
Hast thou not rendered millions up to slaughter,
When thy ships brought upon their sailing wings
The sceptre—and the shroud?
What should'st thou thank?—Blush, earth, to hear and feel
What should'st thou thank?—Thy genius and thy steel!
Behold the hidden and the giant fires!
Behold thy glory trembling to its fall!
Thy coming doom the round earth shall appal,
And all the hearts of freemen beat for thee,
And all free souls their fate in thine foresee—
Theirs is thy glory's fall!

One look below the Almighty gave,
Where streamed the lion-flags of thy proud foe;
And near and wider yawned the horrent grave.
“And who,” saith He, “shall lay mine England low—
The stem that blooms with hero-deeds—
The rock when man from wrong a refuge needs—
The stronghold where the tyrant comes in vain?
Who shall bid England vanish from the main?
Ne'er be this only Eden freedom knew,
Man's stout defence from power, to fate consigned.”
God the Almighty blew,
And the Armada went to every wind!

The Poems of Schiller

THE GODS OF GREECE.

Ye in the age gone by,
Who ruled the world—a world how lovely then!—
And guided still the steps of happy men
In the light leading-strings of careless joy!
Ah, flourished then your service of delight!
How different, oh, how different, in the day
When thy sweet fanes with many a wreath were bright,
O Venus Amathusia!

Then, through a veil of dreams
Woven by song, truth's youthful beauty glowed,
And life's redundant and rejoicing streams
Gave to the soulless, soul—where'r they flowed
Man gifted nature with divinity
To lift and link her to the breast of love;
All things betrayed to the initiate eye
The track of gods above!
Where lifeless—fixed afar,
A flaming ball to our dull sense is given,
Phoebus Apollo, in his golden car,
In silent glory swept the fields of heaven!
On yonder hill the Oread was adored,
In yonder tree the Dryad held her home;
And from her urn the gentle Naiad poured
The wavelet's silver foam.

Yon bay, chaste Daphne wreathed,
Yon stone was mournful Niobe's mute cell,
Low through yon sedges pastoral Syrinx breathed,
And through those groves wailed the sweet Philomel,
The tears of Ceres swelled in yonder rill—
Tears shed for Proserpine to Hades borne;
And, for her lost Adonis, yonder hill
Heard Cytherea mourn!—
Heaven's shapes were charmed unto
The mortal race of old Deucalion;

The Poems of Schiller

Pyrrha's fair daughter, humanly to woo,
Came down, in shepherd-guise, Latona's son
Between men, heroes, gods, harmonious then
Love wove sweet links and sympathies divine;
Blest Amathusia, heroes, gods, and men,
Equals before thy shrine!

Not to that culture gay,
Stern self-denial, or sharp penance wan!
Well might each heart be happy in that day—
For gods, the happy ones, were kin to man!
The beautiful alone the holy there!
No pleasure shamed the gods of that young race;
So that the chaste Camoenae favoring were,
And the subduing grace!

A palace every shrine;
Your sports heroic;—yours the crown
Of contests hallowed to a power divine,
As rushed the chariots thundering to renown.
Fair round the altar where the incense breathed,
Moved your melodious dance inspired; and fair
Above victorious brows, the garland wreathed
Sweet leaves round odorous hair!

The lively Thyrsus-swinger,
And the wild car the exulting panthers bore,
Announced the presence of the rapture-bringer—
Bounded the Satyr and blithe Faun before;
And Maenads, as the frenzy stung the soul,
Hymned in their maddening dance, the glorious wine—
As ever beckoned to the lusty bowl
The ruddy host divine!

Before the bed of death
No ghastly spectre stood—but from the porch
Of life, the lip—one kiss inhaled the breath,
And the mute graceful genius lowered a torch.

The Poems of Schiller

The judgment-balance of the realms below,
A judge, himself of mortal lineage, held;
The very furies at the Thracian's woe,
Were moved and music-spelled.

In the Elysian grove
The shades renewed the pleasures life held dear:
The faithful spouse rejoined remembered love,
And rushed along the meads the charioteer;
There Linus poured the old accustomed strain;
Admetus there Alcestis still could greet; his
Friend there once more Orestes could regain,
His arrows—Philoctetes!

More glorious than the meeds
That in their strife with labor nerved the brave,
To the great doer of renowned deeds
The Hebe and the heaven the Thunderer gave.
Before the rescued rescuer 10 of the dead,
Bowed down the silent and immortal host;
And the twain stars 11 their guiding lustre shed,
On the bark tempest-tossed!

Art thou, fair world, no more?
Return, thou virgin-bloom on Nature's face;
Ah, only on the minstrel's magic shore,
Can we the footstep of sweet fable trace!
The meadows mourn for the old hallowing life;
Vainly we search the earth of gods bereft;
Where once the warm and living shapes were rife,
Shadows alone are left!

Cold, from the north, has gone
Over the flowers the blast that killed their May;
And, to enrich the worship of the one,
A universe of gods must pass away!
Mourning, I search on yonder starry steeps,
But thee no more, Selene, there I see!

The Poems of Schiller

And through the woods I call, and o'er the deeps,
And — Echo answers me!

Deaf to the joys she gives —
Blind to the pomp of which she is possessed —
Unconscious of the spiritual power that lives
Around, and rules her — by our bliss unblessed —
Dull to the art that colors or creates,
Like the dead timepiece, godless nature creeps
Her plodding round, and, by the leaden weights,
The slavish motion keeps.

To-morrow to receive
New life, she digs her proper grave to-day;
And icy moons with weary sameness weave
From their own light their fulness and decay.
Home to the poet's land the gods are flown,
Light use in them that later world discerns,
Which, the diviner leading-strings outgrown,
On its own axle turns.

Home! and with them are gone
The hues they gazed on and the tones they heard;
Life's beauty and life's melody: — alone
Broods o'er the desolate void, the lifeless word;
Yet rescued from time's deluge, still they throng
Unseen the Pindus they were wont to cherish:
All, that which gains immortal life in song,
To mortal life must perish!

RESIGNATION.

Yes! even I was in Arcadia born,
And, in mine infant ears,
A vow of rapture was by Nature sworn; —
Yes! even I was in Arcadia born,
And yet my short spring gave me only — tears!

The Poems of Schiller

Once blooms, and only once, life's youthful May;
For me its bloom hath gone.
The silent God—O brethren, weep to-day—
The silent God hath quenched my torch's ray,
And the vain dream hath flown.

Upon thy darksome bridge, Eternity,
I stand e'en now, dread thought!
Take, then, these joy-credentials back from me!
Unopened I return them now to thee,
Of happiness, alas, know naught!

Before Thy throne my mournful cries I vent,
Thou Judge, concealed from view!
To yonder star a joyous saying went
With judgment's scales to rule us thou art sent,
And call'st thyself Requirer, too!

Here,—say they,—terrors on the bad alight,
And joys to greet the virtuous spring.
The bosom's windings thou'lt expose to sight,
Riddle of Providence wilt solve aright,
And reckon with the suffering!

Here to the exile be a home outspread,
Here end the meek man's thorny path of strife!
A godlike child, whose name was Truth, they said,
Known but to few, from whom the many fled,
Restrained the ardent bridle of my life.

"It shall be thine another life to live,—
Thy youth to me surrender!
To thee this surety only can I give"—
I took the surety in that life to live;
And gave to her each youthful joy so tender.
"Give me the woman precious to thy heart,
Give up to me thy Laura!

The Poems of Schiller

Beyond the grave will usury pay the smart." —
I wept aloud, and from my bleeding heart
With resignation tore her.

"The obligation's drawn upon the dead!"
Thus laughed the world in scorn;
"The lying one, in league with despots dread,
For truth, a phantom palmed on thee instead,
Thou'lt be no more, when once this dream has gone!"

Shamelessly scoffed the mockers' serpent-band
"A dream that but prescription can admit
Dost dread? Where now thy God's protecting hand,
(The sick world's Saviour with such cunning planned),
Borrowed by human need of human wit?"

"What future is't that graves to us reveal?
What the eternity of thy discourse?
Honored because dark veils its form conceal,
The giant-shadows of the awe we feel,
Viewed in the hollow mirror of remorse!"

"An image false of shapes of living mould,
(Time's very mummy, she!)
Whom only Hope's sweet balm hath power to hold
Within the chambers of the grave so cold, —
Thy fever calls this immortality!"

"For empty hopes, — corruption gives the lie —
Didst thou exchange what thou hadst surely done?
Six thousand years sped death in silence by, —
His corpse from out the grave e'er mounted high,
That mention made of the Requiring One?"

I saw time fly to reach thy distant shore,
I saw fair Nature lie
A shrivelled corpse behind him evermore, —
No dead from out the grave then sought to soar

The Poems of Schiller

Yet in that Oath divine still trusted I.

My ev'ry joy to thee I've sacrificed,
I throw me now before thy judgment-throne;
The many's scorn with boldness I've despised,—
Only—thy gifts by me were ever prized,—
I ask my wages now, Requiting One!

“With equal love I love each child of mine!”
A genius hid from sight exclaimed.
“Two flowers,” he cried, “ye mortals, mark the sign,—
Two flowers to greet the Searcher wise entwined,—
Hope and Enjoyment they are named.”

“Who of these flowers plucks one, let him ne'er yearn
To touch the other sister's bloom.
Let him enjoy, who has no faith; eterne
As earth, this truth!—Abstain, who faith can learn!
The world's long story is the world's own doom.”

“Hope thou hast felt,—thy wages, then, are paid;
Thy faith 'twas formed the rapture pledged to thee.
Thou might'st have of the wise inquiry made,—
The minutes thou neglectest, as they fade,
Are given back by no eternity!”

THE CONFLICT.

No! I this conflict longer will not wage,
The conflict duty claims—the giant task;—
Thy spells, O virtue, never can assuage
The heart's wild fire—this offering do not ask

True, I have sworn—a solemn vow have sworn,
That I myself will curb the self within;
Yet take thy wreath, no more it shall be worn—
Take back thy wreath, and leave me free to sin.

The Poems of Schiller

Rent be the contract I with thee once made;—
She loves me, loves me—forfeit be the crown!
Blessed he who, lulled in rapture's dreamy shade,
Glides, as I glide, the deep fall gladly down.

She sees the worm that my youth's bloom decays,
She sees my spring-time wasted as it flees;
And, marvelling at the rigor that gainsays
The heart's sweet impulse, my reward decrees.

Distrust this angel purity, fair soul!
It is to guilt thy pity armeth me;
Could being lavish its unmeasured whole,
It ne'er could give a gift to rival thee!

Thee—the dear guilt I ever seek to shun,
O tyranny of fate, O wild desires!
My virtue's only crown can but be won
In that last breath—when virtue's self expires!

THE ARTISTS.

How gracefully, O man, with thy palm-bough,
Upon the waning century standest thou,
In proud and noble manhood's prime,
With unlocked senses, with a spirit freed,
Of firmness mild,—though silent, rich in deed,
The ripest son of Time,
Through meekness great, through precepts strong,
Through treasures rich, that time had long
Hid in thy bosom, and through reason free,—
Master of Nature, who thy fetters loves,
And who thy strength in thousand conflicts proves,
And from the desert soared in pride with thee!
Flushed with the glow of victory,
Never forget to prize the hand
That found the weeping orphan child

The Poems of Schiller

Deserted on life's barren strand,
And left a prey to hazard wild,—
That, ere thy spirit-honor saw the day,
Thy youthful heart watched over silently,
And from thy tender bosom turned away
Each thought that might have stained its purity;
That kind one ne'er forget who, as in sport,
Thy youth to noble aspirations trained,
And who to thee in easy riddles taught
The secret how each virtue might be gained;
Who, to receive him back more perfect still,
E'en into strangers' arms her favorite gave—
Oh, may'st thou never with degenerate will,
Humble thyself to be her abject slave!
In industry, the bee the palm may bear;
In skill, the worm a lesson may impart;
With spirits blest thy knowledge thou dost share,
But thou, O man, alone hast art!

Only through beauty's morning gate
Didst thou the land of knowledge find.
To merit a more glorious fate,
In graces trains itself the mind.
What thrilled thee through with trembling blessed,
When erst the Muses swept the chord,
That power created in thy breast,
Which to the mighty spirit soared.

When first was seen by doting reason's ken,
When many a thousand years had passed away,
A symbol of the fair and great e'en then,
Before the childlike mind uncovered lay.
Its blessed form bade us honor virtue's cause,—
The honest sense 'gainst vice put forth its powers,
Before a Solon had devised the laws
That slowly bring to light their languid flowers.
Before Eternity's vast scheme
Was to the thinker's mind revealed,

The Poems of Schiller

Was't not foreshadowed in his dream,
Whose eyes explored yon starry field?

Urania, — the majestic dreaded one,
Who wears a glory of Orions twined
Around her brow, and who is seen by none
Save purest spirits, when, in splendor shrined,
She soars above the stars in pride,
Ascending to her sunny throne, —
Her fiery chaplet lays aside,
And now, as beauty, stands alone;
While, with the Graces' girdle round her cast,
She seems a child, by children understood;
For we shall recognize as truth at last,
What here as beauty only we have viewed.

When the Creator banished from his sight
Frail man to dark mortality's abode,
And granted him a late return to light,
Only by treading reason's arduous road, —
When each immortal turned his face away,
She, the compassionate, alone
Took up her dwelling in that house of clay,
With the deserted, banished one.
With drooping wing she hovers here
Around her darling, near the senses' land,
And on his prison-walls so drear
Elysium paints with fond deceptive hand.

While soft humanity still lay at rest,
Within her tender arms extended,
No flame was stirred by bigots' murderous zest,
No guiltless blood on high ascended.
The heart that she in gentle fetters binds,
Views duty's slavish escort scornfully;
Her path of light, though fairer far it winds,
Sinks in the sun-track of morality.
Those who in her chaste service still remain,

The Poems of Schiller

No grovelling thought can tempt, no fate affright;
The spiritual life, so free from stain,
Freedom's sweet birthright, they receive again,
Under the mystic sway of holy might.

The purest among millions, happy they
Whom to her service she has sanctified,
Whose mouths the mighty one's commands convey,
Within whose breasts she deigneth to abide;
Whom she ordained to feed her holy fire
Upon her altar's ever-flaming pyre, —
Whose eyes alone her unveiled graces meet,
And whom she gathers round in union sweet
In the much-honored place be glad
Where noble order bade ye climb,
For in the spirit-world sublime,
Man's loftiest rank ye've ever had!

Ere to the world proportion ye revealed,
That every being joyfully obeys, —
A boundless structure, in night's veil concealed,
Illumed by naught but faint and languid rays,
A band of phantoms, struggling ceaselessly,
Holding his mind in slavish fetters bound,
Unsociable and rude as he,
Assailing him on every side around, —
Thus seemed to man creation in that day!
United to surrounding forms alone
By the blind chains the passions had put on,
Whilst Nature's beauteous spirit fled away
Unfelt, untasted, and unknown.

And, as it hovered o'er with parting ray,
Ye seized the shades so neighborly,
With silent hand, with feeling mind,
And taught how they might be combined
In one firm bond of harmony.
The gaze, light-soaring, felt uplifted then,

The Poems of Schiller

When first the cedar's slender trunk it viewed;
And pleasingly the ocean's crystal flood
Reflected back the dancing form again.
Could ye mistake the look, with beauty fraught,
That Nature gave to help ye on your way?
The image floating on the billows taught
The art the fleeting shadow to portray.

From her own being torn apart,
Her phantom, beauteous as a dream,
She plunged into the silvery stream,
Surrendering to her spoiler's art.
Creative power soon in your breast unfolded;
Too noble far, not idly to conceive,
The shadow's form in sand, in clay ye moulded,
And made it in the sketch its being leave.
The longing thirst for action then awoke,—
And from your breast the first creation broke.

By contemplation captive made,
Ensnared by your discerning eye,
The friendly phantom's soon betrayed
The talisman that roused your ecstasy.
The laws of wonder-working might,
The stores by beauty brought to light,
Inventive reason in soft union planned
To blend together 'neath your forming hand.
The obelisk, the pyramid ascended,
The Hermes stood, the column sprang on high,
The reed poured forth the woodland melody,
Immortal song on victor's deeds attended.

The fairest flowers that decked the earth,
Into a nosegay, with wise choice combined,
Thus the first art from Nature had its birth;
Into a garland then were nosegays twined,
And from the works that mortal hands had made,
A second, nobler art was now displayed.

The Poems of Schiller

The child of beauty, self-sufficient now,
That issued from your hands to perfect day,
Loses the chaplet that adorned its brow,
Soon as reality asserts its sway.
The column, yielding to proportion's chains,
Must with its sisters join in friendly link,
The hero in the hero-band must sink,
The Muses' harp peals forth its tuneful strains.

The wondering savages soon came
To view the new creation's plan
"Behold!" — the joyous crowds exclaim, —
"Behold, all this is done by man!"
With jocund and more social aim
The minstrel's lyre their awe awoke,
Telling of Titans, and of giant's frays
And lion-slayers, turning, as he spoke,
Even into heroes those who heard his lays.
For the first time the soul feels joy,
By raptures blessed that calmer are,
That only greet it from afar,
That passions wild can ne'er destroy,
And that, when tasted, do not cloy.

And now the spirit, free and fair,
Awoke from out its sensual sleep;
By you unchained, the slave of care
Into the arms of joy could leap.
Each brutish barrier soon was set at naught,
Humanity first graced the cloudless brow,
And the majestic, noble stranger, thought,
From out the wondering brain sprang boldly now.
Man in his glory stood upright,
And showed the stars his kingly face;
His speaking glance the sun's bright light
Blessed in the realms sublime of space.
Upon the cheek now bloomed the smile,
The voice's soulful harmony

The Poems of Schiller

Expanded into song the while,
And feeling swam in the moist eye;
And from the mouth, with spirit teeming o'er,
Jest, sweetly linked with grace, began to pour.

Sunk in the instincts of the worm,
By naught but sensual lust possessed,
Ye recognized within his breast
Love-spiritual's noble germ;
And that this germ of love so blest
Escaped the senses' abject load,
To the first pastoral song he owed.
Raised to the dignity of thought,
Passions more calm to flow were taught
From the bard's mouth with melody.
The cheeks with dewy softness burned;
The longing that, though quenched, still yearned,
Proclaimed the spirit-harmony.

The wisest's wisdom, and the strongest's vigor, —
The meekest's meekness, and the noblest's grace,
By you were knit together in one figure,
Wreathing a radiant glory round the place.
Man at the Unknown's sight must tremble,
Yet its refulgence needs must love;
That mighty Being to resemble,
Each glorious hero madly strove;
The prototype of beauty's earliest strain
Ye made resound through Nature's wide domain.
The passions' wild and headlong course,
The ever-varying plan of fate,
Duty and instinct's twofold force,
With proving mind and guidance straight
Ye then conducted to their ends.
What Nature, as she moves along,
Far from each other ever rends,
Become upon the stage, in song,
Members of order, firmly bound.

The Poems of Schiller

Awed by the Furies' chorus dread,
Murder draws down upon its head
The doom of death from their wild sound.
Long e'er the wise to give a verdict dared,
An Iliad had fate's mysteries declared
To early ages from afar;
While Providence in silence fared
Into the world from Thespis' car.
Yet into that world's current so sublime
Your symmetry was borne before its time,
When the dark hand of destiny
Failed in your sight to part by force.

What it had fashioned 'neath your eye,
In darkness life made haste to die,
Ere it fulfilled its beauteous course.
Then ye with bold and self-sufficient might
Led the arch further through the future's night:
Then, too, ye plunged, without a fear,
Into Avernus' ocean black,
And found the vanished life so dear
Beyond the urn, and brought it back.
A blooming Pollux-form appeared now soon,
On Castor leaning, and enshrined in light —
The shadow that is seen upon the moon,
Ere she has filled her silvery circle bright!

Yet higher, — higher still above the earth
Inventive genius never ceased to rise:
Creations from creations had their birth,
And harmonies from harmonies.
What here alone enchants the ravished sight,
A nobler beauty yonder must obey;
The graceful charms that in the nymph unite,
In the divine Athene melt away;
The strength with which the wrestler is endowed,
In the god's beauty we no longer find:
The wonder of his time — Jove's image proud —

The Poems of Schiller

In the Olympian temple is enshrined.

The world, transformed by industry's bold hand,
The human heart, by new-born instincts moved,
That have in burning fights been fully proved,
Your circle of creation now expand.

Advancing man bears on his soaring pinions,
In gratitude, art with him in his flight,
And out of Nature's now-enriched dominions
New worlds of beauty issue forth to light.

The barriers upon knowledge are o'erthrown;
The spirit that, with pleasure soon matured,
Has in your easy triumphs been inured
To hasten through an artist-whole of graces,
Nature's more distant columns duly places.
And overtakes her on her pathway lone.

He weighs her now with weights that human are,
Metes her with measures that she lent of old;
While in her beauty's rites more practised far,
She now must let his eye her form behold.

With youthful and self-pleasing bliss,
He lends the spheres his harmony,
And, if he praise earth's edifice,
'Tis for its wondrous symmetry.

In all that now around him breathes,
Proportion sweet is ever rife;
And beauty's golden girdle wreathes
With mildness round his path through life;
Perfection blest, triumphantly,
Before him in your works soars high;
Wherever boisterous rapture swells,
Wherever silent sorrow flees,
Where pensive contemplation dwells,
Where he the tears of anguish sees,
Where thousand terrors on him glare,
Harmonious streams are yet behind—
He sees the Graces sporting there,
With feeling silent and refined.

The Poems of Schiller

Gentle as beauty's lines together linking,
As the appearances that round him play,
In tender outline in each other sinking,
The soft breath of his life thus fleets away.
His spirit melts in the harmonious sea,
That, rich in rapture, round his senses flows,
And the dissolving thought all silently
To omnipresent Cytherea grows.
Joining in lofty union with the Fates,
On Graces and on Muses calm relying,
With freely-offered bosom he awaits
The shaft that soon against him will be flying
From the soft bow necessity creates.

Favorites beloved of blissful harmony,
Welcome attendants on life's dreary road,
The noblest and the dearest far that she,
Who gave us life, to bless that life bestowed!
That unyoked man his duties bears in mind,
And loves the fetters that his motions bind,
That Chance with brazen sceptre rules him not, —
For this eternity is now your lot,
Your heart has won a bright reward for this.
That round the cup where freedom flows,
Merrily sport the gods of bliss, —
The beauteous dream its fragrance throws,
For this, receive a loving kiss!

The spirit, glorious and serene,
Who round necessity the graces trains, —
Who bids his ether and his starry plains
Upon us wait with pleasing mien, —
Who, 'mid his terrors, by his majesty gives joy,
And who is beauteous e'en when seeking to destroy, —
Him imitate, the artist good!
As o'er the streamlet's crystal flood
The banks with checkered dances hover,
The flowery mead, the sunset's light, —

The Poems of Schiller

Thus gleams, life's barren pathway over,
Poesy's shadowy world so bright.
In bridal dress ye led us on
Before the terrible Unknown,
Before the inexorable fate,
As in your urns the bones are laid,
With beauteous magic veil ye shade
The chorus dread that cares create.
Thousands of years I hastened through
The boundless realm of vanished time
How sad it seems when left by you —
But where ye linger, how sublime!
She who, with fleeting wing, of yore
From your creating hand arose in might,
Within your arms was found once more,
When, vanquished by Time's silent flight,
Life's blossoms faded from the cheek,
And from the limbs all vigor went,
And mournfully, with footstep weak,
Upon his staff the gray-beard leant.
Then gave ye to the languishing,
Life's waters from a new-born spring;
Twice was the youth of time renewed,
Twice, from the seeds that ye had strewed.

When chased by fierce barbarian hordes away,
The last remaining votive brand ye tore
From Orient's altars, now pollution's prey,
And to these western lands in safety bore.
The fugitive from yonder eastern shore,
The youthful day, the West her dwelling made;
And on Hesperia's plains sprang up once more
Ionia's flowers, in pristine bloom arrayed.
Over the spirit fairer Nature shed,
With soft refulgence, a reflection bright,
And through the graceful soul with stately tread
Advanced the mighty Deity of light.
Millions of chains were burst asunder then,

The Poems of Schiller

And to the slave then human laws applied,
And mildly rose the younger race of men,
As brethren, gently wandering side by side,
With noble inward ecstasy,
The bliss imparted ye receive,
And in the veil of modesty,
With silent merit take your leave.
If on the paths of thought, so freely given,
The searcher now with daring fortune stands,
And, by triumphant Paeans onward driven,
Would seize upon the crown with dauntless hands—
If he with grovelling hireling's pay
Thinks to dismiss his glorious guide—
Or, with the first slave's-place array
Art near the throne his dream supplied—
Forgive him!—O'er your head to-day
Hovers perfection's crown in pride,
With you the earliest plant Spring had,
Soul-forming Nature first began;
With you, the harvest-chaplet glad,
Perfected Nature ends her plan.

The art creative, that all-modestly arose
From clay and stone, with silent triumph throws
Its arms around the spirit's vast domain.
What in the land of knowledge the discoverer knows,
He knows, discovers, only for your gain
The treasures that the thinker has amassed,
He will enjoy within your arms alone,
Soon as his knowledge, beauty-ripe at last.
To art ennobled shall have grown, —
Soon as with you he scales a mountain-height,
And there, illumined by the setting sun,
The smiling valley bursts upon his sight.
The richer ye reward the eager gaze
The higher, fairer orders that the mind
May traverse with its magic rays,
Or compass with enjoyment unconfined—

The Poems of Schiller

The wider thoughts and feelings open lie
To more luxuriant floods of harmony.
To beauty's richer, more majestic stream,—
The fair members of the world's vast scheme,
That, maimed, disgrace on his creation bring,
He sees the lofty forms then perfecting—

The fairer riddles come from out the night—
The richer is the world his arms enclose,
The broader stream the sea with which he flows—
The weaker, too, is destiny's blind might—
The nobler instincts does he prove—
The smaller he himself, the greater grows his love.
Thus is he led, in still and hidden race,
By poetry, who strews his path with flowers,
Through ever-purer forms, and purer powers,
Through ever higher heights, and fairer grace.
At length, arrived at the ripe goal of time,—
Yet one more inspiration all-sublime,
Poetic outburst of man's latest youth,
And—he will glide into the arms of truth!

Herself, the gentle Cypria,
Illumined by her fiery crown,
Then stands before her full-grown son
Unveiled—as great Urania;
The sooner only by him caught,
The fairer he had fled away!
Thus stood, in wonder rapture-fraught,
Ulysses' noble son that day,
When the sage mentor who his youth beguiled;
Herself transfigured as Jove's glorious child!

Man's honor is confided to your hand,—
There let it well protected be!
It sinks with you! with you it will expand!
Poesy's sacred sorcery
Obeys a world-plan wise and good;

The Poems of Schiller

In silence let it swell the flood
Of mighty-rolling harmony.

By her own time viewed with disdain,
Let solemn truth in song remain,
And let the Muses' band defend her!
In all the fullness of her splendor,
Let her survive in numbers glorious,
More dread, when veiled her charms appear,
And vengeance take, with strains victorious,
On her tormentor's ear!

The freest mother's children free,
With steadfast countenance then rise
To highest beauty's radiancy,
And every other crown despise!
The sisters who escaped you here,
Within your mother's arms ye'll meet;
What noble spirits may revere,
Must be deserving and complete.
High over your own course of time
Exalt yourselves with pinion bold,
And dimly let your glass sublime
The coming century unfold!
On thousand roads advancing fast
Of ever-rich variety,
With fond embraces meet at last
Before the throne of harmony!
As into seven mild rays we view
With softness break the glimmer white,
As rainbow-beams of sevenfold hue
Dissolve again in that soft light,
In clearness thousandfold thus throw
Your magic round the ravished gaze,—
Into one stream of light thus flow,—
One bond of truth that ne'er decays!

The Poems of Schiller

THE CELEBRATED WOMAN.

AN EPISTLE BY A MARRIED MAN—TO A FELLOW-SUFFERER.

[In spite of Mr. Carlyle's assertion of Schiller's "total deficiency in humor," 12 we think that the following poem suffices to show that he possessed the gift in no ordinary degree, and that if the aims of a genius so essentially earnest had allowed him to indulge it he would have justified the opinion of the experienced Iffland as to his capacities for original comedy.]

Can I, my friend, with thee condole?—
Can I conceive the woes that try men,
When late repentance racks the soul
Ensnared into the toils of hymen?
Can I take part in such distress?—
Poor martyr,—most devoutly, "Yes!"
Thou weep'st because thy spouse has flown
To arms preferred before thine own;—
A faithless wife,—I grant the curse,—
And yet, my friend, it might be worse!
Just hear another's tale of sorrow,
And, in comparing, comfort borrow!

What! dost thou think thyself undone,
Because thy rights are shared with one!
O, happy man—be more resigned,
My wife belongs to all mankind!
My wife—she's found abroad—at home;
But cross the Alps and she's at Rome;
Sail to the Baltic—there you'll find her;
Lounge on the Boulevards—kind and kinder:
In short, you've only just to drop
Where'er they sell the last new tale,
And, bound and lettered in the shop,
You'll find my lady up for sale!

She must her fair proportions render

The Poems of Schiller

To all whose praise can glory lend her;—
Within the coach, on board the boat,
Let every pedant “take a note;”
Endure, for public approbation,
Each critic’s “close investigation,”
And brave—nay, court it as a flattery—
Each spectacled Philistine’s battery.
Just as it suits some scurvy carcass
In which she hails an Aristarchus,
Ready to fly with kindred souls,
O’er blooming flowers or burning coals,
To fame or shame, to shrine or gallows,
Let him but lead—sublimely callous!
A Leipsic man—(confound the wretch!)
Has made her topographic sketch,
A kind of map, as of a town,
Each point minutely dotted down;
Scarce to myself I dare to hint
What this d—d fellow wants to print!
Thy wife—howe’er she slight the vows—
Respects, at least, the name of spouse;
But mine to regions far too high
For that terrestrial name is carried;
My wife’s “The famous Ninon!”—I
“The gentleman that Ninon married!”

It galls you that you scarce are able
To stake a florin at the table—
Confront the pit, or join the walk,
But straight all tongues begin to talk!
O that such luck could me befall,
Just to be talked about at all!
Behold me dwindling in my nook,
Edged at her left,—and not a look!
A sort of rushlight of a life,
Put out by that great orb—my wife!

Scarce is the morning gray—before

The Poems of Schiller

Postman and porter crowd the door;
No premier has so dear a levee—
She finds the mail-bag half its trade;
My God—the parcels are so heavy!
And not a parcel carriage-paid!
But then—the truth must be confessed—
They're all so charmingly addressed:
Whate'er they cost, they well requite her—
"To Madame Blank, the famous writer!"
Poor thing, she sleeps so soft! and yet
'Twere worth my life to spare her slumber;
"Madame—from Jena—the Gazette—
The Berlin Journal—the last number!"
Sudden she wakes; those eyes of blue
(Sweet eyes!) fall straight—on the Review!
I by her side—all undetected,
While those cursed columns are inspected;
Loud squall the children overhead,
Still she reads on, till all is read:
At last she lays that darling by,
And asks—"What makes the baby cry?"

Already now the toilet's care
Claims from her couch the restless fair;
The toilet's care!—the glass has won
Just half a glance, and all is done!
A snappish—pettish word or so
Warns the poor maid 'tis time to go:—
Not at her toilet wait the Graces
Uncombed Erynnys takes their places;
So great a mind expands its scope
Far from the mean details of—soap!

Now roll the coach-wheels to the muster—
Now round my muse her votaries cluster;
Spruce Abbe Millefleurs—Baron Herman—
The English Lord, who don't know German,—
But all uncommonly well read

The Poems of Schiller

From matchless A to deathless Z!
Sneaks in the corner, shy and small,
A thing which men the husband call!
While every fop with flattery fires her,
Swears with what passion he admires her. —
“‘Passion!’ ‘admire!’ and still you’re dumb?”
Lord bless your soul, the worst’s to come: —

I’m forced to bow, as I’m a sinner, —
And hope—the rogue will stay to dinner!
But oh, at dinner! — there’s the sting;
I see my cellar on the wing!
You know if Burgundy is dear? —
Mine once emerged three times a year; —
And now to wash these learned throttles,
In dozens disappear the bottles;
They well must drink who well do eat
(I’ve sunk a capital on meat).
Her immortality, I fear, a
Death-blow will prove to my Madeira;
It has given, alas! a mortal shock
To that old friend — my Steinberg hock! 13

If Faust had really any hand
In printing, I can understand
The fate which legends more than hint; —
The devil take all hands that print!

And what my thanks for all? — a pout —
Sour looks — deep sighs; but what about?
About! O, that I well divine —
That such a pearl should fall to swine —
That such a literary ruby
Should grace the finger of a booby!

Spring comes; — behold, sweet mead and lea
Nature’s green splendor tapestries o’er;
Fresh blooms the flower, and buds the tree;

The Poems of Schiller

Larks sing—the woodland wakes once more.
The woodland wakes—but not for her!
From Nature's self the charm has flown;
No more the Spring of earth can stir
The fond remembrance of our own!
The sweetest bird upon the bough
Has not one note of music now;
And, oh! how dull the grove's soft shade,
Where once—as lovers then—we strayed!
The nightingales have got no learning—
Dull creatures—how can they inspire her?
The lilies are so undiscerning,
They never say—"how they admire her!"

In all this jubilee of being,
Some subject for a point she's seeing—
Some epigram—to be impartial,
Well turned)—there may be worse in Martial!

But, hark! the goddess stoops to reason:—
"The country now is quite in season,
I'll go!"—"What! to our country seat?"
"No!—Travelling will be such a treat;
Pyrmont's extremely full, I hear;
But Carlsbad's quite the rage this year!"
Oh yes, she loves the rural Graces;
Nature is gay—in watering-places!
Those pleasant spas—our reigning passion—
Where learned Dons meet folks of fashion;
Where—each with each illustrious soul
Familiar as in Charon's boat,
All sorts of fame sit cheek-by-jowl,
Pearls in that string—the table d'hôte!
Where dames whom man has injured—fly,
To heal their wounds or to efface, them;
While others, with the waters, try
A course of flirting,—just to brace them!

The Poems of Schiller

Well, there (O man, how light thy woes
Compared with mine—thou need'st must see!)
My wife, undaunted, greatly goes—
And leaves the orphans (seven!!!) to me!

O, wherefore art thou flown so soon,
Thou first fair year—Love's honeymoon!
All, dream too exquisite for life!
Home's goddess—in the name of wife!
Reared by each grace—yet but to be
Man's household Anadyomene!
With mind from which the sunbeams fall,
Rejoice while pervading all;
Frank in the temper pleased to please—
Soft in the feeling waked with ease.
So broke, as native of the skies,
The heart-enthraller on my eyes;
So saw I, like a morn of May,
The playmate given to glad my way;
With eyes that more than lips bespoke,
Eyes whence—sweet words—"I love thee!" broke!
So—Ah, what transports then were mine!
I led the bride before the shrine!
And saw the future years revealed,
Glassed on my hope—one blooming field!
More wide, and widening more, were given
The angel-gates disclosing heaven;
Round us the lovely, mirthful troop
Of children came—yet still to me
The loveliest—merriest of the group
The happy mother seemed to be!
Mine, by the bonds that bind us more
Than all the oaths the priest before;
Mine, by the concord of content,
When heart with heart is music-blent;
When, as sweet sounds in unison,
Two lives harmonious melt in one!
When—sudden (O the villain!)—came

The Poems of Schiller

Upon the scene a mind profound!—
A bel esprit, who whispered "Fame,"
And shook my card-house to the ground.

