

Classic Poetry Series

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

- poems -

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Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe was born at Frankfurt-on-Main. He studied at Leipzig and Strassburg. His early romantic poetry made him a leader of the Sturm and Drang movement. His novel the Sorrows of Young Werther made him famous. He settled at the Weimar court, travelling to Italy in 1786. He interested himself in science (botany, optics, anatomy) and helped to run the State theatre. He married in 1806. His major work was his version of the Faust legend. His broad sympathies and balanced personality illuminated German culture.

A Parable

I PICKED a rustic nosegay lately,
And bore it homewards, musing greatly;
When, heated by my hand, I found
The heads all drooping tow'rd the ground.
I plac'd them in a well-cool'd glass,
And what a wonder came to pass
The heads soon raised themselves once more.
The stalks were blooming as before,
And all were in as good a case
As when they left their native place.

So felt I, when I wond'ring heard
My song to foreign tongues transferr'd.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

A Plan The Muses Entertained

A PLAN the Muses entertain'd

Methodically to impart

To Psyche the poetic art;
Prosaic-pure her soul remain'd.
No wondrous sounds escaped her lyre

E'en in the fairest Summer night;
But Amor came with glance of fire,--

The lesson soon was learn'd aright.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

A Symbol

THE mason's trade Observe them well,
Resembles life, And watch them revealing
With all its strife,-- How solemn feeling
Is like the stir made And wonderment swell
By man on earth's face. The hearts of the brave.
Though weal and woe The voice of the blest,
The future may hide, And of spirits on high
Unterrified Seems loudly to cry:
We onward go "To do what is best,
In ne'er changing race. Unceasing endeavour!
A veil of dread "In silence eterne
Hangs heavier still. Here chaplets are twin'd,
Deep slumbers fill That each noble mind
The stars over-head, Its guerdon may earn.--
And the foot-trodden grave. Then hope ye for ever!"

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Admonition

WHEREFORE ever ramble on?

For the Good is lying near,
Fortune learn to seize alone,

For that Fortune's ever here.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

After-Sensations

WHEN the vine again is blowing,
Then the wine moves in the cask;
When the rose again is glowing,
 Wherefore should I feel oppress'd?
Down my cheeks run tears all-burning,
If I do, or leave my task;
I but feel a speechless yearning,
 That pervades my inmost breast.
But at length I see the reason,
When the question I would ask:
'Twas in such a beauteous season,
 Doris glowed to make me blest!
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Anacreon's Grave

HERE where the roses blossom, where vines round the laurels are twining,
Where the turtle-dove calls, where the blithe cricket is heard,
Say, whose grave can this be, with life by all the Immortals

Beauteously planted and deck'd?--Here doth Anacreon sleep
Spring and summer and autumn rejoiced the thrice-happy minstrel,
And from the winter this mound kindly hath screen'd him at last.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Anniversary Song

WHY papest thou, my neighbour fair,
The garden all alone?
If house and land thou seek'st to guard,
I'd thee as mistress own.
My brother sought the cellar-maid,
And suffered her no rest;
She gave him a refreshing draught,
A kiss, too, she impress'd.
My cousin is a prudent wight,
The cook's by him ador'd;
He turns the spit round ceaselessly,
To gain love's sweet reward.
We six together then began
A banquet to consume,
When lo! a fourth pair singing came,
And danced into the room.
Welcome were they,--and welcome too
Was a fifth jovial pair.
Brimful of news, and stored with tales
And jests both new and rare.
For riddles, spirit, raillery,
And wit, a place remain'd;
A sixth pair then our circle join'd,
And so that prize was gain'd.
And yet to make us truly blest,
One miss'd we, and full sore;
A true and tender couple came,--
We needed them no more.
The social banquet now goes on,
Unchequer'd by alloy;

The sacred double-numbers then

Let us at once enjoy!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Another

Go! obedient to my call,
Turn to profit thy young days,
Wiser make betimes thy breast
In Fate's balance as it sways,
Seldom is the cock at rest;
Thou must either mount, or fall,
Thou must either rule and win,
Or submissively give in,
Triumph, or else yield to clamour:
Be the anvil or the hammer.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Answers In A Game Of Questions

THE LADY.

IN the small and great world too,
What most charms a woman's heart?
It is doubtless what is new,
For its blossoms joy impart;
Nobler far is what is true,
For fresh blossoms it can shoot
Even in the time of fruit.

THE YOUNG GENTLEMAN.

With the Nymphs in wood and cave
Paris was acquainted well,
Till Zeus sent, to make him rave,
Three of those in Heav'n who dwell;
And the choice more trouble gave
Than e'er fell to mortal lot,
Whether in old times or not.

THE EXPERIENCED.

Tenderly a woman view,
And thould win her, take my word;
He who's quick and saucy too,
Will of all men be preferr'd;
Who ne'er seems as if he knew
If he pleases, if he charms,--
He 'tis injures, he 'tis harms.

THE CONTENTED.

Manifold is human strife,
Human passion, human pain;
Many a blessing yet is rife,
Many pleasures still remain.
Yet the greatest bliss in life,

And the richest prize we find,
Is a good, contented mind.

THE MERRY COUNSEL.

He by whom man's foolish will
Is each day review'd and blamed,
Who, when others fools are still,
Is himself a fool proclaim'd,--
Ne'er at mill was beast's back press'd
With a heavier load than he.
What I feel within my breast
That in truth's the thing for me!
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Apparent Death

WEEP, maiden, weep here o'er the tomb of Love;

He died of nothing--by mere chance was slain.
But is he really dead?--oh, that I cannot prove:

A nothing, a mere chance, oft gives him life again.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

April

Eyes tell, tell me, what you tell me,
telling something all too sweet,
making music out of beauty,
with a question hidden deep.

Still I think I know your meaning,
there behind your pupils' brightness,
love and truth are your heart's lightness,
that, instead of its own gleaming,

would so truly like to greet,
in a world of dullness, blindness,
one true look of human kindness,
where two kindred spirits meet.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

As Broad As It's Long

MODEST men must needs endure,

And the bold must humbly bow;
Thus thy fate's the same, be sure,

Whether bold or modest thou.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

At Midnight Hour

AT midnight hour I went, not willingly,

A little, little boy, yon churchyard past,
To Father Vicar's house; the stars on high

On all around their beauteous radiance cast,

At midnight hour.

And when, in journeying o'er the path of life,

My love I follow'd, as she onward moved,
With stars and northern lights o'er head in strife,

Going and coming, perfect bliss I proved

At midnight hour.

Until at length the full moon, lustre-fraught,

Burst thro' the gloom wherein she was enshrined;
And then the willing, active, rapid thought

Around the past, as round the future twined,

At midnight hour.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Authors

OVER the meadows, and down the stream,

And through the garden-walks straying,
He plucks the flowers that fairest seem;

His throbbing heart brooks no delaying.
His maiden then comes--oh, what ecstasy!
Thy flowers thou giv'st for one glance of her eye!

The gard'ner next door o'er the hedge sees the youth:
"I'm not such a fool as that, in good truth;
My pleasure is ever to cherish each flower,
And see that no birds my fruit e'er devour.
But when 'tis ripe, your money, good neighbour!
'Twas not for nothing I took all this labour!"
And such, methinks, are the author-tribe.

The one his pleasures around him strews,

That his friends, the public, may reap, if they choose;
The other would fain make them all subscribe.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Autumn Feelings

FLOURISH greener, as ye clamber,
Oh ye leaves, to seek my chamber,

Up the trellis'd vine on high!
May ye swell, twin-berries tender,
Juicier far,--and with more splendour

Ripen, and more speedily!
O'er ye broods the sun at even
As he sinks to rest, and heaven

Softly breathes into your ear
All its fertilising fullness,
While the moon's refreshing coolness,

Magic-laden, hovers near;
And, alas! ye're watered ever

By a stream of tears that rill
From mine eyes--tears ceasing never,

Tears of love that nought can still!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Ballad Of The Banished And Returning Count

OH, enter old minstrel, thou time-honour'd one!
We children are here in the hall all alone,

The portals we straightway will bar.
Our mother is praying, our father is gone

To the forest, on wolves to make war.
Oh sing us a ballad, the tale then repeat,

'Till brother and I learn it right;
We long have been hoping a minstrel to meet,

For children hear tales with delight.

"At midnight, when darkness its fearful veil weaves,
His lofty and stately old castle he leaves,

But first he has buried his wealth.
What figure is that in his arms one perceives,

As the Count quits the gateway by stealth?
O'er what is his mantle so hastily thrown?

What bears he along in his flight?
A daughter it is, and she gently sleeps on"--

The children they hear with delight.

"The morning soon glimmers. the world is so wide,
In valleys and forests a home is supplied,

The bard in each village is cheer'd.
Thus lives he and wanders, while years onward glide,

And longer still waxes his beard;
But the maiden so fair in his arms grows amain,

'Neath her star all-protecting and bright,
Secured in the mantle from wind and from rain--"

The children they hear with delight.

"And year upon year with swift footstep now steals,
The mantle it fades, many rents it reveals,

The maiden no more it can hold.
The father he sees her, what rapture he feels!

His joy cannot now be controll'd.
How worthy she seems of the race whence she springs,

How noble and fair to the sight!

What wealth to her dearly-loved father she brings!"--

The children they hear with delight.

"Then comes there a princely knight galloping by,
She stretches her hand out, as soon as he's nigh,

But alms he refuses to give.
He seizes her hand, with a smile in his eye:

'Thou art mine!' he exclaims, 'while I live!'
'When thou know'st,' cries the old man, 'the treasure that's
there,

A princess thou'lt make her of right;
Betroth'd be she now, on this spot green and fair--"

The children they hear with delight.

"So she's bless'd by the priest on the hallowed place,
And she goes with a smiling but sorrowful face,

From her father she fain would not part.
The old man still wanders with ne'er-changing pace,

He covers with joy his sad heart.
So I think of my daughter, as years pass away,

And my grandchildren far from my sight;
I bless them by night, and I bless them by day"--

The children they hear with delight.

He blesses the children: a knocking they hear,
The father it is! They spring forward in fear,

The old man they cannot conceal--
"Thou beggar, wouldst lure, then, my children so dear?

Straight seize him, ye vassals of steel!
To the dungeon most deep, with the fool-hardy knave!"

The mother from far hears the fight;
She hastens with flatt'ring entreaty to crave--

The children they hear with delight.

The vassals they suffer the Bard to stand there,
And mother and children implore him to spare,

The proud prince would stifle his ire,
'Till driven to fury at hearing their prayer,

His smouldering anger takes fire:
"Thou pitiful race! Oh, thou beggarly crew!

Eclipsing my star, once so bright!
Ye'll bring me destruction, ye sorely shall rue!"

The children they hear with affright.

The old man still stands there with dignified mien,
The vassals of steel quake before him, I ween,

The Count's fury increases in power;
"My wedded existence a curse long has been,

And these are the fruits from that flower!
'Tis ever denied, and the saying is true,

That to wed with the base-born is right;
The beggar has borne me a beggarly crew,--"

The children they hear with affright.

"If the husband, the father, thus treats you with scorn,
If the holiest bonds by him rashly are torn,

Then come to your father--to me!
The beggar may gladden life's pathway forlorn,

Though aged and weak he may be.
This castle is mine! thou hast made it thy prey,

Thy people 'twas put me to flight;
The tokens I bear will confirm what I say"--

The children they hear with delight.

"The king who erst govern'd returneth again,
And restores to the Faithful the goods that were ta'en,

I'll unseal all my treasures the while;
The laws shall be gentle, and peaceful the reign"--

The old man thus cries with a smile--
"Take courage, my son! all hath turned out for good,

And each hath a star that is bright,
Those the princess hath borne thee are princely in blood,"--

The children thy hear with delight.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Before A Court Of Justice

THE father's name ye ne'er shall be told
Of my darling unborn life;
"Shame, shame," ye cry, "on the strumpet bold!"
Yet I'm an honest wife.
To whom I'm wedded, ye ne'er shall be told,
Yet he's both loving and fair;
He wears on his neck a chain of gold,
And a hat of straw doth he wear.
If scorn 'tis vain to seek to repel,
On me let the scorn be thrown.
I know him well, and he knows me well,
And to God, too, all is known.
Sir Parson and Sir Bailiff, again,
I pray you, leave me in peace!
My child it is, my child 'twill remain,
So let your questionings cease!
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Blindman's Buff

OH, my Theresa dear!
Thine eyes, I greatly fear,

Can through the bandage see!
Although thine eyes are bound,
By thee I'm quickly found,

And wherefore shouldst thou catch but me?

Ere long thou held'st me fast,
With arms around me cast,

Upon thy breast I fell;
Scarce was thy bandage gone,
When all my joy was flown,

Thou coldly didst the blind repel.

He groped on ev'ry side,
His limbs he sorely tried,

While scoffs arose all round;
If thou no love wilt give,
In sadness I shall live,

As if mine eyes remain'd still bound.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Book Of Contemplation - Firdusi

OH world, with what baseness and guilt thou art rife!

Thou nurtures, trainest, and illest the while.

He only whom Allah doth bless with his smile
Is train'd and is nurtured with riches and life.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Book Of Contemplation - Five Things

WHAT makes time short to me?

Activity!

What makes it long and spiritless?

'Tis idleness!

What brings us to debt?

To delay and forget!

What makes us succeed?

Decision with speed

How to fame to ascend?

Oneself to defend!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Book Of Contemplation - For Woman

FOR woman due allowance make!

Form'd of a crooked rib was she,--

By Heaven she could not straightened be.
Attempt to bend her, and she'll break;
If left alone, more crooked grows madam;
What well could be worse, my good friend, Adam?--
For woman due allowance make;
'Twere grievous, if thy rib should break!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Book Of Contemplation - Suleika

THE mirror tells me, I am fair!

Thou sayest, to grow old my fate will be.
Nought in God's presence changeth e'er,--

Love him, for this one moment, then, in me.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Book Of Gloom

Hi There! I see you're enjoying the site, and just wanted to extend an invitation to register for our free site. The members of oldpoetry strive to make this a fun place to learn and share - hope you join us! - Kevin

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Book Of Hafis - The Unlimited

THAT thou can't never end, doth make thee great,
And that thou ne'er beginnest, is thy fate.
Thy song is changeful as yon starry frame,
End and beginning evermore the same;
And what the middle bringeth, but contains
What was at first, and what at last remains.
Thou art of joy the true and minstrel-source,
From thee pours wave on wave with ceaseless force.
A mouth that's aye prepared to kiss,

A breast whence flows a loving song,
A throat that finds no draught amiss,

An open heart that knows no wrong.

And what though all the world should sink!

Hafis, with thee, alone with thee

Will I contend! joy, misery,

The portion of us twain shall be;
Like thee to love, like thee to drink,--

This be my pride,--this, life to me!

Now, Song, with thine own fire be sung,--
For thou art older, thou more young!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Book Of Hafis - To Hafis

HAFIS, straight to equal thee,

One would strive in vain;
Though a ship with majesty

Cleaves the foaming main,
Feels its sails swell haughtily

As it onward hies
Crush'd by ocean's stern decree,

Wrecked it straightway lies.
Tow'rd thee, songs, light, graceful, free,

Mount with cooling gush;
Then their glow consumeth me,

As like fire they rush.
Yet a thought with ecstasy

Hath my courage moved;
In the land of melody

I have lived and loved.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Book Of Love - Love's Torments

LOVE's torments sought a place of rest,
Where all might drear and lonely be;
They found ere long my desert breast,
And nestled in its vacancy.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Book Of Love - One More Pair

LOVE is indeed a glorious prize!
What fairer guerdon meets our eyes?--
Though neither wealth nor power are thine,
A very hero thou dost shine.
As of the prophet, they will tell,
Wamik and Asia's tale as well.--
They'll tell not of them,--they'll but give
Their names, which now are all that live.
The deeds they did, the toils they proved
No mortal knows! But that they loved
This know we. Here's the story true
Of Wamik and of Asia too.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Book Of Love - The Types

LIST, and in memory bear
These six fond loving pair.
Love, when aroused, kept true
Rustan and Rad!
Strangers approach from far
Joseph and Suleika;
Love, void of hope, is in
Ferhad and Schirin.
Born for each other are
Medschnun and Lily;
Loving, though old and grey,
Dschemil saw Boteinah.
Love's sweet caprice anon,
Brown maid and Solomon!
If thou dost mark them well,
Stronger thy love will swell.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Book Of Proverbs

CALL on the present day and night for nought,
Save what by yesterday was brought.

THE sea is flowing ever,
The land retains it never.

BE stirring, man, while yet the day is clear;
The night when none can work fast Draweth near.

WHEN the heavy-laden sigh,
Deeming help and hope gone by,
Oft, with healing power is heard,
Comfort-fraught, a kindly word.

How vast is mine inheritance, how glorious and sublime!
For time mine own possession is, the land I till is time!

UNWARY saith,--ne'er lived a man more true;
The deepest heart, the highest head he knew,--
"In ev'ry place and time thou'lt find availing
Uprightness, judgment, kindness unfailing."

THOUGH the bards whom the Orient sun bath bless'd
Are greater than we who dwell in the west,
Yet in hatred of those whom our equals we find.
In this we're not in the least behind.

WOULD we let our envy burst,
Feed its hunger fully first!
To keep our proper place,
We'll show our bristles more;
With hawks men all things chase,
Except the savage boar.

BY those who themselves more bravely have fought
A hero's praise will be joyfully told.
The worth of man can only be taught
By those who have suffer'd both heat and cold.

"WHEREFORE is truth so far from our eyes,
Buried as though in a distant land?"
None at the proper moment are wise!

Could they properly understand,
Truth would appear in her own sweet guise,
Beauteous, gentle, and close at hand.

WHY these inquiries make,
Where charity may flow?
Cast in the flood thy cake,--
Its eater, who will know?

ONCE when I a spider had kill'd,
Then methought: wast right or wrong?
That we both to these times should belong,
This had God in His goodness willed.

MOTLEY this congregation is, for, lo!
At the communion kneel both friend and foe.

IF the country I'm to show,
Thou must on the housetop go.

A MAN with households twain
Ne'er finds attention meet,
A house wherein two women reign
Is ne'er kept clean and neat.

BLESS, thou dread Creator,
Bless this humble fane;
Man may build them greater,--
More they'll not contain.

LET this house's glory rise,
Handed to far ages down,
And the son his honour prize.
As the father his renown.

O'ER the Mediterranean sea
Proudly hath the Orient sprung;
Who loves Hafis and knows him, he
Knows what Caldron hath sung.

IF the ass that bore the Saviour
Were to Mecca driven, he
Would not alter, but would be
Still an ass in his behavior.

THE flood of passion storms with fruitless strife
'Gainst the unvanquished solid land.--
It throws poetic pearls upon the strand,
And thus is gain'd the prize of life.

WHEN so many minstrels there are,
How it pains me, alas, to know it!
Who from the earth drives poetry far?
Who but the poet!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Book Of Suleika - Hatem 01

NOT occasion makes the thief;

She's the greatest of the whole;
For Love's relics, to my grief,

From my aching heart she stole.

She hath given it to thee,--

All the joy my life had known,
So that, in my poverty,

Life I seek from thee alone.

Yet compassion greets me straight

In the lustre of thine eye,
And I bless my newborn fate,

As within thine arms I lie.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Book Of Suleika - Hatem 02

O, SAY, 'neath what celestial sign

The day doth lie,
When ne'er again this heart of mine

Away will fly?
And e'en though fled (what thought divine!)

Would near me lie?--
On the soft couch, on whose sweet shrine

My heart near hers will lie!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Book Of Suleika - Hatem 03

HOLD me, locks, securely caught
In the circle of her face!
Dear brown serpents, I have nought
To repay this act of grace,
Save a heart whose love ne'er dies,
Throbbing with aye-youthful glow;
For a raging ETA lies
'Neath its veil of mist and snow.
Yonder mountain's stately brow
Thou, like morning beams, dost shame;
Once again feels Hatem now
Spring's soft breath and summer's flame.
One more bumper! Fill the glass;
This last cup I pledge to thee!--
By mine ashes if she pass,
"He consumed," she'll say, "for me."
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Book Of Suleika - In Thousand Form

IN thousand forms mayst thou attempt surprise,
Yet, all-beloved-one, straight know I thee;
Thou mayst with magic veils thy face disguise,
And yet, all-present-one, straight know I thee.
Upon the cypress' purest, youthful bud,
All-beauteous-growing-one, straight know I thee;
In the canal's unsullied, living flood,
All-captivating-one, well know I thee.
When spreads the water-column, rising proud,
All-sportive one, how gladly know I thee;
When, e'en in forming, is transform'd the cloud,
All-figure-changing-one, there know I thee.
Veil in the meadow-carpet's flowery charms,
All-checkered-starry-fair-one, know I thee;
And if a plant extend its thousand arms,
O, all-embracing-one, there know I thee.
When on the mount is kindled morn's sweet light,
Straightway, all-gladdening-one, salute I thee,
The arch of heaven o'er head grows pure and bright,--
All-heart-expanding-one, then breathe I thee.
That which my inward, outward sense proclaims,
Thou all-instructing-one, I know through thee;
And if I utter Allah's hundred names,
A name with each one echoes, meant for thee.
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Book Of Suleika - Love For Love

LOVE for love, and moments sweet,

Lips returning kiss for kiss,
Word for word, and eyes that meet;

Breath for breath, and bliss for bliss.
Thus at eve, and thus the morrow!

Yet thou feeblest, at my lay,
Ever some half-hidden sorrow;
Could I Joseph's graces borrow,

All thy beauty I'd repay!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Book Of Suleika - Suleika 01

THE sun appears! A glorious sight!

The crescent-moon clings round him now.
What could this wondrous pair unite?

How to explain this riddle? How?

HATEM.

May this our joy's foreboder prove!

In it I view myself and thee;
Thou calmest me thy sun, my love,--

Come, my sweet moon, cling thou round me!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Book Of Suleika - Suleika 02

WHAT is by this stir reveal'd?
Doth the East glad tidings bring?
For my heart's deep wounds are heal'd
By his mild and cooling wing.
He the dust with sports doth meet,
And in gentle cloudlets chase;
To the vineleaf's safe retreat
Drives the insects' happy race,
Cools these burning cheeks of mine,
Checks the sun's fierce glow Adam,
Kisses, as he flies, the vine,
Flaunting over hill and plain.
And his whispers soft convey
Thousand greetings from my friend;
Ere these hills own night's dark sway,
Kisses greet me, without end.
Thus canst thou still onward go,
Serving friend and mourner too!
There, where lofty ramparts glow,
Soon the loved one shall I view.
Ah, what makes the heart's truth known,--
Love's sweet breath,--a newborn life,--
Learn I from his mouth alone,
In his breath alone is rife!
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Book Of Suleika - Suleika 03

ZEPHYR, for thy humid wing,
Oh, how much I envy thee!
Thou to him canst tidings bring
How our parting saddens me!
In my breast, a yearning still
As thy pinions wave, appears;
Flow'rs and eyes, and wood, and hill
At thy breath are steeped in tears.
Yet thy mild wing gives relief,
Soothes the aching eyelid's pain;
Ah, I else had died for grief,
Him ne'er hoped to see again.
To my love, then, quick repair,
Whisper softly to his heart;
Yet, to give him pain, beware,
Nor my bosom's pangs impart.
Tell him, but in accents coy,
That his love must be my life;
Both, with feelings fraught with joy,
In his presence will be rife.
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Book Of Suleika - Suleika 04

WITH what inward joy, sweet lay,

I thy meaning have descried!
Lovingly thou seem'st to say

That I'm ever by his side;

That he ever thinks of me,

That he to the absent gives
All his love's sweet ecstasy,

While for him alone she lives.

Yes, the mirror which reveals

Thee, my loved one, is my breast;
This the bosom, where thy seals

Endless kisses have impress'd.

Numbers sweet, unsullied truth,

Chain me down in sympathy!
Love's embodied radiant youth,

In the garb of poesy!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Book Of Suleika - Suleika's Love

ONCE, methought, in the night hours cold,

That I saw the moon in my sleep;
But as soon as I waken'd, behold

Unawares rose the sun from the deep.

THAT Suleika's love was so strong

For Joseph, need cause no surprise;

He was young, youth pleaseth the eyes,--

He was fair, they say, beyond measure

Fair was she, and so great was their pleasure.
But that thou, who awaitedst me long,
Youthful glances of fire dost throw me,
Soon wilt bless me, thy love now dost show me,
This shall my joyous numbers proclaim,
Thee I for ever Suleika shall name.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Book Of Suleika - The Loving One Again

WRITES he in Neski,
Faithfully speaks he;
Writes he in Tali,
Joy to give, seeks he:
Writes he in either,
Good!--for he loves!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Book Of Suleika - The Loving One Speaks

THE LOVING ONE SPEAKS.

AND wherefore sends not
The horseman-captain
His heralds hither

Each day, unfailling?
Yet hath he horses,
He writes well.

He waiteth Tali,
And Neski knows he
To write with beauty
On silken tablets.
I'd deem him present,
Had I his words.

The sick One will not,
Will not recover
From her sweet sorrow;
She, when she heareth
That her true lover
Grows well, falls sick.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Book Of Suleika - The Reunion

CAN it be! of stars the star,
Do I press thee to my heart?
In the night of distance far,
What deep gulf, what bitter smart!
Yes, 'tis thou, indeed, at last,
Of my joys the partner dear!
Mindful, though, of sorrows past,
I the present needs must fear.
When the still-unfashion'd earth
Lay on God's eternal breast,
He ordain'd its hour of birth,
With creative joy possess'd.
Then a heavy sigh arose,
When He spake the sentence:--"Be!"
And the All, with mighty throes,
Burst into reality.
And when thus was born the light,
Darkness near it fear'd to stay,
And the elements with might
Fled on every side away;
Each on some far-distant trace,
Each with visions wild employ,
Numb, in boundless realm of space,
Harmony and feeling-void.
Dumb was all, all still and dead,
For the first time, God alone!
Then He form'd the morning-red,
Which soon made its kindness known:
It unravelled from the waste,
Bright and glowing harmony,
And once more with love was grac'd
What contended formerly.

And with earnest, noble strife,
Each its own Peculiar sought;
Back to full, unbounded life
Sight and feeling soon were brought.
Wherefore, if 'tis done, explore
How? why give the manner, name?
Allah need create no more,
We his world ourselves can frame.
So, with morning pinions bright,
To thy mouth was I impell'd;
Stamped with thousand seals by night,
Star-clear is the bond fast held.
Paragons on earth are we
Both of grief and joy sublime,
And a second sentence:--"Be!"
Parts us not a second time.
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Book Of Suleika - The Sublime Type

THE sun, whom Grecians Helms call,
His heavenly path with pride doth tread,
And, to subdue the world's wide all,
Looks round, beneath him, high o'er head.
He sees the fairest goddess pine,
Heaven's child, the daughter of the clouds,--
For her alone he seems to shine;
In trembling grief his form he shrouds,
Careless for all the realms of bliss,--
Her streaming tears more swiftly flow:
For every pearl he gives a kiss,
And changeth into joy her woe.
She gazeth upward fixedly,
And deeply feels his glance of might,
While, stamped with his own effigy,
Each pearl would range itself aright.
Thus wreath'd with bows, with hues thus grac'd,
With gladness beams her face so fair,
While he, to meet her, maketh haste,
And yet, alas! can reach her ne'er.
So, by the harsh decree of Fate,
Thou modest from me, dearest one;
And were I Helms e'en, the Great,
What would avail his chariot-throne?
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Book Of Suleika - These Tufted Branches

THESE tufted branches fair

Observe, my loved one, well!
And see the fruits they bear

In green and prickly shell!

They've hung roll'd up, till now,

Unconsciously and still;
A loosely-waving bough

Doth rock them at its will.

Yet, ripening from within.

The kernel brown swells fast;
It seeks the air to win,

It seeks the sun at last.

With joy it bursts its thrall,

The shell must needs give way.
'Tis thus my numbers fall

Before thy feet, each day.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Book Of Timur - The Winter And Timur

So the winter now closed round them
With resistless fury. Scattering
Over all his breath so icy,
He inflamed each wind that blithe
To assail them angrily.
Over them he gave dominion
To his frost-unsharpened tempests;
Down to Timur's council went he,
And with threat'ning voice address'd him:--
"Softly, slowly, wretched being!
Live, the tyrant of injustice;
But shall hearts be scorch'd much longer
By thy flames,--consume before them?
If amongst the evil spirits
Thou art one,--good! I'm another.
Thou a greybeard art--so I am;
Land and men we make to stiffen.
Thou art Mars! And I Saturnus,--
Both are evil-working planets,
When united, horror-fraught.
Thou dost kill the soul, thou freezes
E'en the atmosphere; still colder
Is my breath than thine was ever.
Thy wild armies vex the faithful
With a thousand varying torments;
Well! God grant that I discover
Even worse, before I perish!
And by God, I'll give thee none.
Let God hear what now I tell thee!
Yes, by God! from Death's cold clutches
Nought, O greybeard, shall protect thee,
Not the hearth's broad coalfire's ardour,
Not December's brightest flame."

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Book Of Timur - To Suleika

FITTING perfumes to prepare,
And to raise thy rapture high,
Must a thousand rosebuds fair
First in fiery torments die.
One small flask's contents to glean,
Whose sweet fragrance aye may live,
Slender as thy finger e'en,
Must a world its treasures give;
Yes, a world where life is moving,
Which, with impulse full and strong,
Could forbode the Bulbul's loving,
Sweet, and spirit-stirring song.
Since they thus have swell'd our joy,
Should such torments grieve us, then?
Doth not Timur's rule destroy
Myriad souls of living men?
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Burial

To the grave one day from a house they bore

A maiden;
To the window the citizens went to explore;
In splendour they lived, and with wealth as of yore

Their banquets were laden.
Then thought they: "The maid to the tomb is now borne;
We too from our dwellings ere long must be torn,
And he that is left our departure to mourn,

To our riches will be the successor,

For some one must be their possessor.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

By The River

FLOW on, ye lays so loved, so fair,

On to Oblivion's ocean flow!
May no rapt boy recall you e'er,

No maiden in her beauty's glow!

My love alone was then your theme,

But now she scorns my passion true.
Ye were but written in the stream;

As it flows on, then, flow ye too!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

By The River II

WHEN by the broad stream thou dost dwell,

Oft shallow is its sluggish flood;
Then, when thy fields thou tendest well,

It o'er them spreads its slime and mud.

The ships descend ere daylight wanes,

The prudent fisher upward goes;
Round reef and rock ice casts its chains,

And boys at will the pathway close.

To this attend, then, carefully,

And what thou wouldst, that execute!
Ne'er linger, ne'er o'erhasty be,

For time moves on with measured foot.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Calm At Sea

SILENCE deep rules o'er the waters,

Calmly slumb'ring lies the main,
While the sailor views with trouble

Nought but one vast level plain.

Not a zephyr is in motion!

Silence fearful as the grave!
In the mighty waste of ocean

Sunk to rest is ev'ry wave.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Cat-Pie

WHILE he is mark'd by vision clear
Who fathoms Nature's treasures,
The man may follow, void of fear,
Who her proportions measures.
Though for one mortal, it is true,
These trades may both be fitted,
Yet, that the things themselves are two
Must always be admitted.
Once on a time there lived a cook
Whose skill was past disputing,
Who in his head a fancy took
To try his luck at shooting.
So, gun in hand, he sought a spot
Where stores of game were breeding,
And there ere long a cat he shot
That on young birds was feeding.
This cat he fancied was a hare,
Forming a judgment hasty,
So served it up for people's fare,
Well-spiced and in a pasty.
Yet many a guest with wrath was fill'd
(All who had noses tender):
The cat that's by the sportsman kill'd
No cook a hare can render.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Celebrity

ON bridges small and bridges great
Stands Nepomucks in ev'ry state,
Of bronze, wood, painted, or of stone,
Some small as dolls, some giants grown;
Each passer must worship before Nepomuck,
Who to die on a bridge chanced to have the ill luck,
When once a man with head and ears
A saint in people's eyes appears,
Or has been sentenced piteously
Beneath the hangman's hand to die,
He's as a noted person prized,
In portrait is immortalized.
Engravings, woodcuts, are supplied,
And through the world spread far and wide.
Upon them all is seen his name,
And ev'ry one admits his claim;
Even the image of the Lord
Is not with greater zeal ador'd.
Strange fancy of the human race!
Half sinner frail, half child of grace
We see HERR WERTHER of the story
In all the pomp of woodcut glory.
His worth is first made duly known,
By having his sad features shown
At ev'ry fair the country round;
In ev'ry alehouse too they're found.
His stick is pointed by each dunce
"The ball would reach his brain at once!"
And each says, o'er his beer and bread:
"Thank Heav'n that 'tis not we are dead!"

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Charade

Two words there 'are, both short, of beauty rare,
Whose sounds our lips so often love to frame,
But which with clearness never can proclaim
The things whose own peculiar stamp they bear.
'Tis well in days of age and youth so fair,
One on the other boldly to inflame;
And if those words together link'd we name,
A blissful rapture we discover there.
But now to give them pleasure do I seek,
And in myself my happiness would find;
I hope in silence, but I hope for this:
Gently, as loved one's names, those words to speak
To see them both within one image shrin'd,
Both in one being to embrace with bliss.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Christel

My senses oftentimes are oppress'd,

Oft stagnant is my blood;
But when by Christel's sight I'm blest,

I feel my strength renew'd.
I see her here, I see her there,

And really cannot tell
The manner how, the when, the where,

The why I love her well.

If with the merest glance I view

Her black and roguish eyes,
And gaze on her black eyebrows too,

My spirit upward flies.
Has any one a mouth so sweet,

Such love-round cheeks as she?
Ah, when the eye her beauties meet,

It ne'er content can be.

And when in airy German dance

I clasp her form divine,
So quick we whirl, so quick advance,

What rapture then like mine!
And when she's giddy, and feels warm,

I cradle her, poor thing,
Upon my breast, and in mine arm,--

I'm then a very king!

And when she looks with love on me,

Forgetting all but this,
When press'd against my bosom, she

Exchanges kiss for kiss,
All through my marrow runs a thrill,

Runs e'en my foot along!
I feel so well, I feel so ill,

I feel so weak, so strong!

Would that such moments ne'er would end!

The day ne'er long I find;
Could I the night too with her spend,

E'en that I should not mind.
If she were in mine arms but held,

To quench love's thirst I'd try;
And could my torments not be quell'd,

Upon her breast would die.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Comfort In Tears

How happens it that thou art sad,
While happy all appear?
Thine eye proclaims too well that thou

Hast wept full many a tear.

"If I have wept in solitude,

None other shares my grief,
And tears to me sweet balsam are,

And give my heart relief."

Thy happy friends invite thee now,--

Oh come, then, to our breast!
And let the loss thou hast sustain'd

Be there to us confess'd!

"Ye shout, torment me, knowing not

What 'tis afflicteth me;
Ah no! I have sustained no loss,

Whate'er may wanting be."

If so it is, arise in haste!

Thou'rt young and full of life.
At years like thine, man's blest with strength.

And courage for the strife.

"Ah no! in vain 'twould be to strive,

The thing I seek is far;
It dwells as high, it gleams as fair

As yonder glitt'ring star."

The stars we never long to clasp,

We revel in their light,
And with enchantment upward gaze,

Each clear and radiant night.

"And I with rapture upward gaze,

On many a blissful day;

Then let me pass the night in tears,

Till tears are wip'd away!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Constancy In Change

COULD this early bliss but rest

Constant for one single hour!
But e'en now the humid West

Scatters many a vernal shower.
Should the verdure give me joy?

'Tis to it I owe the shade;
Soon will storms its bloom destroy,

Soon will Autumn bid it fade.

Eagerly thy portion seize,

If thou wouldst possess the fruit!
Fast begin to ripen these,

And the rest already shoot.
With each heavy storm of rain

Change comes o'er thy valley fair;
Once, alas! but not again

Can the same stream hold thee e'er.

And thyself, what erst at least

Firm as rocks appear'd to rise,
Walls and palaces thou seest

But with ever-changing eyes.
Fled for ever now the lip

That with kisses used to glow,
And the foot, that used to skip

O'er the mountain, like the roe.

And the hand, so true and warm,

Ever raised in charity,
And the cunning-fashion'd form,--

All are now changed utterly.
And what used to bear thy name,

When upon yon spot it stood,
Like a rolling billow came,

Hast'ning on to join the flood.

Be then the beginning found

With the end in unison,
Swifter than the forms around

Are themselves now fleeting on!
Thank the merit in thy breast,

Thank the mould within thy heart,
That the Muses' favour blest
Ne'er will perish, ne'er depart.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Coptic Song

LEAVE we the pedants to quarrel and strive,

Rigid and cautious the teachers to be!
All of the wisest men e'er seen alive

Smile, nod, and join in the chorus with me:
"Vain 'tis to wait till the dolt grows less silly!
Play then the fool with the fool, willy-nilly,--

Children of wisdom,--remember the word!"

Merlin the old, from his glittering grave,
When I, a stripling, once spoke to him,--gave

Just the same answer as that I've preferr'd;
"Vain 'tis to wait till the dolt grows less silly!
Play then the fool with the fool, willy-nilly,--

Children of wisdom,--remember the word!"

And on the Indian breeze as it booms,
And in the depths of Egyptian tombs,

Only the same holy saying I've heard:
"Vain 'tis to wait till the dolt grows less silly!
Play then the fool with the fool, willy-nilly,--

Children of wisdom,--remember the word!"

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Courage

CARELESSLY over the plain away,
Where by the boldest man no path
Cut before thee thou canst discern,
Make for thyself a path!

Silence, loved one, my heart!
Cracking, let it not break!
Breaking, break not with thee!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Death-Lament Of The Noble Wife Of Asan Aga

WHAT is yonder white thing in the forest?
Is it snow, or can it swans perchance be?
Were it snow, ere this it had been melted,
Were it swans, they all away had hastend.
Snow, in truth, it is not, swans it is not,
'Tis the shining tents of Asan Aga.
He within is lying, sorely wounded;
To him come his mother and his sister;
Bashfully his wife delays to come there.
When the torment of his wounds had lessen'd,
To his faithful wife he sent this message:
"At my court no longer dare to tarry,
At my court, or e'en amongst my people."

