POEMS: AND TRANSLATIONS FROM THE GERMAN OF GOETHE, SCHILLER, CHAMISSO, UHLAND, RÜCKERT, HEINE, PLATEN, &C. &C.

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CHARLES R. LAMBERT

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Trieste

Thos Ann Pritt
1850

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AND

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OF

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CHAMISSO, UHLAND, RÜCKERT, HEINE,

PLATEN, &c. &c.

BY

CHARLES R. LAMBERT.

„Süßer Wohllaut schläft in der Saiten Gold,
Der Sänger singt von der Minne Sold,
Er preiset das Höchste, das Beste,
Was das Herz sich wünscht, was der Sinn begehrt."

Schiller.

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Dedicatory Sonnet.

As men with votive wreaths of flowerets fair
Adorn their guardian saints' or angels' shrine,
So, Emma, oft in other days 'twas mine
Sweetly to wile away an hour of care
With culling blossoms, beautiful and rare,
For thee, from out the garden of the Nine,
The which with loving hand I did entwine
In many a chaplet for thy heart to wear.
Years, mighty billows in the tide of life,
Since then have roll'd away, and we who were
Lover and loved are husband now and wife;
Yet now as then this wreath to thee I bear,—
My aim no proud display of poet's skill,
But proof the husband is the lover still.

PREFACE.

With many of the Poems contained in the following pages, the English public have long been rendered familiar, through the labours of translators no less distinguished by profound erudition, than by poetical talent of the highest order. But, though the field has been already so often and so ably pre-occupied, I am bold enough to hope that the present volume may not prove altogether unacceptable to the lovers of German Poetry. This hope arises from no arrogant notion of having succeeded better than my predecessors, whose excellence I have as little disposition to question, as I have pretensions to approach, but results entirely from

the following consideration :—No translation, as it seems to me, presents a perfect reflection of its original. The most successful efforts are only approximations to complete fidelity, nearer or more remote according as the idiosyncracies of the translator's mind correspond with those of his author's, and the genius of the language in which he writes agrees with that of the language from which he translates. If this view of the subject be correct, genius being million-sided, the works of a great poet may be translated again and again, and by every new attempt something in them be brought out, which no preceding one has unfolded. It is solely on this ground that I venture to present to the public these translations; for though I well know as literary productions they will bear no comparison with those of the master-translators of the age, I still flatter myself that the careful student may discover in them some few things desiderated in far more artistic performances; and thus, that he will not regard their publication either as presumptuous or superfluous.

With reference to the Original Poems contained in this volume, I have only to observe that I wish them to pass for just what they are, and nothing more, viz., attempts to give expression to feelings which have operated powerfully upon my own heart, and to embody sentiments, which, whatever they may appear to others, I believe to be founded in truth. Many of them were written with the idea of their never meeting the eye of any but of those to whom they were originally addressed; and a still greater number were composed by way of solace under the severe affliction with which it has pleased Providence to visit me; for, with no view of disarming just criticism, but merely to place myself in my proper position, I feel it due both to the reader and myself to state, that from infancy I can say in the words used by our great Poet, to describe the condition of his later life—

"Thus with the year
Seasons return: but not to me returns
Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,