What have I now instead of all
The Eden lost of hearth and hall?
What comforts for the heaven bereft?
What of the younger angel's left?
A sort of intellectual mule,
Man's stubborn mind in woman's shape,
Too hard to love, too frail to rule—
A sage engrafted on an ape!
To what she calls the realm of mind,
She leaves that throne, her sex, to crawl,
The cestus and the charm resigned—
A public gaping-show to all!
She blots from beauty's golden book
A name 'mid nature's choicest few,
To gain the glory of a nook
In Doctor Dunderhead's Review.

WRITTEN IN A YOUNG LADY'S ALBUM.

Sweet friend, the world, like some fair infant blessed,
Radiant with sportive grace, around thee plays;
Yet 'tis not as depicted in thy breast—
Not as within thy soul's fair glass, its rays
Are mirrored. The respectful fealty
That my heart's nobleness hath won for thee,
The miracles thou workest everywhere,
The charms thy being to this life first lent,—
To it, mere charms to reckon thou'rt content,
To us, they seem humanity so fair.
The witchery sweet of ne'er-polluted youth,
The talisman of innocence and truth—
Him I would see, who these to scorn can dare!
Thou revelest joyously in telling o'er

The Poems of Schiller

The blooming flowers that round thy path are strown,—
The glad, whom thou hast made so evermore,—
The souls that thou hast conquered for thine own.
In thy deceit so blissful be thou glad!
Ne'er let a waking disenchantment sad
Hurl thee despairing from thy dream's proud flight!
Like the fair flowerets that thy beds perfume,
Observe them, but ne'er touch them as they bloom,—
Plant them, but only for the distant sight.
Created only to enchant the eye,
In faded beauty at thy feet they'll lie,
The nearer thee, the nearer their long night!

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.

The Poems of Schiller

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.

The Poems of Schiller

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. 14

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 copses 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,
Broaden below thy web of purple dye,
Which lulled boughs mysterious round us weave.

The Poems of Schiller

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, 15
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!

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 Poems of Schiller

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

The Poems of Schiller

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 Poems of Schiller

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.

The Poems of Schiller

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;

The Poems of Schiller

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. 16

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,

The Poems of Schiller

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;
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,

The Poems of Schiller

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

The Poems of Schiller

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. 17
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! 18

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 20, 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, 21
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.

Black-yawning a portal, thy soul to affright,

The Poems of Schiller

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, 22
The diadem blazing with diamonds above
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!”



The Poems of Schiller

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—

The Poems of Schiller

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. 23

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

"Hebe, the chalice

The Poems of Schiller

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,—

The Poems of Schiller

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.

The Poems of Schiller

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,

The Poems of Schiller

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.

The Poems of Schiller

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 aye is phantasy alone;
What has happened nowhere, — happened never, —
That has never older grown!

The Poems of Schiller

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

The Poems of Schiller

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,

The Poems of Schiller

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.

The Poems of Schiller

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

The Poems of Schiller

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, 24
"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,

The Poems of Schiller

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 inspired 25
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!"

Neoptolemus poured then,
To his sire renowned 26 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 27 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
One whose honored name ne'er dies."

Nestor, joyous reveller old,

The Poems of Schiller

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 28 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."

The Poems of Schiller

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.

The Poems of Schiller

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. 29

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,
The buds are bursting from the spray;
While birds are blithe on every tree;
The Oread from the mountain-shore

The Poems of Schiller

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! 30
Oh, plunge me in the night of nights,

The Poems of Schiller

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!
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?

The Poems of Schiller

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

The Poems of Schiller

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.

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 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,

The Poems of Schiller

Billow-cast on that wild strand!

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

The Poems of Schiller

“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,

The Poems of Schiller

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,—

The Poems of Schiller

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 uprise,—
'Neath their axes' blows so clear

The Poems of Schiller

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,
Nimble 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 Camoenae 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.

The Poems of Schiller

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,
She who has man to his fellow-man bound:
Let our glad numbers extol then to heaven,
Her who the earth's kindly mother is found!

THE RING OF POLYCRATES. 32

A BALLAD.

Upon his battlements he stood,
And downward gazed in joyous mood,
On Samos' Isle, that owned his sway,
"All this is subject to my yoke;"
To Egypt's monarch thus he spoke, —
"That I am truly blest, then, say!"

"The immortals' favor thou hast known!
Thy sceptre's might has overthrown
All those who once were like to thee.
Yet to avenge them one lives still;
I cannot call thee blest, until
That dreaded foe has ceased to be."

While to these words the king gave vent,
A herald from Miletus sent,
Appeared before the tyrant there:
"Lord, let thy incense rise to-day,
And with the laurel branches gay
Thou well may'st crown thy festive hair!"

"Thy foe has sunk beneath the spear, —
I'm sent to bear the glad news here,
By thy true marshal Polydore" —
Then from a basin black he takes —
The fearful sight their terror wakes —
A well-known head, besmeared with gore.

The king with horror stepped aside,
And then with anxious look replied:
"Thy bliss to fortune ne'er commit.
On faithless waves, bethink thee how
Thy fleet with doubtful fate swims now —
How soon the storm may scatter it!"

The Poems of Schiller

But ere he yet had spoke the word,
A shout of jubilee is heard
 Resounding from the distant strand.
With foreign treasures teeming o'er,
The vessels' mast-rich wood once more
 Returns home to its native land.

The guest then speaks with startled mind:
"Fortune to-day, in truth, seems kind;
 But thou her fickleness shouldst fear:
The Cretan hordes, well skilled, in arms,
Now threaten thee with war's alarms;
 E'en now they are approaching here."

And, ere the word has 'scaped his lips,
A stir is seen amongst the ships,
 And thousand voices "Victory!" cry:
"We are delivered from our foe,
The storm has laid the Cretan low,
 The war is ended, is gone by!"

The shout with horror hears the guest:
"In truth, I must esteem thee blest!
 Yet dread I the decrees of heaven.
The envy of the gods I fear;
To taste of unmixed rapture here
 Is never to a mortal given."
"With me, too, everything succeeds;
In all my sovereign acts and deeds
 The grace of Heaven is ever by;
And yet I had a well-loved heir—
I paid my debt to fortune there—
 God took him hence—I saw him die."

"Wouldst thou from sorrow, then, be free.
Pray to each unseen Deity,
 For thy well-being, grief to send;
The man on whom the Gods bestow

The Poems of Schiller

Their gifts with hands that overflow,
Comes never to a happy end."

"And if the Gods thy prayer resist,
Then to a friend's instruction list,—
Invoke thyself adversity;
And what, of all thy treasures bright,
Gives to thy heart the most delight—
That take and cast thou in the sea!"

Then speaks the other, moved by fear:
"This ring to me is far most dear
Of all this isle within it knows—
I to the furies pledge it now,
If they will happiness allow"—
And in the flood the gem he throws.

And with the morrow's earliest light,
Appeared before the monarch's sight
A fisherman, all joyously;
"Lord, I this fish just now have caught,
No net before e'er held the sort;
And as a gift I bring it thee."

The fish was opened by the cook,
Who suddenly, with wondering look,
Runs up, and utters these glad sounds:
"Within the fish's maw, behold,
I've found, great lord, thy ring of gold!
Thy fortune truly knows no bounds!"

The guest with terror turned away:
"I cannot here, then, longer stay,—
My friend thou canst no longer be!
The gods have willed that thou shouldst die:
Lest I, too, perish, I must fly"—
He spoke,—and sailed thence hastily.

THE CRANES OF IBYCUS.

A BALLAD.

Once to the song and chariot-fight,
Where all the tribes of Greece unite
On Corinth's isthmus joyously,
The god-loved Ibycus drew nigh.
On him Apollo had bestowed
The gift of song and strains inspired;
So, with light staff, he took his road
From Rhegium, by the godhead fired.

Acrocorinth, on mountain high,
Now burns upon the wanderer's eye,
And he begins, with pious dread,
Poseidon's grove of firs to tread.
Naught moves around him, save a swarm
Of cranes, who guide him on his way;
Who from far southern regions warm
Have hither come in squadron gray.

"Thou friendly band, all hail to thee!
Who led'st me safely o'er the sea!
I deem thee as a favoring sign,—
My destiny resembles thine.
Both come from a far distant coast,
Both pray for some kind sheltering place;—
Propitious toward us be the host
Who from the stranger wards disgrace!"

And on he hastes, in joyous wood,
And reaches soon the middle wood
When, on a narrow bridge, by force
Two murderers sudden bar his course.
He must prepare him for the fray,
But soon his wearied hand sinks low;
Inured the gentle lyre to play,

The Poems of Schiller

It ne'er has strung the deadly bow.

On gods and men for aid he cries, —
No savior to his prayer replies;
However far his voice he sends,
Naught living to his cry attends.
“And must I in a foreign land,
Unwept, deserted, perish here,
Falling beneath a murderous hand,
Where no avenger can appear?”

Deep-wounded, down he sinks at last,
When, lo! the cranes' wings rustle past.
He hears, — though he no more can see, —
Their voices screaming fearfully.
“By you, ye cranes, that soar on high,
If not another voice is heard,
Be borne to heaven my murder-cry!”
He speaks, and dies, too, with the word.

The naked corpse, ere long, is found,
And, though defaced by many a wound,
His host in Corinth soon could tell
The features that he loved so well.
“And is it thus I find thee now,
Who hoped the pine's victorious crown
To place upon the singer's brow,
Illumined by his bright renown?”

The news is heard with grief by all
Met at Poseidon's festival;
All Greece is conscious of the smart,
He leaves a void in every heart;
And to the Prytanis 33 swift hie
The people, and they urge him on
The dead man's manes to pacify
And with the murderer's blood atone.

The Poems of Schiller

But where's the trace that from the throng
The people's streaming crowds among,
Allured there by the sports so bright,
Can bring the villain back to light?
By craven robbers was he slain?
Or by some envious hidden foe?
That Helios only can explain,
Whose rays illumine all things below.

Perchance, with shameless step and proud,
He threads e'en now the Grecian crowd —
Whilst vengeance follows in pursuit,
Gloats over his transgression's fruit.
The very gods perchance he braves
Upon the threshold of their fane, —
Joins boldly in the human waves
That haste yon theatre to gain.

For there the Grecian tribes appear,
Fast pouring in from far and near;
On close-packed benches sit they there, —
The stage the weight can scarcely bear.
Like ocean-billows' hollow roar,
The teeming crowds of living man
Toward the cerulean heavens upsoar,
In bow of ever-widening span.
Who knows the nation, who the name,
Of all who there together came?
From Theseus' town, from Aulis' strand
From Phocis, from the Spartan land,
From Asia's distant coast, they wend,
From every island of the sea,
And from the stage they hear ascend
The chorus's dread melody.

Who, sad and solemn, as of old,
With footsteps measured and controlled,
Advancing from the far background,

The Poems of Schiller

Circle the theatre's wide round.
Thus, mortal women never move!
No mortal home to them gave birth!
Their giant-bodies tower above,
High o'er the puny sons of earth.

With loins in mantle black concealed,
Within their fleshless bands they wield
The torch, that with a dull red glows,—
While in their cheek no life-blood flows;
And where the hair is floating wide
And loving, round a mortal brow,
Here snakes and adders are descried,
Whose bellies swell with poison now.
And, standing in a fearful ring,
The dread and solemn chant they sing,
That through the bosom thrilling goes,
And round the sinner fetters throws.
Sense-robbing, of heart-maddening power,
The furies' strains resound through air
The listener's marrow they devour,—
The lyre can yield such numbers ne'er.

"Happy the man who, blemish-free,
Preserves a soul of purity!
Near him we ne'er avenging come,
He freely o'er life's path may roam.
But woe to him who, hid from view,
Hath done the deed of murder base!
Upon his heels we close pursue,—
We, who belong to night's dark race!"

"And if he thinks to 'scape by flight,
Winged we appear, our snare of might
Around his flying feet to cast,
So that he needs must fall at last.
Thus we pursue him, tiring ne'er,—
Our wrath repentance cannot quell,—

The Poems of Schiller

On to the shadows, and e'en there
We leave him not in peace to dwell!"

Thus singing, they the dance resume,
And silence, like that of the tomb,
O'er the whole house lies heavily,
As if the deity were nigh.
And staid and solemn, as of old,
Circling the theatre's wide round,
With footsteps measured and controlled,
They vanish in the far background.

Between deceit and truth each breast.
Now doubting hangs, by awe possessed,
And homage pays to that dread might,
That judges what is hid from sight, —
That, fathomless, inscrutable,
The gloomy skein of fate entwines,
That reads the bosom's depths full well,
Yet flies away where sunlight shines.

When sudden, from the tier most high,
A voice is heard by all to cry:
"See there, see there, Timotheus!
Behold the cranes of Ibycus!"
The heavens become as black as night,
And o'er the theatre they see,
Far over-head, a dusky flight
Of cranes, approaching hastily.

"Of Ibycus!" — That name so blest
With new-born sorrow fills each breast.
As waves on waves in ocean rise,
From mouth to mouth it swiftly flies:
"Of Ibycus, whom we lament?
Who fell beneath the murderer's hand?
What mean those words that from him went?
What means this cranes' advancing band?"

The Poems of Schiller

And louder still become the cries,
And soon this thought foreboding flies
Through every heart, with speed of light—
“Observe in this the furies’ might!
The poets manes are now appeased
The murderer seeks his own arrest!
Let him who spoke the word be seized,
And him to whom it was addressed!”

That word he had no sooner spoke,
Than he its sound would fain invoke;
In vain! his mouth, with terror pale,
Tells of his guilt the fearful tale.
Before the judge they drag them now
The scene becomes the tribunal;
Their crimes the villains both avow,
When neath the vengeance-stroke they fall.

THE PLAYING INFANT.

Play on thy mother’s bosom, babe, for in that holy isle
The error cannot find thee yet, the grieving, nor the guile;
Held in thy mother’s arms above life’s dark and troubled wave,
Thou lookest with thy fearless smile upon the floating grave.
Play, loveliest innocence!—Thee yet Arcadia circles round,
A charmed power for thee has set the lists of fairy ground;
Each gleesome impulse Nature now can sanction and befriend,
Nor to that willing heart as yet the duty and the end.
Play, for the haggard labor soon will come to seize its prey.
Alas! when duty grows thy law, enjoyment fades away!



HERO AND LEANDER. 34

A BALLAD.

See you the towers, that, gray and old,
Frown through the sunlight's liquid gold,
Steep sternly fronting steep?
The Hellespont beneath them swells,
And roaring cleaves the Dardanelles,
The rock-gates of the deep!
Hear you the sea, whose stormy wave,
From Asia, Europe clove in thunder?
That sea which rent a world, cannot
Rend love from love asunder!

In Hero's, in Leander's heart,
Thrills the sweet anguish of the dart
Whose feather flies from love.
All Hebe's bloom in Hero's cheek—
And his the hunter's steps that seek
Delight, the hills above!
Between their sires the rival feud
Forbids their plighted hearts to meet;
Love's fruits hang over danger's gulf,
By danger made more sweet.

Alone on Sestos' rocky tower,
Where upward sent in stormy shower,
The whirling waters foam,—
Alone the maiden sits, and eyes
The cliffs of fair Abydos rise
Afar—her lover's home.
Oh, safely thrown from strand to strand,
No bridge can love to love convey;
No boatman shoots from yonder shore,
Yet Love has found the way.—

That love, which could the labyrinth pierce—

The Poems of Schiller

Which nerves the weak, and curbs the fierce,
And wings with wit the dull;—
That love which o'er the furrowed land
Bowed—tame beneath young Jason's hand—
The fiery-snorting bull!
Yes, Styx itself, that ninefold flows,
Has love, the fearless, ventured o'er,
And back to daylight borne the bride,
From Pluto's dreary shore!

What marvel then that wind and wave,
Leander doth but burn to brave,
When love, that goads him, guides!
Still when the day, with fainter glimmer,
Wanes pale—he leaps, the daring swimmer,
Amid the darkening tides;
With lusty arms he cleaves the waves,
And strikes for that dear strand afar;
Where high from Hero's lonely tower
Lone streams the beacon-star.

In vain his blood the wave may chill,
These tender arms can warm it still—
And, weary if the way,
By many a sweet embrace, above
All earthly boons—can liberal love
The lover's toil repay,
Until Aurora breaks the dream,
And warns the loiterer to depart—
Back to the ocean's icy bed,
Scared from that loving heart.

So thirty suns have sped their flight—
Still in that theft of sweet delight
Exult the happy pair;
Caress will never pall caress,
And joys that gods might envy, bless
The single bride-night there.



The Poems of Schiller

Ah! never he has rapture known,
Who has not, where the waves are driven
Upon the fearful shores of hell,
Plucked fruits that taste of heaven!

Now changing in their season are,
The morning and the Hesper star;—
Nor see those happy eyes
The leaves that withering droop and fall,
Nor hear, when, from its northern hall,
The neighboring winter sighs;
Or, if they see, the shortening days
But seem to them to close in kindness;
For longer joys, in lengthening nights,
They thank the heaven in blindness.

It is the time, when night and day,
In equal scales contend for sway 35—
Lone, on her rocky steep,
Lingers the girl with wistful eyes
That watch the sun-steeds down the skies,
Careering towards the deep.
Lulled lay the smooth and silent sea,
A mirror in translucent calm,
The breeze, along that crystal realm,
Unmurmuring, died in balm.

In wanton swarms and blithe array,
The merry dolphins glide and play
Amid the silver waves.
In gray and dusky troops are seen,
The hosts that serve the ocean-queen,
Upborne from coral caves:
They—only they—have witnessed love
To rapture steal its secret way:
And Hecate 36 seals the only lips
That could the tale betray!
She marks in joy the lulled water,

The Poems of Schiller

And Sestos, thus thy tender daughter,
Soft-flattering, woos the sea!
“Fair god—and canst thou then betray?
No! falsehood dwells with them that say
That falsehood dwells with thee!
Ah! faithless is the race of man,
And harsh a father’s heart can prove;
But thee, the gentle and the mild,
The grief of love can move!”

“Within these hated walls of stone,
Should I, repining, mourn alone,
And fade in ceaseless care,
But thou, though o’er thy giant tide,
Nor bridge may span, nor boat may glide,
Dost safe my lover bear.
And darksome is thy solemn deep,
And fearful is thy roaring wave;
But wave and deep are won by love—
Thou smilest on the brave!”

“Nor vainly, sovereign of the sea,
Did Eros send his shafts to thee
What time the rain of gold,
Bright Helle, with her brother bore,
How stirred the waves she wandered o’er,
How stirred thy deeps of old!
Swift, by the maiden’s charms subdued,
Thou cam’st from out the gloomy waves,
And in thy mighty arms, she sank
Into thy bridal caves.”

“A goddess with a god, to keep
In endless youth, beneath the deep,
Her solemn ocean-court!
And still she smooths thine angry tides,
Tames thy wild heart, and favoring guides
The sailor to the port!

The Poems of Schiller

Beautiful Helle, bright one, hear
Thy lone adoring suppliant pray!
And guide, O goddess—guide my love
Along the wonted way!"

Now twilight dims the waters' flow,
And from the tower, the beacon's glow
Waves flickering o'er the main.
Ah, where athwart the dismal stream,
Shall shine the beacon's faithful beam
The lover's eyes shall strain!

Hark! sounds moan threatening from afar—
From heaven the blessed stars are gone—
More darkly swells the rising sea
The tempest labors on!

Along the ocean's boundless plains
Lies night—in torrents rush the rains
From the dark-bosomed cloud—
Red lightning skirts the panting air,
And, loosed from out their rocky lair,
Sweep all the storms abroad.

Huge wave on huge wave tumbling o'er,
The yawning gulf is rent asunder,
And shows, as through an opening pall,
Grim earth—the ocean under!

Poor maiden! bootless wail or vow—
"Have mercy, Jove—be gracious, thou!
Dread prayer was mine before!"

What if the gods have heard—and he,
Lone victim of the stormy sea,
Now struggles to the shore!
There's not a sea-bird on the wave—
Their hurrying wings the shelter seek;
The stoutest ship the storms have proved,
Takes refuge in the creek.

"Ah, still that heart, which oft has braved

The Poems of Schiller

The danger where the daring saved,
Love lureth o'er the sea;—
For many a vow at parting morn,
That naught but death should bar return,
Breathed those dear lips to me;
And whirled around, the while I weep,
Amid the storm that rides the wave,
The giant gulf is grasping down
The rash one to the grave!
"False Pontus! and the calm I hailed,
The awaiting murder darkly veiled—
The lulled pellucid flow,
The smiles in which thou wert arrayed,
Were but the snares that love betrayed
To thy false realm below!
Now in the midway of the main,
Return relentlessly forbidden,
Thou loosenest on the path beyond
The horrors thou hadst hidden."

Loud and more loud the tempest raves
In thunder break the mountain waves,
White-foaming on the rock—
No ship that ever swept the deep
Its ribs of gnarled oak could keep
Unshattered by the shock.
Dies in the blast the guiding torch
To light the struggler to the strand;
'Tis death to battle with the wave,
And death no less to land!

On Venus, daughter of the seas,
She calls the tempest to appease—
To each wild-shrieking wind
Along the ocean-desert borne,
She vows a steer with golden horn—
Vain vow—relentless wind!
On every goddess of the deep,

The Poems of Schiller

On all the gods in heaven that be,
She calls—to soothe in calm, awhile
The tempest-laden sea!

“Hearken the anguish of my cries!
From thy green halls, arise—arise,
Leucothoe the divine!
Who, in the barren main afar,
Oft on the storm-beat mariner
Dost gently-saving shine.
Oh,—reach to him thy mystic veil,
To which the drowning clasp may cling,
And safely from that roaring grave,
To shore my lover bring!”
And now the savage winds are hushing.
And o’er the arched horizon, blushing,
Day’s chariot gleams on high!
Back to their wonted channels rolled,
In crystal calm the waves behold
One smile on sea and sky!
All softly breaks the rippling tide,
Low-murmuring on the rocky land,
And playful wavelets gently float
A corpse upon the strand!

‘Tis he!—who even in death would still
Not fail the sweet vow to fulfil;
She looks—sees—knows him there!
From her pale lips no sorrow speaks,
No tears glide down her hueless cheeks;
Cold-numbered in her despair—
She looked along the silent deep,
She looked upon the brightening heaven,
Till to the marble face the soul
Its light sublime had given!

“Ye solemn powers men shrink to name,
Your might is here, your rights ye claim—

The Poems of Schiller

Yet think not I repine
Soon closed my course; yet I can bless
The life that brought me happiness—
The fairest lot was mine!
Living have I thy temple served,
Thy consecrated priestess been—
My last glad offering now receive
Venus, thou mightiest queen!"

Flashed the white robe along the air,
And from the tower that beetled there
She sprang into the wave;
Roused from his throne beneath the waste,
Those holy forms the god embraced—
A god himself their grave!
Pleased with his prey, he glides along—
More blithe the murmured music seems,
A gush from unexhausted urns
His everlasting streams!

CASSANDRA.

Mirth the halls of Troy was filling,
Ere its lofty ramparts fell;
From the golden lute so thrilling
Hymns of joy were heard to swell.
From the sad and tearful slaughter
All had laid their arms aside,
For Pelides Priam's daughter
Claimed then as his own fair bride.

Laurel branches with them bearing,
Troop on troop in bright array
To the temples were repairing,
Owning Thymbrius' sovereign sway.
Through the streets, with frantic measure,
Danced the bacchanal mad round,

The Poems of Schiller

And, amid the radiant pleasure,
Only one sad breast was found.

Joyless in the midst of gladness,
None to heed her, none to love,
Roamed Cassandra, plunged in sadness,
To Apollo's laurel grove.
To its dark and deep recesses
Swift the sorrowing priestess hied,
And from off her flowing tresses
Tore the sacred band, and cried:

"All around with joy is beaming,
Ev'ry heart is happy now,
And my sire is fondly dreaming,
Wreathed with flowers my sister's brow
I alone am doomed to wailing,
That sweet vision flies from me;
In my mind, these walls assailing,
Fierce destruction I can see."

"Though a torch I see all-glowing,
Yet 'tis not in Hymen's hand;
Smoke across the skies is blowing,
Yet 'tis from no votive brand.
Yonder see I feasts entrancing,
But in my prophetic soul,
Hear I now the God advancing,
Who will steep in tears the bowl!"

"And they blame my lamentation,
And they laugh my grief to scorn;
To the haunts of desolation
I must bear my woes forlorn.
All who happy are, now shun me,
And my tears with laughter see;
Heavy lies thy hand upon me,
Cruel Pythian deity!"

The Poems of Schiller

“Thy divine decrees foretelling,
Wherefore hast thou thrown me here,
Where the ever-blind are dwelling,
With a mind, alas, too clear?
Wherefore hast thou power thus given,
What must needs occur to know?
Wrought must be the will of Heaven—
Onward come the hour of woe!”

“When impending fate strikes terror,
Why remove the covering?
Life we have alone in error,
Knowledge with it death must bring.
Take away this prescience tearful,
Take this sight of woe from me;
Of thy truths, alas! how fearful
‘Tis the mouthpiece frail to be!”

“Veil my mind once more in slumbers
Let me heedlessly rejoice;
Never have I sung glad numbers
Since I’ve been thy chosen voice.
Knowledge of the future giving,
Thou hast stolen the present day,
Stolen the moment’s joyous living,—
Take thy false gift, then, away!”

“Ne’er with bridal train around me,
Have I wreathed my radiant brow,
Since to serve thy fane I bound me—
Bound me with a solemn vow.
Evermore in grief I languish—
All my youth in tears was spent;
And with thoughts of bitter anguish
My too-feeling heart is rent.”

“Joyously my friends are playing,
All around are blest and glad,

The Poems of Schiller

In the paths of pleasure straying,—
My poor heart alone is sad.
Spring in vain unfolds each treasure,
Filling all the earth with bliss;
Who in life can e'er take pleasure,
When is seen its dark abyss?"

"With her heart in vision burning,
Truly blest is Polyxene,
As a bride to clasp him yearning.
Him, the noblest, best Hellene!
And her breast with rapture swelling,
All its bliss can scarcely know;
E'en the Gods in heavenly dwelling
Envy not, when dreaming so."

"He to whom my heart is plighted
Stood before my ravished eye,
And his look, by passion lighted,
Toward me turned imploringly.
With the loved one, oh, how gladly
Homeward would I take my flight
But a Stygian shadow sadly
Steps between us every night."

"Cruel Proserpine is sending
All her spectres pale to me;
Ever on my steps attending
Those dread shadowy forms I see.
Though I seek, in mirth and laughter
Refuge from that ghastly train,
Still I see them hastening after,—
Ne'er shall I know joy again."

"And I see the death-steel glancing,
And the eye of murder glare;
On, with hasty strides advancing,
Terror haunts me everywhere.

The Poems of Schiller

Vain I seek alleviation;—
Knowing, seeing, suffering all,
I must wait the consummation,
In a foreign land must fall."

While her solemn words are ringing,
Hark! a dull and wailing tone
From the temple's gate upspringing,—
Dead lies Thetis' mighty son!
Eris shakes her snake-locks hated,
Swiftly flies each deity,
And o'er Ilion's walls ill-fated
Thunder-clouds loom heavily!

THE HOSTAGE.

A BALLAD.

The tyrant Dionys to seek,
Stern Moerus with his poniard crept;
The watchful guard upon him swept;
The grim king marked his changeless cheek:
"What wouldst thou with thy poniard? Speak!"
"The city from the tyrant free!"
"The death-cross shall thy guerdon be."

"I am prepared for death, nor pray,"
Replied that haughty man, "I to live;
Enough, if thou one grace wilt give
For three brief suns the death delay
To wed my sister—leagues away;
I boast one friend whose life for mine,
If I should fail the cross, is thine."

The tyrant mused,—and smiled,—and said
With gloomy craft, "So let it be;
Three days I will vouchsafe to thee.

The Poems of Schiller

But mark—if, when the time be sped,
Thou fail'st—thy surety dies instead.
His life shall buy thine own release;
Thy guilt atoned, my wrath shall cease."

He sought his friend—"The king's decree
Ordains my life the cross upon
Shall pay the deed I would have done;
Yet grants three days' delay to me,
My sister's marriage-rites to see;
If thou, the hostage, wilt remain
Till I—set free—return again!"

His friend embraced—No word he said,
But silent to the tyrant strode—
The other went upon his road.
Ere the third sun in heaven was red,
The rite was o'er, the sister wed;
And back, with anxious heart unquailing,
He hastes to hold the pledge unfailing.
Down the great rains unending bore,
Down from the hills the torrents rushed,
In one broad stream the brooklets gushed.
The wanderer halts beside the shore,
The bridge was swept the tides before—
The shattered arches o'er and under
Went the tumultuous waves in thunder.

Dismayed he takes his idle stand—
Dismayed, he strays and shouts around;
His voice awakes no answering sound.
No boat will leave the sheltering strand,
To bear him to the wished-for land;
No boatman will Death's pilot be;
The wild stream gathers to a sea!

Sunk by the banks, awhile he weeps,
Then raised his arms to Jove, and cried,

The Poems of Schiller

“Stay thou, oh stay the maddening tide;
Midway behold the swift sun sweeps,
And, ere he sinks adown the deeps,
If I should fail, his beams will see
My friend’s last anguish—slain for me!”

More fierce it runs, more broad it flows,
And wave on wave succeeds and dies
And hour on hour remorseless flies;
Despair at last to daring grows—
Amidst the flood his form he throws;
With vigorous arms the roaring waves
Cleaves—and a God that pities, saves.

He wins the bank—he scours the strand,
He thanks the God in breathless prayer;
When from the forest’s gloomy lair,
With ragged club in ruthless hand,
And breathing murder—rushed the band
That find, in woods, their savage den,
And savage prey in wandering men.

“What,” cried he, pale with generous fear;
“What think to gain ye by the strife?
All I bear with me is my life—
I take it to the king!”—and here
He snatched the club from him most near:
And thrice he smote, and thrice his blows
Dealt death—before him fly the foes!

The sun is glowing as a brand;
And faint before the parching heat,
The strength forsakes the feeble feet:
“Thou hast saved me from the robbers’ hand,
Through wild floods given the blessed land;
And shall the weak limbs fail me now?
And he!—Divine one, nerve me, thou!”

The Poems of Schiller

Hark! like some gracious murmur by,
Babbles low music, silver-clear—
The wanderer holds his breath to hear;
And from the rock, before his eye,
Laughs forth the spring delightedly;
Now the sweet waves he bends him o'er,
And the sweet waves his strength restore.

Through the green boughs the sun gleams dying,
O'er fields that drink the rosy beam,
The trees' huge shadows giant seem.
Two strangers on the road are hieing;
And as they fleet beside him flying,
These muttered words his ear dismay:
"Now—now the cross has claimed its prey!"

Despair his winged path pursues,
The anxious terrors hound him on—
There, reddening in the evening sun,
From far, the domes of Syracuse!—
When towards him comes Philostratus
(His leal and trusty herdsman he),
And to the master bends his knee.

"Back—thou canst aid thy friend no more,
The niggard time already flown—
His life is forfeit—save thine own!
Hour after hour in hope he bore,
Nor might his soul its faith give o'er;
Nor could the tyrant's scorn deriding,
Steal from that faith one thought confiding!"

"Too late! what horror hast thou spoken!
Vain life, since it cannot requite him!
But death with me can yet unite him;
No boast the tyrant's scorn shall make—
How friend to friend can faith forsake.
But from the double death shall know,

The Poems of Schiller

That truth and love yet live below!"

The sun sinks down—the gate's in view,
The cross looms dismal on the ground—
The eager crowd gape murmuring round.
His friend is bound the cross unto. . . .
Crowd—guards—all bursts he breathless through:
"Me! Doomsman, me!" he shouts, "alone!
His life is rescued—lo, mine own!"

Amazement seized the circling ring!
Linked in each other's arms the pair—
Weeping for joy—yet anguish there!
Moist every eye that gazed;—they bring
The wondrous tidings to the king—
His breast man's heart at last hath known,
And the friends stand before his throne.

Long silent, he, and wondering long,
Gazed on the pair—"In peace depart,
Victors, ye have subdued my heart!
Truth is no dream!—its power is strong.
Give grace to him who owns his wrong!
'Tis mine your suppliant now to be,
Ah, let the band of love—be three!" 37

GREEKISM.

Scarce has the fever so chilly of Gallomania departed,
When a more burning attack in Grecomania breaks out.
Greekism,—what did it mean?—'Twas harmony, reason, and
clearness!
Patience,—good gentlemen, pray, ere ye of Greekism speak!
'Tis for an excellent cause ye are fighting, and all that I ask for
Is that with reason it ne'er may be a laughing-stock made.

The Poems of Schiller

THE DIVER.

A BALLAD.

“What knight or what vassal will be so bold
As to plunge in the gulf below?
See! I hurl in its depths a goblet of gold,
Already the waters over it flow.
The man who can bring back the goblet to me,
May keep it henceforward, — his own it shall be.”

Thus speaks the king, and he hurls from the height
Of the cliffs that, rugged and steep,
Hang over the boundless sea, with strong might,
The goblet afar, in the bellowing deep.
“And who’ll be so daring, — I ask it once more, —
As to plunge in these billows that wildly roar?”

And the vassals and knights of high degree
Hear his words, but silent remain.
They cast their eyes on the raging sea,
And none will attempt the goblet to gain.
And a third time the question is asked by the king:
“Is there none that will dare in the gulf now to spring?”

Yet all as before in silence stand,
When a page, with a modest pride,
Steps out of the timorous squirely band,
And his girdle and mantle soon throws aside,
And all the knights, and the ladies too,
The noble stripling with wonderment view.

And when he draws nigh to the rocky brow,
And looks in the gulf so black,
The waters that she had swallowed but now,
The howling Charybdis is giving back;
And, with the distant thunder’s dull sound.
From her gloomy womb they all-foaming rebound.

The Poems of Schiller

And it boils and it roars, and it hisses and seethes,
As when water and fire first blend;
To the sky spurts the foam in steam-laden wreaths,
And wave presses hard upon wave without end.
And the ocean will never exhausted be,
As if striving to bring forth another sea.

But at length the wild tumult seems pacified,
And blackly amid the white swell
A gaping chasm its jaws opens wide,
As if leading down to the depths of hell:
And the howling billows are seen by each eye
Down the whirling funnel all madly to fly.

Then quickly, before the breakers rebound,
The stripling commends him to Heaven,
And—a scream of horror is heard around,—
And now by the whirlpool away he is driven,
And secretly over the swimmer brave
Close the jaws, and he vanishes 'neath the dark wave.

O'er the watery gulf dread silence now lies,
But the deep sends up a dull yell,
And from mouth to mouth thus trembling it flies:
"Courageous stripling, oh, fare thee well!"
And duller and duller the howls recommence,
While they pause in anxious and fearful suspense.