When the woman heard this cruel message,
Mute and full of sorrow stood that true one.
At the doors she hears the feet of horses,
And bethinks that Asan comes--her husband,
To the tower she springs, to leap thence headlong,
Her two darling daughters follow sadly,
And whilst weeping bitter tears, exclaim they:
These are not our father Asan's horses;
'Tis thy brother Pintorowich coming!"

So the wife of Asan turns to meet him,
Clasps her arms in anguish round her brother:
"See thy sister's sad disgrace, oh brother!
How I'm banish'd--mother of five children!"
Silently her brother from his wallet,
Wrapp'd in deep red-silk, and ready written,
Draweth forth the letter of divorcement,
To return home to her mother's dwelling,
Free to be another's wife thenceforward.

When the woman saw that mournful letter,
Fervently she kiss'd her two sons' foreheads,
And her two girls' cheeks with fervour kiss'd she,
But she from the suckling in the cradle
Could not tear herself, so deep her sorrow!
So she's torn thence by her fiery brother,
On his nimble steed he lifts her quickly,
And so hastens, with the heart-sad woman,
Straightway tow'rd his father's lofty dwelling.

Short the time was--seven days had pass'd not,--
Yet enough 'twas; many mighty princes
Sought the woman in her widow's-mourning.
Sought the woman,--as their wife they sought her.
And the mightiest was Imoski's Cadi,
And the woman weeping begg'd her brother:
By thy life, my brother, I entreat thee,
Let me not another's wife be ever,

Lest my heart be broken at the image
Of my poor, my dearly-cherish'd children!"

To her prayer her brother would not hearken,
Fix'd to wed her to Imoski's Cadi.
Yet the good one ceaselessly implored him:
"Send, at least a letter, oh, my brother,
With this message to Imoski's Cadi:
'The young widow sends thee friendly greeting;
Earnestly she prays thee, through this letter,
That, when thou com'st hither, with thy Suatians,
A long veil thou'lt bring me, 'neath whose shadow
I may hide, when near the house of Asan,
And not see my dearly cherish'd orphans.'"

Scarcely had the Cadi read this letter,
Than he gather'd all his Suatians round him,
And then tow'rd the bride his course directed,
And the veil she ask'd for, took he with him.

Happily they reach'd the princess' dwelling,
From the dwelling happily they led her.
But when they approach'd the house of Asan,
Lo! the children saw from high their mother,
And they shouted: "To thy halls return thou!
Eat thy supper with thy darling children!"
Mournfully the wife of Asan heard it,
Tow'rd the Suatian prince then turn'd she, saying:
"Let, I pray, the Suatians and the horses
At the loved ones' door a short time tarry,
That I may give presents to my children."

And before the loved ones' door they tarried,
And she presents gave to her poor children,
To the boys gave gold-embroider'd buskins,
To the girls gave long and costly dresses,
To the suckling, helpless in the cradle,
Gave a garment, to be worn hereafter.

This aside saw Father Asan Aga,--
Sadly cried he to his darling children:
"Hither come, ye dear unhappy infants,
For your mother's breast is turn'd to iron,
Lock'd for ever, closed to all compassion!"

When the wife of Asan heard him speak thus,
On the ground, all pale and trembling, fell she,
And her spirit fled her sorrowing bosom,
When she saw her children flying from her.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Declaration Of War

OH, would I resembled
The country girls fair,
Who rosy-red ribbons
And yellow hats wear!
To believe I was pretty
I thought was allow'd;
In the town I believed it
When by the youth vow'd.
Now that Spring hath return'd,
All my joys disappear;
The girls of the country
Have lured him from here.
To change dress and figure,
Was needful I found,
My bodice is longer,
My petticoat round.
My hat now is yellow.
My bodice like snow;
The clover to sickle
With others I go.
Something pretty, e'er long
Midst the troop he explores;
The eager boy signs me
To go within doors.
I bashfully go,--
Who I am, he can't trace;
He pinches my cheeks,
And he looks in my face.
The town girl now threatens
You maidens with war;

Her twofold charms pledges .

Of victory are.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Dedication - The Poems Of Goeth

The morn arrived; his footstep quickly scared

The gentle sleep that round my senses clung,
And I, awak'ning, from my cottage fared,

And up the mountain side with light heart sprung;
At every step I felt my gaze ensnared

By new-born flow'rs that full of dew-drops hung;
The youthful day awoke with ecstasy,
And all things quicken'd were, to quicken me.

And as I mounted, from the valley rose

A streaky mist, that upward slowly spread,
Then bent, as though my form it would enclose,

Then, as on pinions, soar'd above my head:
My gaze could now on no fair view repose,

in mournful veil conceal'd, the world seem'd dead;
The clouds soon closed around me, as a tomb,
And I was left alone in twilight gloom.

At once the sun his lustre seem'd to pour,

And through the mist was seen a radiant light;
Here sank it gently to the ground once more,

There parted it, and climb'd o'er wood and height.
How did I yearn to greet him as of yore,

After the darkness waxing doubly bright!
The airy conflict oft-times was renew'd,
Then blinded by a dazzling glow I stood.

Ere long an inward impulse prompted me

A hasty glance with boldness round to throw;
At first mine eyes had scarcely strength to see,

For all around appear'd to burn and glow.
Then saw I, on the clouds borne gracefully,

A godlike woman hov'ring to and fro.
In life I ne'er had seen a form so fair--
She gazed at me, and still she hover'd there.

"Dost thou not know me?" were the words she said

In tones where love and faith were sweetly bound;
"Knowest thou not Her who oftentimes hath shed

The purest balsam in each earthly wound?
Thou knows't me well; thy panting heart I led

To join me in a bond with rapture crown'd.
Did I not see thee, when a stripling, yearning
To welcome me with tears, heartfelt and burning?"

"Yes!" I exclaim'd, whilst, overcome with joy,

I sank to earth; "I long have worshipp'd thee;
Thou gav'st me rest, when passions rack'd the boy,

Pervading ev'ry limb unceasingly;
Thy heav'nly pinions thou didst then employ

The scorching sunbeams to ward off from me.
From thee alone Earth's fairest gifts I gain'd,
Through thee alone, true bliss can be obtain'd.

"Thy name I know not; yet I hear thee nam'd

By many a one who boasts thee as his own;
Each eye believes that tow'rd thy form 'tis aim'd,

Yet to most eyes thy rays are anguish-sown.
Ah! whilst I err'd, full many a friend I claim'd,

Now that I know thee, I am left alone;
With but myself can I my rapture share,
I needs must veil and hide thy radiance fair.

She smiled, and answering said: "Thou see'st how wise,

How prudent 'twas but little to unveil!
Scarce from the clumsiest cheat are clear'd thine eyes,

Scarce hast thou strength thy childish bars to scale,
When thou dost rank thee 'mongst the deities,

And so man's duties to perform would'st fail!
How dost thou differ from all other men?
Live with the world in peace, and know thee then!"

"Oh, pardon me," I cried, "I meant it well:

Not vainly did'st thou bless mine eyes with light;
For in my blood glad aspirations swell,

The value of thy gifts I know aright!
Those treasures in my breast for others dwell,

The buried pound no more I'll hide from sight.
Why did I seek the road so anxiously,
If hidden from my brethren 'twere to be?"

And as I answer'd, tow'rd me turn'd her face,

With kindly sympathy, that god-like one;
Within her eye full plainly could I trace

What I had fail'd in, and what rightly done.
She smiled, and cured me with that smile's sweet grace,

To new-born joys my spirit soar'd anon;
With inward confidence I now could dare
To draw yet closer, and observe her there.

Through the light cloud she then stretch'd forth her hand,

As if to bid the streaky vapour fly:
At once it seemed to yield to her command,

Contracted, and no mist then met mine eye.
My glance once more survey'd the smiling land,

Unclouded and serene appear'd the sky.
Nought but a veil of purest white she held,
And round her in a thousand folds it swell'd.

"I know thee, and I know thy wav'ring will.

I know the good that lives and glows in thee!"--
Thus spake she, and methinks I hear her still--

"The prize long destined, now receive from me;
That blest one will be safe from ev'ry ill,

Who takes this gift with soul of purity,--"
The veil of Minstrelsy from Truth's own hand,
Of sunlight and of morn's sweet fragrance plann'd.

"And when thou and thy friends at fierce noon-day

Are parched with heat, straight cast it in the air!
Then Zephyr's cooling breath will round you play,

Distilling balm and flowers' sweet incense there;
The tones of earthly woe will die away,

The grave become a bed of clouds so fair,
To sing to rest life's billows will be seen,
The day be lovely, and the night serene."--

Come, then, my friends! and whensoever ye find

Upon your way increase life's heavy load;
If by fresh-waken'd blessings flowers are twin'd

Around your path, and golden fruits bestow'd,
We'll seek the coming day with joyous mind!

Thus blest, we'll live, thus wander on our road
And when our grandsons sorrow o'er our tomb,
Our love, to glad their bosoms, still shall bloom.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Departure

WITH many a thousand kiss not yet content,
At length with One kiss I was forced to go;
After that bitter parting's depth of woe,
I deem'd the shore from which my steps I bent,
Its hills, streams, dwellings, mountains, as I went,
A pledge of joy, till daylight ceased to glow;
Then on my sight did blissful visions grow
In the dim-lighted, distant firmament,
And when at length the sea confined my gaze,
My ardent longing fill'd my heart once more;
What I had lost, unwillingly I sought.
Then Heaven appear'd to shed its kindly rays:
Methought that all I had possess'd of yore
Remain'd still mine--that I was reft of nought.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Different Emotions On The Same Spot

THE MAIDEN.

I'VE seen him before me!
What rapture steals o'er me!

Oh heavenly sight!
He's coming to meet me;
Perplex'd, I retreat me,

With shame take to flight.
My mind seems to wander!
Ye rocks and trees yonder,

Conceal ye my rapture.

Conceal my delight!

THE YOUTH.

'Tis here I must find her,
'Twas here she enshrined her,

Here vanish'd from sight.
She came, as to meet me,
Then fearing to greet me,

With shame took to flight.
Is't hope? Do I wander?
Ye rocks and trees yonder,

Disclose ye the loved one,

Disclose my delight!

THE LANGUISHING.

O'er my sad, fate I sorrow,
To each dewy morrow,

Veil'd here from man's sight
By the many mistaken,
Unknown and forsaken,

Here I wing my flight!
Compassionate spirit!
Let none ever hear it,--

Conceal my affliction,

Conceal thy delight!

THE HUNTER.

To-day I'm rewarded;
Rich booty's afforded

By Fortune so bright.
My servant the pheasants,
And hares fit for presents

Takes homeward at night;
Here see I enraptured
In nets the birds captured!--

Long life to the hunter!

Long live his delight!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Different Threats

I ONCE into a forest far

My maiden went to seek,
And fell upon her neck, when: "Ah!"

She threaten'd, "I will shriek!"

Then cried I haughtily: "I'll crush

The man that dares come near thee!"
"Hush!" whisper'd she: "My loved one, hush!

Or else they'll overhear thee!"

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Effects At A Distance

THE queen in the lofty hall takes her place,
The tapers around her are flaming;
She speaks to the page: "With a nimble pace

Go, fetch me my purse for gaming.

'Tis lying, I'll pledge,

On my table's edge."
Each nerve the nimble boy straineth,
And the end of the castle soon gaineth.

The fairest of maidens was sipping sherbet

Beside the queen that minute;
Near her mouth broke the cup,--and she got so wet!

The very devil seem'd in it

What fearful distress

'Tis spoilt, her gay dress.
She hastens, and ev'ry nerve straineth,
And the end of the castle soon gaineth.

The boy was returning, and quickly came,

And met the sorrowing maiden;
None knew of the fact,--and yet with Love's flame,

Those two had their hearts full laden.

And, oh the bliss

Of a moment like this!
Each falls on the breast of the other,
With kisses that well nigh might smother.

They tear themselves asunder at last,

To her chamber she hastens quickly,
To reach the queen the page hies him fast,

Midst the swords and the fans crowded thickly.

The queen spied amain

On his waistcoat a stain;
For nought was inscrutable to her,
Like Sheba's queen--Solomon's wooer.

To her chief attendant she forthwith cried

"We lately together contended,
And thou didst assert, with obstinate pride,

That the spirit through space never wended,--

That traces alone

By the present were shown,--
That afar nought was fashion'd--not even
By the stars that illumine you heaven.

"Now see! while a goblet beside me they drain'd,

They spilt all the drink in the chalice;
And straightway the boy had his waistcoat stain'd

At the furthest end of the palace.--

Let them newly be clad!

And since I am glad
That it served as a proof so decided,
The cost will by me be provided."

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Epiphanias

THE three holy kings with their star's bright ray,--
They eat and they drink, but had rather not pay;
They like to eat and drink away,
They eat and drink, but had rather not pay.

The three holy kings have all come here,
In number not four, but three they appear;
And if a fourth join'd the other three,
Increased by one their number would be.

The first am I,--the fair and the white,
I ought to be seen when the sun shines bright!
But, alas! with all my spices and myrrh,
No girl now likes me,--I please not her.

The next am I,--the brown and the long,
Known well to women, known well to song.
Instead of spices, 'tis gold I bear,
And so I'm welcome everywhere.

The last am I,--the black and small,
And fain would be right merry withal.
I like to eat and to drink full measure,
I eat and drink, and give thanks with pleasure.

The three holy kings are friendly and mild,
They seek the Mother, and seek the Child;
The pious Joseph is sitting by,
The ox and the ass on their litter lie.

We're bringing gold, we're bringing myrrh,
The women incense always prefer;
And if we have wine of a worthy growth,
We three to drink like six are not loth.

As here we see fair lads and lasses,
But not a sign of oxen or asses,
We know that we have gone astray
And so go further on our way.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Epitaph

As a boy, reserved and naughty;
As a youth, a coxcomb and haughty;
As a man, for action inclined;
As a greybeard, fickle in mind.--
Upon thy grave will people read:
This was a very man, indeed!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Ergo Bibamus!

FOR a praiseworthy object we're now gather'd here,

So, brethren, sing: ERGO BIBAMUS!
Tho' talk may be hush'd, yet the glasses ring clear,

Remember then: ERGO BIBAMUS!
In truth 'tis an old, 'tis an excellent word,
With its sound so befitting each bosom is stirr'd,
And an echo the festal hall filling is heard,

A glorious ERGO BIBAMUS!

I saw mine own love in her beauty so rare,

And bethought me of: ERGO BIBAMUS;
So I gently approach'd, and she let me stand there,

While I help'd myself, thinking: BIBAMUS!
And when she's appeased, and will clasp you and kiss,
Or when those embraces and kisses ye miss,
Take refuge, till sound is some worthier bliss,

In the comforting ERGO BIBAMUS!

I am call'd by my fate far away from each friend;

Ye loved ones, then: ERGO BIBAMUS!
With wallet light-laden from hence I must wend.

So double our ERGO BIBAMUS!
Whate'er to his treasures the niggard may add,
Yet regard for the joyous will ever be had,
For gladness lends over its charms to the glad,

So, brethren, sing; ERGO BIBAMUS!

And what shall we say of to-day as it flies?

I thought but of: ERGO BIBAMUS
'Tis one of those truly that seldom arise,

So again and again sing: BIBAMUS!
For joy through a wide-open portal it guides,
Bright glitter the clouds, as the curtain divides,
An a form, a divine one, to greet us in glides,

While we thunder our: ERGO BIBAMUS!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Ever And Everywhere

FAR explore the mountain hollow,
High in air the clouds then follow!

To each brook and vale the Muse

Thousand times her call renews.

Soon as a flow'ret blooms in spring,
It wakens many a strain;

And when Time spreads his fleeting wing,

The seasons come again.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Excuse

THOU dost complain of woman for changing from one to another?
Censure her not: for she seeks one who will constant remain.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Explanation Of An Ancient Woodcut

EARLY within his workshop here,
On Sundays stands our master dear;
His dirty apron he puts away,
And wears a cleanly doublet to-day;
Lest wax'd thread, hammer, and pincers rest,
And lays his awl within his chest;
The seventh day he takes repose
From many pulls and many blows.

Soon as the spring-sun meets his view,
Repose begets him labour anew;
He feels that he holds within his brain
A little world, that broods there amain,
And that begins to act and to live,
Which he to others would gladly give.

He had a skillful eye and true,
And was full kind and loving too.
For contemplation, clear and pure,--
For making all his own again, sure;
He had a tongue that charm'd when 'twas heard,
And graceful and light flow'd ev'ry word;
Which made the Muses in him rejoice,
The Master-singer of their choice.

And now a maiden enter'd there,
With swelling breast, and body fair;
With footing firm she took her place,
And moved with stately, noble grace;
She did not walk in wanton mood,
Nor look around with glances lewd.

She held a measure in her hand,
Her girdle was a golden band,
A wreath of corn was on her head,
Her eye the day's bright lustre shed;
Her name is honest Industry,
Else, Justice, Magnanimity.

She enter'd with a kindly greeting;
He felt no wonder at the meeting,
For, kind and fair as she might be,
He long had known her, fancied he.

"I have selected thee," she said,
"From all who earth's wild mazes tread,
That thou shouldst have clear-sighted sense,
And nought that's wrong shouldst e'er commence.
When others run in strange confusion,
Thy gaze shall see through each illusion
When others dolefully complain,

Thy cause with jesting thou shalt gain,
Honour and right shalt value duly,
In everything act simply, truly,--
Virtue and godliness proclaim,
And call all evil by its name,
Nought soften down, attempt no quibble,
Nought polish up, nought vainly scribble.
The world shall stand before thee, then,
As seen by Albert Durer's ken,
In manliness and changeless life,
In inward strength, with firmness rife.
Fair Nature's Genius by the hand
Shall lead thee on through every land,
Teach thee each different life to scan,
Show thee the wondrous ways of man,
His shifts, confusions, thrustings, and drubbings,
Pushings, tearings, pressings, and rubbings;
The varying madness of the crew,
The anthill's ravings bring to view;
But thou shalt see all this express'd,
As though 'twere in a magic chest.
Write these things down for folks on earth,
In hopes they may to wit give birth."--
Then she a window open'd wide,
And show'd a motley crowd outside,
All kinds of beings 'neath the sky,
As in his writings one may spy.

Our master dear was, after this,
On Nature thinking, full of bliss,
When tow'rd him, from the other side
He saw an aged woman glide;
The name she bears, Historia,
Mythologia, Fabula;
With footstep tottering and unstable
She dragg'd a large and wooden carved-table,
Where, with wide sleeves and human mien,
The Lord was catechizing seen;
Adam, Eve, Eden, the Serpent's seduction,
Gomorrhah and Sodom's awful destruction,
The twelve illustrious women, too,
That mirror of honour brought to view;
All kinds of bloodthirstiness, murder, and sin,
The twelve wicked tyrants also were in,
And all kinds of goodly doctrine and law;
Saint Peter with his scourge you saw,
With the world's ways dissatisfied,
And by our Lord with power supplied.
Her train and dress, behind and before,
And e'en the seams, were painted o'er
With tales of worldly virtue and crime.--
Our master view'd all this for a time;

The sight right gladly he survey'd,
So useful for him in his trade,
Whence he was able to procure
Example good and precept sure,
Recounting all with truthful care,
As though he had been present there.
His spirit seem'd from earth to fly,
He ne'er had turned away his eye,
Did he not just behind him hear
A rattle of bells approaching near.
And now a fool doth catch his eye,
With goat and ape's leap drawing nigh
A merry interlude preparing
With fooleries and jests unsparing.
Behind him, in a line drawn out,
He dragg'd all fools, the lean and stout,
The great and little, the empty and full,
All too witty, and all too dull,
A lash he flourish'd overhead,
As though a dance of apes he led,
Abusing them with bitterness,
As though his wrath would ne'er grow less.

While on this sight our master gazed,
His head was growing well-nigh crazed:
What words for all could he e'er find,
Could such a medley be combined?
Could he continue with delight
For evermore to sing and write?
When lo, from out a cloud's dark bed
In at the upper window sped
The Muse, in all her majesty,
As fair as our loved maids we see.
With clearness she around him threw
Her truth, that ever stronger grew.

"I, to ordain thee come," she spake:
"So prosper, and my blessing take!
The holy fire that slumb'ring lies
Within thee, in bright flames shall rise;
Yet that thine ever-restless life
May still with kindly strength be rife,
I, for thine inward spirit's calm,
Have granted nourishment and balm,
That rapture may thy soul imbue,
Like some fair blossom bathed in dew."--
Behind his house then secretly
Outside the doorway pointed she,
Where, in a shady garden-nook,
A beauteous maid with downcast look
Was sitting where a stream was flowing,
With elder bushes near it growing,

She sat beneath an apple tree,
And nought around her seem'd to see.
Her lap was full of roses fair,
Which in a wreath she twined with care.
And, with them, leaves and blossoms blended:
For whom was that sweet wreath intended?
Thus sat she, modest and retired,
Her bosom throb'd, with hope inspired;
Such deep forebodings fill'd her mind,
No room for wishing could she find,
And with the thoughts that o'er it flew,
Perchance a sigh was mingled too.

"But why should sorrow cloud thy brow?
That, dearest love, which fills thee now
Is fraught with joy and ecstasy.
Prepared in one alone for thee,
That he within thine eye may find
Solace when fortune proves unkind,
And be newborn through many a kiss,
That he receives with inward bliss;
When'er he clasps thee to his breast.
May he from all his toils find rest
When he in thy dear arms shall sink,
May he new life and vigour drink:
Fresh joys of youth shalt thou obtain,
In merry jest rejoice again.
With raillery and roguish spite,
Thou now shalt tease him, now delight.
Thus Love will nevermore grow old,
Thus will the minstrel ne'er be cold!"

While he thus lives, in secret bless'd,
Above him in the clouds doth rest
An oak-wreath, verdant and sublime,
Placed on his brow in after-time;
While they are banish'd to the slough,
Who their great master disavow.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Explanation Of An Antique Gem

A YOUNG fig-tree its form lifts high

Within a beauteous garden;
And see, a goat is sitting by.

As if he were its warden.

But oh, Quirites, how one errs!

The tree is guarded badly;
For round the other side there whirrs

And hums a beetle madly.

The hero with his well-mail'd coat

Nibbles the branches tall so;
A mighty longing feels the goat

Gently to climb up also.

And so, my friends, ere long ye see

The tree all leafless standing;
It looks a type of misery,

Help of the gods demanding.

Then listen, ye ingenuous youth,

Who hold wise saws respected:
From he-goat and from beetles-tooth

A tree should be protected!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Faithful Eckart

"OH, would we were further! Oh, would we were home,
The phantoms of night tow'rd us hastily come,
The band of the Sorceress sisters.

They hitherward speed, and on finding us here,
They'll drink, though with toil we have fetch'd it, the beer,
And leave us the pitchers all empty."

Thus speaking, the children with fear take to flight,
When sudden an old man appears in their sight:
"Be quiet, child! children, be quiet!

From hunting they come, and their thirst they would still,
So leave them to swallow as much as they will,
And the Evil Ones then will be gracious."

As said, so 'twas done! and the phantoms draw near,
And shadowlike seem they, and grey they appear,
~Yet blithely they sip and they revel

The beer has all vanish'd, the pitchers are void;
With cries and with shouts the wild hunters, o'erjoy'd,
Speed onward o'er vale and o'er mountain.

The children in terror fly nimbly tow'rd home,
And with them the kind one is careful to come:
"My darlings, oh, be not so mournful!--

"They'll blame us and beat us, until we are dead."--
"No, no! ye will find that all goes well," he said;
"Be silent as mice, then, and listen!

"And he by whose counsels thus wisely ye're taught,
Is he who with children loves ever to sport.
The trusty and faithful old Eckart.

Ye have heard of the wonder for many a day,
But ne'er had a proof of the marvellous lay,--
Your hands hold a proof most convincing."

They arrive at their home, and their pitchers they place
By the side of their parents, with fear on their face,
Awaiting a beating and scolding.

But see what they're tasting: the choicest of beer!
Though three times and four times they quaff the good cheer
The pitchers remain still unemptied.

The marvel it lasts till the dawning of day;
All people who hear of it doubtless will say:
"What happen'd at length to the pitchers?"

In secret the children they smile, as they wait;
At last, though, they stammer, and stutter, and prate,
And straightway the pitchers were empty.

And if, children, with kindness address'd ye may be,
Whether father, or master, or alderman he,
Obey him, and follow his bidding!

And if 'tis unpleasant to bridle the tongue,
Yet talking is bad, silence good for the young--
And then will the beer fill your pitchers!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Farewell

To break one's word is pleasure-fraught,

To do one's duty gives a smart;
While man, alas! will promise nought,

That is repugnant to his heart.

Using some magic strains of yore,

Thou lurest him, when scarcely calm,
On to sweet folly's fragile bark once more,

Renewing, doubling chance of harm.

Why seek to hide thyself from me?

Fly not my sight--be open then!
Known late or early it must be,

And here thou hast thy word again.

My duty is fulfill'd to-day,

No longer will I guard thee from surprise;
But, oh, forgive the friend who from thee turns away,

And to himself for refuge flies!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Finnish Song

IF the loved one, the well-known one,
Should return as he departed,
On his lips would ring my kisses,
Though the wolf's blood might have dyed them;
And a hearty grasp I'd give him,
Though his finger-ends were serpents.

Wind! Oh, if thou hadst but reason,
Word for word in turns thou'dst carry,
E'en though some perchance might perish
'Tween two lovers so far distant.

All choice morsels I'd dispense with,
Table-flesh of priests neglect too,
Sooner than renounce my lover,
Whom, in Summer having vanquish'd,
I in Winter tamed still longer.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

First Loss

AH! who'll e'er those days restore,

Those bright days of early love
Who'll one hour again concede,

Of that time so fondly cherish'd!
Silently my wounds I feed,
And with wailing evermore

Sorrow o'er each joy now perish'd.
Ah! who'll e'er the days restore

Of that time so fondly cherish'd.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Flower-Salute

THIS nosegay,--'twas I dress'd it,--

Greets thee a thousand times!
Oft stoop'd I, and caress'd it,

Ah! full a thousand times,
And 'gainst my bosom press'd it

A hundred thousand times!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Food In Travel

IF to her eyes' bright lustre I were blind,
No longer would they serve my life to gild.
The will of destiny must be fulfilled,--
This knowing, I withdrew with sadden'd mind.
No further happiness I now could find:
The former longings of my heart were still'd;
I sought her looks alone, whereon to build
My joy in life,--all else was left behind.
Wine's genial glow, the festal banquet gay,
Ease, sleep, and friends, all wonted pleasures glad
I spurn'd, till little there remain'd to prove.
Now calmly through the world I wend my way:
That which I crave may everywhere be had,
With me I bring the one thing needful--love.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

For Ever

THE happiness that man, whilst prison'd here,

Is wont with heavenly rapture to compare,--
The harmony of Truth, from wavering clear,--

Of Friendship that is free from doubting care,--
The light which in stray thoughts alone can cheer

The wise,--the bard alone in visions fair,--
In my best hours I found in her all this,
And made mine own, to mine exceeding bliss.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Fortune Of War

NOUGHT more accursed in war I know
Than getting off scot-free;
Inured to danger, on we go
In constant victory;
We first unpack, then pack again,
With only this reward,
That when we're marching, we complain,
And when in camp, are bor'd.
The time for billeting comes next,--
The peasant curses it;
Each nobleman is sorely vex'd,
'Tis hated by the cit.
Be civil, bad though be thy food,
The clowns politely treat;
If to our hosts we're ever rude,
Jail-bread we're forced to eat.
And when the cannons growl around,
And small arms rattle clear,
And trumpet, trot, and drum resound,
We merry all appear;
And as it in the fight may chance,
We yield, then charge amain,
And now retire, and now advance,
And yet a cross ne'er gain.
At length there comes a musket-ball,
And hits the leg, please Heaven;
And then our troubles vanish all,
For to the town we're driven,
(Well cover'd by the victor's force,)
Where we in wrath first came,--
The women, frightened then, of course,
Are loving now and tame.

Cellar and heart are open'd wide,
The cook's allow'd no rest;
While beds with softest down supplied
Are by our members press'd.
The nimble lads upon us wait,
No sleep the hostess takes
Her shift is torn in pieces straight,--
What wondrous lint it makes!
If one has tended carefully
The hero's wounded limb,
Her neighbour cannot rest, for she
Has also tended him.
A third arrives in equal haste,
At length they all are there,
And in the middle he is placed
Of the whole band so fair!
On good authority the king
Hears how we love the fight,
And bids them cross and ribbon bring,
Our coat and breast to dight.
Say if a better fate can e'er
A son of Mars pursue!
'Midst tears at length we go from there,
Beloved and honour'd too.
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Found

Hi There! I see you're enjoying the site, and just wanted to extend an invitation to register for our free site. The members of oldpoetry strive to make this a fun place to learn and share - hope you join us! - Kevin

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

From

EV'RY youth for love's sweet portion sighs,

Ev'ry maiden sighs to win man's love;
Why, alas! should bitter pain arise

From the noblest passion that we prove?

Thou, kind soul, bewailest, lov'st him well,

From disgrace his memory's saved by thee;
Lo, his spirit signs from out its cell:

BE A MAN, NOR SEEK TO FOLLOW ME.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

From An Album Of 1604

HOPE provides wings to thought, and love to hope.
Rise up to Cynthia, love, when night is clearest,
And say, that as on high her figure changeth,
So, upon earth, my joy decays and grows.
And whisper in her ear with modest softness,
How doubt oft hung its head, and truth oft wept.
And oh ye thoughts, distrustfully inclined,
If ye are therefore by the loved one chided,
Answer: 'tis true ye change, but alter not,
As she remains the same, yet changeth ever.
Doubt may invade the heart, but poisons not,
For love is sweeter, by suspicion flavour'd.
If it with anger overcasts the eye,
And heaven's bright purity perversely blackens,
Then zephyr-sighs straight scare the clouds away,
And, changed to tears, dissolve them into rain.
Thought, hope, and love remain there as before,
Till Cynthia gleams upon me as of old.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

From The Mountain

IF I, dearest Lily, did not love thee,
How this prospect would enchant my sight!
And yet if I, Lily, did not love thee,
Could I find, or here, or there, delight?

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Ganymede

How, in the light of morning,
Round me thou glowest,
Spring, thou beloved one!
With thousand-varying loving bliss
The sacred emotions
Born of thy warmth eternal
Press 'gainst my bosom,
Thou endlessly fair one!
Could I but hold thee clasp'd
Within mine arms!

Ah! upon thy bosom
Lay I, pining,
And then thy flowers, thy grass,
Were pressing against my heart.
Thou coolest the burning
Thirst of my bosom,
Beauteous morning breeze!
The nightingale then calls me
Sweetly from out of the misty vale.
I come, I come!
Whither? Ah, whither?

Up, up, lies my course.
While downward the clouds
Are hovering, the clouds
Are bending to meet yearning love.
For me,
Within thine arms
Upwards!
Embraced and embracing!
Upwards into thy bosom,
Oh Father all-loving!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

General Confession

In this noble ring to-day

Let my warning shame ye!
Listen to my solemn voice,--

Seldom does it name ye.
Many a thing have ye intended,

Many a thing have badly ended,
And now I must blame ye.

At some moment in our lives

We must all repent us!
So confess, with pious trust,

All your sins momentous!
Error's crooked pathways shunning.

Let us, on the straight road running,
Honestly content us!

Yes! we've oft, when waking, dream'd,

Let's confess it rightly;
Left undrain'd the brimming cup,

When it sparkled brightly;
Many a shepherd's-hour's soft blisses,

Many a dear mouth's flying kisses
We've neglected lightly.

Mute and silent have we sat,

Whilst the blockheads prated,
And above e'en song divine

Have their babblings rated;
To account we've even call'd us

For the moments that enthrall'd us,
With enjoyment freighted.

If thou'lt absolution grant

To thy true ones ever,
We, to execute thy will,

Ceaseless will endeavour,
From half-measures strive to wean us,

Wholly, fairly, well demean us,
Resting, flagging never.

At all blockheads we'll at once

Let our laugh ring clearly,
And the pearly-foaming wine

Never sip at merely.
Ne'er with eye alone give kisses,

But with boldness suck in blisses
From those lips loved dearly.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Genial Impulse

THUS roll I, never taking ease,
My tub, like Saint Diogenes,
Now serious am, now seek to please;
Now love and hate in turn one sees;
The motives now are those, now these;
Now nothings, now realities.
Thus roll I, never taking ease,
My tub, like Saint Diogenes.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Gipsy Song

IN the drizzling mist, with the snow high-pil'd,
In the Winter night, in the forest wild,
I heard the wolves with their ravenous howl,
I heard the screaming note of the owl:

Wille wau wau wau!

Wille wo wo wo!

Wito hu!

I shot, one day, a cat in a ditch--
The dear black cat of Anna the witch;
Upon me, at night, seven were-wolves came down,
Seven women they were, from out of the town.

Wille wau wau wau!

Wille wo wo wo!

Wito hu!

I knew them all; ay, I knew them straight;
First, Anna, then Ursula, Eve, and Kate,
And Barbara, Lizzy, and Bet as well;
And forming a ring, they began to yell:

Wille wau wau wau!

Wille wo wo wo!

Wito hu!

Then call'd I their names with angry threat:
"What wouldst thou, Anna? What wouldst thou, Bet?"
At hearing my voice, themselves they shook,
And howling and yelling, to flight they took.

Wille wau wau wau!

Wille wo wo wo!

Wito hu!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Growth

O'ER field and plain, in childhood's artless days,
Thou sprang'st with me, on many a spring-morn fair.
"For such a daughter, with what pleasing care,
Would I, as father, happy dwellings raise!"
And when thou on the world didst cast thy gaze,
Thy joy was then in household toils to share.
"Why did I trust her, why she trust me e'er?
For such a sister, how I Heaven should praise!"
Nothing can now the beauteous growth retard;
Love's glowing flame within my breast is fann'd.
Shall I embrace her form, my grief to end?
Thee as a queen must I, alas, regard:
So high above me placed thou seem'st to stand;
Before a passing look I meekly bend.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Happiness And Vision

TOGETHER at the altar we
In vision oft were seen by thee,

Thyself as bride, as bridegroom I.
Oft from thy mouth full many a kiss
In an unguarded hour of bliss

I then would steal, while none were by.

The purest rapture we then knew,
The joy those happy hours gave too,

When tasted, fled, as time fleets on.
What now avails my joy to me?
Like dreams the warmest kisses flee,

Like kisses, soon all joys are gone.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Human Feelings

AH, ye gods! ye great immortals
In the spacious heavens above us!
Would ye on this earth but give us
Steadfast minds and dauntless courage
We, oh kindly ones, would leave you
All your spacious heavens above us!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Idyll

A village Chorus is supposed to be assembled, and about to commence its festive procession.

[Written for the birthday of the Duchess Louisa of Weimar.]

CHORUS.

THE festal day hail ye

With garlands of pleasure,

And dances' soft measure,
With rapture commingled
And sweet choral song.

DAMON.

Oh, how I yearn from out the crowd to flee!
What joy a secret glade would give to me!
Amid the throng, the turmoil here,
Confined the plain, the breezes e'en appear.

CHORUS.

Now order it truly,
That ev'ry one duly
May roam and may wander,
Now here, and now yonder,

The meadows along.

[The Chorus retreats gradually, and the song becomes fainter and fainter, till it dies away in the distance.]

DAMON.

In vain ye call, in vain would lure me on;
True my heart speaks,--but with itself alone.

And if I may view

A blessing-fraught land,

The heaven's clear blue,

And the plain's verdant hue,

Alone I'll rejoice,

Undisturbed by man's voice.

And there I'll pay homage
To womanly merit,
Observe it in spirit,
In spirit pay homage;
To echo alone
Shall my secret be known.

CHORUS.

[Faintly mingling with Damon's song in the distance.]

To echo--alone--
Shall my secret--be known.--

MENALCAS.

My friend, why meet I here with thee?
Thou hast'nest not to join the festal throng?
No longer stay, but come with me,
And mingle in the dance and song.

DAMON.

Thou'rt welcome, friend! but suffer me to roam
Where these old beeches hide me from man's view:
Love seeks in solitude a home,
And homage may retreat there too.

MENALCAS.

Thou seekest here a spurious fame,
And hast a mind to-day to grieve me.
Love as thy portion thou mayst claim
But homage thou must share with all, believe me!
When their voices thousands raise,
And the dawn of morning praise,
Rapture bringing,

Blithely singing

On before us,
Heart and ear in pleasure vie;

And when thousands join in chorus,
With the feelings brightly glowing,
And the wishes overflowing,
Forcibly they'll bear thee high.

[The Chorus gradually approaches, from the distance.]

DAMON.

Distant strains are hither wending,
And I'm gladden'd by the throng;
Yes, they're coming,--yes, descending

To the valley from the height,

MENALCAS.

Let us haste, our footsteps blending
With the rhythm of the song!
Yes, they come; their course they're bending
Tow'rd the wood's green sward so bright.

CHORUS.
[Gradually becoming louder.]

Yes, we hither come, attending
With the harmony of song,
As the hours their race are ending
On this day of blest delight.

ALL.

Let none reveal
The thoughts we feel,
The aims we own!
Let joy alone

Disclose the story!

She'll prove it right
And her delight

Includes the glory,
Includes the bliss
Of days like this!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

In A Word

THUS to be chain'd for ever, can I bear?
A very torment that, in truth, would be.
This very day my new resolve shall see.--
I'll not go near the lately-worshipp'd Fair.
Yet what excuse, my heart, can I prepare
In such a case, for not consulting thee?
But courage! while our sorrows utter we
In tones where love, grief, gladness have a share.
But see! the minstrel's bidding to obey,
Its melody pours forth the sounding lyre,
Yearning a sacrifice of love to bring.
Scarce wouldst thou think it--ready is the lay;
Well, but what then? Methought in the first fire
We to her presence flew, that lay to sing.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

In Summer

How plain and height
With dewdrops are bright!
How pearls have crown'd
The plants all around!
How sighs the breeze
Thro' thicket and trees!
How loudly in the sun's clear rays
The sweet birds carol forth their lays!

