

# **THE SONG OF THE BELL**

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The Song of the Bell by Friedrich von Schiller

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**FRIEDRICH VON SCHILLER**

**THE SONG  
OF THE BELL**



THE  
SONG OF THE BELL.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

FREDERICK VON SCHILLER.

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WITH THE ORIGINAL.

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LONDON:

PRINTED FOR TREUTTEL AND WURTE, SOHO-SQUARE;  
AND HATCHARD, PICCADILLY.

1827.

## INTRODUCTION.

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SCHILLER stands pre-eminent among the German writers. He combines the various talents of the historian, the dramatic and the lyric poet. Some of his Histories and Tragedies have been translated, but his Lyric Poems are less familiar to the English reader.

“The casting of a bell (says the author of an Autumn on the Rhine, 2nd edition, p. 223) is in Germany an event of solemnity and rejoicing. In the neighbourhood of the Hartz and the other mining districts you read formal announcements in the newspapers from bell-founders, that at a given time and spot a casting is to take place, to which they invite all their friends. An entertainment

out of doors is prepared, and held with much festivity."

It will be perceived that the mechanical operations attendant on the casting a bell, and its uses when finished, suggest moral reflexions which Schiller has clothed in the language of poetry. "The Song of the Bell" contains images truly national; and the general view of human life which it presents, is associated with the domestic feelings of that middle state between the extremes of wealth and poverty, which is happily the lot of a very great proportion of mankind.

One of the most pleasing of our English poets has expanded Schiller's ideas into a description of "Human Life" in a higher rank of society; yet the misfortunes incident to that station do not excite so great a common interest as those which are presented in Schiller's poem.

Had the author above quoted, who gives a prose description of the poem, undertaken its translation with similar talent to that which he has transfused into those of Goëthe's "Baiadere" and Schiller's

“Cassandra,” the following attempt would have been unnecessary. It has been the employment of some hours dedicated to the study of the German language. The translator was not aware, until he had nearly completed it, that he had been anticipated by Lord Leveson Gower.

He would have declined entering the lists with the excellent translator of the “Faust” of Goëthe, but on inspection of that version of “The Song of the Bell,” he considered it rather as a poetical illustration of Schiller’s thoughts, than such a translation as would give the mere English reader a correct idea of the poem itself.

The following is more literally, if less poetically, rendered; and the translator has endeavoured in general to communicate, not only Schiller’s ideas, but the mode both as to rhyme and order in which they are conveyed; in some parts, however, this was found unattainable.

The German original is annexed, to enable the English reader to judge between that and the translation, as similar construction of the sen-



tences and similarity in the words of two congenerous languages are frequently discernible. This has been done also with the further view of exciting to the study of the language of a great nation, to whom we are indebted for many discoveries in science and in art, and for noble exertions in the causes of literature and freedom of opinion.

The serious character of a people who begin the common business of every-day life with prayer—who attach importance as well to the manner of performing an action as to the action itself—the custom of travelling either in their own or foreign countries in the interval between the completion of their education and their settlement in life—the household manners, where great attention is paid to the minutiae of domestic economy—the aggregation of the agricultural population in small towns and villages, frequently walled, where the products of the field are stored under the protection of municipal police—the common field system of cultivation—and the consequent depasturing of the

cattle of each township under the care of a common herdsman,—are peculiarities in German manners to be noted and recollected in perusing the following poem. Other temporary allusions will be understood by the information that the German original was first published in 1799.

FREDERICK VON SCHILLER was born at Marbach in 1759, and died at Weimar in 1805.