"If even thy crown in the gulf thou shouldst fling,
And shouldst say, 'He who brings it to me
Shall wear it henceforward, and be the king,'
Thou couldst tempt me not e'en with that precious foe;
What under the howling deep is concealed
To no happy living soul is revealed!"

Full many a ship, by the whirlpool held fast,
Shoots straightway beneath the mad wave,
And, dashed to pieces, the hull and the mast

The Poems of Schiller

Emerge from the all-devouring grave,—
And the roaring approaches still nearer and nearer,
Like the howl of the tempest, still clearer and clearer.

And it boils and it roars, and it hisses and seethes,
As when water and fire first blend;
To the sky spurts the foam in steam-laden wreaths,
And wave passes hard upon wave without end.
And, with the distant thunder's dull sound,
From the ocean-womb they all-bellowing bound.

And lo! from the darkly flowing tide
Comes a vision white as a swan,
And an arm and a glistening neck are descried,
With might and with active zeal steering on;
And 'tis he, and behold! his left hand on high
Waves the goblet, while beaming with joy is his eye.

Then breathes he deeply, then breathes he long,
And blesses the light of the day;
While gladly exclaim to each other the throng:
"He lives! he is here! he is not the sea's prey!
From the tomb, from the eddying waters' control,
The brave one has rescued his living soul!"

And he comes, and they joyously round him stand;
At the feet of the monarch he falls,—
The goblet he, kneeling, puts in his hand,
And the king to his beauteous daughter calls,
Who fills it with sparkling wine to the brim;
The youth turns to the monarch, and speaks thus to him:

"Long life to the king! Let all those be glad
Who breathe in the light of the sky!
For below all is fearful, of moment sad;
Let not man to tempt the immortals e'er try,
Let him never desire the thing to see
That with terror and night they veil graciously."

The Poems of Schiller

"I was torn below with the speed of light,
When out of a cavern of rock
Rushed towards me a spring with furious might;
I was seized by the twofold torrent's wild shock,
And like a top, with a whirl and a bound,
Despite all resistance, was whirled around."

"Then God pointed out, — for to Him I cried
In that terrible moment of need, —
A craggy reef in the gulf's dark side;
I seized it in haste, and from death was then freed.
And there, on sharp corals, was hanging the cup, —
The fathomless pit had else swallowed it up."

"For under me lay it, still mountain-deep,
In a darkness of purple-tinged dye,
And though to the ear all might seem then asleep
With shuddering awe 'twas seen by the eye
How the salamanders' and dragons' dread forms
Filled those terrible jaws of hell with their swarms."

"There crowded, in union fearful and black,
In a horrible mass entwined,
The rock-fish, the ray with the thorny back,
And the hammer-fish's misshapen kind,
And the shark, the hyena dread of the sea,
With his angry teeth, grinned fiercely on me."

"There hung I, by fulness of terror possessed,
Where all human aid was unknown,
Amongst phantoms, the only sensitive breast,
In that fearful solitude all alone,
Where the voice of mankind could not reach to mine ear,
'Mid the monsters foul of that wilderness drear."

"Thus shuddering methought — when a something crawled near,
And a hundred limbs it out-flung,
And at me it snapped; — in my mortal fear,

The Poems of Schiller

I left hold of the coral to which I had clung;
Then the whirlpool seized on me with maddened roar,
Yet 'twas well, for it brought me to light once more."

The story in wonderment hears the king,
And he says, "The cup is thine own,
And I purpose also to give thee this ring,
Adorned with a costly, a priceless stone,
If thou'lt try once again, and bring word to me
What thou saw'st in the nethermost depths of the sea."

His daughter hears this with emotions soft,
And with flattering accent prays she:
"That fearful sport, father, attempt not too oft!
What none other would dare, he hath ventured for thee;
If thy heart's wild longings thou canst not tame,
Let the knights, if they can, put the squire to shame."

The king then seizes the goblet in haste,
In the gulf he hurls it with might:
"When the goblet once more in my hands thou hast placed,
Thou shalt rank at my court as the noblest knight,
And her as a bride thou shalt clasp e'en to-day,
Who for thee with tender compassion doth pray."

Then a force, as from Heaven, descends on him there,
And lightning gleams in his eye,
And blushes he sees on her features so fair,
And he sees her turn pale, and swooning lie;
Then eager the precious guerdon to win,
For life or for death, lo! he plunges him in!

The breakers they hear, and the breakers return,
Proclaimed by a thundering sound;
They bend o'er the gulf with glances that yearn,
And the waters are pouring in fast around;
Though upwards and downwards they rush and they rave,
The youth is brought back by no kindly wave.

THE KNIGHT OF TOGGENBURG.

A BALLAD.

"I Can love thee well, believe me,
As a sister true;
Other love, Sir Knight, would grieve me,
Sore my heart would rue.
Calmly would I see thee going,
Calmly, too, appear;
For those tears in silence flowing
Find no answer here."

Thus she speaks,—he hears her sadly,—
How his heartstrings bleed!
In his arms he clasps her madly,
Then he mounts his steed.
From the Switzer land collects he
All his warriors brave;—
Cross on breast, their course directs he
To the Holy Grave.

In triumphant march advancing,
Onward moves the host,
While their morion plumes are dancing
Where the foes are most.
Mortal terror strikes the Paynim
At the chieftain's name;
But the knight's sad thoughts enchain him—
Grief consumes his frame.

Twelve long months, with courage daring,
Peace he strives to find;
Then, at last, of rest despairing,
Leaves the host behind;
Sees a ship, whose sails are swelling,
Lie on Joppa's strand;
Ships him homeward for her dwelling,

The Poems of Schiller

In his own loved land.

Now behold the pilgrim weary
At her castle gate!
But alas! these accents dreary
Seal his mournful fate:—
“She thou seek’st her troth hath plighted
To all-gracious heaven;
To her God she was united
Yesterday at even!”

To his father’s home forever
Bids he now adieu;
Sees no more his arms and beaver,
Nor his steed so true.
Then descends he, sadly, slowly,—
None suspect the sight,—
For a garb of penance lowly
Wears the noble knight.

Soon he now, the tempest braving,
Builds an humble shed,
Where o’er the lime-trees darkly waving,
Peeps the convent’s head.
From the orb of day’s first gleaming,
Till his race has run,
Hope in every feature beaming,
There he sits alone.

Toward the convent straining ever
His unwearied eyes,—
From her casement looking never
Till it open flies,
Till the loved one, soft advancing,
Shows her gentle face,
O’er the vale her sweet eye glancing,
Full of angel-grace.

The Poems of Schiller

Then he seeks his bed of rushes,
Stilled all grief and pain,
Slumbering calm, till morning's blushes
Waken life again.
Days and years fleet on, yet never
Breathes he plaint or sighs,
On her casement gazing ever
Till it open flies.

Till the loved one, soft advancing,
Shows her gentle face,
O'er the vale her sweet eyes glancing,
Full of angel-grace.
But at length, the morn returning
Finds him dead and chill;—
Pale and wan, his gaze, with yearning,
Seeks her casement still.

THE FIGHT WITH THE DRAGON.

Why run the crowd? What means the throng
That rushes fast the streets along?
Can Rhodes a prey to flames, then, be?
In crowds they gather hastily,
And, on his steed, a noble knight
Amid the rabble, meets my sight;
Behind him—prodigy unknown!—
A monster fierce they're drawing on;
A dragon stems it by its shape,
With wide and crocodile-like jaw,
And on the knight and dragon gape,
In turns, the people, filled with awe.

And thousand voices shout with glee
"The fiery dragon come and see,
Who hind and flock tore limb from limb!—
The hero see, who vanquished him!

The Poems of Schiller

Full many a one before him went,
To dare the fearful combat bent,
But none returned home from the fight;
Honor ye, then, the noble knight!"
And toward the convent move they all,
While met in hasty council there
The brave knights of the Hospital,
St. John the Baptist's Order, were.

Up to the noble master sped
The youth, with firm but modest tread;
The people followed with wild shout,
And stood the landing-place about,
While thus outspoke that daring one:
"My knightly duty I have done.

The dragon that laid waste the land
Has fallen beneath my conquering hand.
The way is to the wanderer free,
The shepherd o'er the plains may rove;
Across the mountains joyfully
The pilgrim to the shrine may move."

But sternly looked the prince, and said:
"The hero's part thou well hast played
By courage is the true knight known,—
A dauntless spirit thou hast shown.
Yet speak! What duty first should he
Regard, who would Christ's champion be,
Who wears the emblem of the Cross?"—
And all turned pale at his discourse.
Yet he replied, with noble grace,
While blushing he bent him low:
"That he deserves so proud a place
Obedience best of all can show."



The Poems of Schiller

"My son," the master answering spoke,
"Thy daring act this duty broke.
The conflict that the law forbade
Thou hast with impious mind essayed." —
"Lord, judge when all to thee is known,"
The other spake, in steadfast tone, —
"For I the law's commands and will
Purposed with honor to fulfil.
I went not out with heedless thought.
Hoping the monster dread to find;
To conquer in the fight I sought
By cunning, and a prudent mind."

"Five of our noble Order, then
(Our faith could boast no better men),
Had by their daring lost their life,
When thou forbadest us the strife.
And yet my heart I felt a prey
To gloom, and panted for the fray;
Ay, even in the stilly night,
In vision gasped I in the fight;
And when the glimmering morning came,
And of fresh troubles knowledge gave,
A raging grief consumed my frame,
And I resolved the thing to brave."

"And to myself I thus began:
"What is't adorns the youth, the man?
What actions of the heroes bold,
Of whom in ancient song we're told,
Blind heathendom raised up on high
To godlike fame and dignity?
The world, by deeds known far and wide,
From monsters fierce they purified;
The lion in the fight they met,
And wrestled with the minotaur,
Unhappy victims free to set,
And were not sparing of their gore.'"

“Are none but Saracens to feel
The prowess of the Christian steel?
False idols only shall be brave?
His mission is the world to save;
To free it, by his sturdy arm,
From every hurt, from every harm;
Yet wisdom must his courage bend,
And cunning must with strength contend.’
Thus spake I oft, and went alone
The monster’s traces to espy;
When on my mind a bright light shone, —
‘I have it!’ was my joyful cry.”

“To thee I went, and thus I spake:
‘My homeward journey I would take.’
Thou, lord, didst grant my prayer to me, —
Then safely traversed I the sea;
And, when I reached my native strand,
I caused a skilful artist’s hand
To make a dragon’s image, true
To his that now so well I knew.
On feet of measure short was placed
Its lengthy body’s heavy load;
A scaly coat of mail embraced
The back, on which it fiercely showed.”

“Its stretching neck appeared to swell,
And, ghastly as a gate of hell,
Its fearful jaws were open wide,
As if to seize the prey it tried;
And in its black mouth, ranged about,
Its teeth in prickly rows stood out;
Its tongue was like a sharp-edged sword,
And lightning from its small eyes poured;
A serpent’s tail of many a fold
Ended its body’s monstrous span,
And round itself with fierceness rolled,

The Poems of Schiller

So as to clasp both steed and man."

"I formed the whole to nature true,
In skin of gray and hideous hue;
Part dragon it appeared, part snake,
Engendered in the poisonous lake.
And, when the figure was complete,
A pair of dogs I chose me, fleet,
Of mighty strength, of nimble pace,
Inured the savage boar to chase;
The dragon, then, I made them bait,
Inflaming them to fury dread,
With their sharp teeth to seize it straight,
And with my voice their motions led."

"And, where the belly's tender skin
Allowed the tooth to enter in,
I taught them how to seize it there,
And, with their fangs, the part to tear.
I mounted, then, my Arab steed,
The offspring of a noble breed;
My hand a dart on high held forth,
And, when I had inflamed his wrath,
I stuck my sharp spurs in his side,
And urged him on as quick as thought,
And hurled my dart in circles wide
As if to pierce the beast I sought."

"And though my steed reared high in pain,
And champed and foamed beneath the rein,
And though the dogs howled fearfully,
Till they were calmed ne'er rested I.
This plan I ceaselessly pursued,
Till thrice the moon had been renewed;
And when they had been duly taught,
In swift ships here I had them brought;
And since my foot these shores has pressed
Flown has three mornings' narrow span;

The Poems of Schiller

I scarce allowed my limbs to rest
Ere I the mighty task began."

"For hotly was my bosom stirred
When of the land's fresh grief I heard;
Shepherds of late had been his prey,
When in the marsh they went astray.
I formed my plans then hastily, —
My heart was all that counselled me.
My squires instructing to proceed,
I sprang upon my well-trained steed,
And, followed by my noble pair
Of dogs, by secret pathways rode,
Where not an eye could witness bear,
To find the monster's fell abode."

"Thou, lord, must know the chapel well,
Pitched on a rocky pinnacle,
That overlooks the distant isle;
A daring mind 'twas raised the pile.
Though humble, mean, and small it shows
Its walls a miracle enclose, —
The Virgin and her infant Son,
Vowed by the three kings of Cologne.
By three times thirty steps is led
The pilgrim to the giddy height;
Yet, when he gains it with bold tread,
He's quickened by his Saviour's sight."

"Deep in the rock to which it clings,
A cavern dark its arms outflings,
Moist with the neighboring moorland's dew,
Where heaven's bright rays can ne'er pierce through.
There dwelt the monster, there he lay,
His spoil awaiting, night and day;
Like the hell-dragon, thus he kept
Watch near the shrine, and never slept;
And if a hapless pilgrim chanced

The Poems of Schiller

To enter on that fatal way,
From out his ambush quick advanced
The foe, and seized him as his prey."

"I mounted now the rocky height;
Ere I commenced the fearful fight,
There knelt I to the infant Lord,
And pardon for my sins implored.
Then in the holy fane I placed
My shining armor round my waist,
My right hand grasped my javelin,
The fight then went I to begin;
Instructions gave my squires among,
Commanding them to tarry there;
Then on my steed I nimbly sprung,
And gave my spirit to God's care."

"Soon as I reached the level plain,
My dogs found out the scent amain;
My frightened horse soon reared on high, —
His fear I could not pacify,
For, coiled up in a circle, lo!
There lay the fierce and hideous foe,
Sunning himself upon the ground.
Straight at him rushed each nimble hound;
Yet thence they turned, dismayed and fast,
When he his gaping jaws op'd wide,
Vomited forth his poisonous blast,
And like the howling jackal cried."

"But soon their courage I restored;
They seized with rage the foe abhorred,
While I against the beast's loins threw
My spear with sturdy arm and true:
But, powerless as a bulrush frail,
It bounded from his coat of mail;
And ere I could repeat the throw,
My horse reeled wildly to and fro

The Poems of Schiller

Before his basilisk-like look,
And at his poison-teeming breath, —
Sprang backward, and with terror shook,
While I seemed doomed to certain death.”

“Then from my steed I nimbly sprung,
My sharp-edged sword with vigor swung;
Yet all in vain my strokes I plied, —
I could not pierce his rock-like hide.
His tail with fury lashing round,
Sudden he bore me to the ground.
His jaws then opening fearfully,
With angry teeth he struck at me;
But now my dogs, with wrath new-born,
Rushed on his belly with fierce bite,
So that, by dreadful anguish torn,
He howling stood before my sight.”

“And ere he from their teeth was free,
I raised myself up hastily,
The weak place of the foe explored,
And in his entrails plunged my sword,
Sinking it even to the hilt;
Black gushing forth, his blood was spilt.
Down sank he, burying in his fall
Me with his body’s giant ball,
So that my senses quickly fled;
And when I woke with strength renewed,
The dragon in his blood lay dead,
While round me grouped my squires all stood.”

The joyous shouts, so long suppressed,
Now burst from every hearer’s breast,
Soon as the knight these words had spoken;
And ten times ‘gainst the high vault broken,
The sound of mingled voices rang,
Re-echoing back with hollow clang.
The Order’s sons demand, in haste,

The Poems of Schiller

That with a crown his brow be graced,
And gratefully in triumph now
The mob the youth would bear along
When, lo! the master knit his brow,
And called for silence 'mongst the throng.

And said, "The dragon that this land
Laid waste, thou slew'st with daring hand;
Although the people's idol thou,
The Order's foe I deem thee now.
Thy breast has to a fiend more base
Than e'en this dragon given place.
The serpent that the heart most stings,
And hatred and destruction brings,
That spirit is, which stubborn lies,
And impiously cast off the rein,
Despising order's sacred ties;
'Tis that destroys the world amain."

"The Mameluke makes of courage boast,
Obedience decks the Christian most;
For where our great and blessed Lord
As a mere servant walked abroad,
The fathers, on that holy ground,
This famous Order chose to found,
That arduous duty to fulfil
To overcome one's own self-will!
'Twas idle glory moved thee there:
So take thee hence from out my sight!
For who the Lord's yoke cannot bear,
To wear his cross can have no right."

A furious shout now raise the crowd,
The place is filled with outcries loud;
The brethren all for pardon cry;
The youth in silence droops his eye—
Mutely his garment from him throws,
Kisses the master's hand, and—goes.

The Poems of Schiller

But he pursues him with his gaze,
Recalls him lovingly, and says:
"Let me embrace thee now, my son!
The harder fight is gained by thee.
Take, then, this cross—the guerdon won
By self-subdued humility."

FEMALE JUDGMENT.

Man frames his judgment on reason; but woman on love finds her
verdict; If her judgment loves not, woman already has judged.

FRIDOLIN; OR, THE WALK TO THE IRON FOUNDRY.

A gentle was Fridolin,
And he his mistress dear,
Savern's fair Countess, honored in
All truth and godly fear.
She was so meek, and, ah! so good!
Yet each wish of her wayward mood,
He would have studied to fulfil,
To please his God, with earnest will.

From the first hour when daylight shone
Till rang the vesper-chime,
He lived but for her will alone,
And deemed e'en that scarce time.
And if she said, "Less anxious be!"
His eye then glistened tearfully.
Thinking that he in duty failed,
And so before no toil he quailed.

And so, before her serving train,
The Countess loved to raise him;
While her fair mouth, in endless strain,
Was ever wont to praise him.

The Poems of Schiller

She never held him as her slave,
Her heart a child's rights to him gave;
Her clear eye hung in fond delight
Upon his well-formed features bright.

Soon in the huntsman Robert's breast
Was poisonous anger fired;
His black soul, long by lust possessed,
With malice was inspired;
He sought the Count, whom, quick in deed,
A traitor might with ease mislead,
As once from hunting home they rode,
And in his heart suspicion sowed.

"Happy art thou, great Count, in truth,"
Thus cunningly he spoke;
"For ne'er mistrust's envenomed tooth
Thy golden slumbers broke;
A noble wife thy love rewards,
And modesty her person guards.
The tempter will be able ne'er
Her true fidelity to snare."

A gloomy scowl the Count's eye filled:
"What's this thou say'st to me?
Shall I on woman's virtue build,
Inconstant as the sea?
The flatterer's mouth with ease may lure;
My trust is placed on ground more sure.
No one, methinks, dare ever burn
To tempt the wife of Count Savern."

The other spoke: "Thou sayest it well,
The fool deserves thy scorn
Who ventures on such thoughts to dwell,
A mere retainer born,—
Who to the lady he obeys
Fears not his wishes' lust to raise." —

The Poems of Schiller

"What!" tremblingly the Count began,
"Dost speak, then, of a living man?" —

"Is, then, the thing, to all revealed,
Hid from my master's view?
Yet, since with care from thee concealed,
I'd fain conceal it too" —
"Speak quickly, villain! speak or die!"
Exclaimed the other fearfully.
"Who dares to look on Cunigond?"
"'Tis the fair page that is so fond."

"He's not ill-shaped in form, I wot,"
He craftily went on;
The Count meanwhile felt cold and hot,
By turns in every bone.
"Is't possible thou seest not, sir,
How he has eyes for none but her?
At table ne'er attends to thee,
But sighs behind her ceaselessly?"

"Behold the rhymes that from him came
His passion to confess" —
"Confess!" — "And for an answering flame, —
The impious knave! — to press.
My gracious lady, soft and meek,
Through pity, doubtless, feared to speak;
That it has 'scaped me, sore I rue;
What, lord, canst thou to help it do?"

Into the neighboring wood then rode
The Count, inflamed with wrath,
Where, in his iron foundry, glowed
The ore, and bubbled forth.
The workmen here, with busy hand,
The fire both late and early fanned.
The sparks fly out, the bellows ply,
As if the rock to liquefy.

The Poems of Schiller

The fire and water's might twofold
Are here united found;
The mill-wheel, by the flood seized hold,
Is whirling round and round;
The works are clattering night and day,
With measured stroke the hammers play,
And, yielding to the mighty blows,
The very iron plastic grows.

Then to two workmen beckons he,
And speaks thus in his ire;
"The first who's hither sent by me
Thus of ye to inquire
'Have ye obeyed my lord's word well?'
Him cast ye into yonder hell,
That into ashes he may fly,
And ne'er again torment mine eye!"
The inhuman pair were overjoyed,
With devilish glee possessed
For as the iron, feeling void,
Their heart was in their breast,
And brisker with the bellows' blast,
The foundry's womb now heat they fast,
And with a murderous mind prepare
To offer up the victim there.

Then Robert to his comrade spake,
With false hypocrisy:
"Up, comrade, up! no tarrying make!
Our lord has need of thee."
The lord to Fridolin then said:
"The pathway toward the foundry tread,
And of the workmen there inquire,
If they have done their lord's desire."

The other answered, "Be it so!"
But o'er him came this thought,
When he was all-prepared to go,

The Poems of Schiller

"Will she command me aught?"
So to the Countess straight he went:
"I'm to the iron-foundry sent;
Then say, can I do aught for thee?
For thou 'tis who commandest me."

To this the Lady of Savern
Replied in gentle tone:
"To hear the holy mass I yearn,
For sick now lies my son;
So go, my child, and when thou'rt there,
Utter for me a humble prayer,
And of thy sins think ruefully,
That grace may also fall on me."

And in this welcome duty glad,
He quickly left the place;
But ere the village bounds he had
Attained with rapid pace,
The sound of bells struck on his ear,
From the high belfry ringing clear,
And every sinner, mercy-sent,
Inviting to the sacrament.

"Never from praising God refrain
Where'er by thee He's found!"
He spoke, and stepped into the fane,
But there he heard no sound;
For 'twas the harvest time, and now
Glowed in the fields the reaper's brow;
No choristers were gathered there,
The duties of the mass to share.
The matter paused he not to weigh,
But took the sexton's part;
"That thing," he said, "makes no delay
Which heavenward guides the heart."
Upon the priest, with helping hand,
He placed the stole and sacred band,

The Poems of Schiller

The vessels he prepared beside,
That for the mass were sanctified.

And when his duties here were o'er,
Holding the mass-book, he,
Ministering to the priest, before
The altar bowed his knee,
And knelt him left, and knelt him right,
While not a look escaped his sight,
And when the holy Sanctus came,
The bell thrice rang he at the name.

And when the priest, bowed humbly too,
In hand uplifted high,
Facing the altar, showed to view
The present Deity,
The sacristan proclaimed it well,
Sounding the clearly-tinkling bell,
While all knelt down, and beat the breast,
And with a cross the Host confessed.

The rites thus served he, leaving none,
With quick and ready wit;
Each thing that in God's house is done,
He also practised it.
Unweariedly he labored thus,
Till the Vobiscum Dominus,
When toward the people turned the priest,
Blessed them,—and so the service ceased.

Then he disposed each thing again,
In fair and due array;
First purified the holy fane,
And then he went his way,
And gladly, with a mind at rest,
On to the iron-foundry pressed,
Saying the while, complete to be,
Twelve paternosters silently.

The Poems of Schiller

And when he saw the furnace smoke,
And saw the workmen stand,
"Have ye, ye fellows," thus he spoke,
"Obeyed the Count's command?"
Grinning they ope the orifice,
And point into the fell abyss:
"He's cared for—all is at an end!
The Count his servants will commend."

The answer to his lord he brought,
Returning hastily,
Who, when his form his notice caught,
Could scarcely trust his eye:
"Unhappy one! whence comest thou?"—
"Back from the foundry"—"Strange, I vow!
Hast in thy journey, then, delayed?"—
"'Twas only, lord, till I had prayed."

"For when I from thy presence went
(Oh pardon me!) to-day,
As duty bid, my steps I bent
To her whom I obey.
She told me, lord, the mass to hear,
I gladly to her wish gave ear,
And told four rosaries at the shrine,
For her salvation and for thine."

In wonder deep the Count now fell,
And, shuddering, thus spake he:
"And, at the foundry, quickly tell,
What answer gave they thee?"
"Obscure the words they answered in,—
Showing the furnace with a grin:
'He's cared for—all is at an end!
The Count his servants will commend.'"

"And Robert?" interrupted he,
While deadly pale he stood,—

The Poems of Schiller

"Did he not, then, fall in with thee?
I sent him to the wood." —
"Lord, neither in the wood nor field
Was trace of Robert's foot revealed." —
"Then," cried the Count, with awe-struck mien,
"Great God in heaven his judge hath been!"

With kindness he before ne'er proved,
He led him by the hand
Up to the Countess, — deeply moved, —
Who naught could understand.
"This child, let him be dear to thee,
No angel is so pure as he!
Though we may have been counselled ill,
God and His hosts watch o'er him still."

THE GENIUS WITH THE INVERTED TORCH.

Lovely he looks, 'tis true, with the light of his torch now
extinguished; But remember that death is not aesthetic, my friends!

THE COUNT OF HAPSBURG. 38

A BALLAD.

At Aix-la-Chapelle, in imperial array,
In its halls renowned in old story,
At the coronation banquet so gay
King Rudolf was sitting in glory.
The meats were served up by the Palsgrave of Rhine,
The Bohemian poured out the bright sparkling wine,
And all the Electors, the seven,
Stood waiting around the world-governing one,
As the chorus of stars encircle the sun,
That honor might duly be given.

The Poems of Schiller

And the people the lofty balcony round
In a throng exulting were filling;
While loudly were blending the trumpets' glad sound,
The multitude's voices so thrilling;
For the monarchless period, with horror rife,
Has ended now, after long baneful strife,
And the earth had a lord to possess her.
No longer ruled blindly the iron-bound spear,
And the weak and the peaceful no longer need fear
Being crushed by the cruel oppressor.

And the emperor speaks with a smile in his eye,
While the golden goblet he seizes:
"With this banquet in glory none other can vie,
And my regal heart well it pleases;
Yet the minstrel, the bringer of joy, is not here,
Whose melodious strains to my heart are so dear,
And whose words heavenly wisdom inspire;
Since the days of my youth it hath been my delight,
And that which I ever have loved as a knight,
As a monarch I also require."

And behold! 'mongst the princes who stand round the throne
Steps the bard, in his robe long and streaming,
While, bleached by the years that have over him flown,
His silver locks brightly are gleaming;
"Sweet harmony sleeps in the golden strings,
The minstrel of true love reward ever sings,
And adores what to virtue has tended—
What the bosom may wish, what the senses hold dear;
But say, what is worthy the emperor's ear
At this, of all feasts the most splendid?"

"No restraint would I place on the minstrel's own choice,"
Speaks the monarch, a smile on each feature;
"He obeys the swift hour's imperious voice,
Of a far greater lord is the creature.
For, as through the air the storm-wind on-speeds,—

The Poems of Schiller

One knows not from whence its wild roaring proceeds—
As the spring from hid sources up-leaping,
So the lay of the bard from the inner heart breaks
While the might of sensations unknown it awakes,
That within us were wondrously sleeping.”

Then the bard swept the cords with a finger of might,
Evoking their magical sighing:
“To the chase once rode forth a valorous knight,
In pursuit of the antelope flying.
His hunting-spear bearing, there came in his train
His squire; and when o’er a wide-spreading plain
On his stately steed he was riding,
He heard in the distance a bell tinkling clear,
And a priest, with the Host, he saw soon drawing near,
While before him the sexton was striding.”

“And low to the earth the Count then inclined,
Bared his head in humble submission,
To honor, with trusting and Christian-like mind,
What had saved the whole world from perdition.
But a brook o’er the plain was pursuing its course,
That swelled by the mountain stream’s headlong force,
Barred the wanderer’s steps with its current;
So the priest on one side the blest sacrament put,
And his sandal with nimbleness drew from his foot,
That he safely might pass through the torrent.”

““What wouldst thou?” the Count to him thus began,
His wondering look toward him turning:
‘My journey is, lord, to a dying man,
Who for heavenly diet is yearning;
But when to the bridge o’er the brook I came nigh,
In the whirl of the stream, as it madly rushed by
With furious might ‘twas uprooted.
And so, that the sick the salvation may find
That he pants for, I hasten with resolute mind
To wade through the waters barefooted.’”

The Poems of Schiller

“Then the Count made him mount on his stately steed,
And the reins to his hands he confided,
That he duly might comfort the sick in his need,
And that each holy rite be provided.
And himself, on the back of the steed of his squire,
Went after the chase to his heart’s full desire,
While the priest on his journey was speeding
And the following morning, with thankful look,
To the Count once again his charger he took,
Its bridle with modesty leading.”

“‘God forbid that in chase or in battle,’ then cried
The Count with humility lowly,
‘The steed I henceforward should dare to bestride
That had borne my Creator so holy!
And if, as a guerdon, he may not be thine,
He devoted shall be to the service divine,
Proclaiming His infinite merit,
From whom I each honor and earthly good
Have received in fee, and my body and blood,
And my breath, and my life, and my spirit.’”

“‘Then may God, the sure rock, whom no time can e’er move,
And who lists to the weak’s supplication,
For the honor thou pay’st Him, permit thee to prove
Honor here, and hereafter salvation!
Thou’rt a powerful Count, and thy knightly command
Hath blazoned thy fame through the Switzer’s broad land;
Thou art blest with six daughters admired;
May they each in thy house introduce a bright crown,
Filling ages unborn with their glorious renown’ —
Thus exclaimed he in accents inspired.”

And the emperor sat there all-thoughtfully,
While the dream of the past stood before him;
And when on the minstrel he turned his eye,
His words’ hidden meaning stole o’er him;
For seeing the traits of the priest there revealed,

The Poems of Schiller

In the folds of his purple-dyed robe he concealed
His tears as they swiftly coursed down.
And all on the emperor wonderingly gazed,
And the blest dispensations of Providence praised,
For the Count and the Caesar were one.

THE FORUM OF WOMAN.

Woman, never judge man by his individual actions;
But upon man as a whole, pass thy decisive decree.

THE GLOVE.

A TALE.

Before his lion-court,
Impatient for the sport,
King Francis sat one day;
The peers of his realm sat around,
And in balcony high from the ground
Sat the ladies in beauteous array.

And when with his finger he beckoned,
The gate opened wide in a second,—
And in, with deliberate tread,
Enters a lion dread,
And looks around
Yet utters no sound;
Then long he yawns
And shakes his mane,
And, stretching each limb,
Down lies he again.

Again signs the king,—
The next gate open flies,
And, lo! with a wild spring,

The Poems of Schiller

A tiger out hies.
When the lion he sees, loudly roars he about,
And a terrible circle his tail traces out.
Protruding his tongue, past the lion he walks,
And, snarling with rage, round him warily stalks:
Then, growling anew,
On one side lies down too.

Again signs the king, —
And two gates open fly,
And, lo! with one spring,
Two leopards out hie.
On the tiger they rush, for the fight nothing loth,
But he with his paws seizes hold of them both.
And the lion, with roaring, gets up, — then all's still;
The fierce beasts stalk around, madly thirsting to kill.

From the balcony raised high above
A fair hand lets fall down a glove
Into the lists, where 'tis seen
The lion and tiger between.

To the knight, Sir Delorges, in tone of jest,
Then speaks young Cunigund fair;
"Sir Knight, if the love that thou feel'st in thy breast
Is as warm as thou'rt wont at each moment to swear,
Pick up, I pray thee, the glove that lies there!"
And the knight, in a moment, with dauntless tread,
Jumps into the lists, nor seeks to linger,
And, from out the midst of those monsters dread,
Picks up the glove with a daring finger.

And the knights and ladies of high degree
With wonder and horror the action see,
While he quietly brings in his hand the glove,
The praise of his courage each mouth employs;
Meanwhile, with a tender look of love,
The promise to him of coming joys,

The Poems of Schiller

Fair Cunigund welcomes him back to his place.
But he threw the glove point-blank in her face:
"Lady, no thanks from thee I'll receive!"
And that selfsame hour he took his leave.

THE CIRCLE OF NATURE.

All, thou gentle one, lies embraced in thy kingdom; the graybeard
Back to the days of his youth, childish and child-like, returns.

THE VEILED STATUE AT SAIS.

A youth, impelled by a burning thirst for knowledge
To roam to Sais, in fair Egypt's land,
The priesthood's secret learning to explore,
Had passed through many a grade with eager haste,
And still was hurrying on with fond impatience.
Scarce could the Hierophant impose a rein
Upon his headlong efforts. "What avails
A part without the whole?" the youth exclaimed;
"Can there be here a lesser or a greater?
The truth thou speak'st of, like mere earthly dross,
Is't but a sum that can be held by man
In larger or in smaller quantity?
Surely 'tis changeless, indivisible;
Deprive a harmony of but one note,
Deprive the rainbow of one single color,
And all that will remain is naught, so long
As that one color, that one note, is wanting."

While thus they converse held, they chanced to stand
Within the precincts of a lonely temple,
Where a veiled statue of gigantic size
The youth's attention caught. In wonderment
He turned him toward his guide, and asked him, saying,
"What form is that concealed beneath yon veil?"

The Poems of Schiller

"Truth!" was the answer. "What!" the young man cried,
"When I am striving after truth alone,
Seekest thou to hide that very truth from me?"

"The Godhead's self alone can answer thee,"
Replied the Hierophant. "'Let no rash mortal
Disturb this veil,' said he, 'till raised by me;
For he who dares with sacrilegious hand
To move the sacred mystic covering,
He'—said the Godhead—" "Well?"—"will see the truth."
"Strangely oracular, indeed! And thou
Hast never ventured, then, to raise the veil?"
"I? Truly not! I never even felt
The least desire."—"Is't possible? If I
Were severed from the truth by nothing else
Than this thin gauze—" "And a divine decree,"
His guide broke in. "Far heavier than thou thinkest
Is this thin gauze, my son. Light to thy hand
It may be—but most weighty to thy conscience."

The youth now sought his home, absorbed in thought;
His burning wish to solve the mystery
Banished all sleep; upon his couch he lay,
Tossing his feverish limbs. When midnight came,
He rose, and toward the temple timidly,
Led by a mighty impulse, bent his way.
The walls he scaled, and soon one active spring
Landed the daring boy beneath the dome.

Behold him now, in utter solitude,
Welcomed by naught save fearful, deathlike silence,—
A silence which the echo of his steps
Alone disturbs, as through the vaults he paces.
Piercing an opening in the cupola,
The moon cast down her pale and silvery beams,
And, awful as a present deity,
Glittering amid the darkness of the pile,
In its long veil concealed, the statue stands.

The Poems of Schiller

With hesitating step, he now draws near—
His impious hand would fain remove the veil—
Sudden a burning chill assails his bones
And then an unseen arm repulses him.
"Unhappy one, what wouldst thou do?" Thus cries
A faithful voice within his trembling breast.
"Wouldst thou profanely violate the All-Holy?"
"'Tis true the oracle declared, 'Let none
Venture to raise the veil till raised by me.'
But did the oracle itself not add,
That he who did so would behold the truth?
Whate'er is hid behind, I'll raise the veil."
And then he shouted: "Yes! I will behold it!"
 "Behold it!"
Repeats in mocking tone the distant echo.