But, ah! above,
Where saw I my love,
Within her room,
Small, mantled in gloom,
Enclosed around,
Where sunlight was drown'd,
How little there was earth to me,
With all its beauteous majesty!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

It Is Good

IN Paradise while moonbeams play'd,

Jehovah found, in slumber deep,
Adam fast sunk; He gently laid

Eve near him,--she, too, fell asleep.
There lay they now, on earth's fair shrine,
God's two most beauteous thoughts divine.--
When this He saw, He cried:--'Tis Good!!!
And scarce could move from where He stood.

No wonder, that our joy's complete
While eye and eye responsive meet,
When this blest thought of rapture moves us--
That we're with Him who truly loves us,
And if He cries:--Good, let it be!
'Tis so for both, it seems to me.
Thou'rt clasp'd within these arms of mine,
Dearest of all God's thoughts divine!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Johanna Sebus

THE DAM BREAKS DOWN, THE ICE-PLAIN GROWLS,
THE FLOODS ARISE, THE WATER HOWLS.

"I'll bear thee, mother, across the swell,

'Tis not yet high, I can wade right well."

"Remember us too! in what danger are we!

Thy fellow-lodger, and children three!

The trembling woman!--Thou'rt going away!"

She bears the mother across the spray.

"Quick! haste to the mound, and awhile there wait,

I'll soon return, and all will be straight.

The mound's close by, and safe from the wet;

But take my goat too, my darling pet!"

THE DAM DISSOLVES, THE ICE-PLAIN GROWLS,
THE FLOODS DASH ON, THE WATER HOWLS.

She places the mother safe on the shore;

Fair Susan then turns tow'rd the flood once more.

"Oh whither? Oh whither? The breadth fast grows,

Both here and there the water o'erflows.

Wilt venture, thou rash one, the billows to brave?"

"THEY SHALL, AND THEY MUST BE PRESERVED FROM THE WAVE!"

THE DAM DISAPPEARS, THE WATER GROWLS,
LIKE OCEAN BILLOWS IT HEAVES AND HOWLS.

Fair Susan returns by the way she had tried,

The waves roar around, but she turns not aside;

She reaches the mound, and the neighbour straight,

But for her and the children, alas, too late!

THE DAM DISAPPEAR'D,--LIKE A SEA IT GROWLS,
ROUND THE HILLOCK IN CIRCLING EDDIES IT HOWLS.

The foaming abyss gapes wide, and whirls round,

The women and children are borne to the ground;
The horn of the goat by one is seized fast,
But, ah, they all must perish at last!
Fair Susan still stands-there, untouch'd by the wave;
The youngest, the noblest, oh, who now will save?
Fair Susan still stands there, as bright as a star,
But, alas! all hope, all assistance is far.
The foaming waters around her roar,
To save her, no bark pushes off from the shore.
Her gaze once again she lifts up to Heaven,
Then gently away by the flood she is driven.
NO DAM, NO PLAIN! TO MARK THE PLACE
SOME STRAGGLING TREES ARE THE ONLY TRACE.
The rushing water the wilderness covers,
Yet Susan's image still o'er it hovers.--
The water sinks, the plains re-appear.
Fair Susan's lamented with many a tear,--
May he who refuses her story to tell,
Be neglected in life and in death as well!
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Joy

A DRAGON-FLY with beauteous wing
Is hov'ring o'er a silv'ry spring;
I watch its motions with delight,--
Now dark its colours seem, now bright;
Chameleon-like appear, now blue,
Now red, and now of greenish hue.
Would it would come still nearer me,
That I its tints might better see

It hovers, flutters, resting ne'er!

But hush! it settles on the mead.
I have it safe now, I declare!

And when its form I closely view,

'Tis of a sad and dingy blue--
Such, Joy-Dissector, is thy case indeed

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Joy And Sorrow

As a fisher-boy I fared
To the black rock in the sea,
And, while false gifts I prepared.
Listen'd and sang merrily,
Down descended the decoy,
Soon a fish attack'd the bait;
One exultant shout of joy,--
And the fish was captured straight.
Ah! on shore, and to the wood
Past the cliffs, o'er stock and stone,
One foot's traces I pursued,
And the maiden was alone.
Lips were silent, eyes downcast
As a clasp-knife snaps the bait,
With her snare she seized me fast,
And the boy was captured straight.
Heav'n knows who's the happy swain
That she rambles with anew!
I must dare the sea again,
Spite of wind and weather too.
When the great and little fish
Wail and flounder in my net,
Straight returns my eager wish
In her arms to revel yet!
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

June

SHE behind yon mountain lives,
Who my love's sweet guerdon gives.
Tell me, mount, how this can be!
Very glass thou seem'st to me,
And I seem to be close by,
For I see her drawing nigh;
Now, because I'm absent, sad,
Now, because she sees me, glad!

Soon between us rise to sight
Valleys cool, with bushes light,
Streams and meadows; next appear

Mills and wheels, the surest token
That a level spot is near,

Plains far-stretching and unbroken.
And so onwards, onwards roam,
To my garden and my home!

But how comes it then to pass?
All this gives no joy, alas!--
I was ravish'd by her sight,
By her eyes so fair and bright,
By her footstep soft and light.
How her peerless charms I praised,
When from head to foot I gazed!
I am here, she's far away,--
I am gone, with her to stay.

If on rugged hills she wander,

If she haste the vale along,
Pinions seem to flutter yonder,

And the air is fill'd with song;
With the glow of youth still playing,

Joyous vigour in each limb,
One in silence is delaying,

She alone 'tis blesses him.

Love, thou art too fair, I ween!
Fairer I have never seen!
From the heart full easily
Blooming flowers are cull'd by thee.
If I think: "Oh, were it so,"
Bone and marrow seen to glow!
If rewarded by her love,
Can I greater rapture prove?

And still fairer is the bride,
When in me she will confide,
When she speaks and lets me know
All her tale of joy and woe.
All her lifetime's history
Now is fully known to me.
Who in child or woman e'er
Soul and body found so fair?

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Legend

Hi There! I see you're enjoying the site, and just wanted to extend an invitation to register for our free site. The members of oldpoetry strive to make this a fun place to learn and share - hope you join us! - Kevin

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Leopold, Duke Of Brunswick

THOU wert forcibly seized by the hoary lord of the river,--

Holding thee, ever he shares with thee his streaming domain,
Calmly sleepest thou near his urn as it silently trickles,

Till thou to action art roused, waked by the swift-rolling flood.
Kindly be to the people, as when thou still wert a mortal,

Perfecting that as a god, which thou didst fail in, as man.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Like And Like

A FAIR bell-flower

Sprang tip from the ground;
And early its fragrance

It shed all around;
A bee came thither

And sipp'd from its bell;
That they for each other

Were made, we see well.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Lily's Menagerie

THERE'S no menagerie, I vow,
Excels my Lily's at this minute;

She keeps the strangest creatures in it,
And catches them, she knows not how.

Oh, how they hop, and run, and rave,
And their clipp'd pinions wildly wave,--
Poor princes, who must all endure
The pangs of love that nought can cure.

What is the fairy's name?--Is't Lily?--Ask not me!
Give thanks to Heaven if she's unknown to thee.

Oh what a cackling, what a shrieking,

When near the door she takes her stand,

With her food-basket in her hand!
Oh what a croaking, what a squeaking!
Alive all the trees and the bushes appear,
While to her feet whole troops draw near;
The very fish within, the water clear
Splash with impatience and their heads protrude;
And then she throws around the food
With such a look!--the very gods delighting
(To say nought of beasts). There begins, then, a biting,
A picking, a pecking, a sipping,
And each o'er the legs of another is tripping,
And pushing, and pressing, and flapping,
And chasing, and fuming, and snapping,
And all for one small piece of bread,
To which, though dry, her fair hands give a taste,
As though it in ambrosia had been plac'd.

And then her look! the tone

With which she calls: Pipi! Pipi!
Would draw Jove's eagle from his throne;
Yes, Venus' turtle doves, I wean,
And the vain peacock e'en,
Would come, I swear,
Soon as that tone had reach'd them through the air.

E'en from a forest dark had she

Enticed a bear, unlick'd, ill-bred,

And, by her wiles alluring, led
To join the gentle company,
Until as tame as they was he:

(Up to a certain point, be't understood!)
How fair, and, ah, how good
She seem'd to be! I would have drain'd my blood
To water e'en her flow'rets sweet.

"Thou sayest: I! Who? How? And where?"--
Well, to be plain, good Sirs--I am the bear;

In a net-apron, caught, alas!

Chain'd by a silk-thread at her feet.

But how this wonder came to pass
I'll tell some day, if ye are curious;
Just now, my temper's much too furious.

Ah, when I'm in the corner plac'd,
And hear afar the creatures snapping,
And see the flipping and the flapping,
I turn around
With growling sound,
And backward run a step in haste,
And look around
With growling sound.

Then run again a step in haste,
And to my former post go round.

But suddenly my anger grows,
A mighty spirit fills my nose,
My inward feelings all revolt.
A creature such as thou! a dolt!
Pipi, a squirrel able nuts to crack!
I bristle up my shaggy back
Unused a slave to be.
I'm laughed at by each trim and upstart tree
To scorn. The bowling-green I fly,

With neatly-mown and well-kept grass:

The box makes faces as I pass,--
Into the darkest thicket hasten I,
Hoping to 'scape from the ring,
Over the palings to spring!
Vainly I leap and climb;

I feel a leaden spell.

That pinions me as well,
And when I'm fully wearied out in time,
I lay me down beside some mock-cascade,

And roll myself half dead, and foam, and cry,

And, ah! no Oreads hear my sigh,
Excepting those of china made!

But, ah, with sudden power

In all my members blissful feelings reign!
'Tis she who singeth yonder in her bower!

I hear that darling, darling voice again.
The air is warm, and teems with fragrance clear,
Sings she perchance for me alone to hear?

I haste, and trample down the shrubs amain;
The trees make way, the bushes all retreat,
And so--the beast is lying at her feet.

She looks at him: "The monster's droll enough!

He's, for a bear, too mild,

Yet, for a dog, too wild,
So shaggy, clumsy, rough!"
Upon his back she gently strokes her foot;

He thinks himself in Paradise.
What feelings through his seven senses shoot!

But she looks on with careless eyes.
I lick her soles, and kiss her shoes,

As gently as a bear well may;
Softly I rise, and with a clever ruse

Leap on her knee.--On a propitious day
She suffers it; my ears then tickles she,

And hits me a hard blow in wanton play;
I growl with new-born ecstasy;
Then speaks she in a sweet vain jest, I wot
"Allons lout doux! eh! la menotte!
Et faites serviteur
Comme un joli seigneur."
Thus she proceeds with sport and glee;

Hope fills the oft-deluded beast;
Yet if one moment he would lazy be,
Her fondness all at once hath ceas'd.
She doth a flask of balsam-fire possess,
Sweeter than honey bees can make,
One drop of which she'll on her finger take,
When soften'd by his love and faithfulness,
Wherewith her monster's raging thirst to slake;
Then leaves me to myself, and flies at last,
And I, unbound, yet prison'd fast
By magic, follow in her train,
Seek for her, tremble, fly again.
The hapless creature thus tormenteth she,
Regardless of his pleasure or his woe;
Ha! oft half-open'd does she leave the door for me,
And sideways looks to learn if I will fly or no.
And I--Oh gods! your hands alone
Can end the spell that's o'er me thrown;
Free me, and gratitude my heart will fill;
And yet from heaven ye send me down no aid--
Not quite in vain doth life my limbs pervade:
I feel it! Strength is left me still.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Lines On Seeing Schiller's Skull

WITHIN a gloomy charnel-house one day

I view'd the countless skulls, so strangely mated,
And of old times I thought, that now were grey.

Close pack'd they stand, that once so fiercely hated,
And hardy bones, that to the death contended,

Are lying cross'd,--to lie for ever, fated.
What held those crooked shoulder-blades suspended?

No one now asks; and limbs with vigour fired,
The hand, the foot--their use in life is ended.

Vainly ye sought the tomb for rest when tired;
Peace in the grave may not be yours; ye're driven

Back into daylight by a force inspired;
But none can love the wither'd husk, though even

A glorious noble kernel it contained.
To me, an adept, was the writing given

Which not to all its holy sense explained,
When 'mid the crowd, their icy shadows flinging,

I saw a form, that glorious still remained.
And even there, where mould and damp were clinging,

Gave me a blest, a rapture-fraught emotion,
As though from death a living fount were springing.

What mystic joy I felt! What rapt devotion!
That form, how pregnant with a godlike trace!

A look, how did it whirl me tow'rd that ocean
Whose rolling billows mightier shapes embrace!

Mysterious vessel! Oracle how dear!
Even to grasp thee is my hand too base,

Except to steal thee from thy prison here
With pious purpose, and devoutly go

Back to the air, free thoughts, and sunlight clear.
What greater gain in life can man e'er know

Than when God-Nature will to him explain
How into Spirit steadfastness may flow,

How steadfast, too, the Spirit-Born remain.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Living Remembrance

HALF vex'd, half pleased, thy love will feel,
Shouldst thou her knot or ribbon steal;
To thee they're much--I won't conceal;

Such self-deceit may pardon'd be;
A veil, a kerchief, garter, rings,
In truth are no mean trifling things,

But still they're not enough for me.

She who is dearest to my heart,
Gave me, with well dissembled smart,
Of her own life, a living part,

No charm in aught beside I trace;
How do I scorn thy paltry ware!
A lock she gave me of the hair

That wantons o'er her beauteous face.

If, loved one, we must sever'd be,
Wouldst thou not wholly fly from me,
I still possess this legacy,

To look at, and to kiss in play.--
My fate is to the hair's allied,
We used to woo her with like pride,

And now we both are far away.

Her charms with equal joy we press'd,
Her swelling cheeks anon caress'd,
Lured onward by a yearning blest,

Upon her heaving bosom fell.
Oh rival, free from envy's sway,
Thou precious gift, thou beauteous prey.

Remain my joy and bliss to tell!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Longing

WHAT pulls at my heart so?

What tells me to roam?
What drags me and lures me

From chamber and home?
How round the cliffs gather

The clouds high in air!
I fain would go thither,

I fain would be there!

The sociable flight

Of the ravens comes back;
I mingle amongst them,

And follow their track.
Round wall and round mountain

Together we fly;
She tarries below there,

I after her spy.

Then onward she wanders,

My flight I wing soon
To the wood fill'd with bushes,

A bird of sweet tune.
She tarries and hearkens,

And smiling, thinks she:
"How sweetly he's singing!

He's singing to me!"

The heights are illum'd

By the fast setting sun;
The pensive fair maiden

Looks thoughtfully on;
She roams by the streamlet,

O'er meadows she goes,
And darker and darker

The pathway fast grows.

I rise on a sudden,
A glimmering star;
"What glitters above me,
So near and so far?"
And when thou with wonder
Hast gazed on the light,
I fall down before thee,
Entranced by thy sight!
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Love As A Landscape Painter

ON a rocky peak once sat I early,
Gazing on the mist with eyes unmoving;
Stretch'd out like a pall of greyish texture,
All things round, and all above it cover'd.

Suddenly a boy appear'd beside me,
Saying "Friend, what meanest thou by gazing
On the vacant pall with such composure?
Hast thou lost for evermore all pleasure
Both in painting cunningly, and forming?"
On the child I gazed, and thought in secret:
"Would the boy pretend to be a master?"

"Wouldst thou be for ever dull and idle,"
Said the boy, "no wisdom thou'lt attain to;
See, I'll straightway paint for thee a figure,--
How to paint a beauteous figure, show thee."

And he then extended his fore-finger,--
(Ruddy was it as a youthful rosebud)
Tow'rd the broad and far outstretching carpet,
And began to draw there with his finger.

First on high a radiant sun he painted,
Which upon mine eyes with splendour glisten'd,
And he made the clouds with golden border,
Through the clouds he let the sunbeams enter;
Painted then the soft and feathery summits
Of the fresh and quicken'd trees, behind them
One by one with freedom drew the mountains;
Underneath he left no lack of water,
But the river painted so like Nature,
That it seem'd to glitter in the sunbeams,
That it seem'd against its banks to murmur.

Ah, there blossom'd flowers beside the river,
And bright colours gleam'd upon the meadow,
Gold, and green, and purple, and enamell'd,
All like carbuncles and emeralds seeming!

Bright and clear he added then the heavens,
And the blue-tinged mountains far and farther,
So that I, as though newborn, enraptured
Gazed on, now the painter, now the picture.

Then spake he: "Although I have convinced thee
That this art I understand full surely,
Yet the hardest still is left to show thee."

Thereupon he traced, with pointed finger,
And with anxious care, upon the forest,
At the utmost verge, where the strong sunbeams

From the shining ground appear'd reflected,

Traced the figure of a lovely maiden,
Fair in form, and clad in graceful fashion,
Fresh the cheeks beneath her brown locks' ambush,
And the cheeks possess'd the selfsame colour
As the finger that had served to paint them.

"Oh thou boy!" exclaim'd I then, "what master
In his school received thee as his pupil,
Teaching thee so truthfully and quickly
Wisely to begin, and well to finish?"

Whilst I still was speaking, lo, a zephyr
Softly rose, and set the tree-tops moving,
Curling all the wavelets on the river,
And the perfect maiden's veil, too, fill'd it,
And to make my wonderment still greater,
Soon the maiden set her foot in motion.
On she came, approaching tow'rd the station
Where still sat I with my arch instructor.

As now all, yes, all thus moved together,--
Flowers, river, trees, the veil,--all moving,--
And the gentle foot of that most fair one,
Can ye think that on my rock I linger'd,
Like a rock, as though fast-chain'd and silent?

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Lover In All Shapes

To be like a fish,
Brisk and quick, is my wish;
If thou cam'st with thy line.
Thou wouldst soon make me thine.
To be like a fish,
Brisk and quick, is my wish.

Oh, were I a steed!
Thou wouldst love me indeed.
Oh, were I a car
Fit to bear thee afar!
Oh, were I a steed!
Thou wouldst love me indeed.

I would I were gold
That thy fingers might hold!
If thou boughtest aught then,
I'd return soon again.
I would I were gold
That thy fingers might hold!

I would I were true,
And my sweetheart still new!
To be faithful I'd swear,
And would go away ne'er.
I would I were true,
And my sweetheart still new!

I would I were old,
And wrinkled and cold,
So that if thou said'st No,
I could stand such a blow!
I would I were old,
And wrinkled and cold.

An ape I would be,
Full of mischievous glee;
If aught came to vex thee,
I'd plague and perplex thee.
An ape I would be,
Full of mischievous glee

As a lamb I'd behave,
As a lion be brave,
As a lynx clearly see,
As a fox cunning be.
As a lamb I'd behave,
As a lion be brave.

Whatever I were,
All on thee I'd confer;
With the gifts of a prince

My affection evince.
Whatever I were,
All on thee I'd confer.

As nought diff'rent can make me,
As I am thou must take me!
If I'm not good enough,
Thou must cut thine own stuff.
As nought diff'rent can make me,
As I am thou must take me!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Love's Distresses

WHO will hear me? Whom shall I lament to?
Who would pity me that heard my sorrows?
Ah, the lip that erst so many raptures
Used to taste, and used to give responsive,
Now is cloven, and it pains me sorely;
And it is not thus severely wounded
By my mistress having caught me fiercely,
And then gently bitten me, intending
To secure her friend more firmly to her:
No, my tender lip is crack'd thus, only
By the winds, o'er rime and frost proceeding,
Pointed, sharp, unloving, having met me.
Now the noble grape's bright juice commingled
With the bee's sweet juice, upon the fire
Of my hearth, shall ease me of my torment.
Ah, what use will all this be, if with it
Love adds not a drop of his own balsam?

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Mahomet's Song

SEE the rock-born stream!
Like the gleam
Of a star so bright
Kindly spirits
High above the clouds
Nourished him while youthful
In the copse between the cliffs.

Young and fresh.
From the clouds he danceth
Down upon the marble rocks;
Then tow'rd heaven
Leaps exulting.

Through the mountain-passes
Chaseth he the colour'd pebbles,
And, advancing like a chief,
Tears his brother streamlets with him
In his course.

In the valley down below
'Neath his footsteps spring the flowers,
And the meadow
In his breath finds life.

Yet no shady vale can stay him,
Nor can flowers,
Round his knees all-softly twining
With their loving eyes detain him;
To the plain his course he taketh,
Serpent-winding,

Social streamlets
Join his waters. And now moves he
O'er the plain in silv'ry glory,
And the plain in him exults,
And the rivers from the plain,
And the streamlets from the mountain,
Shout with joy, exclaiming: "Brother,
Brother, take thy brethren with thee,
With thee to thine aged father,
To the everlasting ocean,
Who, with arms outstretching far,
Waiteth for us;
Ah, in vain those arms lie open
To embrace his yearning children;
For the thirsty sand consumes us
In the desert waste; the sunbeams
Drink our life-blood; hills around us
Into lakes would dam us! Brother,
Take thy brethren of the plain,
Take thy brethren of the mountain

With thee, to thy father's arms!

Let all come, then!--
And now swells he
Lordlier still; yea, e'en a people
Bears his regal flood on high!
And in triumph onward rolling,
Names to countries gives he,--cities
Spring to light beneath his foot.

Ever, ever, on he rushes,
Leaves the towers' flame-tipp'd summits,
Marble palaces, the offspring
Of his fullness, far behind.

Cedar-houses bears the Atlas
On his giant shoulders; flutt'ring
In the breeze far, far above him
Thousand flags are gaily floating,
Bearing witness to his might.

And so beareth he his brethren,
All his treasures, all his children,
Wildly shouting, to the bosom
Of his long-expectant sire.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Maiden Wishes

WHAT pleasure to me
A bridegroom would be!
When married we are,
They call us mamma.
No need then to sew,
To school we ne'er go;
Command uncontroll'd,
Have maids, whom to scold;
Choose clothes at our ease,
Of what tradesmen we please;
Walk freely about,
And go to each rout,
And unrestrained are
By papa or mamma.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

March

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Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

May

LIGHT and silv'ry cloudlets hover

In the air, as yet scarce warm;
Mild, with glimmer soft tinged over,

Peeps the sun through fragrant balm.
Gently rolls and heaves the ocean

As its waves the bank o'erflow.
And with ever restless motion

Moves the verdure to and fro,

Mirror'd brightly far below.

What is now the foliage moving?

Air is still, and hush'd the breeze,
Sultriness, this fullness loving,

Through the thicket, from the trees.
Now the eye at once gleams brightly,

See! the infant band with mirth
Moves and dances nimbly, lightly,

As the morning gave it birth,

Flutt'ring two and two o'er earth.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

May Song

How fair doth Nature
Appear again!
How bright the sunbeams!
How smiles the plain!
The flow'rs are bursting
From ev'ry bough,
And thousand voices
Each bush yields now.
And joy and gladness
Fill ev'ry breast!
Oh earth!--oh sunlight!
Oh rapture blest!
Oh love! oh loved one!
As golden bright,
As clouds of morning
On yonder height!
Thou blessest gladly
The smiling field,--
The world in fragrant
Vapour conceal'd.
Oh maiden, maiden,
How love I thee!
Thine eye, how gleams it!
How lov'st thou me!
The blithe lark loveth
Sweet song and air,
The morning flow'ret
Heav'n's incense fair,
As I now love thee
With fond desire,

For thou dost give me

Youth, joy, and fire,

For new-born dances

And minstrelsy.

Be ever happy,

As thou lov'st me!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

May Song II

BETWEEN wheatfield and corn,
Between hedgerow and thorn,
Between pasture and tree,
Where's my sweetheart
Tell it me!

Sweetheart caught I

Not at home;
She's then, thought I.

Gone to roam.
Fair and loving

Blooms sweet May;
Sweetheart's roving,

Free and gay.

By the rock near the wave,
Where her first kiss she gave,
On the greensward, to me,--
Something I see!
Is it she?

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Measure Of Time

EROS, what mean'st thou by this? In each of thine hands is an hourglass!

What, oh thou frivolous god! twofold thy measure of time?
"Slowly run from the one, the hours of lovers when parted;

While through the other they rush swiftly, as soon as they meet."

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Mignon

Do you know the land where the lemon-trees grow,
in darkened leaves the gold-oranges glow,
a soft wind blows from the pure blue sky,
the myrtle stands mute, and the bay-tree high?
Do you know it well?

 It's there I'd be gone,
to be there with you, O, my beloved one!

Do you know the house? It has columns and beams,
there are glittering rooms, the hallway gleams,
and figures of marble looking at me?

 'What have they done, child of misery?
Do you know it well?

 It's there I'd be gone,
to be there with you, O my true guardian!

Do you know the clouded mountain mass?
The mule picks its way through the misted pass,
and dragons in caves raise their ancient brood,
and the cliffs are polished smooth by the flood;
Do you know it well?

 It's there I would be gone!
It's there our way leads! Father, we must go on!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Minstrel's Book - Discord

WHEN by the brook his strain
Cupid is fluting,
And on the neighboring plain
Mayors disputing,
There turns the ear ere long,
Loving and tender,
Yet to the noise a song
Soon must surrender.
Loud then the flute-notes glad
Sound 'mid war's thunder;
If I grow raving mad,
Is it a wonder?
Flutes sing and trumpets bray,
Waxing yet stronger;
If, then, my senses stray,
Wonder no longer.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Minstrel's Book - Song And Structure

LET the Greek his plastic clay

Mould in human fashion,
While his own creation may

Wake his glowing passion;

But it is our joy to court

Great Euphrates' torrent,
Here and there at will to sport

In the Wat'ry current.

Quench'd I thus my spirit's flame,

Songs had soon resounded;
Water drawn by bards whose fame

Pure is, may be rounded.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Minstrel's Book - Talismans

GOD is of the east possess'd,
God is ruler of the west;
North and south alike, each land
Rests within His gentle hand.

HE, the only righteous one,
Wills that right to each be done.
'Mongst His hundred titles, then,
Highest praised be this!--Amen.

ERROR seeketh to deceive me,
Thou art able to retrieve me;
Both in action and in song
Keep my course from going wrong.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Minstrel's Book - The Four Favours

THAT Arabs through the realms of space
May wander on, light-hearted,
Great Allah hath, to all their race,
Four favours meet imparted.
The turban first--that ornament
All regal crowns excelling;
A light and ever-shifting tent,
Wherein to make our dwelling;
A sword, which, more than rocks and walls
Doth shield us, brightly glistening;
A song that profits and enthrall,
For which the maids are list'ning!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Mischievous Joy

AS a butterfly renew'd,
When in life I breath'd my last,
To the spots my flight I wing,
Scenes of heav'nly rapture past,
Over meadows, to the spring,
Round the hill, and through the wood.
Soon a tender pair I spy,
And I look down from my seat
On the beauteous maiden's head--
When embodied there I meet
All I lost as soon as dead,
Happy as before am I.
Him she clasps with silent smile,
And his mouth the hour improves,
Sent by kindly Deities;
First from breast to mouth it roves,
Then from mouth to hands it flies,
And I round him sport the while.
And she sees me hov'ring near;
Trembling at her lovers rapture,
Up she springs--I fly away,
"Dearest! let's the insect capture
Come! I long to make my prey
Yonder pretty little dear!"

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Morning Lament

OH thou cruel deadly-lovely maiden,
Tell me what great sin have I committed,
That thou keep'st me to the rack thus fasten'd,
That thou hast thy solemn promise broken?

'Twas but yestere'en that thou with fondness
Press'd my hand, and these sweet accents murmured:
"Yes, I'll come, I'll come when morn approacheth,
Come, my friend, full surely to thy chamber."

On the latch I left my doors, unfasten'd,
Having first with care tried all the hinges,
And rejoic'd right well to find they creak'd not.

What a night of expectation pass'd I!
For I watch'd, and ev'ry chime I number'd;
If perchance I slept a few short moments,
Still my heart remain'd awake forever,
And awoke me from my gentle slumbers.

Yes, then bless'd I night's o'erhanging darkness,
That so calmly cover'd all things round me;
I enjoy'd the universal silence,
While I listen'd ever in the silence,
If perchance the slightest sounds were stirring.

"Had she only thoughts, my thoughts resembling,
Had she only feelings, like my feelings,
She would not await the dawn of morning.
But, ere this, would surely have been with me."

Skipp'd a kitten on the floor above me,
Scratch'd a mouse a panel in the corner,
Was there in the house the slightest motion,
Ever hoped I that I heard thy footstep,
Ever thought I that I heard thee coming.
And so lay I long, and ever longer,
And already was the daylight dawning,
And both here and there were signs of movement.

"Is it yon door? Were it my door only!"
In my bed I lean'd upon my elbow,
Looking tow'rd the door, now half-apparent,
If perchance it might not be in motion.
Both the wings upon the latch continued,
On the quiet hinges calmly hanging.

And the day grew bright and brighter ever;
And I heard my neighbour's door unbolted,
As he went to earn his daily wages,
And ere long I heard the waggons rumbling,
And the city gates were also open'd,

While the market-place, in ev'ry corner,
Teem'd with life and bustle and confusion.

In the house was going now and coming
Up and down the stairs, and doors were creaking
Backwards now, now forwards,--footsteps clatter'd
Yet, as though it were a thing all-living,
From my cherish'd hope I could not tear me.

When at length the sun, in hated splendour,
Fell upon my walls, upon my windows,
Up I sprang, and hasten'd to the garden,
There to blend my breath, so hot and yearning,
With the cool refreshing morning breezes,
And, it might be, even there to meet thee:
But I cannot find thee in the arbour,
Or the avenue of lofty lindens.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Motives

IF to a girl who loves us truly
Her mother gives instruction duly
In virtue, duty, and what not,--
And if she hearkens ne'er a jot,
But with fresh-strengthen'd longing flies

To meet our kiss that seems to burn,--

Caprice has just as much concerned
As love in her bold enterprise.

But if her mother can succeed
In gaining for her maxims heed,
And softening the girl's heart too,
So that she coyly shuns our view,--
The heart of youth she knows but ill;

For when a maiden is thus stern,

Virtue in truth has less concern
In this, than an inconstant will.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

My Goddess

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Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

My Own Property

I FEEL that I'm possess'd of nought,
Saving the free unfetterd thought
Which from my bosom seeks to flow,
And each propitious passing hour
That suffers me in all its power
A loving fate with truth to know.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Neither This Nor That

IF thou to be a slave shouldst will,
Thou'lt get no pity, but fare ill;
And if a master thou wouldst be,
The world will view it angrily;
And if in status quo thou stay,
That thou art but a fool, they'll say.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Nemesis

WHEN through the nations stalks contagion wild,
We from them cautiously should steal away.
E'en I have oft with ling'ring and delay
Shunn'd many an influence, not to be defil'd.
And e'en though Amor oft my hours beguil'd,
At length with him preferr'd I not to play,
And so, too, with the wretched sons of clay,
When four and three-lined verses they compil'd.
But punishment pursues the scoffer straight,
As if by serpent-torch of furies led
From bill to vale, from land to sea to fly.
I hear the genie's laughter at my fate;
Yet do I find all power of thinking fled
In sonnet-rage and love's fierce ecstasy.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

New Love, New Life

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Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Next Year's Spring

THE bed of flowers

Loosens amain,
The beauteous snowdrops

Droop o'er the plain.
The crocus opens

Its glowing bud,
Like emeralds others,

Others, like blood.
With saucy gesture

Primroses flare,
And roguish violets,

Hidden with care;
And whatsoever

There stirs and strives,
The Spring's contented,

If works and thrives.

'Mongst all the blossoms

That fairest are,
My sweetheart's sweetness

Is sweetest far;
Upon me ever

Her glances light,
My song they waken,

My words make bright,
An ever open

And blooming mind,
In sport, unsullied,

In earnest, kind.
Though roses and lilies

By Summer are brought,
Against my sweetheart

Prevails he nought.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Night Song

WHEN on thy pillow lying,
Half listen, I implore,
And at my lute's soft sighing,
Sleep on! what wouldst thou more?
For at my lute's soft sighing
The stars their blessings pour
On feelings never-dying;
Sleep on! what wouldst thou more?
Those feelings never-dying
My spirit aid to soar
From earthly conflicts trying;
Sleep on! what wouldst thou more?
From earthly conflicts trying
Thou driv'st me to this shore;
Through thee I'm thither flying,--
Sleep on! what wouldst thou more?
Through thee I'm hither flying,
Thou wilt not list before
In slumbers thou art lying:
Sleep on! what wouldst thou more?
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Night Thoughts

OH, unhappy stars! your fate I mourn,

Ye by whom the sea-toss'd sailor's lighted,
Who with radiant beams the heav'ns adorn,

But by gods and men are unrequited:
For ye love not,--ne'er have learnt to love!
Ceaselessly in endless dance ye move,
In the spacious sky your charms displaying,

What far travels ye have hasten'd through,
Since, within my loved one's arms delaying,

I've forgotten you and midnight too!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

November Song

To the great archer--not to him

To meet whom flies the sun,
And who is wont his features dim

With clouds to overrun--

But to the boy be vow'd these rhymes,

Who 'mongst the roses plays,
Who hear us, and at proper times

To pierce fair hearts essays.

Through him the gloomy winter night,

Of yore so cold and drear,
Brings many a loved friend to our sight,

And many a woman dear.

Henceforward shall his image fair

Stand in yon starry skies,
And, ever mild and gracious there,

Alternate set and rise.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Old Age

OLD age is courteous--no one more:
For time after time he knocks at the door,
But nobody says, "Walk in, sir, pray!"
Yet turns he not from the door away,
But lifts the latch, and enters with speed.
And then they cry "A cool one, indeed!"

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

On The Divan

HE who knows himself and others

Here will also see,
That the East and West, like brothers,

Parted ne'er shall be.

Thoughtfully to float for ever

'Tween two worlds, be man's endeavour!
So between the East and West

To revolve, be my behest!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

On The Lake

I DRINK fresh nourishment, new blood

From out this world more free;
The Nature is so kind and good

That to her breast clasps me!
The billows toss our bark on high,

And with our oars keep time,
While cloudy mountains tow'rd the sky

Before our progress climb.

Say, mine eye, why sink'st thou down?
Golden visions, are ye flown?

Hence, thou dream, tho' golden-twin'd;

Here, too, love and life I find.

Over the waters are blinking

Many a thousand fair star;
Gentle mists are drinking

Round the horizon afar.
Round the shady creek lightly

Morning zephyrs awake,
And the ripen'd fruit brightly

Mirrors itself in the lake.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

On The New Year

FATE now allows us,

'Twixt the departing

And the upstarting,
Happy to be;
And at the call of

Memory cherish'd,

Future and perish'd
Moments we see.

Seasons of anguish,--

Ah, they must ever

Truth from woe sever,
Love and joy part;
Days still more worthy

Soon will unite us,

Fairer songs light us,
Strength'ning the heart.

We, thus united,

Think of, with gladness,

Rapture and sadness,
Sorrow now flies.
Oh, how mysterious

Fortune's direction!

Old the connection,

New-born the prize!

Thank, for this, Fortune,

Wavering blindly!

Thank all that kindly
Fate may bestow!
Revel in change's

Impulses clearer,

Love far sincerer,
More heartfelt glow!

Over the old one,
Wrinkles collected,
Sad and dejected,
Others may view;
But, on us gently
Shineth a true one,
And to the new one
We, too, are new.
As a fond couple
'Midst the dance veering,
First disappearing,
Then reappear,
So let affection
Guide thro' life's mazy
Pathways so hazy
Into the year!
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Open Table

MANY a guest I'd see to-day,

Met to taste my dishes!
Food in plenty is prepar'd,

Birds, and game, and fishes.
Invitations all have had,

All proposed attending.
Johnny, go and look around!

Are they hither wending?

Pretty girls I hope to see,

Dear and guileless misses,
Ignorant how sweet it is

Giving tender kisses.
Invitations all have had,

All proposed attending.
Johnny, go and look around!

Are they hither wending?

Women also I expect,

Loving tow'rd their spouses,
Whose rude grumbling in their breasts

Greater love but rouses.
Invitations they've had too,

All proposed attending!
Johnny, go and look around!

Are they hither wending?

I've too ask'd young gentlemen,

Who are far from haughty,
And whose purses are well-stock'd,

Well-behaved, not haughty.
These especially I ask'd,

All proposed attending.
Johnny, go and look around!

Are they hither wending?

Men I summon'd with respect,
Who their own wives treasure;
Who in ogling other Fair
Never take a pleasure.
To my greetings they replied,
All proposed attending.
Johnny, go and look around!
Are they hither wending?
Then to make our joy complete,
Poets I invited,
Who love other's songs far more
Than what they've indited.
All acceded to my wish,
All proposed attending.
Johnny, go and look around!
Are they hither wending?
Not a single one appears,
None seem this way posting.
All the soup boils fast away,
Joints are over-roasting.
Ah, I fear that we have been
Rather too unbending!
Johnny, tell me what you think!
None are hither wending.
Johnny, run and quickly bring
Other guests to me now!
Each arriving as he is--
That's the plan, I see now.
In the town at once 'tis known,
Every one's commending.
Johnny, open all the doors:
All are hither wending!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Paulo Post Futuri

WEEP ye not, ye children dear,

That as yet ye are unborn:
For each sorrow and each tear

Makes the father's heart to mourn.

Patient be a short time to it,

Unproduced, and known to none;
If your father cannot do it,

By your mother 'twill be done.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Petition

OH thou sweet maiden fair,
Thou with the raven hair,

Why to the window go?

While gazing down below,
Art standing vainly there?

