THE LAY OF THE BELL, OR HUMAN LIFE; AND THE DIVER

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FREDERICK VON SCHILLER

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Trieste

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OR

HUMAN LIFE;

AND

THE DIVER.

BY

FREDERICK VON SCHILLER.

TRANSLATED BY

JOHN WYNNIATT GRANT,

AUTHOR OF "HISTORICAL PICTURES FROM THE CAMPAGNA OF ROME," ETC., ETC.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR.

1867.

PREFACE.

The author of the following translations would wish he were able to say that the version of Bürger's Lenore which was published last year had met with a favourable reception from the patrons and promoters of English classical literature, and not been a cause of pecuniary loss which he could very ill spare. He has however, notwithstanding such discouragement, now entered upon the cultivation of a more extensive field, and one probably, more congenial to the tastes of most readers. Bürger's "Lenore," is pre-eminently a work of genius; but in Schiller's masterpieces we find genius combined with intellectual supremacy. It must not be forgotten, at the same time, that Schiller was favoured by the advantages accruing from a better social position, easy circumstances, and tranquillity of mind, which were, unhappily, not shared by his less fortunate and continually-struggling contemporary. And while wondering at the genius and talent of the one, we are led to admire the genius and sympathize with the misfortunes of the other.

Should this new version of Schiller's two famed poems be received with critical and *public* favour, the translator will be encouraged to persevere in his design of turning his attention to all the tragedies of the same illustrious author. It is true they have been already translated with more or less ability by different hands; yet one cannot help thinking that it would be a valuable addition to English foreign literature, were they all rendered in one uniform style, somewhat approaching in simplicity and rhythmical beauty, to that of the illustrious original. The fitness of the present translator for the task will depend on the measure of success that may—or may not—have attended his efforts in translating "The Lay of the Bell," with reference to which he will welcome with equal pleasure either favourable or adverse criticism.

11, Earl Street W.,
Edgware Road,
April 1st, 1867.

THE LAY OF THE BELL.

CONTENTS.

THE LAY OF THE BELL.

"Vivos voco—Mortuos Plango—Fulgura frango."

I.

Introduction.

SECURELY wall'd within the ground
  Stands bak'd the mould of plastic clay;
Now come, my lads, 'tis time to found,
  The Bell must come to light to-day!
    From the forehead's hot glow
    Let the sweat in streams flow!
And however skilful the master may prove,
The blessings on labour come but from above.

This work that claims our serious care
  Suggests an earnest word to say;
When sage discourse our labours share
  Time wings his flight without delay.
What feeble strength can best effect,
  Let us observe with close inspection;
And treat the wight with marked neglect
  Whose task is done without reflection!
For this was reason given to man,
  And this doth every grace excel—
Within his inmost soul to scan
  The things his hands would fashion well.

II.

General Purposes of the Bell.

Fetch the wood of the pitchy pine
  The faggots well trimméd and dry!
Then the flames feed well and confine!
  The metal will soon liquefy:
    Make the copper-brew nice!
    Add the tin in a trice!
That the glowing food of the greedy bell
May flow to its cravings glibly and well.

What now, with fire's subduing power,
  Our hands within that pit are founding,
Will dwell in yonder belfry-tower,
  To chime our praises loud-resounding—
Through many a year that fleeting flies,
  To peal on youth and aged sire—
With hearts that ache to sympathize,
  Or join devotion's solemn choir.
Each fitful change in life's career,
  That weal or woe to man may bring,
Its metal crown in accents clear,
  To edify afar will ring.