He speaks, and, with the word, lifts up the veil.
Would you inquire what form there met his eye?
I know not,—but, when day appeared, the priests
Found him extended senseless, pale as death,
Before the pedestal of Isis' statue.
What had been seen and heard by him when there
He never would disclose, but from that hour
His happiness in life had fled forever,
And his deep sorrow soon conducted him
To an untimely grave. "Woe to that man,"
He warning said to every questioner,
"Woe to that man who wins the truth by guilt,
For truth so gained will ne'er reward its owner."

THE DIVISION OF THE EARTH.

"Take the world!" Zeus exclaimed from his throne in the skies
To the children of man—"take the world I now give;
It shall ever remain as your heirloom and prize,
So divide it as brothers, and happily live."

The Poems of Schiller

Then all who had hands sought their share to obtain,
The young and the aged made haste to appear;
The husbandman seized on the fruits of the plain,
The youth through the forest pursued the fleet deer.

The merchant took all that his warehouse could hold,
The abbot selected the last year's best wine,
The king barred the bridges, — the highways controlled,
And said, "Now remember, the tithes shall be mine!"

But when the division long-settled had been,
The poet drew nigh from a far distant land;
But alas! not a remnant was now to be seen,
Each thing on the earth owned a master's command.

"Alas! shall then I, of thy sons the most true, —
Shall I, 'mongst them all, be forgotten alone?"
Thus loudly he cried in his anguish, and threw
Himself in despair before Jupiter's throne.

"If thou in the region of dreams didst delay,
Complain not of me," the Immortal replied;
"When the world was apportioned, where then wert thou, pray?"
"I was," said the poet, "I was — by thy side!"

"Mine eye was then fixed on thy features so bright,
Mine ear was entranced by thy harmony's power;
Oh, pardon the spirit that, awed by thy light,
All things of the earth could forget in that hour!"

"What to do?" Zeus exclaimed, — "for the world has been given;
The harvest, the market, the chase, are not free;
But if thou with me wilt abide in my heaven,
Whenever thou comest, 'twill be open to thee!"

The Poems of Schiller

THE FAIREST APPARITION.

If thou never hast gazed upon beauty in moments of sorrow,
Thou canst with truth never boast that thou true beauty hast seen.
If thou never hast gazed upon gladness in beauteous features,
Thou canst with truth never boast that thou true gladness hast
seen.

THE IDEAL AND THE ACTUAL LIFE.

Forever fair, forever calm and bright,
Life flies on plumage, zephyr-light,
For those who on the Olympian hill rejoice—
Moons wane, and races wither to the tomb,
And 'mid the universal ruin, bloom
The rosy days of Gods—With man, the choice,
Timid and anxious, hesitates between
The sense's pleasure and the soul's content;
While on celestial brows, aloft and sheen,
The beams of both are blent.

Seekest thou on earth the life of gods to share,
Safe in the realm of death?—beware
To pluck the fruits that glitter to thine eye;
Content thyself with gazing on their glow—
Short are the joys possession can bestow,
And in possession sweet desire will die.
'Twas not the ninefold chain of waves that bound
Thy daughter, Ceres, to the Stygian river—
She plucked the fruit of the unholy ground,
And so—was hell's forever!
The weavers of the web—the fates—but sway
The matter and the things of clay;
Safe from change that time to matter gives,
Nature's blest playmate, free at will to stray
With gods a god, amidst the fields of day,
The form, the archetype 39, serenely lives.

The Poems of Schiller

Would'st thou soar heavenward on its joyous wing?
Cast from thee, earth, the bitter and the real,
High from this cramped and dungeon being, spring
Into the realm of the ideal!

Here, bathed, perfection, in thy purest ray,
Free from the dregs and taints of clay,
Hovers divine the archetypal man!
Dim as those phantom ghosts of life that gleam
And wander voiceless by the Stygian stream,—
Fair as it stands in fields Elysian,
Ere down to flesh the immortal doth descend:—
If doubtful ever in the actual life
Each contest—here a victory crowns the end
Of every nobler strife.

Not from the strife itself to set thee free,
But more to nerve—doth victory
Wave her rich garland from the ideal clime.
Whate'er thy wish, the earth has no repose—
Life still must drag thee onward as it flows,
Whirling thee down the dancing surge of time.
But when the courage sinks beneath the dull
Sense of its narrow limits—on the soul,
Bright from the hill-tops of the beautiful,
Bursts the attained goal!

If worth thy while the glory and the strife
Which fire the lists of actual life—
The ardent rush to fortune or to fame,
In the hot field where strength and valor are,
And rolls the whirling thunder of the car,
And the world, breathless, eyes the glorious game—
Then dare and strive—the prize can but belong
To him whose valor o'er his tribe prevails;
In life the victory only crowns the strong—
He who is feeble fails.

The Poems of Schiller

But life, whose source, by crags around it piled,
Chafed while confined, foams fierce and wild,
Glides soft and smooth when once its streams expand,
When its waves, glassing in their silver play,
Aurora blent with Hesper's milder ray,
Gain the still beautiful—that shadow-land!
Here, contest grows but interchange of love,
All curb is but the bondage of the grace;
Gone is each foe,—peace folds her wings above
Her native dwelling-place.

When, through dead stone to breathe a soul of light,
With the dull matter to unite
The kindling genius, some great sculptor glows;
Behold him straining, every nerve intent—
Behold how, o'er the subject element,
The stately thought its march laborious goes!
For never, save to toil untiring, spoke
The unwilling truth from her mysterious well—
The statue only to the chisel's stroke
Wakes from its marble cell.

But onward to the sphere of beauty—go
Onward, O child of art! and, lo!
Out of the matter which thy pains control
The statue springs!—not as with labor wrung
From the hard block, but as from nothing sprung—
Airy and light—the offspring of the soul!
The pangs, the cares, the weary toils it cost
Leave not a trace when once the work is done—
The Artist's human frailty merged and lost
In art's great victory won! 40

If human sin confronts the rigid law
Of perfect truth and virtue 41, awe
Seizes and saddens thee to see how far
Beyond thy reach, perfection;—if we test
By the ideal of the good, the best,

The Poems of Schiller

How mean our efforts and our actions are!
This space between the ideal of man's soul
And man's achievement, who hath ever past?
An ocean spreads between us and that goal,
Where anchor ne'er was cast!

But fly the boundary of the senses—live
The ideal life free thought can give;
And, lo, the gulf shall vanish, and the chill
Of the soul's impotent despair be gone!
And with divinity thou sharest the throne,
Let but divinity become thy will!
Scorn not the law—permit its iron band
The sense (it cannot chain the soul) to thrall.
Let man no more the will of Jove withstand 42,
And Jove the bolt lets fall!

If, in the woes of actual human life—
If thou could'st see the serpent strife
Which the Greek art has made divine in stone—
Could'st see the writhing limbs, the livid cheek,
Note every pang, and hearken every shriek,
Of some despairing lost Laocoon,
The human nature would thyself subdue
To share the human woe before thine eye—
Thy cheek would pale, and all thy soul be true
To man's great sympathy.

But in the ideal realm, aloof and far,
Where the calm art's pure dwellers are,
Lo, the Laocoon writhes, but does not groan.
Here, no sharp grief the high emotion knows—
Here, suffering's self is made divine, and shows
The brave resolve of the firm soul alone:
Here, lovely as the rainbow on the dew
Of the spent thunder-cloud, to art is given,
Gleaming through grief's dark veil, the peaceful blue
Of the sweet moral heaven.

The Poems of Schiller

So, in the glorious parable, behold
How, bowed to mortal bonds, of old
Life's dreary path divine Alcides trod:
The hydra and the lion were his prey,
And to restore the friend he loved to-day,
He went undaunted to the black-browed god;
And all the torments and the labors sore
Wroth Juno sent—the meek majestic one,
With patient spirit and unquailing, bore,
Until the course was run—

Until the god cast down his garb of clay,
And rent in hallowing flame away
The mortal part from the divine—to soar
To the empyreal air! Behold him spring
Blithe in the pride of the unwonted wing,
And the dull matter that confined before
Sinks downward, downward, downward as a dream!
Olympian hymns receive the escaping soul,
And smiling Hebe, from the ambrosial stream,
Fills for a god the bowl!

GERMANY AND HER PRINCES.

Thou hast produced mighty monarchs, of whom thou art not
unworthy,
For the obedient alone make him who governs them great.
But, O Germany, try if thou for thy rulers canst make it
Harder as kings to be great,—easier, though, to be men!

DANGEROUS CONSEQUENCES.

Deeper and bolder truths be careful, my friends, of avowing;
For as soon as ye do all the world on ye will fall.

The Poems of Schiller

THE MAIDEN FROM AFAR.

(OR FROM ABROAD.)

Within a vale, each infant year,
When earliest larks first carol free,
To humble shepherds cloth appear
A wondrous maiden, fair to see.
Not born within that lowly place—
From whence she wandered, none could tell;
Her parting footsteps left no trace,
When once the maiden sighed farewell.
And blessed was her presence there—
Each heart, expanding, grew more gay;
Yet something loftier still than fair
Kept man's familiar looks away.
From fairy gardens, known to none,
She brought mysterious fruits and flowers—
The things of some serener sun—
Some Nature more benign than ours.

With each her gifts the maiden shared—
To some the fruits, the flowers to some;
Alike the young, the aged fared;
Each bore a blessing back to home.
Though every guest was welcome there,
Yet some the maiden held more dear,
And culled her rarest sweets whene'er
She saw two hearts that loved draw near. 43

THE HONORABLE.

Ever honor the whole; individuals only I honor;
In individuals I always discover the whole.

The Poems of Schiller

PARABLES AND RIDDLES.

I.

A bridge of pearls its form uprears
High o'er a gray and misty sea;
E'en in a moment it appears,
And rises upwards giddily.

Beneath its arch can find a road
The loftiest vessel's mast most high,
Itself hath never borne a load,
And seems, when thou draw'st near, to fly.
It comes first with the stream, and goes
Soon as the watery flood is dried.
Where may be found this bridge, disclose,
And who its beauteous form supplied!

II.

It bears thee many a mile away,
And yet its place it changes ne'er;
It has no pinions to display,
And yet conducts thee through the air.

It is the bark of swiftest motion
That every weary wanderer bore;
With speed of thought the greatest ocean
It carries thee in safety o'er;
One moment wafts thee to the shore.

III.

Upon a spacious meadow play
Thousands of sheep, of silvery hue;
And as we see them move to-day,
The man most aged saw them too.

The Poems of Schiller

They ne'er grow old, and, from a rill
That never dries, their life is drawn;
A shepherd watches o'er them still,
With curved and beauteous silver horn.

He drives them out through gates of gold,
And every night their number counts;
Yet ne'er has lost, of all his fold,
One lamb, though oft that path he mounts.

A hound attends him faithfully,
A nimble ram precedes the way;
Canst thou point out that flock to me,
And who the shepherd, canst thou say?

IV.

There stands a dwelling, vast and tall,
On unseen columns fair;
No wanderer treads or leaves its hall,
And none can linger there.

Its wondrous structure first was planned
With art no mortal knows;
It lights the lamps with its own hand
'Mongst which it brightly glows.

It has a roof, as crystal bright,
Formed of one gem of dazzling light;
Yet mortal eye has ne'er
Seen Him who placed it there.

V.

Within a well two buckets lie,
One mounts, and one descends;
When one is full, and rises high,
The other downward wends.

The Poems of Schiller

They wander ever to and fro—
Now empty are, now overflow.
If to the mouth thou liftest this,
That hangs within the dark abyss.
In the same moment they can ne'er
Refresh thee with their treasures fair.

VI.

Know'st thou the form on tender ground?
It gives itself its glow, its light;
And though each moment changing found.
Is ever whole and ever bright.
In narrow compass 'tis confined,
Within the smallest frame it lies;
Yet all things great that move thy mind,
That form alone to thee supplies.

And canst thou, too, the crystal name?
No gem can equal it in worth;
It gleams, yet kindles near to flame,
It sucks in even all the earth.
Within its bright and wondrous ring
Is pictured forth the glow of heaven,
And yet it mirrors back each thing
Far fairer than to it 'twas given.

VII.

For ages an edifice here has been found,
It is not a dwelling, it is not a Pane;
A horseman for hundreds of days may ride round,
Yet the end of his journey he ne'er can attain.

Full many a century o'er it has passed,
The might of the storm and of time it defies!
Neath the rainbow of Heaven stands free to the last,—
In the ocean it dips, and soars up to the skies.

The Poems of Schiller

It was not vain glory that bade its erection,
It serves as a refuge, a shield, a protection;
Its like on the earth never yet has been known
And yet by man's hand it is fashioned alone.

VIII.

Among all serpents there is one,
Born of no earthly breed;
In fury wild it stands alone,
And in its matchless speed.
With fearful voice and headlong force
It rushes on its prey,
And sweeps the rider and his horse
In one fell swoop away.

The highest point it loves to gain;
And neither bar nor lock
Its fiery onslaught can restrain;
And arms—invite its shock.

It tears in twain like tender grass,
The strongest forest-trees;
It grinds to dust the hardened brass,
Though stout and firm it be.

And yet this beast, that none can tame,
Its threat ne'er twice fulfils;
It dies in its self-kindled flame.
And dies e'en when it kills.

IX.

We children six our being had
From a most strange and wondrous pair,—
Our mother ever grave and sad,
Our father ever free from care.

The Poems of Schiller

Our virtues we from both receive, —
Meekness from her, from him our light;
And so in endless youth we weave
Round thee a circling figure bright.

We ever shun the caverns black,
And revel in the glowing day;
'Tis we who light the world's dark track,
With our life's clear and magic ray.
Spring's joyful harbingers are we,
And her inspiring streams we swell;
And so the house of death we flee,
For life alone must round us dwell.

Without us is no perfect bliss,
When man is glad, we, too, attend,
And when a monarch worshipped is,
To him our majesty attend.

X.

What is the thing esteemed by few?
The monarch's hand it decks with pride,
Yet it is made to injure too,
And to the sword is most allied.

No blood it sheds, yet many a wound
Inflicts, — gives wealth, yet takes from none;
Has vanquished e'en the earth's wide round,
And makes life's current smoothly run.

The greatest kingdoms it has framed,
The oldest cities reared from dust,
Yet war's fierce torch has ne'er inflamed;
Happy are they who in it trust!

The Poems of Schiller

XI.

I live within a dwelling of stone,
There buried in slumber I dally;
Yet, armed with a weapon of iron alone,
The foe to encounter I sally.

At first I'm invisible, feeble, and mean,
And o'er me thy breath has dominion;
I'm easily drowned in a raindrop e'en,
Yet in victory waxes my pinion.

When my sister, all-powerful, gives me her hand,
To the terrible lord of the world I expand.

XII.

Upon a disk my course I trace,
There restlessly forever flit;
Small is the circuit I embrace,
Two hands suffice to cover it.
Yet ere that field I traverse, I
Full many a thousand mile must go,
E'en though with tempest-speed I fly,
Swifter than arrow from a bow.

XIII.

A bird it is, whose rapid motion
With eagle's flight divides the air;
A fish it is, and parts the ocean,
That bore a greater monster ne'er;
An elephant it is, whose rider
On his broad back a tower has put:
'Tis like the reptile base, the spider,
Whenever it extends its foot;
And when, with iron tooth projecting,
It seeks its own life-blood to drain,

The Poems of Schiller

On footing firm, itself erecting,
It braves the raging hurricane.

THE VIRTUE OF WOMAN.

Man of virtue has need;-into life with boldness he plunges,
Entering with fortune more sure into the hazardous strife;
But to woman one virtue suffices; it is ever shining
Lovingly forth to the heart; so let it shine to the eye!

THE WALK.

Hail to thee, mountain beloved, with thy glittering purple-dyed
summit!

Hail to thee also, fair sun, looking so lovingly on!
Thee, too, I hail, thou smiling plain, and ye murmuring lindens,
Ay, and the chorus so glad, cradled on yonder high boughs;
Thee, too, peaceably azure, in infinite measure extending
Round the dusky-hued mount, over the forest so green,—
Round about me, who now from my chamber's confinement
escaping,

And from vain frivolous talk, gladly seek refuge with thee.
Through me to quicken me runs the balsamic stream of thy breezes,
While the energetical light freshens the gaze as it thirsts.
Bright o'er the blooming meadow the changeable colors are
gleaming,

But the strife, full of charms, in its own grace melts away
Freely the plain receives me,—with carpet far away reaching,
Over its friendly green wanders the pathway along.
Round me is humming the busy bee, and with pinion uncertain
Hovers the butterfly gay over the trefoil's red flower.
Fiercely the darts of the sun fall on me,—the zephyr is silent,
Only the song of the lark echoes athwart the clear air.
Now from the neighboring copse comes a roar, and the tops of the
alders

Bend low down,—in the wind dances the silvery grass;

The Poems of Schiller

Night ambrosial circles me round; in the coolness so fragrant
Greets me a beauteous roof, formed by the beeches' sweet shade.
In the depths of the wood the landscape suddenly leaves me
And a serpentine path guides up my footsteps on high.
Only by stealth can the light through the leafy trellis of branches
Sparingly pierce, and the blue smilingly peeps through the boughs,
But in a moment the veil is rent, and the opening forest
Suddenly gives back the day's glittering brightness to me!
Boundlessly seems the distance before my gaze to be stretching,
And in a purple-tinged hill terminates sweetly the world.

Deep at the foot of the mountain, that under me falls away steeply,
Wanders the greenish-hued stream, looking like glass as it flows.
Endlessly under me see I the ether, and endlessly o'er
Giddily look I above, shudderingly look I below,
But between the infinite height and the infinite hollow
Safely the wanderer moves over a well-guarded path.
Smilingly past me are flying the banks all teeming with riches,
And the valley so bright boasts of its industry glad.
See how yonder hedgerows that sever the farmer's possessions
Have by Demeter been worked into the tapestried plain!
Kindly decree of the law, of the Deity mortal-sustaining,
Since from the brazen world love vanished forever away.
But in freer windings the measured pastures are traversed
(Now swallowed up in the wood, now climbing up to the hills)
By a glimmering streak, the highway that knits lands together;
Over the smooth-flowing stream, quietly glide on the rafts.

Ofttimes resound the bells of the flocks in the fields that seem living,
And the shepherd's lone song wakens the echo again.
Joyous villages crown the stream, in the copse others vanish,
While from the back of the mount, others plunge wildly below.
Man still lives with the land in neighborly friendship united,
And round his sheltering roof calmly repose still his fields;
Trustingly climbs the vine high over the low-reaching window,
While round the cottage the tree circles its far-stretching boughs.
Happy race of the plain! Not yet awakened to freedom,
Thou and thy pastures with joy share in the limited law;

The Poems of Schiller

Bounded thy wishes all are by the harvest's peaceable circuit,
And thy lifetime is spent e'en as the task of the day!

But what suddenly hides the beauteous view? A strange spirit
Over the still-stranger plain spreads itself quickly afar —
Coily separates now, what scarce had lovingly mingled,
And 'tis the like that alone joins itself on to the like.
Orders I see depicted; the haughty tribes of the poplars
Marshalled in regular pomp, stately and beauteous appear.
All gives token of rule and choice, and all has its meaning, —
'Tis this uniform plan points out the Ruler to me.
Brightly the glittering domes in far-away distance proclaim him.
Out of the kernel of rocks rises the city's high wall.
Into the desert without, the fauns of the forest are driven,
But by devotion is lent life more sublime to the stone.
Man is brought into nearer union with man, and around him
Closer, more actively wakes, swifter moves in him the world.
See! the emulous forces in fiery conflict are kindled,
Much, they effect when they strive, more they effect when they join.
Thousands of hands by one spirit are moved, yet in thousands of
bosoms
Beats one heart all alone, by but one feeling inspired —
Beats for their native land, and glows for their ancestors' precepts;
Here on the well-beloved spot, rest now time-honored bones.

Down from the heavens descends the blessed troop of immortals,
In the bright circle divine making their festal abode;
Granting glorious gifts, they appear: and first of all, Ceres
Offers the gift of the plough, Hermes the anchor brings next,
Bacchus the grape, and Minerva the verdant olive-tree's branches,
Even his charger of war brings there Poseidon as well.
Mother Cybele yokes to the pole of her chariot the lions,
And through the wide-open door comes as a citizen in.
Sacred stones! 'Tis from ye that proceed humanity's founders,
Morals and arts ye sent forth, e'en to the ocean's far isles.
'Twas at these friendly gates that the law was spoken by sages;
In their Penates' defence, heroes rushed out to the fray.
On the high walls appeared the mothers, embracing their infants,

The Poems of Schiller

Looking after the march, till the distance 'twas lost.
Then in prayer they threw themselves down at the deities' altars,
Praying for triumph and fame, praying for your safe return.
Honor and triumph were yours, but naught returned save your
glory,
And by a heart-touching stone, told are your valorous deeds.
"Traveller! when thou com'st to Sparta, proclaim to the people
That thou hast seen us lie here, as by the law we were bid."
Slumber calmly, ye loved ones! for sprinkled o'er by your life-blood,
Flourish the olive-trees there, joyously sprouts the good seed.
In its possessions exulting, industry gladly is kindled.
And from the sedge of the stream smilingly signs the blue god.
Crushingly falls the axe on the tree, the Dryad sighs sadly;
Down from the crest of the mount plunges the thundering load.
Winged by the lever, the stone from the rocky crevice is loosened;
Into the mountain's abyss boldly the miner descends.
Mulciber's anvil resounds with the measured stroke of the hammer;
Under the fist's nervous blow, spurt out the sparks of the steel.
Brilliantly twines the golden flax round the swift-whirling spindles,
Through the strings of the yarn whizzes the shuttle away.

Far in the roads the pilot calls, and the vessels are waiting,
That to the foreigner's land carry the produce of home;
Others gladly approach with the treasures of far-distant regions,
High on the mast's lofty head flutters the garland of mirth.
See how yon markets, those centres of life and of gladness, are
swarming!
Strange confusion of tongues sounds in the wondering ear.
On to the pile the wealth of the earth is heaped by the merchant,
All that the sun's scorching rays bring forth on Africa's soil,
All that Arabia prepares, that the uttermost Thule produces,
High with heart-gladdening stores fills Amalthea her horn.
Fortune wedded to talent gives birth there to children immortal,
Suckled in liberty's arms, flourish the arts there of joy.
With the image of life the eyes by the sculptor are ravished,
And by the chisel inspired, speaks e'en the sensitive stone.
Skies artificial repose on slender Ionian columns,
And a Pantheon includes all that Olympus contains.

The Poems of Schiller

Light as the rainbow's spring through the air, as the dart from the
bowstring,
Leaps the yoke of the bridge over the boisterous stream.

But in his silent chamber the thoughtful sage is projecting
Magical circles, and steals e'en on the spirit that forms,
Proves the force of matter, the hatreds and loves of the magnet,
Follows the tune through the air, follows through ether the ray,
Seeks the familiar law in chance's miracles dreaded,
Looks for the ne'er-changing pole in the phenomena's flight.
Bodies and voices are lent by writing to thought ever silent,
Over the centuries' stream bears it the eloquent page.
Then to the wondering gaze dissolves the cloud of the fancy,
And the vain phantoms of night yield to the dawning of day.
Man now breaks through his fetters, the happy one! Oh, let him
never
Break from the bridle of shame, when from fear's fetters he breaks
Freedom! is reason's cry,—ay, freedom! The wild raging passions
Eagerly cast off the bonds Nature divine had imposed.

Ah! in the tempest the anchors break loose, that warningly held him
On to the shore, and the stream tears him along in its flood,—
Into infinity whirls him,—the coasts soon vanish before him,
High on the mountainous waves rocks all-dismasted the bark;
Under the clouds are hid the steadfast stars of the chariot,
Naught now remains,—in the breast even the god goes astray.
Truth disappears from language, from life all faith and all honor
Vanish, and even the oath is but a lie on the lips.
Into the heart's most trusty bond, and into love's secrets,
Presses the sycophant base, tearing the friend from the friend.
Treason on innocence leers, with looks that seek to devour,
And the fell slanderer's tooth kills with its poisonous bite.
In the dishonored bosom, thought is now venal, and love, too,
Scatters abroad to the winds, feelings once god-like and free.
All thy holy symbols, O truth, deceit has adopted,
And has e'en dared to pollute Nature's own voices so fair,
That the craving heart in the tumult of gladness discovers;
True sensations are now mute and can scarcely be heard.

The Poems of Schiller

Justice boasts at the tribune, and harmony vaunts in the cottage,
While the ghost of the law stands at the throne of the king.
Years together, ay, centuries long, may the mummy continue,
And the deception endure, apeing the fulness of life.
Until Nature awakes, and with hands all-brazen and heavy
'Gainst the hollow-formed pile time and necessity strikes.
Like a tigress, who, bursting the massive grating iron,
Of her Numidian wood suddenly, fearfully thinks, —
So with the fury of crime and anguish, humanity rises
Hoping nature, long-lost in the town's ashes, to find.
Oh then open, ye walls, and set the captive at freedom
To the long desolate plains let him in safety return!

But where am I? The path is now hid, declivities rugged
Bar, with their wide-yawning gulfs, progress before and behind.
Now far behind me is left the gardens' and hedges' sure escort,
Every trace of man's hand also remains far behind.
Only the matter I see piled up, whence life has its issue,
And the raw mass of basalt waits for a fashioning hand.
Down through its channel of rock the torrent roaringly rushes,
Angrily forcing a path under the roots of the trees.
All is here wild and fearfully desolate. Naught but the eagle
Hangs in the lone realms of air, knitting the world to the clouds.
Not one zephyr on soaring pinion conveys to my hearing
Echoes, however remote, marking man's pleasures and pains.
Am I in truth, then, alone? Within thine arms, on thy bosom,
Nature, I lie once again! — Ah, and 'twas only a dream
That assailed me with horrors so fearful; with life's dreaded
phantom,
And with the down-rushing vale, vanished the gloomy one too.
Purer my life I receive again from thine altar unsullied, —
Purer receive the bright glow felt by my youth's hopeful days.
Ever the will is changing its aim and its rule, while forever,
In a still varying form, actions revolve round themselves.
But in enduring youth, in beauty ever renewing.
Kindly Nature, with grace thou dost revere the old law!
Ever the same, for the man in thy faithful hands thou preservest
That which the child in its sport, that which the youth lent to thee;

The Poems of Schiller

At the same breast thou dost suckle the ceaselessly-varying ages;
Under the same azure vault, over the same verdant earth,
Races, near and remote, in harmony wander together,
See, even Homer's own sun looks on us, too, with a smile!

THE LAY OF THE BELL.

"Vivos voco—Mortuos plango—Fulgura frango." 44

Fast, in its prison-walls of earth,
Awaits the mould of baked clay.
Up, comrades, up, and aid the birth
The bell that shall be born to-day!
Who would honor obtain,
With the sweat and the pain,
The praise that man gives to the master must buy.—
But the blessing withal must descend from on high!

And well an earnest word beseems
The work the earnest hand prepares;
Its load more light the labor deems,
When sweet discourse the labor shares.
So let us ponder—nor in vain—
What strength can work when labor wills;
For who would not the fool disdain
Who ne'er designs what he fulfils?
And well it stamps our human race,
And hence the gift to understand,
That man within the heart should trace
Whate'er he fashions with the hand.

From the fir the fagot take,
Keep it, heap it hard and dry,
That the gathered flame may break
Through the furnace, wroth and high.
When the copper within
Seeths and simmers—the tin,

The Poems of Schiller

Pour quick, that the fluid that feeds the bell
May flow in the right course glib and well.

Deep hid within this nether cell,
What force with fire is moulding thus,
In yonder airy tower shall dwell,
And witness wide and far of us!
It shall, in later days, unfailing,
Rouse many an ear to rapt emotion;
Its solemn voice with sorrow wailing,
Or choral chiming to devotion.
Whatever fate to man may bring,
Whatever weal or woe befall,
That metal tongue shall backward ring,
The warning moral drawn from all.

See the silvery bubbles spring!
Good! the mass is melting now!
Let the salts we duly bring
Purge the flood, and speed the flow.
From the dross and the scum,
Pure, the fusion must come;
For perfect and pure we the metal must keep,
That its voice may be perfect, and pure, and deep.

That voice, with merry music rife,
The cherished child shall welcome in;
What time the rosy dreams of life,
In the first slumber's arms begin.
As yet, in Time's dark womb unwarning,
Repose the days, or foul or fair;
And watchful o'er that golden morning,
The mother-love's untiring care!
And swift the years like arrows fly
No more with girls content to play,
Bounds the proud boy upon his way,
Storms through loud life's tumultuous pleasures,
With pilgrim staff the wide world measures;

The Poems of Schiller

And, wearied with the wish to roam,
Again seeks, stranger-like, the father-home.
And, lo, as some sweet vision breaks
Out from its native morning skies
With rosy shame on downcast cheeks,
The virgin stands before his eyes.

A nameless longing seizes him!
From all his wild compassions flown;
Tears, strange till then, his eyes bedim;
He wanders all alone.
Blushing, he glides where'er she move;
Her greeting can transport him;
To every mead to deck his love,
The happy wild flowers court him!
Sweet hope—and tender longing—ye

The growth of life's first age of gold;
When the heart, swelling, seems to see
The gates of heaven unfold!
O love, the beautiful and brief! O prime,
Glory, and verdure, of life's summer time!

Browning o'er, the pipes are simmering,
Dip this wand of clay 45 within;
If like glass the wand be glimmering,
Then the casting may begin.
Brisk, brisk now, and see
If the fusion flow free;
If—(happy and welcome indeed were the sign!)
If the hard and the ductile united combine.
For still where the strong is betrothed to the weak,
And the stern in sweet marriage is blent with the meek,
Rings the concord harmonious, both tender and strong
So be it with thee, if forever united,
The heart to the heart flows in one, love-delighted;
Illusion is brief, but repentance is long.

The Poems of Schiller

Lovely, thither are they bringing,
With the virgin wreath, the bride!
To the love-feast clearly ringing,
Tolls the church-bell far and wide!
With that sweetest holiday,
Must the May of life depart;
With the cestus loosed—away
Flies illusion from the heart!
Yet love lingers lonely,
When passion is mute,
And the blossoms may only
Give way to the fruit.
The husband must enter
The hostile life,
With struggle and strife
To plant or to watch.
To snare or to snatch,
To pray and importune,
Must wager and venture
And hunt down his fortune!
Then flows in a current the gear and the gain,
And the garners are filled with the gold of the grain,
Now a yard to the court, now a wing to the centre!
Within sits another,
The thrifty housewife;
The mild one, the mother—
Her home is her life.
In its circle she rules,
And the daughters she schools
And she cautions the boys,
With a bustling command,
And a diligent hand
Employed she employs;
Gives order to store,
And the much makes the more;
Locks the chest and the wardrobe, with lavender smelling,
And the hum of the spindle goes quick through the dwelling;
And she hoards in the presses, well polished and full,

The Poems of Schiller

The snow of the linen, the shine of the wool;
Blends the sweet with the good, and from care and endeavor
Rests never!

Blithe the master (where the while
From his roof he sees them smile)
Eyes the lands, and counts the gain;
There, the beams projecting far,
And the laden storehouse are,
And the granaries bowed beneath
The blessed golden grain;
There, in undulating motion,
Wave the cornfields like an ocean.
Proud the boast the proud lips breathe:—
“My house is built upon a rock,
And sees unmoved the stormy shock
Of waves that fret below!”
What chain so strong, what girth so great,
To bind the giant form of fate?—
Swift are the steps of woe.

Now the casting may begin;
See the breach indented there:
Ere we run the fusion in,
Halt—and speed the pious prayer!
Pull the bung out—
See around and about
What vapor, what vapor—God help us!—has risen?—
Ha! the flame like a torrent leaps forth from its prison!
What friend is like the might of fire
When man can watch and wield the ire?
Whate’er we shape or work, we owe
Still to that heaven-descended glow.
But dread the heaven-descended glow,
When from their chain its wild wings go,
When, where it listeth, wide and wild
Sweeps free Nature’s free-born child.
When the frantic one fleets,
While no force can withstand,

The Poems of Schiller

Through the populous streets
Whirling ghastly the brand;
For the element hates
What man's labor creates,
And the work of his hand!
Impartially out from the cloud,
Or the curse or the blessing may fall!
Benignantly out from the cloud
Come the dews, the revivers of all!
Avengingly out from the cloud
Come the levin, the bolt, and the ball!
Hark—a wail from the steeple!—aloud
The bell shrills its voice to the crowd!
Look—look—red as blood
All on high!
It is not the daylight that fills with its flood
The sky!
What a clamor awaking
Roars up through the street,
What a hell-vapor breaking.
Rolls on through the street,
And higher and higher
Aloft moves the column of fire!
Through the vistas and rows
Like a whirlwind it goes,
And the air like the stream from the furnace glows.
Beams are crackling—posts are shrinking
Walls are sinking—windows clinking—
Children crying—
Mothers flying—
And the beast (the black ruin yet smouldering under)
Yells the howl of its pain and its ghastly wonder!
Hurry and skurry—away—away,
The face of the night is as clear as day!
As the links in a chain,
Again and again
Flies the bucket from hand to hand;
High in arches up-rushing

The Poems of Schiller

The engines are gushing,
And the flood, as a beast on the prey that it hounds
With a roar on the breast of the element bounds.
 To the grain and the fruits,
 Through the rafters and beams,
Through the barns and garnerns it crackles and streams!
As if they would rend up the earth from its roots,
 Rush the flames to the sky
 Giant-high;
And at length,
Wearied out and despairing, man bows to their strength!
With an idle gaze sees their wrath consume,
And submits to his doom!
 Desolate
The place, and dread
For storms the barren bed.
In the blank voids that cheerful casements were,
Comes to and fro the melancholy air,
 And sits despair;
And through the ruin, blackening in its shroud
Peers, as it flits, the melancholy cloud.

One human glance of grief upon the grave
Of all that fortune gave
The loiterer takes—then turns him to depart,
And grasps the wanderer's staff and mans his heart
Whatever else the element bereaves
One blessing more than all it reft—it leaves,
The faces that he loves!—He counts them o'er,
See—not one look is missing from that store!

Now clasped the bell within the clay—
The mould the mingled metals fill—
Oh, may it, sparkling into day,
Reward the labor and the skill!
 Alas! should it fail,
 For the mould may be frail—
And still with our hope must be mingled the fear—

The Poems of Schiller

And, ev'n now, while we speak, the mishap may be near!
To the dark womb of sacred earth
This labor of our hands is given,
As seeds that wait the second birth,
And turn to blessings watched by heaven!
Ah, seeds, how dearer far than they,
We bury in the dismal tomb,
Where hope and sorrow bend to pray
That suns beyond the realm of day
May warm them into bloom!

From the steeple
Tolls the bell,
Deep and heavy,
The death-knell!
Guiding with dirge-note—solemn, sad, and slow,
To the last home earth's weary wanderers know.
It is that worshipped wife—
It is that faithful mother! 46
Whom the dark prince of shadows leads benighted,
From that dear arm where oft she hung delighted
Far from those blithe companions, born
Of her, and blooming in their morn;
On whom, when couched her heart above,
So often looked the mother-love!