Oh, if thou stood'st for me,
And lett'st the latch but fly,

How happy should I be!
How soon would I leap high!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Phoebus And Hermes

DELOS' stately ruler, and Maia's son, the adroit one,

Warmly were striving, for both sought the great prize to obtain.
Hermes the lyre demanded, the lyre was claim'd by Apollo,

Yet were the hearts of the foes fruitlessly nourish'd by hope.
For on a sudden Ares burst in, with fury decisive,

Dashing in twain the gold toy, brandishing wildly his sword.
Hermes, malicious one, laughed beyond measure; yet deep-seated sorrow

Seized upon Phoebus's heart, seized on the heart of each Muse.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Playing At Priests

WITHIN a town where parity
According to old form we see,--
That is to say, where Catholic
And Protestant no quarrels pick,
And where, as in his father's day,
Each worships God in his own way,
We Luth'ran children used to dwell,
By songs and sermons taught as well.
The Catholic clingclang in truth
Sounded more pleasing to our youth,
For all that we encounter'd there,
To us seem'd varied, joyous, fair.
As children, monkeys, and mankind
To ape each other are inclin'd,
We soon, the time to while away,
A game at priests resolved to play.
Their aprons all our sisters lent
For copes, which gave us great content;
And handkerchiefs, embroider'd o'er,
Instead of stoles we also wore;
Gold paper, whereon beasts were traced,
The bishop's brow as mitre graced.

Through house and garden thus in state
We strutted early, strutted late,
Repeating with all proper unction,
Incessantly each holy function.
The best was wanting to the game;

We knew that a sonorous ring

Was here a most important thing;
But Fortune to our rescue came,
For on the ground a halter lay;

We were delighted, and at once

Made it a bellrope for the nonce,
And kept it moving all the day;

In turns each sister and each brother

Acted as sexton to another;
All help'd to swell the joyous throng;

The whole proceeded swimmingly,

And since no actual bell had we,
We all in chorus sang, Ding dong!

*

Our guileless child's-sport long was hush'd

In memory's tomb, like some old lay;
And yet across my mind it rush'd

With pristine force the other day.
The New-Poetic Catholics
In ev'ry point its aptness fix!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Poetry

GOD to his untaught children sent

Law, order, knowledge, art, from high,
And ev'ry heav'nly favour lent,

The world's hard lot to qualify.
They knew not how they should behave,

For all from Heav'n stark-naked came;
But Poetry their garments gave,

And then not one had cause for shame.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Premature Spring

DAYS full of rapture,

Are ye renew'd ?--
Smile in the sunlight

Mountain and wood?

Streams richer laden

Flow through the dale,
Are these the meadows?

Is this the vale?

Coolness cerulean!

Heaven and height!
Fish crowd the ocean,

Golden and bright.

Birds of gay plumage

Sport in the grove,
Heavenly numbers

Singing above.

Under the verdure's

Vigorous bloom,
Bees, softly bumming,

Juices consume.

Gentle disturbance

Quivers in air,
Sleep-causing fragrance,

Motion so fair.

Soon with more power

Rises the breeze,
Then in a moment

Dies in the trees.

But to the bosom

Comes it again.

Aid me, ye Muses,

Bliss to sustain!

Say what has happen'd

Since yester e'en?
Oh, ye fair sisters,

Her I have seen!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Presence

ALL things give token of thee!
As soon as the bright sun is shining,
Thou too wilt follow, I trust.

When in the garden thou walk'st,
Thou then art the rose of all roses,
Lily of lilies as well.

When thou dost move in the dance,
Then each constellation moves also;
With thee and round thee they move.

Night! oh, what bliss were the night!
For then thou o'ershadow'st the lustre,
Dazzling and fair, of the moon.

Dazzling and beauteous art thou,
And flowers, and moon, and the planets
Homage pay, Sun, but to thee.

Sun! to me also be thou
Creator of days bright and glorious;
Life and Eternity this!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Preservation

My maiden she proved false to me;
To hate all joys I soon began,
Then to a flowing stream I ran,--
The stream ran past me hastily.
There stood I fix'd, in mute despair;
My head swam round as in a dream;
I well-nigh fell into the stream,
And earth seem'd with me whirling there.
Sudden I heard a voice that cried--
I had just turn'd my face from thence--
It was a voice to charm each sense:
"Beware, for deep is yonder tide!"
A thrill my blood pervaded now,
I look'd and saw a beauteous maid
I asked her name--twas Kate, she said--
"Oh lovely Kate! how kind art thou!
"From death I have been sav'd by thee,
'Tis through thee only that I live;
Little 'twere life alone to give,
My joy in life then deign to be!"
And then I told my sorrows o'er,
Her eyes to earth she sweetly threw;
I kiss'd her, and she kiss'd me too,
And--then I talk'd of death no more.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Procemion

IN His blest name, who was His own creation,
Who from all time makes making his vocation;
The name of Him who makes our faith so bright,
Love, confidence, activity, and might;
In that One's name, who, named though oft He be,
Unknown is ever in Reality:
As far as ear can reach, or eyesight dim,
Thou findest but the known resembling Him;
How high so'er thy fiery spirit hovers,
Its simile and type it straight discovers
Onward thou'rt drawn, with feelings light and gay,
Where'er thou goest, smiling is the way;
No more thou numbrest, reckonest no time,
Each step is infinite, each step sublime.

WHAT God would outwardly alone control,
And on his finger whirl the mighty Whole?
He loves the inner world to move, to view
Nature in Him, Himself in Nature too,
So that what in Him works, and is, and lives,
The measure of His strength, His spirit gives.

WITHIN us all a universe doth dwell;
And hence each people's usage laudable,
That ev'ry one the Best that meets his eyes
As God, yea e'en his God, doth recognise;
To Him both earth and heaven surrenders he,
Fears Him, and loves Him too, if that may be.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Prometheus

COVER thy spacious heavens, Zeus,
With clouds of mist,
And, like the boy who lops
The thistles' heads,
Disport with oaks and mountain-peaks,
Yet thou must leave
My earth still standing;
My cottage too, which was not raised by thee;
Leave me my hearth,
Whose kindly glow
By thee is envied.

I know nought poorer
Under the sun, than ye gods!
Ye nourish painfully,
With sacrifices
And votive prayers,
Your majesty:
Ye would e'en starve,
If children and beggars
Were not trusting fools.

While yet a child
And ignorant of life,
I turned my wandering gaze
Up tow'rd the sun, as if with him
There were an ear to hear my wailings,
A heart, like mine,
To feel compassion for distress.

Who help'd me
Against the Titans' insolence?
Who rescued me from certain death,
From slavery?
Didst thou not do all this thyself,
My sacred glowing heart?
And glowedst, young and good,
Deceived with grateful thanks
To yonder slumbering one?

I honour thee! and why?
Hast thou e'er lighten'd the sorrows
Of the heavy laden?
Hast thou e'er dried up the tears
Of the anguish-stricken?
Was I not fashion'd to be a man
By omnipotent Time,
And by eternal Fate,
Masters of me and thee?

Didst thou e'er fancy
That life I should learn to hate,

And fly to deserts,
Because not all
My blossoming dreams grew ripe?

Here sit I, forming mortals
After my image;
A race resembling me,
To suffer, to weep,
To enjoy, to be glad,
And thee to scorn,
As I!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Proverbs

'TIS easier far a wreath to bind,
Than a good owner fort to find.

I KILL'D a thousand flies overnight,
Yet was waken'd by one, as soon as twas light.

To the mother I give;
For the daughter I live.

A BREACH is every day,
By many a mortal storm'd;
Let them fall in the gaps as they may,
Yet a heap of dead is ne'er form'd.

WHAT harm has thy poor mirror done, alas?
Look not so ugly, prythee, in the glass!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Proximity

I KNOW not, wherefore, dearest love,

Thou often art so strange and coy
When 'mongst man's busy haunts we move,

Thy coldness puts to flight my joy.
But soon as night and silence round us reign,
I know thee by thy kisses sweet again!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Proximity Of The Beloved One

I THINK of thee, whene'er the sun his beams

O'er ocean flings;
I think of thee, whene'er the moonlight gleams

In silv'ry springs.

I see thee, when upon the distant ridge

The dust awakes;
At midnight's hour, when on the fragile bridge

The wanderer quakes.

I hear thee, when yon billows rise on high,

With murmur deep.
To tread the silent grove oft wander I,

When all's asleep.

I'm near thee, though thou far away mayst be--

Thou, too, art near!
The sun then sets, the stars soon lighten me.

Would thou wert here!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Reciprocal

MY mistress, where sits she?

What is it that charms?
The absent she's rocking,

Held fast in her arms.

In pretty cage prison'd

She holds a bird still;
Yet lets him fly from her,

Whenever he will.

He pecks at her finger,

And pecks at her lips,
And hovers and flutters,

And round her he skips.

Then hasten thou homeward,

In fashion to be;
If thou hast the maiden,

She also hath thee.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Reciprocal Invitation To The Dance

THE INDIFFERENT.

COME to the dance with me, come with me, fair one!

Dances a feast-day like this may well crown.
If thou my sweetheart art not, thou canst be so,

But if thou wilt not, we still will dance on.
Come to the dance with me, come with me, fair one!

Dances a feast-day like this may well crown.

THE TENDER.

Loved one, without thee, what then would all feast be?

Sweet one, without thee, what then were the dance?
If thou my sweetheart wert not, I would dance not.

If thou art still so, all life is one feast.
Loved one, without thee, what then would all feasts be?

Sweet one, without thee, what then were the dance?

THE INDIFFERENT.

Let them but love, then, and leave us the dancing!

Languishing love cannot bear the glad dance.
Let us whirl round in the waltz's gay measure,

And let them steal to the dim-lighted wood.
Let them but love, then, and leave us the dancing!

Languishing love cannot bear the glad dance.

THE TENDER.

Let them whirl round, then, and leave us to wander!

Wand'ring to love is a heavenly dance.
Cupid, the near one, o'erhears their deriding,

Vengeance takes suddenly, vengeance takes soon.
Let them whirl round, then, and leave us to wander!

Wand'ring to love is a heavenly dance.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Restless Love

THROUGH rain, through snow,
Through tempest go!
'Mongst streaming caves,
O'er misty waves,
On, on! still on!
Peace, rest have flown!

Sooner through sadness

I'd wish to be slain,
Than all the gladness

Of life to sustain
All the fond yearning

That heart feels for heart,
Only seems burning

To make them both smart.

How shall I fly?
Forestwards hie?
Vain were all strife!
Bright crown of life.
Turbulent bliss,--
Love, thou art this!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Rhymed Distichs

Hi There! I see you're enjoying the site, and just wanted to extend an invitation to register for our free site. The members of oldpoetry strive to make this a fun place to learn and share - hope you join us! - Kevin

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Rinaldo

CHORUS.

To the strand! quick, mount the bark!

If no favouring zephyrs blow,

Ply the oar and nimbly row,
And with zeal your prowess mark!

O'er the sea we thus career.

RINALDO.

Oh, let me linger one short moment here!
'Tis heaven's decree, I may not hence away.
The rugged cliffs, the wood-encircled bay,
Hold me a prisoner, and my flight delay.

Ye were so fair, but now that dream is o'er;
The charms of earth, the charms of heaven are nought.
What keeps me in this spot so terror-fraught?

My only joy is fled for evermore.

Let me taste those days so sweet,

Heav'n-descended, once again!
Heart, dear heart! ay, warmly beat!

Spirit true, recall those days

Freeborn breath thy gentle lays

Mingled are with joy and pain.

Round the beds, so richly gleaming,

Rises up a palace fair;
All with rosy fragrance teeming,

As in dream thou saw'st it ne'er.

And this spacious garden round,

Far extend the galleries;
Roses blossom near the ground,

High in air, too, bloom the trees.

Wat'ry flakes and jets are falling.

Sweet and silv'ry strains arise;
While the turtle-dove is calling,

And the nightingale replies.

CHORUS.

Gently come! feel no alarm,

On a noble duty bent;
Vanish'd now is ev'ry charm

That by magic power was lent.
Friendly words and greetings calm
On his wounds will pour soft balm.

Fill his mind with sweet content.

RINALDO.

Hark! the turtle-dove is calling,

And the nightingale replies;
Wat'ry flakes and jets are falling,

Mingling with their melodies.

But all of them say:

Her only we mean;
But all fly away,

As soon as she's seen,--
The beauteous young maiden,

With graces so rife,

Then lily and rose

In wreaths are entwining;

In dancing combining,
Each zephyr that blows

Its brother is greeting,

All flying and meeting,
With balsam full laden,

When waken'd to life.

CHORUS.

No! no longer may we wait;
Rouse him from his vision straight!
Show the adamantine shield!

RINALDO.

Woe! what form is here reveal'd!

CHORUS.

'Twill disclose the cheat to thee.

RINALDO.

Am I doom'd myself to see
Thus degraded evermore?

CHORUS.

Courage take, and all is o'er.

RINALDO.

Be it so! I'll take fresh heart,
From the spot beloved depart,
Leave Armida once again,--
Come then! here no more remain.

CHORUS.

Yes, 'tis well! no more remain.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Away then! let's fly

O'er the zephyr-kiss'd ocean!
The soul-lighted eye

Sees armies in motion,
See proud banners wave

O'er the dust-sprinkled course.

CHORUS.

From his forefathers brave

Draws the hero new force.

RINALDO.

With sorrow laden,
Within this valley's

All-silent alleys
The fairest maiden

Again I see.

Twice can this be?
What! shall I hear it,
And not have spirit
To ease her pains?

CHORUS.

Unworthy chains?

RINALDO.

And now I've see her,

Alas! how changed!
With cold demeanour.

And looks estranged,
With ghostly tread,--
All hope is fled,
Yes, fled for ever.
The lightnings quiver,
Each palace falls;
The godlike halls,
Each joyous hour
Of spirit-power,
With love's sweet day
All fade away!

CHORUS.

Yes, fade away!

SEMI-CHORUS.

Already are heard

The prayers of the pious.

Why longer deny us?
The favouring zephyr

Forbids all delay.

CHORUS.

Away, then! away!

RINALDO.

With heart sadly stirr'd,

Your command I receive;

Ye force me to leave.
Unkind is the zephyr,--

Oh, wherefore not stay?

CHORUS.

Away, then! away!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Rollicking Hans

HALLO there! A glass!

Ha! the draught's truly sweet!
If for drink go my shoes,

I shall still have my feet.

A maiden and wine,

With sweet music and song,--
I would they were mine,

All life's journey along!

If I depart from this sad sphere,
And leave a will behind me here,
A suit at law will be preferr'd,
But as for thanks,--the deuce a word!
So ere I die, I squander all,
And that a proper will I call.

HIS COMRADE.

Hallo there! A glass!

Ha! the draught's truly sweet
If thou keepest thy shoes,

Thou wilt then spare thy feet.

A maiden and wine,

With sweet music and song,
On pavement, are thine,

All life's journey along!

THE FREEBOOTER,

No door has my house,

No house has my door;
And in and out ever

I carry my store.

No grate has my kitchen,

No kitchen my grate;
Yet roasts it and boils it

Both early and late.

My bed has no trestles,

My trestles no bed;
Yet merrier moments

No mortal e'er led.

My cellar is lofty,

My barn is full deep,
From top to the bottom,--

There lie I and sleep.

And soon as I waken,

All moves on its race;
My place has no fixture,

My fixture no place.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Roman Elegies I

Tell me you stones, O speak, you towering palaces!
Streets, say a word! Spirit of this place, are you dumb?
All things are alive in your sacred walls
eternal Rome, only for me all's still.
Who will whisper to me, at what window
will I see the sweet thing who will kindle me, and quicken?
Already I guess the ways, walking to her and from her,
ever and always I'll go, while sweet time slips by.
I'm gazing at church and palace, ruin and column,
like a serious man making sensible use of a journey,
but soon it will happen, and all will be one vast temple,
Love's temple, receiving its new initiate.
Though you are a whole world, Rome, still, without Love,
the world's not the world, Rome cannot be Rome.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Royal Prayer

HA, I am the lord of earth! The noble,

Who're in my service, love me.

Ha, I am the lord of earth! The noble,

O'er whom my sway extendeth, love I.

Oh, grant me, God in Heaven, that I may ne'er

Dispense with loftiness and love!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Rules For Monarchs

IF men are never their thoughts to employ,
Take care to provide them a life full of joy;
But if to some profit and use thou wouldst bend them,
Take care to shear them, and then defend them.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Sakontala

WOULDST thou the blossoms of spring, as well as the fruits of the autumn,
Wouldst thou what charms and delights, wouldst thou what plenteously, feeds,
Would thou include both Heaven and earth in one designation,
All that is needed is done, when I Sakontala name.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Self-Deceit

My neighbour's curtain, well I see,
Is moving to and fro.
No doubt she's list'ning eagerly,
If I'm at home or no.
And if the jealous grudge I bore
And openly confess'd,
Is nourish'd by me as before,
Within my inmost breast.
Alas! no fancies such as these
E'er cross'd the dear child's thoughts.
I see 'tis but the ev'ning breeze
That with the curtain sports.
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

She Cannot End

WHEN unto thee I sent the page all white,
Instead of first thereon inscribing aught,
The space thou doubtless filledst up in sport.
And sent it me, to make my joy grow bright.
As soon as the blue cover met my sight,
As well becomes a woman, quick as thought
I tore it open, leaving hidden nought,
And read the well-known words of pure delight:
MY ONLY BEING! DEAREST HEART! SWEET CHILD!
How kindly thou my yearning then didst still
With gentle words, entralling me to thee.
In truth methought I read thy whispers mild
Wherewith thou lovingly my soul didst fill,
E'en to myself for aye ennobling me.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Should E'er The Loveless Day

SHOULD e'er the loveless day remain
Obscured by storms of hail and rain,

Thy charms thou showest never;
I tap at window, tap at door:
Come, lov'd one, come! appear once more!

Thou art as fair as ever!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Sicilian Song

YE black and roguish eyes,

If ye command.
Each house in ruins lies,

No town can stand.
And shall my bosom's chain,--

This plaster wall,
To think one moment, deign,--

Shall I not fall?

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Sir Curt's Wedding-Journey

WITH a bridegroom's joyous bearing,
Mounts Sir Curt his noble beast,
To his mistress' home repairing,
There to hold his wedding feast;
When a threatening foe advances
From a desert, rocky spot;
For the fray they couch their lances,
Not delaying, speaking not.
Long the doubtful fight continues,
Victory then for Curt declares;
Conqueror, though with wearied sinews,
Forward on his road he fares.
When he sees, though strange it may be,
Something 'midst the foliage move;
'Tis a mother, with her baby,
Stealing softly through the grove!
And upon the spot she beckons--
"Wherefore, love, this speed so wild?
Of the wealth thy storehouse reckons,
Hast thou nought to give thy child!"
Flames of rapture now dart through him,
And he longs for nothing more,
While the mother seemeth to him
Lovely as the maid of yore.
But he hears his servants blowing,
And bethinks him of his bride;
And ere long, while onward going,
Chances past a fair to ride;
In the booths he forthwith buys him
For his mistress many a pledge;
But, alas! some Jews surprise him,
And long-standing debts allege.

And the courts of justice duly

Send the knight to prison straight.
Oh accursed story, truly!

For a hero, what a fate!
Can my patience such things weather?

Great is my perplexity.
Women, debts, and foes together,--

Ah, no knight escapes scot free!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Solitude

OH ye kindly nymphs, who dwell 'mongst the rocks and the thickets,
Grant unto each whatsoe'er he may in silence desire!
Comfort impart to the mourner, and give to the doubter instruction,
And let the lover rejoice, finding the bliss that he craves.
For from the gods ye received what they ever denied unto mortals,
Power to comfort and aid all who in you may confide.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Song Of Fellowship

IN ev'ry hour of joy

That love and wine prolong,
The moments we'll employ

To carol forth this song!
We're gathered in His name,

Whose power hath brought us here;
He kindled first our flame,

He bids it burn more clear.

Then gladly glow to-night,

And let our hearts combine!
Up! quaff with fresh delight

This glass of sparkling wine!
Up! hail the joyous hour,

And let your kiss be true;
With each new bond of power

The old becomes the new!

Who in our circle lives,

And is not happy there?
True liberty it gives,

And brother's love so fair.
Thus heart and heart through life

With mutual love are fill'd;
And by no causeless strife

Our union e'er is chill'd.

Our hopes a God has crown'd

With life-discernment free,
And all we view around,

Renews our ecstasy.
Ne'er by caprice oppress'd,

Our bliss is ne'er destroy'd;
More freely throbs our breast,

By fancies ne'er alloy'd.

Where'er our foot we set,

The more life's path extends,
And brighter, brighter yet

Our gaze on high ascends.
We know no grief or pain,

Though all things fall and rise;
Long may we thus remain!

Eternal be our ties!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Songs

SONGS are like painted window-panes!
In darkness wrapp'd the church remains,
If from the market-place we view it;
Thus sees the ignoramus through it.
No wonder that he deems it tame,--
And all his life 'twill be the same.

But let us now inside repair,
And greet the holy Chapel there!
At once the whole seems clear and bright,
Each ornament is bathed in light,
And fraught with meaning to the sight.
God's children! thus your fortune prize,
Be edified, and feast your eyes!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Sound, Sweet Song

SOUND, sweet song, from some far land,
Sighing softly close at hand,

Now of joy, and now of woe!

Stars are wont to glimmer so.

Sooner thus will good unfold;
Children young and children old
Gladly hear thy numbers flow.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Spirit Song Over The Waters

THE soul of man
Resembleth water:
From heaven it cometh,
To heaven it soareth.
And then again
To earth descendeth,
Changing ever.

Down from the lofty
Rocky wall
Streams the bright flood,
Then spreadeth gently
In cloudy billows
O'er the smooth rock,
And welcomed kindly,
Veiling, on roams it,
Soft murmuring,
Tow'rd the abyss.

Cliffs projecting
Oppose its progress,--
Angrily foams it
Down to the bottom,
Step by step.

Now, in flat channel,
Through the meadowland steals it,
And in the polish'd lake
Each constellation
Joyously peepeth.

Wind is the loving
Wooer of waters;
Wind blends together
Billows all-foaming.

Spirit of man,
Thou art like unto water!
Fortune of man,
Thou art like unto wind!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Such, Such Is He Who Pleaseth Me

FLY, dearest, fly! He is not nigh!

He who found thee one fair morn in Spring

In the wood where thou thy flight didst wing.
Fly, dearest, fly! He is not nigh!
Never rests the foot of evil spy.

Hark! flutes' sweet strains and love's refrains

Reach the loved one, borne there by the wind,

In the soft heart open doors they find.
Hark! flutes' sweet strains and love's refrains,
Hark!--yet blissful love their echo pains.

Erect his head, and firm his tread,

Raven hair around his smooth brow strays,

On his cheeks a Spring eternal plays.
Erect his head, and firm his tread,
And by grace his ev'ry step is led.

Happy his breast, with pureness bless'd,

And the dark eyes 'neath his eyebrows placed,

With full many a beauteous line are graced.
Happy his breast, with pureness bless'd,
Soon as seen, thy love must be confess'd.

His mouth is red--its power I dread,

On his lips morn's fragrant incense lies,

Round his lips the cooling Zephyr sighs.
His mouth is red--its power I dread,
With one glance from him, all sorrow's fled.

His blood is true, his heart bold too,

In his soft arms, strength, protection, dwells

And his face with noble pity swells.
His blood is true, his heart bold too,
Blest the one whom those dear arms may woo!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Swiss Song

Up in th' mountain
I was a-sitting,
With the bird there
As my guest,
Blithely singing,
Blithely springing,
And building
His nest.

In the garden
I was a-standing,
And the bee there
Saw as well,
Buzzing, humming,
Going, coming,
And building
His cell.

O'er the meadow
I was a-going,
And there saw the
Butterflies,
Sipping, dancing,
Flying, glancing,
And charming
The eyes.

And then came my
Dear Hansel,
And I show'd them
With glee,
Sipping, quaffing,
And he, laughing,
Sweet kisses
Gave me.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Symbols

PALM Sunday at the Vatican

They celebrate with palms;
With reverence bows each holy man,

And chaunts the ancient psalms.
Those very psalms are also sung

With olive boughs in hand,
While holly, mountain wilds among,

In place of palms must stand:
In fine, one seeks some twig that's green,

And takes a willow rod,
So that the pious man may e'en

In small things praise his God.

And if ye have observed it well,

To gain what's fit ye're able,
If ye in faith can but excel;

Such are the myths of fable.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Table Song

O'ER me--how I cannot say,--
Heav'nly rapture's growing.
Will it help to guide my way
To yon stars all-glowing?
Yet that here I'd sooner be,
To assert I'm able,
Where, with wine and harmony,
I may thump the table.
Wonder not, my dearest friends,
What 'tis gives me pleasure;
For of all that earth e'er lends,
'Tis the sweetest treasure.
Therefore solemnly I swear,
With no reservation,
That maliciously I'll ne'er
Leave my present station.
Now that here we're gather'd round,
Chasing cares and slumbers,
Let, methought, the goblet sound
To the bard's glad numbers!
Many a hundred mile away,
Go those we love dearly;
Therefore let us here to-day
Make the glass ring clearly!
Here's His health, through Whom we live!
I that faith inherit.
To our king the next toast give,
Honour is his merit,
'Gainst each in-- and outward foe
He's our rock and tower.
Of his maintenance thinks he though,
More that grows his power.

Next to her good health I drink,

Who has stirr'd my passion;
Of his mistress let each think,

Think in knightly fashion.
If the beauteous maid but see

Whom 'tis I now call so,
Let her smiling nod to me:

"Here's my love's health also!"

To those friends,--the two or three,--

Be our next toast given,
In whose presence revel we,

In the silent even,--
Who the gloomy mist so cold

Scatter gently, lightly;
To those friends, then, new or old,

Let the toast ring brightly.

Broader now the stream rolls on,

With its waves more swelling,
While in higher, nobler tone,

Comrades, we are dwelling,--
We who with collected might,

Bravely cling together,
Both in fortune's sunshine bright,

And in stormy weather.

Just as we are gather'd thus,

Others are collected;
On them, therefore, as on us,

Be Fate's smile directed!
From the springhead to the sea,

Many a mill's revolving,
And the world's prosperity

Is the task I'm solving.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Beauteous Flower - Son Of The Imprisoned Count

COUNT.

I KNOW a flower of beauty rare,

Ah, how I hold it dear!
To seek it I would fain repair,

Were I not prison'd here.
My sorrow sore oppresses me,
For when I was at liberty,

I had it close beside me.

Though from this castle's walls so steep

I cast mine eyes around,
And gaze oft from the lofty keep,

The flower can not be found.
Whoe'er would bring it to my sight,
Whether a vassal he, or knight,

My dearest friend I'd deem him.

THE ROSE.

I blossom fair,--thy tale of woes

I hear from 'neath thy grate.
Thou doubtless meanest me, the rose.

Poor knight of high estate!
Thou hast in truth a lofty mind;
The queen of flowers is then enshrin'd,

I doubt not, in thy bosom.

COUNT.

Thy red, in dress of green array'd,

As worth all praise I hold;
And so thou'rt treasured by each maid

Like precious stones or gold.
Thy wreath adorns the fairest face
But still thou'rt not the flower whose grace

I honour here in silence.

THE LILY.

The rose is wont with pride to swell,
And ever seeks to rise;
But gentle sweethearts love full well

The lily's charms to prize,
The heart that fills a bosom true,
That is, like me, unsullied too,

My merit values duly.

COUNT.

In truth, I hope myself unstain'd,

And free from grievous crime;
Yet I am here a prisoner chain'd,

And pass in grief my time,
To me thou art an image sure
Of many a maiden, mild and pure,

And yet I know a dearer.

THE PINK.

That must be me, the pink, who scent

The warder's garden here;
Or wherefore is he so intent

My charms with care to rear?
My petals stand in beauteous ring,
Sweet incense all around I fling,

And boast a thousand colours.

COUNT.

The pink in truth we should not slight,

It is the gardener's pride
It now must stand exposed to light,

Now in the shade abide.
Yet what can make the Count's heart glow
Is no mere pomp of outward show;

It is a silent flower.

THE VIOLET.

Here stand I, modestly half hid,
And fain would silence keep;
Yet since to speak I now am bid,
I'll break my silence deep.
If, worthy Knight, I am that flower,
It grieves me that I have not power
To breathe forth all my sweetness.

COUNT.

The violet's charms I prize indeed,
So modest 'tis, and fair,
And smells so sweet; yet more I need

To ease my heavy care.
The truth I'll whisper in thine ear:
Upon these rocky heights so drear,

I cannot find the loved one.

The truest maiden 'neath the sky
Roams near the stream below,
And breathes forth many a gentle sigh,

Till I from hence can go.
And when she plucks a flow'ret blue,
And says "Forget-me-not!"--I, too,

Though far away, can feel it.

Ay, distance only swells love's might,
When fondly love a pair;
Though prison'd in the dungeon's night,

In life I linger there
And when my heart is breaking nigh,
"Forget-me-not!" is all I cry,

And straightway life returneth.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Beautiful Night

Now I leave this cottage lowly,
Where my love hath made her home,
And with silent footstep slowly
Through the darksome forest roam,
Luna breaks through oaks and bushes,
Zephyr hastes her steps to meet,
And the waving birch-tree blushes,
Scattering round her incense sweet.
Grateful are the cooling breezes
Of this beauteous summer night,
Here is felt the charm that pleases,
And that gives the soul delight.
Boundless is my joy; yet, Heaven,
Willingly I'd leave to thee
Thousand such nights, were one given
By my maiden loved to me!
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Best

WHEN head and heart are busy, say,

What better can be found?
Who neither loves nor goes astray,

Were better under ground.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Bliss Of Absence

DRINK, oh youth, joy's purest ray
From thy loved one's eyes all day,

And her image paint at night!
Better rule no lover knows,
Yet true rapture greater grows,

When far sever'd from her sight.

Powers eternal, distance, time,
Like the might of stars sublime,

Gently rock the blood to rest,
O'er my senses softness steals,
Yet my bosom lighter feels,

And I daily am more blest.

Though I can forget her ne'er,
Yet my mind is free from care,

I can calmly live and move;
Unperceived infatuation
Longing turns to adoration,

Turns to reverence my love.

Ne'er can cloud, however light,
Float in ether's regions bright,

When drawn upwards by the sun,
As my heart in rapturous calm.
Free from envy and alarm,

Ever love I her alone!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Bliss Of Sorrow

NEVER dry, never dry,

Tears that eternal love sheddeth!
How dreary, how dead doth the world still appear,
When only half-dried on the eye is the tear!

Never dry, never dry,

Tears that unhappy love sheddeth!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Boundaries Of Humanity

WHEN the primeval
All-holy Father
Sows with a tranquil hand
From clouds, as they roll,
Bliss-spreading lightnings
Over the earth,
Then do I kiss the last
Hem of his garment,
While by a childlike awe
Fill'd is my breast.

For with immortals
Ne'er may a mortal
Measure himself.
If he soar upwards
And if he touch
With his forehead the stars,
Nowhere will rest then
His insecure feet,
And with him sport
Tempest and cloud.

Though with firm sinewy
Limbs he may stand
On the enduring
Well-grounded earth,
All he is ever
Able to do,
Is to resemble
The oak or the vine.

Wherein do gods
Differ from mortals?
In that the former
See endless billows
Heaving before them;
Us doth the billow
Lift up and swallow,
So that we perish.

Small is the ring
Enclosing our life,
And whole generations
Link themselves firmly
On to existence's
Chain never-ending.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Brethren

SLUMBER and Sleep, two brethren ordain'd by the gods to their service,
Were by Prometheus implored, comfort to give to his race;
But though so light to the gods, too heavy for man was their burden,
We in their slumber find sleep, we in their sleep meet with death.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Bride Of Corinth

ONCE a stranger youth to Corinth came,
Who in Athens lived, but hoped that he
From a certain townsman there might claim,
As his father's friend, kind courtesy.

Son and daughter, they
Had been wont to say
Should thereafter bride and bridegroom be.

But can he that boon so highly prized,
Save tis dearly bought, now hope to get?
They are Christians and have been baptized,
He and all of his are heathens yet.

For a newborn creed,
Like some loathsome weed,
Love and truth to root out oft will threat.

Father, daughter, all had gone to rest,
And the mother only watches late;
She receives with courtesy the guest,
And conducts him to the room of state.

Wine and food are brought,
Ere by him besought;
Bidding him good night. she leaves him straight.

But he feels no relish now, in truth,
For the dainties so profusely spread;
Meat and drink forgets the wearied youth,
And, still dress'd, he lays him on the bed.

Scarce are closed his eyes,
When a form in-hies
Through the open door with silent tread.

By his glimmering lamp discerns he now
How, in veil and garment white array'd,
With a black and gold band round her brow,
Glides into the room a bashful maid.

But she, at his sight,
Lifts her hand so white,
And appears as though full sore afraid.

"Am I," cries she, "such a stranger here,
That the guest's approach they could not name?
Ah, they keep me in my cloister drear,
Well nigh feel I vanquish'd by my shame.

On thy soft couch now
Slumber calmly thou!

I'll return as swiftly as I came."

"Stay, thou fairest maiden!" cries the boy,
Starting from his couch with eager haste:
"Here are Ceres', Bacchus' gifts of joy;
Amor bringest thou, with beauty grac'd!

Thou art pale with fear!
Loved one let us here
Prove the raptures the Immortals taste."

"Draw not nigh, O Youth! afar remain!
Rapture now can never smile on me;
For the fatal step, alas! is ta'en,
Through my mother's sick-bed phantasy.

Cured, she made this oath:
'Youth and nature both
Shall henceforth to Heav'n devoted be.'

"From the house, so silent now, are driven
All the gods who reign'd supreme of yore;
One Invisible now rules in heaven,
On the cross a Saviour they adore.

Victims slay they here,
Neither lamb nor steer,
But the altars reek with human gore."

And he lists, and ev'ry word he weighs,
While his eager soul drinks in each sound:
"Can it be that now before my gaze
Stands my loved one on this silent ground?

Pledge to me thy troth!
Through our father's oath:
With Heav'ns blessing will our love be crown'd."

"Kindly youth, I never can be thine!
'Tis my sister they intend for thee.
When I in the silent cloister pine,
Ah, within her arms remember me!

Thee alone I love,
While love's pangs I prove;
Soon the earth will veil my misery."

"No! for by this glowing flame I swear,
Hymen hath himself propitious shown:
Let us to my fathers house repair,
And thout find that joy is not yet flown,

Sweetest, here then stay,
And without delay
Hold we now our wedding feast alone!"

Then exchange they tokens of their truth;
She gives him a golden chain to wear,
And a silver chalice would the youth
Give her in return of beauty rare.

"That is not for me;
Yet I beg of thee,
One lock only give me of thy hair."

Now the ghostly hour of midnight knell'd,
And she seem'd right joyous at the sign;
To her pallid lips the cup she held,
But she drank of nought but blood-red wine.

For to taste the bread
There before them spread,
Nought he spoke could make the maid incline.

To the youth the goblet then she brought,--
He too quaff'd with eager joy the bowl.
Love to crown the silent feast he sought,
Ah! full love-sick was the stripling's soul.

From his prayer she shrinks,
Till at length he sinks
On the bed and weeps without control.

And she comes, and lays her near the boy:
"How I grieve to see thee sorrowing so!
If thou think'st to clasp my form with joy,
Thou must learn this secret sad to know;

Yes! the maid, whom thou
Call'st thy loved one now,
Is as cold as ice, though white as snow."

Then he clasps her madly in his arm,
While love's youthful might pervades his frame:
"Thou might'st hope, when with me, to grow warm,
E'en if from the grave thy spirit came!

Breath for breath, and kiss!
Overflow of bliss!
Dost not thou, like me, feel passion's flame?"

Love still closer rivets now their lips,
Tears they mingle with their rapture blest,

From his mouth the flame she wildly sips,
Each is with the other's thought possess'd.

His hot ardour's flood
Warms her chilly blood,
But no heart is beating in her breast.

In her care to see that nought went wrong,
Now the mother happen'd to draw near;
At the door long hearkens she, full long,
Wond'ring at the sounds that greet her ear.

Tones of joy and sadness,
And love's blissful madness,
As of bride and bridegroom they appear,

From the door she will not now remove
'Till she gains full certainty of this;
And with anger hears she vows of love,
Soft caressing words of mutual bliss.

"Hush! the cock's loud strain!
But thoult come again,
When the night returns!"--then kiss on kiss.

Then her wrath the mother cannot hold,
But unfastens straight the lock with ease
"In this house are girls become so bold,
As to seek e'en strangers' lusts to please?"

By her lamp's clear glow
Looks she in,--and oh!
Sight of horror!--'tis her child she sees.

Fain the youth would, in his first alarm,
With the veil that o'er her had been spread,
With the carpet, shield his love from harm;
But she casts them from her, void of dread,

And with spirit's strength,
In its spectre length,
Lifts her figure slowly from the bed.

"Mother! mother!"--Thus her wan lips say:
"May not I one night of rapture share?
From the warm couch am I chased away?
Do I waken only to despair?"

It contents not thee
To have driven me
An untimely shroud of death to wear?

"But from out my coffin's prison-bounds
By a wond'rous fate I'm forced to rove,
While the blessings and the chaunting sounds
That your priests delight in, useless prove.

Water, salt, are vain
Fervent youth to chain,
Ah, e'en Earth can never cool down love!

"When that infant vow of love was spoken,
Venus' radiant temple smiled on both.
Mother! thou that promise since hast broken,
Fetter'd by a strange, deceitful oath.

Gods, though, hearken ne'er,
Should a mother swear
To deny her daughter's plighted troth.

From my grave to wander I am forc'd,
Still to seek The Good's long-sever'd link,
Still to love the bridegroom I have lost,
And the life-blood of his heart to drink;

When his race is run,
I must hasten on,
And the young must 'neath my vengeance sink,

"Beauteous youth! no longer mayst thou live;
Here must shrivel up thy form so fair;
Did not I to thee a token give,
Taking in return this lock of hair?

View it to thy sorrow!
Grey thout be to-morrow,
Only to grow brown again when there.

"Mother, to this final prayer give ear!
Let a funeral pile be straightway dress'd;
Open then my cell so sad and drear,
That the flames may give the lovers rest!

When ascends the fire
From the glowing pyre,
To the gods of old we'll hasten, blest."

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Bridegroom

I SLEPT,--'twas midnight,--in my bosom woke,

As though 'twere day, my love-o'erflowing heart;
To me it seemed like night, when day first broke;

What is't to me, whate'er it may impart?

She was away; the world's unceasing strife

For her alone I suffer'd through the heat
Of sultry day; oh, what refreshing life

At cooling eve!--my guerdon was complete.