Ah! rent the sweet home's union-band,
And never, never more to come—
She dwells within the shadowy land,
Who was the mother of that home!
How oft they miss that tender guide,
The care—the watch—the face—the mother—
And where she sate the babes beside,
Sits with unloving looks—another!

While the mass is cooling now,
Let the labor yield to leisure,
As the bird upon the bough,

The Poems of Schiller

Loose the travail to the pleasure.
When the soft stars awaken,
Each task be forsaken!
And the vesper-bell lulling the earth into peace,
If the master still toil, chimes the workman's release!

Homeward from the tasks of day,
Through the greenwood's welcome way
Wends the wanderer, blithe and cheerly,
To the cottage loved so dearly!
And the eye and ear are meeting,
Now, the slow sheep homeward bleating—
Now, the wonted shelter near,
Lowing the lusty-fronted steer;
Creaking now the heavy wain,
Reels with the happy harvest grain.
While with many-colored leaves,
Glitters the garland on the sheaves;
For the mower's work is done,
And the young folks' dance begun!
Desert street, and quiet mart;—
Silence is in the city's heart;
And the social taper lighteth;
Each dear face that home uniteth;
While the gate the town before
Heavily swings with sullen roar!

Though darkness is spreading
O'er earth—the upright
And the honest, undreading,
Look safe on the night—
Which the evil man watches in awe,
For the eye of the night is the law!
Bliss-dowered! O daughter of the skies,
Hail, holy order, whose employ
Blends like to like in light and joy—
Builder of cities, who of old
Called the wild man from waste and wold.

The Poems of Schiller

And, in his hut thy presence stealing,
Roused each familiar household feeling;
And, best of all the happy ties,
The centre of the social band,—
The instinct of the Fatherland!

United thus—each helping each,
Brisk work the countless hands forever;
For naught its power to strength can teach,
Like emulation and endeavor!
Thus linked the master with the man,
Each in his rights can each revere,
And while they march in freedom's van,
Scorn the lewd rout that dogs the rear!
To freemen labor is renown!
Who works—gives blessings and commands;
Kings glory in the orb and crown—
Be ours the glory of our hands.

Long in these walls—long may we greet
Your footfalls, peace and concord sweet!
Distant the day, oh! distant far,
When the rude hordes of trampling war
Shall scare the silent vale;
And where,
Now the sweet heaven, when day doth leave
The air,
Limns its soft rose-hues on the veil of eve;
Shall the fierce war-brand tossing in the gale,
From town and hamlet shake the horrent glare!

Now, its destined task fulfilled,
Asunder break the prison-mould;
Let the goodly bell we build,
Eye and heart alike behold.
The hammer down heave,
Till the cover it cleave:—
For not till we shatter the wall of its cell

The Poems of Schiller

Can we lift from its darkness and bondage the bell.

To break the mould, the master may,
If skilled the hand and ripe the hour;
But woe, when on its fiery way
The metal seeks itself to pour.
Frantic and blind, with thunder-knell,
Exploding from its shattered home,
And glaring forth, as from a hell,
Behold the red destruction come!
When rages strength that has no reason,
There breaks the mould before the season;
When numbers burst what bound before,
Woe to the state that thrives no more!
Yea, woe, when in the city's heart,
The latent spark to flame is blown;
And millions from their silence start,
To claim, without a guide, their own!

Discordant howls the warning bell,
Proclaiming discord wide and far,
And, born but things of peace to tell,
Becomes the ghastliest voice of war:
"Freedom! Equality!" — to blood
Rush the roused people at the sound!
Through street, hall, palace, roars the flood,
And banded murder closes round!
The hyena-shapes (that women were!),
Jest with the horrors they survey;
They hound — they rend — they mangle there —
As panthers with their prey!
Naught rests to hollow — burst the ties
Of life's sublime and reverent awe;
Before the vice the virtue flies,
And universal crime is law!
Man fears the lion's kingly tread;
Man fears the tiger's fangs of terror;
And still the dreadliest of the dread,

The Poems of Schiller

Is man himself in error!
No torch, though lit from heaven, illumines
The blind!—Why place it in his hand?
It lights not him—it but consumes
The city and the land!

Rejoice and laud the prospering skies!
The kernel bursts its husk—behold
From the dull clay the metal rise,
Pure-shining, as a star of gold!
Neck and lip, but as one beam,
It laughs like a sunbeam.
And even the scutcheon, clear-graven, shall tell
That the art of a master has fashioned the bell!

Come in—come in
My merry men—we'll form a ring
The new-born labor christening;
And "Concord" we will name her!—
To union may her heartfelt call
In brother-love attune us all!
May she the destined glory win
For which the master sought to frame her—
Aloft—(all earth's existence under),
In blue-pavillioned heaven afar
To dwell—the neighbor of the thunder,
The borderer of the star!
Be hers above a voice to rise
Like those bright hosts in yonder sphere,
Who, while they move, their Maker praise,
And lead around the wreathed year!
To solemn and eternal things
We dedicate her lips sublime!—
As hourly, calmly, on she swings
Fanned by the fleeting wings of time!—
No pulse—no heart—no feeling hers!
She lends the warning voice to fate;
And still companions, while she stirs,

The Poems of Schiller

The changes of the human state!
So may she teach us, as her tone
But now so mighty, melts away—
That earth no life which earth has known
From the last silence can delay!

Slowly now the cords upheave her!
From her earth-grave soars the bell;
Mid the airs of heaven we leave her!
In the music-realm to dwell!
Up—upwards yet raise—
She has risen—she sways.
Fair bell to our city bode joy and increase,
And oh, may thy first sound be hallowed to peace! 47

THE POWER OF SONG.

The foaming stream from out the rock
With thunder roar begins to rush,—
The oak falls prostrate at the shock,
And mountain-wrecks attend the gush.
With rapturous awe, in wonder lost,
The wanderer hearkens to the sound;
From cliff to cliff he hears it tossed,
Yet knows not whither it is bound:
'Tis thus that song's bright waters pour
From sources never known before.

In union with those dreaded ones
That spin life's thread all-silently,
Who can resist the singer's tones?
Who from his magic set him free?
With wand like that the gods bestow,
He guides the heaving bosom's chords,
He steeps it in the realms below,
He bears it, wondering, heavenward,
And rocks it, 'twixt the grave and gay,

The Poems of Schiller

On feeling's scales that trembling sway.

As when before the startled eyes
Of some glad throng, mysteriously,
With giant-step, in spirit-guise,
Appears a wondrous deity,
Then bows each greatness of the earth
Before the stranger heaven-born,
Mute are the thoughtless sounds of mirth,
While from each face the mask is torn,
And from the truth's triumphant might
Each work of falsehood takes to flight.

So from each idle burden free,
When summoned by the voice of song,
Man soars to spirit-dignity,
Receiving force divinely strong:
Among the gods is now his home,
Naught earthly ventures to approach—
All other powers must now be dumb,
No fate can on his realms encroach;
Care's gloomy wrinkles disappear,
Whilst music's charms still linger here,

As after long and hopeless yearning,
And separation's bitter smart,
A child, with tears repentant burning,
Clings fondly to his mother's heart—
So to his youthful happy dwelling,
To rapture pure and free from stain,
All strange and false conceits expelling,
Song guides the wanderer back again,
In faithful Nature's loving arm,
From chilling precepts to grow warm.

The Poems of Schiller

TO PROSELYTIZERS.

“Give me only a fragment of earth beyond the earth’s limits,” —
So the godlike man said, — “and I will move it with ease.”
Only give me permission to leave myself for one moment,
And without any delay I will engage to be yours.

HONOR TO WOMAN.

[Literally “Dignity of Women.”]

Honor to woman! To her it is given
To garden the earth with the roses of heaven!
All blessed, she linketh the loves in their choir
In the veil of the graces her beauty concealing,
She tends on each altar that’s hallowed to feeling,
And keeps ever-living the fire!

From the bounds of truth careering,
Man’s strong spirit wildly sweeps,
With each hasty impulse veering
Down to passion’s troubled deeps.
And his heart, contented never,
Greeds to grapple with the far,
Chasing his own dream forever,
On through many a distant star!
But woman with looks that can charm and enchain,
Lureth back at her beck the wild truant again,
By the spell of her presence beguiled—
In the home of the mother her modest abode,
And modest the manners by Nature bestowed
On Nature’s most exquisite child!

Bruised and worn, but fiercely breasting,
Foe to foe, the angry strife;
Man, the wild one, never resting,
Roams along the troubled life;

The Poems of Schiller

What he planneth, still pursuing;
Vainly as the Hydra bleeds,
Crest the severed crest renewing—
Wish to withered wish succeeds.

But woman at peace with all being, reposes,
And seeks from the moment to gather the roses—
Whose sweets to her culture belong.
Ah! richer than he, though his soul reigneth o'er
The mighty dominion of genius and lore,
And the infinite circle of song.

Strong, and proud, and self-depending,
Man's cold bosom beats alone;
Heart with heart divinely blending,
In the love that gods have known,
Soul's sweet interchange of feeling,
Melting tears—he never knows,
Each hard sense the hard one steeling,
Arms against a world of foes.

Alive, as the wind-harp, how lightly soever
If wooed by the zephyr, to music will quiver,
Is woman to hope and to fear;
All, tender one! still at the shadow of grieving,
How quiver the chords—how thy bosom is heaving—
How trembles thy glance through the tear!

Man's dominion, war and labor;
Might to right the statue gave;
Laws are in the Scythian's sabre;
Where the Mede reigned—see the slave!
Peace and meekness grimly routing,
Prowls the war-lust, rude and wild;
Eris rages, hoarsely shouting,
Where the vanished graces smiled.

But woman, the soft one, persuasively prayeth—

The Poems of Schiller

Of the life 48 that she charmeth, the sceptre she swayeth;
She lulls, as she looks from above,
The discord whose bell for its victims is gaping,
And blending awhile the forever escaping,
Whispers hate to the image of love!

HOPE.

We speak with the lip, and we dream in the soul,
Of some better and fairer day;
And our days, the meanwhile, to that golden goal
Are gliding and sliding away.
Now the world becomes old, now again it is young,
But "The better" 's forever the word on the tongue.

At the threshold of life hope leads us in—
Hope plays round the mirthful boy;
Though the best of its charms may with youth begin,
Yet for age it reserves its toy.

THE GERMAN ART.

By no kind Augustus reared,
To no Medici endeared,
German art arose;
Fostering glory smiled not on her,
Ne'er with kingly smiles to sun her,
Did her blooms unclose.

No,—she went by monarchs slighted
Went unhonored, unrequited,
From high Frederick's throne;
Praise and pride be all the greater,
That man's genius did create her,
From man's worth alone.

The Poems of Schiller

Therefore, all from loftier mountains,
Purer wells and richer fountains,
Streams our poet-art;
So no rule to curb its rushing—
All the fuller flows it gushing
From its deep—the heart!

ODYSSEUS.

Seeking to find his home, Odysseus crosses each water;
Through Charybdis so dread; ay, and through Scylla's wild yells,
Through the alarms of the raging sea, the alarms of the land too,—
E'en to the kingdom of hell leads him his wandering course.
And at length, as he sleeps, to Ithaca's coast fate conducts him;
There he awakes, and, with grief, knows not his fatherland now.

CARTHAGE.

Oh thou degenerate child of the great and glorious mother,
Who with the Romans' strong might couplest the Tyrians' deceit!
But those ever governed with vigor the earth they had conquered,—
These instructed the world that they with cunning had won.
Say! what renown does history grant thee? Thou, Roman-like,
gained'st
That with the steel, which with gold, Tyrian-like, then thou didst
rule!

THE SOWER.

Sure of the spring that warms them into birth,
The golden seeds thou trustest to the earth;
And dost thou doubt the eternal spring sublime,
For deeds—the seeds which wisdom sows in time.

The Poems of Schiller

THE KNIGHTS OF ST. JOHN.

Oh, nobly shone the fearful cross upon your mail afar,
When Rhodes and Acre hailed your might, O lions of the war!
When leading many a pilgrim horde, through wastes of Syrian
gloom;
Or standing with the cherub's sword before the holy tomb.
Yet on your forms the apron seemed a nobler armor far,
When by the sick man's bed ye stood, O lions of the war!
When ye, the high-born, bowed your pride to tend the lowly
weakness,
The duty, though it brought no fame, fulfilled by Christian
meekness—
Religion of the cross, thou blend'st, as in a single flower,
The twofold branches of the palm—humility and power. 49

THE MERCHANT.

Where sails the ship?—It leads the Tyrian forth
For the rich amber of the liberal north.
Be kind, ye seas—winds, lend your gentlest wing,
May in each creek sweet wells restoring spring!—
To you, ye gods, belong the merchant!—o'er
The waves his sails the wide world's goods explore;
And, all the while, wherever waft the gales
The wide world's good sails with him as he sails!

GERMAN FAITH. 50

Once for the sceptre of Germany, fought with Bavarian Louis
Frederick, of Hapsburg descent, both being called to the throne.
But the envious fortune of war delivered the Austrian
Into the hands of the foe, who overcame him in fight.
With the throne he purchased his freedom, pledging his honor
For the victor to draw 'gainst his own people his sword;

The Poems of Schiller

But what he vowed when in chains, when free he could not
accomplish,
So, of his own free accord, put on his fetters again.
Deeply moved, his foe embraced him, — and from thenceforward
As a friend with a friend, pledged they the cup at the feast;
Arm-in-arm, the princes on one couch slumbered together.
While a still bloodier hate severed the nations apart.
'Gainst the army of Frederick Louis now went, and behind him
Left the foe he had fought, over Bavaria to watch.
"Ay, it is true! 'Tis really true! I have it in writing!"
Thus did the Pontifex cry, when he first heard of the news.

THE SEXES.

See in the babe two loveliest flowers united — yet in truth,
While in the bud they seem the same — the virgin and the youth!
But loosened is the gentle bond, no longer side by side —
From holy shame the fiery strength will soon itself divide.
Permit the youth to sport, and still the wild desire to chase,
For, but when sated, weary strength returns to seek the grace.
Yet in the bud, the double flowers the future strife begin,
How precious all — yet naught can still the longing heart within.
In ripening charms the virgin bloom to woman shape hath grown,
But round the ripening charms the pride hath clasped its guardian
zone;
Shy, as before the hunter's horn the doe all trembling moves,
She flies from man as from a foe, and hates before she loves!

From lowering brows this struggling world the fearless youth
observes,
And hardened for the strife betimes, he strains the willing nerves;
Far to the armed throng and to the race prepared to start,
Inviting glory calls him forth, and grasps the troubled heart: —
Protect thy work, O Nature now! one from the other flies,
Till thou unitest each at last that for the other sighs.
There art thou, mighty one! where'er the discord darkest frown,
Thou call'st the meek harmonious peace, the god-like soother down.

The Poems of Schiller

The noisy chase is lulled asleep, day's clamor dies afar,
And through the sweet and veiled air in beauty comes the star.
Soft-sighing through the crisped reeds, the brooklet glides along,
And every wood the nightingale melodious fills with song.
O virgin! now what instinct heaves thy bosom with the sigh?
O youth! and wherefore steals the tear into thy dreaming eye?
Alas! they seek in vain within the charm around bestowed,
The tender fruit is ripened now, and bows to earth its load.
And restless goes the youth to feed his heart upon its fire,
All, where the gentle breath to cool the flame of young desire!
And now they meet—the holy love that leads them lights their eyes,
And still behind the winged god the winged victory flies.
O heavenly love!—'tis thy sweet task the human flowers to bind,
For ay apart, and yet by thee forever intertwined!

LOVE AND DESIRE.

Rightly said, Schlosser! Man loves what he has; what he has not,
desireth;
None but the wealthy minds love; poor minds desire alone.

THE BARDS OF OLDEN TIME.

Say, where is now that glorious race, where now are the singers
Who, with the accents of life, listening nations enthralled,
Sung down from heaven the gods, and sung mankind up to heaven,
And who the spirit bore up high on the pinions of song?
Ah! the singers still live; the actions only are wanting,
And to awake the glad harp, only a welcoming ear.
Happy bards of a happy world! Your life-teeming accents
Flew round from mouth unto mouth, gladdening every race.
With the devotion with which the gods were received, each one
welcomed
That which the genius for him, plastic and breathing, then formed.
With the glow of the song were inflamed the listener's senses,
And with the listener's sense, nourished the singer the glow—

The Poems of Schiller

Nourished and cleansed it, — fortunate one! for whom in the voices
Of the people still clear echoed the soul of the song,
And to whom from without appeared, in life, the great godhead,
Whom the bard of these days scarcely can feel in his breast.

JOVE TO HERCULES.

'Twas not my nectar made thy strength divine,
But 'twas thy strength which made my nectar thine!

THE ANTIQUES AT PARIS.

That which Grecian art created,
Let the Frank, with joy elated,
Bear to Seine's triumphant strand,
And in his museums glorious
Show the trophies all-victorious
To his wondering fatherland.

They to him are silent ever,
Into life's fresh circle never
From their pedestals come down.
He alone e'er holds the Muses
Through whose breast their power diffuses, —
To the Vandal they're but stone!

THEKLA.

A SPIRIT VOICE.

Whither was it that my spirit wended
When from thee my fleeting shadow moved?
Is not now each earthly conflict ended?
Say, — have I not lived, — have I not loved?

The Poems of Schiller

Art thou for the nightingales inquiring
Who entranced thee in the early year
With their melody so joy-inspiring?
Only whilst they loved they lingered here.

Is the lost one lost to me forever?
Trust me, with him joyfully I stray
There, where naught united souls can sever,
And where every tear is wiped away.
And thou, too, wilt find us in yon heaven,
When thy love with our love can compare;
There my father dwells, his sins forgiven,—
Murder foul can never reach him there.

And he feels that him no vision cheated
When he gazed upon the stars on high;
For as each one metes, to him 'tis meted;
Who believes it, hath the Holy nigh.

Faith is kept in those blest regions yonder
With the feelings true that ne'er decay.
Venture thou to dream, then, and to wander
Noblest thoughts oft lie in childlike play.

THE ANTIQUE TO THE NORTHERN WANDERER.

Thou hast crossed over torrents, and swung through wide-spreading
ocean,—
Over the chain of the Alps dizzily bore thee the bridge,
That thou might'st see me from near, and learn to value my beauty,
Which the voice of renown spreads through the wandering world.
And now before me thou standest,—canst touch my altar so holy,—
But art thou nearer to me, or am I nearer to thee?

The Poems of Schiller

THE ILIAD.

Tear forever the garland of Homer, and number the fathers
Of the immortal work, that through all time will survive!
Yet it has but one mother, and bears that mother's own feature,
'Tis thy features it bears,—Nature,—thy features eterne!

POMPEII AND HERCULANEUM.

What wonder this?—we ask thelympid well,
O earth! of thee—and from thy solemn womb
What yieldest thou?—is there life in the abyss—
Doth a new race beneath the lava dwell?
Returns the past, awakening from the tomb?
Rome—Greece!—Oh, come!—Behold—behold! for this!
Our living world—the old Pompeii sees;
And built anew the town of Dorian Hercules!
House upon house—its silent halls once more
Opes the broad portico!—Oh, haste and fill
Again those halls with life!—Oh, pour along
Through the seven-vista'd theatre the throng!
Where are ye, mimes?—Come forth, the steel prepare
For crowned Atrides, or Orestes haunt,
Ye choral Furies, with your dismal chant!
The arch of triumph!—whither leads it?—still
Behold the forum!—on the curule chair
Where the majestic image? Lictors, where
Your solemn fasces?—Place upon his throne
The Praetor—here the witness lead, and there
Bid the accuser stand

—O God! how lone

The clear streets glitter in the quiet day—
The footpath by the doors winding its lifeless way!
The roofs arise in shelter, and around
The desolate Atrium—every gentle room
Wears still the dear familiar smile of home!

The Poems of Schiller

Open the doors—the shops—on dreary night
Let lusty day laugh down in jocund light!
See the trim benches ranged in order!—See
The marble-tesselated floor—and there
The very walls are glittering livingly
With their clear colors. But the artist, where!
Sure but this instant he hath laid aside
Pencil and colors!—Glittering on the eye
Swell the rich fruits, and bloom the flowers!—See all
Art's gentle wreaths still fresh upon the wall!
Here the arch Cupid slyly seems to glide
By with bloom-laden basket. There the shapes
Of genii press with purpling feet the grapes,
Here springs the wild Bacchante to the dance,
And there she sleeps [while that voluptuous trance
Eyes the sly faun with never-sated glance]
Now on one knee upon the centaur-steeds
Hovering—the Thyrsus plies.—Hurrah!—away she speeds!

Come—come, why loiter ye?—Here, here, how fair
The goodly vessels still! Girls, hither turn,
Fill from the fountain the Etruscan urn!
On the winged sphinxes see the tripod.—

Ho!

Quick—quick, ye slaves, come—fire!—the hearth prepare!
Ha! wilt thou sell?—this coin shall pay thee—this,
Fresh from the mint of mighty Titus!—Lo!
Here lie the scales, and not a weight we miss
So—bring the light! The delicate lamp!—what toil
Shaped thy minutest grace!—quick pour the oil!
Yonder the fairy chest!—come, maid, behold
The bridegroom's gifts—the armlets—they are gold,
And paste out-feigning jewels!—lead the bride
Into the odorous bath—lo! unguents still—
And still the crystal vase the arts for beauty fill!

But where the men of old—perchance a prize
More precious yet in yon papyrus lies,

The Poems of Schiller

And see ev'n still the tokens of their toil—
The waxen tablets—the recording style.
The earth, with faithful watch, has hoarded all!
Still stand the mute penates in the hall;
Back to his haunts returns each ancient god.
Why absent only from their ancient stand
The priests?—waves Hermes his Caducean rod,
And the winged victory struggles from the hand.
Kindle the flame—behold the altar there!
Long hath the god been worshipless—to prayer.

NAENIA.

Even the beauteous must die! This vanquishes men and immortals;
But of the Stygian god moves not the bosom of steel.
Once and once only could love prevail on the ruler of shadows,
And on the threshold, e'en then, sternly his gift he recalled.
Venus could never heal the wounds of the beauteous stripling,
That the terrible boar made in his delicate skin;
Nor could his mother immortal preserve the hero so godlike,
When at the west gate of Troy, falling, his fate he fulfilled.
But she arose from the ocean with all the daughters of Nereus,
And o'er her glorified son raised the loud accents of woe.
See! where all the gods and goddesses yonder are weeping,
That the beauteous must fade, and that the perfect must die.
Even a woe-song to be in the mouth of the loved ones is glorious,
For what is vulgar descends mutely to Orcus' dark shades.

THE MAID OF ORLEANS.

Humanity's bright image to impair.
Scorn laid thee prostrate in the deepest dust;
Wit wages ceaseless war on all that's fair,—
In angel and in God it puts no trust;
The bosom's treasures it would make its prey,—
Besieges fancy,—dims e'en faith's pure ray.

The Poems of Schiller

Yet issuing like thyself from humble line,
Like thee a gentle shepherdess is she—
Sweet poesy affords her rights divine,
And to the stars eternal soars with thee.
Around thy brow a glory she hath thrown;
The heart 'twas formed thee,—ever thou'lt live on!

The world delights whate'er is bright to stain,
And in the dust to lay the glorious low;
Yet fear not! noble bosoms still remain,
That for the lofty, for the radiant glow
Let Momus serve to fill the booth with mirth;
A nobler mind loves forms of nobler worth.

ARCHIMEDES.

To Archimedes once a scholar came,
"Teach me," he said, "the art that won thy fame;—
The godlike art which gives such boons to toil,
And showers such fruit upon thy native soil;—
The godlike art that girt the town when all
Rome's vengeance burst in thunder on the wall!"
"Thou call'st art godlike—it is so, in truth,
And was," replied the master to the youth,
"Ere yet its secrets were applied to use—
Ere yet it served beleaguered Syracuse:—
Ask'st thou from art, but what the art is worth?
The fruit?—for fruit go cultivate the earth.—
He who the goddess would aspire unto,
Must not the goddess as the woman woo!"

THE DANCE.

See how, like lightest waves at play, the airy dancers fleet;
And scarcely feels the floor the wings of those harmonious feet.
Ob, are they flying shadows from their native forms set free?

The Poems of Schiller

Or phantoms in the fairy ring that summer moonbeams see?
As, by the gentle zephyr blown, some light mist flees in air,
As skiffs that skim adown the tide, when silver waves are fair,
So sports the docile footstep to the heave of that sweet measure,
As music wafts the form aloft at its melodious pleasure,
Now breaking through the woven chain of the entangled dance,
From where the ranks the thickest press, a bolder pair advance,
The path they leave behind them lost – wide open the path beyond,
The way unfolds or closes up as by a magic wand.
See now, they vanish from the gaze in wild confusion blended;
All, in sweet chaos whirled again, that gentle world is ended!
No! – disentangled glides the knot, the gay disorder ranges –
The only system ruling here, a grace that ever changes.
For ay destroyed – for ay renewed, whirls on that fair creation;
And yet one peaceful law can still pervade in each mutation.
And what can to the reeling maze breathe harmony and vigor,
And give an order and repose to every gliding figure?
That each a ruler to himself doth but himself obey,
Yet through the hurrying course still keeps his own appointed way.
What, would'st thou know? It is in truth the mighty power of tune,
A power that every step obeys, as tides obey the moon;
That threadeth with a golden clue the intricate employment,
Curbs bounding strength to tranquil grace, and tames the wild
enjoyment.
And comes the world's wide harmony in vain upon thine ears?
The stream of music borne aloft from yonder choral spheres?
And feel'st thou not the measure which eternal Nature keeps?
The whirling dance forever held in yonder azure deeps?
The suns that wheel in varying maze? – That music thou discernest?
No! Thou canst honor that in sport which thou forgettest in earnest.
52

THE FORTUNE-FAVORED. 53

Ah! happy he, upon whose birth each god
Looks down in love, whose earliest sleep the bright
Idalia cradles, whose young lips the rod

The Poems of Schiller

Of eloquent Hermes kindles—to whose eyes,
Scarce wakened yet, Apollo steals in light,
While on imperial brows Jove sets the seal of might!
Godlike the lot ordained for him to share,
He wins the garland ere he runs the race;
He learns life's wisdom ere he knows life's care,
And, without labor vanquished, smiles the grace.
Great is the man, I grant, whose strength of mind,
Self-shapes its objects and subdues the fates—
Virtue subdues the fates, but cannot blind
The fickle happiness, whose smile awaits
Those who scarce seek it; nor can courage earn
What the grace showers not from her own free urn!
From aught unworthy, the determined will
Can guard the watchful spirit—there it ends
The all that's glorious from the heaven descends;
As some sweet mistress loves us, freely still
Come the spontaneous gifts of heaven!—Above
Favor rules Jove, as it below rules love!
The immortals have their bias!—Kindly they
See the bright locks of youth enamored play,
And where the glad one goes, shed gladness round the way.
It is not they who boast the best to see,
Whose eyes the holy apparitions bless;
The stately light of their divinity
Hath oft but shone the brightest on the blind;—
And their choice spirit found its calm recess
In the pure childhood of a simple mind.
Unasked they come delighted to delude
The expectation of our baffled pride;
No law can call their free steps to our side.
Him whom he loves, the sire of men and gods
(Selected from the marvelling multitude)
Bears on his eagle to his bright abodes;
And showers, with partial hand and lavish, down,
The minstrel's laurel or the monarch's crown!
Before the fortune-favored son of earth,
Apollo walks—and, with his jocund mirth,

The Poems of Schiller

The heart-enthraling smiler of the skies
For him gray Neptune smooths the pliant wave—
Harmless the waters for the ship that bore
The Caesar and his fortunes to the shore!
Charmed at his feet the crouching lion lies,
To him his back the murmuring dolphin gave;
His soul is born a sovereign o'er the strife—
The lord of all the beautiful of life;
Where'er his presence in its calm has trod,
It charms—it sways as solve diviner God.
Scorn not the fortune-favored, that to him
The light-won victory by the gods is given,
Or that, as Paris, from the strife severe,
The Venus draws her darling—Whom the heaven
So prospers, love so watches, I revere!
And not the man upon whose eyes, with dim
And baleful night, sits fate. Achaia boasts,
No less the glory of the Dorian lord 54
That Vulcan wrought for him the shield and sword—
That round the mortal hovered all the hosts
Of all Olympus—that his wrath to grace,
The best and bravest of the Grecian race
Untimely slaughtered, with resentful ghosts
Awed the pale people of the Stygian coasts!
Scorn not the darlings of the beautiful,
If without labor they life's blossoms cull;
If, like the stately lilies, they have won
A crown for which they neither toiled nor spun;—
If without merit, theirs be beauty, still
Thy sense, unenvying, with the beauty fill.
Alike for thee no merit wins the right,
To share, by simply seeing, their delight.
Heaven breathes the soul into the minstrel's breast,
But with that soul he animates the rest;
The god inspires the mortal—but to God,
In turn, the mortal lifts thee from the sod.
Oh, not in vain to heaven the bard is dear;
Holy himself—he hallows those who hear!

The Poems of Schiller

The busy mart let justice still control,
Weighing the guerdon to the toil! — What then?
A God alone claims joy — all joy is his,
Flushing with unsought light the cheeks of men.
55 Where is no miracle, why there no bliss!
Grow, change, and ripen all that mortal be,
Shapened from form to form, by toiling time;
The blissful and the beautiful are born
Full grown, and ripened from eternity —
No gradual changes to their glorious prime,
No childhood dwarfs them, and no age has worn. —
Like heaven's, each earthly Venus on the sight
Comes, a dark birth, from out an endless sea;
Like the first Pallas, in maturest might,
Armed, from the thunderer's — brow, leaps forth each thought of
light.

BOOKSELLER'S ANNOUNCEMENT.

Naught is for man so important as rightly to know his own
purpose;
For but twelve groschen hard cash 'tis to be bought at my shop!

GENIUS.

"Do I believe," sayest thou, "what the masters of wisdom would
teach me,
And what their followers' band boldly and readily swear?
Cannot I ever attain to true peace, excepting through knowledge,
Or is the system upheld only by fortune and law?
Must I distrust the gently-warning impulse, the precept
That thou, Nature, thyself hast in my bosom impressed,
Till the schools have affixed to the writ eternal their signet,
Till a mere formula's chain binds down the fugitive soul?
Answer me, then! for thou hast down into these deeps e'en
descended, —

The Poems of Schiller

Out of the mouldering grave thou didst uninjured return.
Is't to thee known what within the tomb of obscure works is hidden,
Whether, yon mummies amid, life's consolations can dwell?
Must I travel the darksome road? The thought makes me tremble;
Yet I will travel that road, if 'tis to truth and to right."

Friend, hast thou heard of the golden age? Full many a story
Poets have sung in its praise, simply and touchingly sung—
Of the time when the holy still wandered over life's pathways,—
When with a maidenly shame every sensation was veiled,—
When the mighty law that governs the sun in his orbit,
And that, concealed in the bud, teaches the point how to move,
When necessity's silent law, the steadfast, the changeless,
Stirred up billows more free, e'en in the bosom of man,—
When the sense, unerring, and true as the hand of the dial,
Pointed only to truth, only to what was eternal?

Then no profane one was seen, then no initiate was met with,
And what as living was felt was not then sought 'mongst the dead;
Equally clear to every breast was the precept eternal,
Equally hidden the source whence it to gladden us sprang;
But that happy period has vanished! And self-willed presumption
Nature's godlike repose now has forever destroyed.
Feelings polluted the voice of the deities echo no longer,
In the dishonored breast now is the oracle dumb.
Save in the silenter self, the listening soul cannot find it,
There does the mystical word watch o'er the meaning divine;
There does the searcher conjure it, descending with bosom
 unsullied;
There does the nature long-lost give him back wisdom again.
If thou, happy one, never hast lost the angel that guards thee,
Forfeited never the kind warnings that instinct holds forth;
If in thy modest eye the truth is still purely depicted;
If in thine innocent breast clearly still echoes its call;
If in thy tranquil mind the struggles of doubt still are silent,
If they will surely remain silent forever as now;
If by the conflict of feelings a judge will ne'er be required;
If in its malice thy heart dims not the reason so clear,

The Poems of Schiller

Oh, then, go thy way in all thy innocence precious!
Knowledge can teach thee in naught; thou canst instruct her in
much!
Yonder law, that with brazen staff is directing the struggling,
Naught is to thee. What thou dost, what thou mayest will is thy
law,
And to every race a godlike authority issues.
What thou with holy hand formest, what thou with holy mouth
speakest,
Will with omnipotent power impel the wondering senses;
Thou but observest not the god ruling within thine own breast,
Not the might of the signet that bows all spirits before thee;
Simple and silent thou goest through the wide world thou hast
won.

HONORS.

[Dignities would be the better title, if the word were not so
essentially unpoetical.]

When the column of light on the waters is glassed,
As blent in one glow seem the shine and the stream;
But wave after wave through the glory has passed,
Just catches, and flies as it catches, the beam
So honors but mirror on mortals their light;
Not the man but the place that he passes is bright.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL EGOTIST.

Hast thou the infant seen that yet, unknowing of the love
Which warms and cradles, calmly sleeps the mother's heart
above—
Wandering from arm to arm, until the call of passion wakes,
And glimmering on the conscious eye—the world in glory breaks?

And hast thou seen the mother there her anxious vigil keep?

The Poems of Schiller

Buying with love that never sleeps the darling's happy sleep?
With her own life she fans and feeds that weak life's trembling
 rays,
And with the sweetness of the care, the care itself repays.

And dost thou Nature then blaspheme—that both the child and
 mother
Each unto each unites, the while the one doth need the other?—
All self-sufficing wilt thou from that lovely circle stand—
That creature still to creature links in faith's familiar band?

Ah! dar'st thou, poor one, from the rest thy lonely self estrange?
Eternal power itself is but all powers in interchange!

THE BEST STATE CONSTITUTION.

I can recognize only as such, the one that enables
Each to think what is right,—but that he thinks so, cares not.

THE WORDS OF BELIEF.

Three words will I name thee—around and about,
From the lip to the lip, full of meaning, they flee;
But they had not their birth in the being without,
And the heart, not the lip, must their oracle be!
And all worth in the man shall forever be o'er
When in those three words he believes no more.

Man is made free!—Man by birthright is free,
Though the tyrant may deem him but born for his tool.
Whatever the shout of the rabble may be—
Whatever the ranting misuse of the fool—
Still fear not the slave, when he breaks from his chain,
For the man made a freeman grows safe in his gain.

And virtue is more than a shade or a sound,

The Poems of Schiller

And man may her voice, in this being, obey;
And though ever he slip on the stony ground,
Yet ever again to the godlike way,
To the science of good though the wise may be blind,
Yet the practice is plain to the childlike mind.

And a God there is!—over space, over time,
While the human will rocks, like a reed, to and fro,
Lives the will of the holy—a purpose sublime,
A thought woven over creation below;
Changing and shifting the all we inherit,
But changeless through all one immutable spirit

Hold fast the three words of belief—though about
From the lip to the lip, full of meaning, they flee;
Yet they take not their birth from the being without—
But a voice from within must their oracle be;
And never all worth in the man can be o'er,
Till in those three words he believes no more.

THE WORDS OF ERROR.

Three errors there are, that forever are found
On the lips of the good, on the lips of the best;
But empty their meaning and hollow their sound—
And slight is the comfort they bring to the breast.
The fruits of existence escape from the clasp
Of the seeker who strives but those shadows to grasp—

So long as man dreams of some age in this life
When the right and the good will all evil subdue;
For the right and the good lead us ever to strife,
And wherever they lead us the fiend will pursue.
And (till from the earth borne, and stifled at length)
The earth that he touches still gifts him with strength! 56

So long as man fancies that fortune will live,

The Poems of Schiller

Like a bride with her lover, united with worth;
For her favors, alas! to the mean she will give—
And virtue possesses no title to earth!
That foreigner wanders to regions afar,
Where the lands of her birthright immortally are!

So long as man dreams that, to mortals a gift,
The truth in her fulness of splendor will shine;
The veil of the goddess no earth-born may lift,
And all we can learn is—to guess and divine!
Dost thou seek, in a dogma, to prison her form?
The spirit flies forth on the wings of the storm!

O, noble soul! fly from delusions like these,
More heavenly belief be it thine to adore;
Where the ear never hearkens, the eye never sees,
Meet the rivers of beauty and truth evermore!
Not without thee the streams—there the dull seek them;—No!
Look within thee—behold both the fount and the flow!

THE POWER OF WOMAN.

Mighty art thou, because of the peaceful charms of thy presence;
That which the silent does not, never the boastful can do.
Vigor in man I expect, the law in its honors maintaining,
But, through the graces alone, woman e'er rules or should rule.
Many, indeed, have ruled through the might of the spirit and
action,
But then thou noblest of crowns, they were deficient in thee.
No real queen exists but the womanly beauty of woman;
Where it appears, it must rule; ruling because it appears!

THE TWO PATHS OF VIRTUE.

Two are the pathways by which mankind can to virtue mount
upward;

The Poems of Schiller

If thou should find the one barred, open the other will lie.
'Tis by exertion the happy obtain her, the suffering by patience.
Blest is the man whose kind fate guides him along upon both!

THE PROVERBS OF CONFUCIUS.

I.

Threefold is the march of time
While the future slow advances,
Like a dart the present glances,
Silent stands the past sublime.

No impatience e'er can speed him
On his course if he delay;
No alarm, no doubts impede him
If he keep his onward way;
No regrets, no magic numbers
Wake the tranced one from his slumbers.
Wouldst thou wisely and with pleasure,
Pass the days of life's short measure,
From the slow one counsel take,
But a tool of him ne'er make;
Ne'er as friend the swift one know,
Nor the constant one as foe!

II.

Threefold is the form of space:
Length, with ever restless motion,
Seeks eternity's wide ocean;
Breadth with boundless sway extends;
Depth to unknown realms descends.

All as types to thee are given;
Thou must onward strive for heaven,
Never still or weary be

The Poems of Schiller

Would'st thou perfect glory see;
Far must thy researches go.
Wouldst thou learn the world to know;
Thou must tempt the dark abyss
Wouldst thou prove what Being is.

Naught but firmness gains the prize, —
Naught but fulness makes us wise, —
Buried deep, truth ever lies!

HUMAN KNOWLEDGE.

Since thou readest in her what thou thyself hast there written,
And, to gladden the eye, placest her wonders in groups; —
Since o'er her boundless expanses thy cords to extend thou art able,
Thou dost think that thy mind wonderful Nature can grasp.
Thus the astronomer draws his figures over the heavens,
So that he may with more ease traverse the infinite space,
Knitting together e'en suns that by Sirius-distance are parted,
Making them join in the swan and in the horns of the bull.
But because the firmament shows him its glorious surface,
Can he the spheres' mystic dance therefore decipher aright?

COLUMBUS.

Steer on, bold sailor — Wit may mock thy soul that sees the land,
And hopeless at the helm may droop the weak and weary hand,
Yet ever — ever to the West, for there the coast must lie,
And dim it dawns, and glimmering dawns before thy reason's eye;
Yea, trust the guiding God — and go along the floating grave,
Though hid till now — yet now behold the New World o'er the
wave!
With genius Nature ever stands in solemn union still,
And ever what the one foretells the other shall fulfil.

The Poems of Schiller

LIGHT AND WARMTH.

In cheerful faith that fears no ill
The good man doth the world begin;
And dreams that all without shall still
Reflect the trusting soul within.
Warm with the noble vows of youth,
Hallowing his true arm to the truth;

Yet is the littleness of all
So soon to sad experience shown,
That crowds but teach him to recall
And centre thought on self alone;
Till love, no more, emotion knows,
And the heart freezes to repose.

Alas! though truth may light bestow,
Not always warmth the beams impart,
Blest he who gains the boon to know,
Nor buys the knowledge with the heart.
For warmth and light a blessing both to be,
Feel as the enthusiast—as the world-wise see.

BREADTH AND DEPTH.

Full many a shining wit one sees,
With tongue on all things well conversing;
The what can charm, the what can please,
In every nice detail rehearsing.
Their raptures so transport the college,
It seems one honeymoon of knowledge.

Yet out they go in silence where
They whilom held their learned prate;
Ah! he who would achieve the fair,
Or sow the embryo of the great,
Must hoard—to wait the ripening hour—

The Poems of Schiller

In the least point the loftiest power.

With wanton boughs and pranksome hues,
Aloft in air aspires the stem;
The glittering leaves inhale the dews,
But fruits are not concealed in them.
From the small kernel's undiscerned repose
The oak that lords it o'er the forest grows.

THE TWO GUIDES OF LIFE.

THE SUBLIME AND THE BEAUTIFUL.

Two genii are there, from thy birth through weary life to guide thee;
Ah, happy when, united both, they stand to aid beside thee?
With gleesome play to cheer the path, the one comes blithe with
 beauty,
And lighter, leaning on her arm, the destiny and duty.
With jest and sweet discourse she goes unto the rock sublime,
Where halts above the eternal sea the shuddering child of time.
The other here, resolved and mute and solemn, claspeth thee,
And bears thee in her giant arms across the fearful sea.
Never admit the one alone!—Give not the gentle guide
Thy honor—nor unto the stern thy happiness confide!

THE IMMUTABLE.

Time flies on restless pinions—constant never.
Be constant—and thou chainest time forever.

VOTIVE TABLETS.

That which I learned from the Deity,—
that which through lifetime hath helped me,
Meekly and gratefully now, here I suspend in his shrine.

The Poems of Schiller

DIFFERENT DESTINIES.

Millions busily toil, that the human race may continue;
But by only a few is propagated our kind.
Thousands of seeds by the autumn are scattered, yet fruit is
engendered
Only by few, for the most back to the element go.
But if one only can blossom, that one is able to scatter
Even a bright living world, filled with creations eterne.

THE ANIMATING PRINCIPLE.

Nowhere in the organic or sensitive world ever kindles
Novelty, save in the flower, noblest creation of life.

TWO DESCRIPTIONS OF ACTION.

Do what is good, and humanity's godlike plant thou wilt nourish;
Plan what is fair, and thou'lt strew seeds of the godlike around.

DIFFERENCE OF STATION.

Even the moral world its nobility boasts—vulgar natures
Reckon by that which they do; noble, by that which they are.

WORTH AND THE WORTHY.

If thou anything hast, let me have it,—I'll pay what is proper;
If thou anything art, let us our spirits exchange.

THE MORAL FORCE.

If thou feelest not the beautiful, still thou with reason canst will it;

The Poems of Schiller

And as a spirit canst do, that which as man thou canst not.

PARTICIPATION.

E'en by the hand of the wicked can truth be working with vigor;
But the vessel is filled by what is beautiful alone.

TO — —

Tell me all that thou knowest, and I will thankfully hear it!
But wouldst thou give me thyself,—let me, my friend, be excused!

TO — —

Wouldst thou teach me the truth? Don't take the trouble! I wish not,
Through thee, the thing to observe,—but to see thee through the
thing.

TO — —

Thee would I choose as my teacher and friend. Thy living example
Teaches me,—thy teaching word wakens my heart unto life.

THE PRESENT GENERATION.

Was it always as now? This race I truly can't fathom.
Nothing is young but old age; youth, alas! only is old.

TO THE MUSE.

What I had been without thee, I know not—yet, to my sorrow
See I what, without thee, hundreds and thousands now are.

The Poems of Schiller

THE LEARNED WORKMAN.

Ne'er does he taste the fruit of the tree that he raised with such
trouble;
Nothing but taste e'er enjoys that which by learning is reared.

THE DUTY OF ALL.

Ever strive for the whole; and if no whole thou canst make thee,
Join, then, thyself to some whole, as a subservient limb!

A PROBLEM.

Let none resemble another; let each resemble the highest!
How can that happen? let each be all complete in itself.

THE PECULIAR IDEAL.

What thou thinkest, belongs to all; what thou feelest, is thine only.
Wouldst thou make him thine own, feel thou the God whom thou
thinkest!

TO MYSTICS.

That is the only true secret, which in the presence of all men
Lies, and surrounds thee for ay, but which is witnessed by none.

THE KEY.

Wouldst thou know thyself, observe the actions of others.
Wouldst thou other men know, look thou within thine own heart.

The Poems of Schiller

THE OBSERVER.

Stern as my conscience, thou seest the points wherein I'm deficient;
Therefore I've always loved thee, as my own conscience I've loved.

WISDOM AND PRUDENCE.

Wouldst thou, my friend, mount up to the highest summit of
wisdom,
Be not deterred by the fear, prudence thy course may deride
That shortsighted one sees but the bank that from thee is flying,
Not the one which ere long thou wilt attain with bold flight.

THE AGREEMENT.

Both of us seek for truth—in the world without thou dost seek it,
I in the bosom within; both of us therefore succeed.
If the eye be healthy, it sees from without the Creator;
And if the heart, then within doubtless it mirrors the world.

POLITICAL PRECEPT.

All that thou doest is right; but, friend, don't carry this precept
On too far,—be content, all that is right to effect.
It is enough to true zeal, if what is existing be perfect;
False zeal always would find finished perfection at once.

MAJESTAS POPULI.

Majesty of the nature of man! In crowds shall I seek thee?
'Tis with only a few that thou hast made thine abode.
Only a few ever count; the rest are but blanks of no value,
And the prizes are hid 'neath the vain stir that they make.

The Poems of Schiller

THE DIFFICULT UNION.

Why are taste and genius so seldom met with united?
Taste of strength is afraid,—genius despises the rein.

TO A WORLD-REFORMER.

“I Have sacrificed all,” thou sayest, “that man I might succor;
Vain the attempt; my reward was persecution and hate.”
Shall I tell thee, my friend, how I to humor him manage?
Trust the proverb! I ne’er have been deceived by it yet.
Thou canst not sufficiently prize humanity’s value;
Let it be coined in deed as it exists in thy breast.
E’en to the man whom thou chancest to meet in life’s narrow
pathway,
If he should ask it of thee, hold forth a succoring hand.
But for rain and for dew, for the general welfare of mortals,
Leave thou Heaven to care, friend, as before, so e’en now.

MY ANTIPATHY.

I have a heartfelt aversion for crime,—a twofold aversion,
Since ‘tis the reason why man prates about virtue so much.
“What! thou hatest, then, virtue?”—I would that by all it were
practised,
So that, God willing, no man ever need speak of it more.

ASTRONOMICAL WRITINGS.

Oh, how infinite, how unspeakably great, are the heavens!
Yet by frivolity’s hand downwards the heavens are pulled!

The Poems of Schiller

THE BEST STATE.

“How can I know the best state?”
In the way that thou know’st the best woman;
Namely, my friend, that the world ever is silent of both.

TO ASTRONOMERS.

Prate not to me so much of suns and of nebulous bodies;
Think ye Nature but great, in that she gives thee to count?
Though your object may be the sublimest that space holds within it,
Yet, my good friends, the sublime dwells not in the regions of
space.

MY FAITH.

Which religion do I acknowledge? None that thou namest.
“None that I name? And why so?” — Why, for religion’s own sake?

INSIDE AND OUTSIDE.

God alone sees the heart and therefore, since he alone sees it,
Be it our care that we, too, something that’s worthy may see.

FRIEND AND FOE.

Dearly I love a friend; yet a foe I may turn to my profit;
Friends show me that which I can; foes teach me that which I
should.

The Poems of Schiller

LIGHT AND COLOR.

Thou that art ever the same, with the changeless One take up thy dwelling!
Color, thou changeable one, kindly descends upon man!

GENIUS.

Understanding, indeed, can repeat what already existed,—
That which Nature has built, after her she, too, can build.
Over Nature can reason build, but in vacancy only:
But thou, genius, alone, nature in nature canst form.

BEAUTEOUS INDIVIDUALITY.

Thou in truth shouldst be one, yet not with the whole shouldst thou be so.
'Tis through the reason thou'rt one,—art so with it through the heart.
Voice of the whole is thy reason, but thou thine own heart must be ever;
If in thy heart reason dwells evermore, happy art thou.

VARIETY.

Many are good and wise; yet all for one only reckon,
For 'tis conception, alas, rules them, and not a fond heart.
Sad is the sway of conception,—from thousandfold varying figures,
Needy and empty but one it is e'er able to bring.
But where creative beauty is ruling, there life and enjoyment
Dwell; to the ne'er-changing One, thousands of new forms she gives.

The Poems of Schiller

THE IMITATOR.

Good from the good,—to the reason this is not hard of conception;
But the genius has power good from the bad to evoke.
'Tis the conceived alone, that thou, imitator, canst practise;
Food the conceived never is, save to the mind that conceives.

GENIALITY.

How does the genius make itself known? In the way that in nature
Shows the Creator himself,—e'en in the infinite whole.
Clear is the ether, and yet of depth that ne'er can be fathomed;
Seen by the eye, it remains evermore closed to the sense.

THE INQUIRERS.

Men now seek to explore each thing from within and without too!
How canst thou make thy escape, Truth, from their eager pursuit?
That they may catch thee, with nets and poles extended they seek
thee
But with a spirit-like tread, glidest thou out of the throng.

CORRECTNESS.

Free from blemish to be, is the lowest of steps, and highest;
Weakness and greatness alone ever arrive at this point.

THE THREE AGES OF NATURE.

Life she received from fable; the schools deprived her of being,
Life creative again she has from reason received.

The Poems of Schiller

THE LAW OF NATURE.

It has ever been so, my friend, and will ever remain so:
Weakness has rules for itself, — vigor is crowned with success.

CHOICE.

If thou canst not give pleasure to all by thy deeds and thy
knowledge,
Give it then, unto the few; many to please is but vain.

SCIENCE OF MUSIC.

Let the creative art breathe life, and the bard furnish spirit;
But the soul is expressed by Polyhymnia alone.

TO THE POET.

Let thy speech be to thee what the body is to the loving;
Beings it only can part, — beings it only can join.

LANGUAGE.

Why can the living spirit be never seen by the spirit?
Soon as the soul 'gins to speak, then can the soul speak no more!

THE MASTER.

Other masters one always can tell by the words that they utter;
That which he wisely omits shows me the master of style.

The Poems of Schiller

THE GIRDLE.

Aphrodite preserves her beauty concealed by her girdle;
That which lends her her charms is what she covers—her shame.

THE DILETTANTE.

Merely because thou hast made a good verse in a language poetic,
One which composes for thee, thou art a poet forsooth!

THE BABBLER OF ART.

Dost thou desire the good in art? Of the good art thou worthy,
Which by a ne'er ceasing war 'gainst thee thyself is produced?

THE PHILOSOPHIES.

Which among the philosophies will be enduring? I know not,
But that philosophy's self ever may last is my hope.

THE FAVOR OF THE MUSES.

Fame with the vulgar expires; but, Muse immortal, thou bearest
Those whom thou lovest, who love thee, into Mnemosyne's arms.

HOMER'S HEAD AS A SEAL.

Trusty old Homer! to thee I confide the secret so tender;
For the raptures of love none but the bard should e'er know.

The Poems of Schiller

GOODNESS AND GREATNESS.

Only two virtues exist. Oh, would they were ever united!
Ever the good with the great, ever the great with the good!

THE IMPULSES.

Fear with his iron staff may urge the slave onward forever;
Rapture, do thou lead me on ever in roseate chains!

NATURALISTS AND TRANSCENDENTAL PHILOSOPHERS.

Enmity be between ye! Your union too soon is cemented;
Ye will but learn to know truth when ye divide in the search.

GERMAN GENIUS.

Strive, O German, for Roman-like strength and for Grecian-like
beauty!
Thou art successful in both; ne'er has the Gaul had success.

THEOPHANIA.

When the happy appear, I forget the gods in the heavens;
But before me they stand, when I the suffering see.

TRIFLES.

THE EPIC HEXAMETER.

Giddily onward it bears thee with resistless impetuous billows;
Naught but the ocean and air seest thou before or behind.

The Poems of Schiller

THE DISTICH.

In the hexameter rises the fountain's watery column,
In the pentameter sweet falling in melody down.

THE EIGHT-LINE STANZA.

Stanza, by love thou'rt created, — by love, all-tender and yearning;
Thrice dost thou bashfully fly; thrice dost with longing return.

THE OBELISK.

On a pedestal lofty the sculptor in triumph has raised me.
"Stand thou," spake he, — and I stand proudly and joyfully here.

THE TRIUMPHAL ARCH.

"Fear not," the builder exclaimed, "the rainbow that stands in the
heavens;
I will extend thee, like it, into infinity far!"

THE BEAUTIFUL BRIDGE.

Under me, over me, hasten the waters, the chariots; my builder
Kindly has suffered e'en me, over myself, too, to go!

THE GATE.

Let the gate open stand, to allure the savage to precepts;
Let it the citizen lead into free nature with joy.

The Poems of Schiller

ST. PETER'S.

If thou seekest to find immensity here, thou'rt mistaken;
For my greatness is meant greater to make thee thyself!

THE PHILOSOPHERS.

PUPIL.

I am rejoiced, worthy sirs, to find you in pleno assembled;
For I have come down below, seeking the one needful thing.

ARISTOTLE.

Quick to the point, my good friend! For the Jena Gazette comes
to hand here,
Even in hell,—so we know all that is passing above.

PUPIL.

So much the better! So give me (I will not depart hence without it)
Some good principle now,—one that will always avail!

FIRST PHILOSOPHER.

Cogito, ergo sum. I have thought, and therefore existence!
If the first be but true, then is the second one sure.

PUPIL.

As I think, I exist. 'Tis good! But who always is thinking?
Oft I've existed e'en when I have been thinking of naught.

SECOND PHILOSOPHER.

Since there are things that exist, a thing of all things there must
needs be;
In the thing of all things dabble we, just as we are.

THIRD PHILOSOPHER.

Just the reverse, say I. Besides myself there is nothing;
Everything else that there is is but a bubble to me.

The Poems of Schiller

FOURTH PHILOSOPHER.

Two kinds of things I allow to exist,—the world and the spirit;
Naught of others I know; even these signify one.

FIFTH PHILOSOPHER.

I know naught of the thing, and know still less of the spirit;
Both but appear unto me; yet no appearance they are.

SIXTH PHILOSOPHER.

I am I, and settle myself,—and if I then settle
Nothing to be, well and good—there's a nonentity formed.

SEVENTH PHILOSOPHER.

There is conception at least! A thing conceived there is, therefore;
And a conceiver as well,—which, with conception, make three.

PUPIL.

All this nonsense, good sirs, won't answer my purpose a tittle:
I a real principle need,—one by which something is fixed.

EIGHTH PHILOSOPHER.

Nothing is now to be found in the theoretical province;
Practical principles hold, such as: thou canst, for thou shouldst.

PUPIL.

If I but thought so! When people know no more sensible answer,
Into the conscience at once plunge they with desperate haste.

DAVID HUME.

Don't converse with those fellows! That Kant has turned them all
crazy;
Speak to me, for in hell I am the same that I was.

LAW POINT.

I have made use of my nose for years together to smell with;
Have I a right to my nose that can be legally proved?

The Poems of Schiller

PUFFENDORF.

Truly a delicate point! Yet the first possession appeareth
In thy favor to tell; therefore make use of it still!

SCRUPLE OF CONSCIENCE.

Willingly serve I my friends; but, alas, I do it with pleasure;
Therefore I often am vexed that no true virtue I have.

DECISION.

As there is no other means, thou hadst better begin to despise them;
And with aversion, then, do that which thy duty commands.

THE HOMERIDES.

Who is the bard of the Iliad among you? For since he likes
puddings,
Heyne begs he'll accept these that from Gottingen come.
"Give them to me! The kings' quarrel I sang!" —
"I, the fight near the vessels!" — "Hand me the puddings!
I sang what upon Ida took place!"
Gently! Don't tear me to pieces! The puddings will not be sufficient;
He by whom they are sent destined them only for one.

G. G.

Each one, when seen by himself, is passably wise and judicious;
When they in corpore are, naught but a blockhead is seen.

THE MORAL POET.

Man is in truth a poor creature, — I know it, — and fain would forget
it;
Therefore (how sorry I am!) came I, alas, unto thee!

The Poems of Schiller

THE DANAIDES.

Into the sieve we've been pouring for years,—
o'er the stone we've been brooding;
But the stone never warms,—nor does the sieve ever fill.

THE SUBLIME SUBJECT.

'Tis thy Muse's delight to sing God's pity to mortals;
But, that they pitiful are,—is it a matter for song?

THE ARTIFICE.

Wouldst thou give pleasure at once to the children of earth and the
righteous?
Draw the image of lust—adding the devil as well!

IMMORTALITY.

Dreadest thou the aspect of death! Thou wishest to live on forever?
Live in the whole, and when long thou shalt have gone, 'twill
remain!

JEREMIADS.

All, both in prose and in verse, in Germany fast is decaying;
Far behind us, alas, lieth the golden age now!
For by philosophers spoiled is our language—our logic by poets,
And no more common sense governs our passage through life.
From the aesthetic, to which she belongs, now virtue is driven,
And into politics forced, where she's a troublesome guest.
Where are we hastening now? If natural, dull we are voted,
And if we put on constraint, then the world calls us absurd.
Oh, thou joyous artlessness 'mongst the poor maidens of Leipzig,
Witty simplicity come,—come, then, to glad us again!

The Poems of Schiller

Comedy, oh repeat thy weekly visits so precious,
Sigismund, lover so sweet,—Mascarill, valet jocose!
Tragedy, full of salt and pungency epigrammatic,—
And thou, minuet-step of our old buskin preserved!
Philosophic romance, thou mannikin waiting with patience,
When, 'gainst the pruner's attack, Nature defendeth herself!
Ancient prose, oh return,—so nobly and boldly expressing
All that thou thinkest and hast thought,—and what the reader
thinks too
All, both in prose and in verse, in Germany fast is decaying;
Far behind us, alas, lieth the golden age now!

SHAKESPEARE'S GHOST.

A PARODY.

I, too, at length discerned great Hercules' energy mighty,—
Saw his shade. He himself was not, alas, to be seen.
Round him were heard, like the screaming of birds,
the screams of tragedians,
And, with the baying of dogs, barked dramaturgists around.
There stood the giant in all his terrors; his bow was extended,
And the bolt, fixed on the string, steadily aimed at the heart.
"What still hardier action, unhappy one, dost thou now venture,
Thus to descend to the grave of the departed souls here?"—
"'Tis to see Tiresias I come, to ask of the prophet
Where I the buskin of old, that now has vanished, may find?"
"If they believe not in Nature, nor the old Grecian, but vainly
Wilt thou convey up from hence that dramaturgy to them."
"Oh, as for Nature, once more to tread our stage she has ventured,
Ay, and stark-naked beside, so that each rib we count."
"What? Is the buskin of old to be seen in truth on your stage, then,
Which even I came to fetch, out of mid-Tartarus' gloom?"—
"There is now no more of that tragic bustle, for scarcely
Once in a year on the boards moves thy great soul, harness-clad."
"Doubtless 'tis well! Philosophy now has refined your sensations,
And from the humor so bright fly the affections so black."—

The Poems of Schiller

"Ay, there is nothing that beats a jest that is stolid and barren,
But then e'en sorrow can please, if 'tis sufficiently moist."
"But do ye also exhibit the graceful dance of Thalia,
Joined to the solemn step with which Melpomene moves?" —
"Neither! For naught we love but what is Christian and moral;
And what is popular, too, homely, domestic, and plain."
"What? Does no Caesar, does no Achilles, appear on your stage
now,
Not an Andromache e'en, not an Orestes, my friend?"
"No! there is naught to be seen there but parsons,
and syndics of commerce,
Secretaries perchance, ensigns, and majors of horse."
"But, my good friend, pray tell me, what can such people e'er meet
with
That can be truly called great? — what that is great can they do?"
"What? Why they form cabals, they lend upon mortgage, they
pocket
Silver spoons, and fear not e'en in the stocks to be placed."
"Whence do ye, then, derive the destiny, great and gigantic,
Which raises man up on high, e'en when it grinds him to dust?" —
"All mere nonsense! Ourselves, our worthy acquaintances also,
And our sorrows and wants, seek we, and find we, too, here."
"But all this ye possess at home both apter and better, —
Wherefore, then, fly from yourselves, if 'tis yourselves that ye
seek?"
"Be not offended, great hero, for that is a different question;
Ever is destiny blind, — ever is righteous the bard."
"Then one meets on your stage your own contemptible nature,
While 'tis in vain one seeks there nature enduring and great?"
"There the poet is host, and act the fifth is the reckoning;
And, when crime becomes sick, virtue sits down to the feast!"

THE RIVERS.

RHINE.

True, as becometh a Switzer, I watch over Germany's borders;

The Poems of Schiller

But the light-footed Gaul jumps o'er the suffering stream.

RHINE AND MOSELLE.

Many a year have I clasped in my arms the Lorrainian maiden;
But our union as yet ne'er has been blest with a son.

DANUBE IN — —

Round me are dwelling the falcon-eyed race, the Phaeacian people;
Sunday with them never ends; ceaselessly moves round the spit.

MAIN.

Ay, it is true that my castles are crumbling; yet, to my comfort,
Have I for centuries past seen my old race still endure.

SAALE.

Short is my course, during which I salute many princes and
nations;
Yet the princes are good—ay! and the nations are free.

ILM.

Poor are my banks, it is true; but yet my soft-flowing waters
Many immortal lays here, borne by the current along.

PLEISSE.

Flat is my shore and shallow my current; alas, all my writers,
Both in prose and in verse, drink far too deep of its stream!

The Poems of Schiller

ELBE.

All ye others speak only a jargon; 'mongst Germany's rivers
None speak German but me; I but in Misnia alone.

SPREE.

Ramler once gave me language,—my Caesar a subject; and
therefore
I had my mouth then stuffed full; but I've been silent since that.

WESER.

Nothing, alas, can be said about me; I really can't furnish
Matter enough to the Muse e'en for an epigram, small.

MINERAL WATERS AT — —.

Singular country! what excellent taste in its fountains and rivers
In its people alone none have I ever yet found!

PEGNTTZ.

I for a long time have been a hypochondriacal subject;
I but flow on because it has my habit been long.

THE — — RIVERS.

We would gladly remain in the lands that own—as their masters;
Soft their yoke ever is, and all their burdens are light.

The Poems of Schiller

SALZACH.

I, to salt the archbishopric, come from Juvavia's mountains;
Then to Bavaria turn, where they have great need of salt!

THE ANONYMOUS RIVER.

Lenten food for the pious bishop's table to furnish,
By my Creator I'm poured over the famishing land.

LES FLEUVES INDISCRETS.

Pray be silent, ye rivers! One sees ye have no more discretion
Than, in a case we could name, Diderot's favorites had.

ZENITH AND NADIR.

Wheresoever thou wanderest in space, thy Zenith and Nadir
Unto the heavens knit thee, unto the axis of earth.
Howsoever thou attest, let heaven be moved by thy purpose,
Let the aim of thy deeds traverse the axis of earth!

KANT AND HIS COMMENTATORS.

See how a single rich man gives a living to numbers of beggars!
'Tis when sovereigns build, carters are kept in employ.

THE PHILOSOPHERS.

The principle by which each thing
Toward strength and shape first tended,—
The pulley whereon Zeus the ring
Of earth, that loosely used to swing,
With cautiousness suspended,—

The Poems of Schiller

he is a clever man, I vow,
Who its real name can tell me now,
Unless to help him I consent—
'Tis: ten and twelve are different!

Fire burns,—'tis chilly when it snows,
Man always is two-footed,—
The sun across the heavens goes,—
This, he who naught of logic knows
Finds to his reason suited.
Yet he who metaphysics learns,
Knows that naught freezes when it burns—
Knows that what's wet is never dry,—
And that what's bright attracts the eye.

Old Homer sings his noble lays,
The hero goes through dangers;
The brave man duty's call obeys,
And did so, even in the days
When sages yet were strangers—
But heart and genius now have taught
What Locke and what Descartes never thought;
By them immediately is shown
That which is possible alone.

In life avails the right of force.
The bold the timid worries;
Who rules not, is a slave of course,
Without design each thing across
Earth's stage forever hurries.
Yet what would happen if the plan
Which guides the world now first began,
Within the moral system lies
Disclosed with clearness to our eyes.

"When man would seek his destiny,
Man's help must then be given;
Save for the whole, ne'er labors he,—

The Poems of Schiller

Of many drops is formed the sea,—
By water mills are driven;
Therefore the wolf's wild species flies,—
Knit are the state's enduring ties."
Thus Puffendorf and Feder, each
Is, *ex cathedra*, wont to teach.

Yet, if what such professors say,
Each brain to enter durst not,
Nature exerts her mother-sway,
Provides that ne'er the chain gives way,
And that the ripe fruits burst not.
Meanwhile, until earth's structure vast
Philosophy can bind at last,
'Tis she that bids its pinion move,
By means of hunger and of love!

THE METAPHYSICIAN.

"How far beneath me seems the earthly ball!
The pigmy race below I scarce can see;
How does my art, the noblest art of all,
Bear me close up to heaven's bright canopy!"
So cries the slater from his tower's high top,
And so the little would-be mighty man,
Hans Metaphysicus, from out his critic-shop.
Explain, thou little would-be mighty man!
The tower from which thy looks the world survey,
Whereof,—whereon is it erected, pray?
How didst thou mount it? Of what use to thee
Its naked heights, save o'er the vale to see?

PEGASUS IN HARNESS.

Once to a horse-fair,—it may perhaps have been
Where other things are bought and sold,—I mean

The Poems of Schiller

At the Haymarket,—there the muses' horse
A hungry poet brought—to sell, of course.

'The hippogriff neighed shrilly, loudly,
And reared upon his hind-legs proudly;
In utter wonderment each stood and cried:
"The noble regal beast!" But, woe betide!
Two hideous wings his slender form deface,
The finest team he else would not disgrace.
"The breed," said they, "is doubtless rare,
But who would travel through the air?"
Not one of them would risk his gold.
At length a farmer grew more bold:
"As for his wings, I of no use should find them,
But then how easy 'tis to clip or bind them!
The horse for drawing may be useful found,—
So, friend, I don't mind giving twenty pound!"
The other glad to sell his merchandise,
Cried, "Done!"—and Hans rode off upon his prize.

The noble creature was, ere long, put-to,
But scarcely felt the unaccustomed load,
Than, panting to soar upwards, off he flew,
And, filled with honest anger, overthrew
The cart where an abyss just met the road.
"Ho! ho!" thought Hans: "No cart to this mad beast
I'll trust. Experience makes one wise at least.
To drive the coach to-morrow now my course is,
And he as leader in the team shall go.
The lively fellow'll save me full two horses;
As years pass on, he'll doubtless tamer grow."

All went on well at first. The nimble steed
His partners roused,—like lightning was their speed.
What happened next? Toward heaven was turned his eye,—
Unused across the solid ground to fly,
He quitted soon the safe and beaten course,
And true to nature's strong resistless force,

The Poems of Schiller

Ran over bog and moor, o'er hedge and pasture tilled;
An equal madness soon the other horses filled—
No reins could hold them in, no help was near,
Till,—only picture the poor travellers' fear!—
The coach, well shaken, and completely wrecked,
Upon a hill's steep top at length was checked.

"If this is always sure to be the case,"
Hans cried, and cut a very sorry face,
"He'll never do to draw a coach or wagon;
Let's see if we can't tame the fiery dragon
By means of heavy work and little food."
And so the plan was tried.—But what ensued?
The handsome beast, before three days had passed,
Wasted to nothing. "Stay! I see at last!"
Cried Hans. "Be quick, you fellows! yoke him now
With my most sturdy ox before the plough."

No sooner said than done. In union queer
Together yoked were soon winged horse and steer.
The griffin pranced with rage, and his remaining might
Exerted to resume his old-accustomed flight.
'Twas all in vain—his partner stepped with circumspection,
And Phoebus' haughty steed must follow his direction;
Until at last, by long resistance spent,
When strength his limbs no longer was controlling,
The noble creature, with affliction bent,
Fell to the ground, and in the dust lay rolling.
"Accursed beast!" at length with fury mad
Hans shouted, while he soundly plied the lash,—
"Even for ploughing, then, thou art too bad!—
That fellow was a rogue to sell such trash!"

Ere yet his heavy blows had ceased to fly,
A brisk and merry youth by chance came by.
A lute was tinkling in his hand,
And through his light and flowing hair
Was twined with grace a golden band.

The Poems of Schiller

“Whither, my friend, with that strange pair?”
From far he to the peasant cried.
“A bird and ox to one rope tied—
Was such a team e’er heard of, pray?
Thy horse’s worth I’d fain essay;
Just for one moment lend him me,—
Observe, and thou shalt wonders see!”

The hippogriff was loosened from the plough,
Upon his back the smiling youth leaped now;
No sooner did the creature understand
That he was guided by a master-hand,
Than ‘gainst his bit he champed, and upward soared
While lightning from his flaming eyes outpoured.
No longer the same being, royally
A spirit, ay, a god, ascended he,
Spread in a moment to the stormy wind
His noble wings, and left the earth behind,
And, ere the eye could follow him,
Had vanished in the heavens dim.

KNOWLEDGE.

Knowledge to one is a goddess both heavenly and high,—to
another
Only an excellent cow, yielding the butter he wants.

THE POETRY OF LIFE.

“Who would himself with shadows entertain,
Or gild his life with lights that shine in vain,
Or nurse false hopes that do but cheat the true?—
Though with my dream my heaven should be resigned—
Though the free-pinioned soul that once could dwell
In the large empire of the possible,
This workday life with iron chains may bind,

The Poems of Schiller

Yet thus the mastery o'er ourselves we find,
And solemn duty to our acts decreed,
Meets us thus tutored in the hour of need,
With a more sober and submissive mind!
How front necessity—yet bid thy youth
Shun the mild rule of life's calm sovereign, truth."
So speakest thou, friend, how stronger far than I;
As from experience—that sure port serene—
Thou lookest;—and straight, a coldness wraps the sky,
The summer glory withers from the scene,
Scared by the solemn spell; behold them fly,

The godlike images that seemed so fair!
Silent the playful Muse—the rosy hours
Halt in their dance; and the May-breathing flowers
Fall from the sister-graces' waving hair.
Sweet-mouthed Apollo breaks his golden lyre,
Hermes, the wand with many a marvel rife;—
The veil, rose-woven, by the young desire
With dreams, drops from the hueless cheeks of life.
The world seems what it is—a grave! and love
Casts down the bondage wound his eyes above,
And sees!—He sees but images of clay
Where he dreamed gods; and sighs—and glides away.
The youngness of the beautiful grows old,
And on thy lips the bride's sweet kiss seems cold;
And in the crowd of joys—upon thy throne
Thou sittest in state, and hardenest into stone.