The sun now set, and wand'ring hand in hand,

His last and blissful look we greeted then;
While spake our eyes, as they each other scann'd:

"From the far east, let's trust, he'll come again!"

At midnight!--the bright stars, in vision blest,

Guide to the threshold where she slumbers calm:
Oh be it mine, there too at length to rest,--

Yet howsoe'er this prove, life's full of charm!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Buyers

To an apple-woman's stall

Once some children nimbly ran;
Longing much to purchase all,
They with joyous haste began
Snatching up the piles there raised,
While with eager eyes they gazed
On the rosy fruit so nice;
But when they found out the price,
Down they threw the whole they'd got,
Just as if they were red hot.

*

The man who gratis will his goods supply
Will never find a lack of folks to buy!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Chosen Cliff

HERE in silence the lover fondly mused on his loved one;
Gladly he spake to me thus: "Be thou my witness, thou stone!
Yet thou must not be vainglorious, thou hast many companions;
Unto each rock on the plain, where I, the happy one, dwell,
Unto each tree of the wood that I cling to, as onward I ramble,
'Be thou a sign of my bliss!' shout I, and then 'tis ordain'd.
Yet to thee only I lend a voice, as a Muse from the people
Chooseth one for herself, kissing his lips as a friend."

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Christmas-Box

THIS box, mine own sweet darling, thou wilt find
With many a varied sweetmeat's form supplied;
The fruits are they of holy Christmas tide,
But baked indeed, for children's use design'd.
I'd fain, in speeches sweet with skill combin'd,
Poetic sweetmeats for the feast provide;
But why in such frivolities confide?
Perish the thought, with flattery to blind!
One sweet thing there is still, that from within,
Within us speaks,--that may be felt afar;
This may be wafted o'er to thee alone.
If thou a recollection fond canst win,
As if with pleasure gleam'd each well-known star,
The smallest gift thou never wilt disown.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Consecrated Spot

WHEN in the dance of the Nymphs, in the moonlight so holy assembled,
Mingle the Graces, down from Olympus in secret descending,
Here doth the minstrel hide, and list to their numbers enthralling,
Here doth he watch their silent dances' mysterious measure.
All that is glorious in Heaven, and all that the earth in her beauty
Ever hath brought into life, the dreamer awake sees before him;
All he repeats to the Muses, and lest the gods should be anger'd,
How to tell of secrets discreetly, the Muses instruct him.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Convert

As at sunset I was straying

Silently the wood along,
Damon on his flute was playing,

And the rocks gave back the song,
So la, la!

Softly tow'rds him then he drew me;

Sweet each kiss he gave me then!
And I said, "Play once more to me!"

And he kindly play'd again,
So la, la!

All my peace for aye has fled,

All my happiness has flown;
Yet my ears are ever greeted

With that olden, blissful tone,
So la, la!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Country Schoolmaster

I.

A MASTER of a country school
Jump'd up one day from off his stool,
Inspired with firm resolve to try
To gain the best society;
So to the nearest baths he walk'd,
And into the saloon he stalk'd.
He felt quite startled at the door,
Ne'er having seen the like before.
To the first stranger made he now
A very low and graceful bow,
But quite forgot to bear in mind
That people also stood behind;
His left-hand neighbor's paunch he struck
A grievous blow, by great ill luck;
Pardon for this he first entreated,
And then in haste his bow repeated.
His right hand neighbor next he hit,
And begg'd him, too, to pardon it;
But on his granting his petition,
Another was in like condition;
These compliments he paid to all,
Behind, before, across the hall;
At length one who could stand no more,
Show'd him impatiently the door.

May many, pond'ring on their crimes,
A moral draw from this betimes!

II.

As he proceeded on his way
He thought, "I was too weak to-day;
To bow I'll ne'er again be seen;
For goats will swallow what is green."
Across the fields he now must speed,
Not over stumps and stones, indeed,
But over meads and cornfields sweet,
Trampling down all with clumsy feet.
A farmer met him by-and-by,
And didn't ask him: how? or why?
But with his fist saluted him.

"I feel new life in every limb!"
Our traveller cried in ecstasy.
"Who art thou who thus gladden'st me?
May Heaven such blessings ever send!
Ne'er may I want a jovial friend!"

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Coy One

ONE Spring-morning bright and fair,
Roam'd a shepherdess and sang;
Young and beauteous, free from care,
Through the fields her clear notes rang:
So, Ia, Ia! le ralla.

Of his lambs some two or three

Thyrsis offer'd for a kiss;
First she eyed him roguishly,

Then for answer sang but this:
So, Ia, Ia! le ralla.

Ribbons did the next one offer,

And the third, his heart so true
But, as with the lambs, the scoffer

Laugh'd at heart and ribbons too,--
Still 'twas Ia! le ralla.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Critic

I HAD a fellow as my guest,
Not knowing he was such a pest,
And gave him just my usual fare;
He ate his fill of what was there,

And for desert my best things swallow'd,
Soon as his meal was o'er, what follow'd?
Led by the Deuce, to a neighbour he went,
And talk'd of my food to his heart's content:
"The soup might surely have had more spice,
The meat was ill-brown'd, and the wine wasn't nice."
A thousand curses alight on his head!
'Tis a critic, I vow! Let the dog be struck dead!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Dance Of Death

THE warder looks down at the mid hour of night,
On the tombs that lie scatter'd below:
The moon fills the place with her silvery light,
And the churchyard like day seems to glow.

When see! first one grave, then another opes wide,
And women and men stepping forth are descried,
In cerements snow-white and trailing.

In haste for the sport soon their ankles they twitch,
And whirl round in dances so gay;
The young and the old, and the poor, and the rich,
But the cerements stand in their way;

And as modesty cannot avail them aught here,
They shake themselves all, and the shrouds soon appear
Scatter'd over the tombs in confusion.

Now waggles the leg, and now wriggles the thigh,
As the troop with strange gestures advance,
And a rattle and clatter anon rises high,
As of one beating time to the dance.

The sight to the warder seems wondrously queer,
When the villainous Tempter speaks thus in his ear:
"Seize one of the shrouds that lie yonder!"

Quick as thought it was done! and for safety he fled
Behind the church-door with all speed;
The moon still continues her clear light to shed
On the dance that they fearfully lead.

But the dancers at length disappear one by one,
And their shrouds, ere they vanish, they carefully don,
And under the turf all is quiet.

But one of them stumbles and shuffles there still,
And gropes at the graves in despair;
Yet 'tis by no comrade he's treated so ill
The shroud he soon scents in the air.

So he rattles the door--for the warder 'tis well
That 'tis bless'd, and so able the foe to repel,
All cover'd with crosses in metal.

The shroud he must have, and no rest will allow,
There remains for reflection no time;
On the ornaments Gothic the wight seizes now,
And from point on to point hastes to climb.

Alas for the warder! his doom is decreed!
Like a long-legged spider, with ne'er-changing speed,

Advances the dreaded pursuer.

The warder he quakes, and the warder turns pale,
The shroud to restore fain had sought;
When the end,--now can nothing to save him avail,--
In a tooth formed of iron is caught.

With vanishing lustre the moon's race is run,
When the bell thunders loudly a powerful One,
And the skeleton fails, crush'd to atoms.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Death Of The Fly

WITH eagerness he drinks the treach'rous potion,
Nor stops to rest, by the first taste misled;
Sweet is the draught, but soon all power of motion

He finds has from his tender members fled;
No longer has he strength to plume his wing,
No longer strength to raise his head, poor thing!
E'en in enjoyment's hour his life he loses,
His little foot to bear his weight refuses;
So on he sips, and ere his draught is o'er,
Death veils his thousand eyes for evermore.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Destruction Of Magdeburg

Oh, Magdeberg the town!
Fair maids thy beauty crown,
Thy charms fair maids and matrons crown;
Oh, Magdeburg the town!

Where all so blooming stands,
Advance fierce Tilly's bands;
O'er gardens and o'er well--till'd lands
Advance fierce Tilly's bands.

Now Tilly's at the gate.
Our homes who'll liberate?
Go, loved one, hasten to the gate,
And dare the combat straight!

There is no need as yet,
However fierce his threat;
Thy rosy cheeks I'll kiss, sweet pet!
There is no need as yet.

My longing makes me pale.
Oh, what can wealth avail?
E'en now thy father may be pale.
Thou mak'st my courage fail.

Oh, mother, give me bread!
Is then my father dead?
Oh, mother, one small crust of bread!
Oh, what misfortune dread!

Thy father, dead lies he,
The trembling townsmen flee,
Adown the street the blood runs free;
Oh, whither shall we flee?

The churches ruined lie,
The houses burn on high,
The roofs they smoke, the flames out fly,
Into the street then hie!

No safety there they meet!
The soldiers fill the Street,
With fire and sword the wreck complete:
No safety there they meet!

Down falls the houses' line,
Where now is thine or mine?
That bundle yonder is not thine,
Thou flying maiden mine!

The women sorrow sore.
The maidens far, far more.

The living are no virgins more;
Thus Tilly's troops make war!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Dilettante And The Critic

A BOY a pigeon once possess'd,
In gay and brilliant plumage dress'd;
He loved it well, and in boyish sport
Its food to take from his mouth he taught,
And in his pigeon he took such pride,
That his joy to others he needs must confide.

An aged fox near the place chanc'd to dwell,
Talkative, clever, and learned as well;
The boy his society used to prize,
Hearing with pleasure his wonders and lies.

"My friend the fox my pigeon must see
He ran, and stretch'd 'mongst the bushes lay he
"Look, fox, at my pigeon, my pigeon so fair!
His equal I'm sure thou hast look'd upon ne'er!"

"Let's see!"--The boy gave it.--"Tis really not bad;
And yet, it is far from complete, I must add.
The feathers, for, instance, how short! 'Tis absurd!"
So he set to work straightway to pluck the poor bird.

The boy screamed.--"Thou must now stronger pinions supply,
Or else 'twill be ugly, unable to fly."--
Soon 'twas stripp'd--oh, the villain!--and torn all to pieces.
The boy was heart-broken,--and so my tale ceases.

He who sees in the boy shadow'd forth his own case,
Should be on his guard 'gainst the fox's whole race.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Doubters And The Lovers

THE DOUBTERS.

YE love, and sonnets write! Fate's strange behest!
The heart, its hidden meaning to declare,
Must seek for rhymes, uniting pair with pair:
Learn, children, that the will is weak, at best.
Scarcely with freedom the o'erflowing breast
As yet can speak, and well may it beware;
Tempestuous passions sweep each chord that's there,
Then once more sink to night and gentle rest.
Why vex yourselves and us, the heavy stone
Up the steep path but step by step to roll?
It falls again, and ye ne'er cease to strive.

THE LOVERS.

But we are on the proper road alone!
If gladly is to thaw the frozen soul,
The fire of love must aye be kept alive.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Drops Of Nectar

WHEN Minerva, to give pleasure
To Prometheus, her well-loved one,
Brought a brimming bowl of nectar
From the glorious realms of heaven
As a blessing for his creatures,
And to pour into their bosoms
Impulses for arts ennobling,
She with rapid footstep hasten'd,
Fearing Jupiter might see her,
And the golden goblet trembled,
And there fell a few drops from it
On the verdant plain beneath her.
Then the busy bees flew thither
Straightway, eagerly to drink them,
And the butterfly came quickly
That he, too, might find a drop there;
Even the misshapen spider
Thither crawl'd and suck'd with vigour.

To a happy end they tasted,
They, and other gentle insects!
For with mortals now divide they
Art - that noblest gift of all.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Eagle And The Dove

IN search of prey once raised his pinions
An eaglet;
A huntsman's arrow came, and reft
His right wing of all motive power.
Headlong he fell into a myrtle grove,
For three long days on anguish fed,
In torment writhed
Throughout three long, three weary nights;
And then was cured,
Thanks to all-healing Nature's
Soft, omnipresent balm.
He crept away from out the copse,
And stretch'd his wing--alas!
Lost is all power of flight--
He scarce can lift himself
From off the ground
To catch some mean, unworthy prey,
And rests, deep-sorrowing,
On the low rock beside the stream.
Up to the oak he looks,
Looks up to heaven,
While in his noble eye there gleams a tear.
Then, rustling through the myrtle boughs, behold,
There comes a wanton pair of doves,
Who settle down, and, nodding, strut
O'er the gold sands beside the stream,
And gradually approach;
Their red-tinged eyes, so full of love,
Soon see the inward-sorrowing one.
The male, inquisitively social, leaps
On the next bush, and looks
Upon him kindly and complacently.
"Thou sorrowest," murmurs he:
"Be of good cheer, my friend!
All that is needed for calm happiness
Hast thou not here?
Hast thou not pleasure in the golden bough
That shields thee from the day's fierce glow?
Canst thou not raise thy breast to catch,
On the soft moss beside the brook,
The sun's last rays at even?
Here thou mayst wander through the flowers' fresh dew,
Pluck from the overflow
The forest-trees provide,
Thy choicest food,--mayst quench
Thy light thirst at the silvery spring.
Oh friend, true happiness
Lies in contentedness,
And that contentedness
Finds everywhere enough."
"Oh, wise one!" said the eagle, while he sank
In deep and ever deep'ning thought--

"Oh Wisdom! like a dove thou speakest!"

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Epochs

ON Petrarch's heart, all other days before,
In flaming letters written, was impress'd
GOOD FRIDAY. And on mine, be it confess'd,
Is this year's ADVENT, as it passeth o'er.
I do not now begin,--I still adore
Her whom I early cherish'd in my breast;
Then once again with prudence dispossess'd,
And to whose heart I'm driven back once more.
The love of Petrarch, that all-glorious love,
Was unrequited, and, alas, full sad;
One long Good Friday 'twas, one heartache drear
But may my mistress' Advent ever prove,
With its palm-jubilee, so sweet and glad,
One endless Mayday, through the livelong year!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Erl-King

1.

WHO rides there so late through the night dark and drear?
The father it is, with his infant so dear;
He holdeth the boy tightly clasp'd in his arm,
He holdeth him safely, he keepeth him warm.

"My son, wherefore seek'st thou thy face thus to hide?"
"Look, father, the Erl-King is close by our side!
Dost see not the Erl-King, with crown and with train?"
"My son, 'tis the mist rising over the plain."

"Oh, come, thou dear infant! oh come thou with me!
Full many a game I will play there with thee;
On my strand, lovely flowers their blossoms unfold,
My mother shall grace thee with garments of gold."

"My father, my father, and dost thou not hear
The words that the Erl-King now breathes in mine ear?"
"Be calm, dearest child, 'tis thy fancy deceives;
'Tis the sad wind that sighs through the withering leaves."

"Wilt go, then, dear infant, wilt go with me there?
My daughters shall tend thee with sisterly care
My daughters by night their glad festival keep,
They'll dance thee, and rock thee, and sing thee to sleep."

"My father, my father, and dost thou not see,
How the Erl-King his daughters has brought here for me?"
"My darling, my darling, I see it aright,
'Tis the aged grey willows deceiving thy sight."

"I love thee, I'm charm'd by thy beauty, dear boy!
And if thou'rt unwilling, then force I'll employ."
"My father, my father, he seizes me fast,
Full sorely the Erl-King has hurt me at last."

The father now gallops, with terror half wild,
He grasps in his arms the poor shuddering child;
He reaches his courtyard with toil and with dread,--
The child in his arms finds he motionless, dead.

2.

from a translation by
Edwin Zeydel

Who rides so late where winds blow wild?
It is the father grasping his child;
He holds the boy embraced in his arm
He clasps him snugly, he keeps him warm.

"My son, why cover your face in such fear?"
"O don't you see the ErlKing near?
The ErlKing with his crown and train!"
"My son, the mist is on the plain."

"Sweet lad, o come and join me, do!
Such pretty games I'll play with you;
On the shore gay flowers their colors unfold
My mother has made you a garment of gold."

"My father, my father, o can you not hear
The promise the ErlKing breathes in my ear?"
"Be calm, stay calm my child, lie low
In withered leaves the night winds blow."

"Will you, sweet lad, come along with me?
My daughters shall care for you tenderly;
In the night my daughters their revelry keep,
They'll rock you and dance you and sing you to sleep."

"My father, my father, o can you not trace
The ErlKing's daughters in that gloomy place?"
"My son, my son, I see it clear
How grey the ancient willows appear."

"I love you, your comeliness charms me, my boy
And if you're not willing, then force I'll employ!"
"Now father, o father, he's seizing my arm
The ErlKing has done me the cruelest harm!"

The father shudders, his ride is wild
In his arms he's holding the shivering child
He reaches home with toil and dread.
In his arms, the child was dead.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Exchange

THE stones in the streamlet I make my bright pillow,
And open my arms to the swift-rolling billow,

That lovingly hastens to fall on my breast.
Then fickleness soon bids it onwards be flowing;
A second draws nigh, its caresses bestowing,--

And so by a twofold enjoyment I'm blest.

And yet thou art trailing in sorrow and sadness
The moments that life, as it flies, gave for gladness,

Because by thy love thou'rt remember'd no more!
Oh, call back to mind former days and their blisses!
The lips of the second will give as sweet kisses

As any the lips of the first gave before!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Faithless Boy

Hi There! I see you're enjoying the site, and just wanted to extend an invitation to register for our free site. The members of oldpoetry strive to make this a fun place to learn and share - hope you join us! - Kevin

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Farewell

LET mine eye the farewell say,
That my lips can utter ne'er;
Fain I'd be a man to-day,
Yet 'tis hard, oh, hard to bear!
Mournful in an hour like this
Is love's sweetest pledge, I ween;
Cold upon thy mouth the kiss,
Faint thy fingers' pressure e'en.
Oh what rapture to my heart
Used each stolen kiss to bring!
As the violets joy impart,
Gather'd in the early spring.
Now no garlands I entwine,
Now no roses pluck. for thee,
Though 'tis springtime, Fanny mine,
Dreary autumn 'tis to me!
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The First Walpurgis-Night

A DRUID.

SWEET smiles the May!
The forest gay
From frost and ice is freed;
No snow is found,
Glad songs resound
Across the verdant mead.
Upon the height
The snow lies light,
Yet thither now we go,
There to extol our Father's name,
Whom we for ages know.
Amid the smoke shall gleam the flame;
Thus pure the heart will grow.

THE DRUIDS.

Amid the smoke shall gleam the flame;
Extol we now our Father's name,
Whom we for ages know!
Up, up, then, let us go!

ONE OF THE PEOPLE.

Would ye, then, so rashly act?
Would ye instant death attract?
Know ye not the cruel threats
Of the victors we obey?
Round about are placed their nets
In the sinful heathen's way.
Ah! upon the lofty wall
Wife and children slaughter they;
And we all
Hasten to a certain fall.

CHORUS OF WOMEN.

Ay, upon the camp's high wall
All our children loved they slay.

Ah, what cruel victors they!
And we all
Hasten to a certain fall.

A DRUID.

Who fears to-day
His rites to pay,
Deserves his chains to wear.
The forest's free!
This wood take we,
And straight a pile prepare!
Yet in the wood
To stay 'tis good
By day, till all is still,
With watchers all around us plac'd
Protecting you from ill.
With courage fresh, then let us haste
Our duties to fulfil.

CHORUS OF WATCHERS.

Ye valiant watchers, now divide
Your numbers through the forest wide,
And see that all is still,
While they their rites fulfil.

A WATCHER.

Let us in a cunning wise,
Yon dull Christian priests surprise
With the devil of their talk

We'll those very priests confound.
Come with prong, and come with fork.

Raise a wild and rattling sound
Through the livelong night, and prow!

All the rocky passes round.
Screechowl, owl,
Join in chorus with our howl!

CHORUS OF WATCHERS.

Come with prong, and come with fork,
Like the devil of their talk,
And with wildly rattling sound,
Prowl the desert rocks around!
Screechowl, owl,
Join in chorus with our howl!

A DRUID.

Thus far 'tis right.
That we by night
Our Father's praises sing;
Yet when 'tis day,
To Thee we may
A heart unsullied bring.
'Tis true that now,
And often, Thou
Fav'rest the foe in fight.
As from the smoke is freed the blaze,
So let our faith burn bright!
And if they crush our golden ways,
Who e'er can crush Thy light?

A CHRISTIAN WATCHER.

Comrades, quick! your aid afford!
All the brood of hell's abroad;
See how their enchanted forms

Through and through with flames are glowing!
Dragon-women, men-wolf swarms,

On in quick succession going!
Let us, let us haste to fly!

Wilder yet the sounds are growing,
And the archfiend roars on high;
From the ground
Hellish vapours rise around.

CHORUS OF CHRISTIAN WATCHERS.

Terrible enchanted forms,
Dragon-women, men-wolf swarms!
Wilder yet the sounds are growing!
See, the archfiend comes, all-glowing!
From the ground
Hellish vapours rise around!

CHORUS OF DRUIDS.

As from the smoke is freed the blaze,

So let our faith burn bright!
And if they crush our golden ways,

Who e'er can crush Thy light?

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Fisherman

THE waters rush'd, the waters rose,

A fisherman sat by,
While on his line in calm repose

He cast his patient eye.
And as he sat, and hearken'd there,

The flood was cleft in twain,
And, lo! a dripping mermaid fair

Sprang from the troubled main.

She sang to him, and spake the while:

"Why lurest thou my brood,
With human wit and human guile

From out their native flood?
Oh, couldst thou know how gladly dart

The fish across the sea,
Thou wouldst descend, e'en as thou art,

And truly happy be!

"Do not the sun and moon with grace

Their forms in ocean lave?
Shines not with twofold charms their face,

When rising from the wave?
The deep, deep heavens, then lure thee not,--

The moist yet radiant blue,--
Not thine own form,--to tempt thy lot

'Midst this eternal dew?"

The waters rush'd, the waters rose,

Wetting his naked feet;
As if his true love's words were those,

His heart with longing beat.
She sang to him, to him spake she,

His doom was fix'd, I ween;
Half drew she him, and half sank he,

And ne'er again was seen.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Fool's Epilogue

MANY good works I've done and ended,
Ye take the praise--I'm not offended;
For in the world, I've always thought
Each thing its true position hath sought.
When praised for foolish deeds am I,
I set off laughing heartily;
When blamed for doing something good,
I take it in an easy mood.
If some one stronger gives me hard blows,
That it's a jest, I feign to suppose:
But if 'tis one that's but my own like,
I know the way such folks to strike.
When Fortune smiles, I merry grow,
And sing in dulci júbilo;
When sinks her wheel, and tumbles me o'er,
I think 'tis sure to rise once more.

In the sunshine of summer I ne'er lament,
Because the winter it cannot prevent;
And when the white snow-flakes fall around,
I don my skates, and am off with a bound.
Though I dissemble as I will,
The sun for me will ne'er stand still;
The old and wonted course is run,
Until the whole of life is done;
Each day the servant like the lord,
In turns comes home, and goes abroad;
If proud or humble the line they take,
They all must eat, drink, sleep, and wake.
So nothing ever vexes me;
Act like the fool, and wise ye'll be!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Fox And The Crane

ONCE two persons uninvited
Came to join my dinner table;
For the nonce they lived united,
Fox and crane yclept in fable.
Civil greetings pass'd between us
Then I pluck'd some pigeons tender
For the fox of jackal-genius,
Adding grapes in full-grown splendour.
Long-neck'd flasks I put as dishes
For the crane, without delaying,
Fill'd with gold and silver fishes,
In the limpid water playing.
Had ye witness'd Reynard planted
At his flat plate, all demurely,
Ye with envy must have granted:
"Ne'er was such a gourmand, surely!"
While the bird with circumspection
On one foot, as usual, cradled,
From the flasks his fish-refection
With his bill and long neck ladled.
One the pigeons praised,--the other,
As they went, extoll'd the fishes,
Each one scoffing at his brother
For preferring vulgar dishes.

*

If thou wouldst preserve thy credit,
When thou askest folks to guzzle
At thy hoard, take care to spread it
Suited both for bill and muzzle.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Fox And The Huntsman

HARD 'tis on a fox's traces

To arrive, midst forest-glades;
Hopeless utterly the chase is,

If his flight the huntsman aids.

And so 'tis with many a wonder,

(Why A B make Ab in fact,
Over which we gape and blunder,

And our head and brains distract.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Friendly Meeting

IN spreading mantle to my chin concealed,
I trod the rocky path, so steep and grey,
Then to the wintry plain I bent my way
Uneasily, to flight my bosom steel'd.
But sudden was the newborn day reveal'd:
A maiden came, in heavenly bright array,
Like the fair creatures of the poet's lay
In realms of song. My yearning heart was heal'd.
Yet turn'd I thence, till she had onward pass'd,
While closer still the folds to draw I tried,
As though with heat self-kindled to grow warm;
But follow'd her. She stood. The die was cast!
No more within my mantle could I hide;
I threw it off,--she lay within mine arm.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Frogs

A POOL was once congeal'd with frost;
The frogs, in its deep waters lost,

No longer dared to croak or spring;
But promised, being half asleep,
If suffer'd to the air to creep,

As very nightingales to sing.

A thaw dissolved the ice so strong,--
They proudly steer'd themselves along,
When landed, squatted on the shore,
And croak'd as loudly as before.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Garlands

KLOPSTOCK would lead us away from Pindus; no longer for laurel
May we be eager--the homely acorn alone must content us;
Yet he himself his more-than-epic crusade is conducting
High on Golgotha's summit, that foreign gods he may honour!
Yet, on what hill he prefers, let him gather the angels together,
Suffer deserted disciples to weep o'er the grave of the just one:
There where a hero and saint hath died, where a bard breath'd his numbers,
Both for our life and our death an ensample of courage resplendent
And of the loftiest human worth to bequeath,--ev'ry nation
There will joyously kneel in devotion ecstatic, revering
Thorn and laurel garland, and all its charms and its tortures.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The German Parnassus

'NEATH the shadow

Of these bushes,
On the meadow

Where the cooling water gushes.
Phoebus gave me, when a boy,
All life's fullness to enjoy.
So, in silence, as the God
Bade them with his sov'reign nod,
Sacred Muses train'd my days
To his praise.--
With the bright and silv'ry flood
Of Parnassus stirr'd my blood,
And the seal so pure and chaste
By them on my lips was placed.

With her modest pinions, see,
Philomel encircles me!
In these bushes, in yon grove,

Calls she to her sister-throng,

And their heavenly choral song
Teaches me to dream of love.

Fullness waxes in my breast
Of emotions social, blest;
Friendship's nurtured love awakes,--
And the silence Phoebus breaks
Of his mountains, of his vales,
Sweetly blow the balmy gales;
All for whom he shows affection,
Who are worthy his protection,
Gladly follow his direction.

This one comes with joyous bearing

And with open, radiant gaze;
That a sterner look is wearing,
This one, scarcely cured, with daring

Wakes the strength of former days;
For the sweet, destructive flame
Pierced his marrow and his frame.
That which Amor stole before
Phoebus only can restore,
Peace, and joy, and harmony,
Aspirations pure and free.

Brethren, rise ye!
Numbers prize ye!

Deeds of worth resemble they.

Who can better than the bard
Guide a friend when gone astray?

If his duty he regard,
More he'll do, than others may.

Yes! afar I hear them sing!
Yes! I hear them touch the string,
And with mighty godlike stroke

Right and duty they inspire,
And evoke,

As they sing, and wake the lyre,
Tendencies of noblest worth,
To each type of strength give birth.

Phantasies of sweetest power
Flower
Round about on ev'ry bough,
Bending now
Like the magic wood of old,
'Neath the fruit that gleams like gold.

What we feel and what we view

In the land of highest bliss,--

This dear soil, a sun like this,--
Lures the best of women too.
And the Muses' breathings blest
Rouse the maiden's gentle breast,
Tune the throat to minstrelsy,
And with cheeks of beauteous dye,
Bid it sing a worthy song,
Sit the sister-band among;
And their strains grow softer still,
As they vie with earnest will.

One amongst the band betimes

Goes to wander
By the beeches, 'neath the limes,

Yonder seeking, finding yonder
That which in the morning-grove
She had lost through roguish Love,
All her breast's first aspirations,
And her heart's calm meditations,
To the shady wood so fair

Gently stealing,
Takes she that which man can ne'er

Duly merit,--each soft feeling,--
Disregards the noontide ray
And the dew at close of day,Ä

In the plain her path she loses.
Ne'er disturb her on her way!

Seek her silently, ye Muses

Shouts I hear, wherein the sound
Of the waterfall is drown'd.
From the grove loud clamours rise,
Strange the tumult, strange the cries.
See I rightly? Can it be?
To the very sanctuary,
Lo, an impious troop in-hies!

O'er the land
Streams the band;
Hot desire,
Drunken-fire
In their gaze
Wildly plays,--
Makes their hair
Bristle there.
And the troop,
With fell swoop,
Women, men,
Coming then,
Ply their blows
And expose,
Void of shame,
All the frame.
Iron shot,
Fierce and hot,
Strike with fear
On the ear;
All they slay
On their way.
O'er the land
Pours the band;
All take flight
At their sight.

Ah, o'er ev'ry plant they rush!
Ah, their cruel footsteps crush
All the flowers that fill their path!
Who will dare to stem their wrath?

Brethren, let us venture all!

Virtue in your pure cheek glows.
Phoebus will attend our call

When he sees our heavy woes;
And that we may have aright
Weapons suited to the fight,
He the mountain shaketh now--
From its brow
Rattling down
Stone on stone
Through the thicket spread appear.
Brethren, seize them! Wherefore fear?
Now the villain crew assail,
As though with a storm of hail,
And expel the strangers wild
From these regions soft and mild
Where the sun has ever smil'd!

What strange wonder do I see?
Can it be?
All my limbs of power are reft.
And all strength my hand has left.
Can it he?
None are strangers that I see!
And our brethren 'tis who go
On before, the way to show!
Oh, the reckless impious ones!
How they, with their jarring tones,
Beat the time, as on they hie!
Quick, my brethren!--let us fly!

To the rash ones, yet a word!
Ay, my voice shall now be heard,
As a peal of thunder, strong!

Words as poets' arms were made,--

When the god will he obey'd,
Follow fast his darts ere long.

Was it possible that ye
Thus your godlike dignity
Should forget? The Thyrsus rude

Must a heavy burden feel

To the hand but wont to steal
O'er the lyre in gentle mood.
From the sparkling waterfalls,

From the brook that purling calls,
Shall Silenus' loathsome beast
Be allow'd at will to feast?
Aganippe's wave he sips
With profane and spreading lips,--
With ungainly feet stamps madly,
Till the waters flow on sadly.

Fain I'd think myself deluded

In the sadd'ning sounds I hear;
From the holy glades secluded

Hateful tones assail the ear.
Laughter wild (exchange how mournful!)

Takes the place of love's sweet dream;
Women-haters and the scornful

In exulting chorus scream.
Nightingale and turtle dove

Fly their nests so warm and chaste,
And, inflamed with sensual love,

Holds the Faun the Nymph embrac'd.
Here a garment's torn away,

Scoffs succeed their sated bliss,
While the god, with angry ray,

Looks upon each impious kiss.

Vapour, smoke, as from a fire,

And advancing clouds I view;
Chords not only grace the lyre,

For the bow its chords bath too.
Even the adorer's heart

Dreads the wild advancing hand,
For the flames that round them dart

Show the fierce destroyer's hand.

Oh neglect not what I say,

For I speak it lovingly!
From our boundaries haste away,

From the god's dread anger fly!

Cleanse once more the holy place,
Turn the savage train aside!
Earth contains upon its face
Many a spot unsanctified;
Here we only prize the good.
Stars unsullied round us burn.
If ye, in repentant mood,
From your wanderings would return,--
If ye fail to find the bliss
That ye found with us of yore,--
Or when lawless mirth like this
Gives your hearts delight no more,--
Then return in pilgrim guise,
Gladly up the mountain go,
While your strains repentant rise,
And our brethren's advent show.
Let a new-born wreath entwine
Solemnly your temples round;
Rapture glows in hearts divine
When a long-lost sinner's found.
Swifter e'en than Lathe's flood
Round Death's silent house can play,
Ev'ry error of the good
Will love's chalice wash away.
All will haste your steps to meet,
As ye come in majesty,--
Men your blessing will entreat;--
Ours ye thus will doubly be!
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Goblet

ONCE I held a well-carved brimming goblet,--
In my two hands tightly clasp'd I held it,
Eagerly the sweet wine sipp'd I from it,
Seeking there to drown all care and sorrow.

Amor enter'd in, and found me sitting,
And he gently smiled in modest fashion,
Smiled as though the foolish one he pitied.

"Friend, I know a far more beauteous vessel,
One wherein to sink thy spirit wholly;
Say, what wilt thou give me, if I grant it,
And with other nectar fill it for thee?"

Oh, how kindly hath he kept his promise!
For to me, who long had yearn'd, he granted
Thee, my Lida, fill'd with soft affection.

When I clasp mine arms around thee fondly,
When I drink in love's long-hoarded balsam
From thy darling lips so true, so faithful,
Fill'd with bliss thus speak I to my spirit
"No! a vessel such as this, save Amor
Never god hath fashion'd or been lord of!
Such a form was ne'er produced by Vulcan
With his cunning, reason-gifted hammers!
On the leaf-crown'd mountains may Lyaeus
Bid his Fauns, the oldest and the wisest,
Pass the choicest clusters through the winepress,
And himself watch o'er the fermentation:
Such a draught no toil can e'er procure him!"

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The God And The Bayadere - An Indian Legend

MAHADEVA, Lord of earth

For the sixth time comes below,

As a man of mortal birth,--

Like him, feeling joy and woe.

Hither loves he to repair,

And his power behind to leave;

If to punish or to spare,

Men as man he'd fain perceive.
And when he the town as a trav'ller hath seen,
Observing the mighty, regarding the mean,
He quits it, to go on his journey, at eve.

He was leaving now the place,

When an outcast met his eyes,--

Fair in form, with painted face,--

Where some straggling dwellings rise.

"Maiden, hail!"--"Thanks! welcome here!

Stay!--I'll join thee in the road.'

"Who art thou?"--"A Bayadere,

And this house is love's abode."
The cymbal she hastens to play for the dance,
Well skill'd in its mazes the sight to entrance,
Then by her with grace is the nosegay bestow'd.

Then she draws him, as in play,

O'er the threshold eagerly:

"Beauteous stranger, light as day

Thou shalt soon this cottage see.

I'll refresh thee, if thou'rt tired,

And will bathe thy weary feet;

Take whate'er by thee's desired,

Toying, rest, or rapture sweet."--
She busily seeks his feign'd suff'rings to ease;
Then smiles the Immortal; with pleasure he sees
That with kindness a heart so corrupted can beat.

And he makes her act the part

Of a slave; he's straight obey'd.

What at first had been but art,

Soon is nature in the maid.

By degrees the fruit we find,

Where the buds at first obtain;

When obedience fills the mind,

Love will never far remain.
But sharper and sharper the maiden to prove,
The Discerner of all things below and above,
Feigns pleasure, and horror, and maddening pain.

And her painted cheeks he kisses,

And his vows her heart enthrall;

Feeling love's sharp pangs and blisses,

Soon her tears begin to fall.

At his feet she now must sink,

Not with thoughts of lust or gain,--

And her slender members shrink,

And devoid of power remain.
And so the bright hours with gladness prepare
Their dark, pleasing veil of a texture so fair,
And over the couch softly, tranquilly reign.

Late she falls asleep, thus bless'd,--

Early wakes, her slumbers fled,

And she finds the much-loved guest

On her bosom lying dead.

Screaming falls she on him there,

But, alas, too late to save!

And his rigid limbs they bear

Straightway to their fiery grave.

Then hears she the priests and the funeral song,

Then madly she runs, and she severs the throng:

"Why press tow'rd the pile thus? Why scream thus, and rave?"

Then she sinks beside his bier,

And her screams through air resound:

"I must seek my spouse so dear,

E'en if in the grave he's bound.

Shall those limbs of grace divine

Fall to ashes in my sight?

Mine he was! Yes, only mine!

Ah, one single blissful night!"

The priests chaunt in chorus: "We bear out the old,

When long they've been weary, and late they've grown cold:

We bear out the young, too, so thoughtless and light.

"To thy priests' commands give ear!

This one was thy husband ne'er;

Live still as a Bayadere,

And no duty thou need'st share.

To deaths silent realms from life,

None but shades attend man's frame,

With the husband, none but wife,--

That is duty, that is fame.

Ye trumpets, your sacred lament haste to raise
Oh, welcome, ye gods, the bright lustre of days!
Oh, welcome to heaven the youth from the flame!"

Thus increased her torments are

By the cruel, heartless quire;

And with arms outstretching far

Leaps she on the glowing pyre.

But the youth divine outsprings

From the flame with heav'nly grace,

And on high his flight he wings,

While his arms his love embrace.

In the sinner repentant the Godhead feels joy;

Immortals delight thus their might to employ.

Lost children to raise to a heavenly place.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Godlike

NOBLE be man,
Helpful and good!
For that alone
Distinguisheth him
From all the beings
Unto us known.

Hail to the beings,
Unknown and glorious,
Whom we forebode!
From his example
Learn we to know them!

For unfeeling
Nature is ever:
On bad and on good
The sun alike shineth;
And on the wicked,
As on the best,
The moon and stars gleam.

Tempest and torrent,
Thunder and hail,
Roar on their path,
Seizing the while,
As they haste onward,
One after another.

Even so, fortune
Gropes 'mid the throng--
Innocent boyhood's
Curly head seizing,--
Seizing the hoary
Head of the sinner.

After laws mighty,
Brazen, eternal,
Must all we mortals
Finish the circuit
Of our existence.

Man, and man only
Can do the impossible;
He 'tis distinguisheth,
Chooseth and judgeth;
He to the moment
Endurance can lend.

He and he only
The good can reward,
The bad can he punish,
Can heal and can save;

All that wanders and strays
Can usefully blend.
And we pay homage
To the immortals
As though they were men,
And did in the great,
What the best, in the small,
Does or might do.

Be the man that is noble,
Both helpful and good.
Unweariedly forming
The right and the useful,
A type of those beings
Our mind hath foreshadow'd!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Goldsmith's Apprentice

My neighbour, none can e'er deny,

Is a most beauteous maid;
Her shop is ever in mine eye,

When working at my trade.