The Poems of Schiller

TO GOETHE,

ON HIS PRODUCING VOLTAIRE'S "MAHOMET" ON THE STAGE.

Thou, by whom, freed from rules constrained and wrong,
On truth and nature once again we're placed, —
Who, in the cradle e'en a hero strong,
Stiffest the serpents round our genius laced, —
Thou whom the godlike science has so long
With her unsullied sacred fillet graced, —
Dost thou on ruined altars sacrifice
To that false muse whom we no longer prize?

This theatre belongs to native art,
No foreign idols worshipped here are seen;
A laurel we can show, with joyous heart,
That on the German Pindus has grown green
The sciences' most holy, hidden part
The German genius dares to enter e'en,
And, following the Briton and the Greek,
A nobler glory now attempts to seek.

For yonder, where slaves kneel, and despots hold
The reins, — where spurious greatness lifts its head,
Art has no power the noble there to mould,
'Tis by no Louis that its seed is spread;
From its own fulness it must needs unfold,
By earthly majesty 'tis never fed;
'Tis with truth only it can e'er unite,
Its glow free spirits only e'er can light.

'Tis not to bind us in a worn-out chain
Thou dost this play of olden time recall, —
'Tis not to seek to lead us back again
To days when thoughtless childhood ruled o'er all.
It were, in truth, an idle risk and vain
Into the moving wheel of time to fall;
The winged hours forever bear it on,

The Poems of Schiller

The new arrives, and, lo! the old has gone.
The narrow theatre is now more wide,
Into its space a universe now steals;
In pompous words no longer is our pride,
Nature we love when she her form reveals;
Fashion's false rules no more are deified;
And as a man the hero acts and feels.
'Tis passion makes the notes of freedom sound,
And 'tis in truth the beautiful is found.

Weak is the frame of Thespis' chariot fair,
Resembling much the bark of Acheron,
That carries naught but shades and forms of air;
And if rude life should venture to press on,
The fragile bark its weight no more can bear,
For fleeting spirits it can hold alone.
Appearance ne'er can reach reality, —
If nature be victorious, art must fly.

For on the stage's boarded scaffold here
A world ideal opens to our eyes,
Nothing is true and genuine save — a tear;
Emotion on no dream of sense relies.
The real Melpomene is still sincere,
Naught as a fable merely she supplies —
By truth profound to charm us is her care;
The false one, truth pretends, but to ensnare.

Now from the scene, art threatens to retire,
Her kingdom wild maintains still phantasy;
The stage she like the world would set on fire,
The meanest and the noblest mingles she.
The Frank alone 'tis art can now inspire,
And yet her archetype can his ne'er be;
In bounds unchangeable confining her,
He holds her fast, and vainly would she stir.

The stage to him is pure and undefiled;

The Poems of Schiller

Chased from the regions that to her belong
Are Nature's tones, so careless and so wild,
To him e'en language rises into song;
A realm harmonious 'tis, of beauty mild,
Where limb unites to limb in order strong.
The whole into a solemn temple blends,
And 'tis the dance that grace to motion lends.

And yet the Frank must not be made our guide.
For in his art no living spirit reigns:
The boasting gestures of a spurious pride
That mind which only loves the true disdains.
To nobler ends alone be it applied,
Returning, like some soul's long-vanished manes.
To render the oft-sullied stage once more
A throne befitting the great muse of yore.

THE PRESENT.

Ring and staff, oh to me on a Rhenish flask ye are welcome!
Him a true shepherd I call, who thus gives drink to his sheep.
Draught thrice blest! It is by the Muse I have won thee,—the Muse,
too,
Sends thee,—and even the church places upon thee her seal.

DEPARTURE FROM LIFE.

Two are the roads that before thee lie open from life to conduct thee;
To the ideal one leads thee, the other to death.
See that while yet thou art free, on the first thou commencest thy
journey,
Ere by the merciless fates on to the other thou'rt led!

The Poems of Schiller

VERSES WRITTEN IN THE FOLIO ALBUM OF A LEARNED
FRIEND.

Once wisdom dwelt in tomes of ponderous size,
While friendship from a pocketbook would talk;
But now that knowledge in small compass lies,
And floats in almanacs, as light as cork,
Courageous man, thou dost not hesitate
To open for thy friends this house so great!
Hast thou no fear, I seriously would ask,
That thou may'st thus their patience overtask?

VERSES WRITTEN IN THE ALBUM OF A FRIEND.

(HERR VON MECHELN OF BASLE.)

Nature in charms is exhaustless, in beauty ever reviving;
And, like Nature, fair art is inexhaustible too.
Hail, thou honored old man! for both in thy heart thou preservest
Living sensations, and thus ne'er-ending youth is thy lot!

THE SUNDAY CHILDREN.

Years has the master been laboring, but always without satisfaction;
To an ingenious race 'twould be in vision conferred.
What they yesterday learned, to-day they fain would be teaching:
Small compassion, alas, is by those gentlemen shown!

THE HIGHEST.

Seerest thou the highest, the greatest!
In that the plant can instruct thee;
What it unwittingly is, be thou of thine own free will!

The Poems of Schiller

THE PUPPET-SHOW OF LIFE.

Thou'rt welcome in my box to peep!
Life's puppet-show, the world in little,
Thou'lt see depicted to a tittle,—
But pray at some small distance keep!
'Tis by the torch of love alone,
By Cupid's taper, it is shown.

See, not a moment void the stage is!
The child in arms at first they bring,—
The boy then skips,— the youth now storms and rages,—
The man contends, and ventures everything!

Each one attempts success to find,
Yet narrow is the race-course ever;
The chariot rolls, the axles quiver,
The hero presses on, the coward stays behind,
The proud man falls with mirth-inspiring fall,
The wise man overtakes them all!
Thou see'st fair woman it the barrier stand,
With beauteous hands, with smiling eyes,
To glad the victor with his prize.

TO LAWGIVERS.

Ever take it for granted, that man collectively wishes
That which is right; but take care never to think so of one!

FALSE IMPULSE TO STUDY.

Oh, how many new foes against truth! My very soul bleedeth
When I behold the owl-race now bursting forth to the light.

The Poems of Schiller

THE HEREDITARY PRINCE OF WEIMAR, ON HIS
PROCEEDING TO PARIS.

(SUNG IN A CIRCLE OF FRIENDS.)

With one last bumper let us hail
The wanderer beloved,
Who takes his leave of this still vale
Wherein in youth he roved.

From loving arms, from native home,
He tears himself away,
To yonder city proud to roam,
That makes whole lands its prey.

Dissension flies, all tempests end,
And chained is strife abhorred;
We in the crater may descend
From whence the lava poured.

A gracious fate conduct thee through
Life's wild and mazy track!
A bosom nature gave thee true,—
A bosom true bring back!

Thou'lt visit lands that war's wild train
Had crushed with careless heed;
Now smiling peace salutes the plain,
And strews the golden seed.

The hoary Father Rhine thou'lt greet,
Who thy forefather's⁵⁸ blest
Will think of, whilst his waters fleet
In ocean's bed to rest.

Do homage to the hero's manes,
And offer to the Rhine,
The German frontier who maintains,

The Poems of Schiller

His own-created wine, —

So that thy country's soul thy guide
May be, when thou hast crossed
On the frail bark to yonder side,
Where German faith is lost!

THE IDEAL OF WOMAN.

TO AMANDA.

Woman in everything yields to man; but in that which is highest,
Even the manliest man yields to the woman most weak.
But that highest, — what is it? The gentle radiance of triumph
As in thy brow upon me, beauteous Amanda, it beams.
When o'er the bright shining disk the clouds of affliction are
fleeting,
Fairer the image appears, seen through the vapor of gold.
Man may think himself free! thou art so, — for thou never knowest
What is the meaning of choice, — know'st not necessity's name.
That which thou givest, thou always givest wholly; but one art thou
ever,
Even thy tenderest sound is thine harmonious self.
Youth everlasting dwells here, with fulness that never is exhausted,
And with the flower at once pluckest thou the ripe golden fruit.

THE FOUNTAIN OF SECOND YOUTH.

Trust me, 'tis not a mere tale, — the fountain of youth really runneth,
Runneth forever. Thou ask'st, where? In the poet's sweet art!

WILLIAM TELL. 59

When hostile elements with rage resound,
And fury blindly fans war's lurid flame, —

The Poems of Schiller

When in the strife of party quarrel drowned,
The voice of justice no regard can claim,—
When crime is free, and impious hands are found
The sacred to pollute, devoid of shame,
And loose the anchor which the state maintains,—
No subject there we find for joyous strains.

But when a nation, that its flocks still feeds
With calm content, nor other's wealth desires
Throws off the cruel yoke 'neath which it bleeds,
Yet, e'en in wrath, humanity admires,—
And, e'en in triumph, moderation heeds,—
That is immortal, and our song requires.
To show thee such an image now is mine;
Thou knowest it well, for all that's great is thine!

TO A YOUNG FRIEND DEVOTING HIMSELF TO PHILOSOPHY.

Severe the proof the Grecian youth was doomed to undergo,
Before he might what lurks beneath the Eleusinia know—
Art thou prepared and ripe, the shrine—the inner shrine—to win,
Where Pallas guards from vulgar eyes the mystic prize within?
Knowest thou what bars thy way? how dear the bargain thou dost
make,
When but to buy uncertain good, sure good thou dost forsake?
Feel'st thou sufficient strength to brave the deadliest human fray,
When heart from reason—sense from thought, shall rend
themselves away?
Sufficient valor, war with doubt, the hydra-shape, to wage;
And that worst foe within thyself with manly soul engage?
With eyes that keep their heavenly health—the innocence of youth
To guard from every falsehood, fair beneath the mask of truth?
Fly, if thou canst not trust thy heart to guide thee on the way—
Oh, fly the charmed margin ere th' abyss engulf its prey.
Round many a step that seeks the light, the shades of midnight
close;

The Poems of Schiller

But in the glimmering twilight, see—how safely childhood goes!

EXPECTATION AND FULFILMENT.

Into life's ocean the youth with a thousand masts daringly
launches;
Mute, in a boat saved from wreck, enters the gray-beard the port.

THE COMMON FATE.

See how we hate, how we quarrel, how thought and how feeling
divide us!
But thy locks, friend, like mine, meanwhile are bleaching fast.

HUMAN ACTION.

Where the pathway begins, eternity seems to lie open,
Yet at the narrowest point even the wisest man stops.

NUPTIAL ODE. 60

Fair bride, attended by our blessing,
Glad Hymen's flowery path 'gin pressing!
We witnessed with enraptured eye
The graces of thy soul unfolding,
Thy youthful charms their beauty moulding
To blossom for love's ecstasy.
A happy fate now hovers round thee,
And friendship yields without a smart
To that sweet god whose might hath bound thee;—
He needs must have, he hath thy heart!

To duties dear, to trouble tender,
Thy youthful breast must now surrender,

The Poems of Schiller

Thy garland's summons must obey.
Each toying infantine sensation,
Each fleeting sport of youth's creation,
Forevermore hath passed away;
And Hymen's sacred bond now chaineth
Where soft and fluttering love was shrined;
Yet for a heart, where beauty reigneth,
Of flowers alone that bond is twined.

The secret that can keep forever
In verdant links, that naught can sever,
The bridal garland, wouldst thou find?
'Tis purity the heart pervading,
The blossoms of a grace unfading,
And yet with modest shame combined,
Which, like the sun's reflection glowing,
Makes every heart throb blissfully;—
'Tis looks with mildness overflowing,
And self-maintaining dignity!

THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE NEW CENTURY.

Where will a place of refuge, noble friend,
For peace and freedom ever open lie!
The century in tempests had its end,
The new one now begins with murder's cry.

Each land-connecting bond is torn away,
Each ancient custom hastens to decline;
Not e'en the ocean can war's tumult stay.
Not e'en the Nile-god, not the hoary Rhine.

Two mighty nations strive, with hostile power,
For undivided mastery of the world;
And, by them, each land's freedom to devour,
The trident brandished is—the lightning hurled.

The Poems of Schiller

Each country must to them its gold afford,
And, Brennus-like, upon the fatal day,
The Frank now throws his heavy iron sword,
The even scales of justice to o'erweigh.

His merchant-fleets the Briton greedily
Extends, like polyp-limbs, on every side;
And the domain of Amphitrite free
As if his home it were, would fain bestride.

E'en to the south pole's dim, remotest star,
His restless course moves onward, unrestrained;
Each isle he tracks, — each coast, however far,
But paradise alone he ne'er has gained!

Although thine eye may every map explore,
Vainly thou'lt seek to find that blissful place,
Where freedom's garden smiles for evermore,
And where in youth still blooms the human race.

Before thy gaze the world extended lies,
The very shipping it can scarce embrace;
And yet upon her back, of boundless size,
E'en for ten happy men there is not space!

Into thy bosom's holy, silent cells,
Thou needs must fly from life's tumultuous throng!
Freedom but in the realm of vision dwells,
And beauty bears no blossoms but in song.

GRECIAN GENIUS.

TO MEYER IN ITALY.

Speechless to thousands of others, who with deaf hearts would
consult him,
Talketh the spirit to thee, who art his kinsman and friend.

The Poems of Schiller

THE FATHER.

Work as much as thou wilt, alone thou'lt be standing forever,
Till by nature thou'rt joined forcibly on to the whole.

THE CONNECTING MEDIUM.

How does nature proceed to unite the high and the lowly
In mankind? She commands vanity 'tween them to stand!

THE MOMENT.

Doubtless an epoch important has with the century risen;
But the moment so great finds but a race of small worth.

GERMAN COMEDY.

Fools we may have in plenty, and simpletons, too, by the dozen;
But for comedy these never make use of themselves.

FAREWELL TO THE READER.

A maiden blush o'er every feature straying,
The Muse her gentle harp now lays down here,
And stands before thee, for thy judgment praying,—
She waits with reverence, but not with fear;
Her last farewell for his kind smile delaying.
Whom splendor dazzles not who holds truth dear.
The hand of him alone whose soaring spirit
Worships the beautiful, can crown her merit.

These simple lays are only heard resounding,
While feeling hearts are gladdened by their tone,
With brighter phantasies their path surrounding,

The Poems of Schiller

To nobler aims their footsteps guiding on.
Yet coming ages ne'er will hear them sounding,
They live but for the present hour alone;
The passing moment called them into being,
And, as the hours dance on, they, too, are fleeing.

The spring returns, and nature then awaking,
Bursts into life across the smiling plain;
Each shrub its perfume through the air is shaking,
And heaven is filled with one sweet choral strain;
While young and old, their secret haunts forsaking,
With raptured eye and ear rejoice again.
The spring then flies,—to seed return the flowers.
And naught remains to mark the vanished hours.

DEDICATION TO DEATH, MY PRINCIPAL.

Most high and mighty Czar of all flesh, ceaseless reducer of empires, unfathomable glutton in the whole realms of nature.

With the most profound flesh-creeping I take the liberty of kissing the rattling leg-bones of your voracious Majesty, and humbly laying this little book at your dried-up feet. My predecessors have always been accustomed, as if on purpose to annoy you, to transport their goods and chattels to the archives of eternity, directly under your nose, forgetting that, by so doing, they only made your mouth water the more, for the proverb—Stolen bread tastes sweetest—is applicable even to you. No! I prefer to dedicate this work to you, feeling assured that you will throw it aside.

But, joking apart! methinks we two know each other better than by mere hearsay. Enrolled in the order of Aesculapius, the first-born of Pandora's box, as old as the fall of man, I have stood at your altar,—have sworn undying hatred to your hereditary foe, Nature, as the son of Hamilcar to the seven hills of Rome,—have sworn to besiege her with a whole army of medicines,—to throw up barricades round the obstinate soul,—to drive from the field the insolents who cut down your fees and cripple your finances,—and on the Archaean battle-plain to plant your midnight standard. In return (for one good turn deserves another), you must prepare for me the precious TALISMAN, which can save me from the gallows and the wheel uninjured, and with a whole skin—

Jusque datum sceleri.

Come then! act the generous Maecenas; for observe, I should be sorry to fare like my foolhardy colleagues and cousins, who, armed with stiletto and pocket-pistol, hold their court in gloomy ravines, or mix in the subterranean laboratory the wondrous polychrest, which, when taken with proper zeal, tickles our political noses, either too little or too much, with throne vacancies or state-fevers. D'Amiens and Ravaillac!—Ho, ho, ho!—'Tis a good thing for straight limbs!

The Poems of Schiller

Perhaps you have been whetting your teeth at Easter and Michaelmas?—the great book-epidemic times at Leipzig and Frankfort! Hurrah for the waste-paper!—’twill make a royal feast. Your nimble brokers, Gluttony and Lust, bring you whole cargoes from the fair of life. Even Ambition, your grandpapa—War, Famine, Fire, and Plague, your mighty huntsmen, have provided you with many a jovial man-chase. Avarice and Covetousness, your sturdy butlers, drink to your health whole towns floating in the bubbling cup of the world-ocean. I know a kitchen in Europe where the rarest dishes have been served up in your honor with festive pomp. And yet—who has ever known you to be satisfied, or to complain of indigestion? Your digestive faculties are of iron; your entrails fathomless!

Pooh—I had many other things to say to you, but I am in a hurry to be off. You are an ugly brother-in-law—go! I hear you are calculating on living to see a general collation, where great and small, globes and lexicons, philosophies and knick-knacks, will fly into your jaws—a good appetite to you, should it come to that.—Yet, ravenous wolf that you are! take care that you don’t overeat yourself, and have to disgorge to a hair all that you have swallowed, as a certain Athenian (no particular friend of yours, by-the-by) has prophesied.

The Poems of Schiller

PREFACE.

TOBOLSKO, 2d February.

Tum primum radiis gelidi incaluere Triones.

Flowers in Siberia? Behind this lies a piece of knavery, or the sun must make face against midnight. And yet—if ye were to exert yourselves! 'Tis really so; we have been hunting sables long enough; let us for once in a way try our luck with flowers. Have not enough Europeans come to us stepsons of the sun, and waded through our hundred years' snow, to pluck a modest flower? Shame upon our ancestors—we'll gather them ourselves, and frank a whole basketful to Europe. Do not crush them, ye children of a milder heaven!

But to be serious; to remove the iron weight of prejudice that broods heavily over the north, requires a stronger lever than the enthusiasm of a few individuals, and a firmer Hypomochlion than the shoulders of two or three patriots. Yet if this anthology reconciles you squeamish Europeans to us snow-men as little as—let's suppose the case—our "Muses' Almanac," 61 which we—let's again suppose the case—might have written, it will at least have the merit of helping its companions through the whole of Germany to give the last neck-stab to expiring taste, as we people of Tobolsko like to word it.

If your Homers talk in their sleep, and your Herculesees kill flies with their clubs—if every one who knows how to give vent to his portion of sorrow in dreary Alexandrines, interprets that as a call to Helicon, shall we northerns be blamed for tinkling the Muses' lyre?—Your matadors claim to have coined silver when they have stamped their effigy on wretched pewter; and at Tobolsko coiners are hanged. 'Tis true that you may often find paper-money amongst us instead of Russian roubles, but war and hard times are an excuse for anything.

Go forth then, Siberian anthology! Go! Thou wilt make many a coxcomb happy, wilt be placed by him on the toilet-table of his sweetheart, and in reward wilt obtain her alabaster, lily-white hand for his tender kiss. Go! thou wilt fill up many a weary gulf of ennui

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in assemblies and city-visits, and may be relieve a Circassienne, who has confessed herself weary amidst a shower of calumnies. Go! thou wilt be consulted in the kitchens of many critics; they will fly thy light, and like the screech-owl, retreat into thy shadow. Ho, ho, ho! Already I hear the ear-cracking howls in the inhospitable forest, and anxiously conceal myself in my sable.

THE JOURNALISTS AND MINOS.

I chanced the other eve, —
But how I ne'er will tell, —
The paper to receive.
That's published down in hell.

In general one may guess,
I little care to see
This free-corps of the press
Got up so easily;

But suddenly my eyes
A side-note chanced to meet,
And fancy my surprise
At reading in the sheet: —

“For twenty weary springs”
(The post from Erebus,
Remark me, always brings
Unpleasant news to us) —

“Through want of water, we
Have well-nigh lost our breath;
In great perplexity
Hell came and asked for Death;

““They can wade through the Styx,
Catch crabs in Lethe's flood;
Old Charon's in a fix,
His boat lies in the mud,

““The dead leap over there,
The young and old as well;
The boatman gets no fare,
And loudly curses hell.’

The Poems of Schiller

"King Minos bade his spies
In all directions go;
The devils needs must rise,
And bring him news below.

"Hurrah! The secret's told
They've caught the robber's nest;
A merry feast let's hold!
Come, hell, and join the rest!

"An author's countless band,
Stalked round Cocytus' brink,
Each bearing in his hand
A glass for holding ink.

"And into casks they drew
The water, strange to say,
As boys suck sweet wine through
An elder-reed in play.

"Quick! o'er them cast the net,
Ere they have time to flee!
Warm welcome ye will get,
So come to Sans-souci!

"Smelt by the king ere long,
He sharpened up his tooth,
And thus addressed the throng
(Full angrily, in truth):

"The robbers is't we see?
What trade? What land, perchance?' —
'German news-writers we!' —
Enough to make us dance!

"A wish I long have known
To bid ye stop and dine,
Ere ye by Death were mown,

The Poems of Schiller

That brother-in-law of mine.

“Yet now by Styx I swear,
Whose flood ye would imbibe,
That torments and despair
Shall fill your vermin-tribe!

“The pitcher seeks the well,
Till broken 'tis one day;
They who for ink would smell,
The penalty must pay.

“So seize them by their thumbs,
And loosen straight my beast
E'en now he licks his gums,
Impatient for the feast.' —

“How quivered every limb
Beneath the bull-dog's jaws
Their honors baited him,
And he allowed no pause.

“Convulsively they swear,
Still writhe the rabble rout,
Engaged with anxious care
In pumping Lethe out.”

Ye Christians, good and meek,
This vision bear in mind;
If journalists ye seek,
Attempt their thumbs to find.

Defects they often hide,
As folks whose hairs are gone
We see with wigs supplied
Probatum! I have done!

BACCHUS IN THE PILLORY.

Twirl him! twirl him! blind and dumb
Deaf and dumb,
Twirl the cane so troublesome!
Sprigs of fashion by the dozen
Thou dost bring to book, good cousin.
Cousin, thou art not in clover;
Many a head that's filled with smoke
Thou hast twirled and well-nigh broke,
Many a clever one perplexed,
Many a stomach sorely vexed,
Turning it completely over;
Many a hat put on awry,
Many a lamb chased cruelly,
Made streets, houses, edges, trees,
Dance around us fools with ease.
Therefore thou are not in clover,
Therefore thou, like other folk,
Hast thy head filled full of smoke,
Therefore thou, too, art perplexed,
And thy stomach's sorely vexed,
For 'tis turned completely over;
Therefore thou art not in clover.

Twirl him! twirl him! blind and dumb
Deaf and dumb,
Twirl the carle so troublesome!
Seest thou how our tongues and wits
Thou hast shivered into bits—
Seest thou this, licentious wight?
How we're fastened to a string,
Whirled around in giddy ring,
Making all like night appear,
Filling with strange sounds our ear?
Learn it in the stocks aright!
When our ears wild noises shook,
On the sky we cast no look,

The Poems of Schiller

Neither stock nor stone reviewed,
But were punished as we stood.
Seest thou now, licentious wight?
That, to us, yon flaring sun
Is the Heidelbergers' tun;
Castles, mountains, trees, and towers,
Seem like chopin-cups of ours.
Learn'st thou now, licentious wight?
Learn it in the stocks aright!

Twirl him! twirl him! blind and dumb,
Deaf and dumb,
Twirl the carle so troublesome!
Kinsman, once so full of glee,
Kinsman, where's thy drollery,
Where thy tricks, thou cunning one?
All thy tricks are spent and past,
To the devil gone at last
Like a silly fop thou'lt prate,
Like a washerwoman rate.
Thou art but a simpleton.
Now thou mayest—more shame to thee—
Run away, because of me;
Cupid, that young rogue, may glory
Learning wisdom from thy story;
Haste, thou sluggard, hence to flee
As from glass is cut our wit,
So, like lightning, 'twill be split;
If thou won't be chased away,
Let each folly also stay
Seest my meaning? Think of me!
Idle one, away with thee!

SPINOSA.

A mighty oak here ruined lies,
Its top was wont to kiss the skies,

The Poems of Schiller

Why is it now o'erthrown?—
The peasants needed, so they said,
Its wood wherewith to build a shed,
And so they've cut it down.

TO THE FATES.

Not in the crowd of masqueraders gay,
Where coxcombs' wit with wondrous splendor flares,
And, easier than the Indian's net the prey,
The virtue of young beauties snares;—

Not at the toilet-table of the fair,
Where vanity, as if before an idol, bows,
And often breathes a warmer prayer
Than when to heaven it pays its vows;

And not behind the curtain's cunning veil,
Where the world's eye is hid by cheating night,
And glowing flames the hearts assail,
That seemed but chilly in the light,—

Where wisdom we surprise with shame-dyed lip,
While Phoebus' rays she boldly drinks,
Where men, like thievish children, nectar sip,
And from the spheres e'en Plato sinks—

To ye—to ye, O lonely sister-band,
Daughters of destiny, ascend,
When o'er the lyre all-gently sweeps my hand,
These strains, where bliss and sadness blend.

You only has no sonnet ever wooed,
To win your gold no usurer e'er sighed
No coxcomb e'er with plaints your steps pursued,
For you, Arcadian shepherd ne'er has died.

The Poems of Schiller

Your gentle fingers ye forever ply,
Life's nervous thread with care to twist,
Till sound the clanging shears, and fruitlessly
The tender web would then resist.

Since thou my thread of life hast kindly spun,
Thy hand, O Clotho, I now kiss!
Since thou hast spared that life whilst scarce begun,
Receive this nosegay, Lachesis!

Full often thorns upon the thread,
But oftener roses, thou hast strung;
For thorns and roses there outspread,
Clotho, to thee this lay be sung!

Oft did tempestuous passions rise,
And threat to break the thread by force;
Oft projects of gigantic size
Have checked its free, unfettered course.

Oft, in sweet hours of heavenly bliss,
Too fine appeared the thread to me;
Still oftener, when near sorrow's dark abyss,
Too firm its fabric seemed to be.

Clotho, for this and other lies,
Thy pardon I with tears implore;
Henceforth I'll take whatever prize
Sage Clotho gives, and asks no more.

But never let the shears cut off a rose—
Only the thorns,—yet as thou will'st!
Let, if thou will'st, the death-shears, sharply close,
If thou this single prayer fulfill'st!

Oh, goddess! when, enchained to Laura's breath,
My spirit from its shell breaks free,
Betraying when, upon the gates of death,

The Poems of Schiller

My youthful life hangs giddily,

Let to infinity the thread extend,
'Twill wander through the realms of bliss,—
Then, goddess, let thy cruel shears descend!
Then let them fall, O Lachesis!

THE PARALLEL.

Her likeness Madame Ramler bids me find;
I try to think in vain, to whom or how
Beneath the moon there's nothing of the kind.—
I'll show she's like the moon, I vow!

The moon—she rouges, steals the sun's bright light,
By eating stolen bread her living gets,—
Is also wont to paint her cheeks at night,
While, with untiring ardor, she coquets.

The moon—for this may Herod give her thanks!—
Reserves her best till night may have returned;
Our lady swallows up by day the francs
That she at night-time may have earned.

The moon first swells, and then is once more lean,
As surely as the month comes round;
With Madame Ramler 'tis the same, I ween—
But she to need more time is found!

The moon to love her silver-horns is said,
But makes a sorry show;
She likes them on her husband's head,—
She's right to have it so

The Poems of Schiller

KLOPSTOCK AND WIELAND.

(WHEN THEIR MINIATURES WERE HANGING SIDE BY SIDE.)

In truth, when I have crossed dark Lethe's river,
The man upon the right I'll love forever,
For 'twas he first that wrote for me.
For all the world the left man wrote, full clearly,
And so we all should love him dearly;
Come, left man! I must needs kiss thee!

THE MUSES' REVENGE.

AN ANECDOTE OF HELICON.

Once the nine all weeping came
To the god of song
"Oh, papa!" they there exclaim—
"Hear our tale of wrong!

"Young ink-lickers swarm about
Our dear Helicon;
There they fight, manoeuvre, shout,
Even to thy throne.

"On their steeds they galop hard
To the spring to drink,
Each one calls himself a bard—
Minstrels—only think!

"There they—how the thing to name!
Would our persons treat—
This, without a blush of shame,
We can ne'er repeat;

"One, in front of all, then cries,
'I the army lead!'

The Poems of Schiller

Both his fists he wildly plies,
Like a bear indeed!

“Others wakes he in a trice
With his whistlings rude;
But none follow, though he twice
Has those sounds renewed.

“He’ll return, he threats, ere long,
And he’ll come no doubt!
Father, friend to lyric song,
Please to show him out!”

Father Phoebus laughing hears
The complaint they’ve brought;
“Don’t be frightened, pray, my dears,
We’ll soon cut them short!

“One must hasten to hell-fire,
Go, Melpomene!
Let a fury borrow lyre,
Notes, and dress, of thee.

“Let her meet, in this array,
One of these vile crews,
As though she had lost her way,
Soon as night ensues.

“Then with kisses dark, I trust,
They’ll the dear child greet,
Satisfying their wild lust
Just as it is meet!” —

Said and done! — Then one from hell
Soon was dressed aright.
Scarcely had the prey, they tell,
Caught the fellow’s sight,

The Poems of Schiller

Than, as kites a pigeon follow,
They attacked her straight—
Part, not all, though, I can swallow
Of what folks relate.

If fair boys were 'mongst the band,
How came they to be—
This I cannot understand,—
In such company?

.
The goddess a miscarriage had, good lack!
And was delivered of an—Almanac!

THE HYPOCHONDRIACAL PLUTO.

A ROMANCE.

BOOK I.

The sullen mayor who reigns in hell,
By mortals Pluto hight,
Who thrashes all his subjects well,
Both morn and eve, as stories tell,
And rules the realms of night,
All pleasure lost in cursing once,
All joy in flogging, for the nonce.

The sedentary life he led
Upon his brazen chair
Made his hindquarters very red,
While pricks, as from a nettle-bed,
He felt both here and there:
A burning sun, too, chanced to shine,
And boiled down all his blood to brine.

'Tis true he drank full many a draught
Of Phlegethon's black flood;

The Poems of Schiller

By cupping, leeches, doctor's craft,
And venesection, fore and aft,
They took from him much blood.
Full many a clyster was applied,
And purging, too, was also tried.

His doctor, versed in sciences,
With wig beneath his hat,
Argued and showed with wondrous ease,
From Celsus and Hippocrates,
When he in judgment sat,—
"Right worshipful the mayor of hell,
The liver's wrong, I see full well."

"He's but a booby," Pluto said,
"With all his trash and pills!
A man like me—pray where's his head?
A young man yet—his wits have fled!
While youth my veins yet fills!
Unless electuaries he'll bring,
Full in his face my club I'll fling!"

Or right or wrong,—'twas a hard case
To weather such a trial;
(Poor men, who lose a king's good grace!)
He's straight saluted in the face
By every splint and phial.
He very wisely made no fuss;
This hint he learnt of Cerberus.

"Go! fetch the barber of the skies,
Apollo, to me soon!"
An airy courier straightway flies
Upon his beast, and onward hies,
And skims past poles and moon;
As he went off, the clock struck four,
At five his charger reached the door.

The Poems of Schiller

Just then Apollo happened—"Heigh-ho!
A sonnet to have made?"
Oh, dear me, no!—upon Miss Io
(Such is the tale I heard from Clio)
The midwife to have played.
The boy, as if stamped out of wax,
Might Zeus as father fairly tax.

He read the letter half asleep,
Then started in dismay:
"The road is long, and hell is deep,
Your rocks I know are rough and steep . . .
Yet like a king he'll pay!"
He dons his cap of mist and furs,
Then through the air the charger spurs.

With locks all frizzled a la mode,
And ruffles smooth and nice,
In gala dress, that brightly glowed
(A gift Aurora had bestowed),
With watch-chains of high price,
With toes turned out, and chapeau bas,
He stood before hell's mighty czar.

BOOK II.

The grumbler, in his usual tone,
Received him with a curse:
"To Pomerania straight begone!
Ugh! how he smells of eau de Cologne!
Why, brimstone isn't worse.
He'd best be off to heaven again,
Or he'll infect hell's wide domain."

The god of pills, in sore surprise,
A spring then backwards took:
"Is this his highness' usual guise?"

The Poems of Schiller

'Tis in the brain, I see, that lies
The mischief—what a look!
See how his eyes in frenzy roll!
The case is bad, upon my soul!

“A journey to Elysium
The infectus would dissolve,
Making the saps less tough become,
As through the Capitolium
And stomach they revolve.
Provisionally be it so:
Let's start then—but incognito!”

“Ay, worthy sir, no doubt well meant!
If, in these regions hazy,
As with you folk, so charged with scent,
You dapper ones who heaven frequent,
'Twere proper to be lazy,
If hell a master needed not,
Why, then I'd follow on the spot!

“Ha! if the cat once turned her back,
Pray where would be the mice?
They'd sally forth from every crack,
My very mufti would attack,
Spoil all things in a trice!
Oddsbodikins! 'tis pretty cool!
I'll let him see I'm no such fool!

“A pleasant uproar happened erst,
When they assailed my tower!
No fault of mine 'twas, at the worst,
That from their desks and chains to burst
Philosophers had power.
What, has there e'er escaped a poet?
Help, heaven! what misery to know it!

“When days are long, folks talk more stuff!

The Poems of Schiller

Upon your seats, no doubt,
With all your cards and music rough,
And scribblings too, 'tis hard enough
The moments to eke out.
Idleness, like a flea will gnaw
On velvet cushions, — as on straw.

“My brother no attempt omits
To drive away ennui;
His lightning round about him flits,
The target with his storms he hits
(Those howls prove that to me),
Till Rhea's trembling shoulders ache,
And force me e'en for hell to quake.

“Were I grandfather Coelus, though,
You wouldn't soon escape!
Into my belly straight you'd go,
And in your swaddling-clothes cry 'oh!'
And through five windows gape!
First o'er my stream you'd have to come,
And then, perhaps, to Elysium!

“Your steed you mounted, I dare say,
In hopes to catch a goose;
If it is worth the trouble, pray
Tell what you've heard from me to-day,
At shaving time, to Zeus.
Just leave him then to swallow it;
I don't care what he thinks a bit;

“You'd better now go homeward straight!
Your servant! there's the door!
For all your pains — one moment wait!
I'll give you — liberal is the rate —
A piece of ruby-ore.
In heaven such things are rareties;
We use them for base purposes.”

BOOK III.

The god at once, then, said farewell,
At small politeness striving;
When sudden through the crowds of hell
A flying courier rushed pell-mell,
From Tellus' bounds arriving.
"Monarch! a doctor follows me!
Behold this wondrous prodigy!"

"Place for the doctor!" each one said—
He comes with spurs and whip,
To every one he nods his head,
As if he had been born and bred
In Tartarus—the rip!
As jaunty, fearless, full of nous
As Britons in the Lower House.

"Good morrow, worthy sirs!—Ahem!
I'm glad to see that here
(Where all they of Prometheus' stem
Must come, whene'er the Fates condemn)
One meets with such good cheer!
Why for Elysium care a rush?
I'd rather see hell's fountains gush!"

"Stop! stop! his impudence, I vow,
Its due reward shall meet;
By Charles's wain, I swear it now!
He must—no questions I'll allow,—
Prescribe me a receipt.
All hell is mine, I'm Pluto hight!
Make haste to bring your wares to light!"

The doctor, with a knowing look,
The swarthy king surveyed;
He neither felt his pulse, nor took
The usual steps,—(see Galen's book),—

The Poems of Schiller

No difference 'twould have made
As piercing as electric fire
He eyed him to his heart's desire.

"Monarch! I'll tell thee in a trice
The thing that's needed here;
Though desperate may seem the advice—
The case itself is very nice—
And children dragons fear.
Devil must devil eat!—no more!—
Either a wife,—or hellebore!

"Whether she scold, or sportive play,
('Tween these, no medium's known),
She'll drive the incubus away
That has assailed thee many a day
Upon thine iron throne.
She'll make the nimble spirits fleet
Up towards the head, down towards the feet."

Long may the doctor honored be
Who let this saying fall!
He ought to have his effigy
By Phidias sculptured, so that he
May be discerned by all;
A monument forever thriving,
Boerhaave, Hippocrates, surviving!

REPROACH—TO LAURA.

Maiden, stay!—oh, whither wouldst thou go?
Do I still or pride or grandeur show?
Maiden, was it right?
Thou the giant mad'st a dwarf once more,
Scattered'st far the mountains that of yore
Climbed to glory's sunny height.

The Poems of Schiller

Thou hast doomed my flowerets to decay,
All the phantoms bright hast blown away,
Whose sweet follies formed the hero's trust;
All my plans that proudly raised their head
Thou dost, with gentle zephyr-tread,
Prostrate, laughing, in the dust.

To the godhead, eagle-like, I flew, —
Smiling, fortune's juggling wheel to view,
Careless wheresoe'er her ball might fly;
Hovering far beyond Cocytus' wave,
Death and life receiving like a slave —
Life and death from out one beaming eye!

Like the victors, who, with thunder-lance,
On the iron plain of glory dance,
Starting from their mistress' breast, —
From Aurora's rosy bed upsprings
God's bright sun, to roam o'er towns of kings,
And to make the young world blest!

Toward the hero doth this heart still strain?
Drink I, eagle, still the fiery rain
Of thine eye, that burneth to destroy?
In the glances that destructive gleam,
Laura's love I see with sweetness beam, —
Weep to see it—like a boy!

My repose, like yonder image bright,
Dancing in the waters—cloudless, light,
Maiden, hath been slain by thee!
On the dizzy height now totter I—
Laura—if from me—my Laura fly!
Oh, the thought to madness hurries me!

Gladly shout the revellers as they quaff,
Raptures in the leaf-crowned goblet laugh,
Jests within the golden wine have birth,

The Poems of Schiller

Since the maiden hath enslaved my mind,
I have left each youthful sport behind,
Friendless roam I o'er the earth.

Hear I still bright glory's thunder-tone?
Doth the laurel still allure me on?
Doth thy lyre, Apollo Cynthius?
In my breast no echoes now arise,
Every shamefaced muse in sorrow flies,—
And thou, too, Apollo Cynthius?

Shall I still be, as a woman, tame?
Do my pulses, at my country's name,
Proudly burst their prison-thralls?
Would I boast the eagle's soaring wing?
Do I long with Roman blood to spring,
When my Hermann calls?

Oh, how sweet the eye's wild gaze divine
Sweet to quaff the incense at that shrine!
Prouder, bolder, swells the breast.
That which once set every sense on fire,
That which once could every nerve inspire,
Scarce a half-smile now hath power to wrest!

That Orion might receive my fame,
On the time-flood's heaving waves my name
Rocked in glory in the mighty tide;
So that Kronos' dreaded scythe was shivered,
When against my monument is quivered,
Towering toward the firmament in pride.

Smil'st thou?—No? to me naught's perished now!
Star and laurel I'll to fools allow,
To the dead their marble cell;—
Love hath granted all as my reward,
High o'er man 'twere easy to have soared,
So I love him well!

The Poems of Schiller

THE SIMPLE PEASANT. 62

MATTHEW.

Gossip, you'll like to hear, no doubt!
A learned work has just come out—
Messias is the name 'twill bear;
The man has travelled through the air,
And on the sun-beplastered roads
Has lost shoe-leather by whole loads,—
Has seen the heavens lie open wide,
And hell has traversed with whole hide.
The thought has just occurred to me
That one so skilled as he must be
May tell us how our flax and wheat arise.
What say you?—Shall I try to ascertain?

LUKE.

You fool, to think that any one so wise
About mere flax and corn would rack his brain.

ACTAEON.

Thy wife is destined to deceive thee!
She'll seek another's arms and leave thee,
And horns upon thy head will shortly sprout!
How dreadful that when bathing thou shouldst see me
(No ether-bath can wash the stigma out),
And then, in perfect innocence, shouldst flee me!

MAN'S DIGNITY.

I am a man!—Let every one
Who is a man, too, spring
With joy beneath God's shining sun,
And leap on high, and sing!

The Poems of Schiller

To God's own image fair on earth
Its stamp I've power to show;
Down to the front, where heaven has birth
With boldness I dare go.

'Tis well that I both dare and can!
When I a maiden see,
A voice exclaims: thou art a man!
I kiss her tenderly.

And redder then the maiden grows,
Her bodice seems too tight—
That I'm a man the maiden knows,
Her bodice therefore's tight.

Will she, perchance, for pity cry,
If unawares she's caught?
She finds that I'm a man—then, why
By her is pity sought?

I am a man; and if alone
She sees me drawing near,
I make the emperor's daughter run,
Though ragged I appear.

This golden watchword wins the smile
Of many a princess fair;
They call—ye'd best look out the while,
Ye gold-laced fellows there!

That I'm a man is fully shown
Whene'er my lyre I sweep;
It thunders out a glorious tone—
It otherwise would creep.

The spirit that my veins now hold,
My manhood calls its brother!
And both command, like lions bold,

The Poems of Schiller

And fondly greet each other.

From out this same creative flood
From which we men have birth,
Both godlike strength and genius bud,
And everything of worth.

My talisman all tyrants hates,
And strikes them to the ground;
Or guides us gladly through life's gates
To where the dead are found.

E'en Pompey, at Pharsalia's fight,
My talisman o'erthrew;
On German sand it hurled with might
Rome's sensual children, too.

Didst see the Roman, proud and stern,
Sitting on Afric's shore?
His eyes like Hecla seem to burn,
And fiery flames outpour.

Then comes a frank and merry knave,
And spreads it through the land:
"Tell them that thou on Carthage's grave
Hast seen great Marius stand!"

Thus speaks the son of Rome with pride,
Still mighty in his fall;
He is a man, and naught beside, —
Before him tremble all.

His grandsons afterwards began
Their portions to o'erthrow,
And thought it well that every man
Should learn with grace to crow.

For shame, for shame, — once more for shame!

The Poems of Schiller

The wretched ones?—they've even
Squandered the tokens of their fame,
The choicest gifts of heaven.

God's counterfeit has sinfully
Disgraced his form divine,
And in his vile humanity
Has wallowed like the swine.

The face of earth each vainly treads,
Like gourds, that boys in sport
Have hollowed out to human heads,
With skulls, whose brains are—naught.

Like wine that by a chemist's art
Is through retorts refined,
Their spirits to the deuce depart,
The phlegma's left behind.

From every woman's face they fly,
Its very aspect dread,—
And if they dared—and could not—why,
'Twere better they were dead.

They shun all worthies when they can,
Grief at their joy they prove—
The man who cannot make a man,
A man can never love!

The world I proudly wander o'er,
And plume myself and sing
I am a man!—Whoe'er is more?
Then leap on high, and spring!

THE MESSIAD.

Religion 'twas produced this poem's fire;

The Poems of Schiller

Perverted also?—prithce, don't inquire!

THOUGHTS ON THE 1ST OCTOBER, 1781.

What mean the joyous sounds from yonder vine-clad height?
What the exulting Evox? 63
Why glows the cheek? Whom is't that I, with pinions light,
Swinging the lofty Thyrsus see?

Is it the genius whom the gladsome throng obeys?
Do I his numerous train descry?
In plenty's teeming horn the gifts of heaven he sways,
And reels from very ecstasy!—

See how the golden grape in glorious beauty shines,
Kissed by the earliest morning-beams!
The shadow of yon bower, how lovingly it signs,
As it with countless blessings teams!

Ha! glad October, thou art welcome unto me!—
October's first-born, welcome thou!
Thanks of a purer kind, than all who worship thee,
More heartfelt thanks I'm bringing now!

For thou to me the one whom I have loved so well,
And love with fondness to the grave,
Who merits in my heart forevermore to dwell,—
The best of friends in Rieger 64 gave.

'Tis true thy breath doth rock the leaves upon the trees,
And sadly make their charms decay;
Gently they fall:—and swift, as morning phantasies
With those who waken, fly away.

'Tis true that on thy track the fleecy spoiler hastes,
Who makes all Nature's chords resound
With discord dull, and turns the plains and groves to wastes,

The Poems of Schiller

So that they sadly mourn around.

See how the gloomy forms of years, as on they roll,
Each joyous banquet overthrows,
When, in uplifted hand, from out the foaming bowl,
Joy's noble purple brightly flows!

See how they disappear, when friends sweet converse hold,
And loving wander arm-in-arm;
And, to revenge themselves on winter's north wind cold,
Upon each other's breasts grow warm!

And when spring's children smile upon us once again,
When all the youthful splendor bright,
When each melodious note of each sweet rapturous strain
Awakens with it each delight:

How joyous then the stream that our whole soul pervades!
What life from out our glances pours!
Sweet Philomela's song, resounding through the glades,
Ourselves, our youthful strength restores!

Oh, may this whisper breathe— (let Rieger bear in mind
The storm by which in age we're bent!)—
His guardian angel, when the evening's star so kind
Gleams softly from the firmament!

In silence be he led to yonder thundering height,
And guided be his eye, that he,
In valley and on plain, may see his friends aright.
And that, with growing ecstasy,

On yonder holy spot, when he their number tells,
He may experience friendship's bliss,
Now first unveiled, until with pride his bosom swells,
Conscious that all their love is his.

Then will the distant voice be loudly heard to say:

The Poems of Schiller

“And G—, too, is a friend of thine!
When silvery locks no more around his temples play,
G— still will be a friend of thine!”

“E’en yonder” —and now in his eye the crystal tear
Will gleam — “e’en yonder he will love!
Love thee too, when his heart, in yonder spring-like sphere,
Linked on to thine, can rapture prove!”

EPITAPH.

Here lies a man cut off by fate
Too soon for all good men;
For sextons he died late — too late
For those who wield the pen.

QUIRL.

You tell me that you feel surprise
Because Quirl’s paper’s grown in size;
And yet they’re crying through the street
That there’s a rise in bread and meat.

THE PLAGUE.

A PHANTASY.

Plague’s contagious murderous breath
God’s strong might with terror reveals,
As through the dreary valley of death
With its brotherhood fell it steals!

Fearfully throbs the anguish-struck heart,
Horribly quivers each nerve in the frame;
Frenzy’s wild laughs the torment proclaim,

The Poems of Schiller

Howling convulsions disclose the fierce smart.

Fierce delirium writhes upon the bed—
Poisonous mists hang o'er the cities dead;
Men all haggard, pale, and wan,
To the shadow-realm press on.
Death lies brooding in the humid air,
Plague, in dark graves, piles up treasures fair,
And its voice exultingly raises.
Funeral silence—churchyard calm,
Rapture change to dread alarm.—
Thus the plague God wildly praises!

MONUMENT OF MOOR THE ROBBER. 65

'Tis ended!
Welcome! 'tis ended
Oh thou sinner majestic,
All thy terrible part is now played!

Noble abased one!
Thou, of thy race beginner and ender!
Wondrous son of her fearfulest humor,
Mother Nature's blunder sublime!

Through cloud-covered night a radiant gleam!
Hark how behind him the portals are closing!
Night's gloomy jaws veil him darkly in shade!
Nations are trembling,
At his destructive splendor afraid!
Thou art welcome! 'Tis ended!
Oh thou sinner majestic,
All thy terrible part is now played!

Crumble,—decay
In the cradle of wide-open heaven!
Terrible sight to each sinner that breathes,

The Poems of Schiller

When the hot thirst for glory
Raises its barriers over against the dread throne!
See! to eternity shame has consigned thee!
To the bright stars of fame
Thou hast clambered aloft, on the shoulders of shame!
Yet time will come when shame will crumble beneath thee,
When admiration at length will be thine!

With moist eye, by thy sepulchre dreaded,
Man has passed onward—
Rejoice in the tears that man sheddeth,
Oh thou soul of the judged!
With moist eye, by the sepulchre dreaded,
Lately a maiden passed onward,
Hearing the fearful announcement
Told of thy deeds by the herald of marble;
And the maiden—rejoice thee! rejoice thee!
Sought not to dry up her tears.
Far away I stood as the pearls were falling,
And I shouted: Amalia!

Oh, ye youths! Oh, ye youths!—
With the dangerous lightning of genius
Learn to play with more caution!
Wildly his bit champs the charger of Phoebus;
Though, 'neath the reins of his master,
More gently he rocks earth and heaven,
Reined by a child's hand, he kindles
Earth and heaven in blazing destruction!
Obstinate Phaeton perished,
Buried beneath the sad wreck.

Child of the heavenly genius!
Glowing bosom all panting for action!
Art thou charmed by the tale of my robber?
Glowing like time was his bosom, and panting for action!
He, like thee, was the child of the heavenly genius.
But thou smilest and goest—

The Poems of Schiller

Thy gaze flies through the realms of the world's long story,
Moor, the robber, it finds not there—
Stay, thou youth, and smile not!
Still survive all his sins and his shame—
Robber Moor liveth—in all but name.

THE BAD MONARCHS. 66

Earthly gods—my lyre shall win your praise,
Though but wont its gentle sounds to raise
When the joyous feast the people throng;
Softly at your pompous-sounding names,
Shyly round your greatness purple flames,
Trembles now my song.

Answer! shall I strike the golden string,
When, borne on by exultation's wing,
O'er the battle-field your chariots trail?
When ye, from the iron grasp set free,
For your mistress' soft arms, joyously
Change your pond'rous mail?—

Shall my daring hymn, ye gods, resound,
While the golden splendor gleams around,
Where, by mystic darkness overcome,
With the thunderbolt your spleen may play,
Or in crime humanity array,
Till—the grave is dumb?

Say! shall peace 'neath crowns be now my theme?
Shall I boast, ye princes, that ye dream?—
While the worm the monarch's heart may tear,
Golden sleep twines round the Moor by stealth,
As he, at the palace, guards the wealth,
Guards—but covets ne'er.

Show how kings and galley-slaves, my Muse,

The Poems of Schiller

Lovingly one single pillow use, —
How their lightnings flatter, when surprised,
When their humors have no power to harm,
When their mimic minotaurs are calm,
And—the lions rest!

Up, thou Hecate! with thy magic seal
Make the barred-up grave its wealth reveal, —
Hark! its doors like thunder open spring;
When death's dismal blast is heard to sigh,
And the hair on end stands fearfully,
Princes' bliss I sing!

Do I hear the strand, the coast, detect
Where your wishes' haughty fleet was wrecked,
Where was stayed your greatness' proud career
That they ne'er with glory may grow warm,
Night, with black and terror-spreading arm,
Forges monarchs here.

On the death-chest sadly gleams the crown,
With its heavy load of pearls weighed down,
And the sceptre, needed now no more.
In what splendor is the mould arrayed!
Yet but worms are with the body paid,
That—the world watched o'er.

Haughty plants within that humble bed
See how death their pomp decayed and fled
With unblushing ribaldry besets!
They who ruled o'er north and east and west
Suffer now his ev'ry nauseous jest,
And—no sultan threats?

Leap for joy, ye stubborn dumb, to-day,
And your heavy slumber shake away!
From the battle, victory upsprings!
Hearken to the trump's exulting song!

The Poems of Schiller

Ye are worshipped by the shouting throng!—
Rouse ye, then, ye kings!

Seven sleepers!—to the clarion hark!
How it rings, and how the fierce dogs bark!
Shouts from out a thousand barrels whizz;
Eager steeds are neighing for the wood,—
Soon the bristly boar rolls in his blood,—
Yours the triumph is!

But what now?—Are even princes dumb?
Tow'rd me scornful echoes ninefold come,
Stealing through the vault's terrific gloom—
Sleep assails the page by slow degrees,
And Madonna gives to you the keys
Of—her sleeping-room.

Not an answer—hushed and still is all—
Does the veil, then, e'en on monarchs fall,
Which enshrouds their humble flatt'ers glance?
And ye ask for worship in the dust,
Since the blind jade, Fate, a world has thrust
In your purse, perchance?

And ye clatter, giant puppet troops,
Marshalled in your proudly childish groups,
Like the juggler on the opera scene?—
Though the sound may please the vulgar ear,
Yet the skilful, filled with sadness, jeer
Powers so great, but mean.

Let your towering shame be hid from sight
In the garment of a sovereign's right,
From the ambush of the throne outspring!
Tremble, though, before the voice of song
Through the purple, vengeance will, ere long,
Strike down e'en a king!

The Poems of Schiller

THE SATYR AND MY MUSE.

An aged satyr sought
Around my Muse to pass,
Attempting to pay court,
And eyed her fondly through his glass.

By Phoebus' golden torch,
By Luna's pallid light,
Around her temple's porch
Crept the unhappy sharp-eared wight;

And warbled many a lay,
Her beauty's praise to sing,
And fiercely scraped away
On his discordant fiddle-string.

With tears, too, swelled his eyes,
As large as nuts, or larger;
He gasped forth heavy sighs,
Like music from Silenus' charger.

The Muse sat still, and played
Within her grotto fair,
And peevishly surveyed
Signor Adonis Goatsfoot there.

"Who ever would kiss thee,
Thou ugly, dirty dunce?
Wouldst thou a gallant be,
As Midas was Apollo once?

"Speak out, old horned boor
What charms canst thou display?
Thou'rt swarthy as a Moor,
And shaggy as a beast of prey.

"I'm by a bard adored

The Poems of Schiller

In far Teutonia's land;
To him, who strikes the chord,
I'm linked in firm and loving band."

She spoke, and straightway fled
The spoiler, — he pursued her,
And, by his passion led,
Soon caught her, shouted, and thus wooed her:

"Thou prudish one, stay, stay!
And hearken unto me!
Thy poet, I dare say,
Repents the pledge he gave thee.

"Behold this pretty thing, —
No merit would I claim, —
Its weight I often fling
On many a clown's back, to his shame.

"His sharpness it increases,
And spices his discourse,
Instilling learned theses,
When mounted on his hobby-horse

"The best of songs are known,
Thanks to this heavy whip
Yet fool's blood 'tis alone
We see beneath its lashes drip.

"This lash, then, shall be his,
If thou'lt give me a smack;
Then thou mayest hasten, miss,
Upon thy German sweetheart's track."

The Muse, with purpose sly,
Ere long agreed to yield —
The satyr said good-by,
And now the lash I wield!

The Poems of Schiller

And I won't drop it here,
Believe in what I say!
The kisses of one's dear
One does not lightly throw away.

They kindle raptures sweet,
But fools ne'er know their flame!
The gentle Muse will kneel at honor's feet,
But cudgels those who mar her fame.

THE PEASANTS. 67

Look outside, good friend, I pray!
Two whole mortal hours
Dogs and I've out here to-day
Waited, by the powers!

Rain comes down as from a spout,
Doomsday-storms rage round about,

Dripping are my hose;
Drenched are coat and mantle too,
Coat and mantle, both just new,
Wretched plight, heaven knows!
Pretty stir's abroad to-day;
Look outside, good friend, I pray!

Ay, the devil! look outside!
Out is blown my lamp,—
Gloom and night the heavens now hide,
Moon and stars decamp.
Stumbling over stock and stone,
Jerkin, coat, I've torn, ochone!

Let me pity beg
Hedges, bushes, all around,
Here a ditch, and there a mound,

The Poems of Schiller

Breaking arm and leg.
Gloom and night the heavens now hide
Ay, the devil! look outside!

Ay, the deuce, then look outside!
Listen to my prayer!
Praying, singing, I have tried,
Wouldst thou have me swear?
I shall be a steaming mass,
Freeze to rock and stone, alas!
If I don't remove.
All this, love, I owe to thee,
Winter-bumps thou'lt make for me,
Thou confounded love!
Cold and gloom spread far and wide!
Ay, the deuce! then look outside!

Thousand thunders! what's this now
From the window shoots?
Oh, thou witch! 'Tis dirt, I vow,
That my head salutes!
Rain, frost, hunger, tempests wild,
Bear I for the devil's child,
Now I'm vexed full sore.
Worse and worse 'tis! I'll begone.
Pray be quick, thou Evil One!
I'll remain no more.
Pretty tumult there's outside!
Fare thee well—I'll homeward stride.

THE WINTER NIGHT.

Farewell! the beauteous sun is sinking fast,
The moon lifts up her head;
Farewell! mute night o'er earth's wide round at last
Her darksome raven-wing has spread.

The Poems of Schiller

Across the wintry plain no echoes float,
Save, from the rock's deep womb,
The murmuring streamlet, and the screech-owl's note,
Arising from the forest's gloom.

The fish repose within the watery deeps,
The snail draws in his head;
The dog beneath the table calmly sleeps,
My wife is slumbering in her bed.

A hearty welcome to ye, brethren mine!
Friends of my life's young spring!
Perchance around a flask of Rhenish wine
Ye're gathered now, in joyous ring.

The brimming goblet's bright and purple beams
Mirror the world with joy,
And pleasure from the golden grape-juice gleams—
Pleasure untainted by alloy.

Concealed behind departed years, your eyes
Find roses now alone;
And, as the summer tempest quickly flies,
Your heavy sorrows, too, are flown.

From childish sports, to e'en the doctor's hood,
The book of life ye thumb,
And reckon o'er, in light and joyous mood,
Your toils in the gymnasium;

Ye count the oaths that Terence—may he ne'er,
Though buried, calmly slumber!—
Caused you, despite Minelli's notes, to swear,—
Count your wry faces without number.

How, when the dread examinations came,
The boy with terror shook!
How, when the rector had pronounced his name,

The Poems of Schiller

The sweat streamed down upon his book!

All this is now involved in mist forever,
The boy is now a man,
And Frederick, wiser grown, discloses never
What little Fritz once loved to plan.

At length—a doctor one's declared to be,—
A regimental one!
And then,—and not too soon,—discover we
That plans soap-bubbles are alone. 68

Blow on! blow on! and let the bubbles rise,
If but this heart remain!
And if a German laurel as the prize
Of song, 'tis given me to gain!

THE WIRTEMBERGER.

The name of Wirtemberg they hold
To come from Wirth am berg 69, I'm told.
A Wirtemberger who ne'er drinks
No Wirtemberger is, methinks!

THE MOLE.

HUSBAND.
The boy's my very image! See!
Even the scars my small-pox left me!

WIFE.
I can believe it easily
They once of all my senses reft me.

The Poems of Schiller

HYMN TO THE ETERNAL.

'Twi'x the heavens and earth, high in the airy ocean,
In the tempest's cradle I'm borne with a rocking motion;
 Clouds are towering,
 Storms beneath me are lowering,
Giddily all the wonders I see,
And, O Eternal, I think of Thee!

All Thy terrible pomp, lend to the Finite now,
Mighty Nature! Oh, of Infinity, thou
 Giant daughter!
 Mirror God, as in water!
Tempest, oh, let thine organ-peal
God to the reasoning worm reveal!

Hark! it peals—how the rocks quiver beneath its growls
Zeboath's glorious name, wildly the hurricane howls!
 Graving the while
 With the lightning's style
"Creatures, do ye acknowledge me?"—
Spare us, Lord! We acknowledge Thee!

DIALOGUE.

A.
Hark, neighbor, for one moment stay!
Herr Doctor Scalpel, so they say,
 Has got off safe and sound;
 At Paris I your uncle found
 Fast to a horse's crupper bound,—
Yet Scalpel made a king his prey.

B.
Oh, dear me, no! A real misnomer!
The fact is, he has his diploma;
 The other one has not.

The Poems of Schiller

A.

Eh? What? Has a diploma?

In Suabia may such things be got?

EPITAPH

ON A CERTAIN PHYSIOGNOMIST.

On every nose he rightly read
What intellects were in the head
And yet—that he was not the one
By whom God meant it to be done,
This on his own he never read.

TRUST IN IMMORTALITY.

The dead has risen here, to live through endless ages;
This I with firmness trust and know.
I was first led to guess it by the sages,
The knaves convince me that 'tis really so

FOOTNOTES

1 The allusion in the original is to the seemingly magical power possessed by a Jew conjuror, named Philadelphia, which would not be understood in English.

2 This most exquisite love poem is founded on the platonic notion, that souls were united in a pre-existent state, that love is the yearning of the spirit to reunite with the spirit with which it formerly made one—and which it discovers on earth. The idea has often been made subservient to poetry, but never with so earnest and elaborate a beauty.

3 “Und Empfindung soll mein Richtschwert seyn.” A line of great vigor in the original, but which, if literally translated, would seem extravagant in English.

4 Joseph, in the original.

5 The youth’s name was John Christian Weckherlin.

6 Venus.

7 Originally Laura, this having been one of the “Laura-Poems,” as the Germans call them of which so many appeared in the Anthology (see Preface). English readers will probably not think that the change is for the better.

8 Tityus.

9 This concluding and fine strophe is omitted in the later editions of Schiller’s “Poems.”

10 Hercules who recovered from the Shades Alcestis, after she had given her own life to save her husband, Admetus. Alcestis, in the hands of Euripides (that woman-hater as he is called!) becomes the loveliest female creation in the Greek drama.

11 i. e. Castor and Pollux are transferred to the stars, Hercules to Olympus, for their deeds on earth.

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12 Carlyle's *Miscellanies*, vol. iii, p. 47.

13 Literally "Nierensteiner," — a wine not much known in England, and scarcely — according to our experience — worth the regrets of its respectable owner.

14 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.

15 The peach.

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

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

18 "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.

19 The three following ballads, in which Switzerland is the scene, betray their origin in Schiller's studies for the drama of *William Tell*.

20 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.

21 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)

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leads, is the Urse Vale. The four rivers, in the next stanza, are the Reus, the Rhine, the Tessin, and the Rhone.

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

23 This has been paraphrased by Coleridge.

24 Ajax the Less.

25 Ulysses.

26 Achilles.

27 Diomed.

28 Cassandra.

29 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

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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.

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

31 The corn-flower.

32 For this story, see Herodotus, book iii, sections 40-43.

33 President of Council of Five Hundred.

34 We have already seen in "The Ring of Polycrates," Schiller's mode of dealing with classical subjects. In the poems that follow, derived from similar sources, the same spirit is maintained. In spite of Humboldt, we venture to think that Schiller certainly does not narrate Greek legends in the spirit of an ancient Greek. The Gothic sentiment, in its ethical depth and mournful tenderness, more or less pervades all that he translates from classic fable into modern pathos. The grief of Hero in the ballad subjoined, touches closely on the lamentations of Thekla, in "Wallenstein." The Complaint of Ceres, embodies Christian grief and Christian hope. The Trojan Cassandra expresses the moral of the Northern Faust. Even the "Victory Feast" changes the whole spirit of Homer, on whom it is founded, by the introduction of the ethical sentiment at the close, borrowed, as a modern would apply what he so borrows from the moralizing Horace. Nothing can be more foreign to the Hellenic genius, (if we except the very disputable intention of the "Prometheus"), than the interior and typical design which usually exalts every conception in Schiller. But it is perfectly open to the modern poet to treat of ancient legends in the modern spirit. Though he selects a Greek story, he is still a modern who narrates—he can never make himself a Greek any more than Aeschylus in the "Persae" could make himself a Persian. But this is still more the privilege of the poet in narrative, or lyrical composition, than in the drama, for in the former he does not abandon his identity, as in the latter he must—yet even

this must have its limits. Shakspeare's wonderful power of self-transfusion has no doubt enabled him, in his plays from Roman history, to animate his characters with much of Roman life. But no one can maintain that a Roman would ever have written plays in the least resembling "Julius Caesar," or "Coriolanus," or "Antony and Cleopatra." The portraits may be Roman, but they are painted in the manner of the Gothic school. The spirit of antiquity is only in them, inasmuch as the representation of human nature, under certain circumstances, is accurately, though loosely outlined. When the poet raises the dead, it is not to restore, but to remodel.

35 This notes the time of year—not the time of day—viz., about the 23d of September.—HOFFMEISTER.

36 Hecate as the mysterious goddess of Nature.—HOFFMEISTER.

37 This story, the heroes of which are more properly known to us under the names of Damon and Pythias (or Phintias), Schiller took from Hyginus in whom the friends are called Moerus and Selinuntius. Schiller has somewhat amplified the incidents in the original, in which the delay of Moerus is occasioned only by the swollen stream—the other hindrances are of Schiller's invention. The subject, like "The Ring of Polycrates," does not admit of that rich poetry of description with which our author usually adorns some single passage in his narratives. The poetic spirit is rather shown in the terse brevity with which picture after picture is not only sketched but finished—and in the great thought at the close. Still it is not one of Schiller's best ballads. His additions to the original story are not happy. The incident of the robbers is commonplace and poor. The delay occasioned by the thirst of Moerus is clearly open to Goethe's objection (an objection showing very nice perception of nature)—that extreme thirst was not likely to happen to a man who had lately passed through a stream on a rainy day, and whose clothes must have been saturated with moisture—nor in the traveller's preoccupied state of mind, is it probable that he would have so much felt the mere physical want. With less reason has it been urged by other critics, that the sudden relenting of the tyrant is contrary to his character. The tyrant here has no individual character at all. He is

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the mere personation of disbelief in truth and love—which the spectacle of sublime self-abnegation at once converts. In this idea lies the deep philosophical truth, which redeems all the defects of the piece—for poetry, in its highest form, is merely this—“Truth made beautiful.”

38 The somewhat irregular metre of the original has been preserved in this ballad, as in other poems; although the perfect anapaestic metre is perhaps more familiar to the English ear.

39 “Die Gestalt” —Form, the Platonic Archetype.

40 More literally translated thus by the author of the article on Schiller in the *Foreign and Colonial Review*, July, 1843—

“Thence all witnesses forever banished
Of poor human nakedness.”

41 The law, i. e., the Kantian ideal of truth and virtue. This stanza and the next embody, perhaps with some exaggeration, the Kantian doctrine of morality.

42 “But in God’s sight submission is command.” “Jonah,” by the Rev. F. Hodgson. Quoted in *Foreign and Colonial Review*, July, 1843: Art. Schiller, p. 21.

43 It seems generally agreed that poetry is allegorized in these stanzas; though, with this interpretation, it is difficult to reconcile the sense of some of the lines—for instance, the last in the first stanza. How can poetry be said to leave no trace when she takes farewell?

44 “I call the living—I mourn the dead—I break the lightning.” These words are inscribed on the great bell of the Minster of Schaffhausen—also on that of the Church of Art near Lucerne. There was an old belief in Switzerland that the undulation of air caused by the sound of a bell, broke the electric fluid of a thunder-cloud.

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45 A piece of clay pipe, which becomes vitrified if the metal is sufficiently heated.

46 The translator adheres to the original, in forsaking the rhyme in these lines and some others.

47 Written in the time of the French war.

48 Literally, "the manners." The French word *moeurs* corresponds best with the German.

49 The epithet in the first edition is *ruhmlose*.

50 For this interesting story, see Cox's "House of Austria," vol i, pp. 87-98 (Bohn's Standard Library).

51 See "Piccolomini," act ii., scene 6; and "The Death of Wallenstein," act v., scene 3.

52 This poem is very characteristic of the noble ease with which Schiller often loves to surprise the reader, by the sudden introduction of matter for the loftiest reflection in the midst of the most familiar subjects. What can be more accurate and happy than the poet's description of the national dance, as if such description were his only object—the outpouring, as it were, of a young gallant intoxicated by the music, and dizzy with the waltz? Suddenly and imperceptibly the reader finds himself elevated from a trivial scene. He is borne upward to the harmony of the sphere. He bows before the great law of the universe—the young gallant is transformed into the mighty teacher; and this without one hard conceit —without one touch of pedantry. It is but a flash of light; and where glowed the playful picture shines the solemn moral.

53 The first five verses in the original of this poem are placed as a motto on Goethe's statue in the Library at Weimar. The poet does not here mean to extol what is vulgarly meant by the gifts of fortune; he but develops a favorite idea of his, that, whatever is really sublime and beautiful, comes freely down from heaven; and

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vindicates the seeming partiality of the gods, by implying that the beauty and the genius given, without labor, to some, but serve to the delight of those to whom they are denied.

54 Achilles.

55 “Nur ein Wunder kann dich tragen
In das schoene Wunderland.”—SCHILLER, *Sehnsucht*.

56 This simile is nobly conceived, but expressed somewhat obscurely. As Hercules contended in vain against Antaeus, the Son of Earth—so long as the earth gave her giant offspring new strength in every fall,—so the soul contends in vain with evil—the natural earth-born enemy, while the very contact of the earth invigorates the enemy for the struggle. And as Antaeus was slain at last, when Hercules lifted him from the earth, and strangled him while raised aloft, so can the soul slay the enemy (the desire, the passion, the evil, the earth’s offspring), when bearing it from earth itself, and stifling it in the higher air.

57 By this Schiller informs us elsewhere that he does not mean death alone; but that the thought applies equally to every period of life when we can divest ourselves of the body and perceive or act as pure spirits; we are truly then under the influence of the sublime.

58 Duke Bernard of Weimar, one of the heroes of the Thirty Years’ war.

59 These verses were sent by Schiller to the then Electoral High Chancellor, with a copy of his “William Tell.”

60 Addressed in the original to Mdlle. Slevoigt, on her marriage to Dr. Sturm.

61 This was the title of the publication in which many of the finest of Schiller’s “Poems of the Third Period” originally appeared.

62 A pointless satire upon Klopstock and his *Messias*.

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63 Schiller, who is not very particular about the quantities of classical names, gives this word with the o long—which is, of course, the correct quantity—in *The Gods of Greece*.

64 A well-known general, who died in 1783.

65 See the play of *The Robbers*.

66 Written in consequence of the ill-treatment Schiller experienced at the hands of the Grand Duke Charles of Wirtemberg.

67 Written in the Suabian dialect.

68 An allusion to the appointment of regimental surgeon, conferred upon Schiller by the Grand Duke Charles in 1780, when he was twenty-one years of age.

69 *The Landlord on the Mountain*.