To ring and chain I hammer then

The wire of gold assay'd,
And think the while: "For Kate, oh when

Will such a ring be made?"

And when she takes her shutters down,

Her shop at once invade,
To buy and haggle, all the town,

For all that's there displayd.

I file, and maybe overfile

The wire of gold assay'd;
My master grumbles all the while,--

Her shop the mischief made.

To ply her wheel she straight begins,

When not engaged in trade;
I know full well for what she spins,--

'Tis hope guides that dear maid.

Her leg, while her small foot treads on,

Is in my mind portray'd;
Her garter I recall anon,--

I gave it that dear maid.

Then to her lips the finest thread

Is by her hand convey'd.
Were I there only in its stead,

How I would kiss the maid!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Happy Couple

AFTER these vernal rains

That we so warmly sought,
Dear wife, see how our plains

With blessings sweet are fraught!
We cast our distant gaze

Far in the misty blue;
Here gentle love still strays,

Here dwells still rapture true.

Thou seest whither go

Yon pair of pigeons white,
Where swelling violets blow

Round sunny foliage bright.
'Twas there we gather'd first

A nosegay as we roved;
There into flame first burst

The passion that we proved.

Yet when, with plighted troth,

The priest beheld us fare
Home from the altar both,

With many a youthful pair,--
Then other moons had birth,

And many a beauteous sun,
Then we had gain'd the earth

Whereon life's race to run.

A hundred thousand fold

The mighty bond was seal'd;
In woods, on mountains cold,

In bushes, in the field,
Within the wall, in caves,

And on the craggy height,
And love, e'en o'er the waves,

Bore in his tube the light.

Contented we remain'd,
We deem'd ourselves a pair;
'Twas otherwise ordain'd,
For, lo! a third was there;
A fourth, fifth, sixth appear'd,
And sat around our board;
And now the plants we've rear'd
High o'er our heads have soar'd!
How fair and pleasant looks,
On yonder beauteous spot,
Embraced by poplar-brooks,
The newly-finish'd cot!
Who is it there that sits
In that glad home above?
Is't not our darling Fritz
With his own darling love?
Beside yon precipice,
Whence pent-up waters steal,
And leaving the abyss,
Fall foaming through the wheel,
Though people often tell
Of millers' wives so fair,
Yet none can e'er excel
Our dearest daughter there!
Yet where the thick-set green
Stands round yon church and sad,
Where the old fir-tree's seen
Alone tow'rd heaven to nod,--
'Tis there the ashes lie
Of our untimely dead;
From earth our gaze on high
By their blest memory's led.

See how yon hill is bright
With billowy-waving arms!
The force returns, whose might
Has vanquished war's alarms.
Who proudly hastens here
With wreath-encircled brow?
'Tis like our child so dear
Thus Charles comes homeward now.
That dearest honour'd guest
Is welcom'd by the bride;
She makes the true one blest,
At the glad festal tide.
And ev'ry one makes haste
To join the dance with glee;
While thou with wreaths hast graced
The youngest children three.
To sound of flute and horn
The time appears renew'd,
When we, in love's young morn,
In the glad dance upstood;
And perfect bliss I know
Ere the year's course is run,
For to the font we go
With grandson and with son!
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Heathrose

ONCE a boy a Rosebud spied,

Heathrose fair and tender,
All array'd in youthful pride,--
Quickly to the spot he hied,

Ravished by her splendour.
Rosebud, rosebud, rosebud red,

Heathrose fair and tender!

Said the boy, "I'll now pick thee,

Heathrose fair and tender!"
Said the rosebud, "I'll prick thee,
So that thou'lt remember me,

Ne'er will I surrender!"
Rosebud, rosebud, rosebud red,

Heathrose fair and tender!

Now the cruel boy must pick

Heathrose fair and tender;
Rosebud did her best to prick,--
Vain 'twas 'gainst her fate to kick--

She must needs surrender.
Rosebud, rosebud, rosebud red,

Heathrose fair and tender!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Hunter's Even-Song

THE plain with still and wand'ring feet,

And gun full-charged, I tread,
And hov'ring see thine image sweet,

Thine image dear, o'er head.

In gentle silence thou dost fare

Through field and valley dear;
But doth my fleeting image ne'er

To thy mind's eye appear?

His image, who, by grief oppress'd,

Roams through the world forlorn,
And wanders on from east to west,

Because from thee he's torn?

When I would think of none but thee,

Mine eyes the moon survey;
A calm repose then steals o'er me,

But how, 'twere hard to say.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Instructors

WHEN Diogenes quietly sunn'd himself in his barrel,
When Calanus with joy leapt in the flame-breathing grave,
Oh, what noble lessons were those for the rash son of Philip,
Were not the lord of the world e'en for instruction too great!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The King Of Thule

IN Thule lived a monarch,
Still faithful to the grave,
To whom his dying mistress
A golden goblet gave.
Beyond all price he deem'd it,
He quaff'd it at each feast;
And, when he drain'd that goblet,
His tears to flow ne'er ceas'd.
And when he felt death near him,
His cities o'er he told,
And to his heir left all things,
But not that cup of gold.
A regal banquet held he
In his ancestral hall,
In yonder sea-wash'd castle,
'Mongst his great nobles all.
There stood the aged reveller,
And drank his last life's-glow,--
Then hurl'd the holy goblet
Into the flood below.
He saw it falling, filling,
And sinking 'neath the main,
His eyes then closed for ever,
He never drank again.
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Legend Of The Horseshoe

WHAT time our Lord still walk'd the earth,
Unknown, despised, of humble birth,
And on Him many a youth attended
(His words they seldom comprehended),
It ever seem'd to Him most meet
To hold His court in open street,
As under heaven's broad canopy
One speaks with greater liberty.
The teachings of His blessed word
From out His holy mouth were heard;
Each market to a fane turn'd He
With parable and simile.

One day, as tow'rd a town He roved,
In peace of mind with those He loved,
Upon the path a something gleam'd;
A broken horseshoe 'twas, it seem'd.
So to St. Peter thus He spake:
"That piece of iron prythee take!"
St. Peter's thoughts had gone astray,--
He had been musing on his way
Respecting the world's government,
A dream that always gives content,
For in the head 'tis check'd by nought;
This ever was his dearest thought,
For him this prize was far too mean
Had it a crown and sceptre been!
But, surely, 'twasn't worth the trouble
For half a horseshoe to bend double!
And so he turn'd away his head,
As if he heard not what was said,

The Lord, forbearing tow'rd all men,
Himself pick'd up the horseshoe then
(He ne'er again like this stoop'd down).
And when at length they reach'd the town,
Before a smithy He remain'd,
And there a penny for 't obtain'd.
As they the market-place went by,
Some beauteous cherries caught His eye:
Accordingly He bought as many
As could be purchased for a penny,
And then, as oft His wont had been,
Placed them within His sleeve unseen.

They went out by another gate,
O'er plains and fields proceeding straight,
No house or tree was near the spot,
The sun was bright, the day was hot;
In short, the weather being such,
A draught of water was worth much.
The Lord walk'd on before them all,

And let, unseen, a cherry fall.
St. Peter rush'd to seize it hold,
As though an apple 'twere of gold;
His palate much approv'd the berry;
The Lord ere long another cherry
Once more let fall upon the plain;
St. Peter forthwith stoop'd again.
The Lord kept making him thus bend
To pick up cherries without end.
For a long time the thing went on;
The Lord then said, in cheerful tone:
"Had'st thou but moved when thou wert bid,
Thou of this trouble had'st been rid;
The man who small things scorns, will next,
By things still smaller be perplex'd."

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Loving One Once More

WHY do I o'er my paper once more bend?
Ask not too closely, dearest one, I pray
For, to speak truth, I've nothing now to say;
Yet to thy hands at length 'twill come, dear friend.
Since I can come not with it, what I send
My undivided heart shall now convey,
With all its joys, hopes, pleasures, pains, to-day:
All this hath no beginning, hath no end.
Henceforward I may ne'er to thee confide
How, far as thought, wish, fancy, will, can reach,
My faithful heart with thine is surely blended.
Thus stood I once enraptured by thy side,
Gazed on thee, and said nought. What need of speech?
My very being in itself was ended.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Loving One Writes

THE look that thy sweet eyes on mine impress
The pledge thy lips to mine convey,--the kiss,--
He who, like me, hath knowledge sure of this,
Can he in aught beside find happiness?
Removed from thee, friend-sever'd, in distress,
These thoughts I vainly struggle to dismiss:
They still return to that one hour of bliss,
The only one; then tears my grief confess.
But unawares the tear makes haste to dry:
He loves, methinks, e'en to these glades so still,--
And shalt not thou to distant lands extend?
Receive the murmurs of his loving sigh;
My only joy on earth is in thy will,
Thy kindly will tow'rd me; a token send!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Magic Net

Do I see a contest yonder?
See I miracles or pastimes?
Beauteous urchins, five in number,
'Gainst five sisters fair contending,--
Measured is the time they're beating--
At a bright enchantress' bidding.
Glitt'ring spears by some are wielded,
Threads are others nimbly twining,

So that in their snares, the weapons
One would think, must needs be captured,
Soon, in truth, the spears are prison'd;
Yet they, in the gentle war-dance,
One by one escape their fetters
In the row of loops so tender,
That make haste to seize a free one
Soon as they release a captive.

So with contests, strivings, triumphs,
Flying now, and now returning,
Is an artful net soon woven,
In its whiteness like the snow-flakes,
That, from light amid the darkness,
Draw their streaky lines so varied,
As e'en colours scarce can draw them.

Who shall now receive that garment
Far beyond all others wish'd-for?
Whom our much-loved mistress favour
As her own acknowledged servant?
I am blest by kindly Fortune's
Tokens true, in silence pray'd for!
And I feel myself held captive,
To her service now devoted.

Yet, e'en while I, thus enraptured,
Thus adorn'd, am proudly wand'ring,
See! yon wantons are entwining,
Void of strife, with secret ardour,
Other nets, each fine and finer,
Threads of twilight interweaving,
Moonbeams sweet, night-violets' balsam.

Ere the net is noticed by us,
Is a happier one imprison'd,
Whom we, one and all, together
Greet with envy and with blessings.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Maid Of The Mill's Repentance

YOUTH.

AWAY, thou swarthy witch! Go forth

From out my house, I tell thee!
Or else I needs must, in my wrath,

Expel thee!
What's this thou singest so falsely, forsooth,
Of love and a maiden's silent truth?

Who'll trust to such a story!

GIPSY.

I sing of a maid's repentant fears,

And long and bitter yearning;
Her levity's changed to truth and tears

All-burning.
She dreads no more the threats of her mother,
She dreads far less the blows of her brother,

Than the dearly loved-one's hatred.

YOUTH.

Of selfishness sing and treacherous lies,

Of murder and thievish plunder!
Such actions false will cause no surprise,

Or wonder.
When they share their booty, both clothes and purse,--
As bad as you gipsies, and even worse,

Such tales find ready credence.

GIPSY.

"Alas, alas! oh what have I done?

Can listening aught avail me?
I hear him toward my room hasten on,

To hail me.
My heart beat high, to myself I said:
'O would that thou hadst never betray'd

That night of love to thy mother!'"

YOUTH.

Alas! I foolishly ventured there,

For the cheating silence misled me;
Ah, sweetest! let me to thee repair,--

Nor dread me!
When suddenly rose a fearful din,
Her mad relations came pouring in.

My blood still boils in my body!

GIPSY.

"Oh when will return an hour like this?

I pine in silent sadness;
I've thrown away my only true bliss

With madness.
Alas, poor maid! O pity my youth!
My brother was then full cruel in troth

To treat the loved one so basely!"

THE POET.

The swarthy woman then went inside,

To the spring in the courtyard yonder;
Her eyes from their stain she purified,

And,--wonder!--
Her face and eyes were radiant and bright,
And the maid of the mill was disclosed to the sight

Of the startled and angry stripling!

THE MAID OF THE MILL.

Thou sweetest, fairest, dearly-loved life!

Before thine anger I cower;
But blows I dread not, nor sharp-edged knife,--

This hour
Of sorrow and love to thee I'll sing,
And myself before thy feet I'll fling,

And either live or die there!

YOUTH.

Affection, say, why buried so deep

In my heart hast thou lain hidden?
By whom hast thou now to awake from thy sleep

Been bidden?
Ah love, that thou art immortal I see!
Nor knavish cunning nor treachery

Can destroy thy life so godlike.

THE MAID OF THE MILL.

If still with as fond and heartfelt love,

As thou once didst swear, I'm cherish'd,
Then nought of the rapture we used to prove

Is perish'd.
So take the woman so dear to thy breast!
In her young and innocent charms be blest,

For all are thine from henceforward!

BOTH.

Now, sun, sink to rest! Now, sun, arise!

Ye stars, be now shining, now darkling!
A star of love now gleams in the skies,

All-sparkling!
As long as the fountain may spring and run,
So long will we two be blended in one,

Upon each other's bosoms!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Maiden Speaks

Hi There! I see you're enjoying the site, and just wanted to extend an invitation to register for our free site. The members of oldpoetry strive to make this a fun place to learn and share - hope you join us! - Kevin

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Metamorphosis Of Plants

THOU art confused, my beloved, at, seeing the thousandfold union

Shown in this flowery troop, over the garden dispers'd;
any a name dost thou hear assign'd; one after another

Falls on thy list'ning ear, with a barbarian sound.
None resembleth another, yet all their forms have a likeness;

Therefore, a mystical law is by the chorus proclaim'd;
Yes, a sacred enigma! Oh, dearest friend, could I only

Happily teach thee the word, which may the mystery solve!
Closely observe how the plant, by little and little progressing,

Step by step guided on, changeth to blossom and fruit!
First from the seed it unravels itself, as soon as the silent

Fruit-bearing womb of the earth kindly allows Its escape,
And to the charms of the light, the holy, the ever-in-motion,

Trusteth the delicate leaves, feebly beginning to shoot.
Simply slumber'd the force in the seed; a germ of the future,

Peacefully lock'd in itself, 'neath the integument lay,
Leaf and root, and bud, still void of colour, and shapeless;

Thus doth the kernel, while dry, cover that motionless life.
Upward then strives it to swell, in gentle moisture confiding,

And, from the night where it dwelt, straightway ascendeth to light.
Yet still simple remaineth its figure, when first it appeareth;

And 'tis a token like this, points out the child 'mid the plants.
Soon a shoot, succeeding it, riseth on high, and reneweth,

Piling-up node upon node, ever the primitive form;
Yet not ever alike: for the following leaf, as thou seest,

Ever produceth itself, fashioned in manifold ways.
Longer, more indented, in points and in parts more divided,

Which. all-deform'd until now, slept in the organ below,
So at length it attaineth the noble and destined perfection,

Which, in full many a tribe, fills thee with wondering awe.
Many ribb'd and tooth'd, on a surface juicy and swelling,

Free and unending the shoot seemeth in fullness to be;
Yet here Nature restraineth, with powerful hands, the formation,

And to a perfecter end, guideth with softness its growth,
Less abundantly yielding the sap, contracting the vessels,

So that the figure ere long gentler effects doth disclose.
Soon and in silence is check'd the growth of the vigorous branches,

And the rib of the stalk fuller becometh in form.
Leafless, however, and quick the tenderer stem then up-springeth,

And a miraculous sight doth the observer enchant.
Ranged in a circle, in numbers that now are small, and now countless,

Gather the smaller-sized leaves, close by the side of their like.
Round the axis compress'd the sheltering calyx unfoldeth,

And, as the perfectest type, brilliant-hued coronals forms.
Thus doth Nature bloom, in glory still nobler and fuller,

Showing, in order arranged, member on member uprear'd.
Wonderment fresh dost thou feel, as soon as the stem rears the flower

Over the scaffolding frail of the alternating leaves.
But this glory is only the new creation's foreteller,

Yes, the leaf with its hues feeleth the hand all divine,
And on a sudden contracteth itself; the tenderest figures

Twofold as yet, hasten on, destined to blend into one.
Lovingly now the beauteous pairs are standing together,

Gather'd in countless array, there where the altar is raised.
Hymen hovereth o'er them, and scents delicious and mighty

Stream forth their fragrance so sweet, all things enliv'ning around.
Presently, parcell'd out, unnumber'd germs are seen swelling,

Sweetly conceal'd in the womb, where is made perfect the fruit.
Here doth Nature close the ring of her forces eternal;

Yet doth a new one, at once, cling to the one gone before,
So that the chain be prolonged for ever through all generations,

And that the whole may have life, e'en as enjoy'd by each part.
Now, my beloved one, turn thy gaze on the many-hued thousands

Which, confusing no more, gladden the mind as they wave.
Every plant unto thee proclaimeth the laws everlasting,

Every flowered speaks louder and louder to thee;
But if thou here canst decipher the mystic words of the goddess,

Everywhere will they be seen, e'en though the features are changed.
Creeping insects may linger, the eager butterfly hasten,--

Plastic and forming, may man change e'en the figure decreed!
Oh, then, bethink thee, as well, how out of the germ of acquaintance,

Kindly intercourse sprang, slowly unfolding its leaves;
Soon how friendship with might unveil'd itself in our bosoms,

And how Amor, at length, brought forth blossom and fruit
Think of the manifold ways wherein Nature hath lent to our feelings,

Silently giving them birth, either the first or the last!
Yes, and rejoice in the present day! For love that is holy

Seeketh the noblest of fruits,--that where the thoughts are the same,
Where the opinions agree,--that the pair may, in rapt contemplation,

Lovingly blend into one,--find the more excellent world.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Minstrel

"WHAT tuneful strains salute mine ear

Without the castle walls?
Oh, let the song re-echo here,

Within our festal halls!"
Thus spake the king, the page out-hied;
The boy return'd; the monarch cried:

"Admit the old man yonder!"

"All hail, ye noble lords to-night!

All hail, ye beauteous dames!
Star placed by star! What heavenly sight!

Whoe'er can tell their names?
Within this glittering hall sublime,
Be closed, mine eyes! 'tis not the time

For me to feast my wonder."

The minstrel straightway closed his eyes,

And woke a thrilling tone;
The knights look'd on in knightly guise,

Fair looks tow'rd earth were thrown.
The monarch, ravish'd by the strain,
Bade them bring forth a golden chain,

To be his numbers' guerdon.

"The golden chain give not to me,

But give the chain to those
In whose bold face we shiver'd see

The lances of our foes.
Or give it to thy chancellor there;
With other burdens he may bear

This one more golden burden.

"I sing, like birds of blithesome note,

That in the branches dwell;
The song that rises from the throat

Repays the minstrel well.
One boon I'd crave, if not too bold--
One bumper in a cup of gold

Be as my guerdon given."

The bowl he raised, the bowl he quaff'd:

"Oh drink, with solace fraught!
Oh, house thrice-blest, where such a draught

A trifling gift is thought!
When Fortune smiles, remember me,
And as I thank you heartily,

As warmly thank ye Heaven!"

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Misanthrope

AT first awhile sits he,

With calm, unruffled brow;
His features then I see,
Distorted hideously,--

An owl's they might be now.

What is it, askest thou?
Is't love, or is't ennui?

'Tis both at once, I vow.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Mountain Village

"THE mountain village was destroy'd;
But see how soon is fill'd the void!
Shingles and boards, as by magic arise,
The babe in his cradle and swaddling-clothes lies;
How blest to trust to God's protection!"

Behold a wooden new erection,
So that, if sparks and wind but choose,
God's self at such a game must lose!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Musagetes

IN the deepest nights of Winter
To the Muses kind oft cried I:
"Not a ray of morn is gleaming,
Not a sign of daylight breaking;
Bring, then, at the fitting moment,
Bring the lamp's soft glimm'ring lustre,
'Stead of Phoebus and Aurora,
To enliven my still labours!"
Yet they left me in my slumbers,
Dull and unrefreshing, lying,
And to each late-waken'd morning
Follow'd days devoid of profit.

When at length return'd the spring-time,
To the nightingales thus spake I:
"Darling nightingales, oh, beat ye
Early, early at my window,--
Wake me from the heavy slumber
That chains down the youth so strongly!"
Yet the love-o'erflowing songsters
Their sweet melodies protracted
Through the night before my window,
Kept awake my loving spirit,
Rousing new and tender yearnings
In my newly-waken'd bosom.
And the night thus fled o'er me,
And Aurora found me sleeping,--
Ay, the sun could scarce arouse me.

Now at length is come the Summer,
And the early fly so busy
Draws me from my pleasing slumbers
At the first-born morning-glimmer.
Mercilessly then returns she,
Though the half-aroused one often
Scares her from him with impatience,
And she lures her shameless sisters,
So that from my weary eyelids
Kindly sleep ere long is driven.
From my couch then boldly spring I,
And I seek the darling Muses,
in the beechen-grove I find them,
Full of pleasure to receive me;
And to the tormenting insects
Owe I many a golden hour.
Thus be ye, unwelcome beings,
Highly valued by the poet,
As the flies my numbers tell of.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Muse's Mirror

EARLY one day, the Muse, when eagerly bent on adornment,
Follow'd a swift-running streamlet, the quietest nook by it seeking.
Quickly and noisily flowing, the changeful surface distorted
Ever her moving form; the goddess departed in anger.
Yet the stream call'd mockingly after her, saying: "What, truly!
Wilt thou not view, then, the truth, in my mirror so clearly depicted?"
But she already was far away, on the brink of the ocean,
In her figure rejoicing, and duly arranging her garland.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Muses' Son

THROUGH field and wood to stray,
And pipe my tuneful lay,--

'Tis thus my days are pass'd;
And all keep tune with me,
And move in harmony,

And so on, to the last.

To wait I scarce have power
The garden's earliest flower,

The tree's first bloom in Spring;
They hail my joyous strain,--
When Winter comes again,

Of that sweet dream I sing.

My song sounds far and near,
O'er ice it echoes clear,

Then Winter blossoms bright;
And when his blossoms fly,
Fresh raptures meet mine eye,

Upon the well-till'd height.

When 'neath the linden tree,
Young folks I chance to see,

I set them moving soon;
His nose the dull lad curls,
The formal maiden whirls,

Obedient to my tune.

Wings to the feet ye lend,
O'er hill and vale ye send

The lover far from home;
When shall I, on your breast,

Ye kindly muses, rest,
And cease at length to roam?

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The New Amadis

IN my boyhood's days so drear

I was kept confined;
There I sat for many a year,

All alone I pined,
As within the womb.

Yet thou drov'st away my gloom,

Golden phantasy!
I became a hero true,

Like the Prince Pipi,
And the world roam'd through,

Many a crystal palace built,

Crush'd them with like art,
And the Dragon's life-blood spilt

With my glitt'ring dart.
Yes! I was a man!

Next I formed the knightly plan

Princess Fish to free;
She was much too complaisant,

Kindly welcomed me,--
And I was gallant.

Heav'nly bread her kisses proved,

Glowing as the wine;
Almost unto death I loved.

Sun-s appeared to shine
In her dazzling charms.

Who hath torn her from mine arms?

Could no magic band
Make her in her flight delay?

Say, where now her land?
Where, alas, the way?

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The New Amor

AMOR, not the child, the youthful lover of Psyche,
Look'd round Olympus one day, boldly, to triumph inured;
There he espied a goddess, the fairest amongst the immortals,--
Venus Urania she,--straight was his passion inflamed.
Even the holy one powerless proved, alas! 'gainst his wooing,--
Tightly embraced in his arm, held her the daring one fast.
Then from their union arose a new, a more beauteous Amor,
Who from his father his wit, grace from his mother derives.
Ever thou'lt find him join'd in the kindly Muses' communion,
And his charm-laden bolt foundeth the love of the arts.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Originals

A FELLOW says: "I own no school or college;
No master lives whom I acknowledge;
And pray don't entertain the thought
That from the dead I e'er learnt aught."
This, if I rightly understand,
Means: "I'm a blockhead at first hand."

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Page And The Miller's Daughter

PAGE.

WHERE goest thou? Where?
Miller's daughter so fair!

Thy name, pray?--

MILLER'S DAUGHTER.

'Tis Lizzy.

PAGE.

Where goest thou? Where?
With the rake in thy hand?

MILLER'S DAUGHTER.
Father's meadows and land

To visit, I'm busy.

PAGE.

Dost go there alone?

MILLER'S DAUGHTER.
By this rake, sir, 'tis shown

That we're making the hay;
And the pears ripen fast
In the garden at last,

So I'll pick them to-day.

PAGE.

Is't a silent thicket I yonder view?

MILLER'S DAUGHTER.
Oh, yes! there are two;
There's one on each side.

PAGE.

I'll follow thee soon;
When the sun burns at noon
We'll go there, o'urselves from his rays to hide,
And then in some glade all-verdant and deep--

MILLER'S DAUGHTER.
Why, people would say--

PAGE.

Within mine arms thou gently wilt sleep.

MILLER'S DAUGHTER.

Your pardon, I pray!
Whoever is kiss'd by the miller-maid,
Upon the spot must needs be betray'd.

'Twould give me distress

To cover with white
Your pretty dark dress.
Equal with equal! then all is right!
That's the motto in which I delight.
I am in love with the miller-boy;
He wears nothing that I could destroy.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Pariah - Legend

WATER-FETCHING goes the noble
Brahmin's wife, so pure and lovely;
He is honour'd, void of blemish.
And of justice rigid, stern.
Daily from the sacred river
Brings she back refreshments precious;--
But where is the pail and pitcher?
She of neither stands in need.
For with pure heart, hands unsullied,
She the water lifts, and rolls it
To a wondrous ball of crystal
This she bears with gladsome bosom,
Modestly, with graceful motion,
To her husband in the house.

She to-day at dawn of morning
Praying comes to Ganges' waters,
Bends her o'er the glassy surface--
Sudden, in the waves reflected,
Flying swiftly far above her,
From the highest heavens descending,
She discerns the beauteous form
Of a youth divine, created
By the God's primeval wisdom
In his own eternal breast.

When she sees him, straightway feels she
Wondrous, new, confused sensations
In her inmost, deepest being;
Fain she'd linger o'er the vision,
Then repels it,--it returneth,--
And, perplex'd, she bends her flood-wards
With uncertain hands to draw it;
But, alas, she draws no more!
For the water's sacred billows
Seem to fly, to hasten from her;
She but sees the fearful chasm
Of a whirlpool black disclosed.

Arms drop down, and footsteps stumble,
Can this be the pathway homewards?
Shall she fly, or shall she tarry?
Can she think, when thought and counsel,
When assistance all are lost?
So before her spouse appears she--
On her looks he--look is judgment--
Proudly on the sword he seizes,
To the hill of death he drags her,
Where delinquents' blood pays forfeit.
What resistance could she offer?
What excuses could she proffer,
Guilty, knowing not her guilt?

And with bloody sword returns he,
Musing, to his silent dwelling,
When his son before him stands:
"Whose this blood? Oh, father! father!"
"The delinquent woman's!"--"Never!
For upon the sword it dries not,
Like the blood of the delinquent;
Fresh it flows, as from the wound.
Mother! mother! hither hasten!
Unjust never was my father,
Tell me what he now hath done."--
"Silence! silence! hers the blood is!"
"Whose, my father?"--"Silence! Silence!"
"What! oh what! my mother's blood!
What her crime? What did she? Answer!
Now, the sword! the sword now hold I;
Thou thy wife perchance might'st slaughter,
But my mother might'st not slay!
Through the flames the wife is able
Her beloved spouse to follow,
And his dear and only mother
Through the sword her faithful son."
"Stay! oh stay!" exclaim'd the father:
"Yet 'tis time, so hasten, hasten!
Join the head upon the body,
With the sword then touch the figure,
And, alive she'll follow thee."

Hastening, he, with breathless wonder,
Sees the bodies of two women
Lying crosswise, and their heads too;
Oh, what horror! which to choose!
Then his mother's head he seizes,--
Does not kiss it, deadly pale 'tis,--
On the nearest headless body
Puts it quickly, and then blesses
With the sword the pious work.
Then the giant form uprises,--
From the dear lips of his mother,
Lips all god-like--changeless--blissful,
Sound these words with horror fraught:
"Son, oh son! what overhast'ning!
Yonder is thy mother's body,
Near it lies the impious head
Of the woman who hath fallen
Victim to the judgment-sword!
To her body I am grafted
By thy hand for endless ages;
Wise in counsel, wild in action,
I shall be amongst the gods.
E'en the heav'nly boy's own image,

Though in eye and brow so lovely,
Sinking downwards to the bosom
Mad and raging lust will stir.

"Twill return again for ever,
Ever rising, ever sinking,
Now obscured, and now transfigur'd,--
So great Brama hath ordain'd.
He 'twas sent the beauteous pinions,
Radiant face and slender members
Of the only God-begotten,
That I might be proved and tempted;
For from high descends temptation,
When the gods ordain it so.
And so I, the Brahmin woman,
With my head in Heaven reclining,
Must experience, as a Pariah,
The debasing power of earth.

Son, I send thee to thy father!
Comfort him! Let no sad penance,
Weak delay, or thought of merit,
Hold thee in the desert fast
Wander on through ev'ry nation,
Roam abroad throughout all ages,
And proclaim to e'en the meanest,
That great Brama hears his cry!

"None is in his eyes the meanest--
He whose limbs are lame and palsied,
He whose soul is wildly riven,
Worn with sorrow, hopeless, helpless,
Be he Brahmin, be he Pariah,
If tow'rd heaven he turns his gaze,
Will perceive, will learn to know it:
Thousand eyes are glowing yonder,
Thousand ears are calmly list'ning,
From which nought below is hid.

"If I to his throne soar upward,
If he sees my fearful figure
By his might transform'd to horror,
He for ever will lament it,--
May it to your good be found!
And I now will kindly warn him,
And I now will madly tell him
Whatsoever my mind conceiveth,
What within my bosom heaveth.
But my thoughts, my inmost feelings--
Those a secret shall remain."

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Pariah - The Pariah's Prayer

DREADED Brama, lord of might!

All proceed from thee alone;
Thou art he who judgeth right!

Dost thou none but Brahmins own?
Do but Rajahs come from thee?

None but those of high estate?

Didst not thou the ape create,
Aye, and even such as we?

We are not of noble kind,

For with woe our lot is rife;
And what others deadly find

Is our only source of life.
Let this be enough for men,

Let them, if they will, despise us;

But thou, Brama, thou shouldst prize us,
All are equal in thy ken.

Now that, Lord, this prayer is said,

As thy child acknowledge me;
Or let one be born in-stead,

Who may link me on to thee!
Didst not thou a Bayadere

As a goddess heavenward raise?

And we too to swell thy praise,
Such a miracle would hear.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Pariah - The Pariah's Thanks

MIGHTY Brama, now I'll bless thee!

'Tis from thee that worlds proceed!
As my ruler I confess thee,

For of all thou takest heed.

All thy thousand ears thou keepest

Open to each child of earth;
We, 'mongst mortals sunk the deepest,

Have from thee received new birth.

Bear in mind the woman's story,

Who, through grief, divine became;
Now I'll wait to view His glory,

Who omnipotence can claim.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Prosperous Voyage

THE mist is fast clearing.
And radiant is heaven,
Whilst AEolus loosens
Our anguish-fraught bond.
The zephyrs are sighing,
Alert is the sailor.
Quick! nimbly be plying!
The billows are riven,
The distance approaches;
I see land beyond!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Pupil In Magic

I AM now,--what joy to hear it!--
Of the old magician rid;
And henceforth shall ev'ry spirit
Do whate'er by me is bid;
 I have watch'd with rigour
 All he used to do,
And will now with vigour
 Work my wonders too.

Wander, wander
Onward lightly,
So that rightly
 Flow the torrent,
And with teeming waters yonder
 In the bath discharge its current!

And now come, thou well-worn broom,
And thy wretched form bestir;
Thou hast ever served as groom,
So fulfil my pleasure, sir!
 On two legs now stand,
 With a head on top;
Waterpail in hand,
 Haste, and do not stop!

Wander, wander
Onward lightly,
So that rightly
 Flow the torrent,
And with teeming waters yonder
 In the bath discharge its current!

See! he's running to the shore,
And has now attain'd the pool,
And with lightning speed once more
Comes here, with his bucket full!

Back he then repairs;
 See how swells the tide!
How each pail he bears
 Straightway is supplied!

Stop, for, lo!
All the measure
Of thy treasure
 Now is right!--

Ah, I see it! woe, oh woe!
 I forget the word of might.
Ah, the word whose sound can straight
Make him what he was before!
Ah, he runs with nimble gait!

Would thou wert a broom once more!
Streams renew'd for ever
Quickly bringeth he;
River after river
Rusheth on poor me!

Now no longer
Can I bear him;
I will snare him,
Knavish sprite!
Ah, my terror waxes stronger!
What a look! what fearful sight

Oh, thou villain child of hell!
Shall the house through thee be drown'd
Floods I see that wildly swell,
O'er the threshold gaining ground.

Wilt thou not obey,
Oh, thou broom accurs'd?
Be thou still I pray,
As thou wert at first!

Will enough
Never please thee?
I will seize thee,
Hold thee fast,
And thy nimble wood so tough,
With my sharp axe split at last.

See, once more he hastens back!
Now, oh Cobold, thou shalt catch it!
I will rush upon his track;
Crashing on him falls my hatchet.

Bravely done, indeed!
See, he's cleft in twain!
Now from care I'm freed,
And can breathe again.

Woe, oh woe!
Both the parts,
Quick as darts,
Stand on end,
Servants of my dreaded foe!
Oh, ye gods protection send!

And they run! and wetter still
Grow the steps and grows the hail.
Lord and master hear me call!
Ever seems the flood to fill,

Ah, he's coming! see,
Great is my dismay!
Spirits raised by me
Vainly would I lay!

"To the side
Of the room
Hasten, broom,
As of old!
Spirits I have ne'er untied
Save to act as they are told."

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Rat-Catcher

I AM the bard known far and wide,
The travell'd rat-catcher beside;
A man most needful to this town,
So glorious through its old renown.
However many rats I see,
How many weasels there may be,
I cleanse the place from ev'ry one,
All needs must helter-skelter run.

Sometimes the bard so full of cheer
As a child-catcher will appear,
Who e'en the wildest captive brings,
Whene'er his golden tales he sings.
However proud each boy in heart,
However much the maidens start,
I bid the chords sweet music make,
And all must follow in my wake.

Sometimes the skillful bard ye view
In the form of maiden-catcher too;
For he no city enters e'er,
Without effecting wonders there.
However coy may be each maid,
However the women seem afraid,
Yet all will love-sick be ere long
To sound of magic lute and song.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Reckoning

LEADER.

LET no cares now hover o'er us
Let the wine unsparing run!
Wilt thou swell our merry chorus?
Hast thou all thy duty done?

SOLO.

Two young folks--the thing is curious--
Loved each other; yesterday
Both quite mild, to-day quite furious,
Next day, quite the deuce to pay!
If her neck she there was stooping,
He must here needs pull his hair.
I revived their spirits drooping,
And they're now a happy pair.

CHORUS.

Surely we for wine may languish!
Let the bumper then go round!
For all sighs and groans of anguish
Thou to-day in joy hast drown'd.

SOLO.

Why, young orphan, all this wailing?
"Would to heaven that I were dead!
For my guardian's craft prevailing
Soon will make me beg my bread."
Knowing well the rascal genus,
Into court I dragg'd the knave;
Fair the judges were between us,
And the maiden's wealth did save.

CHORUS.

Surely we for wine may languish!

Let the bumper then go round!
For all sighs and groans of anguish

Thou to-day in joy hast drown'd.

SOLO.

To a little fellow, quiet,

Unpretending and subdued,
Has a big clown, running riot,

Been to-day extremely rude.
I bethought me of my duty,

And my courage swell'd apace,
So I spoil'd the rascal's beauty,

Slashing him across the face.

CHORUS.

Surely we for wine may languish!

Let the bumper then go round!
For all sighs and groans of anguish

Thou to-day in joy hast drown'd.

SOLO.

Brief must be my explanation,

For I really have done nought.
Free from trouble and vexation,

I a landlord's business bought.
There I've done, with all due ardour,

All that duty order'd me;
Each one ask'd me for the larder,

And there was no scarcity.

CHORUS.

Surely we for wine may languish!

Let the bumper then go round!
For all sighs and groans of anguish

Thou to-day in joy hast drown'd.

LEADER.

Each should thus make proclamation

Of what he did well to-day!
That's the match whose conflagration

Should inflame our tuneful lay.
Let it be our precept ever

To admit no waverer here!
For to act the good endeavour,

None but rascals meek appear.

CHORUS.

Surely we for wine may languish!

Let the bumper then go round!
For all sighs and groans of anguish

We have now in rapture drown'd.

TRIO.

Let each merry minstrel enter,

He's right welcome to our hall!
'Tis but with the self-tormentor

That we are not liberal;

For we fear that his caprices,

That his eye-brows dark and sad,
That his grief that never ceases

Hide an empty heart, or bad.

CHORUS.

No one now for wine shall languish!

Here no minstrel shall be found,
Who all sighs and groans of anguish,

Has not first in rapture drown'd!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Remembrance Of The Good

THE remembrance of the Good
Keep us ever glad in mood.

The remembrance of the Fair
Makes a mortal rapture share.

The remembrance of one's Love
Blest Is, if it constant prove.

The remembrance of the One
Is the greatest joy that's known.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Rule Of Life

IF thou wouldst live unruffled by care,
Let not the past torment thee e'er;
As little as possible be thou annoy'd,
And let the present be ever enjoy'd;
Ne'er let thy breast with hate be supplied,
And to God the future confide.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Rule Of Life Expanded

IF thou wouldst live unruffled by care,
Let not the past torment thee e'er;
If any loss thou hast to rue,
Act as though thou wert born anew;
Inquire the meaning of each day,
What each day means itself will say;
In thine own actions take thy pleasure,
What others do, thou'lt duly treasure;
Ne'er let thy breast with hate be supplied,
And to God the future confide.

IF wealth is gone--then something is gone!

Quick, make up thy mind,

And fresh wealth find.

If honour is gone--then much is gone!

Seek glory to find,

And people then will alter their mind.

If courage is gone--then all is gone!

'Twere better that thou hadst never been born.

HE who with life makes sport,

Can prosper never;

Who rules himself in nought,

Is a slave ever.

MAY each honest effort be

Crown'd with lasting constancy.

EACH road to the proper end
Runs straight on, without a bend.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Same

HUSH'D on the hill

Is the breeze;

Scarce by the zephyr

The trees

Softly are press'd;
The woodbird's asleep on the bough.
Wait, then, and thou

Soon wilt find rest.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Sea-Voyage

MANY a day and night my bark stood ready laden;
Waiting fav'ring winds, I sat with true friends round me,
Pledging me to patience and to courage,
In the haven.

And they spoke thus with impatience twofold:
"Gladly pray we for thy rapid passage,
Gladly for thy happy voyage; fortune
In the distant world is waiting for thee,
In our arms thoult find thy prize, and love too,
When returning."

And when morning came, arose an uproar,
And the sailors' joyous shouts awoke us;
All was stirring, all was living, moving,
Bent on sailing with the first kind zephyr.

And the sails soon in the breeze are swelling,
And the sun with fiery love invites us;
Fill'd the sails are, clouds on high are floating,
On the shore each friend exulting raises
Songs of hope, in giddy joy expecting
Joy the voyage through, as on the morn of sailing,
And the earliest starry nights so radiant.

But by God-sent changing winds ere long he's driven
Sideways from the course he had intended,
And he feigns as though he would surrender,
While he gently striveth to outwit them,

To his goal, e'en when thus press'd, still faithful.
But from out the damp grey distance rising,
Softly now the storm proclaims its advent,
Presseth down each bird upon the waters,
Presseth down the throbbing hearts of mortals.
And it cometh. At its stubborn fury,
Wisely ev'ry sail the seaman striketh;
With the anguish-laden ball are sporting
Wind and water.

And on yonder shore are gather'd standing,
Friends and lovers, trembling for the bold one:
"Why, alas, remain'd he here not with us!
Ah, the tempest! Cast away by fortune!
Must the good one perish in this fashion?
Might not he perchance.... Ye great immortals!"

Yet he, like a man, stands by his rudder;
With the bark are sporting wind and water,
Wind and water sport not with his bosom:
On the fierce deep looks he, as a master,--
In his gods, or shipwreck'd, or safe landed,

Trusting ever.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Shepherd's Lament

ON yonder lofty mountain
A thousand times I stand,
And on my staff reclining,
Look down on the smiling land.
My grazing flocks then I follow,
My dog protecting them well;
I find myself in the valley,
But how, I scarcely can tell.
The whole of the meadow is cover'd
With flowers of beauty rare;
I pluck them, but pluck them unknowing
To whom the offering to bear.
In rain and storm and tempest,
I tarry beneath the tree,
But closed remaineth yon portal;
'Tis all but a vision to me.
High over yonder dwelling,
There rises a rainbow gay;
But she from home hath departed
And wander'd far, far away.
Yes, far away bath she wander'd,
Perchance e'en over the sea;
Move onward, ye sheep, then, move onward!
Full sad the shepherd must be.
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Soldier's Consolation

No! in truth there's here no lack:
White the bread, the maidens black!
To another town, next night:
Black the bread, the maidens white!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Spinner

As I calmly sat and span,
Toiling with all zeal,
Lo! a young and handsome man
Pass'd my spinning-wheel.
And he praised,--what harm was there?--
Sweet the things he said--
Praised my flax-resembling hair,
And the even thread.
He with this was not content,
But must needs do more;
And in twain the thread was rent,
Though 'twas safe before.
And the flax's stonelike weight
Needed to be told;
But no longer was its state
Valued as of old.
When I took it to the weaver,
Something felt I start,
And more quickly, as with fever,
Throbb'd my trembling heart.
Then I bear the thread at length
Through the heat, to bleach;
But, alas, I scarce have strength
To the pool to reach.
What I in my little room
Span so fine and slight,--
As was likely. I presume--
Came at last to light.
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Spirit's Salute

THE hero's noble shade stands high

On yonder turret grey;
And as the ship is sailing by,

He speeds it on his way.

"See with what strength these sinews thrill'd!

This heart, how firm and wild!
These bones, what knightly marrow fill'd!

This cup, how bright it smil'd!

"Half of my life I strove and fought,

And half I calmly pass'd;
And thou, oh ship with beings fraught,

Sail safely to the last!"

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Spring Oracle

OH prophetic bird so bright,
Blossom-songster, cuckoo bight!
In the fairest time of year,
Dearest bird, oh! deign to hear
What a youthful pair would pray,
Do thou call, if hope they may:
Thy cuck-oo, thy cuck-oo.
Ever more cuck-oo, cuck-oo!

Hearest thou? A loving pair
Fain would to the altar fare;
Yes! a pair in happy youth,
Full of virtue, full of truth.
Is the hour not fix'd by fate?
Say, how long must they still wait?
Hark! cuck-oo! hark! cuck-oo!
Silent yet! for shame, cuck-oo!

'Tis not our fault, certainly!
Only two years patient be!
But if we ourselves please here,
Will pa-pa-papas appear?
Know that thou'lt more kindness do us,
More thou'lt prophesy unto us.
One! cuck-oo! Two! cuck-oo!
Ever, ever, cuck-oo, cuck-oo, coo!

If we've calculated clearly,
We have half a dozen nearly.
If good promises we'll give,
Wilt thou say how long we'll live?
Truly, we'll confess to thee,
We'd prolong it willingly.
Coo cuck-oo, coo cuck-oo,
Coo, coo, coo, coo, coo, coo, coo, coo, coo!

Life is one continued feast--
(If we keep no score, at least).
If now we together dwell,
Will true love remain as well?
For if that should e'er decay,
Happiness would pass away.
Coo cuck-oo, coo cuck-oo,
Coo, coo, coo, coo, coo, coo, coo, coo, coo!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Stork's Vocation

THE stork who worms and frogs devours

That in our ponds reside,
Why should he dwell on high church-towers,

With which he's not allied?

Incessantly he chatters there,

And gives our ears no rest;
But neither old nor young can dare

To drive him from his nest.

I humbly ask it,--how can he

Give of his title proof,
Save by his happy tendency

To soil the church's roof?

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Traveller And The Farm-Maiden

HE.

CANST thou give, oh fair and matchless maiden,
'Neath the shadow of the lindens yonder,--
Where I'd fain one moment cease to wander,--
Food and drink to one so heavy laden?

SHE.

Wouldst thou find refreshment, traveller weary,
Bread, ripe fruit and cream to meet thy wishes,--
None but Nature's plain and homely dishes,--
Near the spring may soothe thy wanderings dreary.

HE.

Dreams of old acquaintance now pass through me,
Ne'er-forgotten queen of hours of blisses.
Likenesses I've often found, but this is
One that quite a marvel seemeth to me!

SHE.

Travellers often wonder beyond measure,
But their wonder soon see cause to smother;
Fair and dark are often like each other,
Both inspire the mind with equal pleasure.

HE.

Not now for the first time I surrender
To this form, in humble adoration;
It was brightest midst the constellation
In the hail adorn'd with festal splendour.

SHE.

Be thou joyful that 'tis in my power
To complete thy strange and merry story!
Silks behind her, full of purple glory,

Floated, when thou saw'st her in that hour.

HE.

No, in truth, thou hast not sung it rightly!

Spirits may have told thee all about it;

Pearls and gems they spoke of, do not doubt it,--
By her gaze eclipsed,--it gleam'd so brightly!

SHE.

This one thing I certainly collected:

That the fair one--(say nought, I entreat thee!)

Fondly hoping once again to meet thee,
Many a castle in the air erected.

HE.

By each wind I ceaselessly was driven,

Seeking gold and honour, too, to capture!

When my wand'rings end, then oh, what rapture,
If to find that form again 'tis given!

SHE.

'Tis the daughter of the race now banish'd

That thou seest, not her likeness only;

Helen and her brother, glad though lonely,
Till this farm of their estate now vanish'd.

HE.

But the owner surely is not wanting

Of these plains, with ev'ry beauty teeming?

Verdant fields, broad meads, and pastures gleaming,
Gushing springs, all heav'nly and enchanting.

SHE.

Thou must hunt the world through, wouldst thou find him!--

We have wealth enough in our possession,

And intend to purchase the succession,
When the good man leaves the world behind him.

HE.

I have learnt the owner's own condition,
And, fair maiden, thou indeed canst buy it;

But the cost is great, I won't deny it,--
Helen is the price,--with thy permission!

SHE.

Did then fate and rank keep us asunder,
And must Love take this road, and no other?

Yonder comes my dear and trusty brother;
What will he say to it all, I wonder?

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Treasure Digger

ALL my weary days I pass'd
Sick at heart and poor in purse.
Poverty's the greatest curse,
Riches are the highest good!
And to end my woes at last,
Treasure-seeking forth I sped.
"Thou shalt have my soul instead!"
Thus I wrote, and with my blood.
Ring round ring I forthwith drew,
Wondrous flames collected there,
Herbs and bones in order fair,
Till the charm had work'd aright.
Then, to learned precepts true,
Dug to find some treasure old,
In the place my art foretold
Black and stormy was the night.
Coming o'er the distant plain,
With the glimmer of a star,
Soon I saw a light afar,
As the hour of midnight knell'd.
Preparation was in vain.
Sudden all was lighted up
With the lustre of a cup
That a beauteous boy upheld.
Sweetly seem'd his eyes to laugh
Neath his flow'ry chaplet's load;
With the drink that brightly glow'd,
He the circle enter'd in.

And he kindly bade me quaff:
Then methought "This child can ne'er,
With his gift so bright and fair,
To the arch-fiend be akin."
"Pure life's courage drink!" cried he:
"This advice to prize then learn,--
Never to this place return
Trusting in thy spells absurd;
Dig no longer fruitlessly.
Guests by night, and toil by day!
Weeks laborious, feast-days gay!
Be thy future magic-word!
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Unequal Marriage

EVEN this heavenly pair were unequally match'd when united:
Psyche grew older and wise, Amor remain'd still a child,

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Violet

UPON the mead a violet stood,
Retiring, and of modest mood,

In truth, a violet fair.
Then came a youthful shepherdess,
And roam'd with sprightly joyousness,
And blithely woo'd

With carols sweet the air

"Ah!" thought the violet, "had I been
For but the smallest moment e'en

Nature's most beauteous flower,
'Till gather'd by my love, and press'd,
When weary, 'gainst her gentle breast,
For e'en, for e'en

One quarter of an hour!"

Alas! alas! the maid drew nigh,
The violet failed to meet her eye,

She crush'd the violet sweet.
It sank and died, yet murmur'd not:
"And if I die, oh, happy lot,
For her I die,

And at her very feet!"

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Visit

FAIN had I to-day surprised my mistress,
But soon found I that her door was fasten'd.
Yet I had the key safe in my pocket,
And the darling door I open'd softly!
In the parlour found I not the maiden,
Found the maiden not within her closet,
Then her chamber-door I gently open'd,
When I found her wrapp'd in pleasing slumbers,
Fully dress'd, and lying on the sofa.

While at work had slumber stolen o'er her;
For her knitting and her needle found I
Resting in her folded bands so tender;
And I placed myself beside her softly,
And held counsel, whether I should wake her.

Then I looked upon the beauteous quiet
That on her sweet eyelids was reposing
On her lips was silent truth depicted,
On her cheeks had loveliness its dwelling,
And the pureness of a heart unsullied
In her bosom evermore was heaving.
All her limbs were gracefully reclining,
Set at rest by sweet and godlike balsam.
Gladly sat I, and the contemplation
Held the strong desire I felt to wake her
Firmer and firmer down, with mystic fetters.

"Oh, thou love," methought, "I see that slumber,
Slumber that betrayeth each false feature,
Cannot injure thee, can nought discover
That could serve to harm thy friend's soft feelings.

"Now thy beauteous eyes are firmly closed,
That, when open, form mine only rapture.
And thy sweet lips are devoid of motion,
Motionless for speaking or for kissing;
Loosen'd are the soft and magic fetters
Of thine arms, so wont to twine around me,
And the hand, the ravishing companion
Of thy sweet caresses, lies unmoving.
Were my thoughts of thee but based on error,
Were the love I bear thee self-deception,
I must now have found it out, since Amor
Is, without his bandage, placed beside me."

Long I sat thus, full of heartfelt pleasure
At my love, and at her matchless merit;
She had so delighted me while slumbering,
That I could not venture to awake her.

Then I on the little table near her

Softly placed two oranges, two roses;
Gently, gently stole I from her chamber.
When her eyes the darling one shall open,
She will straightway spy these colourd presents,
And the friendly gift will view with wonder,
For the door will still remain unopen'd.

If perchance I see to-night the angel,
How will she rejoice,--reward me doubly
For this sacrifice of fond affection!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Walking Bell

A CHILD refused to go betimes
To church like other people;
He roam'd abroad, when rang the chimes
On Sundays from the steeple.

His mother said: "Loud rings the bell,
Its voice ne'er think of scorning;
Unless thou wilt behave thee well,
'Twill fetch thee without warning."

The child then thought: "High over head
The bell is safe suspended--"
So to the fields he straightway sped
As if 'twas school-time ended.

The bell now ceas'd as bell to ring,
Roused by the mother's twaddle;
But soon ensued a dreadful thing!--
The bell begins to waddle.

It waddles fast, though strange it seem;
The child, with trembling wonder,
Runs off, and flies, as in a dream;
The bell would draw him under.

He finds the proper time at last,
And straightway nimbly rushes
To church, to chapel, hastening fast
Through pastures, plains, and bushes.

Each Sunday and each feast as well,
His late disaster heeds he;
The moment that he bears the bell,
No other summons needs he.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Wanderer

WANDERER.

YOUNG woman, may God bless thee,
Thee, and the sucking infant
Upon thy breast!
Let me, 'gainst this rocky wall,
Neath the elm-tree's shadow,
Lay aside my burden,
Near thee take my rest.

WOMAN.

What vocation leads thee,
While the day is burning,
Up this dusty path?
Bring'st thou goods from out the town
Round the country?
Smil'st thou, stranger,
At my question?

WANDERER.

From the town no goods I bring.
Cool is now the evening;
Show to me the fountain
'Whence thou drinkest,
Woman young and kind!

WOMAN.

Up the rocky pathway mount;
Go thou first! Across the thicket
Leads the pathway tow'rd the cottage
That I live in,
To the fountain
Whence I drink.

WANDERER.

Signs of man's arranging hand
See I 'mid the trees!
Not by thee these stones were join'd,
Nature, who so freely scatterest!

WOMAN.

Up, still up!

WANDERER.

Lo, a mossy architrave is here!
I discern thee, fashioning spirit!

On the stone thou hast impress'd thy seal.

WOMAN.

Onward, stranger!

WANDERER.

Over an inscription am I treading!
'Tis effaced!
Ye are seen no longer,
Words so deeply graven,
Who your master's true devotion
Should have shown to thousand grandsons!

WOMAN.

At these stones, why
Start'st thou, stranger?
Many stones are lying yonder
Round my cottage.

WANDERER.

Yonder?

WOMAN.

Through the thicket,
Turning to the left,
Here!

WANDERER.

Ye Muses and ye Graces!

WOMAN.

This, then, is my cottage.

WANDERER.

'Tis a ruin'd temple!

WOMAN.

Just below it, see,
Springs the fountain
Whence I drink.

WANDERER.

Thou dost hover
O'er thy grave, all glowing,
Genius! while upon thee
Hath thy master-piece
Fallen crumbling,
Thou Immortal One!

WOMAN.

Stay, a cup I'll fetch thee
Whence to drink.

WANDERER.

Ivy circles thy slender
Form so graceful and godlike.
How ye rise on high
From the ruins,
Column-pair
And thou, their lonely sister yonder,--
How thou,
Dusky moss upon thy sacred head,--
Lookest down in mournful majesty
On thy brethren's figures
Lying scatter'd
At thy feet!
In the shadow of the bramble
Earth and rubbish veil them,
Lofty grass is waving o'er them
Is it thus thou, Nature, prizest
Thy great masterpiece's masterpiece?
Carelessly destroyest thou
Thine own sanctuary,
Sowing thistles there?

WOMAN.

How the infant sleeps!
Wilt thou rest thee in the cottage,
Stranger? Wouldst thou rather
In the open air still linger?
Now 'tis cool! take thou the child
While I go and draw some water.
Sleep on, darling! sleep!

WANDERER.

Sweet is thy repose!
How, with heaven-born health imbued,
Peacefully he slumbers!
Oh thou, born among the ruins
Spread by great antiquity,

On thee rest her spirit!
He whom it encircles
Will, in godlike consciousness,
Ev'ry day enjoy.
Full, of germ, unfold,
As the smiling springtime's
Fairest charm,
Outshining all thy fellows!
And when the blossom's husk is faded,
May the full fruit shoot forth
From out thy breast,
And ripen in the sunshine!

WOMAN.

God bless him!--Is he sleeping still?
To the fresh draught I nought can add,
Saving a crust of bread for thee to eat.

WANDERER.

I thank thee well.
How fair the verdure all around!
How green!

WOMAN.

My husband soon
Will home return
From labour. Tarry, tarry, man,
And with us eat our evening meal.

WANDERER.

Is't here ye dwell?

WOMAN.

Yonder, within those walls we live.
My father 'twas who built the cottage
Of tiles and stones from out the ruins.
'Tis here we dwell.
He gave me to a husbandman,
And in our arms expired.--
Hast thou been sleeping, dearest heart
How lively, and how full of play!
Sweet rogue!

WANDERER.

Nature, thou ever budding one,
Thou formest each for life's enjoyments,

And, like a mother, all thy children dear,
Blessest with that sweet heritage,--a home
The swallow builds the cornice round,
Unconscious of the beauties
She plasters up.
The caterpillar spins around the bough,
To make her brood a winter house;
And thou dost patch, between antiquity's
Most glorious relics,
For thy mean use,
Oh man, a humble cot,--
Enjoyest e'en mid tombs!--
Farewell, thou happy woman!

WOMAN.

Thou wilt not stay, then?

WANDERER.

May God preserve thee,
And bless thy boy!

WOMAN.

A happy journey!

WANDERER.

Whither conducts the path
Across yon hill?

WOMAN.

To Cuma.

WANDERER.

How far from hence?

WOMAN.

'Tis full three miles.

WANDERER.

Farewell!
Oh Nature, guide me on my way!
The wandering stranger guide,
Who o'er the tombs
Of holy bygone times
Is passing,

To a kind sheltering place,
From North winds safe,
And where a poplar grove
Shuts out the noontide ray!
And when I come
Home to my cot
At evening,
Illumined by the setting sun,
Let me embrace a wife like this,
Her infant in her arms!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Wanderer's Night-Song

THOU who comest from on high,

Who all woes and sorrows stillest,
Who, for twofold misery,

Hearts with twofold balsam fillest,
Would this constant strife would cease!

What are pain and rapture now?
Blissful Peace,

To my bosom hasten thou!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Wanderer's Storm-Song

He whom thou ne'er leavest, Genius,
Feels no dread within his heart
At the tempest or the rain.
He whom thou ne'er leavest, Genius,
Will to the rain-clouds,
Will to the hailstorm,
Sing in reply
As the lark sings,
Oh thou on high!

Him whom thou ne'er leavest, Genius,
Thou wilt raise above the mud-track
With thy fiery pinions.
He will wander,
As, with flowery feet,
Over Deucalion's dark flood,
Python-slaying, light, glorious,
Pythius Apollo.

Him whom thou ne'er leavest, Genius,
Thou wilt place upon thy fleecy pinion
When he sleepeth on the rock,--
Thou wilt shelter with thy guardian wing
In the forest's midnight hour.

Him whom thou ne'er leavest, Genius,
Thou wilt wrap up warmly
In the snow-drift;
Tow'rd the warmth approach the Muses,
Tow'rd the warmth approach the Graces.

Ye Muses, hover round me!
Ye Graces also!
That is water, that is earth,
And the son of water and of earth
Over which I wander,
Like the gods.

Ye are pure, like the heart of the water,
Ye are pure like the marrow of earth,
Hov'ring round me, while I hover
Over water, o'er the earth
Like the gods.

Shall he, then, return,
The small, the dark, the fiery peasant?
Shall he, then, return, waiting
Only thy gifts, oh Father Bromius,
And brightly gleaming, warmth-spreading fire?
Return with joy?
And I, whom ye attended,
Ye Muses and ye Graces,

Whom all awaits that ye,
Ye Muses and ye Graces,
Of circling bliss in life
Have glorified--shall I
Return dejected?

Father Bromius!
Thou'rt the Genius,
Genius of ages,
Thou'rt what inward glow
To Pindar was,
What to the world
Phoebus Apollo.

Woe! Woe Inward warmth,
Spirit-warmth,
Central-point!
Glow, and vie with
Phoebus Apollo!
Coldly soon
His regal look
Over thee will swiftly glide,--

Envy-struck
Linger o'er the cedar's strength,
Which, to flourish,
Waits him not.

Why doth my lay name thee the last?
Thee, from whom it began,
Thee, in whom it endeth,
Thee, from whom it flows,
Jupiter Pluvius!
Tow'rd thee streams my song.
And a Castalian spring
Runs as a fellow-brook,
Runs to the idle ones,
Mortal, happy ones,
Apart from thee,
Who cov'rest me around,
Jupiter Pluvius!

Not by the elm-tree
Him didst thou visit,
With the pair of doves
Held in his gentle arm,--
With the beauteous garland of roses,--
Caressing him, so blest in his flowers,
Anacreon,
Storm-breathing godhead!
Not in the poplar grove,
Near the Sybaris' strand,

Not on the mountain's
Sun-illumined brow
Didst thou seize him,
The flower-singing,
Honey-breathing,
Sweetly nodding
Theocritus.

When the wheels were rattling,
Wheel on wheel tow'rd the goal,
High arose
The sound of the lash
Of youths with victory glowing,
In the dust rolling,
As from the mountain fall
Showers of stones in the vale--
Then thy soul was brightly glowing, Pindar--
Glowing? Poor heart!

There, on the hill,--
Heavenly might!
But enough glow
Thither to wend,
Where is my cot!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Warning

WHEN sounds the trumpet at the Judgment Day,
And when forever all things earthly die,
We must a full and true account supply
Of ev'ry useless word we dropp'd in play.
But what effect will all the words convey
Wherein with eager zeal and lovingly,
That I might win thy favour, labour'd I,
If on thine ear alone they die away?
Therefore, sweet love, thy conscience bear in mind,
Remember well how long thou hast delay'd,
So that the world such sufferings may not know.
If I must reckon, and excuses find
For all things useless I to thee have said,
To a full year the Judgment Day will grow

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Way To Behave

THOUGH tempers are bad and peevish folks swear,
Remember to ruffle thy brows, friend, ne'er;
And let not the fancies of women so fair
E'er serve thy pleasure in life to impair.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Wedding

A FEAST was in a village spread,--
It was a wedding-day, they said.
The parlour of the inn I found,
And saw the couples whirling round,
Each lass attended by her lad,
And all seem'd loving, blithe, and glad;
But on my asking for the bride,
A fellow with a stare, replied:
"'Tis not the place that point to raise!

We're only dancing in her honour;
We now have danced three nights and days,
And not bestowed one thought upon her."

Whoe'er in life employs his eyes
Such cases oft will recognise.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Wedding Night

WITHIN the chamber, far away

From the glad feast, sits Love in dread
Lest guests disturb, in wanton play,

The silence of the bridal bed.
His torch's pale flame serves to gild

The scene with mystic sacred glow;
The room with incense-clouds is fil'd,

That ye may perfect rapture know.

How beats thy heart, when thou dost hear

The chime that warns thy guests to fly!
How glow'st thou for those lips so dear,

That soon are mute, and nought deny!
With her into the holy place

Thou hast'nest then, to perfect all;
The fire the warder's hands embrace,

Grows, like a night-light, dim and small.

How heaves her bosom, and how burns

Her face at every fervent kiss!
Her coldness now to trembling turns,

Thy daring now a duty is.
Love helps thee to undress her fast,

But thou art twice as fast as he;
And then he shuts both eye at last,

With sly and roguish modesty.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Wrangler

ONE day a shameless and impudent wight
Went into a shop full of steel wares bright,
Arranged with art upon ev'ry shelf.
He fancied they were all meant for himself;
And so, while the patient owner stood by,
The shining goods needs must handle and try,
And valued,--for how should a fool better know?--
The bad things high, and the good ones low,
And all with an easy self-satisfied face;
Then, having bought nothing, he left the place.

The tradesman now felt sorely vex'd,
So when the fellow went there next,
A lock of steel made quite red hot.
The other cried upon the spot:
"Such wares as these, who'd ever buy?
the steel is tarnish'd shamefully,"--
Then pull'd it, like a fool about,
But soon set up a piteous shout.
"Pray what's the matter?" the shopman spoke;
The other scream'd: "Faith, a very cool joke!"

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Yelpers

OUR rides in all directions bend,
For business or for pleasure,
Yet yelpings on our steps attend,
And barkings without measure.
The dog that in our stable dwells,
After our heels is striding,
And all the while his noisy yells
But show that we are riding.
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Youth And The Millstream

WHENCE comes our friend so hastily,
When scarce the Eastern sky is grey?
Hath he just ceased, though cold it be,
In yonder holy spot to pray?
The brook appears to hem his path,
Would he barefooted o'er it go?
Why curse his orisons in wrath,
Across those heights beclad with snow?
Alas! his warm bed he bath left,
Where he had look'd for bliss, I ween;
And if his cloak too, had been reft,
How fearful his disgrace had been!
By yonder villain sorely press'd,
His wallet from him has been torn;
Our hapless friend has been undress'd,
Left well nigh naked as when born.
The reason why he came this road,
Is that he sought a pair of eyes,
Which, at the mill, as brightly glow'd
As those that are in Paradise.
He will not soon again be there;
From out the house he quickly hied,
And when he gain'd the open air,
Thus bitterly and loudly cried
"Within her gaze, so dazzling bright,
No word of treachery I could read;
She seem'd to see me with delight,
Yet plann'd e'en then this cruel deed!
Could I, when basking in her smile,
Dream of the treason in her breast?
She bade kind Cupid stay awhile,
And he was there, to make us blest.

"To taste of love's sweet ecstasy
Throughout the night, that endless seem'd,
And for her mother's help to cry
Only when morning sunlight beam'd!
A dozen of her kith and kin,
A very human flood, in-press'd
Her cousins came, her aunts peer'd in,
And uncles, brothers, and the rest.
"Then what a tumult, fierce and loud!
Each seem'd a beast of prey to be;
The maiden's honour all the crowd,
With fearful shout, demand of me.
Why should they, madmen-like, begin
To fall upon a guiltless youth?
For he who such a prize would win,
Far nimbler needs must be, in truth.
"The way to follow up with skill
His freaks, by love betimes is known:
He ne'er will leave, within a mill,
Sweet flowers for sixteen years alone.--
They stole my clothes away,--yes, all!
And tried my cloak besides to steal.
How strange that any house so small
So many rascals could conceal!
"Then I sprang up, and raved, and swore,
To force a passage through them there.
I saw the treacherous maid once more,
And she was still, alas, so fair
They all gave way before my wrath,
Wild outcries flew about pell-mell;
At length I managed to rush forth,
With voice of thunder, from that hell.

"As maidens of the town we fly,
We'll shun you maidens of the village;
Leave it to those of quality
Their humble worshippers to pillage.
Yet if ye are of practised skill,
And of all tender ties afraid,
Exchange your lovers, if ye will,
But never let them be betray'd."
Thus sings he in the winter-night,
While not a blade of grass was green.
I laugh'd to see his piteous plight,
For it was well-deserved, I ween.
And may this be the fate of all,
Who treat by day their true loves ill,
And, with foolhardy daring, crawl
By night to Cupid's treacherous mill!
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Thoughts On Jesus Christ's Decent Into Hell

WHAT wondrous noise is heard around!
Through heaven exulting voices sound,

A mighty army marches on
By thousand millions follow'd, lo,
To yon dark place makes haste to go

God's Son, descending from His throne!
He goes--the tempests round Him break,

As Judge and Hero cometh He;
He goes--the constellations quake,
The sun, the world quake fearfully.

I see Him in His victor-car,
On fiery axles borne afar,

Who on the cross for us expired.
The triumph to yon realms He shows,--
Remote from earth, where star ne'er glows,

The triumph He for us acquired.
He cometh, Hell to extirpate,

Whom He, by dying, wellnigh kill'd;
He shall pronounce her fearful fate
Hark! now the curse is straight fulfill'd.

Hell sees the victor come at last,
She feels that now her reign is past,

She quakes and fears to meet His sight;
She knows His thunders' terrors dread,
In vain she seeks to hide her head,

Attempts to fly, but vain is flight;
Vainly she hastes to 'scape pursuit

And to avoid her Judge's eye;
The Lord's fierce wrath restrains her foot
Like brazen chains,--she cannot fly.

Here lies the Dragon, trampled down,
He lies, and feels God's angry frown,

He feels, and grinneth hideously;
He feels Hell's speechless agonies,
A thousand times he howls and sighs:

"Oh, burning flames! quick, swallow me!"
There lies he in the fiery waves,

By torments rack'd and pangs infernal,
Instant annihilation craves,
And hears, those pangs will be eternal.

Those mighty squadrons, too, are here,
The partners of his cursed career,

Yet far less bad than he were they.
Here lies the countless throng combined,
In black and fearful crowds entwined,

While round him fiery tempests play;
He sees how they the Judge avoid,

He sees the storm upon them feed,
Yet is not at the sight o'erjoy'd,
Because his pangs e'en theirs exceed.

The Son of Man in triumph passes
Down to Hell's wild and black morasses,

And there unfolds His majesty.
Hell cannot bear the bright array,
For, since her first created day.

Darkness alone e'er govern'd she.
She lay remote from ev'ry light

With torments fill'd in Chaos here;
God turn'd for ever from her sight
His radiant features' glory clear.

Within the realms she calls her own,
She sees the splendour of the Son,

His dreaded glories shining forth;
She sees Him clad in rolling thunder,
She sees the rocks all quake with wonder,

When God before her stands in wrath.
She sees He comes her Judge to be,

She feels the awful pangs inside her,
Herself to slay endeavours she,
But e'en this comfort is denied her.

Now looks she back, with pains untold,
Upon those happy times of old,

When those glories gave her joy;
When yet her heart revered the truth,
When her glad soul, in endless youth

And rapture dwelt, without alloy.
She calls to mind with madden'd thought

How over man her wiles prevail'd;
To take revenge on God she sought,
And feels the vengeance it entail'd.

God was made man, and came to earth.
Then Satan cried with fearful mirth:

"E'en He my victim now shall be!"
He sought to slay the Lord Most High,
The world's Creator now must die;

But, Satan, endless woe to thee!
Thou thought'st to overcome Him then,

Rejoicing in His suffering;
But he in triumph comes again
To bind thee: Death! where is thy sting?

Speak, Hell! where is thy victory?
Thy power destroy'd and scatter'd see!

Know'st thou not now the Highest's might?
See, Satan, see thy rule o'erthrown!

By thousand-varying pangs weigh'd down,
Thou dwell'st in dark and endless night.

As though by lightning struck thou liest,
No gleam of rapture far or wide;

In vain! no hope thou there decriest,--
For me alone Messiah died!

A howling rises through the air,
A trembling fills each dark vault there,

When Christ to Hell is seen to come.
She snarls with rage, but needs must cower
Before our mighty hero's power;

He signs--and Hell is straightway dumb.
Before his voice the thunders break,

On high His victor-banner blows;
E'en angels at His fury quake,
When Christ to the dread judgment goes.

Now speaks He, and His voice is thunder,

He speaks, the rocks are rent in sunder,

His breath is like devouring flames.
Thus speaks He: "Tremble, ye accurs'd!
He who from Eden hurl'd you erst,

Your kingdom's overthrow proclaims.
Look up! My children once were ye,

Your arms against Me then ye turn'd,
Ye fell, that ye might sinners be,
Ye've now the wages that ye earn'd.

"My greatest foeman from that day,
Ye led my dearest friends astray,--

As ye had fallen, man must fall.
To kill him evermore ye sought,
'They all shall die the death,' ye thought;

But how! for Me I won them all.
For them alone did I descend,

For them pray'd, suffer'd, perish'd I.
Ye ne'er shall gain your wicked end;
Who trusts in Me shall never die.

"In endless chains here lie ye now,
Nothing can save you from the slough.

Not boldness, not regret for crime.
Lie, then, and writhe in brimstone fire!
'Twas ye yourselves drew down Mine ire,

Lie and lament throughout all time!
And also ye, whom I selected,

E'en ye forever I disown,
For ye My saving grace rejected
Ye murmur? blame yourselves alone!

"Ye might have lived with Me in bliss,
For I of yore had promis'd this;

Ye sinn'd, and all My precepts slighted
Wrapp'd in the sleep of sin ye dwelt,
Now is My fearful judgment felt,

By a just doom your guilt requited."--
Thus spake He, and a fearful storm

From Him proceeds, the lightnings glow,

The thunders seize each wicked form,
And hurl them in the gulf below.

The God-man closeth Hell's sad doors,
In all His majesty He soars

From those dark regions back to light.
He sitteth at the Father's side;
Oh, friends, what joy doth this betide!

For us, for us He still will fight!
The angels sacred quire around

Rejoice before the mighty Lord,
So that all creatures hear the sound:
"Zebaoth's God be aye ador'd!"

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Threatening Signs

IF Venus in the evening sky
Is seen in radiant majesty,
If rod-like comets, red as blood,
Are 'mongst the constellations view'd,
Out springs the Ignoramus, yelling:
"The star's exactly o'er my dwelling!
What woeful prospect, ah, for me!
Then calls his neighbour mournfully:
"Behold that awful sign of evil,
Portending woe to me, poor devil!
My mother's asthma ne'er will leave her,
My child is sick with wind and fever;
I dread the illness of my wife,
A week has pass'd, devoid of strife,--
And other things have reach'd my ear;
The Judgment Day has come, I fear!"

His neighbour answered: "Friend, you're right!
Matters look very had to-night.
Let's go a street or two, though, hence,
And gaze upon the stars from thence."--
No change appears in either case.
Let each remain then in his place,
And wisely do the best he can,
Patient as any other man.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Three Palinodias - 01

"Incense is hut a tribute for the gods,--
To mortals 'tis but poison."

THE smoke that from thine altar blows,

Can it the gods offend?
For I observe thou hold'st thy nose--

Pray what does this portend?
Mankind deem incense to excel

Each other earthly thing,
So he that cannot bear its smell,

No incense e'er should bring.

With unmoved face by thee at least

To dolls is homage given;
If not obstructed by the priest,

The scent mounts up to heaven.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Three Palinodias - 02 Conflict Of Wit And Beauty

SIR Wit, who is so much esteem'd,

And who is worthy of all honour,
Saw Beauty his superior deem'd

By folks who loved to gaze upon her;
At this he was most sorely vex'd.

Then came Sir Breath (long known as fit
To represent the cause of wit),

Beginning, rudely, I admit,
To treat the lady with a text.
To this she hearken'd not at all,
But hasten'd to his principal:
"None are so wise, they say, as you,--
Is not the world enough for two?"

If you are obstinate, good-bye!
If wise, to love me you will try,
For be assured the world can ne'er
Give birth to a more handsome pair."

=

FAIR daughters were by Beauty rear'd,

Wit had but dull sons for his lot;
So for a season it appear'd

Beauty was constant, Wit was not.
But Wit's a native of the soil,

So he return'd, work'd, strove amain,
And found--sweet guerdon for his toil!--

Beauty to quicken him again.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Three Palinodias - 03 Rain And Rainbow

DURING a heavy storm it chanced
That from his room a cockney glanced
At the fierce tempest as it broke,
While to his neighbour thus he spoke:
"The thunder has our awe inspired,
Our barns by lightning have been fired,--
Our sins to punish, I suppose;
But in return, to soothe our woes,
See how the rain in torrents fell,
Making the harvest promise well!
But it's a rainbow that I spy
Extending o'er the dark-grey sky?
With it I'm sure we may dispense,
The colour'd cheat! The vain pretence!"
Dame Iris straightway thus replied:
"Dost dare my beauty to deride?
In realms of space God station'd me
A type of better worlds to be
To eyes that from life's sorrows rove
In cheerful hope to Heav'n above,
And, through the mists that hover here
God and his precepts blest revere.
Do thou, then, grovel like the swine,
And to the ground thy snout confine,
But suffer the enlighten'd eye
To feast upon my majesty."

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

To Belinda

WHEREFORE drag me to yon glittering eddy,

With resistless might?
Was I, then, not truly blest already

In the silent night?

In my secret chamber refuge taking,

'Neath the moon's soft ray,
And her awful light around me breaking,

Musing there I lay.

And I dream'd of hours with joy o'erflowing,

Golden, truly blest,
While thine image so beloved was glowing

Deep within my breast.

Now to the card-table hast thou bound me,

'Midst the torches glare?
Whilst unhappy faces are around me,

Dost thou hold me there?

Spring-flow'rs are to me more rapture-giving,

Now conceal'd from view;
Where thou, angel, art, is Nature living,

Love and kindness too.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

To Charlotte

'MIDST the noise of merriment and glee,
'Midst full many a sorrow, many a care,
Charlotte, I remember, we remember thee,
How, at evening's hour so fair,
Thou a kindly hand didst reach us,
When thou, in some happy place
Where more fair is Nature's face,
Many a lightly-hidden trace
Of a spirit loved didst teach us.
Well 'tis that thy worth I rightly knew,--
That I, in the hour when first we met,
While the first impression fill'd me yet,
Call'd thee then a girl both good and true.
Rear'd in silence, calmly, knowing nought,
On the world we suddenly are thrown;
Hundred thousand billows round us sport;
All things charm us--many please alone,
Many grieve us, and as hour on hour is stealing,
To and fro our restless natures sway;
First we feel, and then we find each feeling
By the changeful world-stream borne away.
Well I know, we oft within us find
Many a hope and many a smart.
Charlotte, who can know our mind?
Charlotte, who can know our heart?
Ah! 'twould fain be understood, 'twould fain o'erflow
In some creature's fellow-feelings blest,
And, with trust, in twofold measure know
All the grief and joy in Nature's breast.
Then thine eye is oft around thee cast,
But in vain, for all seems closed for ever.
Thus the fairest part of life is madly pass'd

Free from storm, but resting never:
To thy sorrow thou'rt to-day repell'd

By what yesterday obey'd thee.
Can that world by thee be worthy held

Which so oft betray'd thee?

Which, 'mid all thy pleasures and thy pains,

Lived in selfish, unconcern'd repose?
See, the soul its secret cells regains,

And the heart--makes haste to close.
Thus found I thee, and gladly went to meet thee;

"She's worthy of all love!" I cried,
And pray'd that Heaven with purest bliss might greet thee,

Which in thy friend it richly hath supplied.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

To Father Kronos

HASTEN thee, Kronos!
On with clattering trot
Downhill goeth thy path;
Loathsome dizziness ever,
When thou delayest, assails me.
Quick, rattle along,
Over stock and stone let thy trot
Into life straightway lead

Now once more
Up the toilsome ascent
Hasten, panting for breath!
Up, then, nor idle be,--
Striving and hoping, up, up!

Wide, high, glorious the view
Gazing round upon life,
While from mount unto mount
Hovers the spirit eterne,
Life eternal foreboding.

Sideways a roof's pleasant shade
Attracts thee,
And a look that promises coolness
On the maidenly threshold.
There refresh thee! And, maiden,
Give me this foaming draught also,
Give me this health-laden look!

Down, now! quicker still, down!
See where the sun sets
Ere he sets, ere old age
Seizeth me in the morass,
Ere my toothless jaws mumble,
And my useless limbs totter;
While drunk with his farewell beam
Hurl me,--a fiery sea
Foaming still in mine eye,--
Hurl me, while dazzled and reeling,
Down to the gloomy portal of hell.

Blow, then, gossip, thy horn,
Speed on with echoing trot,
So that Orcus may know we are coming;
So that our host may with joy
Wait at the door to receive us.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

To His Coy One

SEEST thou yon smiling Orange?
Upon the tree still hangs it;
Already March hath vanish'd,
And new-born flow'rs are shooting.
I draw nigh to the tree then,
And there I say: Oh Orange,
Thou ripe and juicy Orange,
Thou sweet and luscious Orange,
I shake the tree, I shake it,
Oh fall into my lap!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

To Lida

THE only one whom, Lida, thou canst love,
Thou claim'st, and rightly claim'st, for only thee;
He too is wholly thine; since doomed to rove

Far from thee, in life's turmoils nought I see
Save a thin veil, through which thy form I view,
As though in clouds; with kindly smile and true,

It cheers me, like the stars eterne that gleam
Across the northern-lights' far-flick'ring beam.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

To Lina

SHOULD these songs, love, as they fleet,

Chance again to reach thy hand,
At the piano take thy seat,

Where thy friend was wont to stand!

Sweep with finger bold the string,

Then the book one moment see:
But read not! do nought but sing!

And each page thine own will be!

Ah, what grief the song imparts

With its letters, black on white,
That, when breath'd by thee, our hearts

Now can break and now delight!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

To Luna

SISTER of the first-born light,

Type of sorrowing gentleness!

Quivering mists in silv'ry dress
Float around thy features bright;
When thy gentle foot is heard,

From the day-closed caverns then

Wake the mournful ghosts of men,
I, too, wake, and each night-bird.

O'er a field of boundless span

Looks thy gaze both far and wide.

Raise me upwards to thy side!
Grant this to a raving man!
And to heights of rapture raised,

Let the knight so crafty peep

At his maiden while asleep,
Through her lattice-window glazed.

Soon the bliss of this sweet view,

Pangs by distance caused allays;

And I gather all thy rays,
And my look I sharpen too.
Round her unveil'd limbs I see

Brighter still become the glow,

And she draws me down below,
As Endymion once drew thee.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

To Mignon

OVER vale and torrent far
Rolls along the sun's bright car.
Ah! he wakens in his course

Mine, as thy deep-seated smart

In the heart.
Ev'ry morning with new force.

Scarce avails night aught to me;
E'en the visions that I see
Come but in a mournful guise;

And I feel this silent smart

In my heart
With creative pow'r arise.

During many a beauteous year
I have seen ships 'neath me steer,
As they seek the shelt'ring bay;

But, alas, each lasting smart

In my heart
Floats not with the stream away.

I must wear a gala dress,
Long stored up within my press,
For to-day to feasts is given;

None know with what bitter smart

Is my heart
Fearfully and madly riven.

Secretly I weep each tear,
Yet can cheerful e'en appear,
With a face of healthy red;

For if deadly were this silent smart

In my heart,
Ah, I then had long been dead!

THE MOUNTAIN CASTLE.

THERE stands on yonder high mountain

A castle built of yore,
Where once lurked horse and horseman

In rear of gate and of door.
Now door and gate are in ashes,
And all around is so still;
And over the fallen ruins
I clamber just as I will.
Below once lay a cellar,
With costly wines well stor'd;
No more the glad maid with her pitcher
Descends there to draw from the hoard.
No longer the goblet she places
Before the guests at the feast;
The flask at the meal so hallow'd
No longer she fills for the priest.
No more for the eager squire
The draught in the passage is pour'd;
No more for the flying present
Receives she the flying reward.
For all the roof and the rafters,
They all long since have been burn'd,
And stairs and passage and chapel
To rubbish and ruins are turn'd.
Yet when with lute and with flagon,
When day was smiling and bright,
I've watch'd my mistress climbing
To gain this perilous height,
Then rapture joyous and radiant
The silence so desolate brake,
And all, as in days long vanish'd,
Once more to enjoyment awoke;
As if for guests of high station

The largest rooms were prepared;
As if from those times so precious

A couple thither had fared;

As if there stood in his chapel

The priest in his sacred dress,
And ask'd: "Would ye twain be united?"

And we, with a smile, answer'd, "Yes!"

And songs that breath'd a deep feeling,

That touched the heart's innermost chord,
The music-fraught mouth of sweet echo,

Instead of the many, outpour'd.

And when at eve all was hidden

In silence unbroken and deep,
The glowing sun then look'd upwards,

And gazed on the summit so steep.

And squire and maiden then glitter'd

As bright and gay as a lord,
She seized the time for her present,

And he to give her reward.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

To My Friend - Ode I

TRANSPLANT the beauteous tree!
Gardener, it gives me pain;
A happier resting-place
Its trunk deserved.

Yet the strength of its nature
To Earth's exhausting avarice,
To Air's destructive inroads,
An antidote opposed.

See how it in springtime
Coins its pale green leaves!
Their orange-fragrance
Poisons each flyblow straight.

The caterpillar's tooth
Is blunted by them;
With silv'ry hues they gleam
In the bright sunshine,

Its twigs the maiden
Fain would twine in
Her bridal-garland;
Youths its fruit are seeking.

See, the autumn cometh!
The caterpillar
Sighs to the crafty spider,--
Sighs that the tree will not fade.

Hov'ring thither
From out her yew-tree dwelling,
The gaudy foe advances
Against the kindly tree,

And cannot hurt it,
But the more artful one
Defiles with nauseous venom
Its silver leaves;

And sees with triumph
How the maiden shudders,
The youth, how mourns he,
On passing by.

Transplant the beauteous tree!
Gardener, it gives me pain;
Tree, thank the gardener
Who moves thee hence!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

To My Friend - Ode II

THOU go'st! I murmur--
Go! let me murmur.
Oh, worthy man,
Fly from this land!

Deadly marshes,
Steaming mists of October
Here interweave their currents,
Blending for ever.

Noisome insects
Here are engender'd;
Fatal darkness
Veils their malice.

The fiery-tongued serpent,
Hard by the sedgy bank,
Stretches his pamper'd body,
Caress'd by the sun's bright beams.

Tempt no gentle night-rambles
Under the moon's cold twilight!
Loathsome toads hold their meetings
Yonder at every crossway.

Injuring not,
Fear will they cause thee.
Oh, worthy man,
Fly from this land!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

To My Friend - Ode III

BE void of feeling!
A heart that soon is stirr'd,
Is a possession sad
Upon this changing earth.

Behrisc, let spring's sweet smile
Never gladden thy brow!
Then winter's gloomy tempests
Never will shadow it o'er.

Lean thyself ne'er on a maiden's
Sorrow-engendering breast.
Ne'er on the arm,
Misery-fraught, of a friend.

Already envy
From out his rocky ambush
Upon thee turns
The force of his lynx-like eyes,

Stretches his talons,
On thee falls,
In thy shoulders
Cunningly plants them.

Strong are his skinny arms,
As panther-claws;
He shaketh thee,
And rends thy frame.

Death 'tis to part,
'Tis threefold death
To part, not hoping
Ever to meet again.

Thou wouldst rejoice to leave
This hated land behind,
Wert thou not chain'd to me
With friendships flowery chains.

Burst them! I'll not repine.
No noble friend
Would stay his fellow-captive,
If means of flight appear.

The remembrance
Of his dear friend's freedom
Gives him freedom
In his dungeon.

Thou go'st,--I'm left.
But e'en already

The last year's winged spokes
Whirl round the smoking axle.

I number the turns
Of the thundering wheel;
The last one I bless.--
Each bar then is broken, I'm free then as thou!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

To The Chosen One

HAND in hand! and lip to lip!

Oh, be faithful, maiden dear!
Fare thee well! thy lover's ship

Past full many a rock must steers
But should he the haven see,

When the storm has ceased to break,
And be happy, reft of thee,--

May the Gods fierce vengeance take!

Boldly dared is well nigh won!

Half my task is solved aright;
Ev'ry star's to me a sun,

Only cowards deem it night.
Stood I idly by thy side,

Sorrow still would sadden me;
But when seas our paths divide,

Gladly toil I,--toil for thee!

Now the valley I perceive,

Where together we will go,
And the streamlet watch each eve,

Gliding peacefully below
Oh, the poplars on yon spot!

Oh, the beech trees in yon grove!
And behind we'll build a cot,

Where to taste the joys of love!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

To The Distant One

AND have I lost thee evermore?

Hast thou, oh fair one, from me flown?
Still in mine ear sounds, as of yore,

Thine ev'ry word, thine ev'ry tone.

As when at morn the wand'rer's eye

Attempts to pierce the air in vain,
When, hidden in the azure sky,

The lark high o'er him chaunts his strain:

So do I cast my troubled gaze

Through bush, through forest, o'er the lea;
Thou art invoked by all my lays;

Oh, come then, loved one, back to me!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

To The Golden Heart That He Wore Around His Neck

OH thou token loved of joys now perish'd

That I still wear from my neck suspended,
Art thou stronger than our spirit-bond so cherish'd?

Or canst thou prolong love's days untimely ended?

Lily, I fly from thee! I still am doom'd to range
Thro' countries strange,

Thro' distant vales and woods, link'd on to thee!
Ah, Lily's heart could surely never fall

So soon away from me!

As when a bird bath broken from his thrall,

And seeks the forest green,
Proof of imprisonment he bears behind him,
A morsel of the thread once used to bind him;

The free-born bird of old no more is seen,

For he another's prey bath been.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

To The Grasshopper

HAPPY art thou, darling insect,
Who, upon the trees' tall branches,
By a modest draught inspired,
Singing, like a monarch livest!
Thou possessest as thy portion
All that on the plains thou seest,
All that by the hours is brought thee
'Mongst the husbandmen thou livest,
As a friend, uninjured by them,
Thou whom mortals love to honour,
Herald sweet of sweet Spring's advent!
Yes, thou'rt loved by all the Muses,

Phoebus' self, too, needs must love thee;
They their silver voices gave thee,
Age can never steal upon thee.
Wise and gentle friend of poets,
Born a creature fleshless, bloodless,
Though Earth's daughter, free from suff'ring,
To the gods e'en almost equal.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

To The Husbandman

SMOOTHLY and lightly the golden seed by the furrow is cover'd;

Yet will a deeper one, friend, cover thy bones at the last.
Joyously plough'd and sow'd! Here food all living is budding,

E'en from the side of the tomb Hope will not vanish away.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

To The Kind Reader

No one talks more than a Poet;
Fain he'd have the people know it.

Praise or blame he ever loves;
None in prose confess an error,
Yet we do so, void of terror,

In the Muses' silent groves.

What I err'd in, what corrected,
What I suffer'd, what effected,

To this wreath as flow'rs belong;
For the aged, and the youthful,
And the vicious, and the truthful,

All are fair when viewed in song.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

To The Moon

BUSH and vale thou fill'st again

With thy misty ray,
And my spirit's heavy chain

Castest far away.

Thou dost o'er my fields extend

Thy sweet soothing eye,
Watching like a gentle friend,

O'er my destiny.

Vanish'd days of bliss and woe

Haunt me with their tone,
Joy and grief in turns I know,

As I stray alone.

Stream beloved, flow on! flow on!

Ne'er can I be gay!
Thus have sport and kisses gone,

Truth thus pass'd away.

Once I seem'd the lord to be

Of that prize so fair!
Now, to our deep sorrow, we

Can forget it ne'er.

Murmur, stream, the vale along,

Never cease thy sighs;
Murmur, whisper to my song

Answering melodies!

When thou in the winter's night

Overflow'st in wrath,
Or in spring-time sparklest bright,

As the buds shoot forth.

He who from the world retires,

Void of hate, is blest;

Who a friend's true love inspires,
Leaning on his breast!
That which heedless man ne'er knew,
Or ne'er thought aright,
Roams the bosom's labyrinth through,
Boldly into night.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

To The Rising Full Moon

Dornburg, 25th August, 1828.

WILT thou suddenly enshroud thee,

Who this moment wert so nigh?
Heavy rising masses cloud thee,

Thou art hidden from mine eye.

Yet my sadness thou well knowest,

Gleaming sweetly as a star!
That I'm loved, 'tis thou that showest,

Though my loved one may be far.

Upward mount then! clearer, milder,

Robed in splendour far more bright!
Though my heart with grief throbs wilder,

Fraught with rapture is the night!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Trilogy Of Passion 01 To Werther

ONCE more, then, much-wept shadow, thou dost dare

Boldly to face the day's clear light,
To meet me on fresh blooming meadows fair,

And dost not tremble at my sight.
Those happy times appear return'd once more.

When on one field we quaff'd refreshing dew,
And, when the day's unwelcome toils were o'er,

The farewell sunbeams bless'd our ravish'd view;
Fate bade thee go,--to linger here was mine,--
Going the first, the smaller loss was thine.

The life of man appears a glorious fate:
The day how lovely, and the night how great!
And we 'mid Paradise-like raptures plac'd,
The sun's bright glory scarce have learn'd to taste.

When strange contending feelings dimly cover,
Now us, and now the forms that round us hover;
One's feelings by no other are supplied,
'Tis dark without, if all is bright inside;
An outward brightness veils my sadden'd mood,
When Fortune smiles,--how seldom understood!
Now think we that we know her, and with might
A woman's beauteous form instils delight;
The youth, as glad as in his infancy,
The spring-time treads, as though the spring were he
Ravish'd, amazed, he asks, how this is done?
He looks around, the world appears his own.
With careless speed he wanders on through space,
Nor walls, nor palaces can check his race;
As some gay flight of birds round tree-tops plays,
So 'tis with him who round his mistress strays;
He seeks from AETHER, which he'd leave behind him,
The faithful look that fondly serves to bind him.

Yet first too early warn'd, and then too late,
He feels his flight restrain'd, is captur'd straight
To meet again is sweet, to part is sad,
Again to meet again is still more glad,
And years in one short moment are enshrin'd;
But, oh, the harsh farewell is hid behind!

Thou smilest, friend, with fitting thoughts inspired;
By a dread parting was thy fame acquired,
Thy mournful destiny we sorrow'd o'er,
For weal and woe thou left'st us evermore,
And then again the passions' wavering force
Drew us along in labyrinthine course;

And we, consumed by constant misery,
At length must part--and parting is to die!
How moving is it, when the minstrel sings,
To 'scape the death that separation brings!
Oh grant, some god, to one who suffers so,
To tell, half-guilty, his sad tale of woe.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Trilogy Of Passion 02 Elegy

When man had ceased to utter his lament,

A god then let me tell my tale of sorrow.

WHAT hope of once more meeting is there now
In the still-closed blossoms of this day?
Both heaven and hell thrown open seest thou;
What wav'ring thoughts within the bosom play
No longer doubt! Descending from the sky,
She lifts thee in her arms to realms on high.

And thus thou into Paradise wert brought,

As worthy of a pure and endless life;
Nothing was left, no wish, no hope, no thought,

Here was the boundary of thine inmost strife:
And seeing one so fair, so glorified,
The fount of yearning tears was straightway dried.

No motion stirr'd the day's revolving wheel,

In their own front the minutes seem'd to go;
The evening kiss, a true and binding seal,

Ne'er changing till the morrow's sunlight glow.
The hours resembled sisters as they went.
Yet each one from another different.

The last hour's kiss, so sadly sweet, effac'd

A beauteous network of entwining love.
Now on the threshold pause the feet, now haste.

As though a flaming cherub bade them move;
The unwilling eye the dark road wanders o'er,
Backward it looks, but closed it sees the door.

And now within itself is closed this breast,

As though it ne'er were open, and as though,
Vying with ev'ry star, no moments blest

Had, in its presence, felt a kindling glow;
Sadness, reproach, repentance, weight of care,
Hang heavy on it in the sultry air.

Is not the world still left? The rocky steeps,

Are they with holy shades no longer crown'd?
Grows not the harvest ripe? No longer creeps

The espalier by the stream,--the copse around?
Doth not the wondrous arch of heaven still rise,
Now rich in shape, now shapeless to the eyes?

As, seraph-like, from out the dark clouds' chorus,

With softness woven, graceful, light, and fair,
Resembling Her, in the blue aether o'er us,

A slender figure hovers in the air,--
Thus didst thou see her joyously advance,
The fairest of the fairest in the dance.

Yet but a moment dost thou boldly dare

To clasp an airy form instead of hers;
Back to thine heart! thou'lt find it better there,

For there in changeful guise her image stirs
What erst was one, to many turneth fast,
In thousand forms, each dearer than the last.

As at the door, on meeting lingerd she,

And step by step my faithful ardour bless'd,
For the last kiss herself entreated me,

And on my lips the last last kiss impress'd,--
Thus clearly traced, the lov'd one's form we view,
With flames engraven on a heart so true,--

A heart that, firm as some embattled tower,

Itself for her, her in itself reveres,
For her rejoices in its lasting power,

Conscious alone, when she herself appears;
Feels itself freer in so sweet a thrall,
And only beats to give her thanks in all.

The power of loving, and all yearning sighs

For love responsive were effaced and drown'd;
While longing hope for joyous enterprise

Was form'd, and rapid action straightway found;
If love can e'er a loving one inspire,
Most lovingly it gave me now its fire;

And 'twas through her!--an inward sorrow lay

On soul and body, heavily oppress'd;

To mournful phantoms was my sight a prey,
In the drear void of a sad tortured breast;
Now on the well-known threshold Hope hath smil'd,
Herself appeareth in the sunlight mild.

Unto the peace of God, which, as we read,
Blesseth us more than reason e'er bath done,
Love's happy peace would I compare indeed,
When in the presence of the dearest one.
There rests the heart, and there that sweetest thought,
The thought of being hers, is check'd by nought.

In the pure bosom doth a yearning float,
Unto a holier, purer, unknown Being
Its grateful aspiration to devote,
The Ever-Nameless then unriddled seeing;
We call it: piety!--such blest delight
I feel a share in, when before her sight.

Before her sight, as 'neath the sun's hot ray,
Before her breath, as 'neath the spring's soft wind,
In its deep wintry cavern melts away
Self-love, so long in icy chains confin'd;
No selfishness and no self-will are nigh,
For at her advent they were forced to fly.

It seems as though she said: "As hours pass by
They spread before us life with kindly plan;
Small knowledge did the yesterday supply,
To know the morrow is conceal'd from man;
And if the thought of evening made me start,
The sun at setting gladden'd straight my heart.

"Act, then, as I, and look, with joyous mind,
The moment in the face; nor linger thou!
Meet it with speed, so fraught with life, so kind
In action, and in love so radiant now;
Let all things be where thou art, childlike ever,
Thus thoult be all, thus, thou'lt be vanquish'd never."

Thou speakest well, methought, for as thy guide

The moment's favour did a god assign,
And each one feels himself when by thy side,

Fate's fav'rite in a moment so divine;
I tremble at thy look that bids me go,
Why should I care such wisdom vast to know?

Now am I far! And what would best befit

The present minute? I could scarcely tell;
Full many a rich possession offers it,

These but offend, and I would fain repel.
Yearnings unquenchable still drive me on,
All counsel, save unbounded tears, is gone.

Flow on, flow on in never-ceasing course,

Yet may ye never quench my inward fire!
Within my bosom heaves a mighty force,

Where death and life contend in combat dire.
Medicines may serve the body's pangs to still;
Nought but the spirit fails in strength of will,--

Fails in conception; wherefore fails it so?

A thousand times her image it portrays;
Enchanting now, and now compell'd to go,

Now indistinct, now clothed in purest rays!
How could the smallest comfort here be flowing?
The ebb and flood, the coming and the going!

Leave me here now, my life's companions true!

Leave me alone on rock, in moor and heath;
But courage! open lies the world to you,

The glorious heavens above, the earth beneath;
Observe, investigate, with searching eyes,
And nature will disclose her mysteries.

To me is all, I to myself am lost,

Who the immortals' fav'rite erst was thought;
They, tempting, sent Pandoras to my cost,

So rich in wealth, with danger far more fraught;
They urged me to those lips, with rapture crown'd,
Deserted me, and hurl'd me to the ground.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Trilogy Of Passion 03 Atonement

PASSION brings reason--who can pacify

An anguish'd heart whose loss hath been so great?
Where are the hours that fled so swiftly by?

In vain the fairest thou didst gain from fate;
Sad is the soul, confused the enterprise;

The glorious world, how on the sense it dies!

In million tones entwined for evermore,

Music with angel-pinions hovers there,
To pierce man's being to its inmost core,

Eternal beauty has its fruit to bear;
The eye grows moist, in yearnings blest reveres
The godlike worth of music as of tears.

And so the lighten'd heart soon learns to see

That it still lives, and beats, and ought to beat,
Off'ring itself with joy and willingly,

In grateful payment for a gift so sweet.
And then was felt,--oh may it constant prove!--
The twofold bliss of music and of love.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

True Enjoyment

VAINLY wouldst thou, to gain a heart,

Heap up a maiden's lap with gold;
The joys of love thou must impart,

Wouldst thou e'er see those joys unfold.
The voices of the throng gold buys,

No single heart 'twill win for thee;
Wouldst thou a maiden make thy prize,

Thyself alone the bribe must be.

If by no sacred tie thou'rt bound,

Oh youth, thou must thyself restrain!
Well may true liberty be found,

Tho' man may seem to wear a chain.
Let one alone inflame thee e'er,

And if her heart with love o'erflows,
Let tenderness unite you there,

If duty's self no fetter knows.

First feel, oh youth! A girl then find

Worthy thy choice,--let her choose thee,
In body fair, and fair in mind,

And then thou wilt be blessed, like me.
I who have made this art mine own,

A girl have chosen such as this
The blessing of the priest alone

Is wanting to complete our bliss.

Nought but my rapture is her guide,

Only for me she cares to please,--
Ne'er wanton save when by my side,

And modest when the world she sees;
That time our glow may never chill,

She yields no right through frailty;
Her favour is a favour still,

And I must ever grateful be.

Yet I'm content, and full of joy,
If she'll but grant her smile so sweet,
Or if at table she'll employ,
To pillow hers, her lover's feet,
Give me the apple that she bit,
The glass from which she drank, bestow,
And when my kiss so orders it,
Her bosom, veil'd till then, will show.
And when she wills of love to speak,
In fond and silent hours of bliss,
Words from her mouth are all I seek,
Nought else I crave,--not e'en a kiss.
With what a soul her mind is fraught,
Wreath'd round with charms unceasingly!
She's perfect,--and she fails in nought
Save in her deigning to love me.
My rev'rence throws me at her feet,
My longing throws me on her breast;
This, youth, is rapture true and sweet,
Be wise, thus seeking to be blest.
When death shall take thee from her side,
To join the angelic choir above,
In heaven's bright mansions to abide,--
No diff'rence at the change thoult prove.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Valediction

I ONCE was fond of fools,
And bid them come each day;
Then each one brought his tools
The carpenter to play;
The roof to strip first choosing,
Another to supply,
The wood as trestles using,
To move it by-and-by,
While here and there they ran,
And knock'd against each other;
To fret I soon began,
My anger could not smother,
So cried, "Get out, ye fools!"
At this they were offended
Then each one took his tools,
And so our friendship ended.
Since that, I've wiser been,
And sit beside my door;
When one of them is seen,
I cry, "Appear no more!"
"Hence, stupid knave!" I bellow:
At this he's angry too:
"You impudent old fellow!
And pray, sir, who are you?
Along the streets we riot,
And revel at the fair;
But yet we're pretty quiet,
And folks revile us ne'er.
Don't call us names, then, please!"--
At length I meet with ease,
For now they leave my door--
'Tis better than before!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Vanitas! Vanitatum Vanitas!

MY trust in nothing now is placed,

Hurrah!
So in the world true joy I taste,

Hurrah!
Then he who would be a comrade of mine
Must rattle his glass, and in chorus combine,
Over these dregs of wine.

I placed my trust in gold and wealth,

Hurrah!
But then I lost all joy and health,

Lack-a-day!
Both here and there the money roll'd,
And when I had it here, behold,
From there had fled the gold!

I placed my trust in women next,

Hurrah!
But there in truth was sorely vex'd,

Lack-a-day!
The False another portion sought,
The True with tediousness were fraught,
The Best could not be bought.

My trust in travels then I placed,

Hurrah!
And left my native land in haste.

Lack-a-day!
But not a single thing seem'd good,
The beds were bad, and strange the food,
And I not understood.

I placed my trust in rank and fame,

Hurrah!
Another put me straight to shame,

Lack-a-day!
And as I had been prominent,
All scowl'd upon me as I went,
I found not one content.

I placed my trust in war and fight,

Hurrah!
We gain'd full many a triumph bright,

Hurrah!
Into the foeman's land we cross'd,
We put our friends to equal cost,
And there a leg I lost.

My trust is placed in nothing now,

Hurrah!
At my command the world must bow,

Hurrah!
And as we've ended feast and strain,
The cup we'll to the bottom drain;
No dregs must there remain!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Venetian Epigrams I

Sarcophagi, urns, were all covered with lifelike scenes,
fauns dancing with girls from a Bacchanalian choir,
paired-off, goat-footed creatures puffing their cheeks,
forcing ear-splitting notes from the blaring horns.
Cymbals and drumbeats, the marble is seen and is heard.
How delightful the fruit in the beaks of fluttering birds!
No startling noise can scare them, or scare away love,
Amor, whose torch waves more gladly in this happy throng.
So fullness overcomes death, and the ashes within
seem still, in their silent house, to feel love's delight.
So may the Poet's sarcophagus be adorned,
with this book the writer has filled with the beauty of life.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Warning

WAKEN not Amor from sleep! The beauteous urchin still slumbers;
Go, and complete thou the task, that to the day is assign'd!
Thus doth the prudent mother with care turn time to her profit,
While her babe is asleep, for 'twill awake but too soon.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Wedding Song

THE tale of the Count our glad song shall record

Who had in this castle his dwelling,
Where now ye are feasting the new-married lord,

His grandson of whom we are telling.
The Count as Crusader had blazon'd his fame,
Through many a triumph exalted his name,
And when on his steed to his dwelling he came,

His castle still rear'd its proud head,
But servants and wealth had all fled.

'Tis true that thou, Count, hast return'd to thy home,

But matters are faring there ill.
The winds through the chambers at liberty roam,

And blow through the windows at will
What's best to be done in a cold autumn night?
Full many I've pass'd in more piteous plight;
The morn ever settles the matter aright.

Then quick, while the moon shines so clear,

To bed on the straw, without fear,

And whilst in a soft pleasing slumber he lay,

A motion he feels 'neath his bed.
The rat, an he likes it, may rattle away!

Ay, had he but crumbs there outspread!
But lo! there appears a diminutive wight,
A dwarf 'tis, yet graceful, and bearing a light,
With orator-gestures that notice invite,

At the feet of the Count on the floor

Who sleeps not, though weary full sore.

"We've long been accustom'd to hold here our feast,

Since thou from thy castle first went;
And as we believed thou wert far in the East,

To revel e'en now we were bent.
And if thou'lt allow it, and seek not to chide,
We dwarfs will all banquet with pleasure and pride,
To honour the wealthy, the beautiful bride

Says the Count with a smile, half-asleep;--

"Ye're welcome your quarters to keep!"

Three knights then advance, riding all in a group,

Who under the bed were conceal'd;
And then is a singing and noise-making troop

Of strange little figures reveal'd;
And waggon on waggon with all kinds of things--
The clatter they cause through the ear loudly rings--
The like ne'er was seen save in castles of kings;

At length, in a chariot of gold,

The bride and the guests too, behold!

Then all at full gallop make haste to advance,

Each chooses his place in the hall;
With whirling and waltzing, and light joyous dance,

They begin with their sweethearts the ball.
The fife and the fiddle all merrily sound,
Thy twine, and they glide, and with nimbleness bound,
Thy whisper, and chatter, and, chatter around;

The Count on the scene casts his eye,

And seems in a fever to lie.

They hustle, and bustle, and rattle away

On table, on bench, and on stool;
Then all who had joined in the festival gay

With their partners attempt to grow cool.
The hams and the sausages nimbly they bear,
And meat, fish, and poultry in plenty are there,
Surrounded with wine of the vintage most rare:

And when they have revell'd full long,

They vanish at last with a song.

And if we're to sing all that further occur'd,

Pray cease ye to bluster and prate;
For what he so gladly in small saw and heard

He enjoy'd and he practis'd in great.
For trumpets, and singing, and shouts without end
On the bridal-train, chariots and horsemen attend,
They come and appear, and they bow and they bend,

In merry and countless array.

Thus was it, thus is it to-day.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Welcome And Farewell

QUICK throbb'd my heart: to norse! haste, haste,

And lo! 'twas done with speed of light;
The evening soon the world embraced,

And o'er the mountains hung the night.
Soon stood, in robe of mist, the oak,

A tow'ring giant in his size,
Where darkness through the thicket broke,

And glared with hundred gloomy eyes.

From out a hill of clouds the moon

With mournful gaze began to peer:
The winds their soft wings flutter'd soon,

And murmur'd in mine awe-struck ear;
The night a thousand monsters made,

Yet fresh and joyous was my mind;
What fire within my veins then play'd!

What glow was in my bosom shrin'd!

I saw thee, and with tender pride

Felt thy sweet gaze pour joy on me;
While all my heart was at thy side.

And every breath I breath'd for thee.
The roseate hues that spring supplies

Were playing round thy features fair,
And love for me--ye Deities!

I hoped it, I deserved it ne'er!

But, when the morning sun return'd,

Departure filled with grief my heart:
Within thy kiss, what rapture burn'd!

But in thy look, what bitter smart!
I went--thy gaze to earth first roved

Thou follow'dst me with tearful eye:
And yet, what rapture to be loved!

And, Gods, to love--what ecstasy!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

When I Was Still A Youthful Wight

WHEN I was still a youthful wight,

So full of enjoyment and merry,
The painters used to assert, in spite,

That my features were small--yes, very;
Yet then full many a beauteous child
With true affection upon me smil'd.

Now as a greybeard I sit here in state,

By street and by lane held in awe, sirs;
And may be seen, like old Frederick the Great,

On pipebowls, on cups, and on saucers.
Yet the beauteous maidens, they keep afar;
Oh vision of youth! Oh golden star!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

When The Fox Dies, His Skin Counts

WE young people in the shade
Sat one sultry day;
Cupid came, and "Dies the Fox"
With us sought to play.
Each one of my friends then sat
By his mistress dear;
Cupid, blowing out the torch,
Said: "The taper's here!"
Then we quickly sent around
The expiring brand;
Each one put it hastily
In his neighbour's hand.
Dorilis then gave it me,
With a scoffing jest;
Sudden into flame it broke,
By my fingers press'd.
And it singed my eyes and face,
Set my breast on fire;
Then above my head the blaze
Mounted ever higher.
Vain I sought to put it out;
Ever burned the flame;
Stead of dying, soon the Fox
Livelier still became.
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Who'll Buy Gods Of Love

OF all the beauteous wares
Exposed for sale at fairs,
None will give more delight
Than those that to your sight
From distant lands we bring.
Oh, hark to what we sing!
These beauteous birds behold,
They're brought here to be sold.

And first the big one see,
So full of roguish glee!
With light and merry bound
He leaps upon the ground;
Then springs up on the bough,
We will not praise him now.
The merry bird behold,--
He's brought here to be sold.

And now the small one see!
A modest look has he,
And yet he's such apother
As his big roguish brother.
'Tis chiefly when all's still
He loves to show his will.
The bird so small and bold,--
He's brought here to be sold.

Observe this little love,
This darling turtle dove!
All maidens are so neat,
So civil, so discreet
Let them their charms set loose,
And turn your love to use;
The gentle bird behold,--
She's brought here to be sold.

Their praises we won't tell;
They'll stand inspection well.
They're fond of what is new,--
And yet, to show they're true,
Nor seal nor letter's wanted;
To all have wings been granted.
The pretty birds behold,--
Such beauties ne'er were sold!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Winter Journey Over The Hartz Mountain

LIKE the vulture
Who on heavy morning clouds
With gentle wing reposing
Looks for his prey,--
Hover, my song!

For a God hath
Unto each prescribed
His destined path,
Which the happy one
Runs o'er swiftly
To his glad goal:
He whose heart cruel
Fate hath contracted,
Struggles but vainly
Against all the barriers
The brazen thread raises,
But which the harsh shears
Must one day sever.

Through gloomy thickets
Presseth the wild deer on,
And with the sparrows
Long have the wealthy
Settled themselves in the marsh.

Easy 'tis following the chariot
That by Fortune is driven,
Like the baggage that moves
Over well-mended highways
After the train of a prince.

But who stands there apart?
In the thicket, lost is his path;
Behind him the bushes
Are closing together,
The grass springs up again,
The desert engulphs him.

Ah, who'll heal his afflictions,
To whom balsam was poison,
Who, from love's fullness,
Drank in misanthropy only?
First despised, and now a despiser,
He, in secret, wasteth
All that he is worth,
In a selfishness vain.
If there be, on thy psaltery,
Father of Love, but one tone
That to his ear may be pleasing,
Oh, then, quicken his heart!
Clear his cloud-enveloped eyes

Over the thousand fountains
Close by the thirsty one
In the desert.

Thou who createst much joy,
For each a measure o'erflowing,
Bless the sons of the chase
When on the track of the prey,
With a wild thirsting for blood,
Youthful and joyous
Avenging late the injustice
Which the peasant resisted
Vainly for years with his staff.

But the lonely one veil
Within thy gold clouds!
Surround with winter-green,
Until the roses bloom again,
The humid locks,
Oh Love, of thy minstrel!

With thy glimmering torch
Lightest thou him
Through the fords when 'tis night,
Over bottomless places
On desert-like plains;
With the thousand colours of morning
Gladd'nest his bosom;
With the fierce-biting storm
Bearest him proudly on high;
Winter torrents rush from the cliffs,--
Blend with his psalms;
An altar of grateful delight
He finds in the much-dreaded mountain's
Snow-begirded summit,
Which foreboding nations
Crown'd with spirit-dances.

Thou stand'st with breast inscrutable,
Mysteriously disclosed,
High o'er the wondering world,
And look'st from clouds
Upon its realms and its majesty,
Which thou from the veins of thy brethren
Near thee dost water.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

With A Golden Necklace

THIS page a chain to bring thee burns,

That, train'd to suppleness of old,
On thy fair neck to nestle, yearns,

In many a hundred little fold.

To please the silly thing consent!

'Tis harmless, and from boldness free;
By day a trifling ornament,

At night 'tis cast aside by thee.

But if the chain they bring thee ever,

Heavier, more fraught with weal or woe,
I'd then, Lisette, reproach thee never

If thou shouldst greater scruples show.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

With A Painted Ribbon

LITTLE leaves and flow'rets too,
Scatter we with gentle hand,
Kind young spring-gods to the view,
Sporting on an airy band.
Zephyr, bear it on the wing,
Twine it round my loved one's dress;
To her glass then let her spring,
Full of eager joyousness.
Roses round her let her see,
She herself a youthful rose.
Grant, dear life, one look to me!
'Twill repay me all my woes,
What this bosom feels, feel thou.
Freely offer me thy hand;
Let the band that joins us now
Be no fragile rosy band!
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Wont And Done

I HAVE loved; for the first time with passion I rave!
I then was the servant, but now am the slave;

I then was the servant of all:
By this creature so charming I now am fast bound,
To love and love's guerdon she turns all around,

And her my sole mistress I call.

I've had faith; for the first time my faith is now strong!
And though matters go strangely, though matters go wrong,

To the ranks of the faithful I'm true:
Though ofttimes 'twas dark and though ofttimes 'twas drear,
In the pressure of need, and when danger was near,

Yet the dawning of light I now view.

I have eaten; but ne'er have thus relish'd my food!
For when glad are the senses, and joyous the blood,

At table all else is effaced
As for youth, it but swallows, then whistles an air;
As for me, to a jovial resort I'd repair,

Where to eat, and enjoy what I taste.

I have drunk; but have never thus relish'd the bowl!
For wine makes us lords, and enlivens the soul,

And loosens the trembling slave's tongue.
Let's not seek to spare then the heart-stirring drink,
For though in the barrel the old wine may sink,

In its place will fast mellow the young.

I have danced, and to dancing am pledged by a vow!
Though no caper or waltz may be raved about now,

In a dance that's becoming, whirl round.
And he who a nosegay of flowers has dress'd,
And cares not for one any more than the rest,

With a garland of mirth is aye crown'd.

Then once more be merry, and banish all woes!
For he who but gathers the blossoming rose.

By its thorns will be tickled alone.
To-day still, as yesterday, glimmers the star;
Take care from all heads that hang down to keep far,

And make but the future thine own.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe